

Women's Autonomy and Decision-making Power through Sustainable Food Gardens: A Gender Analysis of an Urban Community in Indonesia

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Abstract: The Sustainable Food Garden Program (P2L) is a government initiative aimed at strengthening household food systems through community-based gardening involving both women and men. This study examines how participation in P2L affects women's autonomy and decision-making within households, particularly in the context of gender relations. Using qualitative methods, data were collected through interviews and observations with members of Women Farmers Groups (KWT) Srikandi Mrican, Depok, Sleman, Yogyakarta, and male participants. The Harvard Gender Analysis Framework was applied to assess roles, access to resources, control, and participation factors. Results show that women's domestic roles allow flexible involvement, while men handle more physically demanding tasks. Overall, P2L fosters a supportive social environment that enhances women's empowerment, independence, and household influence.

Keywords: community empowerment; gender relations; *Kelompok Wanita Tani*; women's autonomy

Abstrak: Program Pekarangan Pangan Lestari (P2L) adalah inisiatif pemerintah yang bertujuan untuk memperkuat sistem pangan rumah tangga melalui kegiatan berkebun berbasis komunitas yang melibatkan baik perempuan maupun laki-laki. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana partisipasi dalam P2L memengaruhi otonomi dan pengambilan keputusan perempuan di dalam rumah tangga, khususnya dalam konteks hubungan gender. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara dan observasi terhadap anggota Kelompok Wanita Tani (KWT) Srikandi Mrican, Depok, Sleman, Yogyakarta serta peserta laki-laki. Kerangka Analisis Gender Harvard diterapkan untuk menilai peran, akses terhadap sumber daya, kontrol, dan faktor partisipasi. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa peran domestik perempuan memungkinkan keterlibatan yang fleksibel, sementara laki-laki menangani tugas-tugas yang lebih berat secara fisik. Secara keseluruhan, P2L menumbuhkan lingkungan sosial yang mendukung yang meningkatkan pemberdayaan, kemandirian, dan pengaruh perempuan dalam rumah tangga.

Kata Kunci: pemberdayaan masyarakat; hubungan gender; *Kelompok Wanita Tani*; otonomi perempuan

A. Introduction

Agriculture plays a vital role in urban societies, particularly as rapid population growth increases pressure on food availability. Although urbanization has contributed to improvements in public infrastructure, it has simultaneously accelerated the conversion of green spaces into industrial and residential areas.¹ This transformation has reduced opportunities for urban agriculture and weakened public awareness of local food production systems.² As green spaces diminish, urban residents increasingly become detached from processes of food production, distribution, and environmental sustainability, raising concerns about long-term food security and resource management.

In response to these urban agriculture challenges, governments have introduced various policy initiatives to optimize limited land use and strengthen household-level food systems. To address these issues, the Indonesian government has implemented several programs focused on household food production.³ One such program is the Sustainable Food Garden Program (Pekarangan Pangan Lestari/P2L), which encourages communities to utilize home gardens to support household food security. Within this program, Women Farmers Groups (Kelompok Wanita Tani/KWT) served as the main participants and strategically used limited spaces around their homes by planting in pots, polybags, and vertical planting systems. These practices contributed not only to food production but also to urban greening, reflecting a localized approach to improving food security.⁴

The P2L program evolved from the earlier Sustainable Food Home Area (Kawasan Rumah Pangan Lestari/KRPL) initiative. Previous studies have identified gender-related challenges in KRPL implementation, particularly

¹ Fitri Nur Solihah, "Dampak Urbanisasi pada Lahan Pertanian: Analisis Spasial di Kecamatan Godean dan Mlati Kabupaten Sleman," *Widya Bhumi* 4, no. 1 (2024): 55–69, <https://doi.org/10.31292/wb.v4i1.97>.

² I Made Yoga Prasada and Tia Alfina Rosa, "Dampak Alih Fungsi Lahan Sawah terhadap Ketahanan Pangan di Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta," *Jurnal Sosial Ekonomi Pertanian* 14, no. 3 (2018): 210–24, <https://doi.org/10.20956/jsep.v14i3.4805>.

³ Nanik Dara Senjawati and Alifah Firda Azizah, "Analisis Ketahanan Pangan Rumah Tangga pada Program Pekarangan Pangan Lestari," *Jurnal Sosial Ekonomi Pertanian* 20, no. 1 (2023): 93–102, <https://doi.org/10.20956/jsep.v20i1.30975>.

⁴ Isti Fajaroh, Eko Murdiyanto, and Budiarto Budiarto, "Pemberdayaan Masyarakat melalui Urban Farming oleh Kelompok Wanita Tani Srikandi Kapanewon Depok Kabupaten Sleman," *Jurnal Dinamika Sosial Ekonomi* 23, no. 1 (2022): 57, <https://doi.org/10.31315/jdse.v23i1.6882>.

concerning the unequal distribution of labor and responsibility within households. Women were often targeted as the primary participants in KRPL programs based on assumptions that they were inherently responsible for domestic food-related tasks. This framing produced a gendered labor burden, as women were expected to manage both household responsibilities and program activities, while men were often marginally involved.⁵ Moreover, because KRPL activities were conducted within the domestic sphere, they were frequently perceived as unproductive, leading to the undervaluation of women's contributions and limited support from male household members.⁶

The transition from KRPL to P2L was not primarily designed to address these gender imbalances. Instead, it aimed to scale up the program and expand its reach across diverse communities. The government repositioned the initiative from a women-centered empowerment model toward broader community participation,⁷ making P2L accessible to both women in KWT and men in farmer groups. While this shift aligns with the principles of inclusive development in the agricultural sector, it also raises critical questions regarding how gender roles are negotiated within households. Given that gender roles are socially and culturally constructed, shaping expectations, responsibilities, and access to power differently for women and men,⁸ examining gender relations within P2L implementation becomes essential.

