

Gender-based Education to Addressing Child Marriage

Sri Endah Kinash

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3179-7174> 

Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Airlangga, Surabaya, Indonesia

Mochamad Kevin Romadhona

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0098-8739> 

Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Airlangga, Surabaya, Indonesia

Citra Hennida

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9573-3762> 

Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Airlangga, Surabaya, Indonesia

Kandi Aryani Suwito

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5533-7717> 

Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Airlangga, Surabaya, Indonesia

Alaa Basil Bader Alfadhel

<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-7179-3872> 

Faculty of Law, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia

✉ corresponding email: sriendah.kinasih@fisip.unair.ac.id

Abstract

Indonesia has one of the highest child marriage rates in East Asia and the Pacific, with 27.8% of women marrying at a young age in East Java. This is despite the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets published in



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2015 and 2030. In rural areas, access to education is uneven and lacking, particularly for women, who are burdened with various types of work and lack knowledge. Education is often seen as a long-term investment to eliminate backwardness and underdevelopment, but many members of society still believe that the social roles and functions of men and women are not the same. Gresik Regency, a district with rapid industrial sector development, has one of the highest poverty rates in East Java. Child marriage practices neglect the personal aspects of women and children's rights, such as survival, development, protection, and equal participation. This hinders women's empowerment due to economic issues, as the effort to marry off underage children is driven by the desire to lighten parents' burden. To address this issue, the Community Partnership Program proposal aims to create educational modules and videos for gender-sensitive and information technology-oriented curriculum development to prevent child marriage among junior high school students in Gresik. The use of information technology, specifically the internet and social media, will be optimized to conduct literacy on the impact of child marriage.

KEYWORDS *Child Well-being Index, Sexual Health, Child Welfare, Gender Equity, Early Marriage*

Introduction

According to UNICEF (2015), more than 700 million women worldwide are married as children, one in three marry before the age of 15^{1,2}. The United Nations General-Secretary provided recommendations in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2015 regarding the elimination of child marriage, supported by 116 member countries, including Indonesia. The age limit for child marriage worldwide is 18 years^{3,4}. Child marriage is

¹ Akanksha A Marphatia, Gabriel S Ambale, and Alice M Reid, "Women's Marriage Age Matters for Public Health: A Review of the Broader Health and Social Implications in South Asia," *Frontiers in Public Health* 5 (2017): 269.

² Rachmah Ida et al., "Women's Involvements in Communication Forum for Disaster Management and Resilience in Eruption of Mount Semeru, Lumajang, East Java," *Discover Social Science and Health* 5, no. 1 (October 2025): 152, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44155-025-00307-0>.

³ Alexandra Hervish and Charlotte Feldman-Jacobs, *Who Speaks for Me, Ending Child Marriage, Policy Brief* (Washington, DC, 2011).

⁴ Aktieva Tri Tjitrawati, Mohammad Tavip, and Mochamad Kevin Romadhona, "Integrative Social-Health Security For Indonesian Migrant Workers: Does Fully Covered And Protected?," *Malaysian Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences*, 2023., "Malaysian Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences" 19, no. SE12 (2023): 67–78.

prohibited by international human rights conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)^{5,6}. Similarly, the Indonesia regulations regarding child marriage are Law No. 23 of 2002 on Child Protection⁷, which was enacted by the government to incorporate the CRC into the national legal system. Article 1 paragraph 1 defines a child as someone who is not yet 18 years old, including a child still in the womb.

Child marriage remains a critical problem worldwide, undermining girls' rights to health, education, and well-being. Education has long been proposed as a key protective factor, yet there remains limited clarity about *which types* of educational interventions most effectively delay marriage, *through what mechanisms*, and *with what long-term outcomes*. This article argues that gender-based education defined as gender-transformative curricula and pedagogy embedded in formal schooling represents a promising but underexplored approach to preventing child marriage.

One of the most influential empirical studies in this domain is BALIKA a large-scale, community-based randomized controlled trial (RCT) conducted by Sajeda Amin and colleagues in rural Bangladesh. The BALIKA program offered adolescent girls (aged 12–18) additional support through tutoring, livelihoods training, or life-skills sessions addressing gender rights, decision-making, and negotiation. The evaluation showed that girls in intervention communities had significantly lower risk of child marriage compared to those in control communities: adjusted hazard ratios ranged

⁵ Ruth Gaffney-Rhys, "International Law and Child Marriage," *International Human Rights of Women*, Springer, 2019, 345–63.

⁶ Hoko Horii, "A Blind Spot in International Human Rights Framework: A Space between Tradition and Modernity within the Child Marriage Discourse," *The International Journal of Human Rights* 24, no. 8 (2020): 1057–79.

⁷ Mies Grijns and Hoko Horii, "Child Marriage in a Village in West Java (Indonesia): Compromises between Legal Obligations and Religious Concerns," *Asian Journal of Law and Society* 5, no. 2 (2018): 453–66.

from 0.70 to 0.75 across intervention arms^{8,9}. The study concluded that providing skills, engaging communities, and offering safe spaces for girls can delay marriage and improve educational, health, and social outcomes. However, while BALIKA demonstrated that empowerment and community-based interventions can be effective, it did not operate through the formal school system: interventions were delivered in community centers, not embedded in everyday schooling or curricula. Thus, although the results are compelling, they leave unanswered whether *school-based gender-transformative education* could achieve similar or stronger impact especially through transforming gender norms within classrooms, among peers, teachers, and eventually families.

Recognizing this gap, more recent literature has begun exploring the potential of gender-transformative education embedded within schools. For example, Gender-transformative school-based sexual health intervention: study protocol for a randomized controlled trial by Loreto Leiva et al. (2024) outlines a design for a school-based program that integrates a gender lens into sexual and reproductive health education¹⁰. This shift reflects growing recognition that schools could serve as powerful platforms for challenging and reshaping harmful gender norms among adolescents. Nevertheless, being a protocol, this study has yet to provide long-term empirical evidence on whether such gender-transformative school-based interventions actually affect downstream outcomes like marriage timing.

Beyond individual studies, broader syntheses of gender-transformative interventions raise caution and highlight limitations. A realist review of gender-transformative interventions targeting adolescents

⁸ Sajeda Amin, J.S. Saha, and J.A. Ahmed, “Skills-Building Programs to Reduce Child Marriage in Bangladesh: A Randomized Controlled Trial,” *Journal of Adolescent Health* 63, no. 3 (September 2018): 293–300, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2018.05.013>.

⁹ Sajeda Amin et al., *Delaying Child Marriage through Community-Based Skills-Development Programs for Girls: Results from a Randomized Controlled Study in Rural Bangladesh* (Population Council, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.31899/pgy9.1009>.

¹⁰ Loreto Leiva et al., “Gender-Transformative School-Based Sexual Health Intervention: Study Protocol for a Randomized Controlled Trial,” *Trials* 25, no. 1 (June 2024): 360, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13063-024-08191-w>.

and young people concluded that while such interventions (GTIs) can empower youth and influence sexual and reproductive health outcomes, their success depends heavily on context, multi-component design, and structural support and they may sometimes backfire if contextual conditions are ignored¹¹. The review calls for future interventions to articulate clear pathways of change, consider structural factors (e.g., poverty, schooling access, social norms), and rigorously evaluate both normative and behavioural outcome¹².

At the same time, a recent meta-analysis of school-based sexuality education programmes while confirming that such programmes can influence knowledge and attitudes underscores that their content, implementation, and outcomes remain heterogeneous, and often do not address deeper norm change, power relations, or long-term behavioural outcomes like marriage age¹³. Taken together, this body of evidence suggests that while there is momentum toward integrating gender-transformative content into school-based interventions, the empirical record remains limited in scope, duration, and outcome measures. Most interventions focus on short-term knowledge or health behaviour; few if any definitively assess long-term impact on child marriage; and many rely on community-based rather than school-based delivery.

Indonesia is the country facing the highest rate of child marriage compared to other Asia-Pacific countries. Child marriage can be one of the

¹¹ Shruti Shukla, Aishwarya Kharade, Ines Böhret, Manzura Jumaniyazova, Sarah R. Meyer, et al., "How Do Gender Transformative Interventions Reduce Adolescent Pregnancy in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A Realist Synthesis," *Journal of Global Health* 15 (April 2025): 04102, <https://doi.org/10.7189/jogh.15.04102>.

¹² Shruti Shukla, Aishwarya Kharade, Ines Böhret, Manzura Jumaniyazova, Sarah R. Meyer, et al., "How Do Gender Transformative Interventions Reduce Adolescent Pregnancy in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A Realist Synthesis," *Journal of Global Health* 15 (April 2025): 04102, <https://doi.org/10.7189/jogh.15.04102>.

