

KOMPAK

Kolaborasi Masyarakat dan Pelayanan untuk Kesejahteraan

AKADEMI PARADIGTA

Strong Women. Prosperous Village.


Leadership course for women to influence village governance.



KOMPAK is supported
by the Australian Government
and managed by Abt Associates



THE THINKING BEHIND THE TRANSFORMATION



‘Women of the thinking society are the builders of nations. Women of the sentient society are the builders of the world. And given the same honor and dignity as men, women can build a much better and more harmonious world.’

- Abhijit Naskar



Where's a woman's place? *Dapur, sumur, kasur*, is the typical answer you'll get from rural women. In the kitchen, by the well, and on the bed. That's how far it was thought a woman could go; just around the house. Meanwhile, men had the opportunities to change the world, for better or worse. So when a group of women, still clad in their house-wear, came to the village office, asking to see the latest documents of the village budgets (APBDes), they were treated like a joke. In Cipanas village in Cianjur regency, West Java, they were labelled as 'strange creatures' by the officials; in Wringingintung village in Batang regency, Central Java, they were given outdated documents from 2008 assuming the women are just fools.

What woman has any business in the affairs of the government?

YET THE FACT REMAINS;

49%

OF THE POOREST FAMILIES
ARE HEADED BY A WOMAN.



BACKGROUND

These “strange creatures”, unlike good women should be are insistent. They keep coming back to the office until they’re heard. In response. In response to Village Law No. 6/2014, PEKKA, an organisation for female-headed family empowerment pioneered *Akademi Paradigta* in 2016. *Paradigta*, in Javanese, means a woman who stands tall: precisely what the Akademian aims for. Nearly half (49%) of the poorest families are headed by a woman, making them the biggest untapped economic potential of all marginalised groups.

Akademi Paradigta provides a one-year-program of study for women on how to be leaders for themselves and others, so they can contribute to village governance and development. Being a member of PKK (Family Welfare Movement) – which had cemented a woman’s place in domesticity since the start of the New Order government in 1966 – is not enough. In fact, it is inequitable. PKK has long given women the reputation of being just a wife, an accessory to her husband. In this thinking, women should care about the issues of beauty, health, and education, but were excluded from policy-making processes. This confined role has marginalised and diminished their power as people capable of transforming lives.

Sarinah, 36, an *akademia* from Wringingintung in Batang, spent her childhood picking up scattered paddy grains that people left on the ground during harvest, and carrying bricks on her back for a construction project, so she could feed her family. As an adult, she’d worked as a housemaid in Jakarta and Malaysia, and then had gone back home, only to find that she’d contracted acute typhoid due to overwork. She believes, though, that the root of her illness was the poor sanitation she’d been exposed to since childhood. The people in her village openly relieve themselves by the river.



Meanwhile, in Bakalan village, also in Batang, its village head, Amat Rochman, finds **Sundari**, 38, indispensable in data collection for the office. She is an *akademia* who has been active in PKK's Family Planning and BUMDes (village-run enterprises). Collecting data door-to-door, she remembers every person who lives in the village.



Amat, Batang Village Head



THE RIPPLE THAT STARTS THE BIG WAVE

Support from a village head for *Akademi Paradigta* can be life-changing, for the *akademias* and also for the whole village. Unlike Sarinah and Sundari, who are married, Tika and Erni from Cipanas village in Cianjur are divorcees. Both use the word *terpuruk* – to hit rock bottom – to describe their lives before *Akademi Paradigta*.

When her husband left her, Tika, now 45, was left with three small children. She was selling bags and cosmetics door-to-door. Joining PEKKA was the beginning of her transformation. She found her passion for organising. Neighbours got suspicious – widows should not be out and about alone, but she ignored their doubts. Her calm demeanour, quiet confidence, and vast knowledge of organisation defied her lack of formal education, and later she was able

to compensate for this by taking the home-schooling package that was equivalent of high school.

At PEKKA, Tika found a sisterhood that instilled a strong sense of solidarity and a drive for progress. When PEKKA founded *Akademi Paradigta* in 2016, they trained Tika to be a mentor. Tika sees potential in every woman, because she sees herself in them. She goes around the village persuading women to sign up for *Akademi Paradigta*. She's been accused of provoking women to abandon their houses and children. She doesn't budge from her belief in the importance of women accessing the *Akademi* for their future. She explains that the classes run on the weekend for half a day and they can bring their children.

