

# The Politics of Women's Representation in Waste Management in Jombang Regency

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## Abstract

It aims to analyze the strategy and impact of the role of the Indonesian Green Studio in encouraging women's political representation in waste management in Jombang Regency. Using qualitative studies through direct observation to grassroots women and stakeholders as well as participatory observation in eight waste banks, and waste management policy analysis. The results/findings show that Sanggar Hijau Indonesia has successfully advocated for environmental policy through three strategies: (1) evidence-based representation by demonstrating the technical success of grassroots waste management (2) the transformation of women's roles from managers to drivers of environmental policy (3) recognition of women's leadership is realized through the Sampah Sayang policy, which results from a tactical coalition between women, bureaucrats, and civil society elements. The limitations in this study are limited to the Jombang context and require further studies to test the sustainability of women's representation. This research contributes to the theory of ecofeminism and environmental politics by offering a model of environmental movement advocacy from grassroots and policymakers. The novelty of this study reveals a performance-based legitimacy mechanism where the technical capacity of waste management by women becomes the basis for their political recognition in the policy process.

**Keywords:** politics, women's representation, waste management, waste policy saying

## 1. Introduction

Women's political representation is often interpreted as the role of women occupying parliamentary seats, so it will be easy to make and encourage policies that are in favor of women. Another consequence is that women's political representation requires them to be affiliated with political parties as a prerequisite for entering the arena of election contestation. Quoting Waylen in the book *Democracy Without Demos*, he said that the democratization literature that only focuses on institutional issues, fails to accommodate gender perspectives and cannot see how women's role in the democratic transition <sup>1</sup>is.

Women's representation of 30 percent is a requirement for all parties participating in election contests under the rules of Law No. 31 of 2022 concerning Political Parties. However, Julia Suryakusuma said that women who were elected in the election received strong kinship support from the rulers<sup>2</sup>. That is why their representation in the legislature does not accommodate gender interests in policymaking.

This is strengthened by data from *Freedom House* which shows a decline in Indonesia's democracy index from 62 in 2019 to 57 in 2024<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, to be able to present women's representation politics, a strategy for organizing political movements by groups is needed. At

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<sup>1</sup> Wijayanto, et al., *Democracy Without Demos: A Reflection on 100 Years of Socio-Political Scientists on the Decline of Democracy in Indonesia* (Depok: LP3ES, 2021), p. 366

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 400

<sup>3</sup> <https://greennetwork.id/gna-knowledge-hub/menurunnya-indeks-demokrasi-indonesia/>

the local level, Jombang Regency, Sanggar Hijau Indonesia (SHI) has become an icon of the grassroots environmental movement. It does not mean that there are no challenges, to negotiate the movement and advocacy of the empowerment of entrepreneurs.

We must remember the history of the women's movement before the reform, the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) was able to awaken the birth of various women's organizations towards a democratic transition. Non-parliamentary movements such as Suara Ibu Peduli (SIP) in the midst of the 1997 monetary crisis have changed the paradigm of the new order that distances women from political movements. Their role attaches that politics is part of daily life<sup>4</sup>.

Sanggar Hijau Indonesia (SHI) is a CSO engaged in environmental issues, since officially becoming a legal entity in 2019 actively providing assistance in waste management in urban areas, villages, and schools<sup>5</sup>. One of the assisted areas is Kaliwungu Village, Jombang District, Jombang Regency, through the East Java provincial environmental program, Kampung Berseri is the entrance for SHI grassroots environmental works. After completing the program, the assistance is done, which often happens, but this is not the case with SHI assistance in Kaliwungu. After receiving the award, the environmental activities that originally ran on one, two RTs were able to move other RTs to replicate environmental good practices that began with the establishment of a waste bank and ensured that it was running.

One of the supporting factors for the running of the waste bank is the facilitation of scheduled collection for each RT. When SHI assisted in the establishment of a waste bank, it was not enough to establish an institution. A form of sustainable mentoring, connected to SHI's waste bank called *Trash4cycle*. It is the main waste bank in the Kaliwungu Village area, while the waste bank at the RT level is the unit. It is important to know that waste banks that are nursing jobs in terms of the environment are dominated by the role of women.

The promotion that is often used is *the circular economy*, although in fact it has not been able to achieve economic turnover in the prosperous category for women's households. More precisely, volunteer work is built from awareness. The awareness of the long process of mentoring and education carried out by SHI does not only include how to manage waste, sorting tutorials, making compost to administrative recording. Residents receive training on women's leadership, GEDSI, political education, in addition to empowerment materials that are integrated with the environment.

