



Analysis of MADANI's Model of Civil Society Policy Advocacy

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Executive Summary

This report analyzes the results of MADANI's local CSO partners' policy recommendations during 2021 and 2022. MADANI supports local CSO partners such that they are better able to advocate for government accountability and communal tolerance. Part of the support is technical assistance (TA) in policy advocacy, particularly in influencing policy formulation through policy dialogue and policy input in the form of policy recommendations. This report provides an analysis of the CSO policy advocacy model based on a review of 42 CSO partners' policy recommendations generated in 2021 and 2022, as well as four site visits to conduct interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) in December 2022. The analysis is guided by an analytical framework adapted from the organizational performance index (OPI).¹ The framework is useful to understand the policy advocacy model of MADANI CSO partners, as it is comprehensive in nature and includes various approaches, from evidence-based vs. value-based to cooperation vs. confrontation. The study is based on previous assessments and field visits to four MADANI sites in December 2022. The main findings include:

- MADANI has been successful in changing the approach of CSO partners from mainly outside-track activism activities to a cooperative (inside-track) approach – from confrontational activism advocacy to models of more collaborative advising and lobbying, and from more personalized lobbying to more evidence-based and participatory advocacy campaigns. These changes have shown to be productive in influencing public policies.
- Utilizing personal connection, networks, and lobbying are still important means to driving a collaborative agenda forward. However, it is increasingly complemented by evidence-based advocacy. Utilization of personal networks is especially important in advocating regulatory and policy measures, as its development deals substantially with political interests of various stakeholders. Community engagement is important to building legitimacy and leveraging more intense engagement with the local government (LG), especially at the grassroots level.
- At the same time, CSO partners acknowledge the importance of preserving their independence and the need to remain critical of the government, albeit in a subtle and measured manner.
- Local governments have been receptive and open to the MADANI partners in the study districts. This is indicated by both a high degree of expressed commitments among the local government officials and recorded interaction, both personally and institutionally, between the local governments and CSOs, indicating an active engagement in driving civil society activities forward.
- The collaborative governance used by MADANI Learning Forums, through both thematic issues and general support of local government in civil society empowerment, such as the introduction of organizational capacity self-assessments, is effective at further fostering collaborative governance. MADANI activities continue to foster trust and openness from the LGs towards CSOs, paving the way for future collaboration. Translating their evidence-based advocacy plans into innovative solutions for LGs to use is crucial for CSOs in gaining a seat at the decision-making table.
- Several challenges remain. The most vital lie in the quality of the collaboration and sustainability of efforts. There are indications that the LGs are still mostly taking a more passive role, while CSOs still have to drive the collaboration. Demand-side advocacy is not always able to increase political will of government or the government's technical capacities that tie directly to budgeting and resource allocation.

¹ Start D. and I. Hovland, "Tools for Policy Impact A Handbook for Researchers". London: ODI 2004. Downloaded at <https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/194.pdf>

- Scale-up is important, but it must be done carefully and with clear plans. Learning Forums should focus on the quality of the process, not quick outputs or replications. Taking time to learn and improve the existing pilot programs, and then communicate impact to the LG in a more comprehensive manner is more important than convincing the LG to simply immediately adopt and scale up the model.

Introduction

The USAID-funded MADANI Civil Society Support Initiative was launched in 2019 to support Indonesia in consolidating the role of civil society in democracy and local development. The aim of MADANI is to foster a more vibrant subnational civil society where local-level decision-making is done in partnership with local governments to better serve people, welcome all citizens to the process, and be more capable of combating the spread of disinformation that promotes intolerance. MADANI supports local CSOs to strengthen their capacity to promote government accountability and communal tolerance and improve their self-reliance and legitimacy through better mobilization of local resources and communities. In short, the aim is for local CSOs to improve their professionalism and start to see themselves as partners in development rather than simply donor beneficiaries.

MADANI works towards this goal by collaborating with local CSOs in targeted districts. Local CSO partners (“Lead Partners”) have, during the past three years, received TA through a pool of expert trainers and organized multi-stakeholder Learning Forums in their respective districts. An independent review, along with MADANI’s internal assessments, show that CSO partners have improved their organizational efficiency, results-based management, effective programming, strong networking, active outreach, and sustainable financing. MADANI’s TA and mentoring help Lead Partners to become more accountable and professional organizations with strengthened systems, processes, and operational management.² MADANI’s continuous mentoring has assisted them in implementing standard operating procedures on procurement, finances, and human resource management, positively impacting their programming, organizational leadership, and responsiveness. The multi-stakeholder Learning Forums are the main way through which MADANI partners build partnerships between CSOs, the local government, media, and the private sector; support the capacity for citizens to exercise their democratic authority over public matters; and strengthen government accountability and communal tolerance in selected thematic areas of maternal and child health, inclusive schools, solid waste management, village fund transparency, and communal and youth tolerance.

MADANI strengthens the collaboration with local government agencies to ensure an improved enabling environment for civil society. This includes joint review, development, and implementation of regulations, policies, and laws for local government–CSO cooperation, with three aims: (1) to exchange important information about opportunities for CSOs; (2) to forge stronger links between CSOs, citizens, and LG agencies through collaborative governance workshops and local solutions; and (3) to provide legal certainty for CSO–local government collaboration through local decrees and regulations. Lead Partners and Learning Forum members have developed and implemented local solutions that address community-identified challenges in their selected thematic areas, in collaboration with LG agencies, private sector representatives, frontline workers, and end users.

The effectiveness of a civil society approach is related to the degree of influence citizens, communities, and civil society organizations have on government and service providers. Recent studies have shown

² “Organizational Performance Index Report: Third Year Capacity Assessment among MADANI Lead Partners”, October 2022, available at <https://www.madani-indonesia.org/organizational-performance-index-report-third-year-capacity-assessment-among-madani-lead-partners/>

that a “light touch” accountability approach, defined as one that focusses on the provision of information without collective action, is not very effective at provoking improved responsiveness.

From the literature, there are two general conclusions in terms of pushing for outcomes: (1) voice should be backed up by the ability to apply effective political pressure³ and (2) the most successful reforms in social accountability are formed and grounded in a specific issue that is tangible and relevant for the beneficiaries.⁴ It is not only about voice and expressing demand, but also about how to gain access to the political bargaining table and make sure that citizen voice counts. Successful demand-side interventions are those that are backed up by the ability of citizens to apply political pressure on public officials, whether through local elections, political patronage, or elite competition. A demand will only lead to results if there is a response – if not, it might lead to frustration and even more distrust. Further, a response will only happen if there is power behind the demand, whether we call that teeth, voice, or power in numbers.

MADANI therefore uses what Jonathan Fox calls a “strategic approach” to social accountability:⁵ interventions that deploy multiple tactics and are mutually reinforcing, that encourage enabling environments for collective action, and that coordinate citizen voice initiatives with governmental reforms that bolster public sector responsiveness. Part of this means working with government officials (“supply-side actors”) to strengthen their responsiveness to citizen needs and concerns by ensuring that local governments can effectively collect and act upon input from citizens.

Getting the accountability formula right is key to improving basic services. Power concedes nothing without a demand. Mechanisms for upwards accountability have had a limited impact. They need to be complemented by accountability to citizens and increased community leverage: information, community-based monitoring, and civic engagement. The last couple of years have seen re-intensified debates on government capability to implement policies and deliver services. The argument is that failures in addressing poor public service delivery, quality of expenditure, corruption, and inefficiencies are generally not due to bad policy or planning, but rather to failures in implementing the final leg of services to the end-users.