EPIPHANY

PEKKA, with the help of KOMPAK, can create a transformation that leads to:

- Strong-minded women, who are brave enough to defy the woman's stereotypical role in society.
- Increasing will for women to participate in village governance.
- Interests for women to fix Village Law.
- Help managing the yearly Village Fund allocation, which minimises poverty in the village.



Erni, 46, is Tika's friend. Erni's life was also turned upside down by a divorce. Left to raise her three children, she struggled to feed them by selling cakes she made. She'd ask her children to deliver the cakes, because she was too embarrassed to face people. She started to have blood pressure problems and thought that life couldn't get worse. Tika took her friend to join *Akademi Paradigta*.



THE WILL TO MAKE THE CHANGE

Strategically, PEKKA understands that better village governance starts with the Village Head himself. So mentors from *Akademi Paradigta*, who are part of the PEKKA team, informed the Village Head about the program and won his support.

At the same time, the academy formulated a very effective curriculum that allowed those who could barely read and write to join, as long as they were willing to commit to a year-long program. The curriculum was structured to accelerate the growth of grassroots leaders with the vision to transform their village. Through active learning in each session, the women were empowered and gained confidence, knowledge, and skills.

Once, the village women only knew one script for them to play. One day, someone tore up the script and offered the women a pen instead of a kitchen knife, and paper instead of an onion. It was then that another version of the women emerged from inside their souls, surprising their own expectations and prompting others to rethink their beliefs. The women's thoughts found space; their dreams took form.

