

# **Creating a Child-Friendly District: Strengthening Psychological First Aid Skills for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (PPPA) Cadre in Pemalang Regency**

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## Abstract

Violence against women and children remains a persistent challenge in Pemalang Regency, with 62 cases reported in 2024. Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (PPPA) cadres, mandated by local regulations, hold a strategic role in prevention and victim assistance; however, limited capacity constrains the effective implementation of protection policies. This community engagement program introduces an innovative Psychological First Aid (PFA) psychoeducation model that integrates psychological support with legal literacy for non-professional cadres. Delivered through interactive training, field practice, and a structured PFA module, the program enhanced cadres' competencies in: (1) applying victim-centered communication, (2) connecting survivors to legal and health services, and (3) operationalizing the Child-Friendly District (KLA) policy at the grassroots level. Evaluation results demonstrated significant improvements in cadres' knowledge and responsiveness. The novelty of this program lies in bridging PFA with the legal framework of women and child protection, thereby providing a replicable model for strengthening the law-in-action dimension of child-friendly policies in Indonesia.

**KEYWORDS** *Child-Friendly District; Psychological First Aid; Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Cadres; Pemalang Regency.*

## Introduction

The Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Regulation regulate the right to protection for women and children.<sup>1</sup> The regulation explicitly states that the safety of women and children is an effort to safeguard and fulfill their rights against all forms of violence, discrimination, special protection needs, and other related issues. Based on 2024 data released by the Central Java Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, Population Control, and Family Planning (DP3AKB), there were thousands of reported cases, but only 30% were brought to legal proceedings. The low percentage of case handling is mainly because victims

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<sup>1</sup> Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak, "Peraturan Menteri Pemberdayaan Perempuan Dan Perlindungan Anak Nomor 2 Tahun 2022 Tentang Standar Layanan Perlindungan Perempuan Dan Anak" (2022).

of violence often refrain from reporting their cases, considering them taboo.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, efforts are needed to prevent violence against women and children through cross-sector collaboration, human resource capacity building, and the utilization of technology.<sup>3</sup> This collaborative effort is essential, considering that, based on the Online Information System for the Protection of Women and Children data as of December 31, 2024, Central Java ranked third in the number of sexual violence cases in 2024. A total of 2,254 cases were recorded, with 1,270 female victims and 1,537 child victims. In Pemalang Regency alone, 62 cases of violence were reported.<sup>4</sup> A more detailed overview can be seen in the graph below.



Figure 1. Violence in Central Java

<sup>2</sup> Kurniawan Kurniawan, "Sepanjang 2024, Ada 1.900 Kasus Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan Dan Anak Di Jateng," Espos.id, December 2024; Sheptia Elliza, "Perlindungan Hukum Anak Dan Perempuan Dari Pelecehan Seksual," *Nomos : Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Hukum* 2, no. 3 (2022): 121–28, <https://doi.org/10.56393/nomos.v1i5.600>; Rifki Elindawati, "Perspektif Feminis Dalam Kasus Perempuan Sebagai Korban Kekerasan Seksual Di Perguruan Tinggi," *AL-WARDAH: Jurnal Kajian Perempuan, Gender Dan Agama* 15, no. 2 (2021): 181–93, <https://doi.org/10.46339/al-wardah.xx.xxx>.

<sup>3</sup> Sri Maya, Abbas Bakhtiar, and Tambunan Rince, "Optimalisasi Peran Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan Dan Perlindungan Anak Dalam Pencegahan Kekerasan Pada Perempuan Dan Anak Pada Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan Dan Perlindungan Anak Di Kabupaten Konawe" 7, no. 3 (2024): 1234–47; Dini Zulfiani et al., "Penanganan Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan Dan Anak Di Provinsi Kalimantan Timur," *Jurnal Administrative Reform* 6, no. 3 (2019): 141, <https://doi.org/10.52239/jar.v6i3.1908>.

<sup>4</sup> "SIMFONI-PPA," January 2024.