In 2021 and 2022, MADANI partners used social accountability tools like community score cards and interface meetings for sharing citizen feedback and data analysis to put pressure on government agencies to make services more sensitive to community needs. Community score cards are one such powerful process to monitor services, empower citizens, and improve the accountability of service providers. This is a feedback survey where citizens or users decide how their community can best measure improvements through creating their own service indicators. The services were not assessed through formal surveys, but CSO partners used a mix of qualitative data and focus group discussions. An easy reference that can be adapted for local use is the Community Score Card Toolkit developed by CARE in Malawi.⁶ It starts by defining the performance measure, introduces a voting scale on how satisfied users and service providers are, and then allows for voting in the score card.

³ Fox, Jonathan. n 2-14 “Social Accountability: What Does the Evidence Really Say”. World Bank (Washington DC). GPSA Working Paper Series and Joshi, Anuradha & Houtzager Peter P. 2012. “Widgets or watchdogs? Conceptual explorations in social accountability.” *Public Management Review* 14 (2):145-162.

⁴ Hickey, Sam and Sofie King, “Understanding Social Accountability: Politics, Power and Building New Social Contracts”, *Journal of Development Studies*, Issued 8 2016.

⁵ Fox, Jonathan, “Social Accountability: What Does the Evidence Really Say”. World Bank (Washington DC). GPSA Working Paper Series. 2014

⁶ CARE Malawi. “The Community Score Card (CSC): A generic guide for implementing CARE’s CSC process to improve quality of services.” Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere, Inc., 2013. Available at https://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/FP-2013-CARE_CommunityScoreCardToolkit.pdf

As part of their policy advocacy, in 2021 and 2022 each Lead Partner provided policy recommendations on two major issues: (1) their selected thematic issue and (2) the enabling environment for civil society. Advocacy is the process of using collective action to influence public decisions and the underlying causes of poverty and injustice, and to support good development. CSO advocacy is often social justice advocacy, taken to change “what is” into “what should be,” a more decent and just society. In order to improve the capacity of partners, MADANI collaborated with YAPPIKA-ActionAid to provide training in successful advocacy and campaigning tactics and with Communication for Change (C4C) on strategic communication.

During 2021 and 2022, 42 thematic policy documents with recommendations were submitted by MADANI partners to their local governments. These documents were the result of partner analysis and advocacy on issues such as promoting community awareness and public participation to improve the quality of maternal and child health, optimizing solid waste management through community-based solutions, strengthening community and village businesses post-COVID, promoting disability-friendly community health centers and schools, increasing community engagement in village governance, maintaining public services standards in community health centers, countering intolerance, improving population services, strengthening women and children-friendly practices in villages and creating more inclusive villages, and alleviating stunting.

In addition to the thematic policy recommendations, MADANI partners have also continued to carry out policy advocacy to ensure that local governments institutionalize their collaboration with citizens and civil society. During 2021 and 2022, Learning Forums and Lead Partners drafted and submitted 40 policy documents that foster an enabling environment for CSOs to contribute to positive change. These documents focused on involving CSOs in regional development, improving CSO empowerment, providing access to public information, building an enabling environment for civil society sustainability, and providing access to small-scale local government procurement contracts under Presidential Regulation no. 16/2018 (PerPres 16/2018).

After submitting the policy recommendations, Lead Partners and Learning Forums carried out follow up policy advocacy, including public campaigns and lobbying, and used various social accountability tools, such as community scorecards and complaint handling surveys, to put pressure on government.

As a result of MADANI partners’ advocacy activities, some local governments in MADANI districts are starting to adopt and issue regulations and policies to various degrees of influence. In MADANI districts during 2021 and 2022, 23 local governments have issued 46 new thematic policies on promoting community awareness and public participation, and 11 local governments have adopted 45 policies to improve the CSO enabling environment and transparency. In the four study districts, the Lead Partners and Learning Forums have drafted 33 policy recommendations and advocated for 10 district-level regulations.

Methodology

The objective of the present study is to analyze the process and results of MADANI partners’ policy advocacy and influence. This study employed various methods, namely document review, focus groups discussions, and field visits (interviews and observation) to four selected MADANI districts, with the goal of identifying the conditions under which MADANI policy advocacy was effective and turned into public policies and regulations.

The present report measures changes and impact of the MADANI program on collaborative governance from four locations: **Serang and Lebak** in Banten and **Surakarta and Boyolali** in Central Java. They are all MADANI locations with different trajectories and different levels of success in their policy recommendations, as well as different thematic issues (see next section).

MADANI documents reviewed include:

- 2020 Collaborative Governance Study and 2022 Collaborative Study Update
- FY22 Annual Report and Annexes
- 2020 and 2022 Organizational Performance Index Reports

The consultant spent two days in each of the four locations in December 2022 and interviewed selected Lead Partners and Learning Forum members, as well as local government representatives, in each district, aided by the local MADANI Field Coordinators. The consultant used an open-ended questionnaire around policy advocacy, consistent with information required to inform the assessment of to what extent they have achieved the objectives of the MADANI program.

The specific objectives of the study are the following:

- Better understand the advocacy cycle of MADANI partners, referring to specific models of effective civil society advocacy.
- Identify best practices in policy advocacy at the subnational level that may support or hamper the co-production of government policies with CSOs.
- Identify practices in fostering local coalitions and Learning Forums at the district level – especially those focused on policy advocacy.
- Through an analysis of the case studies, explain the difference in policy advocacy and policy uptake. Delineate the types of interactions taking place between state and non-state actors at the local level and what is required to balance collaborative and more adversarial relationships.
- Translate findings into practical and concrete recommendations to support the enhancement of MADANI's programmatic interventions for other policy advocacy projects.

Study Districts at a Glance

Lebak

The Lead Partner and Learning Forum in Lebak focus on maternal and child health as their thematic issue. Maternal and child mortality in Lebak is a serious problem. This rural district occupies the lowest position in Banten province with 49 maternal deaths and 261 infant deaths, reportedly an increase from pre-COVID. This increase in cases is mainly among the indigenous Baduy ethnic minority, which includes a number of isolated and traditional communities who reject modernity. This rejection of public services further complicates the situation with regards to, for example, at-risk pregnancies or malnourished infants, and often leads to unwanted outcomes.

To tackle this problem, and with support from MADANI Lead Partner PPSW Pasoendan, the Lebak MADANI Learning Forum SIGMA initiated a pilot project at the community health center (*Puskesmas*) in the Cisimeut subdistrict, where the majority of the Baduy people live. SIGMA conducted community score card and social assessments focusing on the accessibility and the quality of services. The community score card assessment found that there were discrepancies between the Puskesmas self-assessment, conducted by the Lebak health agency, with the community score card participative

assessment conducted by SIGMA. The method included collaboration with the local government through a series of meetings organized by the Learning Forum, which increased the legitimacy of the study. However, they were not able to obtain the direct involvement of the Baduy community during the development of policy brief and community score card.

Using the community score card result, SIGMA piloted village-level strengthening of health services. This initiative, named *Forum JIMAT*, focused on strengthening health cadres in pilot villages to increase health observation for pregnant and at-risk woman and health assistance when required, especially towards the indigenous Baduy community. Forum JIMAT also developed a small livelihood and saving initiative to create resources for its members to be used to help any community members during a health emergency.

Maternal and child health is considered a strategic priority by the local government. As such, their acceptance of the SIGMA Learning Forum study and recommendation is quite high, as maternal and child health is part of the key performance indicators of the district head (regent, or *Bupati*). To date, the SIGMA Learning Forum has achieved a variety of outputs.

