

Women's Empowerment through the Lorong Wisata Program as a Strategy for Improving Family Welfare in Makassar City

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Abstrack

Women living in the alleys (lorong) of Makassar City have long been a group at the periphery of urban development policy attention. They face a dual challenge: limited economic access alongside a heavy responsibility for sustaining family life. The Lorong Wisata ("Tourism Alley") Program, initiated by the Makassar City Government, emerged as a policy innovation that not only reorganizes the physical environment of the alleys but also opens space for women's empowerment within them. This study aims to describe the forms of women's empowerment generated through the Lorong Wisata Program and to analyze its impact on improving family welfare. The study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation involving women actively engaged in the Lorong Wisata Program in Makassar City. Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman. The findings show that the Lorong Wisata Program provides women with access to skills training, business capital, and stronger social networks. This empowerment encourages a shift in women's roles from being merely housewives to becoming active economic actors who make a tangible contribution to family income. In addition, there is an increase in self-confidence, independence in decision-making, and improvement in environmental quality that together support family welfare in a holistic manner. This study concludes that the Lorong Wisata Program has the potential to become a sustainable, locally grounded model of women's empowerment that is relevant to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goals 1, 5, and 11.

Keywords: women's empowerment, Lorong wisata, family welfare, household economy, urban development

INTRODUCTION

Urban poverty is one of the most complex development challenges in Indonesia (Utami et al., 2024). In big cities, poverty is not only reflected in low incomes, but also in limited access to economic resources (M. Raihan Noer et al., 2025), Social Services (Yendra et al., 2023), and public participation spaces (Muryani & Sugiyanto, 2025). The city of Makassar as the center of economic growth in the Eastern Region of Indonesia is not spared from this problem. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency of Makassar City (2026), the number of poor people in Makassar City was recorded at 71.63 thousand people with a poverty percentage of 4.43 percent (BPS Kota Makassar, 2026). This figure places Makassar as the city with the highest number of poor people in South Sulawesi Province, although the percentage is relatively low compared to other districts/cities in the same province (BPS Sulsel, 2024).

The majority of the poor in Makassar City live in the alleyway area, which is small streets with a maximum width of four meters flanked by dense housing on the left and right sides (Perwali Makassar No 94 Tahun 2022, 2022). The majority of the poor in Makassar City live in the alleyway area, which is small streets with a maximum width of four meters flanked by dense housing on the left and right sides (Idrus & Umar, 2024). Among the groups most affected by these conditions are women, who structurally face a double burden: bearing domestic responsibilities while trying to contribute to the family economy with very limited resources (Tuwu, 2018).

Responding to these conditions, the Makassar City Government under the leadership of Mayor Mohammad Ramdhan Pomanto launched the Lorong Wisata Program as one of the priority development programs. This program is a development of the Lorong Garden Program and is officially strengthened through Makassar Mayor Regulation Number 94 of 2022 concerning the Establishment of Lorong Wisata (Wulandari, 2024). This program aims to transform the alley that was originally synonymous with slums into an area that has good infrastructure, a beautiful environment, and an economic turnaround that can increase residents' income (Aminah, 2022). In the context of economic recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic, this program is designed not only as a physical intervention, but also as an instrument of community empowerment, including women's empowerment through the formation of business groups, skills training, and development *Kelompok Wanita Tani (KWT)* (Asrianto et al., 2023).

Women's empowerment in the context of urban development has become a global concern, particularly within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals, Especially the 1st (no poverty), 5th (gender equality), and 11th (sustainable cities and settlements) goals (Indriastuti et al., 2023). At the local level, Makassar City also has a legal umbrella in the form of Regional Regulation Number 5 of 2019 concerning the Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming (PUG) in Development, which emphasizes that all regional development programs must be oriented towards gender equality and justice (Perwali Makassar No 5 Tahun 2019, 2019). This policy framework normatively places the Lorong Wisata Program as one of the strategic arenas for women's empowerment at the community level.

Previous studies on the Makassar City Tourism Corridor generally focused on aspects of social change (Asrianto et al., 2023), MSME development (Hafid et al., 2023), and social policy in general. There has been no study that specifically examines the forms of women's empowerment facilitated by the Lorong Wisata Program and its impact on family welfare. This gap is the starting point of this research.