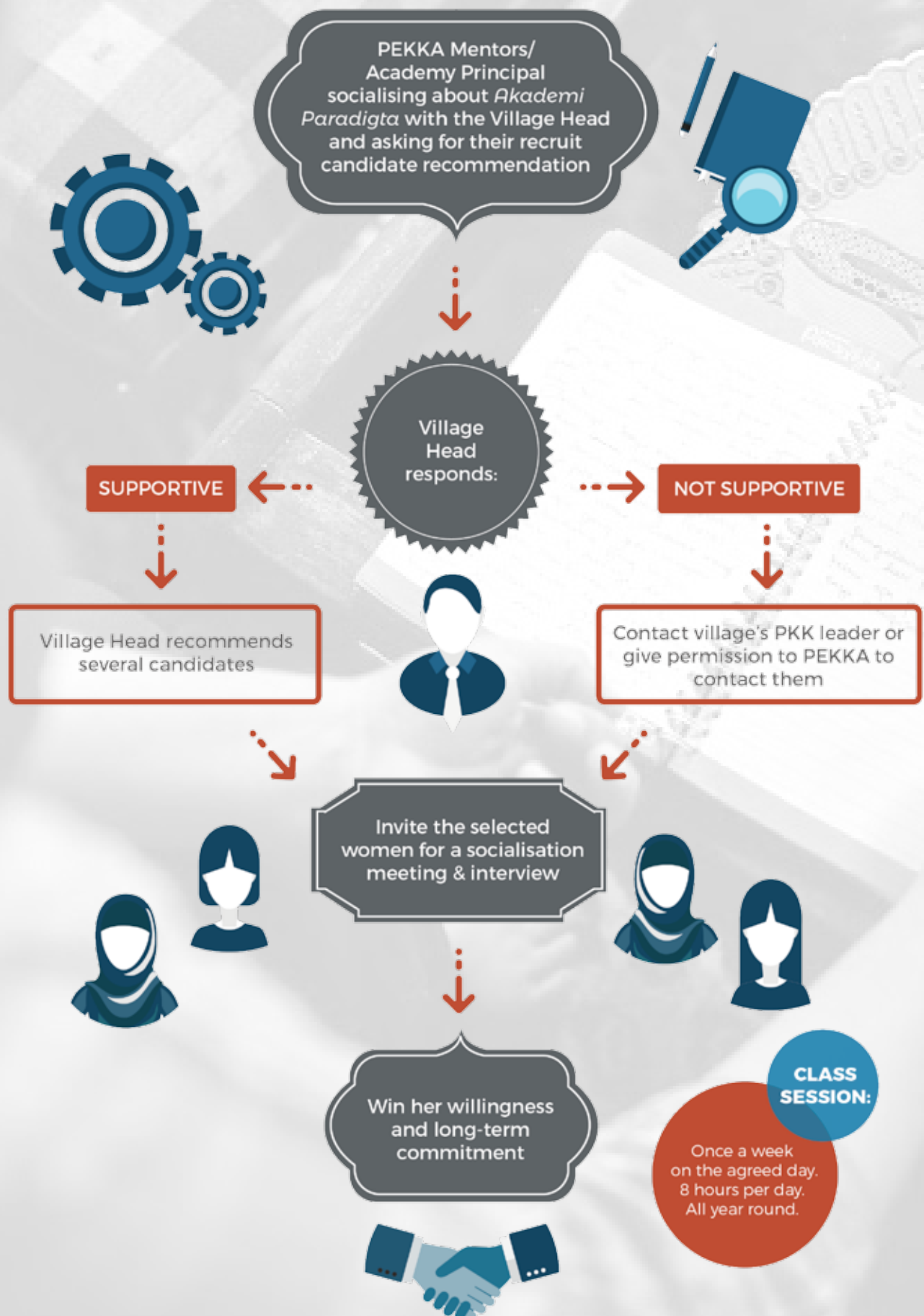
ACCELERATED CURRICULUM

Self-Empowerment / Building
Motivation – Knowledge – Skills

'I consulted Pak Kades Dadan on who would be the right women to be recruited in our village.'

-Tika, Mentor of Akademi Paradigta in Cipanas

RECRUITMENT PROCESS



THE GROWTH OF EMPOWERMENT

At *Akademi Paradigta*, the women – called *Akademia* – learn three fundamental lessons: **Self empowerment**, as most of them have painful pasts hence low confidence; **Community advocacy and organization**, as most have only minimal experience in affairs outside the house; and **knowledge and understanding of how governments work and the laws**.

For self empowerment, *the Akademi* created an expressive tool named *Sungai Kehidupan* (River of Life), a journal where each woman holds a pen instead of a kitchen knife and writes down her feelings instead of thinking what to cook all the time. Through writing, a woman's unspoken thoughts find space, her dreams for the future take form, and her past becomes a source of strength, instead of a handicap. After moving from an I-cannot to an I-can attitude, they go out to do fieldwork, interacting with government officials and participating in the process of becoming equal citizens, not second class ones. Inquiring and getting hold of a copy of APBDes is one of the fieldwork activities, so they can study it in the class, guided by PEKKA-trained mentors and principals.

Now is a crucial time for women, as they finally have the courage and the ability to revise the script written for them by society and start writing their own version.

MODULE 1

Practise most significant change (MSC) writing as individuals, family members, and citizens.

BEGIN THE AKADEMI PARADIGTA



MODULE 2

WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP



Opening up women's leadership potential by understanding the meaning of leadership, the principles of leading, and the role of women leaders in the village ecosystem.

MODULE 3

WOMEN AND THE DREAM VILLAGE



Invite the *akademia* to build their dream village in accordance with the expectations and potential that exists today.

MODULE 4

WOMEN AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION IN THE VILLAGE



Encourage the *akademias* to recognise the importance of women's contributions to village development, to provide inputs for more inclusive village development for women, children, and marginalised groups.

MODULE 5

WOMEN IN THE RURAL AREAS OF VILLAGE GOVERNANCE



Understand the provisions of village management to oversee and provide input on how to improve the effectiveness of village governance.

MODULE 6

WOMEN AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE



Understand the various service officers provided by the government and its minimum standards to demand optimal service from the government, according to the determined minimum service requirements.

MODULE 7

WOMEN MANAGING THE VILLAGE



Developing a variety of activities in society that respond to social and economic life challenges and cultural issues that the village community has faced.

MODULE 8

WOMEN BUILD SOVEREIGN VILLAGES



Be aware of the village potential, especially related to food and energy, so the *akademia* can manage the community to reach food self-sufficiency and energy.

MODULE 9

WOMEN AND THEIR REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS



Understand of women's rights and reproductive health, as well as advocacy efforts for the required services.

MODULE 10

WOMEN ADVOCATE POLICY



Train the *akademia* to actively advocate policy.

THE JOURNEY OF THE TRANSFORMATION

The journey of pursuing the transformation of women in our society is no easy task.

