

# Comprehensive Reproductive Health Education to Promote Equality and Welfare for Men and Women



## Executive Summary



Both male and female adolescents hold high aspirations to complete high education and gain employment opportunities before starting a family in the future. However, exposure to violence, unjust gender-based attitudes and behavior, and economic limitations can prevent young people from achieving their future potentials. Teenage boys also suffer earlier in life due to violence and risky behaviors, both influenced by unequal views and cultures on gender.

We invite the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA) of the Republic of Indonesia to promote and implement the Pendidikan Kesehatan Reproduksi Menyeluruh (PKRM) or comprehensive reproductive health education and other supporting programs based on gender equality into KemenPPA programs for children, adolescents, and families. By prioritizing gender equality and teaching life skills, apart from empowering women, PKRM also encourages men to refrain from inflicting violence that harms both sides and strives for social justice together with women from an early age.



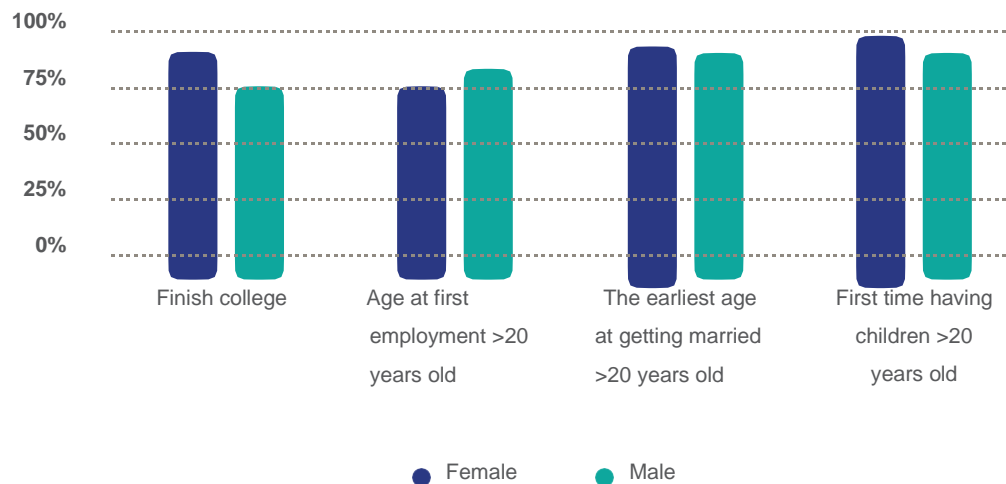
## 01. Background

GEAS Indonesia's research on male and female adolescents aged 10-14 years in three cities (Bandar Lampung, Denpasar, and Semarang) has revealed some closely related issues to KemenPPPA's vision, mission, and strategy.

1. Both boys and girls hold high aspirations for education, employment, and family life for the future.

More than 80% of teens hope to finish college. Of those thinking about the time to start working, marry, or have children, 73% wish to begin work over the age of 20, and more than 90% – both male and female – also want to marry and have children after 20.

### Future aspirations/hopes of adolescents aged 10-14 years in three cities in Indonesia



2. Many adolescents have been exposed to violence by adults and their peers, especially boys who have fallen victim to and become the perpetrators of violence earlier than girls.

Table 1.  
**Experience of violence and bullying in adolescents aged 10-14 years in three cities in Indonesia**

Forms of violence	Percentage	
	Female	Male
Experiencing violence/verbal abuse by parents/adults	52.8	55.8
Fear of being hurt by parents/adults	31	34
Feeling unloved	47.6	41.8
Feeling like nobody can protect them	29.4	30
Have been touched by adults around private parts	5.7	18.2
Have witnessed their mother beaten, threatened, or hurt	9.3	13.7
Have been physically bullied by peers	9	23.9
Have physically bullied their peers	8.4	16.9

More teenage boys experience violence and eventually commit one, making most teenagers feel uncomfortable around their house and school. More than a quarter (27% for girls and 26% for boys) felt threatened/insecure around their home, and 15% of girls and 20% of boys felt unsafe at school.

Violence during childhood and adolescence can harm many aspects of life today and in the long run. It is manifested through trauma, depression, stress, anxiety, and behavioral problems that can lead to substance abuse, criminal behavior, and hinder educational attainment, work, and various future opportunities. GEAS found that 50% of adolescents are anxious for no reason, 32% are miserable that they cannot sleep at night, and 20% are extremely depressed that they are thinking about self-harm.

