



Unpacking Children's Participation in FAD Mojokari, Central Java, Indonesia: An Institutionalized Children's Space in the Development Process

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List of Acronyms

ARI	Aliansi Remaja Independen
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
FAD	<i>Forum Anak Desa</i> /Village Child Forum
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
KPAD	<i>Kelompok Perlindungan Anak Desa</i> /Village Child Protection Committee
MLHR	Ministry of Law and Human Rights
MoH	Ministry of Health
<i>Musrenbang</i>	<i>Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan</i> /Development Planning Meeting
MWECP	Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
NGO	Non-Government Organization
YID	Yes I Do
YIDA	Yes I Do Alliance

Abstract

This paper explores the factors which caused the Child Forum in Mojosari village (FAD Mojosari), Central Java, Indonesia to become an institutionalized space. I argue that the notion of children being seen as becoming, enables the establishment of the Child Forum through top-down approaches. This qualitative research uses semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and candid non-participant observation in order to understand the factors of the institutionalization of children's participation space. It is supported by the norms in which children need to respect adults and girls are more protected than boys. Beside the norms, the legacy of the centralized governmental system in Indonesia and the intervention of the Yes I Do program influences how the Child Forum is established, reorganized, and included in the structure of the adult organization which created the Child Forum. Nevertheless, in the limited space of participation, children enact their participation by negotiating their position towards adults. This paper does not seek to evaluate whether children's participation in the Child Forum has failed or is a success, rather it identifies the factors which weaken and/or strengthen children's participation. Therefore, it may encourage the improvement of it based on its surrounding social context.

Relevance to Development Studies

The children's participation model is often compartmentalized into certain participation levels such as those introduced by Roger Hart (1992) in the ladder of participation. However, the practices of participation are not rigid by putting it into certain levels of participation. In many instances, development programs are trapped by generalizing the successful achievement of participation for all the areas and puts aside the complexities of social contexts. The discourse on children's participation needs to take into account the surrounding contexts in which participation is conducted and address the factors that enable or prevent it.

Keywords

Participation, children, childhood, becoming, agency, norms, institutionalized.

Chapter 1 Considering children's participation into the development process

The Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection (MWECP) in Indonesia prompts government at all level (village, sub-district, district, provincial, and national) to establish Child Forums as spaces for children's participation. It serves as a commitment towards the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), in particular article 12 which mentions children's participation. In addition, the MWECP's Child Forums manifest through their involvement in yearly development planning called *Musrenbang* (*Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan*/Development Planning Meeting) at each level of the Indonesian government (either in village, sub-district, district, provincial, and national).

I took one of Child Forums in Mojosari village, Central Java, Indonesia as my research focus. Although MWECP suggest the establishment of Child Forums through bottom-up approach. In practice the establishment of Child Forums do not always use bottom-up approach, but top-down approach. It is because children are seen as becoming rather than being in which children are seen as assets for future development. In that vein, Child Forums are regulated under the regulation of MWECP number 3 year 2011 on The Policy on Children's Participation in Development, and the Regulation of MWECP number 12 year 2015 on The Guidance of Children's Participation in Development Planning. I argue this notion as a form of institutionalized children's space in the development process in Indonesia.

To develop this argument, this research is divided into five chapters. Chapter one focus on the context of children's participation in Indonesia, methodology, and positionality. Chapters two seeks to explore the norms that encourage or discourage children's participation. Chapter three unpacks the practices of children's participation as a form of becoming under a top-down approach. In both chapters two and three I explore the idea of institutionalized children's space. In chapter four, my focus is on examining how children perceive and enact their participation in an institutionalized space. The last chapter concludes with the main findings.

1.1 Situating children's participation in the context of Indonesia

In 1990, children's participation was introduced through the CRC. Whilst the discourse of 'participation' existed previously, it was the CRC, that clearly determined children's participation (Skelton 2007: 167). Lansdown (2010: 13) contends that article 12 deciphers the rights of child participation as something to be taken seriously in decision making, and that the government needs to ensure the implementation of this right to all children. Indonesia, as a country who ratified the CRC, issued many regulations towards children's participation, including: the law on child protection number 35 in 2014 (and it was amended from law number 23 of 2002), the regulation of the MWECP number 3 of 2011 on The Policy on Children's Participation in Development, and the Regulation of the MWECP number 12 of 2015 on The Guidance of Children's Participation in Development Planning.

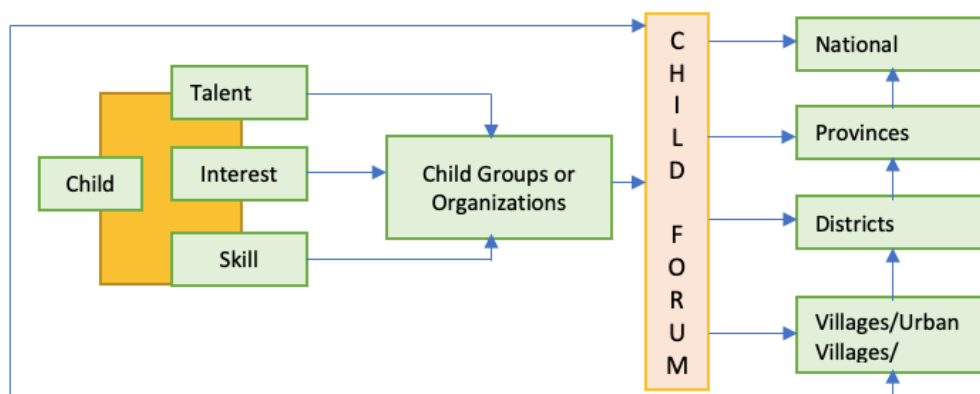
Regulation number 12 of 2015 provides guidance on how children's participation is performed. For example, article 6.1 explains the realization of children's participation in national and local development through Child Forums. In the annex of the regulation, a Child Forum is explained as:

“An organization or social institution as a place for children’s participation who are under 18 years old which its members are representatives of children groups that are managed by children and or supervised by government as a medium for bearing and fulfilling children aspirations, voices, views, and needs in development processes.” (MWECP 2015: 19)

In 2015, the MWECP claimed Child Forums had been formed in 33 provinces, 267 districts/cities, 300 sub-districts and 193 villages (MWECP 2015: 19). Thus, according to the MWECP Child Forums existed in all provinces of Indonesia, because until 2015 Indonesia has only 33 provinces. The existence of Child Forums in each level are developed and legitimized by the government according to the level of Child Forum at either the national, provincial, district, sub-district or village (MWECP 2015: 20).

The mechanism of children’s participation under Child Forums are suggested to be a bottom-up approach. The government facilitates its establishment and encourages the composition of Child Forums members to include different representatives of children’s groups/organizations. These communities are based on talent, interest, and skill. Each level of Child Forum is unified by the lower level of Child Forums. This means that a Child Forum from village/urban villages consists of children’s communities and a Child Forum at a district level consists of representatives of Child Forums from villages/urban villages, this continues up to the national level (see Figure 1). In this regard, the representatives of children’s groups ideally give voice to the needs of their groups in the Child Forums. Thus, their voices could be echoed from village level into national level.

Figure 1 The mechanism of children's participation



Source: MWECP 2015: 19 (translated by author).

However, Arifiani (2015: 18) argues that ideally Child Forums are established based on the existing children’s groups/organizations, however due to the target to increase Child Forums numbers, many areas create it as a new organization either from district level to sub-districts and villages. In addition, I argue creating a new organization is simpler when compared to inviting many children’s organizations to create a Child Forum. It is because children who are involved in organizations have a better understanding of their issues and could bravely voice out their aspirations. It might be not difficult for governments, who have the responsibility to develop and facilitate the sustainability of Child Forums, to create a new organization which consists of children who not are involved in other organizations, since it would be simpler for governments to be in control of this process. That being said, not all Child Forums are formed through a bottom-up approach.

Moreover, Child Forums aim to voice children’s aspirations in *Musrenbang*. In this regard, the Indonesian government provides Child Forums as spaces for children to advocate for themselves and help to change their own condition based on the development

and interest of children. This is a good intention from the government in realizing children's participation in development processes. However, the government have set requirements for those children who can be involved in *Musrenbang*:

Figure 2 The requirement of children's participation in *Musrenbang*

1. Aged 13 until <18 years old
2. Be able to communicate well
3. Be able to deliver children's aspirations in *Musrenbang*
4. Children do not need to follow all of the process of *Musrenbang*, they can only deliver children's aspirations
5. They need to be accompanied by adults/children's facilitators
6. Informed consent
7. Elected based on the agreement in Child Forums/Other Child Representative
8. Have permission from parents

Source: MWECP 2015: 39 (translated by author).

Arifiani (2015: 18) argues that the limitation of age and skills could limit the diversity of children allowed to participate in *Musrenbang*. In this regard, for example only children who are older tend to be chosen since they can speak better, but it raises questions as to whether they can include the proposals from the younger children. Lansdown (2010: 14) echoes this concern, stating the space provided for children's participation is crucial but not enough as it rarely engages very young children or only involves a small proportion of children in a society. However, the MWECP (2015: 46) realizes the need to involve children inclusively; reaching all children not only the most accessible such as students. The MWECP suggests that *Musrenbang* is set to involve all children's groups by referring to the principles of child rights (non-discrimination, best interest of the child, and the right to life and growth) and the mandate of local governments to give special protection to some children. Article 35 of the regulation number 35 of 2014, on the changing of the regulation number 23 of 2002, on Child Protection, stipulates children need special protection, such as children in an emergency situation, children who are dealing with the law, children who are exploited economically and/or sexually, and children with a disability (MWECP 2014: 17 – 18). In this sense, the MWECP suggests *Musrenbang* to involve children from diverse backgrounds.

