

Why Gender Mainstreaming Fails at the Local Level: A Policy Capacity Analysis of Human Development Policy in Wonogiri Central Java

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ABSTRAK:

Studi ini meneliti kegagalan kebijakan pengarusutamaan gender dalam konteks pembangunan daerah di Indonesia. Dengan menggunakan bukti dari Wonogiri yang memiliki kesenjangan yang signifikan dalam Indeks Pembangunan Manusia (IPM) antara laki-laki dan perempuan, Penelitian ini mengkaji kegagalan implementasi kebijakan pengarusutamaan gender di tingkat daerah. Metode penelitian kualitatif diterapkan melalui analisis dokumen dan wawancara mendalam dengan aktor kebijakan lokal. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun pengarusutamaan gender merupakan mandat nasional, implementasinya di tingkat daerah bersifat simbolis, tidak terkoordinasi, dan terhambat oleh keterbatasan teknis serta lemahnya kemauan politik. Temuan ini menyoroti bahwa fragmentasi kelembagaan dan struktur tata kelola yang terdesentralisasi menjadi kendala utama dalam pencapaian kesetaraan gender. Kesimpulannya, penguatan kapasitas kebijakan lokal diperlukan agar pengarusutamaan gender dapat berfungsi sebagai instrumen substantif dalam mendorong pembangunan yang adil dan inklusif.

ABSTRACT:

This study examines the failure of gender mainstreaming policies in the context of regional development in Indonesia. Using evidence from Wonogiri which has a significant gap in the Human Development Index (HDI) between men and women, this study examines the failure of gender mainstreaming policy implementation at the regional level. Qualitative research methods are applied through document analysis and in-depth interviews with local policy actors. The results show that although gender mainstreaming is a national mandate, its implementation at the regional level is symbolic, uncoordinated, and hampered by technical limitations and weak political will. These findings highlight that institutional fragmentation and decentralized governance structures are major obstacles to achieving gender equality. In conclusion, strengthening local policy capacity is needed so that gender mainstreaming can function as a substantive instrument in promoting equitable and inclusive development.

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INTRODUCTION

Gender mainstreaming was officially introduced at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 as a global strategy to achieve gender equality by integrating gender considerations into all aspects of policy-making, legislation, and institutional reform. Since then, countries across the Asia-Pacific region have adopted varying approaches, reflecting different levels of institutional commitment, political will, and administrative capacity.

In the Philippines, the Magna Carta of Women mandates government institutions to conduct Gender and Development (GAD) planning and budgeting, supported by robust institutional mechanisms (Mendoza, 2017). South Korea established the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF), although its effectiveness has fluctuated with political changes and budgetary constraints (Karam et al., 2018). In contrast, Indonesia's Presidential Instruction No. 9/2000 obligates all government entities to undertake gender-responsive planning, but implementation remains uneven, often depending on local bureaucratic leadership (Robinson, 2009).

Despite technical guidelines and institutional arrangements such as gender focal points and gender analysis tools, gender mainstreaming efforts continue to suffer from poor inter-agency coordination, limited understanding of gender concepts among civil servants, and weak monitoring systems (Azis & Azarine, 2023). Scholars argue that gender mainstreaming is not a purely technical endeavor but a political one, requiring shifts in norms, power relations, and organizational culture (True & Parisi, 2013). In sum, while institutional frameworks for gender mainstreaming exist across Asia-Pacific, their effectiveness is constrained by policy capacity gaps, particularly in decentralized contexts like Indonesia. Understanding these capacity

constraints is essential for translating policy mandates into gender-equitable outcomes.

In Indonesia, gender mainstreaming has also become a widely endorsed global strategy for achieving gender equality by embedding gender perspectives across the policy cycle. Indonesia has formally adopted this strategy through national frameworks such as Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2000 and the 2020-2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN). However, despite decades of normative commitment, gender inequality—particularly at the subnational level—remains a persistent problem.

Decentralization has also opened up opportunities for gender mainstreaming at the local level. Through law no. 23 of 2014 local governments have significant authority over policy-making and service delivery in their regions. Under this law, local governments are responsible for implementing national policies, including social policies related to gender equality and women's empowerment (Fossati, 2017). The law also promotes the involvement of local communities, including women's groups, in decision-making processes, thus creating opportunities for gender mainstreaming at the local level (Ribot, 2007). As such, local governments in Indonesia have a critical role in translating national gender mainstreaming policies into action at the regional and community levels. They are responsible for developing and implementing gender-sensitive programs and policies, as well as ensuring that public services are accessible and responsive to the needs of both women and men.

One of the key mechanisms through which local governments integrate gender perspectives into policy-making is through gender-responsive planning and budgeting (GRPB). GRPB is a process that ensures public resources are allocated in a way that addresses the specific needs and interests

of women and men. Local governments are required to conduct gender analyses, identify gender gaps, and allocate budgets to programs that promote gender equality.

This paper examines how local government in Indonesia translates the national mandate. Local governments play a vital role in translating national gender equality goals into practice, as they are closest to the populations they serve and have the ability to implement policies tailored to local contexts.

The paper begins by emphasizing gender mainstreaming policy as systematic integration of gender considerations into all stages of policy processes to ensure that both women's and men's perspectives are considered, and therefore promoting gender equality. The objectives of mainstreaming gender into policy should be seen on how the policy addresses gender disparities and inequalities in its localities, ensuring that policies do not inadvertently reinforce gender biases, and ultimately promoting equitable outcomes across all gender identities. This paper also examines mechanisms, strategies, and challenges faced by local governments in implementing gender mainstreaming. The case studies illustrate challenges and potentials that are relevant for further implementation of gender mainstreaming in local development, especially in low middle income countries such as Indonesia.

In this paper we start by looking at Indonesia's human development index as an entry point to look at how policy making is essentially gendered and bring different impacts to men and women. Based on data published by Indonesia Bureau of Statistics, Indonesia's HDI is stable at 70 and is often included in the high category. However, if we break it down between women and men, it still shows a gap between the HDI of men and women with an average gap of six points per year. This shows that there is still an inequality in human resource

development between men and women in Indonesia.