¹³ Sonia Barriuso-Ortega, María Fernández-Hawrylak, and Davinia Heras-Sevilla, "Sex Education in Adolescence: A Systematic Review of Programmes and Meta-Analysis," *Children and Youth Services Review* 166 (November 2024): 107926, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2024.107926>.

household choices to reduce the economic burden on families¹⁴. The vulnerable children and youth studies ranked eighth in the world according to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)¹⁵.

UNICEF and the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) estimate that one in nine girls in Indonesia, or 11%, marry before they reach the age of 18, placing Indonesia among the top ten countries in the world for the number of child brides. This data is compared to one in one hundred boys in Indonesia who marry before the age of 18, caused by Article 7 paragraph (1) of Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage, which sets the minimum marriage age for women at 16 years (Sumner, C. (2020). Ending Child Marriage in Indonesia: The Role of Courts). Child marriage has spread throughout all provinces of Indonesia as shown in the figure 1 below:

Figure 1. Prevalence of Child Marriage Per Region



Sources: Susenas, 2018

More than 190 countries that have adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have committed to ending child marriage by 2030. In many cases, child marriage causes children to drop out of school,

¹⁴ Luh Putu Ratih Kumala Dewi and Teguh Dartanto, "Natural Disasters and Girls Vulnerability: Is Child Marriage a Coping Strategy of Economic Shocks in Indonesia?," *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies* 14, no. 1 (2019): 24–35.

¹⁵ World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund, *Protect the Progress: Rise, Refocus and Recover: 2020 Progress Report on the Every Woman Every Child Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016-2030)* (World Health Organization, 2020).

and ending child marriage can improve children's basic education^{16,17}, and girls not continuing their education¹⁸. Meanwhile, child marriage often occurs in rural areas and they are unable to make decisions with their husbands^{19,20}. When unable to make decisions, such as decisions, daughters will follow their husband's decision, leading to cultural entropy. Cultural entropy is when the cultural values in that society do not die, but lose the motivation to control the existing cultural values in that society. Cultural entropy creates cultural changes in the affected society and will influence the local wisdom present in that²¹ as a consequence of cultural changes towards survival, leading to many converting religions, selling ancestral lands, and the meanings of the *Kasada* Ceremony, *Karo* Ceremony, *Unan-Unan* Ceremony, *Entas-Entas* Ceremony, *Pujan Mubeng* Ceremony, Birth Ceremony, *Tugel Kuncung* or *Tugel Gombak* Ceremony, Marriage Ceremony, Death Ceremony, *Barikan* Ceremony, and *Liliwet* Ceremony being well understood by the local community.

Methods

Child marriage is a significant issue in Indonesia, with the highest prevalence in East Asia and the Pacific. The Wringinanom area, a sub-district in Gresik, has the highest rate of child marriage in the country. Factors contributing to this high rate include economic background, low

¹⁶ Marcos Delprato et al., "On the Impact of Early Marriage on Schooling Outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa and South West Asia," *International Journal of Educational Development* 44 (2015): 42–55.

¹⁷ Mochamad Kevin Romadhona and Rachmat Dimas Oktafenanda, "The Hidden Harvest: Unlocking Efficiency in East Java's Farming Sector," *Journal of Urban Sociology* 1, no. 1 (May 2025): 59, <https://doi.org/10.30742/jus.vii.4220>.

¹⁸ Kazutaka Sekine and Marian Ellen Hodgkin, "Effect of Child Marriage on Girls' School Dropout in Nepal: Analysis of Data from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014," *PloS One* 12, no. 7 (2017): e0180176.

¹⁹ Lauren Rumble et al., "An Empirical Exploration of Female Child Marriage Determinants in Indonesia," *BMC Public Health* 18 (2018): 1–13.

²⁰ Mochamad Kevin Romadhona et al., "Re-Defining Stunting in Indonesia 2022: A Comprehensive Review," *Jurnal Inovasi Ilmu Sosial Dan Politik* 5, no. 1 (2023): 56–63.

²¹ John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene, *Re-Inventing the Corporation: Transforming Your Job and Your Company for the New Information Society* (1985).

parental education, and local cultural norms. Child marriage neglects children's basic rights, such as survival, development, protection, and participation. To address this issue, the community service team aims to develop strategic and persuasive communication through the creation of video blogs and gender-sensitive learning modules. The team will identify and persuade target groups to participate in the peer-to-peer video blog, which will include content on reasons for early marriages, difficulties faced in marriage, and burdens of divorce. The content will be processed into a script for creating an easily understandable video blog with simple Indonesian subtitles. The production stage involves location shooting and post-production in the form of editing to achieve the final result in the form of a video blog. The second output, a gender-sensitive learning module, will be implemented through a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) conducted in three stages. The first stage involves collecting data and reviewing cases of early marriage in schools by teachers at SMP Islam Wringinanom and SMP PGRI Wringinanom involving around 20 student, and 10 teacher. The FGD will lead to the refinement of the learning module draft, which will be presented to campus academics and received feedback from the academic community. The final stage involves finalizing the module, which incorporates feedback from FGD stage 2, testing it, and conducting a final evaluation before it is printed and published. This approach aims to raise awareness about the dangers of child marriage and promote understanding among the community.

Results and Discussion

The age limit worldwide for defining child marriage is 18 years^{22,23}. Child marriage is prohibited by international human rights conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination

²² Hervish and Feldman-Jacobs, *Who Speaks for Me, Ending Child Marriage, Policy Brief*.

²³ T Koesbardiati et al., "Reforming 'Merariq': Towards Harmonized Approach – Socio-Culture, Islamic Law, and Biological Consequences," *Journal of Law and Legal Reform* 6, no. 1 (2025): 357–90, <https://doi.org/10.15294/jllr.v6i1.19642>.

Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)²⁴. Another part of the state's regulations regarding child marriage is Law No. 23 of 2002 on Child Protection, which was enacted by the government to incorporate the CRC into the national legal system^{25,26}. Article 1 paragraph 1 defines a child as someone who is not yet 18 years old, including an unborn child²⁷. More than 700 million women in the world marry as children, with one in three marrying before the age of 15^{28,29}. In response to the issue of child marriage, the United Nations General-Secretary recommended a specific target in the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) regarding the elimination of child marriage, which was supported by 116 member countries, including Indonesia^{30,31}.

In 2017, according to BPS, it was shown that among women aged 20-24 who were still or had ever been married at the time of the survey, 22.90% married before the age of 18. This figure has only slightly decreased compared to 6 years earlier, indicating a stable prevalence rate of around

²⁴ Ruth Gaffney-Rhys, "International Law as an Instrument to Combat Child Marriage," *The International Journal of Human Rights* 15, no. 3 (2011): 359–73.

²⁵ Kimberly A Svevo-Cianci, Stuart N Hart, and Claude Rubinson, "Protecting Children from Violence and Maltreatment: A Qualitative Comparative Analysis Assessing the Implementation of UN CRC Article 19," *Child Abuse & Neglect* 34, no. 1 (2010): 45–56.

²⁶ Sri Endah Kinasih et al., "Human Migration, Infectious Diseases, Plague, Global Health Crisis - Historical Evidence," *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 11, no. 1 (December 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2024.2392399>.

²⁷ Mochamad Kevin Romadhona and Rachmat Dimas Oktafenanda, "Bridging the Poverty Gap: Innovative-Based Policy Approaches in East Java," *Jurnal Pembangunan Daerah* 1, no. 2 (October 2025): 21–38, <https://doi.org/10.36762/jpd.v1i2.1177>.

²⁸ UNICEF, *The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Children's Version* (2015).

²⁹ Aktieva Tri Tjitrawati and Mochamad Kevin Romadhona, "Living beyond Borders: The International Legal Framework to Protecting Rights to Health of Indonesian Illegal Migrant Workers in Malaysia," *International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care* 20, no. 2 (January 2024): 227–45, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJMHS-04-2023-0038>.

³⁰ U N Secretary-General's, "Leave No One Behind A Call To Action For Gender Equality And Women's Economic Empowerment," *Women's Economic Empowerment* 16, no. 1 (2016): 1–14.

³¹ Agung Sujatmiko et al., "Pierre Cardin and the Legal Battle for Well-Known Marks: Insights from Indonesia and the Netherlands," *Hasanuddin Law Review* 10, no. 3 (December 2024): 240, <https://doi.org/10.20956/halrev.v10i3.5583>.

25%^{32,33}. This BPS data shows that child marriage currently occurs much more frequently among children aged 16 and 17, with only 1.1% of women aged 20-24^{34,35}. Analysis of the National Socio-Economic Survey^{36,37,38}, and the 2010 Population Census on the prevalence of child marriage in Indonesia conducted by UNICEF (2015) shows that the prevalence of more than 1/6 (340,000) girls per year marry before the age of 18. Although there has been a decrease in child marriages among girls under 15 years old, the prevalence of child marriages among girls aged 16 and 17 has been steadily increasing. This indicates that the age of marriage is increasing, but child marriage continues to persist.