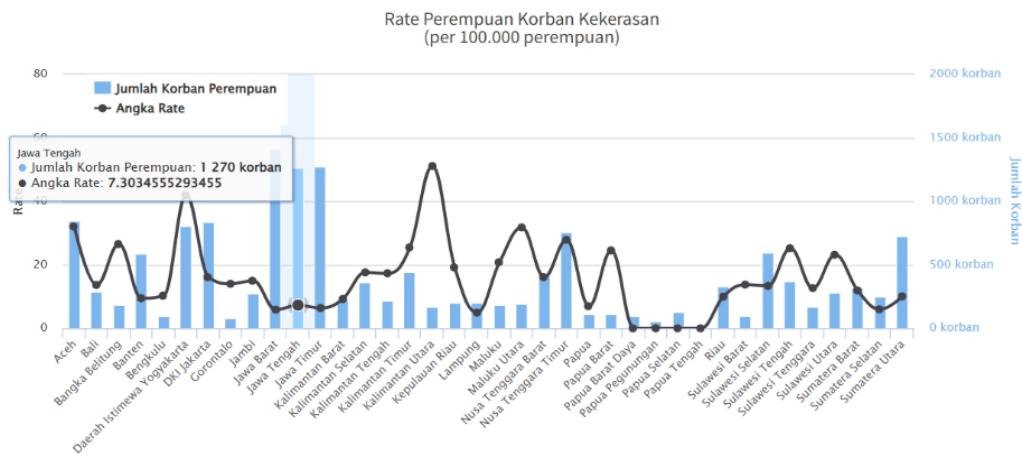


Figure 2. Violence Against Women in Central Java

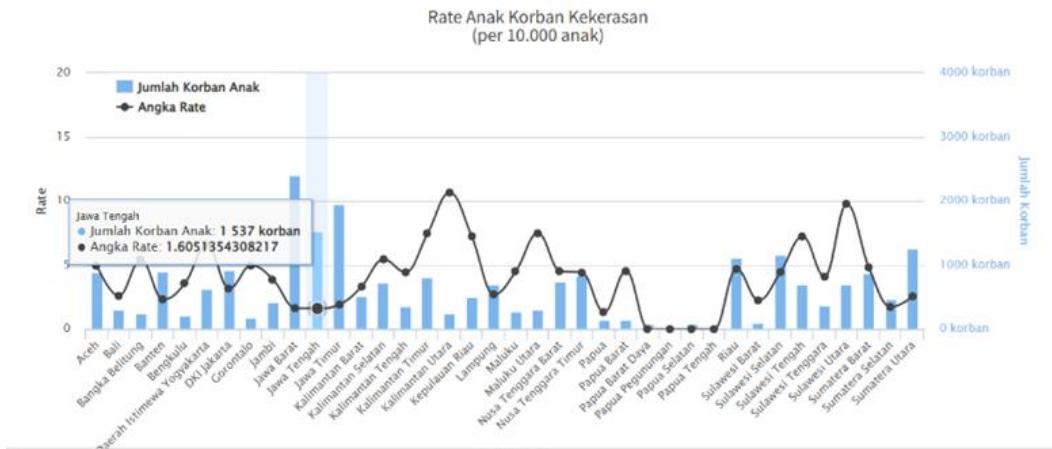
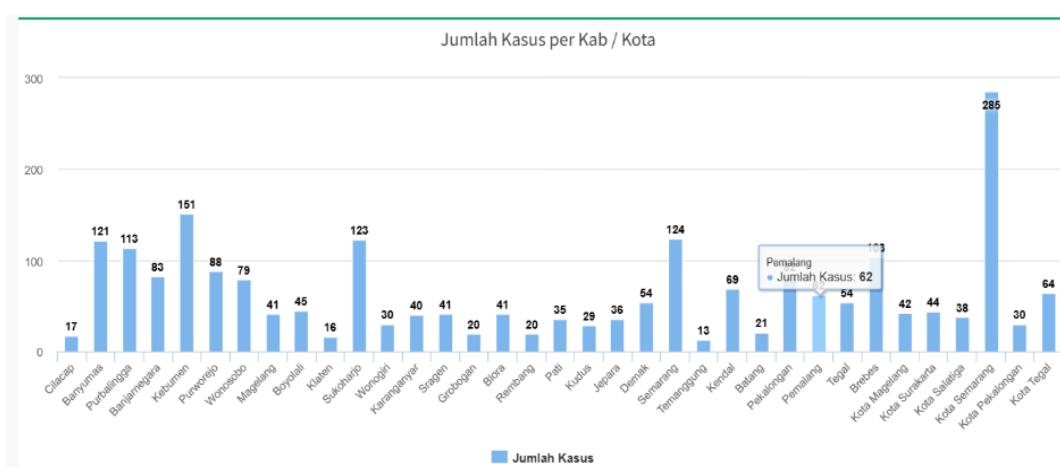


Figure 3. Violence Against Children in Central Java



#### Figure 4. Violence in Pemalang Regency

Acts of violence refer to physical actions, whether intentional or in other forms such as threats or specific acts, that can cause injury, psychological harm, or even death.<sup>5</sup> Forms of violence against children may include physical violence, sexual violence, and psychological violence.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, according to data from the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan), psychological violence is the most prevalent form of violence against women, accounting for 41.55%, followed by physical violence at 24.71%, sexual violence at 24.69%, and economic violence at 9.05%. This phenomenon of violence has become a significant concern, particularly in Pemalang Regency, with the hope that in the future the rate of violence against women and children will show a more substantial decline. Between November and December 2024, Pemalang Regency experienced an increase in violence cases, rising from 49 cases to 62 cases, according to the latest data. This indicates an increase of 13 cases within just one month. Such facts highlight the urgent need for mitigation efforts to prevent the rise of sexual violence cases through community service initiatives in Pemalang Regency.