Nevertheless, the MWECP could suggest the establishment of Child Forums through a bottom-up approach and the involvement of children with different backgrounds in *Musrenbang*. In practice, I argue both are not easy to be implemented and it could become an institutionalized space for children. The notion of 'institutionalized' refers to the ways to include children's voices in the development process as only a formal way to envision them in the future. Therefore, in this study I bring this issue to unpack the practices of children's participation through the Child Forum in Mojosari as a form of an institutionalized children's space in the development process. I seek to understand why it has become institutionalized? How is children's participation practiced and understood, what are the norms that challenge and allow children's participation, and how do children interpret and stipulate their participation. In addition, I also look at a relational analysis between adults and children through their interactions in the Child Forum.

1.2 Justification of the study

In practice, children's participation could not be separated from the role of adults. This is also reflected in the CRC itself. Lansdown (2010: 13) contends that despite article 12 of the

CRC which mentions children's participation; article 5 of the CRC talks about the responsibility of adults towards children. Thus, in order to support children to exercise their rights, adults still have a responsibility to provide support in accordance with the evolving capacity of children. In Indonesia, beside the commitment towards CRC, children's participation through Child Forums is also a manifestation of adults' responsibility in the ways in which they support children's capacities. As a government program, Child Forums became institutionalized through the regulations in which mandates were issued at all levels of government for the creation of Child Forums.

Although the purpose of Child Forums as spaces for children to give aspirations towards development planning, it also reflects how adults project children to be active in these spaces. As a projection, it may not always reflect the children's perspective as the spaces are not coming from children themselves. Hart (2008: 412) argues that the involvement of children in meetings and their formal statements tend to be tokenistic rather than authentic. In this regard, participation is not seen as empowering nor as encouraging transformation. The knowledge gap between children and adults could create an imbalance of power and thus not leading to fully empowered spaces. Child Forums as platforms to voice out children's aspiration could be tokenistic spaces. So, it raises the question why should it be institutionalized? What is the social context? How do children perceive and enact their participation in these created spaces? In this research these questions are addressed in order to find the factors effecting Child Forums as institutionalized spaces for children's participation.

1.3 Questioning institutionalized children's participation

The main purpose for this study is unpacking children's participation in Child Forums by questioning it as an institutionalized space for children that is provided by the Indonesian government. As an institutionalized space, it shows children as citizens whom could be created according to the interests of the government, even though, it aims to be a space for children to voice their needs. By questioning Child Forums as an institutionalized space, it is correlated to the position of children either are seen as being or becoming. In that sense, the research about children participation's, in examining both positions, puts attention on the relation between children and adults in the development process (White 2002, Hart 2008). I argue adults here could be translated into many different places, such as government bodies, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), states, families, and United Nations Bodies. Therefore, this study attempts to contribute to these discussions. However, in the context of Indonesia, this study fills the gap on research of Child Forums considered as an institutionalized-created space. To achieve the objective, the research is guided by one main research question and three related sub-questions:

How does a Child Forum become an institutionalized space for children's participation?

- a. What are the norms about children's participation that would be barriers and opportunities for children to exercise their participation?
- b. What is the relationship between children and adults in exercising children's participation in the Child Forum?
- c. How do children perceive and enact their participation in the provided space?

1.4 Methodology and ethical consideration

This study uses a qualitative research approach by using semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGD) and observation. Clark (2010) contends that child-centred

qualitative research helps to uncover the experience of and knowledge by children. The use of semi-structured interviews gives an advantage where a researcher may get intended results based on a predetermined list of questions, but also disclosure to unexpected data, since it is a flexible approach based on the ongoing conversation (O’Leary 2014: 241). So, before the fieldwork I had set some questions but also when the interview was going, I asked more questions based on the responses and what I was thinking at the time would support this study.

I combined interviews with FGD, since FGD not only uncovers information among the participants on certain issues, but also the agreement among the participants on certain issues (Hennink 2014: 2-3). I recorded all of the interviews and FGDs. In addition, I also did observation for three reasons. First, it gave me opportunities to understand the norms on the interactions between children and adults. Second, it gave me a pool of respondents who could be my interviewees since my initial list was limited to some people such as the leader of the Child Forum, the village leader, and the YIDA Indonesia staff. Third, it allowed me to gain rapport with the people involved since I attended several events which were conducted by local people. I took notes in my notebook from the observations. I could not do it all the time when the observation was happening, but I did it every time I had an opportunity to write it down. O’Leary (2014: 251) argues observation is “a systematic method of data collection that relies on a researcher’s ability to gather data through his or her senses”. I chose candid non-participant observation. It is a method where the observed are aware that a researcher observes their activities (O’Leary 2017: 255). I argue the combination of these research methods helped me to uncover and clarify the topic from different angles.

Conducting the fieldwork: choosing a Child Forum

For this research, I chose a Child Forum that receives assistance from the Yes I Do Alliance (YIDA) Indonesia, through the program called Yes I Do (YID). YIDA Indonesia is part of the YID Alliance¹ together with six other countries that implement the YID program. YID Alliance has a goal to reduce child marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting and unwanted teenage pregnancies. It is done through awareness raising and research in 7 countries: Indonesia, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, and Zambia. As a strategy, the program promotes children’s participation for achieving its vision (Rutgers, n.d.). In Indonesia, YIDA consists of three Indonesian-organizations (Rutgers WPF Indonesia, Plan Indonesia, and Aliansi Remaja Independen) that has implemented the program since 2016 in three districts in Indonesia, which are Rembang Districts in Central Java (in four villages: Mojosari, Woro, Menoro, and Ngasinan), four villages in Sukabumi Districts in West Java: (Sukaraja, Limbangan, Cisolok, and Cikelat), and four villages in Lombok Barat Districts in West Nusa Tenggara (Lembar Selatan, Sekotong Timur, Kediri, and Jagaraga). They work together with village governments to promote children’s participation.

Before choosing one of the YIDA Indonesia intervened-Child Forums, I had consulted with YIDA Indonesia. I put some criteria for choosing a Child Forum in one of the YID program’s intervened-villages, which are: children are involved actively in Child Forums, available support (including financial support) from its village government towards the Child Forum, and the support from other adults in the village (in this case it could be parents or other adults). They then proposed the following Child Forums in Cisolok Village, Sukabumi or Mojosari Village, Rembang. According to them, both of these

¹ YID Alliance consists of five Dutch-organizations which are Amref Flying Doctors, Choice for Youth and Sexuality, KIT Royal Tropical Institute, Plan Nederland, and Rutgers.

Child Forums were created when the YID program started in 2016 but they consider both to have a good track record of children's participation. I chose Mojosari Village since the information that I had got before fieldwork, showed the Child Forum in Mojosari gets financial support from the village government every year, but the Child Forum in Cisolok Village does not. I argue that financial support, demonstrates a strong commitment from the government towards the Child Forum to implement the activities. It shows that the village government puts trust in the Child Forum.

After the consultation with the YIDA Indonesia, I mapped the main research participants that were involved in the establishment and sustainability of the Child Forum in Mojosari. I decided they were the Village Child Forum (in Indonesian is *Forum Anak Desa/FAD*), Village Child Protection Committee (*Kelompok Perlindungan Anak Desa/KPAD* as the adult dominated-group who created FAD), the village leader, and YIDA Indonesia staff. I did my fieldwork for almost three weeks where I lived in a house which belonged to the KPAD's treasurer (she is also a leader of Fatayat²). In this study I called her a gatekeeper, as she helped me to find interviewees, participants for the FGDs, and helped in getting to know better the social-context of the village.

Interview participants and process

The interviewees were divided into four groups. All interviews were conducted separately except for a group interview:

- The leader and members of FAD in Mojosari. I did several interviews with FAD's leader, since she is knowledgeable on the history of FAD and is also involved in most of the YID program activities in the village. The interview with FAD's members was a group interview with four people. I did it after I had the FGD with FAD in order to gather more data. I had invited them through one of the FAD members and she informed others through their WhatsApp group, but only four of them (all girls) joined the group interview.
- The village leader
- KPAD leader and KPAD treasurer
- YIDA Indonesia staff who are responsible for the Rembang district (four community organizers) and national (Program Manager from Aliansi Remaja Independen as an organization responsible for the implementation of children's participation in the YID program).

