



The Role of the GenRe Forum of East Lombok in Empowering Youth through Reproductive Health Education, Stunting Prevention, and Early Marriage Prevention

Muhammad Al Farabi Akma¹, Lilik Feby Rahmawati², Muhammad Sulhan Habibi³, Ghina Annisa Kirana⁴, Nur Kholiza⁵, Tita Putri Ningsih⁶, Abdurrahman Assa'di Maulana⁷, and Forum GenRe East Lombok Team

Affiliation: Forum GenRe Kabupaten Lombok Timur, di bawah Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan, Perlindungan Anak, dan Keluarga Berencana (DP3AKB) Kabupaten Lombok Timur, Indonesia.
Corresponding Author e-mail: muhammadalfarabiakma@gmail.com

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Abstract: This Community Service Program (PKM) aims to enhance youth awareness and empowerment in preventing stunting, child marriage, and promoting reproductive health education in East Lombok Regency. The program was implemented by the East Lombok GenRe Forum under the supervision of the Office of Women Empowerment, Child Protection, and Family Planning (DP3AKB) and the National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN) from 2022 to 2024. A combination of methods was applied, including socialization, workshops, mentoring, the development of Youth Information and Counseling Centers (PIK-R), and mass campaigns involving adolescents across multiple districts. The initiative reached over 25,000 adolescents through the "INI GENTING" (Implementasi Nyata Cegah Stunting – Real Implementation to Prevent Stunting) program and resulted in the formation of 504 Village GenRe Ambassadors as local change agents. According to data from DP3AKB and RRI East Lombok, child marriage cases decreased by nearly 50% during the program period, indicating significant behavioral and awareness shifts among the youth. Furthermore, this initiative strengthened adolescents' reproductive health literacy, increased understanding of balanced nutrition, and built collective awareness of their role in preventing stunting. The program's success stems from strong collaboration among the GenRe Forum, local government, educational institutions, and community networks. Thus, this initiative serves not only as an educational platform but also as a sustainable model of community-based youth empowerment that can be replicated at regional and national levels.

Introduction

Adolescence is a critical stage of human development that significantly shapes the quality of future generations. It is a period of rapid biological, psychological, and social transition. According to the National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN, 2023), Indonesia currently has over 65 million individuals aged 10–24 years, representing one-fourth of the population. This demographic potential, if properly guided, can serve as a strong foundation for sustainable human development. However, without adequate knowledge and health awareness, adolescents remain vulnerable to critical issues such as child marriage, reproductive health risks, and nutritional deficiencies leading to stunting.

Child marriage remains a major social and public health challenge in Indonesia. Based on Statistics Indonesia (BPS, 2023), West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) ranks sixth nationally in child marriage prevalence, with around 12.6% of girls married before the age of 18. This issue is driven by sociocultural norms, limited education, and poor access to reproductive health information. In East Lombok, reported cases of child marriage dropped from 64 in 2021 to 32 in 2023 — a 50% reduction (RRI East Lombok, 2023) — reflecting the positive outcomes of multi-stakeholder education and intervention programs, particularly those led by the East Lombok GenRe Forum.

In addition to early marriage, stunting remains a national priority concern. According to the Indonesian Nutritional Status Survey (SSGI) by the Ministry of Health (2023), national stunting prevalence stands at 21.5%, while NTB records a higher rate at 24.1%. Stunting is closely linked to adolescent reproductive health, nutrition, and awareness, especially among future mothers. BKKBN (2023) emphasizes early interventions for adolescents as a strategy to break the intergenerational cycle of stunting through health education, iron supplementation awareness, and reproductive counseling.

Furthermore, to social and economic factors, the low level of youth engagement in health education and advocacy processes has also contributed to the recurring issues of early marriage and stunting. Most adolescents in East Lombok still have limited access to comprehensive and age-appropriate reproductive health information. This situation affects their ability to make informed decisions regarding their education, health, and future marriage. According to Pratiwi and Ningsih (2022), active involvement of adolescents in educational activities can increase health literacy by up to 60% and significantly reduce risky behaviors. Therefore, programs that position young people as key agents of social change are essential for achieving sustainable health development.

The East Lombok GenRe Forum, operating under DP3AKB and BKKBN, plays a strategic role in addressing these issues through youth-centered education and empowerment. The forum's flagship initiative, "INI GENTING" (*Real Implementation to Prevent Stunting*),

reached over 25,000 adolescents in 21 subdistricts and established 504 Village GenRe Ambassadors. These ambassadors function as peer educators who disseminate information, promote healthy behaviors, and advocate for reproductive health and anti-stunting awareness at the community level.

The program adopts the *Meaningful Youth Participation* concept (UNFPA, 2022), emphasizing that young people should not only receive information but also take part in designing and implementing initiatives that affect their well-being. This participatory model enhances youth ownership, responsibility, and social engagement. Supported by government agencies, schools, and local stakeholders, this collaboration has created a sustainable structure for youth-led health promotion in East Lombok.