This study uses Jim Ife's empowerment theory as a framework for analysis. In *Community Development: Creating Community Alternatives, Vision, Analysis and Practice* (1997), Ife defines empowerment as an effort to provide resources, opportunities, knowledge, and skills to citizens to improve their ability to determine their own future (Ife, 2016). This concept is based on two main ideas, namely *power* and *disadvantaged*, both of which are strongly attached to the condition of women living in urban corridors. Ife also identified three empowerment strategies relevant to this context: empowerment through policy and planning, empowerment through social action, and empowerment through education and awareness raising. These three strategies are used as a lens to read the extent to which the Lorong Wisata Program has opened up space for women to transition from a purely domestic role to a role as an active and empowered economic agent (Ife, 2020).

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type (Creswell, 2009). This approach was chosen because the purpose of the research is to describe in depth the empirical reality of women's empowerment in the Lorong Wisata Program, as it is lived and interpreted by the actors themselves. The

data collected was not in the form of numbers, but came from interview narratives, field notes, and documentation. The research was carried out in Lorong Maastrich, Bara-baraya Village, Makassar District, Makassar City. The selection of the location was carried out *purposively* with the consideration that Makassar District is the sub-district with the highest number of extreme poor families in Makassar City, which reached 1,391 families based on data from the 2023 Target for the Acceleration of Extreme Poverty Elimination (P3KE). Among the alleys that have been designated as Tourism Lanes in the sub-district, Maastrich Lane was chosen because it is a leading tourist corridor that shows the most real development of women's empowerment, marked by the active women-based MSME groups and skills training that runs on a sustainable basis. Data collection in the field will be carried out from November 2023 to January 2024.

The research informants were determined through *purposive sampling techniques* (Sugiyono, 2013), Namely choosing the informant who is considered to have the most mastery of information according to the purpose of the research. Informants consist of two categories. First, the government, including the staff of the Makassar City Tourism Office, Makassar District staff, and Bara-baraya Village staff. Second, the woman who lives in the Maastrich Corridor, is 18–60 years old, and has lived in the corridor for more than five years. The key informant is Mrs. YW, as the Chairperson of ORW in Lorong Maastrich, who has in-depth knowledge of program dynamics and women's involvement in the lane.

Data collection is carried out through three techniques. First, *in-depth interviews* with a relaxed but structured conversation approach are conducted directly in the hallway when the informant is on an active basis, such as watering plants, sweeping, or gathering in the afternoon. Second, participatory observation, where researchers go directly to participate in community activities related to the Lorong Wisata Program to find empirical facts that complement the informant's information (Margono, 2005). Third, documentation, namely the search for public documents, including policies, photos of activities, and relevant program reports.

Data analysis follows Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model, which consists of four stages: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Creswell, 2009; Miles et al., 2014). The interview transcript is coded into categories relevant to the dimensions of empowerment according to Jim Ife's framework, namely access to resources, economic opportunities, knowledge and skills, and strengthening social networks and then presented in the form of a descriptive narrative and confirmed through triangulation of sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

• Informant Profile

This study involved six informants selected *purposively* based on two main criteria: active involvement in the Lorong Wisata Program in Lorong Maastrich, and relevance to the issue of women's empowerment. Informants fell into two categories: government representatives knowledgeable about the program's regulations and technical implementation, and women residing in Lorong Maastrich who directly experienced the program's impact. The complete informant profile is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Informant Profile

No	Initials	Sex	Age	Occupation	Length of Residence / Status	Category
1	Bapak SF	M	52	Tourism Office	Program implementer	Government
2	Bapak BH	M	55	Bara-baraya Sub-district Office	Program implementer	Government
3	Ibu YW	F	47	Housewife / RW (Neighborhood) Chair	>20 years	Community leader / Key informant
4	Ibu NI	F	52	Housewife / Trader	>20 years	Alley resident
5	Ibu HS	F	46	Housewife / Trader	>20 years	Alley resident

6	Sdr ZF	M	25	Daily laborer	>20 years	Alley resident
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Source: Field Data, 2023

As shown in the table above, all resident informants had lived in Lorong Maastrich for more than twenty years. This means they did not merely know the alley from the outside but had lived through its various physical and social changes over the long term, including the periods before and after the Lorong Wisata Program. The predominance of women among the informants reflects the reality on the ground: women are the ones most actively involved in the program's day-to-day activities, from planting and training to managing MSMEs. As the key informant, Ibu YW held a strategic role as ORW Chair, serving as a link between government and the community in her alley and as the driving force behind women's involvement in the program. Meanwhile, the government informants, Bapak SF and Bapak BH, provided the policy and technical-implementation perspective that was an important complement to understanding the empowerment context from the structural side.

- **Research Results**

Drawing on Jim Ife's (1997) empowerment framework, the research findings from Lorong Maastrich are organized into three dimensions of empowerment: empowerment through planning and policy, empowerment through education and consciousness-raising, and empowerment through social action. These three dimensions do not operate separately; rather, they reinforce one another and together form a single, gradual process of transformation for the women living in the alley.