A gender analysis offers a conceptual lens to understand how development programs affect women and men differently in terms of roles, power relations, and opportunities.⁹ Within this perspective, the Harvard Gender Analysis Framework is widely recognized for its emphasis on activity profiles, access to

⁵ Munari Kustanto, "Domestikasi Berbalut Pemberdayaan Perempuan pada Kegiatan Kawasan Rumah Pangan Lestari (KRPL) di Kabupaten Sidoarjo," *Buana Gender: Jurnal Studi Gender dan Anak* 2, no. 1 (2017): 89–102, <https://doi.org/10.22515/bg.v2i1.666>.

⁶ Audia Rahma and Siti Amanah, "Tingkat Kesetaraan Gender dalam Rumah Tangga Peserta Program Kawasan Rumah Pangan Lestari (KRPL)," *Jurnal Sains Komunikasi dan Pengembangan Masyarakat [JSKPM]* 4, no. 2 (2020): 207–16, <https://doi.org/10.29244/jskpm.4.2.207-216>.

⁷ Badan Ketahanan Pangan, *Petunjuk Teknis Bantuan Pemerintah Kegiatan Pekarangan Pangan Lestari (P2L) Tahun 2021* (Jakarta: Badan Ketahanan Pangan, 2021), 7–9.

⁸ Syaribulan Syaribulan and Nurdin Nurdin, "Geneologi Gender pada Perempuan Pembuat Ikan Kering," *Equilibrium: Jurnal Pendidikan* 3, no. 1 (2017): 96–105, <https://doi.org/10.26618/equilibrium.v3i1.517>.

⁹ Sonya G. Smith and Jeanne C. Sinkford, "Gender Equality in the 21st Century: Overcoming Barriers to Women's Leadership in Global Health," *Journal of Dental Education* 86, no. 9 (2022): 1144–73, <https://doi.org/10.1002/jdd.13059>.

and control over resources, and decision-making structures.¹⁰ Existing studies applying this framework in food security programs have largely concentrated on identifying disparities in workload and access to resources.¹¹ However, less attention has been paid to how such programs may reshape women's capacity to exercise autonomy and influence decision-making within everyday life.

This study addresses that gap by conceptually examining how P2L may create a space for women's autonomy within urban household agriculture. In this context, "space" is understood as a social and relational arena in which women negotiate roles, access resources, and participate in decision-making processes. This space is not viewed as an individual attribute but as a relational form of power shaped by social interactions and institutional arrangements.¹² Autonomy within this space is conceptualized through three interrelated dimensions: autonomy, independence, and self-reliance. Autonomy refers to the ability to make decisions free from coercion; independence denotes the capacity to act without constant dependence on others; and self-reliance reflects confidence in one's own abilities to manage challenges and responsibilities.¹³

By focusing on these dimensions, this research moves beyond descriptive mapping of gender roles to examine how participation in P2L may expand women's decision-making power and agency within the household and community. This analysis is based on the experiences of members of KWT Srikandi Mrican, Depok, Sleman, Yogyakarta, an urban women's farmers' group participating in the P2L program. The study contributes to gender studies and urban agriculture literature by demonstrating how inclusive home garden programs can foster a relational space that supports women's autonomy, while simultaneously challenging traditional assumptions about domestic labor and productivity in urban food systems. See Figure 1.

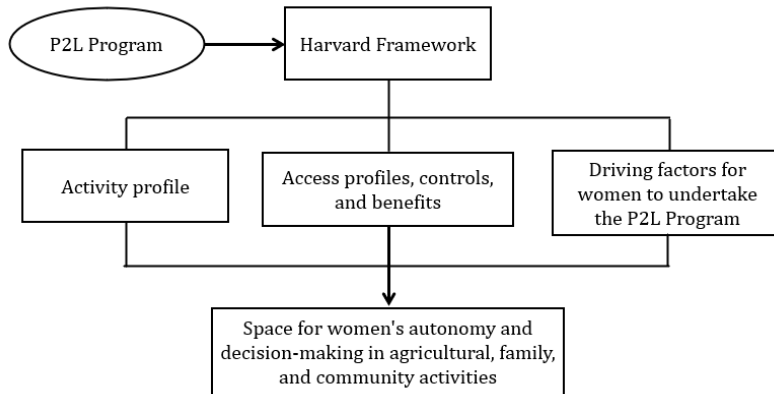
¹⁰ Dimas Erik Sumilat and Ekawati Sri Wahyuni, "Analisis Gender Rumah Tangga Tenaga Kerja Perempuan dalam Sektor Industri Garmen dengan Sistem Putting Out," *Jurnal Sains Komunikasi dan Pengembangan Masyarakat [JSKPM]* 4, no. 2 (2020): 167–80, <https://doi.org/10.29244/jskpm.4.2.167-180>.

¹¹ Ahmad Dedy Syathori, "Peran Perempuan dalam Implementasi Program Kawasan Rumah Pangan Lestari," *Jurnal Penyuluhan Pembangunan* 1, no. 1 (2019): 15–25, <https://doi.org/10.34145/jppm.v1i1.10>.

¹² Marina Korzenevica et al., "Negotiating Spaces of Marginality and Independence: On Women Entrepreneurs within Ethiopian Urbanization and Water Precarity," *World Development* 158 (2022): 105966, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2022.105966>.

¹³ Khoiruddin Bashori, *Psikologi Keluarga Sakinah*, ed. Imron Nasri, vol. I (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2006), 87–131.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework



Note:

→ : Analysis line

B. Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to develop an in-depth understanding of how gender roles and relations are negotiated within the Sustainable Food Garden Program (Pekarangan Pangan Lestari/P2L). A qualitative approach is particularly suitable for exploring social processes, meanings, and power relations as they are experienced in everyday contexts.¹⁴ This approach enables the research to capture participants’ perspectives and lived experiences in actual field conditions.