Inequality in the HDI of men and women also occurs at the regional level, one of which is in Wonogiri Regency, Central Java Province. In the midst of attempts to increase the Human Development Index in Central Java Province, Wonogiri Regency is one of the districts that has received special attention. In Wonogiri Regency, the 2022 Human Development Index was 69.51, below the Central Java average of 72.79. When disaggregated, male HDI reached 72.85, while female HDI lagged at 66.22. This is an alarming gap of over 6.6 points (BPS Wonogiri, 2023). This disparity is particularly evident in the education index, where women's expected years of schooling were 11.2 compared to men's 12.8 years. The health dimension also reflects inequality, with higher maternal mortality and underutilization of reproductive health services. Furthermore, despite the mandate for Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRPB), analysis of the 2023 Wonogiri APBD shows that less than 1% of the total budget was earmarked for gender-specific programs. Interviews with local planning officials revealed a lack of trained personnel to conduct gender analysis, resulting in the mechanical submission of GAD plans without substantive alignment to local gender disparities. These gaps persist despite formal gender equality frameworks, signaling implementation failure at the local level. This raises an important policy question: why do formal mandates for gender mainstreaming often fail to produce measurable improvements at the local level?

In order to examine the implementation challenges of gender mainstreaming at the district level, we employ policy capacity as our main theoretical framework. We utilize policy capacity approach based on two following arguments. First, we look at the existing discussion on gender

mainstreaming research in Indonesia especially gender mainstreaming policy at local level. Based on our examination, we found these studies often overlook the capacity of local government actors in translating gender mainstreaming norms and practices into their local context. As a case in point, if we look study from Syukri (2023), he examines the ideological element of gender policy in Indonesia. He, indeed, implicitly shows that the new developmental state shapes political constellation in many gender-sensitive policies. However, he does not explicitly show processes under which this ideological construction affects gender policy in Indonesia.

Further, studies on the implementation of gender mainstreaming at local levels such as study by Darmastuti (2022), Firdaus et al. (2024), Takayasa (2023), Hidayatulloh & Hutami (2019) do not specify how actors in gender mainstreaming policy exercise their power and authority to incorporate gender mainstreaming into their political agenda. In these studies, gender mainstreaming is seen as a given norm where all actors automatically implement it. As such, these studies overlook the potential capacity of each actor in implementing gender mainstreaming policy at their localities.

Second, we argue that in order to achieve effective gender mainstreaming, local governments are often assumed to have robust policy capacity to ensure that gender perspectives are thoroughly integrated into all policy areas. However, this assumption is often overlooked in the existing studies on gender mainstreaming policy in Indonesia. In this paper, we attempt to examine gender mainstreaming policy through policy capacity approach based on our understanding of policy capacity as the ability of institutions and their actors to develop, implement, and evaluate policies effectively.

While existing scholarship often focuses on the ideological or normative

dimensions of gender mainstreaming, fewer studies examine the institutional and capacity-related barriers to effective implementation. This study fills that gap by applying Wu et al.(2015) policy capacity framework, which identifies three critical dimensions-analytical, operational, and political. We argue that without sufficient policy capacity in these areas, gender mainstreaming cannot be institutionalized in a meaningful way at the local level.

The case of Wonogiri illustrates how fragmented coordination, weak technical infrastructure, and minimal political commitment collectively undermine gender equality efforts. This study not only contributes to gender policy scholarship but also informs broader debates on decentralized governance and public sector capacity in low-and middle-income countries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of policy capacity emerged as scholars and practitioners began to recognize that the success or failure of public policies is not solely dependent on political will or legal frameworks, but also on the ability of institutions and actors to design, implement, and evaluate policies effectively. Early notions of policy capacity can be traced back to the 1970s and 1980s, rooted in the broader field of administrative capacity and state competence, particularly within the context of development studies and comparative public administration (Grindle & Thomas, 1989; Painter & Pierre, 2005). During this period, capacity was often viewed in terms of resource availability, bureaucratic size, and technical expertise. However, as public administration scholarship evolved, particularly in response to the complexities of governing in democratic and decentralized systems, the definition of policy capacity expanded to include a more dynamic set of skills, resources,

and organizational attributes (Howlett & Ramesh, 2004).

A major shift occurred in the early 2000s as scholars sought to formalize and conceptualize policy capacity beyond its technocratic underpinnings. Rather than seeing capacity as a static feature of bureaucracies, researchers began framing it as a strategic and context-dependent competency. This reconceptualization was further advanced by Wu, Ramesh, and Howlett (2015), who introduced a widely used analytical framework that breaks policy capacity into three dimensions: analytical, operational, and political. Analytical capacity involves the ability to generate and use knowledge for policy decisions; operational capacity refers to the administrative and managerial ability to implement policy; and political capacity is about mobilizing support and sustaining legitimacy. Their framework also recognizes that these capacities exist across different levels-individual, organizational, and systemic-making it particularly useful for analyzing complex governance environments.

Over the last decade, the concept of policy capacity has continued to evolve in response to contemporary governance challenges such as decentralization, policy fragmentation, crisis management (eg, pandemics), and the need for policy coherence in multi-level governance systems (Christensen & Lægreid, 2020; Peters, 2015). Recent literature emphasizes the relational and institutional dimensions of policy capacity, noting that it is not just an attribute of government agencies but a product of interactions among various actors including civil society, private sector, and international institutions (Brenton et al., 2023) capability or competency, political resources and the functioning of policy systems, and variables or mechanisms leading to outcomes. We critique and disentangle common operationalizations,

such as policy success and failure, to enable more complete assessments of whether the state's policy capacity has diminished in recent times, as often is suggested. Previous research has concentrated on two key properties of the "supply" of policy responses, namely sufficiency and changes over time and across contexts. We argue that there needs to be more consideration of societal demands on governments or governance systems and the (dis. Scholars such as Peters (2015) and others have expanded the conversation by linking policy capacity to adaptive governance, collaborative policy-making, and the politics of evidence use. As a result, policy capacity today is understood as both a condition for and an outcome of effective governance, making it a central concern for scholars and practitioners alike in navigating policy complexity in the 21st century.