SIGMA has succeeded in pushing for a more evidence-based method in local government health planning. Based on the community score card findings, the SIGMA Learning Forum directly advocated for practical and concrete improvements to the Cisimeut Puskesmas. One of the key grievances of Puskesmas users is that the pharmacy is on a different level and far from the exam room. After advocacy by SIGMA, which involved media, community leaders, and local government officials, the Puskesmas moved the pharmacy closer to the exam room to better support patients, especially persons with disabilities. In addition, the community score card study has been actively used by the local health agency as a basis for their planning document. Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) officials also expressed interest in adopting and scaling up the community score card method to supplement the current health facility accreditation system, which is currently considered to be notoriously inaccurate.

At the regulatory level, the Learning Forum is aware on the importance of institutionalization of their activity beyond village-level piloting. In this matter, they are pushing for draft regent regulations (*Peraturan Bupati or Perbup*) that specifically call for better services and increased access to maternal and child health services for the Baduy indigenous community. There was no formal engagement between the Public Health Office (*Dinas Kesehatan*) and the Learning Forum in the formulation of the *Perbup* or direct influence of the Learning Forum's study and advocacy in terms of its substance. However, Learning Forum members suggest that the timeline and the substance of the draft *Perbup* clearly indicate incorporation of community score card assessment results and the agenda that is advocated by the Learning Forum, especially considering that the formulation timeline commenced just after the Learning Forum shared their community score card findings and results with the local government.

In addition to the pilot initiatives, the SIGMA Learning Forum is also collaborating with the Kesbangpol to create a better enabling environment for future CSO-local government collaboration. The local head of the Directorate General of National Unity and Politics (Kesbangpol) explained that the organizational performance index that MADANI introduced is very relevant to the local government's needs in assessing a large number of CSOs that are recorded in the Kesbangpol data. He stipulated that, with the organizational performance index capacity self-assessment, the local government can

have a better tool to assess CSO capacity and the needs for further capacity building. In this way, local government can sift through the CSOs and determine which ones are actually able and willing to contribute, which leads to greater CSO trust and confidence. In addition, SIGMA is currently pushing for the institutionalization of a wider framework for CSO participation through advocacy of regent's regulations or *Perbup*.

At the same time, Learning Forum members are acknowledging several key challenges that pertain to the sustainability and the relevance of the pilot initiatives. The Learning Forum members in Lebak point out that the key problem of health governance relates to the local government officials' mindset and political will. The mindset of the local government is still mostly in project procurement with key interests in infrastructure building. Even though the budget for health initiatives is one of the highest, maternal and child health is not considered as "lucrative" in terms of infrastructure procurement, regardless of its status as a strategic performance indicator for the Bupati. This is especially pertinent with regards to the Baduy indigenous community, whose cultural beliefs impede their ability to receive care and result in a higher mortality rate, and the local government has limited options to intervene. In addition, there is no capacity yet to expand the pilot project beyond the current subdistrict. The Learning Forum also has not yet developed an effective gender equality and social inclusion policy to involve the Baduy community directly. Going forward, the Lebak Learning Forum is well aware of the importance of engaging at a more strategic level within the participatory development planning process and looks forward to utilizing the forum in a more politically engaged way, without abandoning their capacity for evidence-based policy.

Serang

For its thematic work on village governance transparency, MADANI's Lead Partner in Serang, PD Aisyiyah, together with the Serang Learning Forum, is organizing a community-based group that focuses on strengthening the participation of women's groups in village governance. Based on the preliminary assessment conducted by the Lead Partner, female participation in village governance remains low and insubstantial. This has resulted in the absence of policies and programs that are focused on the wellbeing and safety of women and children.

With this understanding, PD Aisyiyah saw an opportunity to create a community-based group as a space for women to build their capacity and awareness of village governance. The Serang Learning Forum piloted *Madrasah Anggaran Warga Desa* ("Village Budget School") – *Mawar Desa* in short – in the villages of Domas and Tirtayasa. These community groups focus their activities to accommodate marginalized and vulnerable women's interest in the planning and budgeting process in villages. In addition, it also provides capacity building in livelihoods, organizational skills, and knowledge on village planning and budgeting to enable them to participate more actively in village governance.

Since village governance can be abstract and complex, the Learning Forum used village waste management as an entry point. *Mawar Desa* members at the village level are being provided education and training on how to economically manage waste and raise funds for the group. Anchoring the group in this livelihood improvement initiative keeps the members engaged and committed, while also building their skills and confidence to learn more about other facets of village governance. The Learning Forum has also been successful at securing the village government's support, both in terms of funding for the *Mawar Desa* group and the provision of a Circular Letter from the Village Head as a formal legitimation of the group in the village. Currently, the group

members are actively involved in village planning and budgeting activities, with several members now involved in their respective village Musrenbang planning committee.

In addition to community organizing, the Learning Forum also tries to ensure that this model can be sustainable through advocacy at the district level to create a greater enabling environment for female engagement in village governance. Currently, Serang has Local Regulation (*Perda*) No. 1 of 2017 concerning gender mainstreaming. However, it does not mandate in detail about how this regulation may shape current policy and programs at the village level to increase the involvement of women in community affairs. Even though there is encouragement to increase the participation of women's groups, the law does not specify how, or more importantly, commit resources, to support these activities. As a response to this, the Lead Partner, collaborating with the Learning Forum, is advocating for a more specific regulation on Women and Child-Friendly Villages, abbreviated as *DRPPA*, to provide a legal foundation that encourages the integration of a gender perspective and children's rights into the governance of village administration and village development, and secure allocation of village fund funding for its activities. In addition to this, the Learning Forum also prepares technical guidelines for implementing Women and Child-Friendly Villages, based on their experience of implementing the *Mawar Desa* pilot.

To further strengthen the enabling environment of citizen participation in village government, the Learning Forum has also been successful at advocating for a regulation that improves transparency and access to public information for future collaboration. With support from the Serang District Information Office, a circular letter successfully passed and was enacted by the district Legal Affairs Bureau in December 2022. The circular letter encourages village governments to establish an Office of Public Information and Documentation – *Pejabat Pengelola Informasi dan Dokumentasi* (PPID) – at the village level to improve citizen access to public information. The Lead Partner also engaged with the Serang kesbangpol office to introduce and advocate for the organizational performance index as a mechanism to improve CSO engagement with local government, as well as provide an effective tool for local governments to increase collaboration in the future. Fortunately, the head of the local Kesbangpol office is personally invested in this system and has ensured that OPI socialization events will be included in next year's local budget (APBD). Furthermore, PD Aisyiyah recently signed a contract with the Serang Government to conduct a community satisfaction survey on village financial governance under a new social contracting mechanism established by PerPres 16/2018, which allows CSOs to gain contracts from government agencies, the first MADANI Lead Partner successful at doing so.

Key challenges in Serang are similar to those in Lebak. There is an agreement among the Learning Forum members that their current initiatives may not be enough to answer the persisting problem of low resources dedicated to female empowerment at the village level, as it involves larger issues of budget allocation at the district level. Moreover, the *Mawar Desa* initiative, while quite effective, requires intensive work and continued engagement that may not always be readily available. Regulatory output, through the Circular Letter on Public Information and on Women and Child-Friendly Villages (DRRPA), also needs to be followed up by an actual commitment from the local government to support it through planning and budgetary measures, so that it can be translated into actual programs and have an impact. In this matter, the Lead Partner, together with other CSOs in the Learning Forum, have been working to translate these regulatory policies into actual programs, and

advocating for resources, but their success remains to be seen, especially in influencing the local government budgetary process and priorities.

