



Analysis of the ARUNIKA program for preventing sexual violence against women and supporting SDG 5

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ABSTRACT

Sexual violence against women remains a critical social issue related to gender equality, human rights, and sustainable development. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the ARUNIKA Program by SPEK-HAM Surakarta in strengthening community-based mechanisms for preventing and responding to sexual violence and its conceptual contribution to SDGs Goal 5 Target 5.2. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach in Nusukan Village, Surakarta. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis involving 13 informants, including program managers, community organizers, women participants, youth participants, and community leaders selected through purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, with source and methodological triangulation to ensure validity. The findings identified four main themes: community education and awareness, empowerment and capacity strengthening, advocacy and reporting mechanisms, and referral networks and access to protection services. Informants reported increased understanding of sexual violence, victims' rights, confidentiality, reporting mechanisms, and available services. The program also strengthened the roles of women, cadres, youth groups, community leaders, and service networks in responding to violence. Observations showed participants' involvement in identifying problems, developing policy recommendations, and preparing a policy brief. However, the findings do not demonstrate a reduction in violence prevalence because SDGs indicators 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 were not directly measured. Thus, ARUNIKA's contribution to SDGs Target 5.2 is conceptual, particularly through strengthening community capacities and mechanisms underlying responses to violence against women. Further research is needed to assess its long-term outcomes using direct measures.

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INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence remains one of the most critical human rights issues because it causes long-term physical, psychological, social, and economic consequences for survivors while simultaneously undermining social cohesion and sustainable development. In Indonesia, violence against women remains a significant concern, as reflected in national reporting data. According to the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan), 445,502 reports of violence against women were recorded in 2024, representing an increase from the previous year. Meanwhile, based on data on reported forms of violence, sexual violence accounted for 36.43%, making it the most frequently reported form, followed by psychological, physical, and economic violence (Komnas Perempuan, 2024). At the local level, violence against women and children also remains a concern in Surakarta (Alimi & Nurwati, 2021). Data presented by the Surakarta City Government together with SPEK-HAM and Yayasan KAKAK recorded 162 reported cases of violence in 2023, consisting of 62 cases involving adults and 100 involving children, with sexual violence among the predominant forms (Sihotang, 2022). These data indicate the continuing need for preventive and community-based responses, although increases in reported cases should not be interpreted directly as increases in the actual prevalence of violence because reporting and documentation systems may also influence reported figures (Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024).

To address this issue, the Indonesian government enacted Law No. 12 of 2022 on the Crime of Sexual Violence (UU TPKS), establishing a comprehensive legal framework for the prevention, prosecution, and handling of sexual violence, as well as the protection and recovery of victims (Mahmudah & Widiyarta, 2023). The law also recognizes the roles of central and local governments and community participation in preventing sexual violence and supporting victim recovery. However, the existence of a legal framework does not by itself ensure effective prevention at the community level, particularly where barriers such as limited legal awareness, victim-blaming, patriarchal norms, and limited community participation persist (Setiawan & Tomsa, 2023). Therefore, achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, particularly Target 5.2 on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, requires not only effective legal protection but also community-based initiatives that strengthen legal awareness, empower women, and encourage collective action to prevent sexual violence.

Recent studies have highlighted several challenges in implementing sexual violence prevention programs. Waruwu (2024) found that prevention policies in Indonesian universities remain ineffective because of inadequate socialization, weak reporting mechanisms, and persistent cultural stigma. Similarly, Debi (2024) emphasized that community-based prevention requires cross-sector collaboration, stronger local institutional capacity, and changes in social norms to support sustained prevention efforts. More recently, Utomo and Arifin (2024) reported that sexual violence prevention efforts continue to face obstacles due to limited institutional commitment and insufficient public understanding of gender-based violence. Swarizona & Lubis, (2023) have examined community participation and the role of civil society organizations in responding to sexual violence. For example, Alothman et al., (2024) examined the role of SPEK-HAM in prevention and victim recovery in Surakarta, emphasizing community participation and institutional cooperation. However, this body of research has not specifically examined how a community-based program such as ARUNIKA develops mechanisms of legal awareness, community capacity, advocacy, reporting, and referral at the local level while relating these mechanisms to the localization of SDG Target 5.2. Thus, the research gap lies not simply in the lack of studies combining several concepts, but in the limited empirical explanation of how community-based interventions operate through specific mechanisms that strengthen local capacities and responses to sexual violence.