FGD participants and process

I conducted one FGD with FAD and one FGD with KPAD. I talked to the FAD leader who organised participants for the FGD. I also specifically asked for boys who are members of FAD's to join. It is because before the interview, I had joined some of FAD's activities and I had only met girl members. On the day of the FGD, there were 16 girls and one boy who came. I asked where were the rest of the boys, and the FAD leader replied that there were only four boy members, one of whom is not active anymore since he moved to Jakarta (capital city of Indonesia) for work, and two of them were in school³. Based on the data I gathered from the FGD, despite the MWECP defining children as

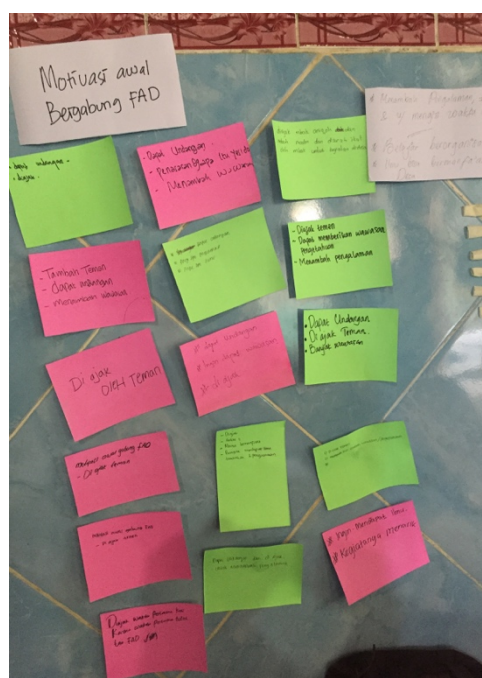
² Fatayat is an Islamic women community under the flag of Nahdhatul Ulama (NU) which consists of women under 40 years old. NU is considered as one of the biggest Islamic organizations in Indonesia.

³ The FGD was conducted on Friday. In Mojosari, there are two types of school; public school and private Islamic school. The latter has holiday on Friday while the first has holiday on Sunday. I chose to conduct the FGD on Friday based on the suggestion from the FAD leader that most of the FAD members have school holiday on Friday.

under 18 years old, there are FAD members who came to the FGD who were 18 (two people) and 19 years old (one person)⁴.

At the beginning of the FGD with FAD, I asked the participants to draw a map of their daily activities. The map is beneficial to know the scope of children's lives; in which hamlet they live, and the distance from home to school or FAD's activities places, and how they commute from one place to another. After they drew the map, they gave a brief explanation about it. All participants came from different hamlets which are Ngegot, Mangseng, Njuwet, and Pringan. It is 4 out of 9 hamlets in Mojosari village and all of them live in Mojosari. It is important to know that they live in Mojosari which means their voices represent their daily struggles in the village, which I explore in the next chapter. In addition, most participants of the FGD are students at the Islamic senior high school, there are two people who study in Package C (Senior High School Equivalency)⁵, there is one who does not study anymore since she has graduated from senior high school, and there is one who did not continue to study even though she is still 16 years old.

Figure 3 FGD result with FAD: Children's motivations for joining FAD



Source: Author's documentation 2019.

For the FGD process, I had prepared several questions. I asked them to write their answer on a paper for each question and I put the answers on the wall. Then, we discussed it. I chose this method to ensure everyone felt comfortable to answer. I was aware that a drawback of FGD is that there might be some people who would dominate the forum while others are silent. This method aimed to reduce this limitation. When the discussion was happening, I asked the meaning of the answer that the participants gave me. The

⁴ Through my observation in the field, three of them were always present in every activity that FAD conducts. They provide technical support to the FAD leader in implementing FAD's activities. Maybe this is also the reason why they are still in FAD.

⁵ In Indonesia, the Indonesian government provides for anyone who wants to get an educational certificate even though their age is more than a school age (6 – 18 years old), they can get it through package A (equivalent to elementary school), package B (equivalent to junior high school), and package C (equivalent to senior high school).

participants elaborated on it and the other participants responded to it. This method made the participants engage more in the discussion.

While the FGD with KPAD members was attended by 10 adult-women, 1 child⁶, the FAD representative, and 1 adult-man. Some of them are in the top management of KPAD: leader, treasurer and the rest are members. They live in 5 different hamlets in Mojosari. Their background ranges from teacher, Fatayat (religious-women organization), *Karang Taruna* (youth-based organization), and *Posyandu* cadre⁷. Before the FGD, I had met and talked to the KPAD leader about my planning for conducting the FGD. Thereafter, she invited KPAD's members to come to the FGD. In this FGD, I repeated the same method like I did with FAD; and requested for them to answer questions on paper and we discussed it.

In the FGD I provided snacks, drinks, and an incentive (money) to the participants. It is based on my discussion with the gatekeeper, who suggested an incentive for the FGD participants since every time KPAD hosts an event, either for the YID program or from the village, KPAD always gives an incentive of IDR 25,000 (USD 1.79) to each person. While for the FAD's FGD I only provided snacks and drinks. So, I followed this suggestion, as I wanted to ensure that I did not break any practices that might affect KPAD and FAD in the future.

Observation process

Since I lived there for almost three weeks, I did observation in order to understand better the everyday lives of the Mojosari people. I also observed the activities conducted by FAD, the YID program, and KPAD. I attended the following activities related to the YID program:

- 2 *posyandu remaja* (youth *posyandu*) in Pringan and Njuwet hamlets.
- One day training by the YID program on meaningful youth participation for KPAD members.
- 2 serial discussions: 1 for adult women in which the facilitator was the KPAD leader and 1 for girls in which the facilitators were FAD's members.

I also attended the activities that were conducted by the Mojosari people in which I was invited to by the gatekeeper to join and mingle with Mojosari people:

- *Barzanji* recitation.
- Fatayat recitation.

Ethical consideration

For all interviewees and participants in FGD, I provided informed consent which explained about the aim of the research, and that they can withdraw all of the data if they ask me to do so. For the children especially, the informed consent was provided and signed by the parents and children themselves. For them, informed consent is not something strange since the YID program always asks their consent through informed consents for every activity that involves children. Therefore, when I asked them to fill informed consent, I found it easy to explain and ask. In addition, personal information or names won't be presented in this research.

⁶ Actually her age is 18 years old. However, since she is one of the representatives of FAD, I categorize her as a child.

⁷ Posyandu is a community based organisation that works with health officers in providing basic healthcare for society.

1.5 Positionality

Crossa (2012: 115) introduces the term relational positionality as “an attempt to consider how researchers’ identities are shaped by multiple mobile and flexible relations and how that makes a difference to the research process”. In this regard, my positionality is shaped by multiple conditions: there might be an assumption that I am part of YIDA Indonesia, a female researcher who studies in an international university in Europe, who is originally born and raised in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia and I was National Coordinator of Aliansi Remaja Independen (2013 – 2015), an organization that is part of YIDA Indonesia. These complex positionalities are connected to each other and played out differently in situations.

My previous position as National Coordinator in Aliansi Remaja Independen (ARI) influenced me to conduct this research. ARI is a youth-led organization that works for young people (aged 10 – 24) to promote meaningful youth participation. When I was working there, I faced many challenges in promoting meaningful youth participation values, especially on how adults (such as governments, UN bodies, and NGOs) accepted and implemented our suggestions to involve young people in planning, monitoring and evaluating of programs related to young people. When I did my fieldwork, I reflected critically on the difficulties of children’s positions in the Child Forum, as it related to my past position when dealing with adults.

I found an assumption that I am part of YIDA Indonesia was more problematic than others. Although YIDA Indonesia consists of many organizations, the research subjects consider all of them as one alliance. Therefore, my previous position in ARI did not influence how they viewed me. In addition, since the only program which intervenes in KPAD and FAD is the YID program. Then, when I came to the village to conduct research on children’s participation that involves KPAD and FAD, I was assumed to be part of YIDA Indonesia. Then, every time I would conduct interviews or FGD, I explained to the research participants that I was not part of YIDA Indonesia. I thought at that moment, it was important to make them understand that I am not part of YIDA and that they could speak freely to deliver their perspectives.

In addition, since I lived in the gate keeper’s house, I had more chances to explore the surrounding by being involved in local people’s activities like *pengajian* (recitation)⁸. I decided to mingle with local people to gain rapport since I lived there for almost three weeks. From being involved in several *pengajian*, I met some KPAD and FAD members that were introduced by the gate keeper before and/or after interviews or FGDs. If I met them before an interview or FGD, I felt more confident to interview them since they know me beforehand. If I met them in *pengajian* after interview or FGD, I could relate more in my interactions with them.

⁸ *Pengajian* is a religious event that was attended by local people from different ages and backgrounds from children to adults.

Chapter 2 Exploring the norms of children's participation in Mojosari village

Children's participation through a Child Forum cannot be separated from surrounding constructed norms. Since the participation involves children, therefore, the concept on how children are seen and treated, influence practices of children's participation. Skelton (2007: 168) argues childhood is seen as a social construction that may change over time. It is different from biological or natural features of being human, but is seen as a component of structural and cultural aspects in many societies (Prout and James 1997: 8). In that sense, I argue the construction of childhood contributes towards the creation of the institutionalized children's participation space.

In this study, there are at least two norms that become barriers to how children's participation is perceived and practiced: firstly, the norm that children need to respect adults and secondly, Islamic culture in which girls are more protected than boys. However, the last norm also becomes an opportunity for girls to develop themselves in FAD. Both norms are closely related to the relationship between adult and children. In that vein, White (2002: 1101) argues that the relationship between adults and children in terms of children's participation tends to fall into a parent-child relationship. This intimate relationship creates control and monitoring towards children's participation.

2.1 Children need to respect adult

Mojosari is located in Rembang District, Central Java province of Javanese island. Based on the village demography, in 2018 there were 2,815 citizens who live there of which 1,442 were men and 1,373 were women, with 722 citizens aged 0 – 15 and 1,397 aged 15 – 65. There is no age-specific data for children. Inside Mojosari, there are only three kindergartens, and two elementary schools. Therefore, every child who continues their studies on to junior and senior high school, need to study at schools nearby. Most students who study outside the village, commute using their own motorcycle. The education level of most of the Mojosari people is elementary school (480 people) and only 105 people have finished senior high school, with the main livelihood in the village being hodge and cattle labour. From the interviews and FGDs, the participants claimed there are some children who do not continue their studies since their parents do not have the money for them to continue. Some of them become unemployed, helping their parents in farming, working in small stalls or working outside the village.