Data were collected through observations, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs). To enhance trustworthiness, this study applied triangulation by combining multiple data collection methods and sources, including perspectives from different categories of participants (method and source triangulation).¹⁵ This strategy helped validate findings and reduce potential bias arising from reliance on a single data source.

¹⁴ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (New York: SAGE Publications, 2017), 300–342.

¹⁵ John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications Inc, 2024), 145–79.

The informants consisted of one village official, two agricultural extension workers, five women from the Women Farmers Group (Kelompok Wanita Tani/KWT), including both administrators and members, and two male participants involved in P2L-related activities. This composition was selected to capture diverse perspectives across institutional, community, and household levels. The number of informants was considered sufficient to achieve analytical depth, as recurring themes emerged consistently across interviews, indicating data saturation. Primary data were collected through direct interviews and field observations, while secondary data were obtained from official documents related to the P2L program.

Preliminary observations were conducted at the initial stage of the research to understand the local context, activity patterns, and gender dynamics within the KWT. These observations informed the selection of relevant informants and the formulation of interview and FGD guides. Interviews and FGDs focused on participants' views and experiences, particularly on how gender roles are negotiated within household and community contexts in relation to P2L activities.

Gender analysis systematically examines differences in roles, social norms, and power relations between women and men, as well as the opportunities and constraints they face.¹⁶ In this study, the analysis is applied using the Harvard Analytical Framework, also known as the Gender Roles Framework, which provides a structured lens for examining labor division, access to resources, and control over benefits.¹⁷ The framework has been widely applied in agricultural and cross-cultural contexts, including research on the Maya-Mam community in Guatemala¹⁸ and studies on gender roles among cocoa farmers in Southern Ghana,¹⁹ demonstrating its adaptability to diverse local settings.

¹⁶ Smith and Sinkford, "Gender Equality in the 21st Century: Overcoming Barriers to Women's Leadership in Global Health."

¹⁷ Nargiza Ludgate, "Harvard Analytical Framework Nargiza Ludgate Activity Profile Tool (Example)," 2016, 1–3, [https://www.ndi.org/files/Guide to Gender Analysis Frameworks.pdf](https://www.ndi.org/files/Guide%20to%20Gender%20Analysis%20Frameworks.pdf).

¹⁸ Adrienne Wiebe, "Applying the Harvard Gender Analytical Framework: A Case Study from a Guatemalan Maya-Mam Community," *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 22, no. 44 (1997): 147–75, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08263663.1997.10816757>.

¹⁹ Enoch Kwame Tham-Agyekum et al., "Exploring Gender Inequalities and Promoting Equal Opportunities in Ghana's Cocoa Industry Using Harvard Analytical Framework," *International Journal of Humanities Education and Social Sciences (IJHESS)* 3, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.55227/ijhess.v3i2.435>; Margaret Ayerakwa Frimpong et al., "Balancing Gender Dynamics with the Adoption of Sustainable Practices in Ghana's Cocoa Sector," *Food and Humanity* 4 (2025): 100478, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foohum.2024.100478>.

The Harvard Framework consists of three key components: 1) activity profiles that describe tasks performed by women and men; 2) profiles of access to and control over resources and benefits; and 3) factors influencing these patterns, such as cultural norms, time availability, and institutional arrangements. Activity profiles distinguish responsibilities across productive, domestic, and social roles.²⁰

In this research, women's and men's involvement in P2L activities is categorized as productive work. These productive roles are further differentiated into activities directly related to P2L and those associated with other non-agricultural income sources. This distinction enables a clearer analysis of gendered labor division both within the program and in the broader household economy.

The access and control profile examines who is able to use specific resources and who holds decision-making authority over them. Access refers to the ability to utilize resources, while control denotes the power to determine how those resources are managed or distributed.²¹ This distinction is essential for assessing women's autonomy in decision-making processes. The analysis of influencing factors focuses on internal and external motivations shaping women's participation in P2L, including household support, social expectations, and institutional facilitation. These factors provide insight into women's social and emotional independence.

Data analysis was conducted thematically, guided by the three components of the Harvard Framework. Interview and FGD transcripts were coded to identify recurring patterns and themes related to autonomy, independence, and self-reliance. Autonomy is understood as the ability to make self-determined decisions without external coercion; independence refers to functioning without prolonged dependence on others; and self-reliance denotes confidence in one's own capacity to address challenges.²² These concepts were used to assess how

²⁰ Fakra Fajrin Nasta and Indra Aditya, "Analisis Kesetaraan Gender dalam Bangku Legislatif Menilik pada Pengarustamaan Gender (PUG) di Kabupaten Karawang," *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan* 8, no. 19 (2022): 104–17, <https://jurnal.peneliti.net/index.php/JIWP/article/view/2504>; see more Catherine Overholt et al, *Gender Roles in Development Projects: A Case Book* (Colorado: Kumarian Press, 1985).

²¹ Herien Puspitawati, *Gender dan Keluarga: Konsep dan Realita di Indonesia* (Bogor: IPB Press, 2012), 25–38.

²² Bashori, *Psikologi Keluarga Sakinah*, 1:87–131.

participation in the P2L program contributes to women's empowerment and the reconfiguration of gender roles within household and community life.

C. Result and Discussion

The Implementation of P2L Program in KWT Srikandi Mrican

The P2L program implemented by KWT Srikandi Mrican was characterized by high flexibility, allowing households to cultivate plants according to their preferences, spatial constraints, and time availability. This flexibility is particularly significant in relation to gender roles, as women's participation in urban agriculture is often shaped by the need to negotiate domestic responsibilities, income-generating activities, and limited physical space. Households with minimal land adapted the scale and type of cultivation by selecting low-maintenance or air-purifying plants, such as pothos (*Epipremnum aureum*) and spider plants (*Chlorophytum comosum*), which require less intensive care and fit well within constrained urban environments.