Boyolali

The Boyolali local government chose maternal and neonatal health as its thematic issue, as the mortality rate among pregnant women and newborns in Boyolali Regency remains high. In 2021, there were 45 cases of death of pregnant women and 131 cases of death of newborns. The maternal mortality rate (MMR) in 2021 was the highest since 2015, while infant mortality in 2021 had the most cases since 2018. There is little indication that mortality cases in Boyolali will decline. This condition can be attributed to several conditions, such as the prevalence of traditional midwives (*dukun beranak*), child marriage, and prevailing cultural beliefs that undermine trust in modern medical processes and institutions.

In response to this challenge, in March 2021 MADANI's Boyolali Learning Forum FORMMAD, led by Lead Partner LKTS, conducted a citizen perception survey on maternal and newborn health issues and access to services in two villages, as well as a social accountability survey in one community health center (*Puskesmas*) in Gladagsari. In addition, FORMMAD also conducted an analysis of "5 Whys" and "5 How's" to identify key issues that the community faced regarding maternal and child health services at the village level. The assessment found that services in studied *Puskesmas* are still perceived as poor. Some of the citizen grievances are slow service, long queues, inadequate information, unfriendly attitude of service providers, and the unavailability of the necessary equipment.

This result was then communicated with the public and the local government to seek solutions. Through a series of consultations with the local government, LKTS, together with FORMMAD, decided to opt for community-based health emergency assistance system strengthening. The pilot program was implemented in two intervention villages in the Gladagsari subdistrict, Sampetan and Seboto, by forming a maternal and child health Alert Village Team, or *Tim Desa SIAGA*. This team is a specialized cadre of individuals that is given extra training and resources by the Learning Forum to act as an emergency observation mechanism in the community, identifying at-risk pregnant women and assisting villagers in accessing maternal and child health services when needed. The Learning Forum also pushed for citizens and village government to address maternal and child health service quality from *Puskesmas*, by advocating village government to hold the sub-district government to account for better services from the *Puskesmas*.

The initiative by FORMMAD has been well received by both the village governments and district government. The support from the village governments can be seen from their willingness to provide funding from their village funds to resource the SIAGA cadres. The Boyolali local government has also shown a high interest in this initiative, as maternal and child health has been a key part of the development agenda. Within local government itself, there have been several initiatives to tackle this problem, such as streamlining the admission mechanism and surveillance of at-risk pregnant women and tasking the *Puskesmas* to conduct village-level data collection and observation to identify pregnant women at risk. Boyolali Bappeda officials have claimed that they want to scale up this *Desa SIAGA* model to more than 127 villages in Boyolali by collaborating with local universities to support its implementation.

In addition, as part of their larger district level policy advocacy, LKTS and FORMMAD successfully pushed for the local government to enact the Bupati Decree to "Increase Public Awareness and

Participation in Maternal and Child Health and Reduce Maternal and Infant Mortality Rates.” This was a foundation for the scale up of the *Desa SIAGA* team model and a Circular Letter (SE) to reiterate the importance of citizen participation in maternal and child health service improvement. Not only does this SE provide direct support for the current *Desa SIAGA* initiative by MADANI’s Learning Forum, but this regulation also creates greater legitimacy for future CSOs and local government to expand it in the future, as well as work on public participation and transparency in maternal and child health issues in general.

However, several challenges remain. First, the model relies on the preexisting network of cadres, which helps initial implementation but may still be risky in the long term as these cadres already committed to other programs. Also, the expressed *Desa SIAGA* scale-up plan by the local government remains without a clear resource commitment from the local government, especially in terms of specific budgetary allocation. The provision of village funds for implementation of the *SIAGA* teams at the village level has not gone into specifics on how these initiatives will be supported or funded in the future. At the same time, the SE at the district level was limited to restating the Bupati’s commitment on the improvement of maternal and child health, but it does not go into more detail on specific policy changes or a commitment of resources from the local government. Finally, as many of the Learning Forum members are already aware, this village level initiative is still unable to address the root problem facing maternal and child health in Boyolali, which is the lack of personnel, equipment, and infrastructure. The Learning Forum agrees that these are the most pressing problems but decided not to advocate towards resource allocation in budgeting due to its "sensitive" nature. When asked about this lack of resources at the frontline level, the local government officials also skirted the issue, mentioning that budgeting is not in their domain and instead suggested to make do with what is currently available.

Surakarta

Building upon the strong legacy of CSOs in the good governance movement in Surakarta, MADANI’s Lead Partner, KOMPIP, and its Learning Forum, Kombes, focus their thematic issue work on urban ward (*Kelurahan*) governance and transparency. The main piloting initiative and advocacy revolves around increasing the transparency and accountability of the Urban Wards Development Fund and increasing citizen’s participation in participatory development planning, or *Musrenbang*. In doing so, the Learning Forum conducted a social audit in two piloting wards: Mojosongo and Pajang. The social audit found several problems, such as the high prevalence of residents with residence status problems, no community organization that represents the interests of people with disabilities or households headed by single women, and the overall low participation capacity of marginalized communities within ward governance.

In response to these challenges, the Kombes Learning Forum supported a community organizing campaign at the ward level, especially through key community activists and champions among ward officials. Through these activists, the Kombes Learning Forum pushed for specific policies at the ward level. One key initiative is to demand the Head of Ward to build better reporting and supervision on the use of the Urban Wards Development Fund (*Dana Pembangunan Kelurahan, DPK*), a discretionary grant from the local government to the neighborhood, or ward, level that can be used for any social purposes. Through the social audits and the experience of Learning Forum members, it is found that this fund traditionally has very little transparency or a social accountability mechanism. Kombes is also advocating, through the Kelurahan activists, for DPK to be used to address the needs of people with

disabilities and other marginalized groups.

To support this Kelurahan-level initiative, Kombes also engaged in policy advocacy to create a supportive regulatory enabling environment. This includes efforts to improve Mayoral Regulation 31/2016 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation and Technical Instructions for Surakarta City Musrenbang and the Circular Letter of the Mayor No. 050/4093 concerning Development Priorities for the City of Surakarta in 2023 and the Implementation of Musrenbang for Regional Development Work Plans 2022. In the piloting wards, Kombes is also successfully advocating for a Head of Ward Decree that encourages and facilitates the formation of marginalized community organizations through the community strategy plan and Musrenbang, which now have been enacted in both pilot wards.

In Surakarta, MADANI's interventions and presence have been considered as very instrumental in not only pushing for specific thematic reform, but also jumpstarting CSO activism. MADANI Lead Partner KOMPIP has a decades-long and strong reputation for its activism work in Surakarta. However, they admit that they have faced increasingly difficult conditions to sustain their activities in the past few years, prior to becoming MADANI's Lead Partner. Members of the Kombes Learning Forum also credited MADANI as the most comprehensive and supportive program in which they have participated, because of its strategic investment in the long-term internal capacity of CSOs in Surakarta. KOMPIP members state that the technical capacity building by MADANI really revitalizes CSO collaboration with local governments in Surakarta. This was confirmed by local government officials that credited the Kombes Learning Forum as being a trusted partner of theirs in developing new initiatives.

Surakarta has always been a city with a dynamic political scene. Similar to other study districts, Surakarta's initiatives at the Kelurahan level will not be enough to tackle the root problem that involves shifting political will and the priorities of local government leadership. In this context, KOMPIP and other Learning Forum members are cognizant of the fact that they will eventually have to be ready for more politically oriented advocacy efforts to sustain their current success and create a critical mass that can push for greater changes in Surakarta. While they expressed concern that MADANI is ending, they also expressed optimism that the capacity building and learning they have gained from MADANI are invaluable tools for their advocacy ahead.