In these conditions, the Javanese culture holds a critical role in shaping the way children's participation is implemented. Arifiani (2015: 9) argues that in Javanese culture obeying adults' orders is recognized as respect. She also adds teachers and parents are always right, and to discipline children, occasionally (physical) punishment, was accepted. Hakim et al. (2012: 7) contend that older people in the Javanese community are obliged to care for and teach younger people as a social responsibility and a strong value of seniority. It is also reflected in my own experience as an Indonesian, even though I am not Javanese, I find it very common in a Javanese area that I need to call someone older as *Mas/Mbak* (*Mas* for men and *Mbak* for women), *Bapak/Ibu* (*Bapak* for men and *Ibu* for women that is much older than *Mas/Mbak*). It would be impolite if I called them by their names directly.

Through the FGD from KPAD, when the question on how the norms between children and adults are practiced, the participants commented that children need to listen adults' advice. At home, children need to obey parents' orders in terms of domestic works

such as cleaning the house. In addition, the parent also needs to give protection for children in terms of protecting them from any risky behaviour such as dating. In Mojosari, dating between teenagers is considered as risky behaviour, especially for girls where parents are afraid their daughters may fall pregnant. They called it as *pergaulan bebas* (translated as promiscuous even though in Indonesian the term of *pergaulan bebas* does not involve a sexual relationship).

The relationship norm between children and parents reflects the relationship between KPAD and FAD. In that sense, the barrier of children's participation is a hierarchal structure where adults are seen as more powerful than children. Although KPAD's members argue that they try to listen and consider the inputs from FAD's members for activities which FAD's members propose. Nevertheless, when I asked the question to FAD members on how the interaction between FAD and KPAD are practiced, they answered: *"I felt awkward to communicate with adults, since they usually prioritize their opinions over our opinions"* (FAD member, 2019). Even though FAD's members delivered their ideas they understand that their ideas were not really heard.

"We state our opinions, but sometimes they replied to our opinions and they did not want to listen to us. However, we need also to obey their opinions even though we do not like it." (FAD member, 2019)

There is a difference in perspectives between KPAD and FAD on that matter, KPAD recognizes that children's participation is one of the main strategies under the YID program which influences them to consider FAD's voices. Even though children's participation is promoted publicly in the Mojosari street close to the village government's office (see Figure 5). In that sense, the mainstreaming of children's participation in the YID program clearly aims to be promoted and accepted by many people including KPAD. Nevertheless, the norm on respecting adults shows that adults have more experience than children in which children need to follow adults' suggestions. So that, when children voice out their needs, the adults tend to win over their opinions. They consider children's opinions as not so important.

Figure 4 The YID program banner promotion in the village. It is stated the need to give opportunities for children to participate meaningfully in development



Source: Author's documentation 2019.

This norm creates a power imbalance between children and adults. White (2002: 1097) argues that the relationship between children and adults are contested through power relations that can be viewed in three areas: first, power is considered as control, where children are deemed as incomplete social human beings and as such need strict discipline from adults. Second, power is exercised through protection of children, since children are seen as innocent and pure. In this view, power is exercised as gentler to give protection and careful care. Third, the combination of both views, which stresses adult training to shape and assess children in the stage of development they achieve. In that sense, I argue that the relationship among KPAD, FAD, and the village government are challenged in these three areas. FAD is perceived as a place for children to improve their skills in which KPAD takes responsibility to control and monitor it.

“We believe that children have abilities for conducting event, even though their abilities are different from adults, since the adults are more experienced than them. Every time they conduct an event, we support but also we monitor it. We could not just let them make their event by themselves without our monitoring.” (KPAD member, 2019)

This monitoring shows that children are seen as an incomplete social human being. Through this monitoring, KPAD would support their activities and ensure that FAD is a positive place for them. *“As we see so far they (FAD) have positive events. We trust them. Not like other children”* (KPAD member, 2019). In that sense, the adults compare other children who have negative activities outside FAD⁹, in which they could not be trusted.

In addition, the formal involvement of children’s participation based on the national regulation is the involvement of FAD in *Musrenbang*. It is stated clearly as a mandate for the government from village until national level to involve Child Forums. In Mojosari, in 2017 FAD involved *Musrenbang*, however in 2018 FAD was not invited for *Musrenbang*. When I asked the question of FAD’s participation in *Musrenbang* to the village leader, he answered that the village government involved FAD in *Musrenbang*. However, when I confirmed it to FAD leader, she said the village government did not involve them in *Musrenbang* in 2018. I asked why? She replied that she was not sure.

In 2017, in *Musrenbang* FAD was represented by one of FAD’s members who has now moved to another province since June 2019 and I could not reach her when I was there. Nevertheless, when FAD was not invited to 2018 *Musrenbang*, the leader of KPAD asked the village leader for the reason. He did not give a clear reason, he only replied not now, may be in other chances. *Musrenbang*, as a yearly planning, for the next year is a crucial time for FAD to deliver their needs into something real. By this I mean, if their needs are considered for the next village planning, they might get funding for their activities. So, *Musrenbang* is the best place for advocating FAD’s needs every year. So that, the absence of FAD in *Musrenbang* shows that the village government does not trust FAD fully and might think of FAD as an unimportant forum to be included in *Musrenbang*. I argue that because FAD consists of children they are seen as not competent and lacking knowledge.

However, the reason I chose Mojosari village was based on the information from the YID staff that the village government gives certain funding to FAD. But, when I arrived at Mojosari, I found a different situation. The information was true, that the village government gives certain funding to FAD, but the funding is not given directly to FAD but through KPAD. The interview with the KPAD leader revealed that in the village budget

⁹ In the FGD with KPAD and interview with the village leader, I asked the question about what are their concerns towards children’s problems in the village? They mentioned the problems of children being involved in drugs, buying alcohol, and pregnancy outside marriage. They consider these as negative activities that may be conducted by children.

there is the budget item that is specifically for KPAD. However, the village government only gives IDR 5,000,000 (USD 355) for one year. The funding is also for FAD's activities. It means that FAD does not manage the funding directly. They can only access it if they want to organize an event. If the management of funding is under FAD, maybe there are at least two concerns. First, how the funding would be used, and second, the inability of children to make financial reports to the village government. It also shows that children are seen as inexperienced and incapable of money management. Therefore, KPAD has a role as a "guardian" for FAD's activities. In this way, the village government allows the funding usage for FAD.

By considering children as incomplete social human beings, the monitoring aims to train children based on the development that adults envision, for the future generation of the village "...when we (adults) are getting older, we need them to replace us to develop our village" (KPAD member, 2019). "I see that FAD is a good place for their (children's) future. They would have abilities that would be useful for their life in society or their own dreams. Broadly speaking, children is the shoot of our nation" (The Village Leader, 2019).

While at the same time, FAD also understands their position in society, they are considered as less knowledgeable and inexperienced human beings, then they need KPAD's protection and support since they know that misunderstandings might happen. Therefore, they always communicate to KPAD for every activity they do.

"Every time we make an event, we always communicate to KPAD, since we consider them as our parent. We are worried if we do not communicate it, there would be any misunderstandings. In addition, if we communicate with them, we might get help also from them for our events." (FAD member, 2019)

The norm for respecting adults influences how KPAD and the village government treat FAD and vice versa. FAD positions KPAD and the village government as their own parents in which they need to respect and listen to their advice. While the adults also see FAD as inexperienced, in need of adults' protection. It influences how they play their role towards FAD: acting as experienced adults in which they prioritize their opinions over FAD's opinions. As a result, their aspirations are not really heard.

Although FAD realizes their role to voice out their needs. This norm limits their space to openly voice their needs. Therefore, when the MWECP put explicitly the involvement of Child Forum's representatives in *Musrenbang*, it is to ensure their involvement. The MWECP realized that the position of children, not only in Javanese society, but also in Indonesia consider children not as equal subjects as compared to adults. However, it also shows that even though this regulation exists, the social norm influences more the practice of children's participation.

2.2 Protecting girls are important

The second norm which influences children's participation in Mojosari is Islamic culture. Mojosari is a homogeneous village of Islamic followers. All citizens are Muslim and there are 2 mosques and 18 *musholla*¹⁰. And there are no any other religious followers who live there. In addition, my observation was facilitated also by my own background which is Muslim, and being born and raised in Islamic family. I understand how Islamic practices and values are implemented in the daily life of the Mojosari people. When I was living there, I observed how girls and women veil their head every time they leave their house. I also veiled my head in respect of the place where I lived. This is based on the recommenda-

¹⁰ *Musholla* is a small version of a mosque which can only could accommodate a few people to pray.

tion from the gatekeeper. I also observed there are several Islamic practices such as *pengajian* for adults and children some of which I attended. After finishing study in schools, students also attended religious courses as an additional study which is very common in the village.

Through these Islamic practices, it also influences how parents treat their children at home. They understand that as an Islamic community, sexuality is a taboo issue. They protect girls to stay at home as compared to boys. As a consequence, girls have limited time to play outside the home after school, which ends at 2pm. Once it is finished, they have to go home directly and are not allowed to play far from home. They do still play with their friends from close by in the neighborhood, or buying something from close stalls. For parents, if their daughters go out at night, it will embarrass their family since their daughters will be considered as bad girls. While for boys, they have flexible space and time after school. Boys could get permission easily from their parents to play football, and to hang out with other boys.