To protect women and children, there is a policy known as the Child-Friendly District/City (KLA) policy, as stipulated in Presidential Regulation Number 25 of 2021 concerning Child-Friendly District/City policies. This policy aims to fulfill and protect children's rights through the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (Kemen PPA).<sup>7</sup> Central Java is among the provinces that have adopted the Child-Friendly District/City (KLA) policy, a national initiative mandated under Presidential Regulation No. 25 of 2021. It requires local governments to institutionalize child protection principles into their development agenda. This policy is further reinforced by Law No. 23 of 2002 on Child Protection (as amended by Law No. 35 of 2014) and Law No. 12 of 2022 on the Crime of Sexual Violence, which collectively emphasize the state's obligation to ensure children's

<sup>5</sup> Anwar Hidayat, "Kekerasan Terhadap Anak Dan Perempuan," *AL-MURABBI: Jurnal Studi Kependidikan Dan Keislaman* 8, no. 1 (2021): 22–33, <https://doi.org/10.53627/jam.v8i1.4260>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid; Fransiska Novita et al., *Buku Ajar Hukum Pelindungan Anak Dan Perempuan*, 2021.

<sup>7</sup> Sekar Adelia Nuriawati, Retna Hanani, and Amni Zarkarsyi Rahman, "Proses Collaborative Governance Dalam Kebijakan Kabupaten Layak Anak (KLA) Pada Klaster V Perlindungan Khusus Di Kabupaten Pemalang" vol 13 no (2024).

rights to protection, participation, and development.<sup>8</sup> In line with these normative frameworks, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA) has set a target of establishing 400 Child-Friendly Districts/Cities across Indonesia. Pemalang Regency, as part of Central Java, has committed to this policy and, in 2023, achieved the "Nindya" category—one of the four levels of KLA recognition (Pratama, Madya, Nindya, and Utama). While this award reflects formal compliance with national standards, comparative studies on child-friendly policy implementation indicate that recognition alone does not guarantee substantive protection at the community level. The central challenge remains the limited capacity of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (PPPA) cadres, who are tasked with frontline service delivery but often lack adequate skills to operationalize the normative mandates of KLA. Strengthening their competence is therefore critical to bridging the gap between law in the books and law in action.<sup>9</sup>

The award is expected to strengthen the fulfilment of children's rights and protection in Pemalang Regency. However, this achievement should not lead to complacency, as continuous improvement of programs and policies is required to ensure substantive protection and a measurable reduction in violence against women and children. The ultimate objective is for Pemalang to achieve the highest KLA category, "Utama", which signifies the comprehensive integration of child protection principles into regional development. To support this agenda, the Pemalang Regency Government established Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (PPPA) cadres, as regulated under Pemalang Regent Regulation No. 12 of 2018, Article 1 paragraph 22. The regulation defines PPPA cadres as individuals who, due to their concern, are appointed to promote gender equality and justice within designated areas under the authority of the relevant local government agency. Normatively, this provision positions PPPA cadres as frontline actors in translating national child protection mandates into local practices. However, their limited capacity—particularly in providing psychological support and legal assistance—reveals a gap between regulatory design and field implementation. Therefore, strengthening the competence and ensuring continuous mentoring of PPPA cadres is essential

<sup>8</sup> "SIMFONI-PPA."; Dyah Kusiantari et al., "Antisipasi Kekerasan Pada Perempuan Dan Anak Dalam Kajian Psikologis Dan Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini Di Kabupaten Banjarnegara," *Mangali* 4 (2024): 124–35.