Currently, Kaliwungu Village has established eight waste banks, many have won environmental awards from the government and the private sector, so that it becomes an example for other villages and regions outside Jombang Regency. On June 20, 2025, this village received appreciation from the Chairman of the Jombang Regency TP PKK as an eco edu service center and environmental social laboratory for the dedication of environmental cadres in the RW 03 Kaliwungu Village area to foster and assist 10 Proklim (Community Program for Climate) locations in Jombang Regency at the RW level in Urban Villages and Hamlets.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 367

<sup>5</sup> <https://sanggarhijau.com/tentang-kami/>

Proklim is a program from the Ministry of Environment (KLHK), now the Ministry of Environment (KLH), which aims to overcome climate problems through adaptation and mitigation measures at the village and sub-district levels. The environmental cadres from RW 3 are women who play a role in delivering Jombang Regency to the Adipura award. In 2025, Jombang Regency will advance towards a sustainable level Proklim, RW 03 Kaliwungu Village will assist 10 villages and sub-districts. From the grassroots movement that was planted and grown, SHI succeeded in forming environmental educators consisting of female cadres. Even today the Kaliwungu area is known as SI BESUT Village. The abbreviation SI BESUT is an innovation created by SHI to facilitate the concept of waste management.

SI is Slap, B is a waste bank, E ecobrick, and SUT is a compost for plants. BESUT is taken from the cultural characterization in Jombang Regency. A collection of artwork from the Scarlet Letter. Through evidence-based grassroots movements, SHI has succeeded in encouraging women's political representation in everyday movements. Facilities from the Village in the form of a heart-shaped garbage basket for each RT area were replicated by the Jombang Regency Government through a collaborative program of the Jombang Regency Environment Agency and the Regency PKK Mobilization Team to launch the "Sayang Garbage Movement" on October 28, 2025.

## **2. Method**

This study uses a qualitative approach through direct observation to unravel how the political form of non-parliamentary women's representation is able to encourage waste management policies in Jombang Regency and how the journey of Sanggar Hijau Indonesia as a Civil Society Organization to open up women's voices at the RW level through its agency is able to encourage it to the district level.

### ***2.1 Fragmented Representations***

The discourse of political representation tends to be assumed negatively, borrowing the concept of Nuri Soeseno (2013) in the writings of Dirga Ardiansa (2016) where there are three points of decline in the interpretation of women's representation. First, "*political representation will not present a perfect representation of interests and identities, only half or partial*". The definition of formal politics through elections to present the people. The affirmative action concept of a 30 percent quota for women is an effort to increase women's representation in parliament.

Second, "*the second discourse of the issue of political representation, that democratic political representation occurs if those whose interests are influenced or touched by a decision have the capacity to (be involved) in influencing that decision-making*". What does it mean? The choice is based on what is in the interest of a political party, candidate for a people's representative, or candidate. Instead of being based on the interests of the people, the choice is *top-down* from the political party elite, the people's representative candidates, and candidates.

Third, electoral and non-electoral political representation. Non-electoral through the strategy of organizing groups or civil society organizations<sup>6</sup>. The latter concept is more relevant in describing the representation of women in local women's movements.

## ***2.2 Women's Leadership and Political Negotiation***

Sanggar Hijau Indonesia is a civil society organization that focuses on environmental issues, especially waste management in Jombang Regency. The organization was founded by Shanti Wurdiani Ramadhani who currently serves as the director. SHI is located in the Kaliwungu Village area. At one time, Shanti said that so far many organizations have been accompanying outside and succeeding, in their own region it is the opposite. He wants to make changes in his place of residence as well.

With the experience of the Jombang Regency Adiwiyata School Trustees, the SHI organization is able to bring enough changes in this region. Consisting of 13 RTs and 5 RWs, eight active waste banks, one KWT received support from the government. The politics of women's representation based on the performance of waste management practices has received recognition so that it can encourage budget politics.

SHI started the movement by building an inclusive space through the Concerned Citizens Forum which embraces the diversity of community actors—women, men, youth, religious leaders, people with disabilities, teachers, the private sector, and waste management officers. This diversity emphasizes that environmental solutions cannot be sectoral, but must involve all citizens as subjects of change.

In the course of mentoring, SHI realizes the power of women in their daily ecological lives: regulating household consumption, taking care of and maintaining family health, and dealing directly with the problem of domestic waste. From there, SHI grounded the perspective of ecofeminism: women are not only affected parties, but core actors in saving the environment.

To strengthen women's political and social position in environmental management, SHI carries out a concrete strategy through strengthening women who have formal forums that already exist, such as PKK, Posyandu cadres, and fatayat organizations. From waste management training, environmental cadres who are dominated by women automatically become leaders, confidence and public communication skills, plus increased awareness about policies.

Furthermore, the strategic role of waste bank managers is to bring these women to become environmental educators, environmental facilitators, and originally technical implementers to community decision makers. It takes a process that is not short, SHI continues to accompany and build communication with the village government so that these cadres are involved in village forums, Musrenbang, and audiences with the district government.