This study addresses this research gap by examining the implementation of the ARUNIKA Program conducted by SPEK-HAM Surakarta, a civil society organization actively engaged in

preventing sexual violence through education, advocacy, community empowerment, and legal awareness initiatives. Unlike previous studies such as Debi, (2024), Faisal et al., (2024) and Febrianti et al., (2024), which examine aspects of prevention, community participation, or related institutional responses, this research focuses specifically on the mechanisms through which a community-based program strengthens legal awareness, community participation, advocacy capacity, reporting mechanisms, and access to protection services. The novelty of this study therefore lies in explaining the mechanism connecting community empowerment with local responses to sexual violence, rather than merely combining the perspectives of citizenship, legal awareness, and sustainable development. By examining these mechanisms in the context of ARUNIKA in Nusukan, Surakarta, the study provides empirical insight into how civil society initiatives can support the localization of SDG Target 5.2 at the community level.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze how the ARUNIKA Program is implemented in strengthening community-based mechanisms for preventing and responding to sexual violence against women in Nusukan, Surakarta, and to identify how the program's activities and outcomes at the community level relate conceptually to the localization of SDG Goal 5, Target 5.2, particularly through legal awareness, community participation, advocacy, reporting mechanisms, and access to protection services.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to obtain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the ARUNIKA Program by SPEK-HAM in strengthening community-based mechanisms for preventing and responding to sexual violence against women and its conceptual contribution to the localization of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 Target 5.2. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables researchers to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and social contexts comprehensively (Sugiyono, 2024). The research was conducted in Kelurahan Nusukan, Surakarta, from November 2025 to July 2026, corresponding to the implementation period of the program. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and document analysis (Kristina, 2024). Thirteen informants were selected through purposive sampling, consisting of three program personnel, seven female participants, two youth participants, and one community leader. Informants were selected based on their direct involvement in, participation in, or knowledge of the ARUNIKA Program. Interviews explored program objectives, implementation, participant experiences, understanding of sexual violence, victims' rights, reporting mechanisms, community participation, referral services, barriers, and program evaluation. Non-participant observation was conducted during advocacy-strengthening and policy-brief preparation activities in May 2026, focusing on problem identification, discussion of policy alternatives, participant involvement, and development of recommendations. Documents analyzed included relevant legislation, SDG documents, institutional profiles and reports, research and administrative documents, interview summaries, photographs, and official SPEK-HAM publications related to ARUNIKA activities (Waruwu, 2024).

The research was conducted chronologically through four stages: preparation, field data collection, data analysis and validation, and reporting. Data collection was followed by an interactive analysis using the Miles and Huberman model, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion verification. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were reviewed repeatedly and coded according to recurring issues, including knowledge of sexual violence, victims' rights, reporting mechanisms, community participation, advocacy, and referral services. Related codes were grouped into categories and broader themes, with coding and interpretation conducted by the researcher and supported by analytic notes to maintain reflexivity. Data collection was considered sufficient when additional information no longer generated substantially new findings relevant to the emerging categories and themes. To ensure the

trustworthiness of the findings, source triangulation and methodological triangulation were applied by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentary evidence (Dini et al., 2025). Credibility was strengthened through comparison among different informant groups and research methods; dependability through documentation of the research procedures and analytical process; confirmability through linking interpretations to interview, observation, and documentary evidence; and transferability through detailed descriptions of the research setting, informant characteristics, and program context. Given the sensitivity of sexual violence, informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity, and the right to withdraw were maintained throughout the research process. The findings were evaluated based on qualitative indicators, including participants' understanding of sexual violence, awareness of victims' rights and reporting mechanisms, women's empowerment, and strengthened community support, as indicators of strengthened capacities and mechanisms underlying prevention and response rather than direct evidence of reduced violence prevalence or achievement of SDG indicators 5.2.1 and 5.2.2.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Implementation of the ARUNIKA Program by SPEK-HAM Surakarta in Preventing Sexual Violence against Women

The study was conducted in Nusukan Village, Banjarsari District, Surakarta City, as one of the implementation areas of the ARUNIKA Program (*Perempuan Berdaya untuk Indonesia Bebas Kekerasan*) developed by SPEK-HAM Surakarta. Implemented from November 2025 to July 2026, the program involved women's groups, youth groups, community cadres, local and religious leaders, village government, PPT, and related service institutions. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation involving program managers, Community Organizers, participants, and relevant stakeholders. The findings were organized into three analytical themes: community awareness and capacity strengthening; reporting, referral, and community participation; and advocacy and contribution to SDG 5.2 localization.

