



The Influence of Development Intervention on Women Beneficiaries' Perceptions of Empowerment

A Case Study of Oxfam Restoring Coastal Livelihoods Project in South Sulawesi, Indonesia (2010-2015)



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Outline

1. Research questions
2. Methodology
3. Findings
4. Conclusions



Research Questions



Main question:

- How have development interventions influenced women beneficiaries' perceptions of empowerment?

Sub-questions:

- How were women positioned in the development project?
- How did women perceive empowerment after their involvement in the project?

Methodology

A qualitative ethnographic research (May – November 2015) based on:

- constructivist paradigm
- post-colonial feminist approaches
- post-development approaches



Research Area



Location. West coast of South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia, Pangkep District

Findings: Women Beneficiaries' Positions in the Project's Framework

- Women were the drivers & major recipients
- Framework of the project defined positions and roles of women
- Economic approach promoted local women champions



Findings: Women's Perceptions of Empowerment

- Various stories and experiences of empowerment
- Women's empowerment depends on other factors
- Moved from passive and weak beneficiaries to active participants
- Perceptions and (individual and collective) actualization depend on the context.



Women's Stories of Empowerment

“Women now have activities, can go out, earn income, and brave and confident to speak up in public.”

Sitti Rahmah, Leader of *Pita Aksi* Group, Pangkep District.



Findings: Influence of Development Intervention on Women's Perceptions

- External intervention → Empowerment by design.
- Primary understanding of empowerment is economic.
- Women perceive empowerment mostly based on their experiences in the project and relations with others.



Conclusions

- There is a 'hopeful' critique of aid
- Agency is crucial in promoting women's empowerment

Empowerment is about 5Cs (capacity, capability, confidence, choice, commitment) and 4As (awareness, achievement, acceptance, and acknowledgement).

- There is a need for reflexive development intervention

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Thank you!

- Questions?
- Comments?
- Feedback?

