

## **Localization of Gender Equality Norms in Local Governance: A Case Study of Parepare City, Indonesia**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the localization of gender equality norms within the governance framework of Parepare City, Indonesia, as part of international cooperation under the *Maju Perempuan Indonesia untuk Penanggulangan Kemiskinan* (MAMPU) program initiated in 2015. It aims to explain how global gender equality principles are translated, negotiated, and institutionalized within local policy and administrative systems. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, the research draws on an extensive literature review and secondary data analysis, including government documents, local regulations, and program reports. The findings reveal that the Parepare City Government has made substantial progress in embedding gender equality norms through three interrelated dimensions: (1) policy reform, marked by the issuance of key local regulations such as *Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2015 on Gender Mainstreaming in Regional Development* and *Regional Regulation No. 12 of 2015 on the Protection of Women and Children*; (2) institutional expansion, through the strengthening of gender-responsive agencies, participatory planning forums (*Musrenbang Perempuan* and *Musrenbang Anak*), and cross-sectoral coordination; and (3) social transformation, reflected in growing public participation and increased reporting of gender-based violence cases. The study concludes that Parepare's success in institutionalizing gender equality stems from its ability to align global frameworks with national mandates and local priorities, strengthened by credible intermediaries and sustained political commitment. The originality of this research lies in its focus on Parepare as an empirical model of localized gender governance, demonstrating how transnational gender norms can be integrated into local institutions, sustained beyond donor cycles, and advanced through rights-based and participatory governance at the subnational level in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** norm localization; gender mainstreaming; gender governance; MAMPU Program.

### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini mengkaji lokalisasi norma kesetaraan gender dalam kerangka tata kelola pemerintahan Kota Parepare, Indonesia, sebagai bagian dari kerja sama internasional melalui program *Maju Perempuan Indonesia untuk Penanggulangan Kemiskinan* (MAMPU) yang dimulai pada tahun 2015. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menjelaskan bagaimana prinsip-prinsip kesetaraan gender global diterjemahkan, dinegosiasikan, dan dilembagakan dalam sistem kebijakan serta administrasi pemerintahan lokal. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, penelitian ini bersumber dari kajian literatur dan analisis data sekunder, termasuk dokumen pemerintah, peraturan daerah, dan laporan program pemberdayaan perempuan. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Pemerintah Kota Parepare telah mencapai kemajuan signifikan dalam mengarusutamakan norma kesetaraan gender melalui tiga dimensi yang saling berkaitan: (1) reformasi kebijakan, yang ditandai dengan terbitnya *Peraturan Daerah No. 5 Tahun 2015 tentang Pengarusutamaan Gender dalam Pembangunan Daerah* dan *Peraturan Daerah No. 12 Tahun 2015 tentang Perlindungan Perempuan dan Anak*; (2) perluasan kelembagaan, melalui penguatan lembaga responsif gender, pembentukan forum perencanaan partisipatif (*Musrenbang Perempuan* dan *Musrenbang Anak*), serta koordinasi lintas sektor; dan (3) transformasi sosial, yang tercermin dari meningkatnya partisipasi publik dan pelaporan kasus kekerasan berbasis gender. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa keberhasilan Parepare dalam melembagakan kesetaraan gender berasal dari kemampuannya menyelaraskan kerangka global dengan mandat nasional dan prioritas lokal, yang diperkuat oleh aktor perantara yang kredibel serta komitmen politik yang berkelanjutan. Keaslian penelitian ini terletak pada fokusnya terhadap Parepare sebagai model empiris tata kelola gender lokal,

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yang menunjukkan bagaimana norma kesetaraan gender transnasional dapat diintegrasikan ke dalam institusi lokal, dipertahankan melampaui siklus donor, serta diperkuat melalui tata kelola yang berbasis hak dan partisipatif di tingkat subnasional di Indonesia.

**Kata Kunci:** lokalisasi norma; pengarusutamaan gender; tata kelola gender; Program MAMPU.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the landscape of international relations, the last few decades have witnessed a remarkable expansion of global concerns beyond traditional political and security issues (Haynes, 2020; Wicaksana, 2021). Cross-border challenges such as climate change, digital governance, and human rights have progressively shaped the normative agenda of global cooperation. Among these, gender equality has emerged as a key transnational issue, gaining increasing attention within international development and governance frameworks. The global discourse on gender equality, institutionalized through instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979), has significantly influenced national policy agendas, particularly in developing countries seeking to align with universal human rights standards.

Indonesia has demonstrated substantial commitment to these global gender norms. Since ratifying CEDAW in 1984 through Law No. 7 of 1984, Indonesia has adopted a range of measures aimed at integrating gender perspectives into its national development strategies (Kasuma & Irianto, 2023). The issuance of Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2000 on Gender Mainstreaming marked a turning point, establishing gender equality as a mandatory consideration across planning, implementation, and evaluation of public policies. According to the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (2025), gender mainstreaming serves not only as a moral imperative but also as a developmental strategy to ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities for both men and women.

Despite these regulatory milestones, Indonesia continues to face critical gender disparities. National data reveal that gender-based violence remains prevalent: the National Commission on Violence Against Women (2022; 2023) reported 338,496 cases of violence against women in 2021, with domestic violence accounting for over 70% of incidents. In South Sulawesi Province alone, Parepare City ranks sixth nationwide in gender-based violence cases (Dihni, 2022). The local statistics indicate that between 2015 and 2021, more than 350 reported cases involved women and children as victims (Antony, 2021; Ma'ruf, 2022). These figures underscore a pressing social challenge—translating national and global commitments into effective local governance mechanisms.

In response, Parepare City was selected as one of four pilot areas for the *Maju Perempuan Indonesia untuk Penanggulangan Kemiskinan* (MAMPU) program—an Indonesia-Australia cooperation established in 2015. The city's active participation reflects its strategic role in experimenting with gender mainstreaming at the subnational level, focusing particularly on reducing violence against women and improving women's access to essential services. Thus, Parepare presents a compelling case for examining how global gender equality norms are localized and institutionalized through local governance frameworks.

Research on gender equality initiatives in Indonesia, particularly those associated with the MAMPU program, has been conducted within several main tendencies. First, studies examining the *impact of international cooperation programs* highlight both progress and persisting gaps. Putri (2019) observed that while MAMPU partnerships have improved women's access to public services, they have not significantly reduced rates of gender-based violence. Similarly, Silaban (2017) found that MAMPU has

succeeded in strengthening women's organizations and enhancing socio-economic empowerment but has yet to fully transform structural gender inequalities. These studies demonstrate that international collaboration can generate institutional capacity but often stops short of systemic behavioral change.

