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Housewives' Participation In The Sustainable Food Garden Programme: An Analysis From Planning To Result Utilization Stages In Leboto Village, North Gorontalo, Indonesia

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Abstract

The Sustainable Food Garden Programme (P2L) is the continuation of Indonesia's Sustainable Food Garden Area (KRPL) programme, designed to promote the utilization of home yards as sources of household food while also being market-oriented. Women's participation, particularly that of housewives, is a key factor in the success of this programme. This study aims to analyze the forms of housewives' participation in the P2L programme in Leboto Village, Kwandang District, North Gorontalo Regency, covering four participation stages: planning, implementation, assessment, and result utilization. A descriptive quantitative method with an Ex Post Facto survey design was applied to 78 respondents selected proportionally using Slovin's formula (e=5%) from a population of 738 household heads. Data were collected through structured interviews using a Likert scale questionnaire (1–5) and analyzed using the Interval Transformation (IT) method based on Cohen and Uphoff's participation concept. Results indicate that housewives participated in all stages at 'often' to 'sometimes' frequency categories, with the highest score in the planning stage (mean 3.41) and the lowest in the assessment stage (3.08). Between 21–28% of respondents never participated in any stage, primarily due to domestic workload. These findings suggest that while quantitative participation is active, the quality of involvement does not yet reflect genuine empowerment, as formal evaluation and feedback mechanisms remain unavailable. This study recommends institutional strengthening of Women Farmer Groups (KWT) and enhanced facilitation intensity to promote higher-quality and more sustainable participation.

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Keywords: community participation, food security, housewives, Sustainable Food Garden Programme, Women Farmer Group.

INTRODUCTION

Household food security constitutes a central priority in Indonesia's national development agenda, reflected in numerous agricultural policy frameworks. Home-based gardening programmes represent one of the most decentralized policy instruments for food security, encouraging households to utilize land surrounding their residences as sources of autonomous food production (Saediman et al., 2021). At the global level, home gardening programmes have demonstrated measurable contributions to dietary diversity enhancement, nutritional status improvement, and reduction of household expenditure (Baliki et al., 2019; Gwacela et al., 2024).

The Indonesian government launched the Sustainable Food Garden Area (KRPL) programme in 2010, which was subsequently developed into the Sustainable Food Garden Programme (P2L) commencing in 2021. The P2L programme is designed not only to fulfill household food requirements but also to increase household income through market mechanisms ((Adiningsih et al., 2021; Saediman et al., 2021). In its implementation, the programme relies on active participation of female farmers, particularly those organized within Women Farmer Groups (KWT), as the primary implementation mechanism at the household level (Sari, 2022; Windiasih et al., 2023).

Women's engagement in food security programmes extends beyond productive roles and encompasses strategic dimensions of household well-being. Research across developing nations demonstrates that women's empowerment in agricultural systems correlates positively with improved household food security, enhanced child nutrition, and more inclusive family-level decision-making (Galiè et al., 2019; Quisumbing et al., 2021). In Indonesia's context, socio-cultural dimensions significantly influence the quality and intensity of women's participation in agricultural programmes, wherein social norms and women's dual roles as household managers and agricultural practitioners frequently constitute structural barriers limiting meaningful engagement (Antriyandarti et al., 2024; Qanti et al., 2022).

Community participation in development programmes demonstrates heterogeneous characteristics. Cohen and Uphoff (1980) conceptualize participation as comprising four functional stages: decision-making, implementation, result utilization, and evaluation. This framework recognizes that community engagement at each stage possesses distinct characteristics and confronts different challenges. Notably,

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participation during evaluation and result utilization stages tends to remain lower than during implementation, particularly among women in rural communities facing temporal constraints and limited institutional access (Egiwirantia & Destrity, 2023; Syahputra et al., 2023).

Leboto Village, located in Kwandang District, North Gorontalo Regency, represents a significant P2L programme target site with distinctive characteristics: the absence of formally established Women Farmer Groups, limited government-facilitated marketing infrastructure, and suboptimal achievement of household food security objectives. These conditions render Leboto Village a particularly relevant case for examining women's participation dynamics in P2L programmes within emerging institutional contexts, while simultaneously providing valuable empirical evidence for developing gender-responsive agricultural extension policies in the North Gorontalo region.