- 1. Empowerment through Planning and Policy: Access to Resources and Economic Opportunities**

The first dimension of empowerment in Ife's framework is empowerment through planning and policy, that is, when structures and institutions are built or changed in ways that provide more equal access to resources and economic opportunities. In Lorong Maastrich, this took the form of physical assistance, productive plant seedlings, pots, and planting media, distributed by the Makassar City Government through the sub-district office, as well as opening access for women's MSME groups to appear at official city events. This assistance was not merely material; it served as an entry point for alley women to begin participating in economic activity, however small in scale. Bapak BH, representing the Bara-baraya Sub-district Office, explained the program's design from the government's side:

"Actually, the concept of Lorong Wisata is to stabilize the economy of the alley's residents, but through their own effort and awareness. We've already given them help — seedlings, pots, soil — then they plant it themselves, and it's them who enjoy the results, whether they want to consume it themselves or sell it." (Interview, 21 November 2023)

Bapak BH's statement reveals the policy logic underlying the program: the government positions itself as a facilitator that opens access, while community self-reliance — with women, as the main managers of the domestic sphere and of the plants, at the forefront of implementation. This view is reinforced by Bapak SF from the Tourism Office, who affirmed that Lorong Wisata brings a renewal that includes an empowerment component, unlike its predecessor, which was more aesthetic in nature:

"So the Lorong Wisata program really is different from the previous one; it's a renewal of the Lorong Garden program. But while Lorong Garden used to focus more on greening, Lorong Wisata still includes greening but now also comes with training, so the hope is that alley residents can become more self-reliant." (Interview, 21 November 2023)

The impact of this access to resources is most keenly felt in the daily lives of women in Lorong Maastrich. Ibu YW, as ORW Chair and the driving force behind women in her alley, described the changes she witnessed firsthand:

"Lorong Wisata has brought a lot of benefits for my residents. From the plants they grow, they can use them for everyday consumption, so whereas before they always had to buy vegetables and chilies, now they don't need to buy them anymore, so they can save that money for other needs. Besides that, the mothers running MSMEs, like the ones making jalangkote, always get invited whenever there's a government event, like the recent F8 festival — they're given a spot there. That's the kind of benefit felt from Lorong Wisata." (Interview, 16 December 2023)

Ibu YW's account reveals two layers of benefit at once. First, a subsistence benefit: women no longer need to spend money buying vegetables, since productive plants such as water spinach, chili, and tomatoes now grow along the alley. This small saving carries great meaning for families with uncertain daily income.

Second, a market-access benefit: women's MSME groups, producing traditional foods such as *jalangkote* (a Makassarese savory pastry), gain space to sell at official city government events such as the F8 festival, Makassar's annual flagship city event. This is a concrete form of what Ife calls the opening of access to economic resources — women who previously operated only within the domestic economy are now beginning to enter the public economic sphere.

2. Empowerment through Education and Consciousness-Raising: Knowledge and Skills as New Capital

The second dimension of empowerment according to Ife is empowerment through education and consciousness-raising, that is, efforts to equip communities with the knowledge and skills that allow them to build their own capacity. In Lorong Maastrich, this dimension is most clearly realized through a series of skills-training sessions attended by the alley's women. Ibu YW described how the training took place and what the women in her alley were taught:

"The government always takes our mothers to be trained at hotels. There they're taught the proper way to package products, how to promote them on social media, and even how to calculate turnover — that's taught too." (Interview, 16 December 2023)

The phrase "always takes our mothers" in Ibu YW's account is not merely a technical description; it reflects a consistent, recurring pattern. These training sessions cover three complementary competencies: production skills (packaging), digital marketing skills (social media promotion), and basic management skills (calculating turnover). For women who had previously managed family finances only informally, mastering these three competencies represents a significant leap in capacity. They learn not only how to sell products but also how to think like business actors. Beyond MSME training, women in Lorong Maastrich also gained new knowledge in urban farming. Sdr ZF described how this knowledge transfer took place informally yet effectively, through Ibu YW's role as facilitator:

"So the RW head [Ibu YW] taught us how to make the plants grow well, how long it takes, how to know when a plant is ready to harvest. Before, we just didn't know things like that — we bought everything, especially since the market was close by anyway." (Interview, 16 December 2023)