Second, several researchers adopt theoretical perspectives from feminist and global governance studies to analyze MAMPU's normative framework. Anggana et al. (2022) and Abhirama et al (2022) interpret MAMPU through the lens of liberal feminism, arguing that it aligns with liberal feminist ideals by promoting women's rights awareness and stimulating legal reforms. However, these works primarily discuss the program at the national level and rarely explore how such global-inspired norms are adapted at the local level where governance actually occurs.

Third, research focusing on case studies of local implementation—such as Nasira (2017) on the LP2EM Foundation's role in Parepare—tends to evaluate program performance rather than the political and normative process of local adaptation. These studies describe activities, outputs, and challenges but seldom explain how local governments internalize, reinterpret, and embed gender equality norms into their regulatory and institutional structures.

From these three tendencies, a clear gap emerges. Existing studies provide valuable insights into the outcomes and theoretical underpinnings of gender equality programs but have not sufficiently explored the localization process—the mechanism through which global gender norms are translated, negotiated, and institutionalized within local governance. This gap is particularly relevant for understanding why some local governments, like Parepare, are able to issue pioneering gender regulations, while others lag behind despite similar exposure to international cooperation.

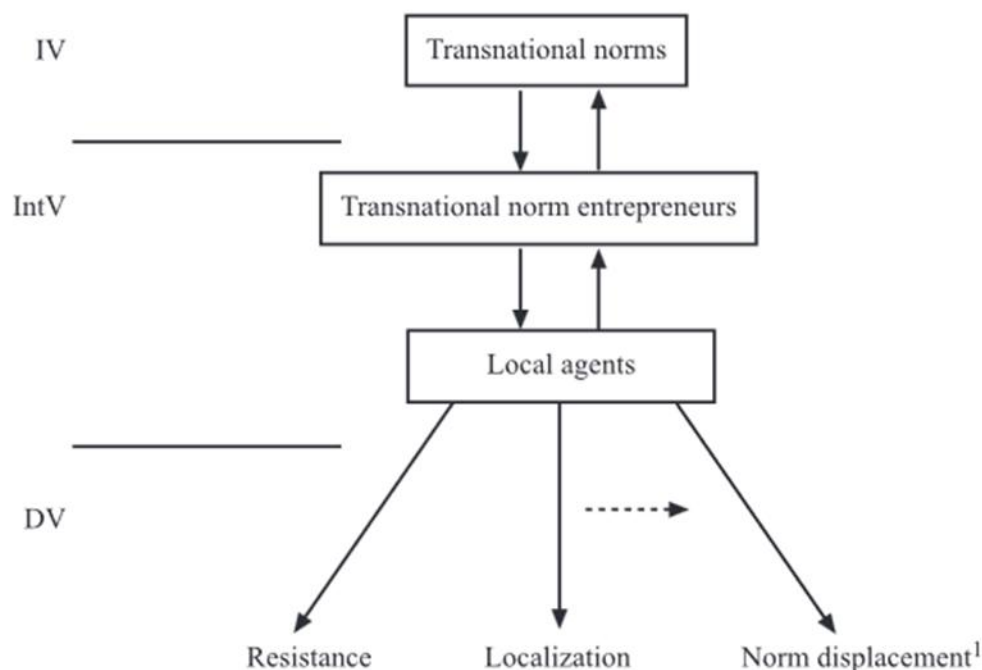
This study aims to analyze how the Parepare City Government responds to and localizes gender equality norms introduced through the Indonesia–Australia MAMPU cooperation program. Specifically, it examines the mechanisms by which these international norms are translated and institutionalized into local policies, governance practices, and legal frameworks—particularly in relation to efforts to reduce violence against women. In doing so, the study addresses a key gap in the literature on the dynamics of norm translation from global to local levels within Indonesia's decentralized governance system.

Drawing on Acharya's (2004) theory of norm localization, this study argues that the success of gender equality norm implementation in Parepare is not a matter of passive adoption but an active process of adaptation—where local actors reinterpret global ideas to fit existing socio-political and cultural structures. Localization occurs when global norms are internalized through policy instruments such as local regulations, administrative reforms, and collaborative networks between government and civil society. Therefore, it is hypothesized that the Parepare City Government's enactment of Regional Regulations No. 5/2015 and No. 12/2015 represents a localized manifestation of global gender equality norms, realized through functional expansion and institutional innovation rather than direct norm transplantation.

This study employs Acharya's (2004) *Theory of Norm Localization* to explain how global gender equality norms introduced through transnational cooperation are adapted within local governance structures. Acharya conceptualizes localization as a dynamic process in which local actors are not passive recipients of externally imposed norms but active agents who reinterpret and reconstruct global ideas to align with pre-existing beliefs, institutions, and socio-cultural contexts. Through this perspective, international norms—such as gender equality promoted by the *Maju Perempuan Indonesia untuk Penanggulangan Kemiskinan* (MAMPU) program—undergo a process of translation mediated by *transnational norm entrepreneurs* (e.g., donor agencies, NGOs) and *local agents* (e.g., local governments, community organizations).

Acharya identifies three possible responses of local actors to transnational norms: resistance, localization, and norm displacement. *Resistance* occurs when local institutions reject external norms, maintaining existing structures without modification, which often leads to the failure of norm diffusion. *Localization* refers to the partial adoption and adaptation of global norms—where new policy instruments or institutions emerge to accommodate external ideas while preserving local values and hierarchies. *Norm displacement*, by contrast, signifies a fundamental transformation in which imported norms replace pre-existing frameworks, producing a new normative order. Among these outcomes, localization represents the most pragmatic and sustainable pathway for integrating international norms within local governance because it allows for negotiation, adaptation, and ownership.

In the context of the MAMPU program, transnational norm entrepreneurs—such as the Australian government and its implementing partners—serve as catalysts for introducing gender equality principles, while local agents (the Parepare City Government, civil society organizations, and women’s advocacy networks) function as mediators that contextualize these norms within the socio-cultural and political realities of Parepare. The extent of norm internalization thus depends on how effectively local actors reinterpret global gender frameworks to align with local policy priorities and institutional capabilities. The theoretical relationship between these elements can be illustrated as follows:



**Figure 1. Response to Transnational Norms (Adapted from Acharya, 2004)**

Through this framework, the study situates Parepare’s issuance of Regional Regulation No. 5/2015 on Gender Mainstreaming and Regional Regulation No. 12/2015 on the Protection of Women and Children as concrete manifestations of norm localization—where global gender equality principles are selectively adopted, institutionalized, and embedded into local governance mechanisms.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The unit of analysis in this study is the *localization of gender equality norms* within the governance system of Parepare City, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. This research focuses on how international gender norms—introduced through the Indonesia–Australia cooperation program *Maju Perempuan Indonesia untuk Penanggulangan Kemiskinan* (MAMPU)—are interpreted, adapted, and institutionalized by the Parepare City Government. The analysis emphasizes two main aspects: (1) the policy response and regulatory framework enacted by local authorities, and (2) the interaction between global gender equality agendas and local institutional dynamics. Accordingly, this study treats policy documents, local regulations, and program reports as its primary analytical units to trace the process of norm translation at the subnational level.