<sup>9</sup> <https://pemalangkab.go.id/>, "Pertama Kali, Pemkab Pemalang Raih Predikat Nindya Kota Layak Anak - Pemerintah Kabupaten Pemalang," July 2023.

so that the KLA policy does not remain at the level of symbolic recognition but truly realizes substantive child protection.<sup>10</sup>

PPPA cadres in Pemalang Regency predominantly come from non-professional backgrounds and lack formal training as psychologists or counsellors. Consequently, their competencies in assisting victims of violence remain limited and are often misaligned with the complex needs encountered in the field. This condition undermines the normative expectation established under national and local regulations, which positions cadres as pivotal actors in implementing child and women protection frameworks. Continuous mentoring and structured guidance are imperative to optimize their performance to enhance technical skills and address structural challenges in handling diverse violence cases, and without such capacity building, implementing the Child-Friendly District/City (KLA) policy risks remaining symbolic rather than substantive, thereby failing to bridge the gap between legal mandates and community-level protection practices.<sup>11</sup>

At the village and sub-district levels, PPPA cadres in Pemalang Regency are designated to receive training and education in PFA as part of capacity-strengthening measures. The program is designed to enhance their competencies in addressing cases of violence against women and children, thereby enabling cadres to provide more effective, timely, and victim-centered support. Normatively, this initiative aligns with the state's obligation under Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection and Presidential Regulation No. 25 of 2021 on the Child-Friendly District/City policy, which requires the integration of protective and preventive mechanisms into local governance. The application of PFA is not merely a psychological intervention but also a preventive legal strategy, as it contributes to reducing the incidence of sexual violence, ensuring immediate support for victims, and minimizing the risk of re-victimization. In this sense, the PFA program bridges psychosocial assistance with the broader framework of child protection law, thereby reinforcing the operationalization of KLA at the grassroots level.<sup>12</sup> The World Health Organization (WHO)

<sup>10</sup> "Peraturan Bupati Pemalang No 12 Tahun 2018," 2021.

<sup>11</sup> Puskapik, "Dinsos Pemalang Bina Kader PPPA Dampingi Kasus Kekerasan Perempuan Dan Anak," [https://www.puskapik.com/38289/seputar-pantura/pemalang/dinsos-pemalang-bina-kader-pppa-dampingi-kasus-kekerasan-perempuan-dan-anak/#google\\_vignette](https://www.puskapik.com/38289/seputar-pantura/pemalang/dinsos-pemalang-bina-kader-pppa-dampingi-kasus-kekerasan-perempuan-dan-anak/#google_vignette), December 2024.

<sup>12</sup> Rino Gohansen and Didik Widiantoro, "Psychological First Aid Bagi Anak Yang Beresiko Kekerasan Seksual Di SDN 12 Buana Makmur Kecamatan Dayun," *Bandung Conference Series: Psychology Science* 2, no. 3 (2022): 873-79, <https://doi.org/10.29313/bcsp.v2i3.4889>.

conceptualizes Psychological First Aid (PFA) as an initial, practical, supportive, and humane intervention designed to assist individuals experiencing psychological distress from personal crises or disaster situations. Importantly, PFA is delivered through a non-coercive and empathetic approach, emphasizing respect for individual dignity and autonomy. This framework underscores that PFA is not a form of clinical therapy but an accessible method of immediate support that trained non-professionals can apply to stabilize victims and connect them with appropriate services.<sup>13</sup> The issues mentioned above have prompted the Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES) community service team, in collaboration with the Pemalang Regency Social Services Office, to provide psychoeducation on Psychological First Aid to PPPA cadres in Pemalang Regency.

Sexual violence, as a form of human rights violation, can have negative impacts on victims, causing physical, mental, and emotional harm, as well as health problems.<sup>14</sup> The government has made efforts to protect victims of violence against women and children through various regulations, including Law No. 7 of 1984 on the Ratification of the CEDAW Convention, Law No. 23 of 2004 on the Elimination of Domestic Violence, Law No. 21 of 2007 on the Eradication of the Crime of Human Trafficking, and Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection. Central Java supports these efforts at the regional level through Regional Regulation No. 2 of 2021 on the Protection of Women and Regional Regulation No. 7 of 2013 on Child Protection.<sup>15</sup>

However, government protection efforts cannot rely solely on legislation, as legal guarantees risk remaining declarative without effective implementation mechanisms. As a preventive strategy, the Pemalang Regency Government has established PPPA cadres in every village and sub-district, positioning them as community-based actors to operationalize child protection norms at the grassroots level. The formation of PPPA cadres across Pemalang is a highly positive step. Nevertheless, the Head of the Women's and Children's Services Division emphasized the need for ongoing monitoring and continuous training for these cadres to ensure they can

<sup>13</sup> World Health Organization, "Psychological First Aid - Guide for Field Workers," *Who* 44, no. 8 (2011): 813.