The membership of the SHI organization contains many young people who become peer leaders, on another occasion the Kaliwungu Village area became a series of *booth camp advance class activities* for the 2025 Jombang Regency Environmental Ambassador election

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<sup>6</sup> <https://cakrawikara.id/publikasi/artikel/menghadirkan-kepentingan-perempuan-dalam-representasi-politik-di-indonesia/>

procession. The regenerative education model involves young women and mothers to ensure the sustainability of women's leadership across generations.

SHI is able to encourage the people of Kaliwungu to carve out various environmental achievements, in turn the Kaliwungu Village government in environmental policy facilitates budgeting for the environment. Currently, it has a building for *the Trash4cycle waste bank* and a warehouse facility to become an integrated waste management site equipped with composting facilities to be perfect recycling for the agricultural land area of the Women Farmers Group (KWT) standing on a land of 3000 m<sup>2</sup>, inaugurated in early 2025. In every occasion involving residents when attended by the local government, SHI facilitates communication between the two regarding the needs and encourages environmental policies at the village to district levels.

The PKK has become part of the environmental movement in Kaliwungu, through the Working Group of each environmental agenda as a gap for advocacy, empowerment, and education. Because the PKK is a women's organization under the government that still exists today up to the village or sub-district level to the household through *dasawisma* leel RT/RW. Proof of the success and good practices of waste management in Kaliwungu, SHI is able to bridge advocacy at the district government level. In 2022, the regulation on single-use plastic types of plastic bags and straws for modern retail, restaurants and cafes was issued with the passage of Regent Regulation No. 56 of 2022. This was followed by the stipulation of Regent Regulation No. 8 of 2023 concerning Village Fund Allocation by including operational financing points for the environment at the RT/RW level as the political basis for the budget for environmental funds in each village.

Furthermore, the Sayang Waste Movement is the implication by providing garbage basket facilities that are distributed to 301 villages and 5 sub-districts in Jombang Regency. To ensure the running of the program through the PKK at the village level, encourage the formation of a waste bank as a continuation of this program. There is a series of how the Regency's "Sayang Waste" Program encourages sustainable waste management and based on community participation was launched in the moment of Jombang Fest (28/10/2025). After the visit of the chairman of the Jombang Regency TP PKK, Yuliati Nugrahani, to the Kaliwungu Village area (20/6/2025), she saw firsthand the environmental activities carried out by women and at the same time appreciated the Eco Edu Service Center and the Social Environment Laboratory<sup>7</sup>. "Dear Trash" Program. This program is expected to encourage a circular economy through waste banks, organic waste management, and inorganic recycling by providing heart-shaped garbage baskets similar to the shape in Kaliwungu Village.

The "Sayang Waste" program is only one of the many waste management problems, because the generation of waste in Jombang Regency per day is more than 530 tons, while the capacity that enters the Banjardowo landfill is only 150 tons. The rest is dumped wildly in the river, planted, and burned. On the other hand, not all villages have polling stations due to the limited government budget. Returning to the politics of women's representation according to the theory at the beginning described as incomplete, the politics of budgeting in every policy in its implementation is also not perfect. Whether or not women's representation is *simalakama*,

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.jombangkab.go.id/berita/umum/ketua-tp-pkk-jombang-yuliati-nugrahani-apresiasi-semangat-gotong-royong-kampung-proklam-kampung-si-besut-kaliwungu-13117>

because women's nursing work to protect the environment is unpaid work. Although the implementation of the "Sayang Waste" policy was adopted and the appreciation was not comprehensive. Appreciation is still in the form of a glass frame, not a welfare award for women.

### **3. Conclusion**

Based on the analysis of the role of SHI in encouraging women's representation in Jombang Regency, it can be concluded that:

1. SHI's evidence-based advocacy strategy has succeeded in encouraging environmental policy through the main strategy by building performance-based legitimacy by demonstrating the success of waste management techniques by grassroots women. The transformation of women's roles from waste managers to environmental policy drivers. Furthermore, build a tactical coalition between women, the government, and civil society to encourage the "Waste Baby" policy.
2. The politics of non-parliamentary representation from this study show that women's representation is not limited to legislative seats. But it can be realized through grassroots movements and civil society organizations. The role of SHI has succeeded in opening up space for women to be involved in decision-making at the sub-district and district levels.
3. Women's environmental work is still considered voluntary work without remuneration
4. The implementation of the policy has not been comprehensive and the appreciation given has not been prosperous.
5. This research is expected to be a recommendation to encourage incentives for environmental cadres, the provision of employment BPJS for waste bank administrators
6. The contribution of this research lies in offering a grassroots environmental movement advocacy model that integrates ecofeminist perspectives and environmental politics.