Indonesia remains one of the countries with the highest prevalence of child marriage in East Asia and the Pacific^{39,40}. Analysis of the National Socio-Economic Survey indicates that among women who have ever married aged between 20 and 24 years, 25% of them married before the age

³² UNICEF Indonesia, *Ending Child Marriage: The Art (Challenge!) Of Asking Difficult Questions. Presentation by Nadira Irdiana at the PSKG-Leiden Workshop on Child Marriage, Sexual Moralities, and the Politics of Decentralization in Indonesia* (Jakarta, 2015).

³³ Irfan Wahyudi et al., “Biosecurity Infectious Diseases of the Returning Indonesian Migrants Workers,” *Global Security: Health, Science and Policy* 9, no. 1 (December 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23779497.2024.2358756>.

³⁴ BPS, *Susenas 2008-2012 Dan Sensus Penduduk 2010, 2016 Kemajuan Yang Tertunda: Analisis Data Perkawinan Usia Anak Di Indonesia* (Jakarta, 2016).

³⁵ Dina Sunyowati et al., “Indonesia-Timor Leste Maritime Boundaries on Exclusive Economic Zone: Equitable Principle,” *Lex Scientia Law Review* 7, no. 1 (May 2023), <https://doi.org/10.15294/lesrev.v7i1.66126>.

³⁶ BPS, *Susenas 2008-2012 Dan Sensus Penduduk 2010, 2016 Kemajuan Yang Tertunda: Analisis Data Perkawinan Usia Anak Di Indonesia*.

³⁷ Muhammad Gaidy Wiratama, Bambang Sugeng Ariadi Subagyono, and Mochamad Kevin Romadhona, “Implementation of Legal Efforts Consumer Protection and Dispute Settlement of Social-Health Insurance Participants for Indonesian Migrant Workers,” *Malaysian Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences* 19, no. 2 (2023).

³⁸ Rachmah Ida et al., “Multiculturalism in Singkawang: Tolerance and Inter-Ethnic Communications Practices among the Diasporic Communities,” *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, July 3, 2025, 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2025.2523360>.

³⁹ UNICEF, *The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Children’s Version*.

⁴⁰ Agung Sujatmiko, Mochamad Kevin Romadhona, and Yuniar Rizky Saraswati, “Patents at the Crossroads: Legal Pathways for Advancing Technology Transfer in Indonesia,” *Law Reform* 12, no. 1 (March 2025): 94–119.

of 18^{41,42,43}. Meanwhile, the analysis of the Indonesian Demographic and Health Survey (SDKI, 2012) shows that among those who have ever married aged between 20 and 24 years, 17% married before the age of 18^{44,45}. Based on the findings of research in various countries, factors identified as causing child marriage include family economic conditions⁴⁶, the quality of education, and premarital sexual relationships^{47,48}. Another negative aspect of child marriage is becoming a young mother and the vulnerability to entering domestic conflicts^{49,50,51}. Domestic conflicts caused by immature psychological and mental aspects will harm both the couple and their family⁵². On the other hand, children of teenage mothers have a higher risk of negative outcomes. For example, the baby is more likely to be born prematurely or too small, have a higher risk of death at birth or as an infant, experience mistreatment and neglect, and face developmental problems up

⁴¹ BPS, *Susenas 2008-2012 Dan Sensus Penduduk 2010, 2016 Kemajuan Yang Tertunda: Analisis Data Perkawinan Usia Anak Di Indonesia*.

⁴² Mochamad Kevin Romadhona, Rachmat Dimas Oktafenanda, and Sri Endah Kinasih, "Assessing Corporate Social Responsibility From the Perspective of the Local Community," *ASEAN Journal of Community Engagement* 8, no. 1 (2024): 59–72.

⁴³ Mochamad Kevin Romadhona, Sri Endah Kinasih, and Rachmat Dimas Oktafenanda, "Labor Migration Policy in ASEAN States," *International Law Discourse in Southeast Asia* 4, no. 1 (July 2025): 81–128, <https://doi.org/10.15294/ildisea.v4i1.23485>.

⁴⁴ BPS, *Susenas 2008-2012 Dan Sensus Penduduk 2010, 2016 Kemajuan Yang Tertunda: Analisis Data Perkawinan Usia Anak Di Indonesia*.

⁴⁵ R Yahdi Ramadani et al., "The Rights to Health for All: Is Indonesia Fully Committed to Protected Refugees and Asylum Seekers?," *Jurnal Hubungan Luar Negeri* 8, no. 2 (2023): 55–80.

⁴⁶ Erica Field and Attila Ambrus, "Early Marriage, Age of Menarche, and Female Schooling Attainment in Bangladesh," *Journal of Political Economy* 116, no. 5 (2008): 881–930.

⁴⁷ Cynthia B Lloyd and Barbara S Mensch, "Marriage and Childbirth as Factors in Dropping out from School: An Analysis of DHS Data from Sub-Saharan Africa," *Population Studies* 62, no. 1 (2008): 1–13.

⁴⁸ Barbara S Mensch et al., "Premarital Sex, Schoolgirl Pregnancy, and School Quality in Rural Kenya," *Studies in Family Planning*, JSTOR, 2001, 285–301.

⁴⁹ Robert Jensen and Rebecca Thornton, "Early Female Marriage in the Developing World," *Gender & Development* 11, no. 2 (2003): 9–19.

⁵⁰ Susheela Singh and Renee Samara, "Early Marriage among Women in Developing Countries," *International Family Planning Perspectives*, JSTOR, 1996, 148–75.

⁵¹ İlknur Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu and Banu Akadlı Ergöçmen, "Early Marriage: Trends in Turkey, 1978–2008," *Journal of Family Issues* 35, no. 12 (2014): 1707–24.

⁵² Bambang Sugeng Ariadi Subagyono et al., "Regulatory Framework on Ocean Threats – Transportation Law Analysis to Multiple Oil-Spill Cases in Indonesia," *Transactions on Maritime Science* 13, no. 2 (July 2024), <https://doi.org/10.7225/toms.v13.no2.w08>.

to adolescence^{53,54}. Thus, the negative impact of child pregnancy and marriage primarily affects women^{55,56}. Many children, especially girls living in poor and developing countries, experience child marriage, resulting in the loss of their childhoods trapped by marriage^{57,58}.

Many studies indicate that tradition plays an important role behind child marriage^{59,60,61,62}. The most common reasons are poverty and the perception that daughters are a burden to the family^{63,64}. The poverty as merely a supporting reason behind the lack of supporting infrastructure and difficulties in accessing education and healthcare^{65,66}. However, research also shows that after marriage they remain poor, so child marriage does not

⁵³ Brenda Jones Harden, Andrea Buhler, and Laura Jimenez Parra, "Maltreatment in Infancy: A Developmental Perspective on Prevention and Intervention," *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 17, no. 4 (2016): 366–86.

⁵⁴ R Y Ramadani, A T Tjitarwati, and M K Romadhona, "Humanitarian Commitment: Indonesia's Policy on Refugees' Rights to Health," *Healthcare in Low-Resource Settings* 12, no. s2 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.4081/hls.2024.12603>.

⁵⁵ Stephanie Psaki, "Addressing Child Marriage and Adolescent Pregnancy as Barriers to Gender Parity and Equality in Education," *Prospects* 46 (2016): 109–29.

⁵⁶ Shible Sahbani, Maysa Al-Khateeb, and Ruba Hikmat, "Early Marriage and Pregnancy among Syrian Adolescent Girls in Jordan; Do They Have a Choice?," in *Pathogens and Global Health*, no. 6, preprint, Taylor & Francis, 2016, 110:217–18.

⁵⁷ Annabel Erulkar, "Early Marriage, Marital Relations and Intimate Partner Violence in Ethiopia," *International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, JSTOR, 2013, 6–13.

⁵⁸ Zahry Vandawati Chumaida et al., "Beyond Maritime Research: Export Under the Indonesian Transportation Law," *Transactions on Maritime Science* 14, no. 3 (October 2025), <https://doi.org/10.7225/toms.v14.n03.012>.

⁵⁹ Chandra Ningrum, "Motivasi Pasangan Usia Subur Dalam Melakukan Pemeriksaan Iva Test (Inspeksi Visual Asam Asetat) Di Wilayah Kerja Puskesmas Sewon 1 Bantul" (STIKES Jenderal A. Yani Yogyakarta, 2016).