When PEKKA founded *Akademi Paradigta* in Cipanas, they trained Tika to be a mentor. She approached her friends, from widows to happily married wives, to join the academy. Relentlessly, she tried to convince them of the benefits of pursuing knowledge and participating in the village regulating process for their own advantage as a woman, mother, and citizen. It was not a smooth journey for Tika. In the process, she faced opposition from family members; accusing her of provoking mothers to neglect their children and wives to abandon their household chores. Fortunately, she gained support from the Head of the Village, Dadan Karim, who was willing to see the potential lying ahead.

Another story comes from Erni. Being a student at *Akademi Paradigta* in Cipanas, she was educated about her role and rights in the village, and how she could contribute to its development. Knowing her rights was truly an eye-opener for a middle-aged widow like Erni, who became fully aware that she was not cast aside, but was invited and encouraged to make a difference for herself and the village community. Not intending to commit to a one-year study program originally, she now finds herself interested in new and exciting things that she had never heard about before. She learns about Village Law and organisation, policy advocacy and public communication, women as village builders and leaders, and women's reproductive rights.

At *Akademi Paradigta* a new Erni emerged, surprising herself and others. 'I never heard the word "advocacy" before, but now that's what I want to do for the rest of my life,' said Erni. The Head of Village Representative (BPD) Solihin commented, 'I never knew that Ibu Erni [Mrs Erni] could talk like that.' Erni led other *akademias* to get the copy of APBDes when they were labelled as 'strange creatures', and later advocated the proposal of *PerDes Kebersihan* (Trash Management Regulation) to Solihin and Dadan Karim, the Village Head.

'...Never heard the word "advocacy" in my life, hard to pronounce it correctly, but now it is my favorite subject,'

explained Erni, replacing her timid self with a confidence she had found within.



Solihin, the Head of Village Representative (BPD) commented,

'I never knew that Ibu Erni could talk like that.'

'RUMAH SAMPAH' or Waste House



Dadan Karim, the Village Head, is now the best advocate of Akademi Paradigta.

'Tika and Erni were relentless in getting me to know what Akademi Paradigta can do for the village. If they can't see me in the office, they come to my house,'
said Dadan with a smile

In Cipanas, waste disposal was the most apparent problem. The village had a slogan of 3K (*Kebersihan, Kesehatan, Keselamatan*), but it remained words. When Tika and the *akademias* wrote a comprehensive proposal, and presented and argued it in front of the village officials, the men were astonished. An LPM (Community Empowerment Agency) member was even annoyed and said, 'Before you proposed this, were you making sure that your house is clean first?' This type of criticism doesn't shake the resolve of Tika, who has learned that the way to change the existing system is to let the men talk first until they have nothing left to say, and then encourage and support the women – after much deliberation – to make their case.

Dadan Karim, the Village Head, is now the best advocate of *Akademi Paradigta*. 'Tika and Erni were relentless in getting me to know what *Akademi Paradigta* can do for the village. If they can't see me in the office, they come to my house,' said Dadan with a smile. From the Village Fund 2017, he's allocated up to IRD 20 million for the *Akademi*. He recommended Erni for UPZ's (Alms Management Unit) selection of its new district treasurer. She passed the examinations and is now happily active throughout her village, and also other villages in the district. Dadan also supported Tika in implementing *Koperasi Simpan Pinjam* (Save-and-Loan Cooperative) as part of the new BUMDes initiatives, and she is the only female member.

AN ENCOURING BEGINNING FOR A GREATER FUTURE

The brave actions of Sarinah and Sundari, from Batang regency, were creating ripples in quiet villages on the north coast of Central Java. Even though her Village Head wouldn't see them to issue a decree for FKD (Village Health Forum) for legitimacy, the forum has plans. Holding a *layar tancap* (outdoor cinema) to show health issue documentaries is one of them.

Their effort to create change outside of their homes by continuously setting examples for others to join their cause has resulted in Sarinah being selected as secretary of FKD, and Sundari being chosen in BUMDes. These strong women are making sure the IDR 1 billion funds each village receives every year are in good hands.

After Sundari graduated from Akademi Paradigta, Pak Amat encouraged her to compete for the Head of Village Planning position. She failed at that time, because she lacked the necessary computer skills. As an akademi, she took a course and is now waiting for her certificate from the Labour Department.

'I bet that Sundari is ready for next time, as we are also strengthening our SID (village information system). We need more women like her; truly committed and meticulous,' praised Pak Amat.