a. Community Awareness and Capacity Strengthening

The women's and youth discussion groups addressed forms of violence, victims' rights, healthy relationships, consent, body boundaries, and digital violence risks. Interview findings indicate that participants perceived broader understanding of violence following their involvement in the program. P1 explained that she previously understood violence mainly as physical action, but subsequently recognized verbal violence, threats, coercion, and economic violence. P1 also stated that victims should be listened to without being judged. Similarly, P4 reported that the program helped her understand different forms of violence and available assistance. These findings indicate that ARUNIKA provided a space for participants to expand their understanding of violence and victims' rights.

ARUNIKA also strengthened local actors through paralegal training and cadre development. AR explained that the training provided basic knowledge of violence, victims' rights, initial responses, and referral mechanisms, while emphasizing that community participants were not professional advocates. This indicates that the program positioned community actors as initial supporters who could help connect survivors with appropriate services while maintaining professional boundaries.



Figure 1. ARUNIKA Program Activities in Nusukan Village

Source: Researcher documentation, 2026

Figure 1 documents the involvement of women, adolescents, cadres, and local actors in educational and capacity-building activities. Rather than functioning only as documentation of program activities, the figure illustrates the community-based setting through which knowledge and capacity were developed.

b. Reporting, Referral, and Community Participation

ARUNIKA also strengthened awareness of reporting and referral mechanisms. GN explained that reporting through PPT had already existed before ARUNIKA; therefore, the program did not establish a new reporting system but sought to strengthen community and PPT capacity to respond and refer cases appropriately. GN stated that complaints could be submitted through social media, family members, paralegals, female cadres, or directly to SPEK-HAM, with follow-up based on the survivor's needs and decisions. P1 similarly reported that she became aware of reporting routes through the kelurahan, PPT, and SPEK-HAM.

The program also connected community actors with formal service providers. GN explained that SPEK-HAM maintains networks with police, hospitals, government agencies, universities, Komnas Perempuan, Komnas HAM, and other institutions. These findings indicate that ARUNIKA strengthened awareness and connectivity within existing reporting and referral pathways rather than demonstrating the creation of an entirely new service system.

3. Advocacy and Contribution to SDG 5.2 Localization

The preparation of policy briefs represented an additional form of community participation. Observation of the advocacy-strengthening and policy-brief preparation activities in May 2026 showed participants identifying problems, discussing policy alternatives, and formulating recommendations. AR explained that participants learned to distinguish a policy brief from an activity proposal, although they still required assistance in preparing the document. This finding indicates the development of an emerging community advocacy capacity rather than a demonstrated policy impact.



Figure 2. Materials for Developing the ARUNIKA Program Policy Brief
Source: Researcher reconstruction based on interviews and observations, 2026

Figure 2 illustrates the process through which community experiences and identified problems were translated into policy-oriented recommendations. The figure therefore supports the finding that ARUNIKA provided a mechanism for community participation in local advocacy.

Program implementation nevertheless faced challenges, including changes in village government structure, inconsistent participant attendance, stigma, patriarchal values, victim-blaming, and the perception that violence is a private family matter. These findings show that strengthened awareness and participation occurred alongside persistent structural and cultural barriers.

In relation to SDG Goal 5 Target 5.2, the findings suggest that ARUNIKA contributes conceptually to its localization by strengthening community awareness, local capacity, reporting and referral pathways, and participation in advocacy. From the perspective of women's citizenship, women were positioned not only as recipients of protection but also as actors who could recognize violence, disseminate information, participate in advocacy, and connect survivors with services. This provides a mechanism through which community empowerment can support the exercise of women's rights and participation at the local level.

However, this study does not directly measure SDG indicators 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 and therefore cannot establish a reduction in violence prevalence or incidence. ARUNIKA's contribution is consequently understood as strengthening enabling conditions and community mechanisms relevant to SDG Target 5.2, rather than demonstrating achievement of the indicators themselves.