However, the norm of protecting girls more than boys seems as a barrier for girls, but it turns out as an opportunity for them to develop themselves in FAD. Girls are more active in FAD than boys. In the current FAD structure, there are 28 children of which 17 are girls and 9 are boys. Since the limitation of girls to play outside after school compared to boys, parents tend to give more permission for girls to be active in FAD. For these girls, it is better for them to come to FAD's activities than to be at home.

"I will get permission to come to FAD's events, since it will give me benefit compared only in my home. I also do not want get angry from my parent, since most of the time in my home I only play with my phone."
(FAD member, 2019)

This finding strengthens the research that was done by Arifiani on Child Forums in Surakarta districts and the national level. She (2015: 21) finds out that girls are more active in Child Forums as compared to boys. The reason is boys have alternative activities outside Child Forums as compared to girls, such as they can choose to spend time by playing football or dating rather than joining an organization like Child Forums. She argues it is related to a male patronage culture in Indonesia, especially amongst Javanese.

Silvey (2003: 354) contends in Javanese culture, women's participation in public spaces (in this case women's strike activity) is considered suitable to the idea of ideal motherhood. Since their participation in the strike was aimed to fight for better wages which will give benefit to feed and clothe their predicted children. In that sense, I argue that the parents of FAD Mojosari's girl members may consider FAD as a safe place for their daughters to do activities compared to allowing them to play outside. It means the parents know if their daughters join FAD activities, then their daughters are with other children that they consider good. In addition, I argue that the activities in FAD also provide a place for these girls to exercise their ability to take care of each other. Taking care is one of the criteria of the notion of ideal motherhood. It is also in line with the male patronage culture in which girls need to be put in a safe place where adults (in this case KPAD) can monitor them.

Although, the norm of girls being more protected than boys is the male patronage culture in which it is presupposed that girls need to be in safe places according to the surrounding norms. In that sense, in Mojosari village girls have very limited spaces to carry out their activities compared to boys. Their activities are around the home and school. They need permission from their parents if they want to do activities outside these spaces. However, since FAD is considered as a safe place by parents, they tend to give permission to their daughters to do activities in FAD. This idea is welcomed by these girls in which they choose FAD rather than to do nothing at home. The norm influences the activeness of the girls to be involved in FAD as compared to boys who are busy with other activities

before FAD exists. Prout and James (1997: 8) argue childhood itself as a social analysis variable could never be separated from other variables: class, gender, or ethnicity. The intersectional and comparative analysis of childhood reveals that childhood not only has a singular reality, but varies. In that sense, gender has an important role in shaping the concept of childhood in Mojosari.

2.3 Final remarks: the critical role of the norms in shaping children's participation

In this chapter, I discussed the norms influence the institutionalized children's participation space in FAD Mojosari. The norms are children need to respect adult and the girls are more protected than the boys. The first norm create a power imbalance in which the relationship between adult and children is viewed as control, protection, and training. However, the norm is also accepted by children in which they always communicate their activities to adults. In this notion, they put the adults as if their parents. This norm limit children's participation to voice out their aspirations. While the second norm limits girls to be active in other spaces except home and schools in which both are considered as safe places for girls. Although this is as a form of patronage male culture, it enables many FAD girls members to be more active than boys members, since their parents consider FAD as a safe place for girls. I argue both norms shape the institutionalized children's participation space in which children tend to accept adult's aspirations. This aspiration includes the establishment of FAD which is made by adults. This discussion will be explored more in chapter three.

Chapter 3 The institutionalized children's participation in FAD Mojosari through a top-down approach as a form of the notion of becoming

The notion of participation has been used in many programs for development issues as a means for empowerment and transformation within local communities. This approach is privileging local knowledges through the help of an outsider with very little intervention to facilitate, in which local people are positioned as the main actor who decides their own problems and also solutions (Chambers 1994: 1438 - 1439). Participation manifests not only with adults but also children. In this regard, children are urged to define their own problems and offer solutions. It is expected that the program that would be developed for children is based on their own needs, and not that of adults. It is also clearly stated in article 1 paragraph 2:

"Children's participation is the involvement of children in the process of decision making on everything in which relates to themselves and it is carried out based on mutual awareness, understanding and willingness of the children so that children could enjoy the result or benefit from the decision." (MWECP 2011: 3)

Nevertheless, the discourse on children's participation is never detached on how children are seen and see themselves. White (2002: 1096) argues children and childhood are intimately bound with moral and practical discourses such as how children are seen as 'becoming', rather than 'being'. In this notion, children are seen as incomplete human beings in which they are prepared for the sake of becoming adults, not their current state of being. I argue it positions children as objects for the interests of adults. In addition, Skelton (2007) criticizes UNICEF (as a UN body who works for child rights), based on The State of the World's Children 2003 Report, for representing children's participation as the state of becoming. It means that the notion of becoming is still a predominant discourse even in UN discourses who also promotes the implementation of the CRC. The notion of becoming is also a dominant perspective in the implementation of children's participation through FAD Mojosari. It manifests in the approach taken in the establishment and the sustainability of FAD.

In the previous chapter, I have discussed about the norms that influence the shaping of the institutionalized children's participation space. In this chapter, I will discuss the Indonesian centralized government system, and the YID program intervention which influences how FAD is regulated, established, reorganized, and elected as representatives in KPAD. In that sense, the notion of becoming dominates how children are seen and treated.

3.1 The centralized government system as a legacy of the past

The notion of children's participation in Indonesia is related to the governmental system in Indonesia, which is a centralized government that has been built since President Soeharto's reign which lasted 32 years. In this reign, villages were uniformed under law number 5 of 1979 which details the government system as one centralized under hierarchical structure and command (Pratiyudha 2016: 104). He (2016: 104 – 105) adds that the uniformity control showed that the Indonesian government used a top-down approach, in which villagers were considered as a mobilization object of government programs. One of the programs being *Karang Taruna*. *Karang Taruna* is a social organization which focuses on the issue of

young people, as a space for the development of community members in village/urban villages on social welfare issues. *Karang Taruna* exists from the village level until national level. In addition, *Karang Taruna* was used by the New Order regime not only to govern young people, but also to give support in the presidential election towards the Soeharto regime (Pratiyudha 2016: 109). When the New Order under Soeharto collapsed in 1998, the governmental system changed from centralization to decentralization. During the Soeharto regime, social policy blueprints were managed and controlled through regulations and a centralized system from Jakarta¹¹ down to the villages (Antlov 2003: 143). While in the decentralization system, the policy design was meant to transfer power from Jakarta to sub-districts, and cities (Hadiz 2010: 79).

Nevertheless, the legacy of a top-down approach in the Indonesian governmental system still exists until now. Under regulation number 38 of 2007 on the distribution of authorities among national, provincial, districts/city governments it is mentioned that the authority on women empowerment and child protection issues are categorized as a mandatory governmental affair for the national and local governments. However, when the regulation was made from the national level, the local government needs to respond to such regulations. In that vein, the regulation about child protection, which includes children's participation, manifests in regulation such as the law on child protection number 35 of 2014 (amended from law number 23 of 2002) and the regulation of MWECP number 12 of 2015 on The Guidance of Children's Participation in Development Planning. The latter regulation mandates the involvement of children in *Musrenbang*. It encourages local governments to create it through a top-down, instead of a bottom-up approach. This is the nature of massive patronage in which the central government is considered higher than the local government. This system is embedded in the governmental system in Indonesia.

3.2 A top-down approach: the history of the created space for children's participation through FAD Mojosari

The notion of becoming is a dominant perspective for seeing children in Mojosari especially in relation to FAD, KPAD, the village government and YIDA Indonesia. The notion of becoming manifests through a top-down approach in which children are positioned as the object. Jenks (2015: 68) contends that the development of children socially, as a social structure that is made up from adults rational, where children are seen as waiting to be transformed based on certain norms of society. In that sense, I argue that since the beginning of its establishment FAD uses a top-down approach. FAD was created, based not only on the encouragement of the YID program, but also the adults rational to provide a space for children's participation which they assume as a good place for children to develop their skills for the future.

The history of FAD's establishment has a strong relation with the intervention of PLAN Indonesia since 2004 in Rembang Districts. It also continues when the YID program was introduced in 2016. Although at the national level there was the regulation that mandates the local government to involve Child Forums in *Musrenbang*, it also could be said that the local government needed to establish Child Forums from village until provincial level. In the Rembang Districts, PLAN Indonesia saw this regulation as an opportunity to sustain PLAN's program and they advocate for it to the Rembang government.

This advocacy is based on the success of child protection programs that were implemented by PLAN Indonesia from 2004 – 2016 in Rembang Districts. The program was a

¹¹ The capital city of Indonesia.

sponsorship program for children in 30 villages in Rembang. The sponsorship program was given in the form of education and health which not only gave the benefit to children but also to the surrounding community. PLAN Indonesia encouraged the establishment of a community-based committee who cares towards child protection issues, called KPAD. KPAD is created as a means not only to give awareness to society but also advocate to village governments for giving them support for their activities in child protection issues. KPAD consists of various villagers from different backgrounds: teachers, religious leaders, representatives of village government, and children (from FAD). Beside KPAD, PLAN Indonesia also encouraged the establishment of FAD as a space for children to voice their aspirations.