This research aims to: (1) describe the forms of housewives' participation in the P2L programme in Leboto Village based on Cohen and Uphoff's four participation stages; and (2) analyze participation intensity at each stage using the Interval Transformation method. Research findings are expected to contribute empirically to developing gender-responsive and community-based agricultural extension strategies in North Gorontalo.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable Food Garden Programme and Food Security Contributions

Home-based gardening programmes have become prominent food security strategies with extensive empirical documentation across developing nations. Saediman et al. (2021), in their comprehensive review of home gardening programmes in Indonesia, identified positive KRPL programme impacts on food availability, access, and utilization, although post-intervention sustainability remained a significant challenge. These findings align with Rwanda-based research demonstrating that home garden ownership correlates with increased dietary diversity and improved nutritional outcomes, particularly among households with constrained land access and limited market proximity (Issahaku et al., 2023).

International research from Tanzania demonstrates that home gardening interventions significantly increase the number of food groups consumed by women daily (Blakstad et al., 2021), although these benefits tend to diminish three years post-intervention due to infrastructural limitations and social disruptions ((Blakstad et al., 2021). Nepal-based research confirms home gardens' contributions to food security

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through year-round food availability, access, utilization, and production stability (Bhandari et al., 2021), while Bangladesh evidence documents sustained long-term positive impacts on vegetable production, women's empowerment, and market engagement (Baliki et al., 2019).

Within Indonesia's context, Adiningsih et al. (2021) identified primary participation motivations as seed distribution and government assistance, while documenting programme contributions to food availability, access, and household consumption. This research emphasized that sustained programme success requires continuous motivation and uninterrupted agricultural input availability—challenges equally relevant to P2L implementation in Leboto Village.

Women's Participation in Agricultural Programmes in Indonesia

Women constitute central figures in small-scale agricultural systems globally, yet their contributions frequently remain unmeasured and they confront systematic barriers accessing resources, technologies, and extension services (Khan, 2021; Quisumbing et al., 2021). In Indonesia, Qanti et al. (2022) demonstrated that social norms significantly influence women's perceptions and participation levels in agricultural decision-making in West Java, with distinct gender-differentiated perspectives regarding women's agricultural roles. Antriyandarti et al. (2024) documented rural Javanese women farmers' dual roles simultaneously managing household requirements and agricultural responsibilities amid climate change pressures, wherein this dual burden frequently constrains meaningful participation in formal empowerment programmes.

Women Farmer Groups (KWT) have proven to be effective collective participation platforms. Esilvita & Setiawati (2023) demonstrated that KWT functioning as learning platforms and production units generate improved agricultural knowledge, reduced household expenditure, and supplementary income for members. Windiasih et al. (2023) confirmed that structured empowerment-oriented KWT exhibit high entrepreneurial motivation and group cohesiveness, although sustained programme success requires continuous technical facilitation. Sari (2022) identified that collaborative governance success in KWT empowerment programmes in Cilegon depends on structured monitoring and evaluation involving village governments, KWT, and private sectors as key food security programme stakeholders.

Savari et al. (2020) in their Iranian research demonstrated that educational channels exhibit significant positive effects on rural women's participation in improving household food security (R^2=0.49, γ=0.70). Women completing agricultural extension

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courses demonstrated significantly higher participation in food improvement efforts compared to those without extension service access. This finding provides robust support for the argument that facilitation quality and intensity constitute critical variables determining women's participation intensity in food security programmes

Theoretical Framework: Cohen and Uphoff Participation Concept

Cohen and Uphoff (1980) developed a participation framework distinguishing four functional dimensions in rural development: (1) decision-making, encompassing involvement in problem identification, planning, and programme priority determination; (2) implementation, including resource contributions through labor, materials, and expertise; (3) result utilization, referring to communities' capacity to access and benefit from programme outputs; and (4) evaluation, encompassing critical programme assessment to foster continuous improvement.