Moreover, a cross-sectoral approach plays an important role in the success of the Forum GenRe East Lombok program. Collaboration between DP3AKB, educational institutions, health professionals, and local communities has created strong synergy in sustaining the program's outcomes. According to Lickona (2012), the formation of resilient youth character requires an integrated educational ecosystem involving families, schools, and communities. In this context, the Forum GenRe acts as a bridge connecting these three elements through value-based education and practical implementation. This synergy enables consistent delivery of key messages related to reproductive health, nutrition, and early marriage prevention across different levels of society.

Consequently, the East Lombok GenRe Forum serves as an exemplary model of community-based youth empowerment in Indonesia. Through integrated education, advocacy, and collaboration, this initiative contributes directly to reducing stunting and child marriage while fostering a generation of informed, responsible, and empowered youth capable of driving national development.

Methods of Implementation

This community service program was implemented by the Forum GenRe of East Lombok Regency, under the supervision of the Office of Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, Population Control, and Family Planning (DP3AKB), and aligned with the national vision of the National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN). The program was carried out over a period of two years (2022–2024), involving 25 youth volunteers consisting of students and university students who were trained as peer educators and facilitators.

I. Approach and Strategy

The implementation adopted a participatory-educative approach, emphasizing the concept of *Meaningful Youth Participation (MYP)* as promoted by BKKBN. According to Nugroho and Aditya (2021), participatory education enables adolescents to become both subjects and agents of change in their communities. Therefore, all activities were designed to involve youth directly in planning, implementation, and evaluation processes. The Forum GenRe team collaborated with schools,

community leaders, and health institutions to ensure inclusive participation and effective delivery of messages related to reproductive health, stunting prevention, and early marriage awareness.

2. Target and Participants

The main target of the program was adolescents aged 13–24 years, both in and out of school, across 21 sub-districts of East Lombok Regency. The program also engaged teachers, parents, and community figures as supporting stakeholders. Overall, the program successfully reached more than 25,000 adolescents through direct education, workshops, and outreach campaigns. In addition, 504 Village-Based GenRe Ambassadors were established as local agents to sustain the dissemination of information and mentoring at the village level.

3. Program Stages

The implementation was divided into three major stages:

a. Preparation Stage:

This phase included coordination with DP3AKB and BKKBN, needs assessment through field observation, and development of educational materials. The team also conducted facilitator training to strengthen youth educators' competence in communication, public speaking, and reproductive health education.

b. Implementation Stage:

Activities were conducted through various educational methods such as seminars, interactive discussions, social media campaigns, and creative competitions. The flagship program "*INI GENTING (Implementasi Nyata Cegah Stunting)*" became a large-scale awareness campaign that focused on reproductive health education, balanced nutrition, and anemia prevention through the distribution of iron tablets (*tablet tambah darah*). Additionally, awareness events such as "*Jalan Sehat Cegah Stunting*" and "*Youth Health Education Roadshows*" were held to encourage active participation from both students and local communities.

c. Evaluation and Follow-up:

This stage involved reflective discussions, questionnaire-based feedback, and follow-up mentoring for village-level GenRe Ambassadors. The evaluation results showed a significant improvement in adolescents' understanding of reproductive health concepts, a decrease in early marriage intentions, and greater awareness of stunting prevention behavior. According to Johnson (2017), the integration of reflection in community-based programs ensures continuous learning and sustainable behavioral change.

Result and Discussion

I. Increased Youth Awareness and Knowledge on Reproductive Health

Prior to the implementation of the program, observations from DP3AKB and Forum GenRe East Lombok indicated that a significant number of adolescents in the region still had limited understanding of reproductive health, stunting prevention, and the risks of early marriage. This situation reflects findings from the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN, 2022),

which reported that more than 60% of Indonesian adolescents had insufficient knowledge of reproductive health issues and lacked access to comprehensive sexuality education.

According to Santrock (2020), adolescence is a critical developmental stage where biological, cognitive, and socio-emotional changes occur rapidly, thus requiring accurate and age-appropriate information. The use of participatory learning methods — including discussions, role-playing, and storytelling — proved effective in engaging students emotionally and cognitively. Furthermore, by providing a safe and non-judgmental space, facilitators successfully built trust and encouraged open dialogue between peers, a key factor emphasized by Suharto & Rachmawati (2021) in youth-based educational interventions.

2. Effectiveness of Stunting Prevention Education

One of the flagship initiatives, “INI GENTING (Implementasi Nyata Cegah Stunting)”, focused on integrating reproductive health with nutrition awareness. The campaign reached over 25,000 adolescents through school visits, workshops, and public events. The primary goal was to emphasize the relationship between early marriage, anemia, and child malnutrition — three interrelated issues contributing to the prevalence of stunting in East Lombok.