In 2012, there were 30 KPADs in 30 PLAN Indonesia-intervened villages. PLAN Indonesia advocated to the Rembang government to replicate KPAD in which each sub-district would have two KPADs. In Rembang, there are 14 sub-districts. Through this advocacy, in 2013, there were 28 KPADs in 28 non-PLAN Indonesia-intervened villages that was created through the encouragement from the Rembang government. In addition, the Rembang government issued the regulation number 6 of 2014 on The Implementation of Child Protection. The regulation in article 6 paragraph 2, states that village governments are obliged and responsible to facilitate the involvement of society in child protection issues through KPAD (Rembang Regent 2014: 8). In article 18, village governments are obliged to facilitate the establishment of FAD, pay attention to and accommodate children's voices from FAD in each policy development on children (Rembang Regent 2014: 12). The regulation strengthens the existence of KPAD and FAD as part of child protection programs in Rembang.

In 2016, when YIDA Indonesia came to Mojosari, as one of the villages in Rembang, to work together in the YID program, the village leader was in agreement, which resulted in the reformation of KPAD that was established before the YID program was implemented. In 2015, KPAD was created without the follow-up actions. It was only a structure that existed on paper. Since its establishment was not a community based (bottom-up) approach but directed from the Rembang government (top-down). The YID program helped with the activation of KPAD and the establishment of FAD in 2017. In 2016, the KPAD structure was reelected by inviting local stakeholders such as teachers, religious leaders, and local community cadres. In 2016, the representative from the village government was selected as the KPAD leader. While in 2018, since the resignation of the last KPAD leader, KPAD members selected a new leader who is a teacher and had previously been the secretary of KPAD.

Meanwhile, FAD was formed by KPAD, but it was based on the stimulation and suggestions from YIDA Indonesia. In 2017, all of the villages who are involved in the YID program visited Pangkalan Village in Rembang as a way to learn about how KPAD and FAD are run and both were created under PLAN Indonesia's intervention beforehand. After this visitation, KPAD Mojosari initiated the establishment of FAD Mojosari through the assistance of the village government. The village government instructed each hamlet to select children to come for the establishment of FAD in *Balai Desa*¹². Through the interview with the current KPAD leader, it was found that she was unsure of how the hamlet leaders selected the children. I also asked the question to a YIDA Indonesia staff in Rembang, he was also unsure about it. I assume the selection of the children was based on the closeness of the hamlet leader towards the children, either they know the children are active in school or community, or probably they are the children of respected parents (such

¹² *Balai Desa* is a place usually next to the village government office that is used for any kind of village activities such as meetings, events etc.

as teachers, local communities cadres, members of Fatayat), or neighbors. In that sense, the chosen children are not considered as representative as it ignores the inclusivity of children's voices from different backgrounds and places.

I could not get much information on the first establishment of FAD in 2017, such as how many children were present at that time, which hamlet representatives were present, and how was the selection of the FAD structure conducted. However, I interviewed the current leader of FAD whom she was the treasurer of FAD who was selected in the first establishment of FAD. She admitted that she was asked to come to the meeting of the establishment of FAD even though at the time she did not know its aims. Thereafter FAD was created with several names who were in management and member positions. FAD was not really active at that time it was only in name on paper. In this regard, it shows that children are not an agenda setter for FAD's establishment. But, it is because of the encouragement of the YID program.

"Honestly, we were gathered since we were asked to come, we did not know what it was for. I was selected as a treasurer.... (after the FAD was created) there were not any meetings in FAD. The leader, vice and me only met if there would be YID's events. May be when the leader of FAD was selected, he thought it would not be many activities. For me, after I joined several activities in YID and FAD, I know well about YID, FAD and KPAD." (FAD member, 2019)

In 2018, there was a reorganization of FAD's management (leader, vice, treasurer and all of the leaders in every division in FAD) to select a new leader. According to the YID staff that I interviewed, it was because the previous leader of FAD was not active. The meeting invited previous FAD members and other children who are involved in weekend classes.¹³ At this time, the new leader was a girl aged 14 years old and the vice a boy aged 17 years old. There are 13 children in FAD's management and 15 children as members. From FAD's FGD, when I asked what were their motivations to join FAD? Almost all of them considered two motivations: first because they were invited by the village government and second, they were invited by friends. Both motivations show that their involvement was not because of their knowledge of FAD. However, either they were invited by the village government or previous FAD members who looked for new cadres for FAD, I argue both motivations show the domination of a top-down approach from the YID program, KPAD and the village government.

"I was invited (by the village government) to come to Balai Desa, since there would be a YID's meeting. Honestly, at that time I did not know what is YID. For those who were invited, we were asked to invite our friends to come also with us. Even though we did not know what the meeting was for." (FAD member, 2019)

Through the history of FAD's establishment and reorganization, it shows that FAD was not established based on the needs from the ground (bottom-up approach). It is also the same with the establishment of KPAD. It did not come from the need of the Mojosari people, but it came based on the push from the Rembang government who made the regulation which encourages each village to create KPAD. When the YID program came to Mojosari village, it helped with the activation of KPAD and the establishment of FAD. In practice, KPAD and FAD work together to ensure the fulfilment of child protection needs in the village. In this case, since the assistance of the YID program, KPAD and FAD in Mojosari focus to reduce child marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting and unwanted teenage pregnancies. In this regard, it shows that neither FAD nor KPAD are the agenda

¹³ The business class under the YID program. It aims to create child entrepreneurs in Mojosari village.

setter. The nature of the centralized patronage system is manifested in the Rembang government down to the village government, KPAD, and FAD through the assistance from the YID program. And FAD is in the lowest position of domination. I argue this hierarchical pattern is a manifestation of the long practice of a centralized government system in Indonesia.

White (2002: 1101) contends that it does not matter that adults specify the best interest of children, however the intimate relationship between children and adults (that could be seen as children-parents relationship) would make vague boundaries regarding which interest is preferred. The idea of the best interest of the child ought to be seen as a platform to consider that children's interest is preferred which manifests by treating them as being, not becoming. It is also the same with the assumption that children do not need to be involved in any kind of demonstrations since it is assumed as a dangerous space for children. Since there might be violence from the police. So, adults would prohibit children from being involved in such demonstrations in the name of protection and the best interest of children. However, this "protection" neglects children's voices in which they might think demonstration is their way to demonstrate their aspirations.

In the CRC, the term of participation is introduced as a third P, in which the first two 'Ps' are provision and protection. In the early phase of the CRC in 1959 its goals for children's rights were about protection, education, shelter, and good nutrition (Skelton 2007: 167). In that sense, the first two 'Ps' indicate children need protection and provision. While the notion of participation puts children as subject that is assumed can decide their best interest. The notion of the best of interest of the child, if it is viewed from the perspective of protection and participation, I argue it would become a dilemma of choices. The best interest of the child from the view of protection, may see adults putting children's need for protection from any harmful conditions, including envisioning the children's future. While from the view of participation, children as subject may have different perspective from adults perception about what are the best things for children. In this notion, I argue the created space of children's participation through Child Forums is as a manifestation of envisioning children's future in which not fully consider children's voices.

3.3 Children's representative in the adult organization: is it enough?

The domination of a top-down approach also occurred in the selection process of children's representative in the KPAD's structure. These children are from FAD. In the structure of KPAD, there are six children who represent FAD. One child is positioned as KPAD's secretary, two children in the service and information division, two children in the advocacy and network division, and one child in the documentation and publication division. One of FAD's members who was selected in KPAD's structure did not know that she was selected. She was just told that she was selected in KPAD's structure without knowing in which position and what is her responsibility. She admitted that she did not attend the selection process since she was studying at school.

"In the establishment of current the KPAD's structure I did not come, since I was in school. I did not know why I was chosen. Although I did not come, they told me that I was selected in KPAD's structure." (FAD member, 2019)

In that vein, I interviewed some children who are in KPAD's structure. Some of them were unsure about their function in the structure, but the other responded that it could be as the bridge between FAD and KPAD to communicate and consult FAD's activities.

Nevertheless, from the interview with other FAD's members who are not in KPAD's structure, they do not know that there are some of FAD's members elected in KPAD's structure. They also do not know what is the function of children's representatives in the KPAD structure. In that sense, I argue in the ambiguity of the function of children's representatives in KPAD's structure shows how the decision on children's involvement has not involved children themselves.

It shows that even though children's participation as one of the main strategies in the YID program, its implementation does not show how children's participation ought to be implemented. The idea of children's representatives in the KPAD structure was the idea from the YID program. The YIDA Indonesia staff admitted that children's involvement in KPAD's structure is in order for children to have a strong position to voice their aspirations in KPAD. However, this idea could not be implemented as expected in the first place. Since the selection process of FAD's representative was problematic. It shows the top-down approach as a dominant approach that reduces the idea of children's participation.

However, the idea of children's representative in the adult-structured organization is one of the ways to include children's voices in programs. This practice has been implemented in many NGOs in Indonesia such as *Perhimpunan Keluarga Berencana Indonesia* (PKBI). PKBI implements the practice of 30 percent of young people's representation¹⁴ on the executive board. This regulation influences the effectiveness of young people's participation in increasing their organization and advocating skills (Singh et. al 2016: 22). For this reason, PKBI as an organization which was established in 1975, has a long history of realizing and creating empowerment for young people. Therefore, it also needs time for the Child Forum in Mojosari to be more empowered as being and playing more roles in advocating their needs towards KPAD and the village government.