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative design with a literature-based analytical approach (Lune & Berg, 2017). The qualitative method was chosen because the research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the contextual processes of norm adaptation rather than statistical measurement. The descriptive approach allows the researcher to depict the complexity of local responses to transnational gender norms in a holistic manner. The literature review technique complements this approach by enabling a systematic synthesis of previous research findings, theoretical perspectives, and documentary evidence relevant to the case of Parepare City. This design is deemed appropriate to uncover the mechanisms of norm localization through interpretive and contextual analysis (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2012).

The research primarily relies on secondary data obtained from multiple sources, including academic literature, policy documents, official reports, and media coverage. These data sources encompass: (1) scholarly works such as books, journal articles, and theses addressing gender equality, international cooperation, and norm localization; (2) official publications and documentation issued by the MAMPU program and its implementing partners; (3) Parepare City Government regulations, particularly Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2015 on Gender Mainstreaming and Regional Regulation No. 12 of 2015 on the Protection of Women and Children; and (4) news articles and public reports that capture gender-related developments in Parepare. The integration of these materials provides a robust foundation for examining how international gender norms are embedded into local governance structures.

Data were collected through systematic document review and observation techniques. The document review involved identifying, categorizing, and extracting relevant information from both printed and digital sources. Each document was evaluated based on its relevance, credibility, and contribution to understanding the localization process. Observation was employed in a non-participatory manner, where the researcher recorded information on how gender mainstreaming programs and local initiatives are represented in official communication channels and media narratives. This dual technique ensures a comprehensive understanding of both policy-level and discursive aspects of norm localization.

The data analysis followed a qualitative content analysis approach (Miles & Huberman, 2013). The analysis began with data reduction—organizing and classifying the collected materials based on themes related to transnational norm diffusion, gender mainstreaming, and local policy adaptation. Subsequently, thematic coding was conducted to identify recurring patterns that indicate forms of norm acceptance, adaptation, or resistance. The final stage involved analytical interpretation using Acharya's *Norm Localization Theory* as the guiding framework, linking empirical findings to theoretical propositions. Through this process, the research seeks to construct a coherent narrative explaining how gender equality norms, transmitted through the MAMPU program, are localized and institutionalized within the governance of Parepare City.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Australia's Gender Aid Policy and the Diffusion of Gender Equality Norms

Australia has long positioned gender equality as a strategic pillar of its foreign policy and development cooperation, reflecting a broader evolution in global governance and domestic policy reform. The transformation of Australia's gender aid policy can be traced from its early welfare-oriented initiatives in the 1970s—focusing on women's social roles—to a more comprehensive empowerment-based framework that integrates gender considerations across governance, economic, and human rights sectors. This evolution was institutionalized through innovations such as gender budgeting (1984) and later through the 2016 Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy, which mandated that 80% of Australia's development aid investments must address gender equality objectives (Bigio & Vogelstein, 2020; Harris Rimmer & Sawer, 2016). These shifts marked Australia's transition from treating gender as a social issue to positioning it as a *strategic instrument of development effectiveness and diplomatic identity*.

As Australia's development policy matured, its gender strategy extended beyond domestic reform to shape regional cooperation across the Indo-Pacific. Under the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), gender equality became an integral component of foreign aid programs aimed at promoting women's leadership, economic empowerment, and the elimination of violence against women. Through this approach, Australia has emerged as a norm entrepreneur—a state actor that uses aid diplomacy not merely to transfer resources but to promote global gender norms aligned with liberal democratic values (Azizah, 2023a; Rosser, 2008). This policy orientation situates gender equality as both a moral commitment and a geopolitical strategy, positioning Australia as a leading proponent of gender-responsive governance in the region.

Within this strategic framework, the Maju Perempuan Indonesia untuk Penanggulangan Kemiskinan (MAMPU) program represents a flagship initiative for the diffusion and localization of gender equality norms in Indonesia. Established in 2012 and expanded nationwide from 2015, MAMPU operationalizes Australia's gender diplomacy by working through Indonesian civil society, advocacy networks, and local governments. The program focuses on five priority areas—social protection, labor rights, migrant workers' welfare, women's health, and the reduction of gender-based violence (MAMPU, 2019b). Rather than acting as a conventional aid project, MAMPU serves as a *norm translation mechanism*, aligning with Acharya's (2004) theory of norm localization, in which global principles are reinterpreted through local socio-political contexts. By engaging actors such as the Parepare City Government and local partners like BaKTI, YLP2EM, and YKS, MAMPU exemplifies how international cooperation can foster bottom-up institutional change, transforming abstract gender norms into actionable policies within Indonesia's decentralized governance landscape.

Taken together, Australia's gender aid policy demonstrates how foreign assistance can function not merely as economic aid but as a vehicle of normative diffusion. The transformation from welfare-based programs to empowerment-oriented and diplomatically framed strategies shows that Australia has institutionalized gender equality as both a development goal and a foreign policy identity. Through the MAMPU program, Australia operationalizes this vision by fostering local ownership of global gender norms, enabling Indonesian partners—governmental and civil society alike—to reinterpret and embed them within their governance systems. In theoretical terms, Australia acts as a norm entrepreneur, initiating the diffusion of global gender standards, while Indonesia—through programs like MAMPU—engages in the localization process that contextualizes those norms within national and municipal structures. This partnership model underscores that the effectiveness of global gender diplomacy depends

on mutual adaptation: norms achieve sustainability only when they are co-created, not imposed, within local socio-political realities.

### Indonesia–Australia’s MAMPU Program Partnership: The Parepare City Case Study

The *Maju Perempuan Indonesia untuk Penanggulangan Kemiskinan* (MAMPU) program, funded by the Australian Government, represents one of the primary instruments through which Australia promotes gender equality norms and women’s empowerment in Indonesia. The program aims to influence government policies, regulations, and public services through partnerships with local governments and civil society organizations across the country (MAMPU, 2019a). The partnership reflects Australia’s broader gender diplomacy, combining development aid with normative advocacy for inclusive governance.