Sdr ZF's account reveals something important: knowledge about farming may seem simple, but for an urban community whose entire food supply depended on the market, this knowledge was genuinely new. The phrase "we just didn't know things like that before" reflects the distance between conditions before and after the program. Ife (1997) argues that one of the most fundamental sources of powerlessness is the absence of knowledge. By filling this gap, the Lorong Wisata Program indirectly expands what Ife calls the capacity to determine one's own needs — women now know what they can grow, how to care for it, and when to harvest it, without having to depend entirely on the market or outside assistance. Furthermore, Ibu YW revealed that the program also changed how alley women approached the potential they already had:

"So far the Lorong Wisata program's focus really is on improving the alley, and also on improving the economy. So if the mothers already have a business, we help develop it. If they don't have one yet, we form groups for them, like farmer groups." (Interview, 16 December 2023)

This statement shows that the program targets not only women who already run a business but also actively forms new groups for those without any productive economic activity yet. This is a concrete manifestation of the empowerment-through-education-and-consciousness strategy within Ife's framework: not merely teaching technical skills, but building the awareness that alley women possess potential that can be developed into a source of income.

3. Empowerment through Social Action: Strengthening Networks and Shifting Roles

The third dimension of empowerment in Ife's framework is empowerment through social action, that is, how collective organizing and the strengthening of social networks allow a community to build shared strength. In Lorong Maastrich, this dimension manifests in two interrelated ways: the strengthening of women's networks as an active collectivity, and the shift in women's roles from mere housewives to economic agents recognized by the community.

Ibu YW's role as ORW Chair is the nodal point of this process. She does not simply pass on government instructions to residents but actively organizes the women in her alley, identifies each woman's potential, and ensures their involvement in the program. She carries out this busy role alongside her role as a housewife — a condition that reflects what the women's empowerment literature often calls a *double burden*, yet in the context of Lorong Maastrich, that burden has instead become a source of leadership. Ibu

NI, known in Lorong Maastrich as the woman with the largest plant collection, has become a reference figure for other residents seeking seedlings:

"My father, he's over 60 years old. With Lorong Wisata here, whenever people are out planting, he joins in and plants too, so he has something to do — he doesn't get bored just staying inside the house all the time. We can also chat with the neighbors more often now, since the alley is clean and doesn't smell bad anymore, so we don't have to worry."
 (Interview, 23 December 2023)

Ibu NI's account reveals a social dimension of empowerment that is often overlooked: increased mobility and social interaction among elderly residents in the alley. Now clean and green, the alley has become a more welcoming public space, encouraging women of all ages to leave their homes more often, interact, and share with one another. This is a concrete form of what Ife (1997) describes as freedom of expression and the strengthening of institutional capacity, part of the community strengths that need to be activated in the empowerment process.

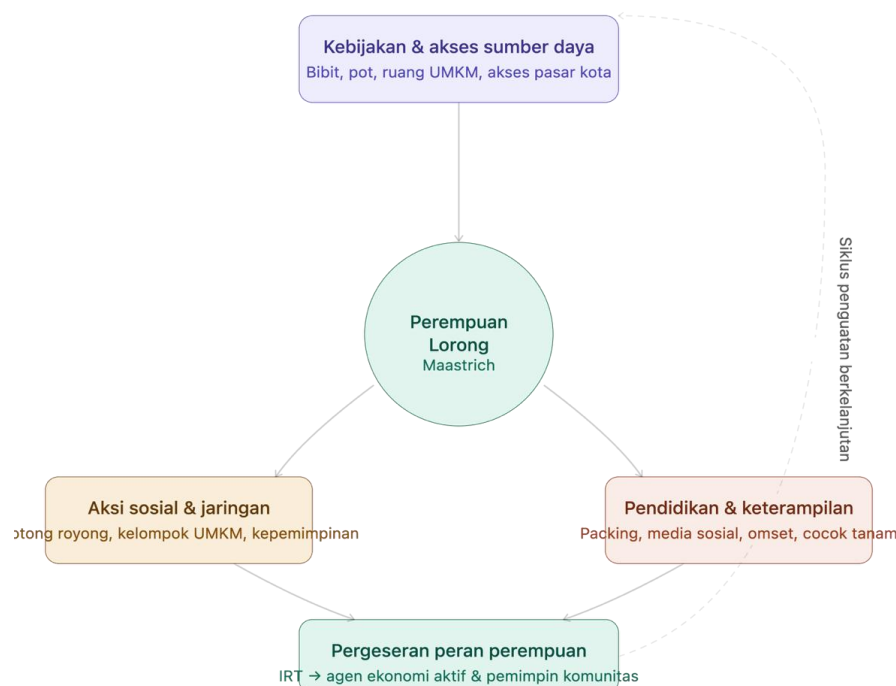
The most substantive role shift, however, is women's entry into the public economic sphere. Before the program, women in Lorong Maastrich generally served only as informal managers of family finances. Now, through the MSME groups formed by the program, they have come to be known as producers, sellers, and even exhibitors at city events. Ibu HS, who runs a small business alongside her role as a housewife, has become one face of this change — a woman who once simply "existed in the alley" now "represents the alley" before a wider public.