3.4 Final remarks: the reduced meaning of children's participation

In this chapter, I discussed about the factors that influence FAD Mojosari as the institutionalized children's participation space. These factors are the legacy of the centralized governmental system in Indonesia and the intervention of the YID program towards the establishment FAD and the election of FAD's representatives in KPAD's structure. Although the basic idea of FAD's establishment is to put children as active agents, however the domination of the notion of becoming reduces the meaning of the participation. Therefore, children are not the agenda setter. However, the awareness of valuing children as being able to participate, needs time for adults to realize and support it. This awareness is one of the main tasks that is built and injected by the YID program.

In addition, it raises a question on how do children understand their participation and play their role in the Child Forum that was made by adults? Given the norms which limit their space and the domination of the notion of becoming, could it give them enough space to participate in FAD in accordance with their needs? This will be addressed in the next chapter.

¹⁴ Young people here are aged 10 – 24 years old.

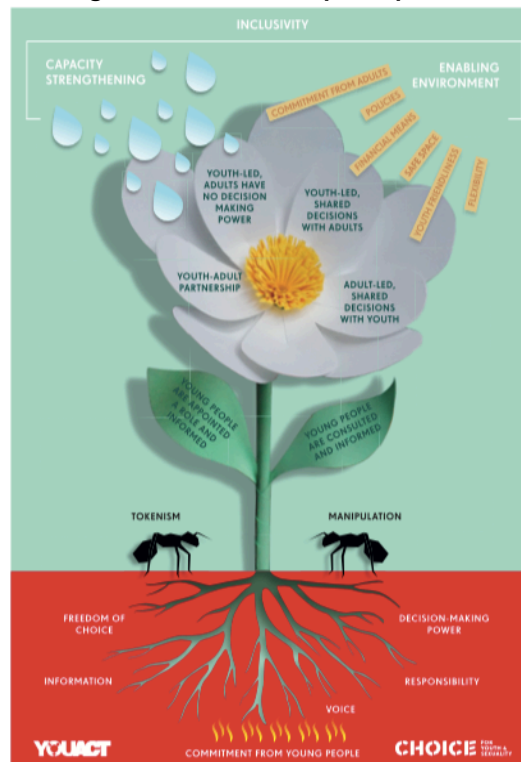
Chapter 4 The children's perceptions and actions towards their participation in the Child Forum

The relationship between children and adults is not only about adult's control towards children. However, their relationship is not simply a binary between being and becoming, but the need to appreciate the diversity of their connections and other forms of engagement (White 2002: 1097). Leonard (2016: 289) echoes the relationship between children and adult as not only binary, but also involves the social context in which the understanding of childhood is perceived. In this regard, I argue that children also have their agency as the way they view and practice their participation even though in a limited space such as in FAD Mojosari. Since children are not passive agents, they also as active agents exercise their own will. Gallagher (2008) adds children also exercise their agency since the power itself is diverse and multivalent and it is practiced by adults or children. According to Leonard (2016: 289), children actively construct their agency from their own everyday lives and their surroundings, while at the same time considering their agency in the position between childhood and adulthood.

In this chapter, I discuss children's perceptions and actions towards the created space as the forms of their participation in FAD Mojosari. It shapes their agency and how they deal with the surrounding norms and the notion of becoming which manifested through the institutionalized children's participation space. It will be opened from the proposed participation model from the YID program, and FAD's members activities in which show their active engagement as the form of their agency.

4.1 The participation model under the YID program

Figure 5 The flower of participation

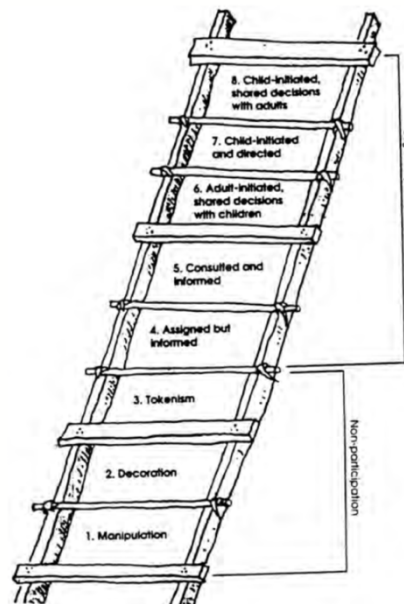


Source: Choice for Youth and Sexuality 2018: 22.

FAD was created and run through a top-down approach, which influences how the concept of children's participation in FAD Mojosari is practiced. The norms in Mojosari and the strong nuance of Indonesian centralized government, and the intervention of the YID program limit children's participation. The YID program introduced the concept of meaningful youth participation, called the Flower of Participation. The Flower of Participation is introduced by Choice for Youth and Sexuality, as one of the organizations under the YID alliance from the Netherlands. It is a participation model that measures participation in six different stages: manipulation, tokenism, young people are appointed a role and informed, young people are consulted and informed, adult led (shared decisions with youth), youth led (shared decisions with adults), youth-led (adults have no decision-making power), and youth-adult partnership (Choice for Youth and Sexuality 2018).

YIDA Indonesia has been giving training and regular technical assistance to FAD and KPAD on this participation model. The model aims to differentiate any kind of children's participation in which FAD is encouraged to understand which model is suitable for them. But also, in the end, they are encouraged to increase their level of participation from the lower level into higher level. This participation model might be useful for measuring the participation process in a development program. However, every stage of participation is really dependent on the social context where the participation is practiced. Hart (1997: 9) also has a similar participation model which is divided into 8 steps. It is ranked from no participation at all into child-initiated and shared decisions with adults. However, he (1997: 37 – 40) realizes this ladder could not be implemented to every child since there are different barriers and challenges, such as different variables of social class, gender, social and emotional development, and age. Therefore, participation could not be compartmentalized into a single definition.

Figure 6 The ladder of participation



Source: Hart 1992: 9.

In addition, through interviews and FGDs, FAD's members barely know about this participation model. They only remember that it is important to raise their hand if they want to deliver their opinions in a meeting with adults. Even though there is the available participation model that is proposed for them, but this concept is not fully understood by them. So then, how do they perceive and enact their participation?

4.2 The bargaining position of children towards the limited participation space

FAD's activities under the YID program

Children's participation in Mojosari through FAD is exercised through their activities in which most of them are under the interest of the YID program. The activities contribute towards the program's vision. Its vision is "to ensure that adolescent girls and boys enjoy their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and achieve their potential, free from all forms of child marriage, teenage pregnancy and female genital mutilation" (YIDA Indonesia 2016: 10).

These activities are:

- a. *Posyandu Remaja* (Youth *Posyandu*): It is a program from the Ministry of Health that aims at increasing healthy life skill education in reproductive health, mental health, adolescent nutrition, and in preventing harassment (MoH 2018: 15). The program is intended to involve children between the ages of 10 – 18 years old in planning, monitoring, and evaluation of *posyandu remaja*. In Mojosari, the program was encouraged by the YID. The YIDA staff works with *puskesmas* (community health center) to train children (in this case they took 4 FAD members from each of the intervened-YID program villages) as facilitators. The tasks of facilitators are to support the health officer (in this case a village midwife) by measuring weight, height, blood pressure, upper arm circumference, and abdominal circumference. *Posyandu remaja* is held monthly. However, since in Mojosari, *posyandu remaja* is currently done in 4 hamlets (Njuwet, Pringan, Ngegot, and Mangseng) in which it occurs every month only in two hamlets.
- b. Serial Discussions for boys and girls: In achieving awareness raising and support from the surrounding community. Twice a month, the YID program conducts serial discussion for men, women, boys and girls. The discussions are done separately in order to create a safe space for women and girls to talk. If it is mixed with men and boys, they tend to shy away from talking. Facilitators for serial discussions for boys and girls are from FAD in which they were trained beforehand. The themes for serial discussions include the prevention of child marriage, teenage pregnancy, sex and gender, power relations, child rights, and accompanying children in the use of social media.
- c. Weekend class: It aims to provide economic empowerment skills for girls and boys, the YID program provides a monthly class (for 12 months since their module covers 12 chapters) on entrepreneurship. In practice, the participants form a business group consisting of 4 – 5 people. Each business group is encouraged to create their own business, make and design their products, and decide their own market. The weekend class was started in 2018, in which some of them are now active in FAD. In 2019, the weekend class started again with many new group businesses where the previous participants became facilitators for the 2019 batch.

The structure and the workplan of FAD Mojosari

In the current FAD's structure, there are 13 people in FAD's management and 15 as members. The different role between management and members are their position and responsibilities. The management consists of a leader, vice, treasurer, secretary (there are two secretaries) and divisions (arts, spirituality, sport, and documentation). Even though there are 28 people in total, not all of them are still active in supporting FAD. It is because some of the boys currently work either in the village or outside the village. While, the members are not well managed since they do not fall under any divisions in FAD. The range age for these 28 people are 15 – 19 years old.

Table 1 FAD Mojosari structure

No.	Position	Consist of	Gender
1.	Leader	1 person	Female
2.	Vice	1 person	Male
3.	Treasurer	1 person	Female
4.	Secretary	2 people	Both are females
5.	Spirituality division	2 people	Both are males
6.	Arts division	2 people	Both are females
7.	Documentation division	2 people	Both are males
8.	Members	15 people	11 females and 4 males
	Total	28 people	

Source: author's elaboration

FAD through its division has several workplans that were agreed upon with other FAD members. For example, the sport division has a workplan for doing exercise together with other children in the village. The art division has a workplan for exercising *hadroh*¹⁵ in collaboration with children from different hamlets. While the spirituality division put recitation with other children and cleaning the mosque as their workplan. However, only one activity the *hadroh* performance was realized as one of the village events.