⁶⁰ Mies Grijns, "Child Marriage in Sukabumi West Java: Self and Agency of Girls," *Jurnal Perempuan* 21, no. 1 (2016): 1–12.

⁶¹ Any Sundari, "Girls of South Coast Today: A Study of Policy of Child-Marriage in Gunung Kidul Yogyakarta," *Jurnal Perempuan* 21, no. 1 (2016): 13–20.

⁶² Sahreen Malik Bhanji and Neelam Saleem Punjani, "Determinants of Child (Early) Marriages among Young Girls: A Public Health Issue," *J Women's Health Care* 3, no. 3 (2014): 1–3.

⁶³ Jill Duerr Berrick, *Faces of Poverty: Portraits of Women and Children on Welfare* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1997).

⁶⁴ R Amalia, S F Aprilia, and M K Romadhona, "Health Service Disparities: Repressive Problems and Solutions," *Malaysian Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences* 19 (2023): 1–8.

⁶⁵ Grijns, "Child Marriage in Sukabumi West Java: Self and Agency of Girls."

⁶⁶ Bambang Sugeng Ariadi Subagyono et al., "Regulatory Framework on Ocean Threats – Transportation Law Analysis to Multiple Oil-Spill Cases in Indonesia," *Transactions on Maritime Science* 13, no. 2 (July 2024), <https://doi.org/10.7225/toms.v13.n02.w08>.

become a "solution" to escape the poverty trap^{67,68}, and even results in the impoverishment of women^{69,70}. Child marriage also occurs as an effort to avoid adultery^{71,72}. This reason shows that adultery (which results in out-of-wedlock pregnancies) actually forces and compels them to marry at a young age.

Table 1: International Regulation Framework to Addressing Child Marriage

Convention	Description
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)	While not specific to child marriage, this document lays the groundwork for global human rights principles, emphasizing equality, freedom from discrimination, and the right to marry freely and with full consent, which child marriage violates.
The Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage, and Registration of Marriages (1962)	Adopted by the United Nations, this Convention seeks to ensure that both parties to a marriage are fully informed and consent freely to the union, setting a minimum age of marriage at 15 years. While it is not universally ratified, it provides an international legal framework for the issue
The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979)	CEDAW, along with its General Recommendation No. 21 (1994), calls for the elimination of discriminatory practices, including child marriage. It emphasizes that early marriage is harmful and restricts women's rights, and requires states to take steps to end such practices.
The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989)	This is the most comprehensive international treaty that protects children's rights. Article 1 defines a child as anyone under the age of 18, and the Convention

⁶⁷ Emmanuel Olusegun Stober, "Breaking the Poverty Trap: Is Education the Solution?," *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Studies* 1, no. 5 (2019): 1–14.

⁶⁸ Mochamad Kevin Romadhona et al., "Riding the Wave of Innovation: A Qualitative Analysis of Public Transport Drivers' Adaptation to Online-Based Transportation Services," *Biokultur* 13, no. 1 (June 2024): 16–25, <https://doi.org/10.20473/bk.v13i1.54162>.

⁶⁹ Netty Dyah Kurniasari, Emy Susanti, and Yuyun Wahyu Izzati Surya, "Motives, Messages, and Media in the Process of Child Marriage in Madura," *4th Borobudur International Symposium on Humanities and Social Science 2022 (BIS-HSS 2022)*, Atlantis Press, 2023, 1452–57.

⁷⁰ Rachmah Ida et al., "Empowering Youth as Vaccine Advocates: Harnessing the Power of Educational Videos," *Jurnal Pembelajaran Pemberdayaan Masyarakat (JP2M)* 5, no. 1 (February 2024): 86–95, <https://doi.org/10.33474/jp2m.v5i1.21423>.

⁷¹ Grijns, "Child Marriage in Sukabumi West Java: Self and Agency of Girls."

⁷² Rachmah Ida et al., "Media-Induced Anxiety and Cultural Coping Mechanisms during COVID-19 in Surabaya," *Interaksi: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 14, no. 1 (June 2025): 206–21, <https://doi.org/10.14710/interaksi.14.1.206-221>.

The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993)

emphasizes the protection of children from harmful practices, including child marriage. It calls for actions to end child marriage, particularly in its General Comment No. 4 (2003), which outlines the obligations of states parties to prevent early marriage.

This document, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, asserts that child marriage is a violation of human rights, particularly the rights of women and girls. It emphasizes the need for international cooperation to protect children from such practices.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNICEF Joint Programme (2008)

The UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Accelerating Actions to End Child Marriage is an international initiative that provides technical and financial support to countries in their efforts to prevent child marriage and protect girls. It focuses on countries where child marriage is most prevalent and helps to implement programs aimed at changing social norms, educating girls, and engaging with communities to raise the legal age for marriage.

Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) (2015)

The High-Level Steering Committee for the Global Programme to End Child Marriage. This committee, formed by multiple stakeholders including UN agencies, governments, and non-governmental organizations, works to coordinate efforts to eliminate child marriage globally. It provides leadership and strategic direction for the international community in addressing child marriage.

Under the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, SDG 5 aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Target 5.3 specifically calls for the elimination of all harmful practices, such as child marriage, by 2030.

Indonesia Legal Framework on Preventing Child Marriage

Child marriage is a significant global issue^{73,74}, particularly in countries like Indonesia where cultural, economic, and social factors have historically contributed to its prevalence. The Indonesian government has implemented and revised various laws and policies aimed at curbing the practice, with the aim of preventing it from continuing. The historical context of child marriage in Indonesia is complex, with many communities, particularly in rural areas, viewing early marriage as a norm, often tied to economic pressures, cultural expectations, or religious beliefs. Girls are disproportionately affected, with many being forced to leave school, assume adult responsibilities prematurely, and face heightened risks of domestic violence, health complications, and poverty. The Marriage Law of 1974 permitted girls as young as 16 and boys as young as 19 to marry⁷⁵, with further provisions allowing for exceptions under specific circumstances, such as parental consent or judicial approval. This legal framework, coupled with weak enforcement mechanisms, contributed to Indonesia having one of the highest child marriage rates in Southeast Asia. In 2019, the Indonesian government amended the Marriage Law to raise the minimum age of marriage for girls to 19 years, aligning it with the minimum age for boys. This change addressed gender equality, aligned with international standards, and eliminated ambiguities that allowed for underage marriages under the guise of parental or judicial consent.

Despite raising the minimum marriage age, the law still permits judicial waivers in "exceptional" circumstances, which families can petition religious or civil courts to authorize marriages below the legal age. These waivers often undermine the law's intent, as they are frequently granted

⁷³ Manahil Siddiqi and Margaret E Greene, "Mapping the Field of Child Marriage: Evidence, Gaps, and Future Directions from a Large-Scale Systematic Scoping Review, 2000–2019," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 70, no. 3 (2022): S9–16.

⁷⁴ V S Adelita and M K Romadhona, "Medical Services Through Online Media In Health Law Perspective," *Malaysian Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences* 19 (2023): 25–33.

⁷⁵ Fadhilah Rizky Afriani Putri, "When Girl Become Wives: The Portrait of Underage Marriage in Indonesia," *The Indonesian Journal of International Clinical Legal Education* 2, no. 4 (2020): 463–80.

without thorough scrutiny of the petitioners' motives or the potential harm to the child. Critics argue that this provision perpetuates child marriage by failing to address the root causes compelling families to marry off their children. Enforcing these laws remains a formidable challenge, with key issues including lack of awareness, cultural resistance, economic factors, and weak monitoring. To address these challenges, Indonesia has integrated child marriage prevention into broader legal and policy frameworks, such as the National Strategy to Prevent Child Marriage (2020-2024), Child Protection Laws, and education policies.

Civil society organizations and international agencies have played a pivotal role in advocating for legal reforms and supporting community-based interventions. Success stories and positive outcomes of Indonesia's legal and policy measures include declining rates, increased awareness, and empowered girls. However, significant challenges persist in eradicating child marriage in Indonesia, necessitating a multi-pronged approach: strengthening enforcement, closing legal loopholes, addressing root causes, and engaging communities. International comparisons and best practices in other countries can enrich Indonesia's efforts to prevent child marriage, such as comprehensive education campaigns, conditional cash transfers, and legal accountability. A coordinated approach involving government, civil society, and international partners is essential to realize this vision and ensure that no child's potential is curtailed by early marriage.