At the national level, the MAMPU program was implemented through Indonesia’s *Partnership for Governance Reform* (*Kemitraan Pembaruan Tata Pemerintahan*)—a multi-stakeholder platform established in 2001 to strengthen collaboration between the government and civil society in promoting transparency, accountability, and gender equality (Azizah, 2023b). The Partnership serves as an institutional bridge linking reform initiatives with donor support. Within this structure, the Directorate of State Apparatus of Bappenas acts as the Executing Agency, while Australia provides funding and technical assistance. Toward the end of 2012, Australia and Indonesia—through Bappenas—formally launched MAMPU to combat gender-based poverty by improving access to essential services for women and strengthening local governance mechanisms (Azizah, 2023b).

The collaboration reached the local level in 2015, when the Parepare City Government entered a formal partnership with *BaKTI Foundation* (Bursa Pengetahuan Kawasan Timur Indonesia) as MAMPU’s local partner, alongside its sub-partners *YLP2EM Parepare* (*Yayasan Lembaga Pengkajian Pengembangan Ekonomi dan Masyarakat*) and *YKS* (*Yayasan Keluarga Sejahtera*). In the same year, Parepare was designated as one of four pilot cities for the implementation of MAMPU’s initiatives (Berita Kota Makassar, 2015). One of the key thematic areas targeted in Parepare was the reduction of violence against women. To achieve this, BaKTI and its sub-partners introduced an innovative participatory model known as Participatory Recess, which enabled MAMPU partners to promote, draft, and monitor gender-responsive legislation by engaging directly with parliament members, local governments, and media actors (MAMPU, 2019b).

Before MAMPU’s involvement, Parepare lacked legal instruments specifically regulating women’s and children’s protection. Based on MAMPU’s official documentation, the presence of program partners successfully encouraged the drafting and ratification of Regional Regulation (*Perda*) No. 12 of 2015 on the Protection of Women and Children—a milestone that marked the city’s first comprehensive legal framework on gender protection (MAMPU, 2020). This achievement signifies the tangible localization of international gender norms into municipal legislation. Subsequent years witnessed the issuance of additional regulations and mayoral decrees expanding the agenda of gender equality and women’s empowerment, notably between 2016 and 2022.

Moreover, prior to 2015, the Parepare City Government had allocated only minimal budgetary resources for women’s empowerment programs, indicating that gender issues were not yet institutional priorities. According to MAMPU’s internal report (MAMPU, 2018), the funding allocation for gender programs between 2014–2016 remained far below other development sectors. This underinvestment reveals a lack of political will and illustrates how budgetary politics reflect policy priorities at the local level.

MAMPU's intervention—by introducing gender-responsive budgeting and participatory planning—helped transform this condition.

A major policy innovation resulting from the program's influence is the establishment of *Musrenbang Perempuan* (Women's Development Planning Forum) and *Musrenbang Anak* (Children's Development Planning Forum), first implemented by the Parepare City Regional Development Planning Agency (*Bappeda*) in 2017 (MAMPU, 2017). These participatory forums created institutional spaces for women and children to articulate their needs and policy preferences directly in development planning—a process previously dominated by male elites and administrative technocrats. The initiative is legally grounded in Article 10(c) of Regional Regulation No. 12/2015, which mandates pre-Musrenbang sessions for women and children as a prerequisite to formal municipal planning.

The development of gender-responsive regulations in Parepare can be summarized as follows:

**Table 1. Parepare City Government Policy on Gender Equality**

Year	Parepare City Government Policy on Gender Equality
Before 2015	No legal framework on women's or children's protection
2015	Regional Regulation No. 12/2015 on the Protection of Women and Children Regional Regulation No. 5/2015 on Gender Mainstreaming in Regional Development
2016 – 2022	Series of mayoral decrees and follow-up regulations reinforcing gender empowerment, participatory planning, and women's leadership initiatives

**Source: Processed from secondary data (MAMPU 2017; 2018; 2020).**

The data reveal a significant escalation in gender-related policymaking following MAMPU's involvement. The enactment of Regional Regulation No. 12/2015 not only institutionalized women's protection but also served as a normative catalyst for subsequent legal and policy reforms. Through these changes, Parepare transitioned from having no formal gender governance instruments to becoming one of the pioneering local governments in Indonesia with a structured framework for gender equality and protection.

Viewed through Acharya's (2004) norm localization lens, the case of Parepare illustrates how transnational gender norms—initially introduced through international cooperation—were not simply adopted wholesale but actively reinterpreted and integrated into the local political and bureaucratic system. Local actors such as BaKTI, YLP2EM, and Bappeda served as mediators who translated the abstract principles of gender equality into context-sensitive regulatory and participatory mechanisms. The process thus demonstrates that localization is not a passive transfer but an active adaptation, whereby global gender norms acquire legitimacy and sustainability through their alignment with local values, institutions, and development priorities.

The findings indicate that the MAMPU program became a crucial turning point in the transformation of Parepare City's gender governance. Before the program's presence, the city had no legal framework or policy instruments addressing women's and children's protection, and the issue of gender equality was not a government priority. The introduction of MAMPU—funded by Australia and implemented in collaboration with BaKTI, YLP2EM, and YKS—initiated a series of significant institutional changes. The program encouraged the drafting and ratification of Regional Regulation No. 12 of 2015 on the Protection of Women and Children and Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2015 on Gender Mainstreaming



in Regional Development, which together established the legal foundation for gender-responsive governance in Parepare.

Following these milestones, gender-oriented initiatives expanded rapidly. The local government began allocating greater funding for women's empowerment programs and developed participatory mechanisms such as *Musrenbang Perempuan* (Women's Development Forum) and *Musrenbang Anak* (Children's Development Forum), which gave women and children a formal role in development planning. These innovations show that the MAMPU program did not merely provide technical assistance but successfully inspired a new policy culture—one that integrates gender equality into the city's broader development vision. In essence, MAMPU served as a catalyst for local institutional reform, translating international gender norms into concrete and context-sensitive local practices.