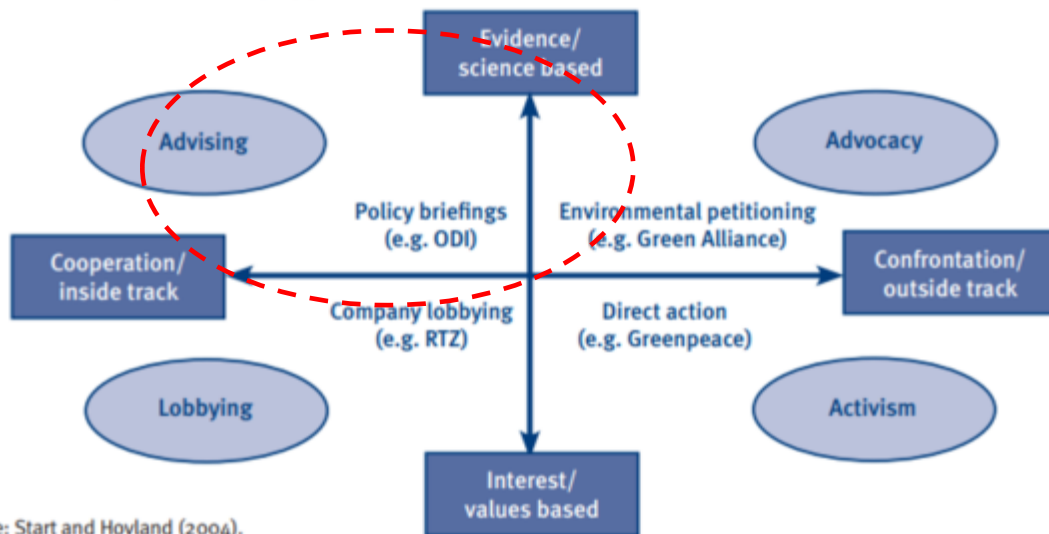
Analysis

Policy Influencing Framework Analysis

The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in London has created a useful tool within the conceptual framework of ODI's policy influencing approaches,⁷ which identifies four types of policy influence: advising, advocacy, lobbying and activism.

⁷ Start D. and I. Hovland, "Tools for Policy Impact A Handbook for Researchers". London: ODI 2004. Downloaded at <https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/194.pdf> from Harry Jones, "A guide to monitoring and evaluating policy influence: Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London. <https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/6453.pdf>

Figure 1: Policy influencing approaches



Source: Start and Hovland (2004).

In the words of this study,

These create four categories of policy influence strategy, which could be typologised as: advising, advocacy, lobbying and activism. Confrontation is usually the method of advocacy and activism strategies. It seeks to obtain change via pressure and seeks to point out problems rather than offer solutions. It works from the outside, rather than gaining an inside track in policy communities. Cooperation – the practice favoured by advising and lobbying – aims to build constructive, working relations with policy makers in order to develop solutions to complex problems. Both are effective and important ways of bringing about policy change. Both the carrot and the stick will create movement, and both are usually present in most forms of change. But it is difficult for one organisation to do both and, on the whole, think tanks usually lean away from confrontation and towards cooperation.⁸

Putting the findings in our study districts within this conceptual framework approach, MADANI Learning Forums fall mainly within the spectrum of Advising, with a smaller degree in Lobbying and Advocacy, as indicated by the red dotted area in the figure above. As will be further elaborated in this section, while MADANI Learning Forums mainly drive their activities through evidence based and collaborative work, they still retain capacity to use personal networks for Lobbying or a more adversarial approach, albeit in a very measured fashion that falls within the Advocacy spectrum. They then combine this evidence-based engagement with their preexisting capacity for Lobbying, which still comprises an important part of the overall Learning Forum approach in influencing local governments.⁹ Open confrontations of the Activism type on the other hand are very rarely utilized,

⁸ Start D. and I. Hovland, "Tools for Policy Impact A Handbook for Researchers". London: ODI 2004, page 5. Downloaded at <https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/194.pdf>

⁹ "Collaborative Governance in Strengthening Accountability and Tolerance in Decentralized Indonesia – a MADANI Program Assessment", July 2020 <https://www.madani-indonesia.org/working-paper-1-collaborative-governance/> and "Collaborative Governance Study Update", MADANI 2022. <https://www.madani-indonesia.org/collaborative-governance-study-update/>.

even though its importance is increasingly acknowledged by the Learning Forums, especially when reflecting on future challenges. This resulted in the utilization of a dual track strategy, both engaging in collaboration while preserving capacity to take a critical approach.

Consistent with the 2020 and 2022 Collaborative Governance Assessments,¹⁰ MADANI has been successful in changing the Lead Partner and Learning Forum approach, from mainly adversarial activities to a cooperative route in their advocacy. Compared to the first collaborative governance study, MADANI Lead Partners and Learning Forums have shifted their core activism strategy from openly adversarial activities, such as open demonstrations or confrontations via media or other public information channels. As identified in these assessments, these adversarial approaches in many cases were the most feasible avenue of engagement, as distrust was the prevailing norm within local governments, while CSOs also largely have a limited capacity in engaging in evidence-based advocacy. As a result, confrontations and disputes became the primary modes of engagement, which rarely delivered any significant or sustainable result. Today, local CSO partners are using evidence-based policy influencing tools, such as community score cards, perception surveys, and participating in public hearings.

In addition, MADANI has also been successful at shifting the Lead Partners and Learning Forums from personalized lobbying to an evidence-based and participatory approach. These changes have shown to be productive at influencing policies, yielding concrete output in terms of advocacy, such as regulations and immediate government commitment to collaborate with Lead Partners and Learning Forums' pilot activities. In the long term, this systematic trust building and capacity building in data and evidence-based advocacy may provide a critical and sustainable foundation for future collaboration between civil society and local government.

At the same time, the Learning Forum members still acknowledge the importance of preserving their independence and the need to remain critical of the government, which results in engaging in a multitude of confrontational tactics akin to the Advocacy type, albeit in a subtle and measured manner. For instance, to ensure a sense of urgency from the local government, the SIGMA Learning Forum decided to "leak" the result to a journalist to be published in local media ahead of its formal launch event with the local government. The news was quite critical in its tone and elicited wide discussions in the local social media sphere, creating pressure on the local government. The diverse nature of Learning Forum membership is well suited to carry these dual track tactics, as it enables some distancing and deniability by the rest of the Learning Forum members to preserve their relationship with the local government. A similar strategy was also adopted in Boyolali and Serang, where the Learning Forums leveraged local media and social media posts to create awareness and pressure to respond to their demands.

Utilizing personal connections and networks that falls within the Lobbying type is still an important means of driving the collaborative agenda forward. Yet, it is increasingly complemented by evidence-based advocacy. This study further confirms what has been identified in previous studies: informality matters and works. Utilization of personal networks is especially important in advocating regulatory and policy measures, as its development deals substantially with the political interests of

¹⁰ "Collaborative Governance in Strengthening Accountability and Tolerance in Decentralized Indonesia – a MADANI Program Assessment", July 2020 <https://www.madani-indonesia.org/working-paper-1-collaborative-governance/> and "Collaborative Governance Study Update", MADANI 2022. <https://www.madani-indonesia.org/collaborative-governance-study-update/>.

various stakeholders. In this matter, in addition to providing evidence, the Lead Partners and Learning Forums were engaging in intense personal networking with key local government officials to build trust. While this falls into the Lobbying type of policy influencing within the ODI framework, it is not clear cut, especially in terms of evidence utilization. In MADANI's case, even this informal communication towards government officials is still largely based on the evidence that the Lead Partners have collected through prior research. In this way, the key messages can be hammered in more effectively within the key official's mind and eventually expedite regulation development and its enactment.