Seedling cultivation was centralized in communal plots to meet the collective target of 300 plants, reducing the burden on individual households and mitigating unequal resource constraints. Rather than prioritizing production output alone, the P2L program in KWT Srikandi Mrican emphasized the internalization of agricultural values, including environmental awareness, food responsibility, and sustainability. These values were largely transmitted through women's everyday practices within the household, positioning women not only as food producers but also as key agents of knowledge transfer and environmental education in urban settings. In a densely populated neighborhood where large-scale cultivation was not feasible, small-scale gardening thus served as a means to reintroduce agriculture as a meaningful life skill embedded in daily routines.

This finding aligns with previous studies showing that urban farming strengthens community engagement in food security and sustainability, particularly in space-limited environments.²³ Urban agriculture initiatives have also been found to foster environmental awareness and civic participation.²⁴ In the

²³ Hoi-Fei Mok et al., "Strawberry Fields Forever? Urban Agriculture in Developed Countries: A Review," *Agronomy for Sustainable Development* 34, no. 1 (2014): 21–43, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13593-013-0156-7>.

²⁴ Leonie J. Pearson, Linda Pearson, and Craig J. Pearson, "Sustainable Urban Agriculture: Stocktake and Opportunities," *International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability* 8, no. 1–2 (2010): 7–19, <https://doi.org/10.3763/ijas.2009.0468>.

context of KWT Srikandi Mrican, P2L activities extend beyond food production to serve as grassroots environmental advocacy and community development, with women playing a central role in sustaining these practices under urban constraints.

The P2L Task Division in KWT Srikandi Mrican

Women emerged as the primary drivers of P2L activities in KWT Srikandi Mrican, largely due to their involvement in home-based and informal economic activities, such as laundry services or small food businesses. While this flexibility enabled women to engage actively in P2L, it also reflects a structural condition in which women's work remains closely tied to the domestic sphere. Thus, women's flexible schedules can be understood simultaneously as a form of agency and as a constraint shaped by gendered labor arrangements.

As illustrated in Table 1, gendered patterns of task allocation were evident in P2L activities. Women predominantly assumed responsibility for seed sowing, post-harvest processing, and marketing, indicating their central role in managing continuity and value addition within the program. Men, in contrast, were more frequently involved in labor-intensive tasks such as watering, fertilizing, and weeding. In this context, "dominance" refers to the frequency and consistency with which a particular gender performed specific tasks, rather than formal decision-making authority alone.

Task-sharing was observed in households where men had greater proximity to home or more flexible working arrangements, such as parking attendants or small shopkeepers. In these cases, husbands assisted or temporarily replaced their wives in communal gardening activities, suggesting that gendered divisions of labor within P2L are negotiable rather than fixed. These dynamics indicate that P2L provides a practical arena for household role renegotiation, enabling women to expand their participation in productive activities while maintaining their domestic responsibilities.

The collaboration observed in the P2L program demonstrates its potential for inclusive implementation, as illustrated in Figure 2, with task-sharing between men and women. Home-based P2L practices typically utilize vertical gardening methods, such as attaching planting containers to walls, and placing small pots and racks at the front or sides of the house. Limited land space is further optimized for cultivating larger plants like mango and banana trees, as well as a variety of food crops and ornamental air-purifying plants. Commonly

grown crops among P2L participants include mustard greens, chili, spinach, eggplant, cabbage, and other crops. Children are often involved in managing P2L activities, especially during the harvesting process. This collective involvement of family members reflects a shared understanding of food security as a collective responsibility.

Table 1
Profile of P2L Activities in KWT Srikandi Mrican

Activity Profiles	Division of Task		Description
	W	M	
P2L Activities			
1. On Farm			
a. Sowing seeds	√*	√	Women select and sow the seeds, men water the seeds
b. Transplanting seedlings into pots	√*	√	Men and women work together to transplant seedlings into pots
c. Watering plants	√*	√	Men and women take turns watering every morning and evening
d. Applying fertilizer	√*	√	Men and women work together to apply fertilizer
e. Crop weeding	√*	√	Men and women work together to weed the plants
f. Pest control	√*	√	Men and women work together to control the pests
g. Harvesting	√*	√	Men and women work together harvesting crops
2. Off Farm			
a. Post-harvest processing	√	-	Women do post-harvest processing
b. Crop marketing	√	-	Women do crop marketing
c. Marketing of processed agricultural products	√	-	Women do marketing of processed agricultural products
d. Promotion	√	-	Women do promotion
Total P2L activities	11	7	

Source: Primary Data 2024

Notes:

W : Women

M : Man

* : Dominant in doing the activity

Figure 2
Illustration of P2L activities in the collaborating household



Source: Author's illustration

Such collaboration enables more productive urban farming practices, even within limited spaces. Although land availability is minimal, the crops cultivated contribute to supplementary household income, with harvested produce typically sold to neighbors via WhatsApp or directly to nearby small food vendors. However, income generated through P2L remains modest and cannot be regarded as a stable or primary livelihood source due to limited production capacity.

Women's participation in P2L reflects a dual dynamic. On the one hand, involvement in cultivation and marketing activities enhances women's productive roles and provides opportunities for skill development, income generation, and increased visibility in community-based economic activities. On the other hand, for some women in KWT Srikandi Mrican, participation also entails role overload, as P2L responsibilities are layered onto existing domestic and caregiving duties. This tension requires women to continuously negotiate time and labor, often resulting in adaptive strategies such as prioritizing low-maintenance crops to sustain participation without exacerbating household burdens.