In this paper, policy capacity refers to the competencies and resources required to perform policy functions effectively (Wu et al., 2015). Wu and colleagues categorize this capacity into three interrelated dimensions: analytical, operational, and political. Analytical capacity refers to the ability of individuals and organizations to gather, interpret, and apply relevant knowledge and evidence throughout the policy process. It includes both technical expertise (eg, data analysis, forecasting, policy evaluation) and cognitive tools (eg, problem definition, scenario planning) that are essential for formulating informed policy choices. At the individual level, this involves skills in using empirical evidence, conducting gender analysis, or producing disaggregated statistics. At the organizational level, analytical capacity depends on institutionalized knowledge systems, availability of data infrastructures, and the presence of policy research units or think tanks. Systemically, a policy environment with open access to

information, robust evaluation mechanisms, and a culture of evidence use further enhances analytical capacity. In gender mainstreaming, for example, the absence of reliable gender-disaggregated data or lack of skills in gender impact assessment can result in superficial policy framing and weak alignment with actual needs (Petridou & Mintrom, 2020). Therefore, analytical capacity is foundational because it shapes the quality of agenda-setting, problem diagnosis, and policy design.

Operational capacity denotes the administrative and managerial ability to implement policies effectively. It involves not only the existence of competent personnel and adequate financial resources, but also the internal organizational systems such as standard operating procedures, monitoring tools, cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms, and programmatic alignment that enable policy execution. At the individual level, civil servants need technical training and professional development to understand and deliver policy objectives. At the organizational level, operational capacity depends on functional bureaucratic structures, budgeting systems (eg, performance-based budgeting or gender-responsive budgeting), and vertical and horizontal coordination across agencies. At the systemic level, operational capacity is linked to institutional incentives, legal clarity, and the delegation of mandates

in multi-level governance systems. In the case of gender mainstreaming, operational capacity is often weakened by fragmented coordination, lack of integration into sectoral plans, and limited institutionalization of gender tools such as Gender Analysis Pathways or GRPB frameworks. Without sufficient operational capacity, well-designed policies remain unimplemented or fail to achieve intended outcomes.

Political capacity refers to the ability to secure and maintain support for policy initiatives from key stakeholders, including political elites, civil society, media, and the general public. It involves building coalitions, mobilizing legitimacy, and navigating the political dynamics that affect agenda-setting and implementation. Political capacity operates at three levels: individual leadership (eg, champions within the bureaucracy or elected officials), organizational legitimacy (eg, trusted institutions that advocate for reform), and systemic environments (eg, norms, democratic openness, and civic engagement). In gender mainstreaming, political capacity is often the most fragile component many initiatives are marginalized within women's departments or treated as symbolic add-ons rather than integrated into core planning processes (Moser & Moser, 2005). Resistance may arise from ideological contestation, conservative cultural norms, or political

Table 1. Policy Capacity: Skills and Resources

Levels of Resources and Capabilities	Skills and Competencis		
	Analytical	Operational	Political
Individual	Individual Analytical Capacity	Individual Operational Capacity	Individual Political Capacity
Organizational	Organizational Analytical Capacity	Organizational Operational Capacity	Organizational Political Capacity
Sytemic	Systemic Analytical Capacity	Systemic Operational Capacity	Systemic Political Capacity

Source: Wu.,et.al (2015)

actors who do not perceive gender equality as electorally advantageous. Strong political capacity is essential not only for initiating reform but for ensuring its sustainability and responsiveness to public demands.

The utility of this framework is particularly evident in decentralized settings, where multiple actors operate with varying degrees of authority and expertise. Scholars such as Peters (2015) and Brenton et al. (2023) have emphasized the need to examine how capacities function across individual, organizational, and systemic levels.

In the case of gender mainstreaming, deficiencies in any of the three dimensions can derail implementation. Analytical weaknesses limit problem diagnosis, operational gaps hinder execution, and political fragility reduces accountability. Thus, policy capacity serves as a diagnostic lens to assess and improve institutional performance in achieving gender equality outcomes.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative case study approach to examine how policy capacity shapes the implementation of gender mainstreaming policies at the local government level. The case of Wonogiri Regency, located in Central Java Province, was purposefully selected based on two criteria: (1) persistent gender inequality in key human development indicators, and (2) the regency's active yet underperforming implementation of gender mainstreaming mandates. As of 2022, the gender gap in Wonogiri's Human Development Index (HDI) exceeded 6 points, with women consistently lagging behind men across education, health, and income dimensions. This makes Wonogiri a critical case to understand the institutional and capacity-related barriers to gender policy implementation in decentralized settings.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with fifteen key informants involved in gender-related policy planning and implementation. These included officials from the Regional Development Planning Agency (BAPPEDA), the Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (DP3A), the Health Office, and the Education and Culture Office. Interviews were conducted between July and October 2024, either in person or via secure video conferencing platforms. The interview guide focused on three key dimensions of policy capacity analytical, operational, and political drawing directly from Wu et al. (2015) framework.

In addition to interviews, document analysis was conducted to triangulate findings and contextualize institutional practices. Sources included the Regency Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD 2021–2026), annual planning documents (RKPD), local regulations (Perda and Perbup), and statistical data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) related to gender development, education, and health. These documents helped assess how gender considerations were formally integrated or neglected within policy processes.