From the data, several clear patterns and tendencies emerge that illustrate the process of norm localization in Parepare City: First, there is a pattern of institutional transformation. The absence of gender-related laws before 2015 was replaced by the creation of a comprehensive regulatory framework within a few years. The enactment of Regional Regulation No. 12/2015 and No. 5/2015 marked a fundamental shift from informal advocacy to legally binding instruments. This suggests that external cooperation through MAMPU accelerated the institutionalization of global gender norms at the local level. Second, the data show a pattern of policy innovation through participation. Initiatives such as *Musrenbang Perempuan* and *Musrenbang Anak* demonstrate that Parepare's local government moved beyond regulatory compliance toward participatory governance. Women and children, previously excluded from planning processes, gained legitimate platforms to express aspirations and influence local decision-making. This reflects the adaptation of gender equality norms into the democratic mechanisms of local development. Third, there is a progressive alignment between funding priorities and gender agendas. Before MAMPU, the allocation for women's empowerment programs was minimal. However, after the program's implementation, budget priorities gradually shifted to support gender-responsive initiatives. This shows that norm internalization is not limited to rhetoric but is reflected in concrete fiscal and administrative commitments. Fourth, the data reveal a synergistic interaction between local and transnational actors. The collaboration among the Parepare City Government, BaKTI, YLP2EM, and the Australian government illustrates that successful localization depends on multi-actor cooperation. Local NGOs acted as mediators translating global concepts into culturally and institutionally relevant policies, while the donor provided resources and normative frameworks.

Taken together, these patterns indicate that the Parepare case exemplifies a successful process of norm localization. Global gender equality principles introduced through MAMPU were not merely adopted passively but reinterpreted and institutionalized within the city's governance structure. The transformation of Parepare—from a city without gender policy to one with progressive legal and participatory frameworks—demonstrates that effective localization occurs when international norms resonate with local needs, are mediated by active local actors, and supported by consistent institutional reform.

### **The Parepare City Government's Response to Gender Equality Norms—Institutionalizing Change through Local Governance**

The engagement of the Parepare City Government in adopting gender equality norms, particularly through the *Maju Perempuan Indonesia untuk Penanggulangan Kemiskinan* (MAMPU) program, demonstrates a sustained and proactive commitment to localizing and institutionalizing gender equality within its governance system. This responsiveness materialized through intensive collaboration with

MAMPU's regional partners—BaKTI, YLP2EM, and YKS—which played pivotal roles as advocacy intermediaries. Between 2015 and 2017, these partners organized 12 multi-stakeholder workshops, six public consultations, and five focus group discussions involving over 250 participants, including local parliament members, civil servants, women's groups, and media representatives (Bursa Pengetahuan Kawasan Timur Indonesia (BaKTI), 2016; Palulungan et al., 2016). These forums enabled participatory dialogue, evidence sharing, and consensus building that directly informed local policymaking, particularly the drafting of Regional Regulation No. 12/2015 on the Protection of Women and Children.

One of the most tangible outcomes of this collaboration was BaKTI's year-long leadership and gender-responsive budgeting initiative, which strengthened the capacity of 45 DPRD members and 80 NGO representatives in integrating gender considerations into planning and fiscal processes. The initiative, later endorsed by AusAID (Australian Agency for International Development), led to the inclusion of gender-responsive budget lines in Parepare's 2015 Regional Budget (*APBD*) and subsequent development plans. These achievements aligned with MAMPU's objective to enhance women's political participation and ensure that local policies became both pro-poor and gender-sensitive. Moreover, the establishment of Musrenbang Perempuan and Musrenbang Anak under Regional Regulation No. 12/2015 marked a historic turning point in the city's planning system—transforming women's roles from passive participants into active subjects of development discourse. This participatory approach has since become a replicable model for inclusive local governance across other districts in South Sulawesi.

The collaboration also produced lasting structural and procedural changes. Through training sessions on Gender-Responsive Planning and Budgeting (PPRG) in 2017–2018, attended by 97 subdistrict and village officials, Parepare integrated gender perspectives across all administrative levels. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, MAMPU partners and the city government continued to promote gender awareness through five virtual campaigns and two hybrid workshops on handling gender-based violence (Bursa Pengetahuan Kawasan Timur Indonesia (BaKTI), 2020b, 2020a). The Regional Development Planning Agency (*Bappeda*) institutionalized these efforts through annual *pre-Musrenbang* events focusing on women and children, ensuring that gender issues remain embedded within the city's planning cycle. The continuity of such programs demonstrates not only Parepare's resilience but also the institutional maturity of its gender governance model.

**Table 2. Key Milestones in the Collaboration between the Parepare City Government and MAMPU Partners (2015–2020)**

Period	Key Activities / Interventions	Impact and Outcomes
2015	12 advocacy workshops and 6 public consultations facilitated by BaKTI and YLP2EM.	Enhanced stakeholder awareness and inclusion of gender perspectives in policy drafting.
2015	Formulation and enactment of <i>Regional Regulation No. 12/2015 on the Protection of Women and Children</i> and <i>Mayor Regulation No. 12/2015</i> .	Established formal legal protection and institutionalized gender equality norms.
2015	Gender-Responsive Budgeting Initiative (BaKTI) involving 45 DPRD members and 80 NGO leaders.	Strengthened capacity for gender-sensitive planning and budget tagging in local development.
2016–2017	Implementation of <i>Musrenbang Perempuan</i> and <i>Musrenbang Anak</i> .	First inclusion of women and children as decision-making subjects in local development planning.

2017– 2018	97 subdistrict/village officials trained on Gender-Responsive Planning and Budgeting (PPRG).	Mainstreamed gender equality into the city's administrative and fiscal systems.
2020	5 online campaigns and 2 workshops on gender-based violence during COVID-19.	Sustained gender advocacy and adaptive governance amidst social restrictions.

**Source: Processed by author from BaKTI (2016–2020) and MAMPU (2017)**

These data confirm that the partnership between MAMPU's local actors and the Parepare City Government went beyond symbolic advocacy—it represented a functional process of norm localization. Through continuous dialogue, training, and participatory design, global gender equality principles were translated into locally owned regulations, budgeting frameworks, and participatory mechanisms. The effectiveness of this collaboration stemmed from the two-way communication between MAMPU partners and government agencies, which ensured that advocacy messages were aligned with existing administrative systems, thus facilitating both political acceptance and sustainable implementation. This case exemplifies how local ownership, iterative learning, and institutional collaboration can transform externally introduced norms into enduring practices of gender-responsive governance at the municipal level.

The experience of Parepare underscores the pivotal role of local partners—BaKTI, YLP2EM, and YKS—as bridging actors in translating global gender equality discourses into contextually grounded practices of governance. Their sustained engagement transformed what began as donor-driven advocacy into an iterative process of co-creation, where local knowledge and administrative capacity mutually reinforced one another. The most effective approach among these interactions proved to be the participatory planning model, particularly through *Musrenbang Perempuan* and *Musrenbang Anak*, which institutionalized gender dialogue within the city's annual development cycle rather than confining it to isolated workshops. This format enabled local women leaders, civil servants, and civil society representatives to negotiate priorities directly within policy formulation forums, ensuring that gender perspectives were not external inputs but embedded components of decision-making.