While the Activism type of policy influencing activities has not been found in all study districts, all Learning Forums are cognizant of its importance moving forward. As previously mentioned, Learning Forums in all districts expressed their readiness to adopt a more politically confrontational approach moving forward, especially when dealing with low government commitment. The technically oriented evidence-based policy Advising type, the type most utilized by MADANI Lead Partners, has its own inherent limitations, especially when facing low government commitment and political will. This concern by the Lead Partners and Learning Forums is in line with the limitations argued, especially in the Collaborative Governance study, about the need to preserve CSOs' adversarial edge and not succumbing to the "technicalization" of civil society work.¹¹

In practice, these four policy advocacy types are not always mutually exclusive, or one considered better than the other. They are often intersected in the everyday activities of Lead Partners and Learning Forums when engaging with the local government. In fact, the ability to quickly adapt to and utilize different types of engagement strategies is a crucial element to the success of MADANI Lead Partners and Learning Forums. Lead Partners in all study districts have a preexisting savviness and highly attuned ability in reading the prevailing political and technical context, thanks to their long history of activism in each of the study districts. This speaks to the success of the MADANI Lead Partner selection mechanism and the training provided by Yappika-ActionAid and other national partners. In Boyolali, LKTS's deep familiarity with the local government political context, which is now dominated by a certain political party, informs their local government engagement strategy. This strategy focuses more on retaining strong buy-in from top officials, and less on securing support from lower bureaucracy, as the command and control is already quite rigid. In Surakarta, local governments are more used to strong public discourse in terms of accountability. Local media articles and opinions that are critical and taking a swipe at the local government are quite common there. Therefore, KOMPIP incorporated more of the confrontational method as part of their engagement strategy. In Lebak and Serang, as the political context is relatively more patronage-based, in addition to evidence-based Advising, Learning Forum members utilized a more informal and personal approach to key LG actors as part of their advocacy tactics.

The MADANI Learning Forum design is instrumental to Lead Partner and Learning Forum success in utilizing these policy influencing tactics. First, the inclusive principle that drives the Learning Forums enables a wide range of actors with different specializations to collaborate with each other. This enables Learning Forums to engage in a variety of policy influencing types, while maintaining coherency in their activities. Secondly, the multistakeholder design increased the legitimacy of the CSOs within the Learning Forum and enabled them to present a credible representation of civil

¹¹ "Collaborative Governance Study Update", MADANI 2022. <https://www.madani-indonesia.org/collaborative-governance-study-update/>.

society's interests when engaging with the local government. Finally, the Learning Forum setting also provides flexibility towards a range of both overt and subtle confrontational tactics, as seen in Lebak.

Key Insights from MADANI Policy Advocacy Activities

Consistent with previous Collaborative Governance Assessments,¹² local government has been receptive and open to the MADANI Learning Forums in the study districts. This is indicated by both a high degree of expressed commitments among local government officials and recorded interaction, both personally and institutionally, between the local governments and Learning Forums, indicating an active engagement in driving Learning Forum activities forward.

The majority of Lead Partners in study districts organized their advocacy activities from the ground up, focusing on community level issues and engagement as an entry point for larger policy uptake within their respective theme. In Lebak, the Learning Forum engaged in village level community organizing to operate as an accountability mechanism for the local Puskesmas. Through this advocacy, they managed to foster a more intensive dialogue with the local government about the necessary reforms to improve maternal and child health services provision at the village level. Similarly, in Serang, the issue of female participation is indirectly introduced to the local government through waste management activities. In Boyolali, the Lead Partner strategically built upon the preexisting cadre system to enable quicker buy-in from the community for their pilot model.

This community-level engagement approach by the Lead Partners is also tactically sound, as there are discretionary funds that they can directly access support to their pilot projects. In all study areas, Lead Partners and Learning Forums have been able to successfully engage the village and ward government to support their activities and secure a funding commitment to support implementation of their initiatives. This move is tactically smart, as it could be much harder and take longer to be able to secure a resource commitment from the district government budget. Through this pattern of engagement, the Learning Forum can quickly start their pilot activities, while also increasing sustainability. With the current trend of increasing devolution of funds and authority directly to the village to plan and execute their development plans, this approach is on the right track and will increasingly become an important strategy for CSO advocacy.

The study confirms that intensive community engagement is important to build legitimacy and leverage more intense engagement with the local government, especially at the grassroots level. The MADANI Learning Forum approach that pools resources and expertise available at the district level, combined with MADANI direct resource support and TA, is proven to be effective to act as a catalyst for more intense civil society engagement at the local level. This grassroots community-based initiative utilizes village level leadership, especially the Village Head, to engage the health service provider to be more accountable to their constituents. This approach is quite effective, as the Village Head may put effective pressure on the Subdistrict Head, who in turn will provide supervision to the Puskesmas. Moreover, this approach also leverages the village fund at the village level, which can be promptly utilized to support Learning Forum initiatives, as it is harder to expect resources from the district government due to its budgetary constraints.

¹² “Collaborative Governance in Strengthening Accountability and Tolerance in Decentralized Indonesia – a MADANI Program Assessment”, July 2020 <https://www.madani-indonesia.org/working-paper-1-collaborative-governance/> and “Collaborative Governance Study Update”, MADANI 2022. <https://www.madani-indonesia.org/collaborative-governance-study-update/>.

Utilizing preexisting programs and networks in the pilot activities may increase pilot program sustainability and help quick implementation. In Lebak and Boyolali, the Learning Forums utilize the current village level cadre network as their starting point. This practice is referred to locally as “sticking to” existing practices or “*nempel*.” For Learning Forums that focus on maternal and child health, there is an opportunity to leverage a plethora of national and regional programs that are already running in the countryside. Many of these programs are closely relevant or even intersect with the maternal and child health agenda driven by MADANI Learning Forums, such as stunting. By attaching their initiative to these existing networks of cadres, it may facilitate manpower and overcome the funding problem, at least at the beginning of the implementation phase. However, in the long term, this approach may risk higher workload for the village activists that are already responsible for a multitude of programs, which may end up decreasing the effectiveness of their pilot initiative.

The collaborative governance approach used by MADANI Learning Forums, through both thematic issues and general support towards local government in civil society empowerment, such as the introduction of OPI, are also effective at further fostering collaborative governance. In all study districts, in addition to its support for MADANI’s Lead Partner and Learning Forum pilot activities, local governments are also very excited with the introduction of the OPI.¹³ This approach of introducing the OPI is strategic, as it addressed the main problem that plagued the CSO-local government relationship in the past, which related to CSO capacity and credibility.¹⁴ The introduction of the OPI as a systematic and measured tool for local government to assess and sift through credible CSOs may solve longstanding hesitancy and distrust, which has hampered local governments’ engagement with civil society and may increase CSO credibility as capable and legitimate actors with which to collaborate. At the same time, the OPI can also push accountability from the CSO side, as it compelled CSOs to take an objective reflection of their own organization, which is critical for their own organizational growth.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were delays in all study districts in terms of execution of village-level pilots and community engagement. However, this delay gave more time for Learning Forums to build their internal capacity and relationships among their members. As argued previously, trust plays an important role in building effective and sustainable collaborative governance, and MADANI’s systematic preparation at the local government level in preparing for their advocacy work proved to be instrumental to their current success at the village level.