Interview transcripts and policy documents were coded thematically using a hybrid deductive inductive strategy. Initial codes were developed based on Wu et al.'s policy capacity framework, while additional themes emerged iteratively during data engagement. The coded data were organized in matrix tables using Microsoft Excel to compare insights across actors and identify cross-cutting patterns related to institutional capacity, coordination, political commitment, and bureaucratic constraints. Patterns were interpreted in light of the broader literature on gender policy implementation in decentralized governance contexts.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Overview of Gender Mainstreaming Implementation at the Local Level

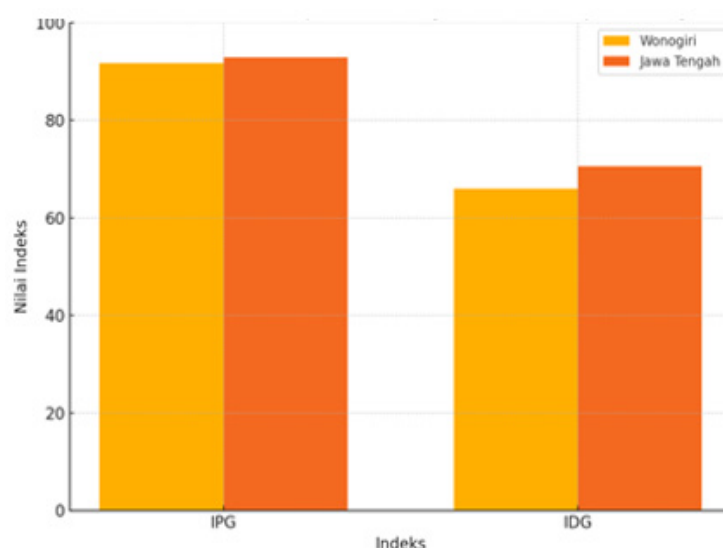
In measuring gender equality, there are several indicators, namely HDI, IPG, and IDG. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a measure of the quality of human life in the fields of health, education, and economy. This measure is then used to measure the Gender Development Index (IPG) which focuses on the factor of inequality between men and women at various levels. Meanwhile, the Gender Empowerment Index (IDG) measures the active participation of women in economic activities, namely with the indicator of the percentage of women's contribution to work income, political activities with the indicator of women's involvement in parliament, and in decision-making through the indicator of women as managers, professionals, administrators, technicians. In conclusion, IDG is used to see the extent to which women's capabilities have been achieved in various areas of life.

The IPG measures human development achievements that take into account gender inequality, particularly in three

dimensions: health (life expectancy), education, and income. Based on statistical data Wonogiri's IPG in 2022 is around 91.70 (Statistik, 2024). This means that women's human development achievements are almost equal to men's (because the closer to 100, the smaller the inequality). Wonogiri's IPG is slightly below the average for Central Java Province which is around 92.90.

The IDG measures the extent to which women can actively participate in economic activities and decision-making, as well as their involvement in the legislature. Based on sources from Bappenas or BPS Central Java, Wonogiri's IDG is relatively low, generally: Wonogiri's IDG in 2022 is in the range of 65-70 points. This achievement shows that women in Wonogiri still have low representation in the public sector and formal economy.

Demographically, based on the 2020-2023 Interim Population Projection, the number of male residents in Wonogiri Regency in 2023 is 524,500 people, or 49.90 percent of the population of Wonogiri Regency. Meanwhile, the number of female residents in Wonogiri Regency in 2023 is 526,585 million people, or 50.10 percent



Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2023

Figure 1. Discrepancies of IPG and IDG between Wonogiri Regency and Central Java Province 2023

of the population of Wonogiri Regency. From both of these information, it can be concluded that the sex ratio of the population of Wonogiri Regency is 99.60. This shows that the number of female residents is greater than the number of male residents. The sex ratio of the young age group shows that the number of male residents is greater than the number of female residents. In the age group 0 - 49 years, the number of male residents is greater than the number of female residents. In the higher age group, because the life expectancy of men is lower than that of women, the tendency is that the number of male residents is less than the number of female residents. In the age group 75+ the sex ratio is 75.04 which shows that there are 75.04 men for every 100 women. This shows that the number of female populations in the age group 75+ has the largest proportion compared to other groups. From the population composition, the age group over 50 years is dominated by women. The large composition of the female population is an asset and potential of the region, but on the contrary, if women are unable to work productively, either for themselves, their families or the community, then it will actually be a burden for the region.

The IPG figure for Wonogiri Regency is lower when compared to the IPG for Central Java Province. IPG is an aggregation of three dimensions, namely health, education, and a decent standard of living. The health dimension is represented by Life Expectancy at Birth (UHH). In 2023, the UHH for women in Wonogiri Regency has reached 78.48 years, while for men it has reached 74.78 years. From the following figure, it can be seen that the UHH value for women and men each year in the period 2020-2023 has increased, which means that the level of welfare and development of women and men has improved. On the other hand, the difference in UHH between women and men in Wonogiri Regency

tends to decrease every year, which indicates that one day the phenomenon of female advantages may no longer appear in Wonogiri Regency. The increase in the UHH value itself is also greater in the male gender from 2022 to 2023, namely 0.25 points for men compared to 0.17 points for women.

In the period 2021 to 2023, the percentage of women who have health complaints is higher than men. The morbidity rate of the female population is higher than that of men in the period 2021-2023. Several factors that are considered by the population in accessing health facilities are the distance of residence from the location of health service facilities, quality of service, socio-economic status of the population, namely the population's ability to finance their treatment, and the type of health service. Of the 23.34 percent of the male population who experienced health complaints in the past month, it turned out that 31.07 percent of the population received outpatient treatment. Of the 27.54 percent of the female population who experienced health complaints in the past month, it turned out that 34.65 percent of the population received outpatient treatment. In the period 2021-2022, the male population who had health complaints tended to seek outpatient treatment more. However, in 2023, the female population who had health complaints tended to seek outpatient treatment more, namely 34.65 percent.

In addition to health, one of the statistics used to measure the quality of a country's education is the expected length of schooling (HLS) of the population aged 7 years and over. The Expected Length of Schooling (HLS) is defined as the length of schooling (in years) that is expected to be experienced by children at a certain age in the future. HLS can be used to determine the condition of the development of the education system at various levels and

to provide an overview of the success of education development. In 2023, the HLS for women was 12.44 years and for men it was 12.54 percent. This means that both boys and girls in Wonogiri Regency who are 7 years old have the hope of pursuing education up to high school/equivalent. With this achievement value, it indicates that equality of development in the aspect of education has been realized relatively evenly. However, when viewed from the Average length of schooling, namely the number of years used by male and female residents aged 25 years and over in undergoing formal education, in 2020-2023 the percentage of average length of schooling for men was greater than for women. In 2023, the average education completed by men will be around 8.12 years, while for women it will be 7.32 years.