The effectiveness of this collaboration stems from three interlinked mechanisms. First, continuous two-way communication between MAMPU partners and municipal institutions allowed advocacy to align seamlessly with bureaucratic processes, facilitating policy uptake. Second, the credibility and long-term presence of local partners built trust and legitimacy, encouraging local officials to perceive gender mainstreaming not as donor conditionality but as an instrument of good governance. Third, the collaborative monitoring structure—jointly managed by BaKTI and Bappeda—created an accountability loop that ensured follow-through from planning to implementation. These dynamics illustrate that the localization of gender norms in Parepare succeeded not merely because of external support, but because local actors internalized and operationalized those norms through sustained negotiation, institutional adaptation, and participatory learning.

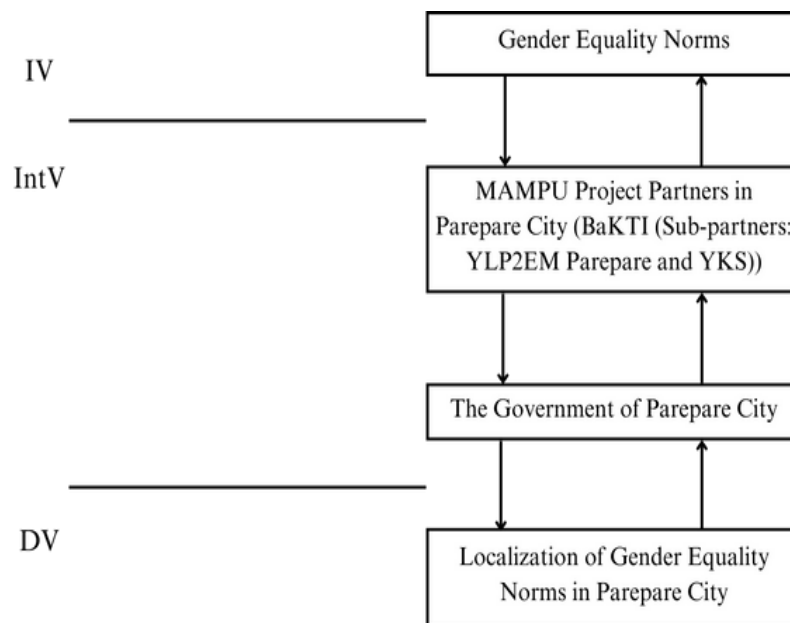
### **The Challenges and Dynamics of Localizing Gender Equality Norms in Parepare City**

The implementation of gender equality norms in Parepare reflects both the progress and the complexity of translating global commitments into local governance frameworks. The enactment of Regional Regulation No. 12 of 2015 on the Protection of Women and Children was a milestone in integrating gender justice into the municipal legal system. The regulation introduced comprehensive

measures—legal assistance, psychosocial support, counseling, and economic empowerment—to prevent and address gender-based violence (GBV). However, statistical data between 2014 and 2021 indicate that reported cases of sexual and domestic violence remained high despite these regulatory advancements. This trend reveals that while institutional frameworks have improved, their practical enforcement and cross-agency coordination still face significant obstacles.

A central limitation of the policy's effectiveness lies in the absence of clear technical guidelines and operational standards. The regulation was not immediately followed by mayoral decrees or detailed standard operating procedures (SOPs) that would specify referral mechanisms, case-handling pathways, or responsibilities across agencies. As Ridwan (Ridwan, 2022) observes, this gap weakened enforcement and created inconsistent service delivery among local institutions. To respond, the Department of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (DP3A) initiated awareness campaigns, legal clinics, and survivor assistance programs. Yet, these initiatives often relied on short-term projects rather than institutionalized funding, leading to fragmented service delivery. The Parepare experience underscores a recurring lesson in gender governance: norm adoption without administrative translation leads to limited social transformation.

The process of norm localization became more structured through the involvement of MAMPU program partners—BaKTI, YLP2EM, and YKS—who acted as *norm entrepreneurs* bridging global frameworks and local realities. Beginning in 2015, these partners conducted 12 multi-stakeholder workshops, six public consultations, and five focus group discussions, engaging over 250 participants from the city council, women's organizations, police, and media (Bursa Pengetahuan Kawasan Timur Indonesia (BaKTI), 2016). Their advocacy focused on improving complaint mechanisms for GBV survivors and aligning them with the forthcoming local regulation. Notably, YLP2EM's policy dialogues on women's access to justice directly influenced the drafting of *Regional Regulation No. 12/2015* by Commission II of the City Council (DPRD). Unlike many replication-based policies, the Parepare regulation was context-specific, integrating local social norms, Islamic ethical values, and bureaucratic realities. This participatory and grounded approach enabled genuine ownership among policymakers and civil society.



**Figure 2. Parepare City Government's Response to Gender Equality Norms through the MAMPU Program**

**Source: Processed by author from BaKTI 2016–2020; MAMPU 2017.**

The collaboration between MAMPU partners and municipal agencies thus evolved into a multi-level localization process. The partnership produced tangible outputs: gender-responsive budgeting integrated into the 2015 Regional Budget (APBD), formation of Musrenbang Perempuan and Musrenbang Anak (women's and children's development planning forums), and capacity-building workshops for 97 subdistrict and village leaders on Gender-Responsive Planning and Budgeting (PPRG). During the COVID-19 pandemic, these networks remained active through five online campaigns and two hybrid workshops on gender-based violence prevention (Bursa Pengetahuan Kawasan Timur Indonesia (BaKTI), 2020a, 2020b). The continuation of such initiatives demonstrated not only the adaptability of Parepare's institutions but also the institutional maturity of its gender governance ecosystem.

From a theoretical standpoint, Parepare's experience resonates with Acharya's (2004) norm localization framework: international gender norms gained local legitimacy when adapted through credible intermediaries and embedded within existing policy structures. The city government's active involvement—rather than passive compliance—was driven by three interlinked mechanisms. First, two-way communication between MAMPU partners and government agencies ensured that advocacy aligned with bureaucratic logic and local political interests. Second, the credibility and sustained presence of local partners fostered trust, reframing gender equality from a donor agenda into a symbol of effective governance. Third, collaborative monitoring mechanisms between BaKTI and Bappeda created a feedback loop connecting planning, budgeting, and implementation. These mechanisms collectively demonstrate that the success of gender-norm localization in Parepare is rooted in co-creation, contextual adaptation, and iterative learning, not in mere policy transfer.

Ultimately, Parepare City stands as an illustrative case of subnational gender governance reform—one that translates global ideals into operational change. While challenges remain in harmonizing inter-agency coordination and ensuring sustained funding, the city's approach reveals a pathway toward

durable transformation: localized ownership, credible partnerships, and institutional embedding. The Parepare experience shows that gender equality norms can thrive when they are translated into everyday administrative routines, supported by communities, and continuously refined through reflective governance.