The Cohen and Uphoff framework emphasizes that meaningful participation must extend across entire programme cycles rather than concentrating on implementation phases alone. Indonesian research consistently demonstrates that women's participation tends to be stronger during implementation compared to planning and evaluation stages (Egiwirantia & Destrity, 2023; Khoiruumah et al., 2024). This pattern reflects structural and institutional barriers limiting women's involvement in decision-making processes directly shaping programme direction and substance. Nugroho et al. (2022) demonstrated that community participation constitutes a significant social capital component in enhancing Indonesia's food security, affirming that evaluative participation deficits directly impact long-term programme sustainability.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research employed a descriptive quantitative approach with an Ex Post Facto survey design, investigating phenomena occurring after programme implementation without manipulating studied variables. This design was selected because the P2L programme had already been implemented in Leboto Village prior to research commencement, thus participation data were collected based on respondents' actual programme experiences.

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Research Location and Timeline

Research was conducted in Leboto Village, Kwandang District, North Gorontalo Regency, Gorontalo Province, Indonesia, during September–October 2022. Location selection was based on Leboto Village's designation as a P2L programme target site lacking formally established Women Farmer Groups and government-facilitated garden produce marketing infrastructure, thereby representing emerging institutional contexts

Population and Sampling

The research population comprised all household heads (738 total) in Leboto Village distributed across four sub-villages. Sample size determination employed Slovin's formula with 5% error margin (e), yielding 78 respondents. Proportional allocation was conducted based on sub-village household head distributions (Table 1). All respondents were female housewives serving as P2L programme participants or beneficiaries.

Table 1. Sample Distribution by Sub-village

Sub-village	Number of HH	Proportion (%)	Sample (n)
Bolongga	215	29.1	22
Tuhiango	192	26.0	20
Durian	206	27.9	21
Tihengo	125	16.9	15
Total	**738**	**100.0**	**78**

Data Collection Techniques

Primary data were collected through three approaches: (1) field observation documenting programme activities and yard conditions; (2) structured interviews using five-point Likert-scale questionnaires (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always); and (3) documentation including photographs, field notes, and relevant programme records. All interviews were conducted face-to-face by trained enumerators ensuring data collection consistency and accuracy.

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Research Variables

Research variables encompassed housewives' participation forms in the P2L programme, operationalized according to Cohen and Uphoff's four participation stages: (1) Planning, including musyawarah attendance and opinion contribution; (2) Implementation, covering planting activities, plant maintenance, and suggestion provision; (3) Evaluation, encompassing activity evaluation involvement and improvement suggestions; and (4) Result Utilization, referring to garden harvest utilization for household vegetable consumption.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the Interval Transformation (IT) method, converting ordinal Likert-scale data into interval data for quantitative interpretation. Score interpretation employed the following scale: 1.00–1.79 = Never; 1.80–2.59 = Rarely; 2.60–3.39 = Sometimes; 3.40–4.19 = Often; 4.20–5.00 = Always. This scale was consistently applied across all programme participation indicators.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

All respondents were married females employed as housewives. Age distribution indicated that 34.61% ranged from 41–50 years, 25.64% from 31–40 years, and 21.79% from 51–60 years, with overall age ranges spanning 23–69 years. This distribution reflects programme participation concentrated among mature-productive women with substantial household management experience, yet simultaneously bearing dual burdens as domestic managers and agricultural programme participants.

Educational attainment was relatively limited, with 69.23% completing primary school, 28.21% secondary school, and 2.56% completing university studies. This low educational level represents relevant contextual factors for understanding participation patterns, as education correlates with programme information processing capacity and confidence expressing opinions in formal forums (Abidin, 2021; Savari et al., 2020).

Planning Stage Participation

Planning stage participation was measured through two indicators: musyawarah attendance and opinion contribution. Interval Transformation analysis yielded a mean score of 3.42 for attendance and 3.40 for opinion contribution, both categorized as

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"Often." The combined planning stage mean of 3.41 represented the highest score among all programme stages (Table 2).