Impact of MADANI’s Policy Advocacy Efforts

This study confirms that MADANI activities continue to foster trust and openness from the local government towards CSOs, which paves the way for future collaboration. This study confirms previous assessments¹⁵ and maintains that MADANI has continued to successfully facilitate a greater opening and increase of CSOs’ collaboration with local government. In all study districts, there is a

¹³ See the complete results in “Year 3 Lead Partner Organizational Performance Index (OPI) Results” at <https://www.madani-indonesia.org/organizational-performance-index-report/> and an analysis of this by the present author at <https://www.madani-indonesia.org/analysis-of-lead-partners-organizational-performance-index-results-2022/>.

¹⁴ “Collaborative Governance Study Update”, MADANI 2022. <https://www.madani-indonesia.org/collaborative-governance-study-update/>.

¹⁵ “Collaborative Governance in Strengthening Accountability and Tolerance in Decentralized Indonesia – a MADANI Program Assessment”, July 2020 <https://www.madani-indonesia.org/working-paper-1-collaborative-governance/> and “Collaborative Governance Study Update”, MADANI 2022. <https://www.madani-indonesia.org/collaborative-governance-study-update/>.

general agreement among the CSOs that the local government has been receptive and supportive, albeit to a varying degree, of Learning Forum initiatives. Learning Forums have been effective in maintaining and developing access to the local government, sustainably engaging them, and building trust progressively. In this sense, MADANI has been able to open the doors to foster greater collaborative governance with local government, establishing and growing trust and credibility between local government and CSOs, building capacity among the CSOs, and facilitating Learning Forums as a technical coalition proving ground for CSO development.

Understanding how to analyze existing governance policies and practices improved Learning Forums' policy analysis and their subsequent advocacy strategies. Learning Forums have become experts at identifying policy gaps, formulating their own policy proposals, and engaging in advocacy. This pattern has been found in all four study districts. All Learning Forums have a clear idea about policy gaps and the shortcomings of the current regulatory framework, thanks to their intimate understanding of the local government's governance context. MADANI's TA has also been credited with this increased capacity in policy analysis and its subsequent campaign effectiveness. This is consistent with other MADANI assessments, which have found that MADANI's TAs has raised Lead Partner advocacy skills, built confidence in maintaining communication with partners, built internal capacity (governance, operational readiness and staff skills), and understood issues clearly to thus allow for the mapping out of an effective advocacy plan.

An evidence-based advocacy approach is crucial for CSO actors in gaining a seat at the decision-making table. MADANI, which emphasizes a solution-based approach to evidence-based advocacy, has successfully transformed CSO actors from noise-to-voice actors with credible expertise. Indeed, there is an indication in all study areas that Learning Forums and Lead Partners have increasingly positioned themselves as "experts," contrasting their methodical and evidence-based approach with the local governments' often reactive or haphazard approach to problem solving. This assertion has a degree of endorsement from the local government officials who acknowledge that CSO expertise, which provides fresh ideas and innovations, is very welcomed, as it readily complements local governments' limitations of being swamped with their respective administrative responsibilities.

More specifically, MADANI's Lead Partners and Learning Forums have been able to provide a much-needed capacity still lacking among the local governments, especially in terms of accountability and quality of service. This is especially pertinent in the study districts that focus on maternal and child health services. For instance, before MADANI, the local government's customer satisfaction surveys for Puskesmas in Lebak were mainly conducted by substandard consultants and carried out only as part of a formal administrative requirement. Similarly, in Boyolali, local government assessments of Puskesmas were always very positive even though the district's health indicator data suggested otherwise. Community score card activities conducted by the Learning Forum as part of their pilot activities are considered to be more legitimate. In Lebak, it was eventually used in Bappeda's coordination meeting about maternal and child health service issues. In Boyolali, the community score card process involved the local government, which eventually enabled buy-in of local government to support the pilot implementation in the two villages. It shows that these evidence-based approaches can act as accountability pressure mechanisms to the existing accountability system, which focuses only on formality.

The success of the Lead Partners in providing contending evidence to the local government cannot be separated from the consistent and systematic trust-building efforts by the Lead Partners and

Learning Forums under MADANI's purview. Presenting contending evidence on local government services can be a very tricky affair for the CSOs. Without the proper foundation of trust and legitimacy, local governments can be quite defensive when confronted by data or evidence that are critical of their performance. This is why an evidence-based advocacy plan in and of itself will most likely not suffice to produce a significant result and sustainable engagement by MADANI Lead Partners and Learning Forums in all study districts. The fact that local governments in study districts were open to, and even utilized, the evidence presented by MADANI Lead Partners reiterates the importance of systematic trust building brought about by MADANI's collaborative government approach.

MADANI's TA and its Learning Forum design build the confidence of CSOs with regards to their ability to cooperate and collaborate, both among themselves and with local governments. This is strategic for the future of CSO growth at the district level. The 2021 OPI assessment states that:

“The majority of the CSOs in all districts still do not have clear documentation of their activities, including data on their beneficiaries, mainly because of the absence of effective Monitoring and Evaluation systems. This failure to distribute findings, including information about results, to the public also hinders organizations from building a positive dialogue with constituencies and/or improving the perception of their professionalism through evidence-based programming.”¹⁶

This study reveals that in 2021 and 2022 there was substantial improvement in terms of Learning Forums' ability to engage in evidence-based programming and advocacy, giving them a significant boost of confidence, especially in engaging the local government, when they are advocating for specific issues. Intensive TA by MADANI for Learning Forum members, especially in terms of evidence-based advocacy, combined with internal organizational capacity strengthening, have enabled the Learning Forums to effectively utilize a systematic evidence-based approach that increased their legitimacy in the eye of their local government counterparts.

However, several challenges remain, the most vital of which are the quality of collaboration and sustainability of efforts. There are indications that the local governments are mainly taking a passive role, while it is the Learning Forums that are still having to mostly drive the collaboration. This is consistent with the issue identified in the 2022 Collaborative Governance Update,¹⁷ where local government collaboration remains only facilitated by the local government, and they are not yet co-designing new innovations with the Learning Forums. As identified in previous studies, reluctance from the local government to commit more resources, limited inclusion of CSOs at the planning and budgeting stage, and the rapid staff rotation (*mutasi*) are all key impediments to replication and a more advanced co-production of an innovative approach.

While Lead Partners and Learning Forums have enjoyed success in influencing policy by pushing a range of new regulations, there should be more attention to the implementation of those regulations. The key problems that plague service provision are not on the regulatory side, but rather on last mile implementation; namely, the actual implementation of frontline and community-level activities where plans meet reality. Typically, the failure to implement the policy results from the lack of willingness and capability of the LG apparatus rather than the quality of the design itself — the “last

¹⁶ <https://www.madani-indonesia.org/briefing-note-opi-results-2020/>.

¹⁷ “Collaborative Governance Study Update”, MADANI 2022. <https://www.madani-indonesia.org/collaborative-governance-study-update/>.

mile problem.”¹⁸ In this regard, MADANI’s Lead Partners and Learning Forums piloting efforts may yield important learnings and a model that can answer part of this challenge. However, the key challenge moving forward relates to scaling up this model and securing resources beyond piloting, maintaining stakeholders’ commitments and programmatic design that can translate this formal commitment into actual programs and activities. **Moreover, while regulatory products are important outputs in advocacy activities, CSOs should be aware of the danger of formalism as a local government appeasement tactic.** There is an increasing tendency by the local government to liberally issue decrees (*Surat Keputusan*, or SK), or regulatory products, such as government Circular Letters (*Surat Edaran*, or SE), merely to appease public and CSO demands, without policy specifics, clear commitment for follow up, or how it will be implemented. This tendency is identified in Lebak, Serang, and Boyolali, and was also identified in previous assessments.¹⁹ The policy products produced are usually vague and lack actual resource commitments or enforcement mechanisms. Moreover, there is also no evaluation mechanism or actual programmatic clarity on how this new regulation may improve actual conditions. Such decrees are important milestones and small victories, but the advocacy and policy influence should not end with their approval – the devil is in the details of implementation.