## Discussion

This study finds that the mainstreaming of gender equality norms in Parepare unfolded through three interconnected layers of transformation—policy, institutional, and social. At the policy level, the Indonesia–Australia cooperation through the *Maju Perempuan Indonesia untuk Penanggulangan Kemiskinan (MAMPU)* program catalyzed the drafting of two key legal instruments that had not existed before: *Regional Regulation No. 12/2015* on the Protection of Women and Children and *Regional Regulation No. 5/2015* on Gender Mainstreaming in Regional Development. At the institutional level, the city government expanded its functional and administrative capacity by strengthening the Women’s and Children’s Protection Agency (DP3A), establishing *Musrenbang Perempuan* (Women’s Development Planning Forum) and *Musrenbang Anak* (Children’s Forum), and improving coordination among diverse stakeholders—municipal agencies, civil society groups, police, and media. At the social level, increased reporting of violence cases and broader citizen participation indicate higher awareness, public trust, and access to protection mechanisms. Taken together, these transformations demonstrate that Parepare has successfully localized global gender norms into its municipal governance system. The process mirrors Acharya’s (2004) concept of norm localization, whereby transnational principles are translated, negotiated, and institutionalized within local contexts.

Several interrelated mechanisms explain why these changes occurred and endured. First, normative resonance: the existence of a legal and moral bridge between global gender norms (CEDAW, anti-GBV principles) and the national framework—particularly *Presidential Instruction No. 9/2000* on Gender Mainstreaming—facilitated local adaptation by providing legitimacy and policy continuity. Second, credible intermediaries, including BaKTI, YLP2EM, and YKS, acted as *norm entrepreneurs* who translated abstract gender equality ideas into actionable policies. Through advocacy forums, participatory recess sessions, and technical consultations, they ensured that gender discourse was anchored in local realities. Third, legitimacy incentives motivated local authorities: aligning with global and national norms enhanced political credibility, strengthened accountability, and improved Parepare’s development reputation. Fourth, the political economy of budgeting proved decisive. Fiscal re-prioritization following MAMPU’s introduction demonstrated that the adoption of norms was accompanied by tangible commitments—gender-responsive budgeting lines, institutional training, and administrative reforms—preventing the agenda from remaining merely symbolic. In essence, Parepare’s transformation shows that global norms gain sustainability when they are co-created through iterative negotiation between donors, intermediaries, and local governments, rather than externally imposed.

These findings both confirm and extend prior research on gender governance in Indonesia. Studies by Putri (2019) and Silaban (2017) highlighted that MAMPU partnerships improved women’s access to public services and organizational empowerment but produced limited measurable impact on reducing gender-based violence. The Parepare case supports this pattern: institutional frameworks have strengthened, yet higher reporting rates of violence likely reflect improved awareness rather than a deterioration of conditions. Unlike previous analyses that emphasized national-level policy coherence (Anggana et al., 2022), who viewed MAMPU through liberal-feminist theory) or performance evaluations of local NGOs (Nasira, 2017), this study contributes a new dimension by unpacking the mechanisms of

norm localization at the municipal level. It shows how global gender norms are internalized—through regulatory innovation, participatory planning, fiscal reform, and continuous learning—creating a durable architecture of gender-responsive governance. The novelty lies in demonstrating that effective localization occurs when local actors act as equal co-producers of global norms, embedding them into daily bureaucratic practice. Parepare thus serves as an empirical model of subnational norm localization, linking global diplomacy with local governance reform.

Historically, the case of Parepare marks a turning point in Indonesia's local governance reform, signaling a shift from a welfare-oriented approach to women's issues toward a rights-based and participatory model of gender governance. This transformation began in 2015—initially as a pilot initiative under the MAMPU program—when post-Reformasi decentralization opened institutional space for municipal governments to experiment with gender-responsive innovations. The issuance of *Regional Regulation No. 12/2015 on the Protection of Women and Children* and *Regional Regulation No. 5/2015 on Gender Mainstreaming* reflects the institutional embedding of gender equality within the local legal framework, moving beyond symbolic rhetoric toward enforceable governance reform. Similar to post-conflict Kosovo and South Africa, where gender-responsive governance was used to legitimize democratic transformation (Beall, 2005; Holzner, 2021), Parepare illustrates how decentralization can foster local ownership of global gender norms within a rights-based governance paradigm.

Socially, the growing number of gender-based violence (GBV) reports in Parepare should not be viewed merely as evidence of rising incidents but as an indicator of shifting social consciousness. Improved reporting channels, survivor-centered services, and the introduction of *Musrenbang Perempuan* and *Musrenbang Anak* demonstrate that gender-responsive governance can reconfigure social norms—transforming private experiences of violence and discrimination into legitimate public issues under state responsibility. This pattern parallels global findings that gender-responsive reforms often catalyze social change by normalizing women's participation in governance and strengthening institutional trust (Lingam et al., 2024; Morgan et al., 2024). The inclusion of women as active participants in development planning moves them from the margins of consultation to the center of decision-making, echoing evidence from gender-responsive budgeting initiatives worldwide that link fiscal inclusion with broader empowerment (Pastore & Tommaso, 2020; Simčić & Vašiček, 2023). In this sense, Parepare's transformation represents a localized manifestation of gender-responsive social change—where awareness, participation, and institutional access reinforce one another to produce enduring behavioral and cultural shifts.

Ideologically, the Parepare case exemplifies the hybridization of global and local values through norm localization (Acharya, 2004). International gender equality principles—rooted in human rights discourses—were selectively adapted into the language of local development, budgeting, and performance accountability. The city's use of gender mainstreaming as a moral and administrative value shows that global norms acquire legitimacy when translated into culturally resonant idioms and institutional routines. Similar hybridization processes have been observed in Turkey, India, and Tanzania, where gender equality norms were localized through negotiation between external frameworks and indigenous ethics (Eaton et al., 2021; Klossek & Johansson-Nogués, 2021; Tabak et al., 2022). In Parepare, this ideological synthesis turns compliance into conviction: gender equality is no longer perceived as a donor-driven agenda but as an intrinsic element of good governance and public accountability. The city thus demonstrates how selective adaptation—rather than wholesale adoption—can sustain the legitimacy and longevity of global norms in local governance contexts.