From Ife's (1997) perspective, this shift reflects women's growing access to economic resources and their growing capacity to determine their own choices, two of the six types of community strength Ife identifies as central to the empowerment process. When women are no longer merely beneficiaries of a program but also its active agents, empowerment ceases to be merely policy discourse and becomes a lived reality within the alley itself.

• Discussion

The three findings presented above do not stand alone; together they form a mutually reinforcing empowerment system that moves cyclically, as visualized in Figure 1 below. Using Jim Ife's (1997) framework as an analytical lens, it can be seen that the Lorong Wisata Program in Lorong Maastrich has activated all three empowerment strategies simultaneously, albeit with differing intensity.

Figure 1. The Cycle of Women's Empowerment in Lorong Wisata



Source: Authors' analysis

The entry point of this whole process is the first dimension: empowerment through policy and access to resources. The Makassar City Government's policy, set out in Mayoral Regulation No. 94 of 2022, opened access for alley women to resources previously out of reach — seedlings, planting media, training spaces, and even a market stage in the city through the F8 event. Within Ife's framework, this is the initial precondition: as long as access to resources remains closed, no empowerment can occur, however strong a woman's individual potential may be.

This open access then flows into the second dimension: empowerment through education and consciousness-raising. The packaging, social-media-promotion, and turnover-calculation training received by the women of Lorong Maastrich are not mere technical courses but a process of cognitive transformation. Women who previously managed family finances intuitively begin to think like business actors: calculating costs, planning production, and marketing products to a wider audience. This aligns with Ife's (1997) argument that knowledge is the most egalitarian form of power — it can be given without diminishing anyone else's share, and once possessed, it is not easily taken away.

These two dimensions then converge and settle into the third dimension: empowerment through social action. Communal work (*gotong royong*) painting the alley, the formation of the *jalangkote* MSME group, and Ibu YW's leadership as a community driver are all expressions of collective strength growing out of the interaction between access and knowledge. It is here that the shift in women's roles becomes most visible: from mere community members receiving a program to actors who organize, motivate, and pass knowledge on to one another.

What makes this system sustainable is its cyclical nature. As women become known as active MSME actors and alley leaders, their self-confidence grows, and that confidence drives them to more actively seek further access to resources, join more training, and expand their social networks. This cycle, indicated by the dashed line in Figure 1, is the core of what Ife (1997) calls genuine empowerment: not a one-off intervention, but an ongoing process that continually generates new strength out of existing strength. These findings also affirm the relevance of the Lorong Wisata Program as a locally grounded model of women's empowerment. Unlike top-down, uniform empowerment approaches, this program uses the alley's physical space — already familiar to and inhabited by women as their everyday domain — as the starting point for transformation. The result is not only increased income but also a shift in women's social position within the community: from invisible alley residents to publicly recognized faces of the alley.

CONCLUSION

This study finds that the Lorong Wisata Program in Lorong Maastrich, Bara-baraya Sub-district, Makassar District, has facilitated a process of women's empowerment through three mutually reinforcing dimensions within Jim Ife's framework: empowerment through policy and access to resources, empowerment through education and consciousness-raising, and empowerment through social action. These three dimensions do not operate linearly but cyclically; each empowerment achievement becomes capital for accessing the next opportunity, forming an ongoing spiral of reinforcement.

Substantively, the program has driven a shift in alley women's roles from housewives confined to the domestic economy to active economic agents engaged in production, marketing, and a wider public network. This shift is realized in three concrete ways: first, reduced dependence on the market for daily food needs through urban farming; second, opened access for women's MSME groups to appear in the city's public space; and third, the emergence of women as leaders and community drivers at the alley level.

These findings carry important policy implications. The Lorong Wisata Program shows that women's everyday physical space — the alley itself — can become an effective arena of social transformation when managed with the right approach: opening access, building capacity, and organizing collective action all at once. This model is worth replicating in other alley areas across Makassar City and in other Indonesian cities with similar settlement characteristics, as an alternative, locally grounded, and sustainable approach to urban women's empowerment.

This study also contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 5 (gender equality), and SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), by showing that all three can be pursued simultaneously through a single alley-based community program designed with a gender perspective.

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Authors' Bibliography

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