Apart from violent behavior, our study found that much more male adolescents have smoked cigarettes and consume alcohol than their female counterparts. As many as 5.8% and 16% of male adolescents have consumed alcohol and cigarettes, compared to 1% of adolescent girls.

3. About half of adolescents agree on some stereotypical gender traits and roles that can lead to discrimination, violence, and encourage harmful behavior in interpersonal relationships in the family and social life.

**Table 2.**  
**Agreement on stereotypical gender roles and characteristics in adolescents aged 10-14 years in three cities in Indonesia**

	Percentage	
	Female	Male
<b>Stereotypical gender traits</b>		
• Boys should always defend themselves, even if it means engaging in a fight.	41.1	55.6
• Boys who act like girls are considered weak.	39.9	46.4
• Girls should not speak out loud to maintain their poise and grace.	58.2	65.4
<b>Stereotypical gender roles</b>		
• Men should always have the final say on various decisions at home.	47.9	56
• Women should obey their husbands in any way.	53.7	56.6
• Men should be the ones making money for their family, instead of women.	69.4	67.1



## 02. Gender Inequality Harms Both Women and Men Even from a Young Age

It is also worrying that many adolescents at a very young age have endured physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and fear of the adults who should otherwise provide protection. We have consistently found that more male adolescents have experienced abuse, which may influence them to commit violence and other health-risk behaviors earlier than female adolescents.

Harmful masculinity values such as the emphasis on toughness, emotional insensitivity, and domination influence adults to treat adolescent boys with violence, which are then imitated by adolescents. The belief that men have the right to control or coerce women makes women vulnerable to violence perpetrated by men.

Therefore, the promotion of gender equality is an integral part of preventing violence. Ignoring and excluding young boys from an early age in gender equality efforts can hinder the mission of the KemenPPPA to empower women, protect women and children, and fulfill children's rights.



## 03. Comprehensive Reproductive Health Education (PKRM) Based on Gender Equality from a Young Age Promotes Health and Welfare for both Women and Men

Gender-based PKRM discusses power relations and gender. It teaches that all people have the same position and dignity regardless of their gender, and gender stereotypes can lead to dangerous behavior and injustice and that all forms of gender-based violence are wrong and violate human rights. PKRM also teaches young people on making decisions, communication, negotiation, and critical thinking skills so they can assess how gender, social, and culture affect

their attitudes and behaviors that may be detrimental. With this knowledge and skills in gender, adolescents from an early age can build self-confidence and make conscious, healthy, and respectful choices for others. PKRM also provides stress management skills, emotions, and interpersonal relationship skills that promote anti-violence and coercion. PKRM helps improve gender discrimination, violence, and dangerous behaviors among adolescents.



PKRM is a curriculum-based learning process on cognitive, emotional, physical, and social aspects of sexuality. PKRM aims to equip children and adolescents with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to achieve health, welfare and dignity; develop respectful personal and social relationships; consider how their choices might affect their own well-being and that of others; and understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout life.

Therefore, we recommend the following policies to the Ministry of PPPA:

1. Cooperate and support the Ministry of Education in a structural and budgetary manner to provide comprehensive reproductive health education throughout Indonesia.

Evaluation of the SETARA curriculum (PKRM by Rutgers Indonesia for grade 7 and 8 students) reveals that intensive teacher training - especially on themes of values and norms (gender) - is vital for PKRM effectiveness. This teacher training can require a large financial commitment.

2. PKRM should be based on gender equality and the prevention of violence that:
  - a. pay attention to and involve young men to create gender relations that are equal and responsible because men will also benefit positively from equality of roles and gender relations.
  - b. includes a critical assessment of gender stereotypes, where one can choose healthy and respectful communication and negotiation over violence, and teaches socio-emotional skills for building healthy and safe relationships.
  - c. teaches life skills such as emotional and stress management, building self-confidence, setting goals, empathy, active negotiation and communication, critical thinking, decision making, and critical thinking, all of which help with socio-emotional competence.
3. Increase the financing of communication, education, and advocacy programs for parents, teachers, and the public regarding discrimination and violence in the family and society and their impact on gender equality, health, and welfare in the future.
4. Develop services, child/youth and family referrals, and safety nets to protect victims of violence, such as psychological counseling and education, health care, social assistance, and law.

KemenPPPA can also provide grant budgets for community organizations that have aided in child/family violence cases.

5. Develop alliances and collaborations between sectors and various stakeholders (local government, community leaders, teachers, parents) to organize innovative programs to prevent violence and discrimination.
6. Work with other ministries to address the structural cause of violence and gender injustice, e.g., poverty and social gap, unemployment, and culture that condones violence and discrimination.





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