In Wonogiri Regency, the opportunity to obtain education between men and women has begun to be equal. This shows that the higher the level of education, the gap between men and women has begun to decrease. At the elementary school to university level, the percentage of men who have received the highest education that has been completed exceeds the percentage of women. Meanwhile, the percentage of female population that gets a larger percentage is only at the high school and Diploma I/II/III levels of education, which is 4.83 percent compared to the percentage of male population which is 0.86 percent. At the secondary school level, the percentage of male diplomas is still greater than that of females. Likewise, the percentage of women who do not have a diploma is also greater than that of men.

Overall, the economy in Wonogiri Regency is still dominated by men. During the period 2020 to 2023, the adjusted per capita expenditure value for women was always much lower than for men. In 2023, the adjusted per capita expenditure for

men was 13,997 million rupiah, while the adjusted per capita expenditure for women was 9,780 million rupiah. Wonogiri's economy is dominated by men, where women's per capita expenditure is no more than 65%. The low achievement of women in the economy is partly influenced by the limitations of women in entering the labor market in certain business fields that require more male workers, such as mining and excavation, electricity, gas and water, and transportation, warehousing and communications. The business fields that are still dominated by men have a relatively high level of productivity compared to other business fields.

The difference in job opportunities has an impact on workforce participation as reflected in the Labor Force Participation Rate (TPAK) figure. In 2023, the female TPAK figure was only around 74.80 percent, while the male TPAK had reached around 90.21 percent. This TPAK figure shows a gap between men and women in terms of employment. In 2023, the female and male TPAK both experienced an increase, compared to the previous year. The male TPAK increased by 5.08 points, while the female TPAK only increased by 15.65 points.

The IDG of Wonogiri Regency was recorded lower than the IDG of Central Java. The IDG of Wonogiri Regency in 2023 decreased by 0.33 points or increased by 0.45 percent. Gender empowerment in Wonogiri Regency in the period 2020-2023 tended to increase, but in 2022 it decreased. In 2020, the IDG of Wonogiri Regency was at level 71.56, decreased by 0.01 points or decreased by 0.01 percent compared to the previous year. Then in 2021 it increased by 1.42 points or increased by 1.98 percent, in 2022 it decreased by 0.33 points or decreased by 0.45 percent.

The decline in IDG in 2023 was mainly due to an increase in the percentage component of women as professionals and

women's contribution to labor income. The percentage of women as professionals decreased by 2.90 points from 52.39 percent in 2022 to 49.49 percent in 2023. Likewise, the percentage of women's contribution to labor income decreased by 0.02 points from 38.98 percent in 2022 to 38.96 percent in 2023. IDG in the 2022-2023 period decreased. The contribution of women to labor income in Wonogiri Regency tends to fluctuate, namely in 2017 it was 39.18 percent, continuing to increase to 39.25 percent in 2019, then decreasing until 2021 and increasing again in 2021. When compared to the contribution of male income, this achievement is still quite far.

The involvement of women in the Wonogiri Regency parliament in the 2017 period increased from 8.89 percent to 16.00 percent, then tended to decrease from 2020 to 2023 by 16.00 percent. The number of women has not met the 30% quota. Data from the Wonogiri Regency DPRD Secretariat, out of 50 DPRD members, the number of female DPRD members is only 8 people. On the other hand, the contribution of women in government in Wonogiri Regency as State Civil Apparatus (ASN) is increasing. The number of female ASN is greater than male ASN. When viewed according to education, female ASN is superior to male ASN. This can be seen from the number of female ASN with a Diploma III education level and above which is greater than male ASN. The number of female ASN in the Wonogiri Regency Government who are certain functional positions such as Teachers and Health Workers, especially nurses, is greater when compared to male ASN. Meanwhile, there are more male structural officials than female structural officials.

In the context of decentralization, the success or failure of these two indices reflects the capacity of local governments to mainstream gender in development planning. Decentralization and Regional

Autonomy implemented through Law No. 22/1999 and Law No. 23/2014 provide space for local governments to set local development priorities. On the one hand, this policy allows for greater innovation and responsiveness to local needs, including gender issues. However, on the other hand, fragmentation of authority and asymmetry of capacity between regions create gaps in achieving gender development indicators.

The Wonogiri Regency IPG which is at 91.70 is close to the average of Central Java Province (92.90), indicating that basic services such as education and health are relatively equal between men and women. This reflects the success of vertical coordination between central policies and regional implementation, as well as the technical capacity of the local bureaucracy in providing gender-responsive public services. In contrast to the IPG, Wonogiri's IDG achievement (66.00) is far behind the provincial average (70.50), indicating low female involvement in decision-making and access to strategic positions. This failure is related to weak horizontal coordination between regional apparatus organizations (OPD), low political commitment of regional heads to the gender agenda, and minimal participation of women's organizations in the planning process.

At the same time, decentralization creates variations in gender development performance between regions. Not all regions have the same fiscal capacity, human resources, and political awareness in promoting gender equality. This causes the achievement of IDG to tend to stagnate or decline, while the IPG increases gradually. Sustainable achievement of IPG and IDG requires a governance approach that integrates vertical and horizontal coordination.

Analytical Capacity

Before we examine the implementation of gender mainstreaming policy in Wonogiri,

this paper identifies several actors involved in the implementation of the policy. The implementation of gender mainstreaming and Human Development Index (HDI) in Wonogiri Regency involves multiple local government agencies operating under sector-specific mandates. Coordination is led by the Regional Development Planning Agency (BAPPEDA), which acts as the central node in this governance network. Specific responsibilities are distributed across agencies: the Health Office manages life expectancy indicators, the Education and Culture Office oversees schooling indicators, and BAPPEDA is responsible for economic indicators such as per capita expenditure. Gender-related programs, including women's empowerment, fall under the jurisdiction of the Office for Population Control, Family Planning, Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (DPPKB & P3A). A comparison between interview findings and legal mandates (e.g., Regent Regulations No. 73/2016, 90/2016, 92/2016, 103/2021) reveals that most agencies demonstrate compliance with their formal duties. For instance, the Health and Education Offices fully align with their legal responsibilities, while BAPPEDA's Community Welfare Division shows partial understanding, particularly regarding technical support and policy preparation duties.