Understanding intra-household task-sharing is vital to achieving inclusive social change.²⁵ Women in KWT Srikandi Mrican bore a disproportionate

²⁵ Ghaniya Ilmi Hanifanisa, "Psikologi Peran Gender Menyelami Peran Gender dalam Identitas dan Perilaku" (Fakultas Psikologi, Universitas Medan Area, Indonesia, 2024), 1–15, <https://circle-archive.com/index.php/carc/article/view/155>.

burden, managing both domestic and productive tasks. A household case study illustrates this tension:

“When it comes to maintaining the P2L at home, I handle everything, but the P2L is more of a side activity. I source vegetable plants from the demo plot. So, at home, I only grow plants that require minimal care, like pothos (ornamental plants) and spider plants, which help purify the air. As for the rambutan tree, since it is tall and has many branches, I hired someone to prune it. I am the one who contacts people via WhatsApp, while my husband barely contributes. When it comes to actual care, it’s all on me.” (YS, interview excerpt, May 16, 2024)

Women’s roles in urban agriculture often go unrecognized, particularly when they juggle multiple roles without institutional or household support.²⁶ In KWT Srikandi Mrican, this lack of recognition was reflected in households where men predominantly contributed financial support, while women handled labor-intensive care work. Meanwhile, some women in the KWT also worked in productive sectors, such as as employees, food stall managers, laundry business owners, or boarding house lessees. Their busy schedules with these productive ventures left them with limited time to care for various plants in P2L activities. As a result, KWT women tended to focus on ornamental plants that required minimal maintenance and served as air purifiers, as shown in Figure 3. These ornamental plants were typically cultivated along the pathways near their homes.

Figure 3
Illustration of P2L activities in the non-collaborating household



Source: Author’s illustration

²⁶ Cheryl Doss et al., “Women in Agriculture: Four Myths,” *Global Food Security* 16 (2018): 69–74, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gfs.2017.10.001>.

Household Activity Profile

Gender partnerships emerged in several households, understood not merely as temporary assistance or task substitution, but as a negotiated and reciprocal sharing of responsibilities based on mutual recognition of time, capacity, and needs. In this context, gender partnership refers to a relational arrangement in which men and women actively coordinate domestic, productive, and caregiving roles to sustain women's participation in P2L activities, reflecting everyday processes of agency and power negotiation within the household.²⁷

When women engaged in activities at the demonstration plot or outside the home, men took the initiative to perform domestic tasks during their available time. Men also supported women's productive activities by assisting with packaging orders, delivering goods, or collecting laundry for home-based laundry businesses. In terms of childcare, cooperation was evident as both parents alternated in accompanying their children during play and study time. Such practices reduced the burden on one party and fostered more balanced gender relations by challenging conventional stereotypes that associate domestic and caregiving work exclusively with women.

In some households, traditional gender roles were exchanged. For instance, husbands became more involved in domestic tasks traditionally associated with women, such as managing daily shopping or purchasing cleaning supplies. Conversely, wives took on roles typically assigned to men, such as overseeing home repairs or replacing broken light bulbs. A family institution with gender partnership is realized through equitable and fair cooperation among husbands, wives, and children.²⁸ For example, when mothers were busy outside the home, children shared responsibilities by serving drinks to their fathers or entertaining guests. The task division teaches them the importance of not relying on one person to complete household tasks.

In extended families, cooperation often included grandparents who assisted with childcare and supported women's productivity at home and in P2L activities. A balanced division of household tasks was necessary to ensure

²⁷ Naila Kabeer, "Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment," *Development and Change* 30, no. 3 (1999): 435-64, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7660.00125>.

²⁸ Puspitawati, *Gender dan Keluarga: Konsep dan Realita di Indonesia*, 25-38.

harmony and mutual respect among family members. Shared responsibilities helped prevent any one person from becoming overburdened. Still, many women felt that the core responsibilities remained theirs. Another interviewee remarked:

"I run a laundry business, but since I use a machine, it is easy to multitask—sweeping or cleaning the front yard while the laundry runs. My husband sometimes sweeps, mops, or waters the plants, but most of the main chores still fall on me. It's sporadic and he helps when he's in the mood. My mother raised me to do whatever I could on my own. I've become self-reliant to earn income and care for everything myself, including maintaining the laundry equipment." (YS, Interview excerpt, May 16, 2024)

Similar patterns have been observed in other contexts. Research on cocoa farming households in Southern Ghana shows that women often perform substantial productive labor while simultaneously remaining responsible for domestic and caregiving duties, resulting in their contributions being undervalued within household and agricultural systems.²⁹ This dual responsibility limits women's opportunities to pursue income-enhancing activities or personal development. Comparable findings have also been reported in European contexts, where unequal caregiving responsibilities constrain women's career advancement and negatively affect their health and well-being.³⁰ The case of KWT Srikandi Mrican reflects these broader dynamics, illustrating the emotional and logistical challenges women face when balancing productive participation in P2L with persistent domestic expectations.

Overall, both men and women in the respondent households played significant roles in productive, domestic, and social activities. Men were more dominant in non-farm productive activities as primary breadwinners. At the same time, women who managed their routines at home would take the lead in P2L productive activities. In domestic tasks, women slightly dominated but maintained a balanced division of responsibilities, managing 15 types of activities compared to men's 14. Men and women participated equally in social activities, each involved in seven community activities.

²⁹ Tham-Agyekum et al., "Exploring Gender Inequalities and Promoting Equal Opportunities in Ghana's Cocoa Industry Using Harvard Analytical Framework."

³⁰ Chiara Mussida and Raffaella Patimo, "Women's Family Care Responsibilities, Employment and Health: A Tale of Two Countries," *Journal of Family and Economic Issues* 42, no. 3 (2021): 489–507, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10834-020-09742-4>.

In Tigray, Ethiopia, cultural norms can create barriers to women's equal access to education. These norms within a broader cultural context define and constrain women through traditional expectations that are often disadvantageous. Addressing cultural and structural barriers is essential to promoting gender equality and expanding women's opportunities to participate beyond the domestic sphere.³¹ Similarly, women in KWT Srikandi Mrican dominate domestic activities, reflecting the general pattern in Indonesia, where women often engage heavily in this sphere. This practice aligns with societal norms that traditionally position women in caregiving and household management roles. Despite their significant contributions to community life, these norms often limit their ability to fully realize their rights and potential.