The functional dimension of Parepare's gender governance reform demonstrates that the city's initiatives have generated tangible institutional, procedural, and social outcomes. The enactment of

*Regional Regulation No. 12/2015 on the Protection of Women and Children* and *Regional Regulation No. 5/2015 on Gender Mainstreaming* established a clear legal foundation for integrating gender equality across municipal governance structures. These legal frameworks were complemented by the expansion of institutional mechanisms such as the Women's and Children's Protection Agency and the creation of participatory platforms like *Musrenbang Perempuan* and *Musrenbang Anak*. Together, these measures produced a more inclusive policy infrastructure, enabling women and children to engage directly in decision-making processes that were previously dominated by bureaucratic and male-centered actors. Furthermore, the steady increase in reported cases of gender-based violence—rather than reflecting a worsening condition—suggests growing public confidence in government services and greater awareness of available protection channels. These developments collectively signify that Parepare's gender agenda has evolved beyond symbolic commitments into a functioning and participatory governance practice, reinforcing the city's reputation as a subnational model of gender-responsive reform.

However, the study also reveals enduring dysfunctions and limitations that constrain the sustainability of these achievements. Despite a progressive regulatory framework, an implementation gap persists between policy design and practical enforcement—a pattern consistent with global gender governance experiences. As observed in the Western Balkans and Argentina, well-crafted gender policies often falter in execution due to weak accountability systems, bureaucratic inertia, and resistance to cultural change (Page-Poma & Duarte, 2025; Spehar, 2018). Parepare faces similar challenges: service provision across legal, medical, and psychosocial sectors remains fragmented, while coordination and referral systems lack full integration. The absence of standardized operational procedures and monitoring mechanisms reduces institutional consistency and limits the city's capacity to provide holistic support for survivors.

Economic and institutional constraints further deepen this implementation gap. The city's partial dependence on external funding—particularly from the MAMPU program—raises concerns about post-project sustainability, mirroring experiences from other developing regions where donor exit leads to program stagnation (Addabbo et al., 2020). In addition, performance evaluation remains dominated by output-oriented indicators, such as the number of trainings or documents produced, rather than outcome-based measures like survivor recovery, reduction in revictimization, or community resilience. This reflects a broader critique in European Union gender policy research, where symbolic compliance often masks limited structural transformation (Jacquot, 2024). Moreover, inconsistencies in gender-related data—stemming from underreporting, lack of disaggregation, and uneven documentation—undermine evidence-based policymaking, echoing findings from African contexts emphasizing how cultural and legal asymmetries shape policy effectiveness (Raimi & Phiri, 2024).

Overall, the Parepare experience encapsulates both the promise and fragility of localized gender governance. Its success lies in the establishment of a robust legal and participatory foundation, yet its vulnerability persists in the uneven translation of policy into sustainable institutional practice. Closing these gaps will require not only coherent regulatory frameworks but also sustained political will, intersectoral collaboration, and a shift toward autonomous, data-driven, and outcome-oriented gender governance systems.

To address the identified dysfunctions and accelerate substantive impact, a comprehensive policy action plan is required to bridge the gender policy implementation gap in Parepare. The first priority is the consolidation of regulations and inter-sectoral standard operating procedures (SOPs) through the issuance of an integrated mayoral decree that harmonizes local regulations with national standards on gender mainstreaming and survivor services, ensuring a clear and efficient referral pathway across police,



DP3A, health offices, shelters, and legal aid providers. The second step involves strengthening institutional capacity and integrated service delivery by operationalizing a one-stop service center equipped with 24/7 access, trauma-informed protocols, legal and psychosocial assistance, and safe housing, supported by regular capacity-building programs for police officers, health workers, social workers, and village officials. The third measure focuses on gender-responsive budgeting and performance accountability, embedding gender indicators and budget tagging across local government agencies, linking them to measurable outcomes such as case-resolution time, survivor satisfaction, and reduction in revictimization rates. Furthermore, community-based prevention and social norm transformation should be advanced through collaborative education programs, engagement of male allies, and the integration of gender literacy, digital safety, and anti-bullying curricula in schools. Equally essential is the establishment of a city-wide data integration and monitoring system, featuring disaggregated databases, periodic public dashboards, and independent data audits to support evidence-based evaluation. Finally, to ensure sustainability beyond donor cycles, Parepare must develop a post-donor transition framework, including multi-year budgeting, institutionalized partnerships, and local knowledge management platforms in collaboration with universities and civil society organizations. Through these measures, the city can transform its regulatory achievements into measurable social outcomes—ensuring that gender norm localization not only endures institutionally but also drives lasting behavioral change, reduces gender-based violence, and strengthens survivor recovery systems in a sustainable manner.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the mainstreaming of gender equality norms in Parepare City has evolved through a dynamic and multi-layered process of localization, driven by interactions among global frameworks, national mandates, and local actors. The collaboration between Indonesia and Australia through the MAMPU program successfully translated international gender equality principles into concrete local policies and institutional structures. This transformation unfolded across three dimensions: (1) the policy level, with the enactment of *Regional Regulation No. 12/2015 on the Protection of Women and Children* and *Regional Regulation No. 5/2015 on Gender Mainstreaming*; (2) the institutional level, with the expansion of gender-responsive bodies, participatory planning forums, and inter-agency coordination mechanisms; and (3) the social level, characterized by rising public awareness and citizen engagement in addressing gender-based violence. Collectively, these findings confirm that global gender norms can be effectively localized when supported by credible intermediaries, enabling institutions, and strong normative resonance with existing national frameworks. This collaborative framework demonstrates how bilateral partnerships can act as vehicles for norm diffusion and institutional innovation in decentralized governance contexts.

Scientifically, the research contributes to the discourse on norm localization and gender governance by offering an empirical case that illustrates how transnational norms are adapted, institutionalized, and sustained at the municipal level. It refines Acharya's (2004) framework by empirically demonstrating the co-production of policies, participatory innovations, and bureaucratic adaptation—showing that localization is an active, negotiated process of ideological hybridization rather than a passive policy transfer. Furthermore, this study provides conceptual and practical insights into how local governments can internalize global norms through rights-based governance, gender-responsive budgeting, and multi-actor collaboration.

Nevertheless, the research acknowledges several limitations. Relying primarily on secondary data constrains the ability to capture the lived experiences of beneficiaries and to assess behavioral outcomes.

While institutional reforms and regulatory progress in Parepare are evident, the study does not quantitatively measure their long-term effects on reducing gender-based violence or shifting patriarchal structures. Future research should adopt mixed-method approaches—combining policy analysis, community surveys, and participatory evaluation—to examine the sustainability of gender-norm localization and its social impacts across diverse localities in Indonesia. Such studies would deepen understanding of how global gender equality frameworks influence not only governance systems but also everyday gender relations within society.

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