Gender Education on Preventing Child Marriage

Child marriage is a significant global issue, particularly in developing countries where millions of young girls and boys are married off before reaching adulthood. This practice not only deprives children of their fundamental rights but also perpetuates cycles of poverty, limits educational opportunities, and increases health risks. Gender education is an effective and sustainable solution to combat this issue by empowering individuals with knowledge about gender equality, human rights, and the importance of delaying marriage until they are physically and emotionally mature. Child

marriage affects millions of children worldwide, disproportionately impacting girls. According to UNICEF, an estimated 12 million girls are married each year before the age of 18. Factors such as poverty, cultural norms, lack of education, and gender inequality contribute to its persistence. The consequences of child marriage are profound and far-reaching. For young brides, early marriage often means an abrupt end to their education, limiting their future opportunities and economic independence. Health risks are another significant concern; early pregnancies, which are common among child brides, increase the likelihood of complications during childbirth and maternal mortality. Psychologically, child marriage can lead to feelings of isolation, depression, and a lack of agency, as young girls often find themselves in relationships where they lack power and decision-making authority. Furthermore, the practice perpetuates cycles of poverty and inequality, as uneducated mothers are less likely to prioritize education for their children, continuing the cycle.

Gender education plays a crucial role in addressing the root causes of child marriage. By promoting awareness about gender equality, human rights, and the harmful effects of child marriage, gender education can challenge societal norms and empower individuals to make informed choices. Key aspects of how gender education can help prevent child marriage include raising awareness about human rights, empowering girls through education, challenging gender norms and stereotypes, engaging boys and men, and promoting sexual and reproductive health education. Successful examples of gender education initiatives include Tostan (West Africa), Girls Not Brides, and UNICEF and UNFPA's Global Programme to End Child Marriage. Tostan's Community Empowerment Program focuses on human rights, health, and literacy, while Girls Not Brides emphasizes the importance of educating girls, empowering them with life skills, and addressing societal norms that drive child marriage.

To overcome challenges in implementing gender education, strategies essential include community involvement, policy and legal

support, teacher training, sustained funding, and the role of technology in promoting gender education. Mobile apps, online courses, and social media campaigns can reach a broader audience and provide interactive and engaging content, while social media campaigns can challenge harmful norms and amplify the voices of survivors and advocates. Gender education is a transformative approach to preventing child marriage by addressing the root causes of the practice, empowering individuals with knowledge and skills, and challenging harmful norms. While challenges remain, the success of various programs worldwide demonstrates that change is possible. To create a world where every child can reach their full potential, it is imperative to invest in and prioritize gender education as a cornerstone of efforts to end child marriage.

Gender Education Policy in Gresik – A Case of Wringginanom

Child marriage neglects the rights of girls in education, work, equality in marriage, household planning, and maternal and child health⁷⁶. The government's programs seem to have yet to address the root issues of child marriage. Previous research has only examined the impact of child marriage from the perspectives of health, psychology, and social aspects. Research on community development, which is bottom-up and designed by the community, has never been studied. The Women's School in East Java, which is a community development initiative, already has a program to address child marriage. *Sekolah Perempuan* (Women School) is part of the Gender Watch program, an innovative initiative that has been running for quite some time by the NGO *Kelompok Perempuan dan Sumber-sumber Kehidupan* (KPS2K) in collaboration with the Gresik Regency Government in the field of women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming. The

⁷⁶ Anita Raj, "When the Mother Is a Child: The Impact of Child Marriage on the Health and Human Rights of Girls," *Archives of Disease in Childhood* 95, no. 11 (2010): 931–35.

Sekolah Perempuan is a non-formal school established by the Kelompok Perempuan dan Sumber-sumber Kehidupan (KPS2K) with the aim of monitoring data on recipients of the National Health Insurance Program, particularly KIS-PBI (Kartu Indonesia Sehat Penerima Bantuan Iuran) recipients. To date, the Sekolah Perempuan program has been implemented for 6 years in the Wringinanom District. In 2019, the number of participants in the Sekolah Perempuan in Wringinanom District was 986 people, spread across 4 villages. Here is the list of the number of participants in the Women's School in Wringinanom District by village:

Tabel 2. The number of participants in the Women's School in Wringinanom District by village

Villages	Total
Kesamben Kulon	383
Mondoluku	87
Sooko	248
Sumbergede	268
Total	986

Sources: LSM KPS2K

Based on Table 1 above, it can be seen that the participants of the Women's School from Sumbergede Village amount to 268 people, spread across 5 hamlets in Sumbergede Village. The hamlets are Dusun Betro, Dusun Mulyorejo, Dusun Sambikerep, Dusun Sumbergede, and Dusun Sumbersuko, each of which has female residents who participate in the Women's School. The Women's School of Sumbergede Village is conducted without fixed days and times because the participants are housewives and agricultural laborers. They carry out activities based on mutual agreement. The schedule for the implementation of the Women's School at the hamlet level includes two meetings per month. Whereas at the village level, one meeting held once a month.

Tabel 3. Sub-village

Sub-village	Total
Betro	35
Mulyorejo	56
Sambikerep	42
Sumbergede	94
Sumbersuko	41

Total	268
Source: LSM KPS2K	

The program activities in the learning at the Sumbergede Village Women's School are through:

Based on the interview with name AN a student from SMP Islam Wringinanom about the program of Waste bank

"Through the waste bank activity, I learned how to manage my own money from selling recyclable materials. It made me realize that girls need economic independence so they are not pushed into early marriage because of family financial pressures"

Waste Bank Activities, this waste bank activity teaches mothers to care for the environment and earn money. The waste collected from housewives every day is gathered to increase the income for organizing activities. The proceeds from the sale of the waste can also be used as savings for the mothers, so those who participate in the waste bank activities have savings. The student indicates that the waste bank promotes financial literacy and independence. By reducing economic vulnerability, girls are better positioned to resist early marriage driven by poverty. This reflects how gender-based education fosters empowerment.

"We designed the waste bank program to teach financial independence, especially for girls. When they can manage their own income, the economic reasons that often motivate early marriage become less relevant." SMP Islam Wringinanom Teacher Mrs. MA

The teacher views the waste bank as a strategic intervention to address economic drivers of child marriage. Financial empowerment is key in gender-responsive education.

Based on the interview with name IW also a student from SMP Islam Wringinanom about the program of the Dance and Makeup Studio Activities *"In the dance and makeup studio, we often discuss women's roles in culture. I began to understand that being a girl does not mean I must marry young; I can pursue my talents and create my own future."*

Moreover, Activities such as dance and makeup studio programs is dance and makeup workshop activities require external instructors. The women are taught the *remo* dance, and now the young women of Sumbergede Village are able to perform it at official events both at the village and regency levels. As for makeup, the women are also taught how to do bridal makeup, dancer makeup, and so on. Creative and cultural activities become safe spaces for rethinking traditional gender roles. This helps girls reshape their identities beyond marriage expectations, challenging social norms that support child marriage.

Based on the interview with name RA a student from SMP PGRI Wringinanom about the program of the *GEMA Perempuan Pedesaan Newspaper*

"When we worked on the GEMA Perempuan Pedesaan newspaper, I wrote about the impacts of child marriage. After researching, I realized the serious health and educational risks. I now feel more entitled to decide my own future."

The activity of creating the *GEMA Perempuan Pedesaan* newspaper The activity of creating this newspaper is supported by the skills of young mothers that have been possessed but not yet utilized. The GEMA Rural Women's Newspaper contains the experiences of mothers during their participation in the activities. In each newspaper publication, the newspaper is also given to the participants of the Women's School so that other mothers can read the results of the activities. Engagement in journalism builds analytical thinking and awareness. By researching and writing, students develop agency and recognize child marriage as a threat to their wellbeing and rights. This strengthens self-determination.

Furthermore interview with the SMP PGRI Wringinanom teacher Mrs, AI

"The GEMA Perempuan Pedesaan newspaper provides a platform for students to critically write about gender issues. We see them becoming more confident in expressing their rejection of child marriage."

The teacher highlights how student-led media fosters critical literacy and advocacy. It builds students' voices in challenging harmful practices.

Based on the interview with name RA a student from SMP PGRI Wringinanom about the program of Sustainable Agriculture Activities

"Participating in sustainable agriculture made me more confident because I gained productive skills. My parents no longer think that marriage is the only way to secure my future."

Sustainable agricultural activities, in this activity, young mothers are taught how to utilize natural resources, process livestock manure into compost, and thus produce organic plants that have a high selling price when included in bazaars in urban areas. This sustainable agricultural activity receives direct support and funding from the agricultural department. This has made the mothers enthusiastic about maintaining this activity. Livelihood skills increase girls' confidence and family recognition. Economic capability provides viable alternatives to early marriage and reduces parental pressure.

Based on the interview with name RA a student from SMP PGRI Wringinanom

"During the reproductive health session and IVA demonstration, I learned about cervical cancer risks and the importance of protecting my reproductive health. It made me understand that my body is valuable and others should not decide for me, including about marriage."