If ripples are the start of a wave, then the *akademias* in Cianjur regency in West Java are riding it high. Tika believes that women's lives will only get better if more women are not just involved, but lead and influence the decision-making process that affects women's welfare.

One of the other *akademias*, another Tika – known better as Ibu Haji – has been trusted as *Ketua RT* (Neighbourhood Chief). She mobilises her neighbourhood to reinforce *PerDes Kebersihan* (Village Health Regulation). 'If Ibu Tika (mentor) is running for the Village Head position, I'll make sure everyone in my neighbourhood votes for her. She's the one,' declares Ibu Haji, giving her the thumbs up.

At Akademi Paradigta, Ibu Haji learned that a health regulation like PerDes Kesehatan can save her village from illnesses related to poor sanitation.



'My mission stems from my pain. The academy taught me that I can do something that our Village Head was not aware of yet. But we must do it together,' said Ibu Haji.



Tika believes that women's lives will only get better if more women are not just involved, but lead and influence the decision-making process that affects women's welfare. Becoming a village head is in Tika's mind

Facilitated by KOMPAK, the partnership of Australian and Indonesian governments in reducing poverty, *Akademi Paradigta* has opened in seven provinces of Central Java, West Java, Aceh, West Kalimantan, Southeast Sulawesi, and West and East Nusa Tenggara. The second year will commence in the middle of 2017. In Cianjur regency alone, there have been over 150 women who have signed up, a significant increase from 55 graduates in 2016. Hitting rock bottom can be the best thing that happens in someone's life, if they are then given the right life jacket. Gradually *Akademi Paradigta* is bringing rural women from the margins of life to its centre. More 'strange creatures' will break down the walls in their lives and stand even taller.

CIPANAS' RESULTS

- From the Village Fund 2017, the Village Head has allocated up to IDR 20 million for the academy.
- The Village Head recommended Erni for UPZ's (Alms Management Unit) selection of its new district treasurer. She passed the examinations and is now happily active throughout her village, and also other villages in the district.
- The Village Head also supported Tika in implementing Koperasi Simpan Pinjam (Save-and-Loan Cooperative) as part of the new BUMDes initiatives, and she is the only female member.
- Waste Management Regulations was passed in April 2017.