The Access and Control Over Resources and Benefits Profile

The resources available to households for managing the P2L program included access to information, training, home gardens, and housing. Both men and women had access to these resources. However, women generally had greater access to and control over information and training through their direct involvement in KWT Srikandi Mrican, while men primarily maintained access through participation in a WhatsApp group. Although men held formal ownership of land and housing, women played a significant role in shaping the practical use of these assets—particularly in deciding which crops to cultivate in the home garden and organizing the spatial layout of planting areas for P2L-related activities.

These gendered patterns of access and control illustrate a shift in household power dynamics at the practical level, even though formal ownership structures remain largely unchanged. The P2L initiative therefore creates opportunities for women to exercise greater agency. However, empowerment cannot be understood merely as an increase in women's participation; it also depends on their meaningful involvement in key decision-making processes within both the household and the broader community.³²

³¹ Thera Mjaaland, "Negotiating Gender Norms in the Context of Equal Access to Education in North-Western Tigray, Ethiopia," *Gender and Education* 30, no. 2 (2018): 139–55, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2016.1175550>.

³² Guman Singh Khattri, "Shifting Gender Roles in the Wake of Male-out Migration in a Village of Western Nepal," *Journal of National Development* 36, no. 2 (2023): 89–110, <https://doi.org/10.62047/JND.2023.12.31.89>.

Furthermore, both men and women benefited from income derived from on-farm, off-farm, and non-farm activities. Women had access to and exercised control over on-farm and off-farm income sources, particularly as they managed various aspects of household-based agricultural and production activities. In contrast, non-farm income, such as salaried jobs or external business ventures, appeared to be accessed more equally by both genders in the P2L households.

Income control within households reflected clear gender-based differences. While men generally maintained primary control over non-farm income, women tended to dominate in managing income generated from home-based on-farm and off-farm activities. Gender partnerships within households increased transparency in resource use, enabling clearer tracking of expenditures.³³ Women's central role in household income management is often linked to their active involvement in food production and the fulfillment of daily household needs, which frequently places them in charge of budget allocation and the monitoring of household spending.³⁴

In the case of KWT Srikandi Mrican, however, financial decision-making was not exclusively handled by women. In some households, women led the budgeting process; in others, men played the dominant role in managing expenses. In many instances, decision-making was shared between spouses, reflecting a more cooperative model of household economic management.

Driving Factors Behind Women's Participation in Managing the P2L Program

The participation of KWT Srikandi Mrican in the P2L program was influenced by both internal and external drivers. Internally, their interest in gardening began as early as 2014 but became more focused during the COVID-19 pandemic when they became involved in the KRPL program. Gardening served not only as a way to spend time meaningfully during lockdowns but also as a source of emotional well-being. It brought a sense of joy, calm, and purpose. Their motivation to green the surrounding environment also led to ecological

³³ Puspitawati, *Gender dan Keluarga: Konsep dan Realita di Indonesia*, 25–38.

³⁴ Fitri Suminar Megantara and Nuraini W. Prasodjo, "Analisis Gender pada Ketahanan Pangan Rumah Tangga Petani Agroforestri," *Jurnal Sains Komunikasi dan Pengembangan Masyarakat [JSKPM]* 5, no. 4 (2021): 577–96, <https://doi.org/10.29244/jskpm.v5i4.858>.

improvements, such as better air quality and enhanced urban biodiversity. Growing their own vegetables fostered a sense of pride and enabled healthier eating habits.

These motivations align with broader findings in urban gardening research, which show that engagement in small-scale cultivation can foster joy, gratitude, and a sense of empowerment through meaningful interaction with nature. Such activities can also promote self-reliance and mental well-being, particularly during crises such as the pandemic.³⁵ In addition, participation in the program expanded social networks. Members interacted more frequently with fellow participants, agricultural extension officers, researchers, and visitors. These networks helped expand the marketing of their harvests, provided access to information and training, and offered small but valuable financial benefits.

Externally, women's participation was driven by the strong leadership of the KWT chairwoman. One of the main challenges in fostering participation within urban communities is their heterogeneous social composition.³⁶ To address this, the leader approached members and surrounding residents personally, learning about their characters and potential. Through this approach, her transformational leadership helped unite community visions and encouraged broader involvement.

Social recognition also played an important role, as women felt valued through family appreciation, community-level awards, and formal acknowledgments from institutions. Urban greening initiatives are also known to foster meaningful social connections within communities.³⁷ In the context of P2L activities, this sense of connection strengthened women's pride as their contributions were publicly acknowledged despite the program's collective nature.

³⁵ Jonathan Kingsley et al., "Pandemic Gardening: A Narrative Review, Vignettes and Implications for Future Research," *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening* 87, no. 3 (2023): 128062, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ufug.2023.128062>.

³⁶ Riska Porawouw, "Peran Tokoh Masyarakat dalam Meningkatkan Partisipasi Pembangunan (Studi di Kelurahan Duasudara Kecamatan Ranowulu Kota Bitung)," *Politico: Jurnal Ilmu Politik* 3, no. 1 (2016): 1–17.

³⁷ Thomas Astell-Burt et al., "Green Space and Loneliness: A Systematic Review with Theoretical and Methodological Guidance for Future Research," *Science of the Total Environment* 847, no. SUPPL. 1 (2022): 157521, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2022.157521>.

Women's participation in urban agriculture is often shaped by a combination of socio-economic conditions and personal motivations. Studies have shown that women are more likely to engage in urban farming when it fulfills practical needs such as access to fresh food, sustainable living practices, and opportunities for additional income, with encouragement frequently coming from local role models and peer networks.³⁸ This pattern resonates with the experience of KWT Srikandi Mrican. Despite the multiple roles women hold, their participation in P2L activities has been sustained through strong leadership, accessible platforms for engagement, and gradually shifting gender norms that encourage shared responsibilities in both domestic and public spheres.