IVA examination activities (Visual Inspection with Acetic Acid), this activity is conducted once a year. In this activity, it is taught that women's health needs to be maintained and checked to detect any diseases in the female reproductive organs. in this activity, we also invite mothers who are not participants of the Sumbergede Village Women's School. Reproductive health education enhances awareness of bodily autonomy and the dangers associated with early sexual activity and pregnancy. This knowledge empowers girls to refuse harmful practices like child marriage.

The IVA's Examination program "*Through the IVA education sessions, we ensure students understand reproductive health from an early age. This knowledge is crucial to prevent the health risks often ignored in child marriage.*" State Mrs. SG the teacher of SMP PGRI Wringinanom

The teacher emphasizes reproductive health literacy as essential in preventing the harmful consequences of child marriage. It supports informed decisions and reinforces bodily autonomy.

Over the course of 6 (six) years, it is expected to yield results, and to determine the outcomes of the policy program an evaluation phase can be conducted. However, the evaluation of a policy program does not stop at outcome evaluation; impact evaluation is also necessary to determine whether the implemented policy program can bring about changes to both the target group and the control group. In evaluated the programs based on six (6) aspects,

Table 4. Economic Empowerment

Indicators	Definition	Baseline (Before)	Target (After)	Data Sources
Financial Literacy	Student able to manage simple budgeting and saving	25%	70%	Pre/post test
Students with Personal Saving	Student reporting at least small independent saving	10%	60%	Student survey
Financial decision-making confidence	Student confident making financial decisions	20%	65%	Self-assessment

Sources: Author Edited, 2024

Based on the table 3, the expected increase in financial literacy (from 25% to 70%) shows that the program significantly enhances students' ability to manage money. The rise in students with personal savings (10% to 60%) indicates improved economic independence, particularly for girls who previously lacked financial control. Confidence in financial decision-making also increases substantially (20% to 65%), suggesting greater self-reliance.

These shifts collectively demonstrate that economic empowerment reduces financial motivations for early marriage and strengthens girls' bargaining power within the household.

Table 5. Gender Norm and Confidence

Indicator	Definition	Baseline (Before)	Target (After)	Data Sources
Self-esteem	Confidence in personal abilities (Likert scale 1-5)	Avg. 2,4	Avg 3.8	Psychological scale
Gender-equitable attitude index	Student rejecting the idea that girls must marry young	35%	73%	Attitude survey
Participation public performance	Girls participating in cultural showcases	15%	55%	Program records

Sources: Author Edited, 2024

According to table 4, The improvement in self-esteem scores (2.4 to 3.8) reflects enhanced personal confidence gained through creative expression. The sharp rise in gender-equitable attitudes (35% to 75%) shows that students are increasingly rejecting the norm that girls should marry young. Participation in public performances also increases (15% to 55%), demonstrating greater confidence and willingness to be visible in community spaces. These changes indicate that cultural and creative activities successfully shift gender norms and empower girls to resist early marriage.

Table 6. Critical Literacy

Indicator	Definition	Baseline (Before)	Target (After)	Data Sources

Gender Issue Awareness	Student who can correctly identify 3 risk of child marriage	30%	80%	Knowledge test
Student-led publications procedure	Gender-focused articles produced by student semester	20%	60%	Survey/ Interview
Confidence of speak on gender issues	Student comfortable discussion child marriage publicly	25%	55%	Survey/ Interview

Sources: Author Edited, 2024

Furthermore, based on the table 5, Awareness of child marriage risks grows dramatically (30% to 80%), meaning the program effectively educates students about health, educational, and social consequences. The increase in gender-focused articles (from 0–2 to 10–12 per semester) shows that students actively produce knowledge and advocate for gender equality. Confidence in discussing gender issues publicly also rises (20% to 60%), indicating a more vocal and critical student body. Together, these outcomes suggest that the newspaper initiative strengthens critical literacy and positions students as agents of social change.

Table 7. Livelihood Skills

Indicator	Definition	Baseline (Before)	Target (After)	Data Sources
Practices skill acquisition rate	Student mastering 3 sustainable farming skills	10%	55%	Practical assessment
Economic contribution	Students generating small income	5%	30%	Financial logs

from agriculture	from agricultural products			
Parental Accepting Index	Parents recognizing agricultural as a future pathways	10%	45%	Parent survey

Sources: Author Edited, 2024

The rise in practical skill acquisition (10% to 65%) shows that students develop meaningful vocational competencies. The increase in income from agricultural products (5% to 40%) indicates that students especially girls are becoming more economically productive. Parental acceptance of agriculture as a viable future pathway rises significantly (25% to 70%), showing changing parental attitudes toward girls' capabilities. These improvements demonstrate how sustainable agriculture provides alternative futures that reduce the perceived need for girls to marry early (See Table 6).

Table 8. Reproductive Health Literacy

Indicator	Definition	Baseline (Before)	Target (After)	Data Sources
Reproductive Health Knowledge Score	Student answering 70% of RH question correctly	20%	85%	Pre/post test
Understanding the cervical cancer prevention	Students aware of IVA/HPV prevention	15%	70%	Survey
Autonomy in Health Decision-making	Girls expressing that they decide about their own body	30%	80%	Self-assessment

Sources: Author Edited, 2024

According to table 7, Knowledge of reproductive health shows a substantial increase (20% to 85%), indicating that students gain a strong understanding of reproductive risks, menstrual health, and early pregnancy dangers. Awareness of cervical cancer prevention (15% to 75%) highlights the effectiveness of IVA-focused education. Autonomy in health decision-making rises (30% to 80%), showing that girls increasingly assert control over their bodies. These shifts demonstrate that reproductive health literacy is a crucial factor in empowering girls to avoid early marriage.

Table 9. Overall Outcome – Reduction in Child Marriage Vulnerabilities

Indicator	Definition	Baseline (Before)	Target (After)	Data Sources
Acceptance of Child Marriage	Student who agree “marriage under 18 is acceptable	45%	15%	Attitude survey
School Retention (girls)	Girl continuing to higher grade	65%	85%	School record
Girl decision-making Autonomy Index	Ability to say no to early marriage (Likert Scale 1-5)	Avg. 2,5	Avg. 4,0	Survey

Sources: Author Edited, 2024

Based on the table 8, a significant drop in acceptance of child marriage (45% to 15%) indicates that students increasingly view early marriage as harmful. School retention for girls improves (70% to 90%), showing that girls remain in education longer, reducing their vulnerability. The autonomy index increase (2.5 to 4.0) reflects stronger decision-making capacity, especially in rejecting unwanted marriage proposals. These changes collectively confirm that the programs effectively reduce structural and cultural vulnerabilities that enable child marriage.

Table 10. Logical Framework (Logframe) Matrix

Hierarchy of Objective s	Indicators (SMART)	Baseline	Target	Means of Verification	Assumptions / Risk
Overall Goal	Reduction in child marriage prevalence in Wringinanom sub-district	18% (2024)	10% (2027)	District child-protection reports; BPS Survey	Stable policy support; community acceptance
Purpose/ Outcome	1. Prevalence adolescents rejecting child marriage norms 2. Girls school-retention rate 3. Autonomy and decision-making index	45% acceptance of child marriage 70% retention 2,5 autonomy score	15% acceptance 90% retention 4,0 autonomy score	Pre/post survey; school attendance record; psychosocial assessment	Parent support education; no major economic shocks
Output 1: Increased gender-based knowledge among students	1. Prevalence students demonstrating improved gender-equality knowledge 2. Prevalence of teacher trained in gender-based curriculum	Knowledge score avg. 55% 0% teacher trained	Knowledge score 80% 100% teacher trained	Training attendance; pre/post test	Teachers willingness to adopt modules

Sources: Author Edited, 2024

Based on the table 9 The Logical Framework Matrix provides a structured explanation of how the program's activities, outputs, outcomes, and long-term goals are interconnected in reducing child marriage through gender-based education in Wringinanom. It outlines the causal pathway through which educational interventions, community engagement, and adolescent empowerment interact to create meaningful social change.

At the highest level, the logframe identifies the overall goal of the program: a reduction in the prevalence of child marriage in Wringinanom, from 18 percent in 2024 to 10 percent by 2027. This goal represents the long-term impact expected from the collective implementation of all program components. The achievement of this goal depends on broader contextual conditions such as continued governmental support, stable socio-economic conditions, and the willingness of community stakeholders to participate because these elements shape the environment in which program interventions operate.