In addition to governmental actors, non-state stakeholders play a complementary role. Civil society organizations such as PERSEPSI contribute to poverty reduction through policy recommendations and planning input. Economic forums like FEDEP serve as collaborative platforms for stakeholders. The private sector including Bank BRI, Bank Jateng, and Kalbe Farma also supports HDI-related initiatives by providing financing, logistical support, and social assistance. This multi-actor arrangement reflects a decentralized yet collaborative governance structure for local

development and gender mainstreaming. The summary of actors involved in this policy is shown in table 2.

Based on the actor identification above, we move to examine the analytical capacity of each actor. Based on our theoretical framework, policy capacity does not only focus on the macro level in policy process (Wu et al, 2015). Although the macro level, such as the entire government or the nation, is often the focus of existing definitions of policy capacity, policy capacity at this level does not exist in a vacuum, and the abilities and competencies demonstrated by specific players and institutions play crucial roles in carrying out important tasks in policy processes. Policy professionals such as public managers, policy analysts, and policy-makers have a significant impact on how well different tasks and functions within the policy process are carried out on an individual basis. Their capacity to make policy decisions is based on their managerial expertise, political judgment, and understanding of policy processes.

Furthermore, in order for governments to be able to create and carry out policies in an effective and economical manner Howlett (2015) argues they must have a sizable number of officials possessing a modicum of analytical capacity, which is defined as the capacity to access and apply technical and scientific knowledge as well as analytical techniques. This is particularly crucial given the increasing focus on evidence-based policymaking, which calls on policy makers to be able to take in and understand information regarding all facets of policy creation, decision-making, execution, and assessment. Governments rarely employ evidence, even when it is available, according to numerous studies on knowledge utilization in government because they lack the expertise to utilize it in the policy making process. Studies on the use of knowledge in government have shown that, even in cases where evidence is

accessible, governments often fail to use it because they lack the necessary expertise. According to this topic, governments generally display an unequal distribution of competencies, technical capabilities, and utilization methods among various organizational and thematic venues, which might provide challenges for the formulation of public policy.

In the context of Wonogiri Regency, actors (in this case organizational actors) do not yet have the ability to see the problem

of human development index connected to gender mainstreaming. This can be seen from the topics discussed in each coordination meeting between government actors. All topics in the coordination meeting are in accordance with the network's objectives, namely increasing the Human Development Index. In the process of increasing the HDI, however, they only refer to unequal men and women HDI index in Wonogiri based on local government development planning document known as

Table 2. Actor Roles Summary Table

Actor	Main Role	Legal Basis	Analysis
BAPPEDA–Community Welfare Unit	Strategic planning, coordination, M&E in welfare, women's empowerment	Regent Regulation No. 73/2016, Art. 15	Partial understanding technical support roles not fully executed
BAPPEDA–Economic Sector Unit	Economic planning, Unit coordination, monitoring	Regent Regulation No. 73/2016, Art. 12	Duties well understood and aligned with regulation
Health Office	Public health policy, data collection, women's health programs	Regent Regulation No. 92/2016, Art. 7	Duties executed and aligned with mandate
Education & Culture Office	Basic education policy, access provision, reporting	Regent Regulation No. 103/2021, Art. 15	Duties clearly understood and executed
DPPKB & P3A	Women's empowerment policy, capacity building, M&E	Regent Regulation No. 90/2016, Art. 13	Clear alignment with formal responsibilities
NGO: PERSEPSI	Provides economic policy input to BAPPEDA	Collaborative practice	Plays advisory and planning support role
FEDEP Forum	Stakeholder coordination on economic development	Collaborative practice	Serves as multi-stakeholder platform
Private Sector (e.g., BRI, Kalbe Farma)	Financial and logistical support for HDI and social assistance	Collaborative practice	Supports implementation of social programs across sectors

Source: Processed Data

the RKPD, this is stated in the following interview statement:

“Yes, the documents are the RKPD which we update every year and the RPJMD, both policy documents contain the direction of regional policies and regional development planning that must be realized, so that in formulating policies or programs we refer to both documents” (interview with the Head of Government and Community Welfare, BAPPEDA, Wonogiri Regency, March 1, 2023, 13.00).

Similar statements were made by the Head of the Economic and Regional Development Division of BAPPEDA, the Head of Public Health Division of the Health Service, and the Head of Primary and Secondary Education Division of the Education Service.

In addition to referring to the RKPD, it also refers to other policy documents. The policy documents on efforts to increase the HDI for women are the Regent's Decree on reducing stunting, the Regent's Decree on the formation of a poverty alleviation coordination team, the Regent's Decree on the Gender Mainstreaming Working Group (PUG) and the Regent's circular on directions for preparing a gender-responsive budget. This was conveyed in the interview statements of the actors, the first statement was conveyed by the Head of the Community Welfare Division as follows.

“Specifically, there is no decree specifically on the Human Development Index for Women, but there is a decree that directly addresses technical issues of the Human Development Index, namely Decree No. 441.7/200/HK/2022 concerning the establishment of a coordination team for the acceleration of stunting reduction and Decree

No. 950/33/HK/2022 concerning the establishment of a coordination team for poverty alleviation.” (interview with the Head of Government and Community Welfare, BAPPEDA, Wonogiri Regency, March 1, 2023, 13.00).

The Head of Economics and Regional Development also mentioned that so far they have not had any policy output or regulations that specifically regulate the increase in the Human Development Index for Women. The Head of Economics and Regional Development stated that in an effort to overcome poverty, especially for women through the Women's Economic Empowerment Program, they currently refer to the Regent's Decree on poverty alleviation which generally applies to the entire community, not specifically to men or women. This was conveyed in the following interview statement:

“So far there has been no policy specifically aimed at women's economy, but we have a guide that addresses technical issues, namely the Stunting SK and poverty alleviation. Then there is also a circular regarding gender-responsive budgeting in the Wonogiri Regency Government work environment.” (interview with the Head of Economics and Regional Development of the Wonogiri Regency BAPPEDA, March 1, 2023, 15.00).