Negotiating Women's Autonomy and Decision-Making Power in KWT Srikandi Mrican

The women of KWT Srikandi Mrican demonstrate autonomy by planning and managing the P2L program, including decisions on crop types, agricultural methods, and harvesting practices. This flexibility allows them to innovate according to community needs. Within the community context, members also demonstrated independence by initiating the KWT's theme for the annual hamlet exhibition, "*Bali Ndeso*" (Back to the Village), without requiring specific instructions from the group leader. They independently determined various elements of the exhibition, including clothing and makeup, as well as food displays. This initiative illustrates their capacity to express ideas creatively and to participate actively in community decision-making.

Enabling women to take initiative in decision-making is widely recognized as an important factor in strengthening their identity and character.³⁹ For the members of KWT Srikandi Mrican, such initiatives contribute to greater confidence and bargaining power within the community, which are essential elements in the process of achieving autonomy. In the family setting, we

³⁸ Tayech Lemma and Mala Sharma, "Motivations for Women's Participation in Urban Agriculture: A Multivariate Probit Model Analysis," *International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability* 22, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1080/14735903.2024.2379893>.

³⁹ Mamata Nanda and Souvik Ghosh, "How Does Male Out-Migration Impact the Lives of Left-behind Women? Trade-off between Feminization of Agriculture and Empowerment of Farm Women," *Evaluation and Program Planning* 111 (2025): 102603, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2025.102603>.

encountered the story of a woman who faced challenges in negotiating the division of domestic responsibilities. Although her husband was physically present at home, his lack of involvement in supporting household economic needs created what can be termed as a “functional absence.” In response to this condition, the woman exhibited strong independence, as illustrated in the following interview excerpt:

“... I always used to help fund my husband's ventures, but he's gone bankrupt many times. Then, I decided to focus on my own business. If he wants to help, sure, go ahead. If not, it's no big deal. What matters most is first being happy and second, paying attention to having a balanced diet. I'm over 40 now, so I've cut down on carbs and sugary drinks. I also regularly check my health. If there is something, we can learn a little for ourselves. Now, we also have smartphones and can easily find something useful to improve our lives...” (YS, interview excerpt, May 16, 2024)

YS's narrative illustrates her capacity for decision-making in everyday life, particularly in areas she perceives as being within her control. Her decision to focus on managing her own laundry and boarding house business, following repeated financial failures experienced by her husband, reflects a deliberate shift toward economic self-reliance. This is evident in her statement that she is open to her husband's support but does not depend on it, indicating an orientation toward autonomy grounded in lived experience rather than abstract choice. Rather than expressing frustration, YS emphasizes self-development and pragmatic adaptation, suggesting that her sense of control emerges from managing what she can realistically influence within her household context.

Her autonomy is further reflected in decisions related to personal well-being, such as regulating her diet, reducing carbohydrate and sugary drink consumption, and engaging in regular health check-ups based on her age and perceived health needs. These practices demonstrate informed and self-directed decision-making in daily life. Empowered women in urban settings tend to adopt more health-conscious consumption patterns, which contribute to improved nutritional outcomes.⁴⁰ Within the context of the P2L program, YS's autonomy is further supported by access to home-grown vegetables and food diversification training provided by KWT, which enhance women's knowledge of food choices and strengthen their capacity to independently meet household nutritional needs.

⁴⁰ Wenli Shang, Ying Zhou, and Xu Tian, “Empowering Women, Enhancing Diets: The Impact of Women's Bargaining Power on Dietary Quality in Urban China,” *Economics & Human Biology* 58 (2025): 101505, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ehb.2025.101505>.

Additionally, YS's use of digital tools to seek information and address everyday challenges reflects a form of practical self-reliance. Her proactive approach to learning and adaptation indicates that autonomy in her case is not only economic but also cognitive. Research suggests that limited male involvement in household economic roles often increases women's responsibilities in decision-making, financial management, and community participation.⁴¹ In YS's case, her husband's limited economic involvement functions as a form of functional absence that, while challenging, has contributed to the development of necessity-driven autonomy and strengthened her agency in managing both household and livelihood activities.

Cultural norms, household gender roles, and informal institutional arrangements governing women's responsibilities in domestic and economic spheres have evolved through both local traditions and broader socio-economic influences. These developments shape expectations regarding women's roles as primary caregivers, managers of household labor, and supplementary income earners. Consequently, women's lives are structured by these norms, influencing their participation in entrepreneurship in both enabling and constraining ways.⁴² While shifting norms related to women's economic contribution can open new spaces for engagement, persistent expectations of rigid domestic roles often act as barriers, limiting women's autonomy to participate fully in entrepreneurial activities.

The life dynamics of women such as YS illustrate how independence is exercised within these constraints. Despite facing structural challenges rooted in entrenched gender norms, YS demonstrates an empowered form of agency by negotiating her roles and responsibilities. This reflects that, even amid gender imbalance, women continue to display autonomy and resilience, enabling them to adapt to challenges and actively contribute to community initiatives such as KWT, as well as to their families and personal development.

In the personal sphere, the P2L program equipped women with practical skills that strengthened their independence. One example is the training in food

⁴¹ Nanda and Ghosh, "How Does Male Out-Migration Impact the Lives of Left-behind Women? Trade-off between Feminization of Agriculture and Empowerment of Farm Women."

⁴² Thilde Langevang et al., "Bounded Entrepreneurial Vitality: The Mixed Embeddedness of Female Entrepreneurship," *Economic Geography* 91, no. 4 (2015): 449–73, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ecge.12092>.

processing, such as transforming banana flowers into nuggets. Through this activity, women not only generated additional income but also shared the knowledge with other community members. Their self-reliance was also reflected in everyday problem-solving, for instance when they experimented with ways to maintain the color of banana flowers during boiling so that the final product remained visually appealing. One participant also demonstrated strong determination to sustain her small business despite facing external criticism and a lack of appreciation from others.