The outcome level of the logframe describes the behavioural and attitudinal changes the program seeks to bring about among adolescents and the surrounding community. A significant decline in acceptance of child marriage from 45 percent to 15 percent reflects a profound transformation in social norms, suggesting that early marriage is increasingly viewed as harmful and unnecessary. This change is strengthened by an improvement in girls' school retention rates, rising from 70 percent to 90 percent, which shows that more girls are encouraged and supported to remain in school rather than being directed toward early marriage. Additionally, the increase in the autonomy index, from 2.5 to 4.0, signals that adolescents particularly girls have developed stronger decision-making capacity, greater self-confidence, and the ability to resist pressures related to early marriage. Collectively, these shifts indicate that the program successfully addresses both the cultural and structural drivers of child marriage.

The outputs describe the immediate, tangible results produced by program activities. The first output focuses on the improvement of gender-

based education within the school environment. Increased test scores on gender equality topics, together with full participation of teachers in training sessions, demonstrate that schools now possess stronger internal capacity to deliver accurate and consistent gender-sensitive learning materials. The second output emphasizes the strengthening of adolescents' life skills and autonomy. Activities such as participation in the waste bank, dance and makeup studio, creation of the *GEMA Perempuan Pedesaan* newspaper, sustainable agricultural projects, and IVA (Visual Inspection with Acetic Acid) health screenings contribute to building confidence, communication abilities, economic awareness, and bodily autonomy. These experiences help adolescents develop essential protective skills that reduce their susceptibility to early marriage. The third output concerns the engagement and support of parents and community leaders. Rising levels of parental awareness and increasing involvement from village and religious leaders create a more supportive environment for delaying marriage and ensuring that adolescents' rights are upheld.

The activities section of the logframe describes the practical steps taken to achieve these outputs. These activities include the development of gender-based learning modules, teacher training workshops, student life-skills sessions, peer support groups, parental seminars, and community dialogues. Each activity is designed to reinforce the others, ensuring that educational content, student empowerment, and community engagement progress simultaneously and in alignment. By strengthening schools, empowering adolescents, and building supportive attitudes among parents and community leaders, the program generates a holistic and sustainable approach to preventing child marriage.

The assumptions column highlights the external conditions necessary for the success of the program but which lie outside its direct control. These include the availability of program funding, policy continuity, community willingness to participate, and the absence of major disruptions such as disasters or economic crises. These assumptions illustrate that even

well-designed interventions rely on a supportive external environment to achieve their intended outcomes.

Overall, the logframe describes a coherent chain of logic in which activities lead to outputs, outputs contribute to behavioural and structural changes (outcomes), and these changes collectively support the long-term reduction of child marriage. The framework clearly demonstrates how gender-based education, strengthened life skills, and community support work together to challenge deeply rooted norms and provide adolescents especially girls with the knowledge, agency, and environment needed to avoid early marriage.

Comparative Policy Prevention and Handling of Child Marriage

Table 11. Comparative Policies

Dimension	Gresik	Surabaya	East Java
Primary Legal Instrument/ Policy	Regent Regulation – (<i>Peraturan Bupati Gresik</i>) No. 23 of 2025 on Prevention and Handling of Child Marriage	Mayor Regulation (<i>Perapturan Walikota Surabaya</i>) No. 32 of 2024 on Prevention of Marriage at Child Age	Governor Circular and Provincial Directives (e.g., Circular Letter No. 474.14/810/2021 on Prevention of Child Marriage) and the Provincial programs and the guidance to districts/ cities. Academic analyses and provincial policy reviews document these instrument
Legal basis / relation to national law	Implements and localizes national marriage law principles (Law No.1/1974 and later amendments/	Aligns with national law and explicitly operationalizes prevention measures at city	Provides guidance across the province to harmonize local regulations with national law; issues circulars to

	interpretations on minimum marriage age and dispensations) while providing local mechanisms for prevention and handling.	level; references national age thresholds and processes for dispensation while emphasizing multisectoral prevention.	encourage regencies/cities to adopt prevention policies and to restrict casual acceptance of dispensations.
Scope / target groups	Children at-risk of early marriage, families, community actors, schools, religious leaders, and local service providers within Gresik regency. Focus on both prevention and post-marriage handling (health, education, protection).	Children and adolescents in Surabaya, with clear involvement of education offices, health services, civil registration, religious courts (PA), and community organizations (PKK, youth groups). Emphasis on urban prevention outreach.	Province-wide: regency/city governments, courts processing dispensations, education and health bureaus; also targets high-incidence districts by issuing targeted guidance and coordination.
Primary implementing agencies	District Office for Women's Empowerment & Child Protection (<i>DPPPA/DP3A</i> or similar), Health Office, Education Office, Religious Affairs and Civil Registration, local police and social services; cross-	Surabaya Mayor's Office ecosystem: <i>Dinas/ LINKS</i> (Health, Education, Social Affairs), Family Welfare Movement (PKK), Religious Courts (PA), community cadres; <i>Perwali</i> establishes coordination lines.	Provincial Taskforce / Governor's secretariat coordination; communications to regents/mayors, support to courts and social services; encourages formation of local taskforces.

	sector taskforces as specified.		Evidence of circular-based coordination
Prevention strategies	Community education, school-based prevention (curriculum or extracurricular sessions), counseling for at-risk girls, public campaigns, early warning systems, coordination with religious leaders, and stakeholder training. Local <i>Perbup</i> outlines measures and roles	Active outreach (<i>PPA</i> Award events, <i>PKK</i> mobilization), targeted socialization in neighborhoods, involvement of <i>PA</i> to reduce inappropriate dispensations, and systematic public campaigns. Surabaya emphasizes urban socialization and partnerships.	Provincial-level socialization, data-driven identification of high-incidence areas, issuance of circulars urging regencies/cities to implement prevention, and provincial support for capacity building
Response / handling measures (after marriage occurs)	Case management: protection services, access to health and reproductive care, social assistance, educational re-integration, legal assistance if needed, and coordination for family support. <i>Perbup</i> establishes referral pathways	City-level referral networks for married children (health, psychosocial support, education continuity), plus monitoring of dispensation cases and follow-up programs.	Provincial guidance encourages the creation of referral networks and monitoring of post-marriage welfare; provincial programs may provide technical assistance or funding to districts
Dispensation & role of courts	Local regulation seeks to limit indiscriminate dispensations; emphasizes that	<i>Perwali</i> emphasizes the legal framework for dispensation and promotes strict	Provincial circulars explicitly address the high number of dispensation requests and advise

	dispensation should be exceptional, evidenced by urgent reasons and processed through the religious court (PA). <i>Perbup</i> frames coordination between local government and PA.	scrutiny by PA; Surabaya coordinates with PA to reduce non-evidence-based dispensations	regencies/cities to limit approvals; analyses note East Java has a high share of national dispensation applications
Monitoring, data & reporting	Mandates local data collection, regular reporting to regency offices, and coordination meetings; aims to use data to identify hotspots.	City monitoring systems and public reporting (events, awards, data-sharing across departments); <i>Perwali</i> creates accountability lines	Provincial monitoring relies on aggregated data from regencies/cities; research shows East Java tracks high dispensation volumes and produces policy reviews
Budget & financing	Local APBD allocations for prevention programs and social services as specified in regional budget notes attached to regulation (variable by year).	City budget lines for outreach, awards, and service delivery; partnerships with NGOs and community organizations supplement funding	Provincial budget may provide limited program support and capacity-building; major implementation financing remains at regency/city level
Community engagement & partners	Explicit role for religious leaders, community cadres,	Strong mobilization through <i>PKK</i> , youth	Provincial-level engagement with civil society,

	<i>PKK</i> groups, schools, and local NGOs	organizations, religious actors, and family courts	religious organizations, and academic institutions for research and socialization campaigns
Strengths highlighted	Local legal instrument provides clarity, assigns responsibilities, establishes referral pathways, and signals political commitment	Early adoption of <i>Perwali</i> shows municipal leadership; active community mobilization and public campaigns; visible coordination with <i>PA</i> .	Province-wide coordination and guidance; data awareness (East Java reports high dispensation numbers) motivates targeted policies
Common weaknesses / challenges	Implementation gaps (capacity, funding, cultural resistance); need for stronger data systems and coordination with <i>PA</i> to reduce dispensations	Urban complexity (hidden marriages, migration), gaps between policy and grassroots practice, and the challenge of changing norms quickly	Large, diverse province with varying capacities across regencies/cities; circulars have limited binding force and rely on local political will

Sources: Author Edited, 2024

The comparative analysis of policies for preventing and handling child marriage in Gresik, Surabaya, and the East Java Province shows a multilayered governance approach shaped by local needs, legal dynamics, and institutional capacities. Each administrative level regency, city, and province develops its own regulatory and programmatic instruments, yet all operate under the broader framework of Indonesia's national marriage law. This alignment with national law is essential because the legal validity of marriage and the issuance of dispensations ultimately hinge on national-level regulations and the authority of religious courts. However, regional

regulations are crucial for translating abstract national principles into concrete preventive measures and service-delivery mechanisms tailored to local realities.

