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# Mariana

*FAKTA-DAMAR Village Coordinator  
Tanggamus, Lampung*

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FAKTA-DAMAR Village Coordinator

Tanggamus, Lampung<sup>1</sup>

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Forty-seven-year-old Mariana is the only female Hamlet Head in her village in Tanggamus district. In 2006, Mariana, who graduated from high school, was selected as Hamlet Head by the Village Head to replace her father. Mariana's husband sells curtains outside the village, which means that Mariana is often home alone with their two children. Their son studies in Bandar Lampung, while their daughter is still in primary school. As well as being a village government official, Mariana also runs their household and has worked as an early childhood educator since 2008.

The majority of villagers in Mariana's village are transmigrants from Central Java. Because of this, villagers are generally open towards new people who bring new knowledge and a strong culture of community organisations. Since becoming Hamlet Head, Mariana has become active as she must attend PKK and Posyandu activities as well as village government meetings. As a female Hamlet Head, she also is a trusted confidante for village women.

*"Since I became Hamlet Head, I often go around the area, I mean sometimes people have something to ask and I sit with them. Because I am a woman and Hamlet Head, they feel fine to talk about anything. We all don't have a lot. I just give them suggestions. We are all poor. We all work with our bodies. So we just give suggestions. All the women here are open with me."* (Mariana, Tanggamus research village, 5 July 2019)

As well as being asked about financial difficulties, Mariana is often asked for suggestions on how to educate children. This is because Mariana is known in the village as having successfully brought up both her children to be kind and respectful to their parents. Her son was a high achieving student and school and won a scholarship for university which, she emphasises, strongly contrasts with the many misbehaving teenagers in their area.

*"[Women] mostly talk to me about their financial problems, and about how to educate their children. In this area, my children are examples, even though I brought them up just normally. It just depends on your kid. About finances, [people ask me], I earn this much but why is it still not enough. Sometimes women are sad, and I feel what they feel."* (Mariana, Tanggamus research village, 5 July 2019)

As Hamlet Head and someone who is seen as a good example, Mariana is committed to keep learning and enhance her capacities. When FAKTA-DAMAR entered the village and began to offer women's empowerment activities, Mariana was immediately interested to join – a decision her husband supported.

*"I want to become someone who is intelligent. Someone who isn't insecure when I socialise with someone who is more than me. The thing is that we have already joined with the Village Administrators and subdistrict officials."* (Mariana, Tanggamus research village, 5 July 2019)

In 2008, Mariana first participated in FAKTA-DAMAR at the first Lampung Women's Movement (Gerakan Perempuan Lampung – GPL) congress in Bandar Lampung. GPL is a DAMAR initiative to strengthen women's associations from all six of Lampung's districts. The Tanggamus women's association, FAKTA, works together

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<sup>1</sup> **Authors:** Azifah Astrina and Nadlirotul Ulfa. **Editors:** Bronwyn A. Beech Jones and Annisa Sabrina Hartoto. **Disclaimer:** The views expressed in the analysis are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the supporting governments or organisations. All names have been anonymised.

with DAMAR to advocate for the fulfilment of women's basic rights, one of which is sexual and reproductive health rights.

After taking part in this congress, Mariana stopped attending FAKTA-DAMAR events. At the time, there was not a lot of funding for women's empowerment in Lampung, so few programs were implemented at the district level. Five years later, Mariana began to participate once more after being contacted by a FAKTA community organiser. In around 2013, DAMAR planned a gender course for six women's associations – a course which benefited many women, including Mariana.

Mariana's first training workshops were themed "Gender Justice and Anti-Violence" and "Social Analysis from a Feminist Perspective." After this course, Mariana became a member of FAKTA-DAMAR and quickly, after taking part in another course, became a cadre. And, after taking part in a fourth training workshop on "Women's Leadership and Organisational Governance", Mariana became a cadre instructor.

For Mariana, these courses helped her to understand gender equality and gender issues. These FAKTA-DAMAR activities also extended her friendship networks with whom she could share her experiences.

*"[I learned] about gender equality. Thanks be to God I got new knowledge there and lots of friends from Central Lampung and East Lampung. After that, we talked to each other in groups. We were supported by FAKTA, DAMAR and the Lampung State University."* (Mariana, Tanggamus research village, 5 July 2019)

In 2015, with MAMPU's support, FAKTA-DAMAR began running gender training in Mariana's village. Mariana became the coordinator of the four specialist classes for women, men, as well as teenage girls and boys. She patiently introduced the FAKTA-DAMAR network and their programs to villagers.

*"I had to be patient. First, I used formal invitations. I went door-to-door introducing FAKTA-DAMAR. After I had done this a lot, it started to be shared mouth-to-mouth. I had to be patient at the start to say that DAMAR has good knowledge for us which we can then share with our neighbours. After a while, they started going to the classes themselves. We also gave materials, so people can use them in their everyday lives."* (Mariana, Tanggamus research village, 5 July 2019)

Mariana reflects that she has created significant change in her household, especially about the sharing of domestic chores. At first, Mariana thought that her husband was responsible for financially providing for the family, while she should take care of the house and bring up the children. But, over time, this perception changed as she shared information she gained at training workshops with her husband and children, and they too realised the importance of sharing domestic chores.

*"Thank God, for me personally there have been a lot of changes. Before, in the house, my husband didn't want to cook, or for us to share roles, such as split the cooking or the cleaning. [Now] if I come home in the afternoon, he is the one who cooks, he can sweep too. [We are] sharing roles, working together. [We are] not distinguishing what work is for women or men."* (Mariana, Tanggamus research village, 5 July 2019)

Upon seeing the positive effects for their family, Mariana's husband supported the program. Mariana also signed up her son in the gender class for teenage boys. She hoped that this class would make him value gender equality.

*"There have been changes about how to educate my children too. Yes, before, my child didn't want to wash his own dishes. After he participated in the young men's activities, [he thought] yeah, he should*

*help his mother with the work. This is very meaningful for us, and then we shared it with friends.”*  
(Mariana, Tanggamus research village, 5 July 2019)

Apart from these changes at home, Mariana’s participation in the FAKTA-DAMAR program has also enhanced her capacities as a village official. Now, she has more self-belief to give welcome addresses at village meetings for the PKK and Posyandu.

*“Since I joined FAKTA-DAMAR, there have been lots of changes. From learning new information at training workshops to putting it into action. For us personally, the knowledge is really beneficial. Before I joined FAKTA-DAMAR, I didn’t socialise or believe in myself. After joining and doing the training, I believe in myself. Talking sometimes was hard. At meetings I gave welcome speeches, they just had limited scope, like for the hamlet PKK. But after I went to FAKTA-DAMAR training, something changed.”*  
(Mariana, Tanggamus research village, 5 July 2019)

Through her involvement in FAKTA-DAMAR, Mariana has both gained understanding of gender equality and applied it in her family by dividing domestic chores with her husband. As Hamlet Head, Mariana is an empathetic leader and shares her understanding of gender and justice.

Mariana hopes that FAKTA-DAMAR’s women’s empowerment activities will continue, so that village women will continue to increase their knowledge and that more women can join. Nevertheless, increasing involvement in women’s empowerment activities still have challenges. Women need their husband’s permission to attend and many prohibit their wives from joining. To overcome this challenge, Mariana persistently shares the information and skill she has gained in all spheres of her life, from within her own family, to meetings, village events and when she is shopping at food stalls.