The Head of Public Health at the Health Office added that there is a Decree on the Establishment of the PUG Working Group which shows that the Wonogiri district government also has awareness of gender equality through policy instruments, but the Decree is not the output of the five actors and is not related to the arrangement of actors in the network. The Head of Elementary Education at the Education and Culture Office said that in the network

there have been no regulations produced in striving for Women's Human Development Index.

Furthermore, the analytical capacity in implementing gender mainstreaming in Wonogiri Regency reveals significant shortcomings that affect policy effectiveness. Based on HDI data showing gaps between men and women in Wonogiri, policies should be grounded in a thorough analysis to identify the root causes of these disparities. However, in practice, data analysis is often limited to formality, supporting policies without delving deeper into the structural factors driving these inequalities (Newman et al., 2017). For example, while data indicates that women have a higher life expectancy than men, economic and educational indicators reveal significant gaps, particularly in women's economic participation. In-depth analysis shows that low economic participation among women is influenced by socio-cultural barriers that still restrict women's roles in public spaces. However, gender policies in Wonogiri have not yet to effectively address these barriers due to insufficient analytical capacity to deeply understand the local context.

At the organizational level, the Wonogiri local government faces challenges in conducting cross-sectoral analyzes to support gender-responsive policies. Available data such as economic, educational, and health data is not well-integrated to provide a comprehensive picture of gender disparities. For example, educational data is often used solely to report participation rates, without analyzing how such disparities impact women's access to formal employment.

Furthermore, as highlighted by Newman et al. (2016), the lack of training and qualifications among local public officials exacerbates the issue. Many officials lack the analytical skills necessary to leverage data for evidence-based policymaking

(Woo, 2020). This approach is expected to help Wonogiri address the shortcomings in analytical capacity and enhance the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming policies to support more inclusive and equitable human development.

We can conclude that despite visible disparities in gender-related HDI indicators, local actors demonstrated limited capacity to interpret and utilize this data for policy reform. Development plans such as RPJMD and RKPD reference gender issues but lack in-depth causal analysis. There is no systematic gender-sensitive evaluation to inform strategic interventions, limiting the scope of responsive planning.

Operational Capacity

In this section we discuss operational capacity of Wonogiri Regency in gender mainstreaming policy. According to Wu et al. (2015), operational-level capacity allows the alignment of resources with policy actions so that the policy can be implemented in practice. In this research we found that the absence of analytical capacity to incorporate gender perspective into human development index has tremendous negative impacts to operational capacity. As we explain in Table 3, none of the government actors exchange resources with specific gender framework. There is indeed certain exchange of resources for programs specifically for women but each actor does not incorporate gender analysis in the practices.

Despite the existence of inter-agency coordination forums, Table 3 reveals that each institution operates with distinct program goals and performance indicators, leading to fragmented implementation. For instance, the Health Office provides services on maternal health and reproductive care, while the Education Office runs programs to reduce school dropout rates among girls. However, there is no shared outcome indicator such as adolescent well-being or

Table 3. Actors and Resource Exchange in Gender Mainstreaming Policy

No.	Actor	Resources
1	BAPPEDA Public Welfare Sector	Expert human resources or experts in the field of development planning. Have the authority to coordinate or direct other IPM-supporting OPDs. Collaboration Network with academics (universities). Communication network with the Regent. Statistical data, which is used in analyzing factors that influence the Human Development Index so that policies or programs can be formulated that are right on target. A multipurpose building that can be used as a meeting room or training venue.
2	BAPPEDA Economic Sector	Economic experts, who can assist in formulating economic policies. Have the authority to direct technical OPDs in the economic sector. Economic development program. Network of cooperation with NGOs and BUMN.
3	Public Health Office	Health workers, such as doctors, nurses, midwives and other health workers. Health Program, the Health Service can provide Health programs to improve women's health such as reproductive health and maternal health programs. Health facilities owned by the health office are of course as facilities and infrastructure that support health services for women. These health facilities are integrated health posts, health centers, clinics and hospitals.
4	Department of Education & Culture	Education Policy. Educators. Learning materials or curriculum, Scholarship program Educational facilities, one of which is schools.
5	DPPKB and P3A	GENRE Ambassador Forum, a group of teenagers who will be role models for teenagers in terms of life planning, reproductive health, counseling to prevent early marriage. Women's empowerment program, we use this program as a tool to increase the Human Development Index. Cooperation Network, in carrying out empowerment efforts, namely the PKK adolescent posyandu in this case collaborating with the Health Service.

Source: Processed Data

life-cycle gender parity that connects these efforts under a unified gender framework. Likewise, the DPPKB & P3A manages women's empowerment programs like GENRE Ambassadors or adolescent Posyandu, yet these initiatives are evaluated using stand-alone metrics (e.g., number of participants), without integration into broader HDI or gender equality goals.

A clear example is the early marriage prevention initiative, where DPPKB & P3A cooperated with the Education Office. While both agencies implemented aligned activities (e.g., counseling and reproductive health education), no joint target or impact measurement was used to track the reduction of early marriage rates or its consequences on girls' educational attainment. Similarly, in the women's economic empowerment program, coordination with BAPPEDA led to resource sharing and policy advice, but economic empowerment outcomes such as increased income, labor market participation, or business sustainability were not jointly monitored across agencies.

The process of exchanging resources in this network begins with the process of interaction between actors through a coordination meeting started in July 2022. The meeting agenda discussed the initial draft of cross-organizational cooperation in increasing the Human Development Index, in the meeting the actors committed to being willing to help each other. The agreement on resource exchange between actors cannot be achieved through just one or two interaction processes, but the five actors have interacted at least once a month since 2022.