The demands of the YID program and the FAD's bargaining

I contend due to the demands from the YID program's activities has taken away FAD's members attention to put their efforts to it compared to their own workplans. Meanwhile, they need also to focus on their studies and other responsibilities at home. Through my observation, when I was living there, I attended two *posyandu remaja* (in Njuwet and Pringan hamlet) that was held for two hours each. The process of *posyandu remaja* is managed and performed by FAD members. Beside *posyandu remaja*, some of FAD's members are facilitators for serial discussions and weekend classes. They are not only facilitator, but also get trust from KPAD and the YID staff to manage both activities. By this I mean, it is also the same as they do for *posyandu remaja*, where they invite and prepare everything for the activities. Nevertheless, when they were conducting these activities, there was a YID staff who came to monitor it.

Although the routine activities of FAD is based on the need of the YID program, I argue their efforts for managing and conducting it demonstrates their agency in the limited space. Agency is something that children can learn from their everyday life and the available spaces that they have at their disposal. This learning needs time for the children to realize and understand that they can do more and probably take more spaces to exercise their agency. While at the same time, they also respect 'the rules of game' for example by consulting KPAD about their activities.

In April 2019, FAD Mojosari made one event based on their initiative. It was not on the YID workplan. This event was a crucial moment for them in exercising their agency. Since it is the first event that was conducted by them. The event was about the celebration of the remembrance of Kartini¹⁶.

¹⁵ *Hadroh* is a traditional art in which every hamlet has *hadroh* youth groups. *Hadroh* groups usually performs in recitation events in Mojosari.

¹⁶ Kartini is a Javanese woman who fought for the education of girls and women in the era of Dutch colonialization in Indonesia. She died in 1904. President Soeharto named her as a heroine and made a special day to celebrate her birthday in 21th of April. In practice, often times the remembrance of Kartini day in April is only a parade of girls who are wearing kebaya (traditional attire from Java) or the other form of celebration such as conducted by FAD Mojosari.

“Kartini event is the first event we made by ourselves. The idea came from FAD’s members. We learnt to make a funding proposal by asking one of the YID staff and also finding references from OSIS¹⁷.” (FAD Member, 2019)

The event was filled by a fashion show competition for children aged 4 – 6, letter making and a poetry recitation competition for children aged 13 – 17. The entire process of the event was planned, managed, and conducted by FAD Mojosari. They also made a proposal for requesting financial support to the village government and YIDA Indonesia.

However, this event was still under the control of KPAD, in which FAD consulted the event and asked KPAD to connect them to the village leader for fundraising. And they got the funding support from the government and also the YID program.

“In Kartini the event, we discussed what kind of competitions we want to conduct. Once we agreed, we report our agreement of the event to KPAD. KPAD was not really involved in the event. We managed all of the process of the event. We only came to KPAD if we had confusions and needed their advice.” (FAD Member, 2019)

The notion of agency also relates to the benefits that they get from joining FAD, which was found out through the FGD with FAD members. They admitted by joining FAD they get benefits such as getting more friends from different hamlets, increasing their knowledge, filling spare time, more confidence, and getting organization skills. Children’s activeness in FAD may be viewed in two perspectives. First, children as actor/implementor/manager for their events are seeing themselves as being, while at the same time the adults see it as their training to get beneficial skills for the future. Both views are not detached and are not seen as separate, but is interwoven due to the complexity of their relationship.

Nevertheless, although the patronage male culture influences the activeness of girls in FAD. Through my observation, girl members of FAD are the most active members who drive FAD, in the confined space they do still have agency as their bargaining towards the dominance narrative of the patronage male culture. Anwar (2004: 107) contends “directed women’s movements” in Indonesia either under the monitoring of the government or their parent’s organizations still have an agency to make a major impact on women’s lives. Kandiyoti (1988) argues women’s strategies in dealing with patriarchy in a constraint situation is shaping their active or passive resistance towards the oppression. She calls it a patriarchal bargain. In this regard, women’s struggles is to bargain their position to protect their security.

In the context of FAD Mojosari, the monitoring from KPAD is a form of domination in which FAD members also contend with this domination as a matter of protection for them to conduct their activities. So, is this agency considered a weak agency? I argue the notion of agency could not be understood as something that could fully liberate and give them the highest level of participation that is compartmentalized under the participation model. Agency is exercised through the process of interactions among themselves, adults, and the environment surrounding them. The interactions could produce an equal partnership, or domination of adults to children, or other forms, and it may change overtime. In this notion, the strategies of girl members of FAD in exercising their agency through the activities under the YID program is a form of bargaining based on the situation they have.

¹⁷ One of FAD members is an OSIS member. OSIS is a school organization which is run by students and under the supervision of teachers.

4.3 Final remarks: there is no rigid relationship

In this chapter, I discussed about even though children in FAD participate in the provided space, however they still have their agency. The domination of the notion of becoming is knitted with the notion of being. The children exercise their agency in the limited space. In this notion, I argue the influence of the norms and the notion of becoming, it affects why they do not put their focus towards their own workplans, but rather to the demands of the YID program activities.

Although, the YID program introduced the participation model, but it is not fully conceived by FAD members. In that sense, the agency that is performed by them is based on their perceptions and will towards the confined space that they have. In addition, since the girls-members of FAD who drive FAD's activities, they choose to be active in FAD as the form of their obedience towards the patronage male culture. However, it is the way they enact their agencies as their bargaining towards patriarchy system. At last, I conclude the perceptions and actions of FAD members towards their participation in FAD is a dynamic relationship between children and adults and it may changes overtime.

Chapter 5 Conclusion: what is working for implementing children's participation in FAD Mojosari

The MWECP made the regulation which encourages the involvement of Child Forums in *Musrenbang*. Besides the Indonesian government's commitment towards the CRC, it also is a form of formal recognition towards children's participation in the development process. It is a way to ensure that children's voices are accommodated in development planning from village until national level. This regulation is also used by development organizations like YIDA Indonesia who work in child rights to encourage the local government in involving Child Forums in *Musrenbang*. In that sense, it also encourages the local government to create Child Forums. YIDA Indonesia also gives technical assistance and stimulates children's participation through trust giving for children to conduct and manage activities.

The formal recognition of children's participation through Child Forums is a way to institutionalize children's participation. It is supported by the constructed norms of childhood; children need to respect adults and girls need to be protected. The first norm is a manifestation of children and parents' relation in which it also reflects the relationship between children and adults. This relationship creates a power imbalance, in which children are seen as incomplete social human being, in need of adults' protection, and both combinations need adults training and assessment (White 2002: 1097). In that sense, adults monitoring is really important as a control towards children's activities.

The second norm shows that girls need to be in safe places. In that sense, parents view FAD is a safe place. As a result, parents tend to give permission for their daughters to be active in FAD rather than being involved in negative activities. Although this norm indicates the patronage male culture, however this norm is utilized by girl FAD members to be active in FAD and enact their agency. In that vein, Kandiyoti (1988) argues this agency in the limited space of patronage male culture as bargaining with patriarchy. Both norms become a constraint to children's participation in the Child Forum, however the second norm also enables girls to have more spaces to develop themselves not only in home and schools.

Nevertheless, it is not only norms, children's participation is also institutionalized through a top-down approach as a form of the notion of becoming. The idea of participation aims to position children as active actors who can decide their own problems and offer its solutions. In this notion, participation aims to empower children which not only increases children's capacities but also children are encouraged to voice their aspirations. However, the past legacy of a centralized governmental system in Indonesia and the intervention of the YID program drive the establishment and the management of FAD Mojosari through a top-down approach. In that sense, children are not active subjects, but as objects of adults' interests. The involvement of children in FAD is through adults' projection towards children, and as a result, children could increase their capacities and would become a useful resource for the benefit of village development in the future.

In this context limitation, children perceive and enact their participation by negotiating the available provided spaces. Children construct their agency from their daily lives by considering their position towards adults (Leonard 2016: 289). In this regard, the available spaces are through the activities which are 'pushed' under the YID program. These children are managers and implementors of some of these activities. It becomes their learning process to understand and enact their agency. Although their agency is 'forced' under the YID program in which they also do not really put attention towards their own workplans. However, it is their agency that could be ignored.

Although I criticize the practices of children's participation in FAD Mojosari and present it as an institutionalized children's participation space, I do not mean to conclude it as a failure. Unpacking its practices show that there are many complexities that occur when children's participation is implemented. These complexities depend on different contexts. By acknowledging its complexities, it suggests an understanding of its social context and could not only be compartmentalized into one or two definitions of participation models as suggested by Choice for Youth and Sexuality (2018) through the flower of participation or the ladder participation by Roger Hart (1997). These complexities include other factors such as economic background, age gap between 0 – 18, race, and sexual orientation. In addition, by acknowledging these complexities, it become opportunities to improve on how children's participation might be implemented.

However, in development programs which are run either by the Indonesian government or NGOs such as YIDA Indonesia, there is a need for a measurement tool to gauge their 'success' and 'achievement'. While YIDA Indonesia measures achievement through their proposed participation model, the flower of participation, the Indonesian government claims one of its successes through the existence of Child Forums in 33 provinces. Whilst it is valid for them to do so, nevertheless, it is necessary to pay attention towards the quality of this achievement by understanding the social context in which Child Forums are located, the inclusivity of children's participation in Child Forums, and ensuring children's participation is not only tokenistic.

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