Musyawarah attendance encompassed meetings discussing P2L implementation plans, including crop type determination, yard land division, and activity schedule establishment. The "Often" attendance category indicates that most participants regarded musyawarah as important forums for obtaining information and determining activity direction. This finding aligns with observations by Egiwirantia & Destrity (2023) that collective planning participation tends to be stronger during early programme phases when participant enthusiasm remains elevated.

Nevertheless, 21–24% of respondents reported never attending musyawarah. This segment represents individuals systematically excluded from planning processes, primarily due to domestic workload. This phenomenon reflects women's dual burden as household managers and programme participants, consistently documented in agricultural women's empowerment literature in Indonesia (Antriyandarti et al., 2024; Quisumbing et al., 2021).

Table 2. Planning Stage Participation

Participation Indicator	IT Score	Category
Musyawarah attendance	3.42	Often
Opinion contribution in musyawarah	3.40	Often
Planning Stage Mean	**3.41**	**Often**

Implementation Stage Participation

The implementation stage encompassed the most diverse activities, measured through three indicators. Analysis revealed scores of 3.37 for planting activities, 3.27 for plant maintenance, and 3.32 for implementation-phase suggestions, yielding a stage mean of 3.32 categorized as "Sometimes" (Table 3).

The most frequently planted commodities were peppers and tomatoes, representing high-value vegetables with stable household consumption demand. Programme-provided inputs included polybags, organic fertilizer, and work gloves. These limited inputs indicate that programme support remained at basic infrastructure provision levels, without achieving comprehensive and sustained technical facilitation.

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The relatively lower plant maintenance scores (3.27) compared to planting activities (3.37) confirm sustainability challenges commonly encountered in home gardening programmes. Blakstad et al. (2022) in their longitudinal Tanzania research found that positive garden programme impacts on dietary diversity persisted only during active intervention years, diminishing three years post-intervention due to irrigation infrastructure limitations and social disruptions. Similar findings were reported by Adiningsih et al. (2021) in Indonesian KRPL programme evaluation, wherein participants emphasized needs for sustained motivation and uninterrupted fertilizer availability.

Between 22% and 27% of respondents reported never participating in implementation activities, indicating a segment experiencing structural participation barriers rather than simple unwillingness. Lal (2020) in a global home gardening review affirmed that effective programmes must consciously consider social contexts and dual burdens limiting women's capacity for active participation, including temporal constraints and household power dynamics.

Table 3. Implementation Stage Participation

Participation Indicator	IT Score	Category
Planting activities	3.37	Often
Plant maintenance and care	3.27	Sometimes
Suggestion provision during implementation	3.32	Sometimes
Implementation Stage Mean	**3.32**	**Sometimes**

Evaluation Stage Participation

The evaluation stage demonstrated the lowest participation score, with a mean of 3.08 categorized as "Sometimes" for evaluation provision and improvement suggestions (Table 4). Between 25% and 28% of respondents reported never participating in programme evaluation activities.

Low evaluation participation did not solely result from participant reluctance but also from the absence of formal, structured programme evaluation mechanisms in P2L activities in Leboto Village. Field data revealed that programme managers had never conducted formal evaluations, leaving participants without institutional forums for

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systematic opinion expression and archival documentation. Syahputra et al. (2023) identified resource availability and community support as aspects requiring enhancement to develop participation in Indonesian food programmes.

From a theoretical perspective, low evaluation participation reflects top-down programme design positioning communities as passive beneficiaries rather than active change agents shaping programme direction. Nugroho et al. (2022) demonstrated that community participation constitutes significant social capital components in enhancing Indonesia's food security in both rural and urban contexts, suggesting that evaluative participation deficits directly impact long-term programme sustainability.

Table 4. Evaluation Stage Participation

Participation Indicator	IT Score	Category
Programme evaluation and improvement suggestions	3.08	Sometimes
Evaluation Stage Mean	**3.08**	**Sometimes**

Result Utilization Stage Participation

Result utilization stage was measured through garden harvest utilization for household vegetable needs, yielding a score of 3.17 categorized as "Sometimes," with 21–23% of respondents reporting never utilizing garden produce (Table 5).