Moreover, the P2L program became a platform for social empowerment. One participant shared how her involvement in P2L enhanced her self-confidence and social adaptability:

“For me, activities in P2L can add a sense of courage... We get to know people's characters. For example, this person turned out to be like this, so I won't be like that... I can carry myself with 'those at the bottom' and not look down on them, and when I'm with those at the top, I do not feel inferior.” (IS, interview excerpt, May 24, 2024)

IS's statement reflects increased confidence in navigating social environments and articulating her thoughts, even in formal settings such as interviews. Difficulties in communication are often associated with lower self-esteem and higher levels of social anxiety, which can affect overall well-being.⁴³ Through P2L, women found a supportive environment that allowed them to express themselves more freely and confidently.

This transformation illustrates not only personal growth but also a deeper sense of social connectedness. Community gardens are more than physical spaces for cultivation. They are socially reproductive spaces of meaning-making. These gardens help meet both basic needs and the deeply human desire for connection, offering a place for interaction, a sense of identity, and belonging.⁴⁴ Within this context, P2L gardens have become inclusive

⁴³ Nourma Ulva Kumala Devi, Hikmah Rahmadaniati Primania, and Diva Putria Anindita, “Edukasi Publik Speaking untuk Meningkatkan Soft Skill sebagai Upaya Pemberdayaan Masyarakat pada Kelompok Wanita Tani (KWT) Srikandi Bangkit,” *Jurnal Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat Nusantara* 4, no. 4 (2023): 3260–66, <https://ejournal.sisfokomtek.org/index.php/jpkm/article/view/1760/>.

⁴⁴ Rade Zinaic et al., “Exploring the Impact of Community Gardens on Mental Health: A Scoping Review,” *Wellbeing, Space and Society* 8, no. 8 (2025): 100263, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wss.2025.100263>.

environments where women can regain a sense of control over their lives, build meaningful relationships, and strengthen their emotional well-being.

Another important insight from this study is the significant role of the KWT leader in fostering members' independence. During routine meetings, the leader often shared case studies to spark critical thinking and collaborative problem-solving among members. This method also gave KWT women a safe space to practice public speaking and receive constructive feedback without fear of judgment. Encouraging critical thinking not only helped the group navigate internal issues but also equipped members to deal with everyday challenges. Participation in the P2L program enabled women at KWT Srikandi Mrican to fully explore and develop their potential. However, this journey toward independence was not without trade-offs. Many had to dedicate less time to family or personal matters. They also continued to face social hurdles, including navigating interpersonal dynamics and managing potential conflicts within the group.

Achieving autonomy also demands that women make deliberate and sometimes difficult decisions, often at the expense of other opportunities. For the members of KWT Srikandi Mrican, this involved balancing personal growth, active community participation, and time with their families. These compromises reflect findings from previous research showing that women working outside the home often face tensions between earning income, managing household duties, and fulfilling personal aspirations.⁴⁵ Similarly, studies on women's dual roles in Indonesia highlight the need for a more adaptable, supportive work culture that enables them to manage their roles as caregivers and professionals.⁴⁶ Within this context, KWT has functioned as a space that accommodates women's multiple responsibilities through shared tasks and collective participation.

D. Conclusion

Activities carried out through the P2L program at KWT Srikandi Mrican contribute to urban food security by increasing household access to fresh

⁴⁵ Sudha Kannan and Douglas L. Bessette, "Time-Use among Men and Women in Zambia: A Comparison of Grid, off-Grid, and Unconnected Households," *Energy for Sustainable Development* 76 (2023): 101276, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esd.2023.101276>.

⁴⁶ Fitry Primadona and Sari Lenggogeni, "'Kepala Putik' on Women: Perspectives and Challenges in Balancing the Dual Role as Mother and Worker in Indonesia," *Sawwa: Jurnal Studi Gender* 19, no. 1 (2024): 75–98, <https://doi.org/10.21580/sa.v19i1.22521>.

vegetables and reducing reliance on market-based food sources, while simultaneously strengthening community awareness of agriculture through daily cultivation practices and collective learning. These flexible, home-based activities enable women to participate according to their available time and capacity, allowing agricultural work to be integrated into everyday domestic routines. However, women continue to face trade-offs between personal development, community engagement, and family responsibilities.

Although men occasionally contribute to P2L activities, women remain the primary actors, particularly in agriculture-related tasks. Domestic and social roles are more evenly shared in some households, yet several women still experience unequal workloads in household duties. Access to information related to P2L is generally available to both men and women; however, women exercise greater control over the use of household yards and the day-to-day implementation of P2L activities. Decision-making and income management, especially in non-agricultural sectors, tend to reflect a more collaborative dynamic between spouses.

Women's participation in P2L is shaped by a combination of internal and external motivations, including the desire to manage urban green spaces, improve household nutrition, and expand knowledge, as well as encouragement and recognition from KWT leaders and the wider community. Their autonomy, independence, and self-reliance are reflected in their involvement in program planning, participation in competitions, and capacity to address technical challenges encountered during implementation.

To strengthen these outcomes, discussion spaces within the P2L program should be co-managed by KWT administrators and household representatives, including both women participants and supportive family members, to broaden engagement and shared responsibility. In practice, this co-management can take the form of jointly facilitated meetings, rotating leadership roles in discussion sessions, and shared decision-making in planning program activities. Government support through training in food processing, packaging, marketing, and digital promotion can further enhance women's technical skills and expand their economic opportunities. Nevertheless, promoting gender-equitable norms remains essential, particularly through targeted community education for men to encourage more balanced household role-sharing. Additionally, online learning options can help women manage time-related trade-offs more effectively, enabling continued personal development while fulfilling household and community responsibilities.[s]

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