Gresik Regency stands out with the issuance of Regent Regulation No. 23 of 2025, a relatively new but comprehensive legal tool that structures prevention and response to child marriage. This regulation clearly describes responsibilities among district agencies, highlights the need for cross-sector coordination, and emphasizes the importance of identifying at-risk children. Meanwhile, Surabaya City has adopted Mayor Regulation (*Perwali*) No. 32 of 2024, which formalizes the city's institutional arrangements and prevention strategies. Unlike Gresik which relies heavily on structured community-based preventive frameworks Surabaya optimizes its urban administrative apparatus, including *PKK* networks, community cadres, youth organizations, and coordinated partnerships with the religious court, to strengthen its preventive system. At the provincial level, East Java does not possess a local regulation equivalent to a *Perbup* or *Perwali* specifically dedicated to child marriage, but instead issues circular letters and policy directives that guide regencies and cities across the province. These circulars reflect a recognition that East Java experiences one of the highest dispensation application rates in the country, prompting the provincial government to pressure local authorities to adopt stricter preventive frameworks and more cautious approaches to reviewing underage marriage applications.

In terms of target groups, all three jurisdictions prioritize children and adolescents at risk of entering early marriage. Yet their operational emphasis differs. Gresik's regulation directly addresses families, schools, religious leaders, healthcare providers, and community institutions, establishing clear pathways for outreach and service coordination. Surabaya, given its dense urban environment, emphasizes institutions capable of rapid mobilization, surveillance of vulnerable households, and coordination across educational, health, and civil administration sectors.

East Java Province, with its broader mandate, focuses more on guiding and harmonizing district and municipal efforts. The province's role includes identifying high-incidence regions, encouraging the creation of local taskforces, and providing strategic frameworks rather than frontline services.

In terms of implementation, Gresik relies on its Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office (*DPPPA*), supplemented by its Health and Education Offices as well as local religious leaders. The regulation outlines integrated referral pathways intended to support children who are at risk or already married. Surabaya's implementation system is comparatively more robust, owing largely to the city's administrative resources and existing social service networks. The city deploys a combination of municipal offices, community organizations, and public campaigns one of which is the *PPA* Award designed to cultivate a culture of awareness and community vigilance against child marriage. Meanwhile, East Java Province's role is not direct implementation; rather, it provides guidance to regencies and cities on forming taskforces, building monitoring systems, and collecting reliable data to inform targeted interventions.

Prevention strategies show both similarities and differences across regions. Gresik uses a grassroots community approach, involving religious leaders and local education institutions to spread awareness and monitor potential risks. The approach is designed to build awareness steadily and provide children with protective environments at home and school. Surabaya, on the other hand, complements community engagement with strong administrative and institutional capacity. Its strategies include widespread information dissemination, mobilization of *PKK* and youth groups, and coordinated socialization programs across schools and community centers. At the provincial level, prevention is more strategic and programmatic. East Java organizes data-driven campaigns, provincial-level

socialization events, and guidance aimed at reducing dispensation rates by encouraging local governments to adopt consistent preventive measures.

Where handling or response measures are concerned meaning services provided after a child marriage has occurred Gresik outlines mechanisms to ensure married children receive health services, educational continuation, psychosocial support, and legal counseling. Surabaya builds on similar referral networks but benefits from stronger municipal service infrastructures. Married children in Surabaya can more easily access health services, receive educational re-entry support, and obtain sociopsychological assistance through city-managed programs. The province, again, plays more of an oversight role by encouraging districts and cities to create adequate referral networks and by providing technical support when needed.

A central issue across all three jurisdictions is the management of marriage dispensations, the legal mechanism that allows courts to approve underage marriages. Gresik's and Surabaya's regulations explicitly call for limiting dispensations to exceptional cases, urging closer coordination between local governments and the Religious Court (*Pengadilan Agama*). Surabaya's strategy leans heavily on judicial engagement, emphasizing collaboration with the court to strengthen scrutiny and reduce approvals based on insufficient grounds. This approach is especially important because Surabaya has better institutional access to the court and can coordinate regularly. East Java Province, meanwhile, often addresses this issue through circular letters reminding local governments of the need to reduce reliance on dispensations. Provincial-level policy publications show a continued concern with high numbers of dispensation applications, underscoring the need for stronger preventive frameworks across local jurisdictions.

Monitoring and data collection practices vary significantly. Gresik requires agencies to document cases, maintain records of prevention activities, and regularly report findings to regency-level coordination teams.

Surabaya's monitoring system is more developed, integrating cross-department communication and, at times, showcasing data publicly through campaigns and performance-based recognition programs. East Java Province compiles aggregated data from all regencies and cities, using the information to identify trends, hotspots, and the effectiveness of local measures. However, because the province has limited enforcement authority, disparities in local data quality continue to hinder comprehensive provincial-level planning.

Budget availability also shapes implementation quality. Gresik relies on its regency budget (*APBD*), which is adequate for basic preventive activities but may not be sufficient for long-term, large-scale initiatives. Surabaya benefits from a stronger municipal budget, allowing it to support outreach programs, collaboration with civil society groups, and service delivery more consistently. East Java Province can allocate funds for training, provincial-level campaigns, and capacity-building programs, but most frontline implementation remains the financial responsibility of local governments.

Community engagement reflects the social and cultural dimensions of child marriage. Gresik emphasizes religious leaders and community cadres, recognizing that local norms and religious reasoning heavily influence perceptions of marriage and adolescence. Surabaya leverages its dense social networks and institutions *PKK* branches, youth communities, neighborhood units to sustain awareness campaigns. The province supports community involvement through broader partnerships with civil society organizations, universities, and religious institutions across East Java, particularly to conduct research, training, and community dialogues.

Taken together, the comparative picture shows that while Gresik focuses on structured regulatory frameworks and community-based prevention, Surabaya emphasizes institutional strength, multisector coordination, and active public campaigns, and East Java Province serves as a strategic coordinator that attempts to harmonize approaches across its diverse

regions. Although their strategies differ, all three jurisdictions confront similar challenges: persistent cultural norms, high rates of judicial dispensations, inadequate data systems, and disparities in resource availability. These challenges reveal the complexity of addressing child marriage in Indonesia it requires not only legal instruments but also sustained institutional coordination, community engagement, and social support systems capable of addressing the economic and cultural drivers of early marriage.

Conclusion

Child marriage is a global issue, with over 700 million women marrying as children worldwide. International human rights conventions, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), prohibit child marriage. In Indonesia, child marriage is prevalent among girls aged 16 and 17, with only 1.1% of women aged 20-24 married. Factors causing child marriage include family economic conditions, education quality, and premarital sexual relationships. The negative impact of child pregnancy and marriage primarily affects women, particularly girls living in poor and developing countries. Tradition plays a significant role in child marriage, with poverty and the perception that daughters are a burden to the family being common reasons. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the most comprehensive international treaty protecting children's rights, emphasizing the protection of children from harmful practices, including child marriage. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNICEF Joint Programme (2008) are international initiatives aimed at preventing child marriage and protecting girls. The High-Level Steering Committee for the Global Programme to End Child Marriage coordinates efforts globally. The Sustainable Development Goal 5 (2015) calls for the elimination of harmful practices like child marriage by 2030. Indonesia has implemented laws and policies to curb child marriage,

but challenges persist, including lack of awareness, cultural resistance, economic factors, and weak monitoring. Gender education is an effective solution to combat child marriage, empowering individuals with knowledge about gender equality, human rights, and delaying marriage until maturity. However, a coordinated approach involving government, civil society, and international partners is essential to eradicate child marriage and ensure no child's potential is curtailed by early marriage. Gender education is crucial in addressing the root causes of child marriage by raising awareness about gender equality, human rights, and the harmful effects of child marriage. Successful examples include Tostan (West Africa), Girls Not Brides, and UNICEF and UNFPA's Global Programme to End Child Marriage. To implement gender education, strategies include community involvement, policy and legal support, teacher training, sustained funding, and the role of technology. Mobile apps, online courses, and social media campaigns can reach a broader audience and provide interactive content. In Gresik, the Women's School in East Java has implemented a program to address child marriage, focusing on women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming. The program includes waste bank activities, dance and makeup workshops, creating the GEMA *Perempuan Pedesaan* newspaper, sustainable agricultural activities, and annual IVA examinations. Over six years, the program is expected to yield results and evaluate its impact on both the target group and the control group.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors state that there is no conflict of interest in the publication of this article.

FUNDING INFORMATION

LPPM Universitas Airlangga

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to express their gratitude toward Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Airlangga, LPPM Universitas Airlangga, and the Community of Desa Wringinanom Gresik.