Through the coordination meetings, actors conveyed their commitment to support specific programs for women empowerment. The resource exchange between actors in the network is as follows:

The first exchange of resources is in the economic sector. Actors committed to supporting women's economic

empowerment program by DPPKB & P3A. The PPEP program in 2021 has a limited budget, then DPPKB & P3A consulted with Bappeda. Through a series of interactions and negotiations, Bappeda agrees to assist DPPKB & P3A by providing policy recommendations and guidance.

The second Inter-Actor Resource Exchange is in the Health Sector, one of which is through an early marriage prevention program. The exchange of resources in this program occurs between DPPKB & DP3A with the Education and Culture Office. Both actors agree to cooperate because early marriage not only has an impact on the health of women, especially mothers and children, but can also have an impact on increasing the number of school dropouts.

The third exchange of resources between actors is still in the health sector, namely the Adolescent Integrated Health Program (Posyandu). It is a program initiated by DPPKB & DP3A to increase the Human Development Index of women and aims to help improve the quality of health among adolescents, especially female adolescents. Implementation of this program is conducted by forming adolescent groups at the village/sub-district level.

Based on this finding, we can argue that none of the government actors exchange resources with specific gender mainstreaming framework. There is indeed certain exchange of resources for programs specifically for women but each actor does not incorporate gender analysis in the practices. Operational capacity is critical for translating policy objectives into practical and impactful actions. In Wonogiri Regency, operational capacity deficiencies have become a significant obstacle to the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming policies. These challenges are particularly evident in the coordination and management of resources, actors,

and processes required for the success of gender-responsive programs.

The operational inefficiencies in Wonogiri have led to a gap between policy formulation and execution. For example, while policies supporting women's economic participation exist, their implementation is hindered by inadequate operational mechanisms. Training programs for women in small enterprises, for example, are rarely linked to access to markets or credit facilities, making them less effective in driving meaningful economic change. By strengthening operational capacity, Wonogiri Regency can bridge the gap between policy formulation and execution, ensuring that gender mainstreaming efforts deliver tangible and sustainable outcomes. This approach aligns with the broader goals of fostering inclusive development and addressing structural gender disparities.

Based on the formulated process, we can conclude that although coordination forums exist, they are often formalistic and lack integration frameworks. Programs related to women's health and economic empowerment operate in silos with no shared objectives, indicators, or evaluation mechanisms. Gender responsive budgeting remains underdeveloped due to limited administrative support and weak institutionalization across departments.

Political Capacity

Given the fact that actors in HDI network consist of various government units, it is imperative for the network to have certain political capacity to navigate different interests. In the case of Wonogiri, the leader or coordinator in the network is BAPPEDA especially the Health Service Division. The leadership is selected based on the top down mandate from the local development planning (RKPD) which stipulates that BAPPEDA is the government unit that oversees the Human Development Index.

The interaction pattern used by actors in the network is through coordination meetings. The network facilitates actors in that actors have held 16 coordination meetings from July 2023 to March 28, 2023. Initially, actors held meetings once a month, then in 2023 at least actors have held 9 meetings. This shows a good commitment and progress from actors to strive to increase the Human Development Index for Women.

Our research also finds that low analytical capacity also has a negative impact on the network's political capacity. As stated by our informant, The Head of Economics and Regional Development, the reason why programs or policies had not been realized was because there was no analytical readiness from the actors. Similar statement also appears from Head of Health Affairs in which they say:

"Because there has been no discussion to create a program that covers all areas, but we maximize what we have first." (interview with the Head of Public Health at the Health Office, March 28, 2023, 07.00).

With this finding, we conclude that the high quantity of coordination meetings will be meaningless if the interaction does not produce output and to analyze whether actors have utilized the network to address gender inequality in Human Development well. Political capacity, which includes the ability to build coalitions, manage stakeholder interests, and navigate complex political environments, is critical to the successful implementation of gender mainstreaming policies.

In Wonogiri Regency, political capacity exhibits significant weaknesses that hinder efforts to prioritize gender equality within the regional development agenda. One major challenge is the sporadic nature of political support for gender mainstreaming.

The local government struggles to mobilize support from key political actors, including members of the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD), making it difficult for gender equality issues to receive sufficient attention during policy and budget formulation processes. In other, weak political capacity directly impacts the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming policies in Wonogiri. Without strong political backing, these policies risk becoming just administrative documents without sustained implementation on the ground. This approach aims to help Wonogiri overcome its deficiencies in political capacity, enabling gender mainstreaming policies to be implemented consistently and achieve significant impacts for inclusive and equitable development.

From the finding above we can conclude that while BAPPEDA leads coordination of human development strategies, political commitment to gender mainstreaming remains inconsistent. Coordination meetings lack actionable outcomes and are often underfunded. Engagement with civil society and legislative bodies is minimal, further weakening the political mandate for gender equity policies.

Based on the presented findings and utilizing Wu et al.'s framework, the study identifies specific gaps: limited use of gender evidence in planning, lack of structured budget alignment, and minimal stakeholder participation. To move beyond compliance-oriented approaches, local governments need to invest in technical training, integrate planning instruments across sectors, and cultivate inclusive leadership. Practical steps include embedding gender metrics into development indicators, formalizing inter-agency collaboration, and incentivizing local champions of gender equality.

CONCLUSION

This paper finds that persistent challenges in implementing gender mainstreaming at the local level are rooted in insufficient policy capacity rather than regulatory absence. In the case of Wonogiri, factors contributing to weak policy capacity stems from fragmented coordination, weak institutional alignment, and limited political traction for gender-related agendas. National directives often fail to influence planning practices on the ground due to disconnected data systems, weak cross-sectoral collaboration, and low engagement from decision-makers. To move beyond compliance-oriented approaches, the paper provides several recommendations such as local governments need to invest in technical training, integrate planning instruments across sectors, and cultivate inclusive leadership. Practical steps include embedding gender metrics into development indicators, formalizing inter-agency collaboration, and incentivizing local champions of gender equality. Overall, addressing these institutional constraints requires a long-term commitment to building capacity and fostering adaptive governance. Future inquiry should compare experiences across districts to identify pathways toward more inclusive local development.

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