Discussion

Implementation of the ARUNIKA Program by SPEK-HAM Surakarta from the Social Ecological Model Perspective

The findings indicate that the ARUNIKA Program represents a multi-level intervention for preventing sexual violence that operates simultaneously across different social levels. This multi-level character can be explained through the Social Ecological Model (SEM), in which each level represents a different mechanism through which ARUNIKA strengthens community responses to violence. At the individual level, ARUNIKA improves participants' understanding of forms of sexual violence, victims' rights, consent, body autonomy, healthy relationships, and reporting mechanisms. This educational process helps transform the community's previous limited understanding of sexual violence as only physical acts into a broader awareness of verbal, psychological, economic, domestic, and digital forms of violence. Thus, the individual-level

mechanism operates primarily through knowledge and awareness, which provide the basis for recognizing violence and identifying appropriate responses.

At the interpersonal level, ARUNIKA strengthens social support through women's groups, youth groups, cadres, and community leaders. These groups function as immediate social networks through which participants can exchange information, challenge victim-blaming attitudes, and connect survivors with available assistance. This finding supports Eitrem, (2025), who emphasized that increasing public awareness and establishing reporting mechanisms are essential elements in preventing sexual violence. However, while Johannes & Roman, (2025) primarily emphasize awareness and reporting, the present findings extend this perspective by showing how these mechanisms are embedded within continuing community relationships.

At the community and organizational levels, ARUNIKA strengthens collaboration between communities, PPT, SPEK-HAM, local government, health services, and legal assistance institutions. At these levels, the intervention operates through institutional coordination and referral networks that connect community-level identification with formal protection services. The development of referral mechanisms demonstrates that victim protection requires an interconnected service network. SPEK-HAM functions not only as a program implementer but also as a bridge between community needs and institutions with formal authority. This finding is consistent with Lestari et al., (2025) and Lippi et al., (2025), who highlighted the important role of civil society organizations in public education, empowerment, advocacy, and strengthening protection networks for women.

At the societal and policy levels, the development of policy briefs strengthens community participation in communicating gender-based violence issues to relevant stakeholders. This indicates that ARUNIKA does not operate only by changing individual knowledge but also creates a channel through which community experiences can be translated into policy recommendations. This shows that violence prevention requires not only individual behavioral change but also transformation of social norms and policy support, in line with (Rahmayani et al., 2025), who emphasized the importance of cross-sector coordination and social norm change in preventing violence against women.

ARUNIKA's Contribution to the Localization of SDG Goal 5 Target 5.2

The ARUNIKA Program can be understood as contributing to the localization of SDG Goal 5 Target 5.2 by strengthening the preventive conditions and local mechanisms relevant to addressing violence against women and girls. This contribution is not demonstrated through a reduction in violence prevalence because this study does not employ population surveys or statistical measurements of SDG indicators 5.2.1 and 5.2.2. Instead, ARUNIKA contributes through improving community capacity, strengthening support systems, and expanding access to protection services.

The relationship between ARUNIKA and Target 5.2 can therefore be understood through the mechanisms identified in the SEM. Individual-level education strengthens recognition of violence; interpersonal networks facilitate support and information sharing; community and organizational collaboration strengthens referral pathways; and advocacy activities create opportunities to communicate community needs to policymakers. Thus, ARUNIKA supports the preventive dimension of Target 5.2 without claiming that the program has achieved or statistically changed the SDG indicators.

These findings demonstrate that SDG localization is not limited to implementing global indicators but also involves translating development goals into local community needs. The theoretical implication is that localization can be understood as a process of connecting global targets with locally available actors, institutions, knowledge, and protection mechanisms. ARUNIKA illustrates that addressing Target 5.2 requires collaboration among multiple actors, including civil society organizations, local governments, women's groups, youth groups, and service providers.

ARUNIKA and Strengthening Women's Citizenship

Beyond its role as a violence prevention program, ARUNIKA also contributes to strengthening women's citizenship. Sexual violence is not merely a criminal issue but is closely related to the fulfillment of women's rights as citizens, including the rights to safety, dignity, legal protection, and participation in society. In this study, women's citizenship is understood not only as formal legal status but as women's practical capacity to know, claim, and exercise their rights and participate in decisions affecting their lives and communities. The findings show that ARUNIKA provides opportunities for women to understand their rights, share experiences, access service information, and participate in community-based protection efforts.

