

Notes from conversation with Nani Zulminarni regarding shared movement-building/organizing challenges:



This experience was very common in PPSW, **where trained leaders**, because of the knowledge and exposure they gained through the program **became ‘famous’ and somewhat disconnected** from other community members. In response, PPSW decided to provide a condensed version of the leadership training to all members of the group. So, for example, 30 people in a village might receive the training, even though not all of them would be in a position to really build on it ... the fact that so **many people had access to the training, helped alleviate** some of the tensions.

In addition, **leadership rotated**. There might be a group of 3 people sharing the leadership in one area for a year, but during the next year, PPSW field organizers would facilitate a process through which the leadership rotated to three other people.

One field organizer (PPSW staff person) might be responsible for facilitating the process in 10 villages (and in each village, there may be between 30 and 100 women participating). She (they are all women) **spends a lot of time observing the area**, talking and getting to know people, identifying individuals who seem to have strong leadership potential. She looks for **characteristics like responsibility, an attitude that reflects caring about the community** (not just interested in getting money out of the project), initiative. “We say don’t start with the one who speaks first, avoid that person. We start with the quiet one...that’s the strong one.” Organizers are in the field every day. They live in the village and will visit the other villages that they are responsible for facilitating. There, they may stay with one of the women participating in the program and will constantly be going around talking with other community members.

Every **group starts with something tangible**. When field workers try to organize in a village for the first time, they go house to house, visiting the women individually (they work with women heads of household, so they identify and visit their homes). Women are invited to participate in a group and when there are enough interested women, the group meets for the first time. **Savings and credit are what tie the group together in the beginning** ... but over time, say after six months when the women have started to get to know one another better, the organizers will begin to introduce content, first with a focus on building a vision of change. They talk about who is most powerful in the village and then what the women’s dreams are for their lives.

The organizers spend a lot of time talking to people, finding out what issues are important to them, and then bringing people together around those issues. With the women we work with, the issue is usually money, so we start there.

We also find a lot of **competition among the development projects**, especially in Aceh. We've found people that don't want to work with us because we don't give them money so we just work with the ones that really want to. Where it's really hard to find people, we just don't continue working there. Eventually, people see that our approach is much more sustained, so more people ask to be organized that before didn't want to work with us.

In terms of **training trainers, we don't do it as a long, intensive training**. We have very few in-house trainings for something like 2 days; we divide it over six months. It may be a six-day training of trainers but we break the sessions down so that we can cover them in weekly meetings or twice a month. We do training on **vision building, organization development, leadership, facilitation skills, human rights**. We create revised modules every time for the training—although there are guidelines at the national level, each staff member adapts the guidelines for their context and develops their own sessions. We use lots of rapporteurs to do documentation. We provide computers for staff working at all levels. It's a problem to focus on workshops rather than organizing. Most of what we do is through daily activities, not 2-3 day trainings.

Risk management? For example, in Aceh and North Maluku, we give people two different identity cards. When they are stopped by the military, they show the card explaining that this is a government-funded program. When they are stopped by GAM, they use the card that says it's a World Bank project. With the community, not much can be done because it's really a vertical conflict between government and the people. Most of the women we work with in that region are widows of fighters in the Aceh Freedom Movement (GAM). When we organize, the military really watches what they're doing. So **we make an effort to ensure our activities are very open, all of our training is done in public places, in mosques where people can see what we're doing, or in village offices, to avoid suspicion**. People can walk in, see what we're discussing. To avoid getting arrested, we work closely with leaders of the women, the wives of GAM leaders, we recruit them as our agents, give them training, ask them build communication with GAM and introduce us so that we can get protection from both sides then.

We've also had problems with drop out rates. **Some women drop out, not because they don't want to come, but they get married, get busy with other activities, or their children are sick**. We face village heads that don't allow women to travel to workshops because he's jealous – he's never gone to Jakarta, so why should these women. Then they're afraid of being excluded by him. But the women are really dying to get out of their village, it's very empowering for them to be able to take a plane, travel to Jakarta. They look forward to the exposure. We also have a high dropout rate among the field workers, but it's really like a process of natural selection. 35% of the current field workers have been with us from the beginning, and they are the next generation of leadership for PEKKA. We actually don't invest too much in field workers – we focus more on the community, in the leadership at the group level. Because the field worker will change but those women in the community will stay. What motivates them is keeping their

group together, going to Jakarta, occasional training. A field organizer will start in one village, as women leaders develop there, they will go with her to other villages, meeting other women and sharing their experiences. That builds connections and the women's own leadership.

In terms of balancing practical needs and strategic/structural interests, we always start with practical things, so women have tangible things—they can see an increase in their income, whatever. We believe we get at the strategic issues through our activities to build critical awareness, to change the way people see themselves, think about social change and their own access to resources, participation in decision-making. It's all blended in. It's an on-going process with many stages. The women organize and after one year, they all come together for the bit national forum. We encourage them to start with simple things – inviting decisionmakers, village heads, indigenous leaders to have a dialogue.