Challenges to MADANI’s Civil Society Advocacy Model

Demand-side advocacy is not always able to increase political will of government, which ties directly to budgeting and resource allocation issues. In all study districts, while local government officials are mostly open about the ideas of collaboration, when it comes to actual budgeting, they become less flexible and willing to discuss openly. There is strong indication that the local governments deemed that collaboration is possible at the activities level, but still have no clear idea on how it would be done at a more programmatic level. Local governments in Serang and Boyolali in particular are adamant that the main task of CSOs is to support their local government programs, and less in influencing the programmatic planning itself, especially when it comes to budgeting. Local government actors argue that the CSOs can bring their aspirations and influence, via a participatory planning mechanism such as Musrenbang, and not from direct advocacy.

Learning Forums voiced concern over the long-term feasibility of community-level initiatives in solving the problems in public service sectors. First, they pointed out that there are already many village-level task forces that have been created for a multitude of issues, from stunting to local economic development, with limited results. There is also a common practice for one person to become a cadre member for multiple issues, which has then hampered the cadres’ effectiveness.

The demand-side advocacy is also limited in terms of influencing local government’s actual spending. These community-level initiatives and surveillance will not compensate for the lack of resources at the frontline level, such as the lack of health personnel, doctors, and equipment at the Puskesmas level. Indeed, in both Lebak and Boyolali, where the focus is on maternal and child health,

¹⁸ See Pritchett, Lant, Michael Woolcock and Matt Andrews “Capability Traps? The Mechanisms of Persistent Implementation Failure,” available at https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/1424651_file_Pritchett_Capability_FINAL.pdf, not dated.

¹⁹ “Collaborative Governance in Strengthening Accountability and Tolerance in Decentralized Indonesia – a MADANI Program Assessment”, July 2020 <https://www.madani-indonesia.org/working-paper-1-collaborative-governance/> and “Collaborative Governance Study Update”, MADANI 2022. <https://www.madani-indonesia.org/collaborative-governance-study-update/>.

CSOs and local government officials recognized that the root problem is limited resource allocation at the frontline level. However, there are no clear agreements on how to tackle this problem from both the Learning Forum and local government perspective.

The preexisting quality of local governance also matters. The Learning Forums in Banten voiced concern over the effectiveness of rational policy-based advocacy within the context of pervasive patronage politics and corruption, especially when it comes to budget allocations and procurement.

Conclusions: Key Learning Points

The key to MADANI's Lead Partner and Learning Forum success in engaging with local government and producing policy impact is the ability to shift and combine various types of policy influencing strategies to achieve their agenda. In this regard, there is no particular type that is better than the other. While this study found that MADANI has been able to shift from the heavily personalized and lobby-based advocacy, which dominated civil society advocacy strategy prior to MADANI, Lead Partners and Learning Forums have retained their skills at engaging in more confrontational tactics, which makes them effective. There is clear and strong evidence that MADANI investment in TA has substantially changed CSO strategy at engaging with the local government, with more emphasis on systematic and evidence-based policy advocacy. MADANI's overall guiding principles, including Learning Forum design, and MADANI TA is instrumental in enabling the Learning Forums to engage in this balancing act. Moving forward, it is imperative for civil society actors to preserve their independence and retain their capacity to use all these different types of policy influencing activities based on the conditions.

Trust continues to be important in advocacy efforts. This is where MADANI's consistent approach on trust building and collaboration clearly pays dividends. Getting a seat at the table and being a recognized party is the first prerequisite of effective policy advocacy. Trust has been consistently identified as an important element in collaborative governance and local government engagement with civil society.²⁰ In this context, and despite the risk of depoliticization of civil society work as a control mechanism towards the state, MADANI's collaborative approach, which focuses on long term collaboration in engaging the local government, has effectively built a foundation for future engagement with the local government.

MADANI Lead Partner and Learning Forum policy advocacy, which combines grassroots organizing and piloting with policy level regulatory advocacy, is effective at producing concrete results. The simultaneous process of research, piloting, and regulatory advocacy creates an important cross-learning environment, which improves the overall quality of policy advocacy. Based on the findings, the policy proposals that the Lead Partners and Learning Forums pushed are very much in line with the evidence they found during their initial research stage. They also incorporated the learnings from their experience of conducting pilot activities into their policy proposals.

Aligning the activities to address strategic local development agendas remains an important approach to ensure sustainability. In Lebak and Boyolali, they presented their work as a strategic initiative that addresses local government needs. In Serang, they connected waste management to

²⁰ "Collaborative Governance in Strengthening Accountability and Tolerance in Decentralized Indonesia – a MADANI Program Assessment", July 2020 <https://www.madani-indonesia.org/working-paper-1-collaborative-governance/> and "Collaborative Governance Study Update", MADANI 2022. <https://www.madani-indonesia.org/collaborative-governance-study-update/>.

the larger agenda of the local government's strategic plan to develop tourism. In Surakarta, the CSO partners utilized the preexisting local government commitment in open and transparent governance to push for Kelurahan-level regulation, which may increase Kelurahan funds utilization towards people with disabilities. Despite its limitations, starting small with pilot projects and activities at the village level is strategic. It provided proof of concept to the local government, demonstrated commitments, and paved the way for greater future buy-in and commitment.

Leveraging available networks helps ensure that the policy agenda gains traction and resources. MADANI's approach, which focuses on building and increasing civil society network quality, is essential to ensuring that future Learning Forum initiatives can continue. As found in study districts, having wide stakeholder engagement, with each member bringing their network into the shared advocacy campaign, increased the sustainability of Learning Forum initiatives. For example, in Serang, one of the Learning Forum members succeeded in getting legislative recess funds to provide seed money for a village waste bank scale-up in the two pilot villages.

However, evidence-based is not always able to increase political will of government, which often ties directly to budgeting and resource allocation issues, reiterating the importance of preserving an adversarial capacity among the CSOs. While local government officials are mostly open about the ideas for collaboration, when it comes to actual budgeting, they become less flexible and willing to discuss openly. This is why the Learning Forums already thinking about how to work more politically. They are conscious of the importance of engaging in political movements in their future advocacy after MADANI.

Finding resources to support activities and programs remains a key issue despite the fact that regulations and a legal framework are already in place. As demonstrated in this study, while local governments are quite open and supportive of Learning Forum pilot initiatives, they have less responsiveness when it comes to sharing resources. The policy outputs achieved by the Learning Forums, such as Bupati Circular Letters, are still quite general and do not entail specific funding mechanisms. Facing this, Learning Forums focus on securing village-level commitments, and focusing on this type of funding for the pilot activities can be seen as a strategically sound tactic. By securing commitments from village governments, they can obtain a certain level of resources and funding that ensures the continuation of pilot programs.

Indeed, regulatory and policy output is important, but as the study data shows, the devil is in the details of implementation. There should be more attention paid to the substance and the implementation of those regulations, as there is a risk that the local government may issue a decree or circular letter to appease civil society's demand without providing a clear commitment for follow up or implementation.

Scale up is important, but it has to be done carefully and with clear plans. Learning Forums should focus on the quality of the process, not quick outputs or scale ups. Taking time to learn and tweak the existing pilot programs, and then communicating with the local government in a more comprehensive manner, which includes details on the technical capacity and funding needed, is more important than convincing the local government to just adopt and scale up the model right away.