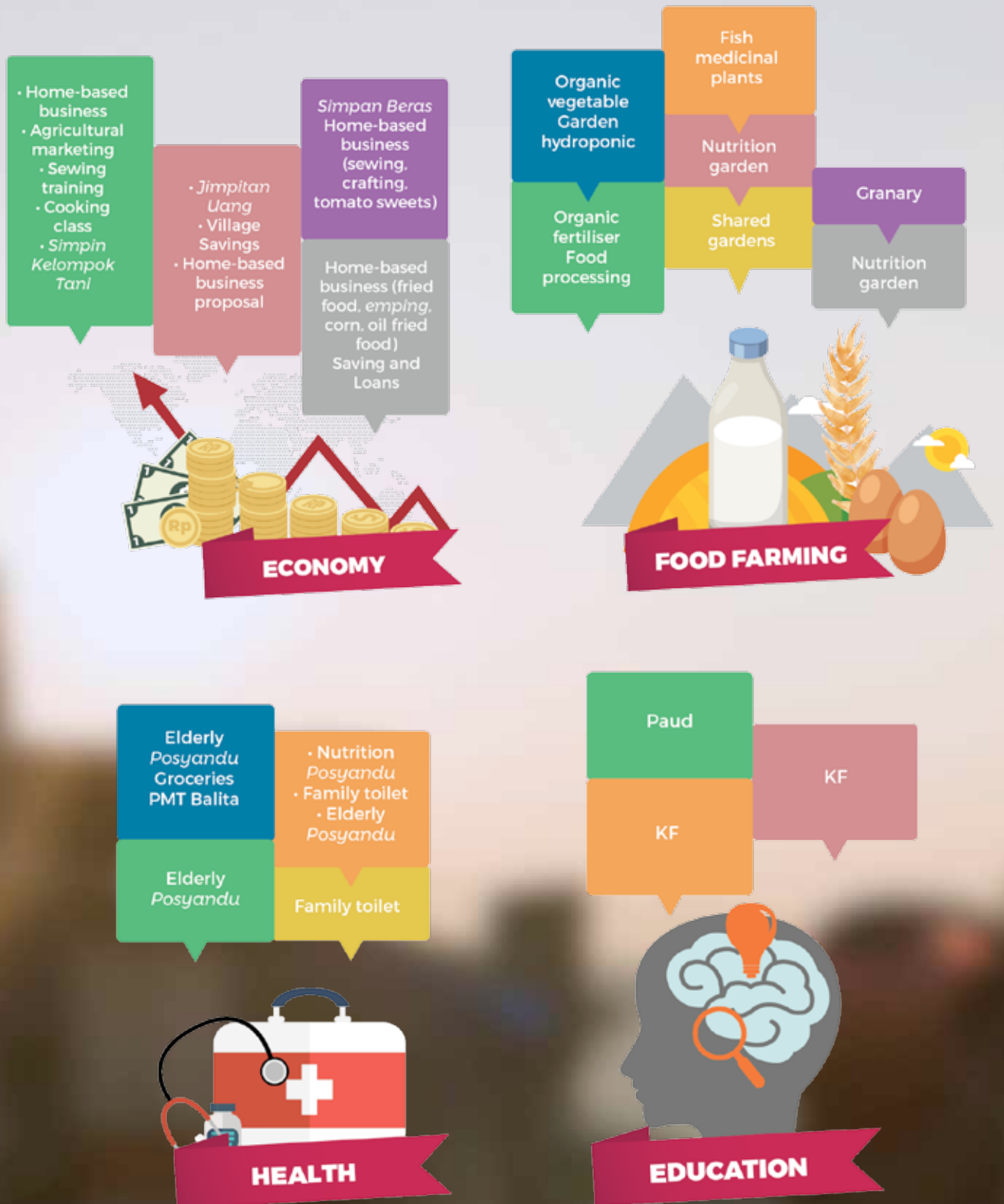


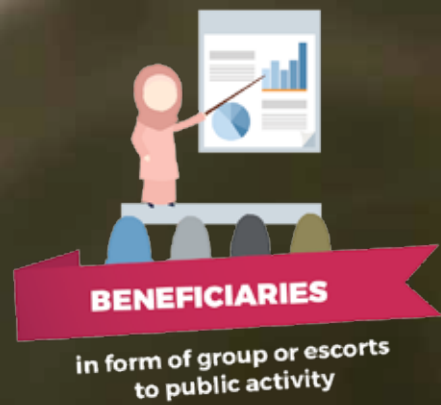
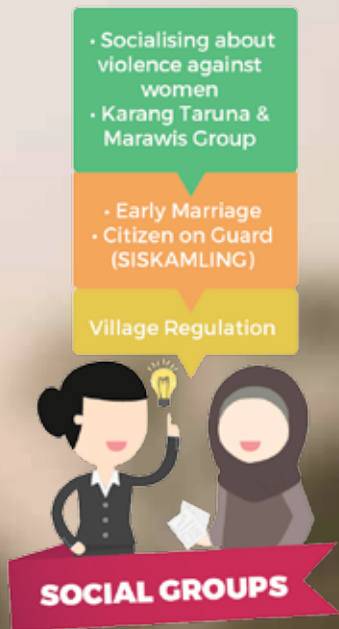
STUDENTS OF AKADEMI PARADIGTA YEAR 1, 2016



ENCOURAGING BEGINNING

Paradigta continue to put their ideas into action. Below are the initiatives they are proud to have achieved.





- AREA**
- Aceh
 - Cianjur
 - Kalbar
 - NTB
 - Sultra
 - NTT

TOTAL NUMBERS OF THE AKADEMIKA FROM ALL OVER INDONESIA IN 2016



- Districts
- Villages
- Total number of *akademia* at the start of 2nd semester
- Total number of *akademia* candidates



For the new academic year in 2017 the number of women signing up keeps adding up. The ripples will soon be waves, and the waves are vibrating across the ocean. This is what happens when women join in village governance across the archipelago. PEKKA with KOMPAK have launched Akademi Paradigta in seven Indonesian provinces of Aceh, West Java, Central Java, West Java, Central Java, West Nusa Tenggara, East Nusa Tenggara West Kalimantan, and Southeast Sulawesi.



A person wearing a hijab is seen from the side, looking at a laptop screen. The scene is set in a room with sheer, light-colored curtains that are slightly wrinkled. The lighting is soft and natural, coming from a window behind the person. The overall mood is calm and focused.

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