Data from DP3AKB Lombok Timur (2023) showed a steady decline in child marriage cases, dropping by around 50% between 2022 and 2023 (RRI, 2023). This reduction correlates with the consistent educational efforts and advocacy led by the Forum GenRe team. Moreover, the distribution of iron supplements (*tablet tambah darah*) and the promotion of balanced diet habits among adolescent girls contributed to increased awareness of maternal and child health.

According to World Health Organization (2022), early nutritional intervention and reproductive health literacy among adolescents play a crucial role in reducing the risk of intergenerational stunting. Hence, the success of this program indicates that youth-centered, culturally adaptive educational models are effective in achieving sustainable behavioral change.

3. Youth Empowerment through the Formation of Village GenRe Ambassadors

A major innovation of this program was the establishment of 504 Village-Based GenRe Ambassadors, trained as community-level advocates to continue delivering reproductive health and anti-stunting education. These ambassadors served as *peer educators* in schools and village youth groups, ensuring the sustainability of the program beyond the initial implementation period.

The empowerment process aligns with the concept of Meaningful Youth Participation (MYP) introduced by UNFPA (2018), which stresses that young people should not only be beneficiaries of programs but also active contributors to policy and decision-making. Through leadership training and mentoring, the ambassadors developed soft skills in communication, public speaking, and project management — empowering them to become role models in their respective communities.

4. Community and Institutional Collaboration

Collaboration played a key role in the program’s success. The Forum GenRe East Lombok worked in close partnership with schools, health centers (Puskesmas), village governments, and the DP3AKB. Support from teachers, health workers, and parents increased the credibility and acceptance of the program among adolescents. According to Lickona (2012), value-based education thrives when schools and communities act together to reinforce moral and social values in young people.

These partnerships not only expanded the program's outreach but also strengthened the institutional commitment toward sustainable youth development. The inclusion of government support ensured that advocacy efforts related to reproductive health and stunting prevention were aligned with regional health and education policies.

5. Behavioral and Social Impact

The program's outcomes were reflected not only in knowledge acquisition but also in behavioral transformation. Post-activity surveys showed that most adolescents exhibited improved interpersonal communication, increased confidence in discussing sensitive issues, and a greater willingness to participate in community health programs.

Teachers and counselors observed fewer cases of absenteeism and a more positive learning attitude among students who were active in GenRe activities. Furthermore, anecdotal evidence indicated that youth leaders began initiating independent campaigns within their schools and neighborhoods, demonstrating the internalization of values such as empathy, leadership, and responsibility.

As stated by Bandura (2018) in his *Social Learning Theory*, behavioral change occurs through observation, imitation, and social reinforcement. This explains why peer-led education, as practiced by the Forum GenRe, is highly effective — because adolescents are more receptive to information conveyed by their peers.

6. Challenges and Sustainability

Despite its success, several challenges were encountered. Limited funding and logistical constraints occasionally hindered the consistency of outreach activities. In rural areas, digital access barriers also affected information dissemination. However, these challenges were mitigated through volunteer-based collaboration and local resource optimization.

The sustainability of the program is ensured through the continuous mentoring of Village GenRe Ambassadors and the integration of youth health education into local school curricula. Moving forward, the program is expected to evolve into a model of community-based youth empowerment replicable across other districts in West Nusa Tenggara.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The implementation of community empowerment activities through the Forum GenRe East Lombok has proven effective in increasing youth awareness and participation in reproductive health education, stunting prevention, and early marriage reduction efforts. The program's collaborative approach—integrating DP3AKB, local health institutions, schools, and village-based youth networks—has successfully reached more than 25,000 adolescents across 21 subdistricts in East Lombok. This initiative not only enhanced knowledge about reproductive and nutritional health but also fostered positive behavioral changes and a sense of responsibility among young people regarding their physical and mental well-being. The declining rate of early marriages in East Lombok, which decreased by around 50% according to the Regional Office of Religious Affairs (RRI, 2022), further illustrates the tangible impact of continuous youth empowerment. Overall, the Forum GenRe has become a model of sustainable, community-based youth education that strengthens the foundation for achieving long-term social and health development goals.

For future sustainability, it is recommended that the Forum GenRe East Lombok continues to strengthen partnerships with educational institutions, community leaders, and local governments to ensure consistent program implementation. Expanding digital literacy and social media campaigns would also enhance message dissemination and engagement among the wider youth population. In addition, periodic monitoring and impact evaluation should be carried out to measure behavioral changes and ensure that health education materials remain relevant to the evolving needs of adolescents. Finally, integrating GenRe activities into local education curricula could institutionalize youth empowerment as part of a broader strategy to build a healthier, more informed, and resilient generation in East Lombok.

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