Women involved in the program are positioned not only as beneficiaries but also as actors capable of contributing to social change through awareness dissemination, early support, and referral assistance for survivors. This reflects an active dimension of citizenship because women participate in the public response to a social problem rather than remaining passive recipients of protection. The role of female cadres therefore illustrates how legal awareness can be translated into community participation and access to protection mechanisms.

The involvement of female cadres and community groups demonstrates the development of women's agency in the public sphere, indicating that women's citizenship is reflected not only in legal recognition but also in their ability to exercise rights and participate in addressing social problems. These findings support Serrano et al., (2025), Simona & Likando, (2025), and Sitorus et al., (2025), who emphasized that community intermediaries play an important role in expanding women's access to justice. However, the present study extends this perspective by connecting access to justice with women's participation in community-based prevention and advocacy. In this sense, citizenship operates as a mechanism linking legal awareness, agency, and participation in local protection systems.

Comparison with Previous Research and Research Novelty

The findings of this study are consistent with Zulfany et al., (2025), who emphasized that community education and reporting mechanisms are essential components in preventing sexual violence. Similarly, the present study finds that awareness and reporting pathways are important mechanisms; however, it further demonstrates that these mechanisms operate through community networks, cadre involvement, and referral coordination. The findings also align with Benítez et al., (2026), who highlighted the importance of target group awareness and institutional support in violence prevention.

At the same time, previous studies have generally examined education, institutional support, or cross-sector coordination as separate components. The present study identifies a gap in explaining how these components are connected through a multi-level community intervention. Using SEM, this study shows that education at the individual level is connected to interpersonal support, community referral mechanisms, institutional collaboration, and policy advocacy.

Furthermore, this study supports Setiawan & Tomsa, (2023), Swarizona, (2023) and Faisal et al., (2024), who emphasized the importance of cross-sector coordination and social norm transformation in preventing violence against women. However, these perspectives do not fully explain the citizenship dimension of women's participation in community-based violence prevention. This study therefore contributes theoretically by connecting the SEM perspective with women's citizenship, demonstrating that women's legal awareness and participation can function as mechanisms linking individual empowerment with community and institutional responses to violence.

Accordingly, the novelty of this research does not merely lie in combining several concepts, but in proposing an empirically grounded mechanism: ARUNIKA strengthens women's knowledge and agency at the individual level, mobilizes interpersonal and community networks, connects these networks with formal protection institutions, and provides a channel for

community advocacy. This mechanism explains how a local civil society initiative can contribute to the localization of SDG Target 5.2 while simultaneously strengthening women's citizenship.

Practically, the findings suggest that community-based violence prevention programs should not rely solely on awareness campaigns but should integrate legal education, community actors, referral systems, institutional collaboration, and opportunities for policy participation.

Research Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered. First, the research was conducted in only one implementation site of the ARUNIKA Program, namely Nusukan Village, so the findings cannot be generalized to other areas with different social characteristics. Second, this study focused on the program implementation process and early outcomes; therefore, it could not assess long-term impacts, such as broader changes in social norms or reductions in the prevalence of sexual violence. Third, the research was conducted while the program was still ongoing, meaning that the final evaluation results were not fully available. Future studies are recommended to employ longitudinal approaches, quantitative methods, or comparative studies across different regions to provide a more comprehensive assessment of program effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the ARUNIKA Program by SPEK-HAM Surakarta supports community-based sexual violence prevention by strengthening community knowledge, women's empowerment, local actor involvement, advocacy, and referral mechanisms rather than demonstrating a measurable reduction in violence. The findings indicate that the program supports the localization of SDG Goal 5 Target 5.2 by strengthening prevention capacity, community awareness, early response, and access to protection services, although SDG indicators 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 were not directly measured. Theoretically, this study demonstrates that the Social Ecological Model (SEM) can be used to understand community-based violence prevention through interconnected individual, interpersonal, community, institutional, and policy mechanisms, while also showing how women's citizenship can be strengthened through legal awareness, participation, and access to protection. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of continuous education, empowered community cadres, safe reporting mechanisms, accessible referral systems, and cross-sectoral coordination among communities, government, civil society organizations, and service providers. From a policy perspective, SDG indicators need to be translated into locally relevant mechanisms and capacities at the community level. Overall, the significance of ARUNIKA lies in demonstrating how a community-based approach can strengthen the conditions and mechanisms that support violence prevention and the localization of SDG Target 5.2. Future research should examine long-term outcomes through quantitative, longitudinal, or comparative approaches.

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