Qualitative reports indicated that garden produce had helped fulfill household vegetable requirements, particularly peppers and tomatoes, and enhanced residential environmental aesthetics. Nevertheless, the programme had not demonstrably increased family income in measurable terms, representing an important P2L objective as a market-oriented initiative. This finding aligns with Saediman et al. (2021) argument that Indonesian home gardening programmes generally succeed in short-term food availability and access improvements but encounter serious sustainability challenges and fail to generate significant income contributions.

The absence of government-facilitated garden produce marketing infrastructure constitutes a structural constraint limiting programme transition from consumption to market orientation. Adebayo et al. (2024) in Nigerian research identified that home gardening can meaningfully contribute to income generation and nutritional improvement, yet greater economic benefits require adequate seed and planting material provision plus

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structured market access. Ogutu et al. (2023) in Indian research confirmed that home gardens increase monthly per capita adult-equivalent income by 37%.

Table 5. Result Utilization Stage Participation

Participation Indicator	IT Score	Category
Harvest utilization for household vegetables	3.17	Sometimes
Result Utilization Stage Mean	**3.17**	**Sometimes**

Cross-Stage Synthesis

Table 6. Participation Summary by Stage

Participation Stage	Mean IT Score	Category	Rank
Planning	3.41	Often	1
Implementation	3.32	Sometimes	2
Result Utilization	3.17	Sometimes	3
Evaluation	3.08	Sometimes	4

Overall participation patterns demonstrated declining gradation from planning through evaluation stages, indicating that involvement was more responsive to external stimuli (musyawarah invitations, extension agent direction) than autonomous and proactive. This pattern aligns with Cohen & Uphoff (1980) predictions that participation in later programme stages (evaluation and utilization) tends to be lower in institutionally underdeveloped programme contexts.

The critical finding of 21–28% non-participation rates at all stages demands serious attention from programme designers and field extension agents. This segment represents individuals systematically marginalized from programme activities, whether due to temporal constraints from domestic workload, geographical distance between sub-villages, or socio-cultural barriers. Research by Khoiruumah et al. (2024) examining

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women's participation in Indonesia's Climate Village Programme in Ciamis identified similar patterns, wherein women's participation spanning Cohen and Uphoff's four stages remained uneven and was significantly influenced by temporal availability and information access factors.

Practical implications derived from findings indicate four operational recommendations: (1) facilitate structured KWT establishment as institutional platforms legitimizing collective women's participation; (2) enhance agricultural extension facilitation quality and intensity through gender-responsive approaches; (3) provide garden produce marketing infrastructure promoting programme income-generating objectives; and (4) develop participatory evaluation mechanisms offering participants active programme shaping roles. Windiasih et al. (2023) and Sari (2022) consistently demonstrated that food security KWT programme success requires robust institutional synergies among farmer groups, village governments, and field extension agents.

CONCLUSION

This research reveals that housewives in Leboto Village, North Gorontalo Regency participated across all P2L programme stages with varying intensities. The planning stage achieved the highest participation (mean IT score 3.41; "Often" category), followed by implementation (3.32), result utilization (3.17), and evaluation (3.08), with the latter three categorized as "Sometimes." The declining participation gradient from planning to evaluation reflects involvement patterns that are more responsive than proactive, indicating that comprehensive empowerment through the P2L programme remains unrealized.

Critical findings demanding urgent attention include the 21–28% proportion of non-participants at all stages, with domestic workload constituting the primary barrier. The absence of formally established Women Farmer Groups and structured programme evaluation mechanisms represent the two most fundamental institutional weaknesses requiring remediation to enhance participation quality and sustainability.

Based on findings, this research recommends: (1) facilitate establishment of Women Farmer Groups oriented toward collective learning and capacity enhancement; (2) intensify and enhance agricultural extension facilitation quality employing gender-responsive approaches; (3) establish garden produce marketing infrastructure; and (4) develop participatory evaluation mechanisms enabling active participant programme shaping. This research acknowledges limitations regarding single-village focus and Ex Post Facto design preventing external variable control. Future research should conduct

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comparative multi-village studies with varying KWT institutional development levels or employ mixed-methods approaches for deeper investigation of housewives' participation quality determinants in P2L programmes.

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