<sup>14</sup> Gohansen and Widiantoro, "Psychological First Aid Bagi Anak Yang Beresiko Kekerasan Seksual Di SDN 12 Buana Makmur Kecamatan Dayun."; Suci Amelia Harlen, "Pemenuhan Hak Santri Atas Kasus Pelanggaran Hak Asasi Manusia Oleh Oknum Pondok Pesantren," *Jurnal HAM* 13, no. 2 (2022): 199, <https://doi.org/10.30641/ham.2022.13.199-214>.

<sup>15</sup> Wahyu Widodo et al., "Optimalisasi Penanganan Korban Kekerasan Perempuan Dan Anak Melalui Perancangan Sistem E-Rujuk Di Kabupaten Pemalang" 3 (2022): 138–56.

carry out their duties more effectively. The Head also hoped that cadre training would continue in the coming years.<sup>16</sup>

As a concrete form of support, our community service team from UNNES will conduct a psychoeducation program on PFA for PPPA cadres in Pemalang Regency. This activity aims to strengthen the cadres' skills in handling cases of violence against women and children, while also supporting efforts to make Pemalang a Child-Friendly District/City with a more effective and responsive handling system. Based on the explanation above, the main issues in Pemalang Regency are as follows: the rate of violence against women and children remains high, with an increase of 13 cases between November and December; the lack of monitoring and continuous training for PPPA cadres, as existing cadres at the sub-district and village levels have not been fully optimized due to minimal guidance; limited skills in handling violence cases, as cadres require training and mentoring to improve their capacity to assist victims; and the need for preventive strategies so that cadres and local authorities can collaborate in reducing violence rates in Pemalang. These problems require solutions through inter-agency collaboration and practical approaches to minimize the impact and prevent the recurrence of similar incidents in the future.<sup>17</sup>

In response to these challenges, the UNNES community service team-initiated psychoeducation on PFA as a practical solution. The program aims to strengthen cadres' capacity to provide victim-centered support, reduce the psychological impact of traumatic experiences, and align their practices with legal protection frameworks. The initiative consists of four main components: (1) enhancing knowledge of PFA fundamentals, (2) training on the principles of look, listen, link, and effective victim communication, (3) integrating legal and psychological perspectives in handling sexual violence, and (4) providing a PFA booklet as a sustainable resource for independent learning. This initiative positions PFA as a psychosocial intervention and a preventive legal instrument, bridging the gap between statutory protection frameworks and grassroots implementation.

## Methods

<sup>16</sup> Puskapik, "Dinsos Pemalang Bina Kader PPPA Dampingi Kasus Kekerasan Perempuan Dan Anak."

<sup>17</sup> Iwan Arifianto, "Kasus Kekerasan Seksual Di Jateng Tinggi, Kapolda Tegaskan Pentingnya Kolaborasi Antar Lembaga," January 2023.

This community service program was designed using a participatory psychoeducational approach to enhance the knowledge and skills of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (PPPA) cadres in Pemalang Regency. The methodological orientation combined elements of intervention and evaluation, thereby ensuring that the program not only functioned as a training activity but also produced academically accountable findings to support the implementation of the Child-Friendly District policy pursuant to Presidential Regulation No. 25 of 2021.

**Research Design.** The study employed a qualitative descriptive design involving seventeen PPPA cadres officially appointed under Pemalang Regent Regulation No. 12 of 2018. The participants acted as both beneficiaries and research subjects, while the implementing team from Universitas Negeri Semarang facilitated the program and simultaneously conducted systematic observation and data Collection. Three primary techniques were utilized: (1) Pre-test and post-test instruments, consisting of multiple-choice questions, to measure participants' cognitive improvement concerning Psychological First Aid (PFA) and legal mechanisms in handling sexual violence; (2) Participant observation throughout discussions, role plays, and case study sessions, aimed at capturing behavioral indicators such as empathy, communication competence, and the practical application of the PFA principles ("look, listen, link"); and (3) Qualitative reflections were gathered through open-ended feedback forms and structured question–answer sessions to record participants' subjective experiences, challenges, and perspectives.

**Data Analysis.** The pre- and post-test results were processed descriptively to demonstrate knowledge enhancement. Meanwhile, observation notes and qualitative feedback were analyzed thematically to identify patterns of understanding and practice, particularly about cadres' ability to integrate psychological support with legal protection frameworks.

Through this methodological framework, the program generates both practical benefits for community empowerment and empirical evidence concerning the role of psychoeducational interventions in advancing the capacity of PPPA cadres. In this way, the study contributes to the broader discourse on legal and psychosocial strategies for realizing Pemalang Regency as a child-friendly district.

## Results and Discussion

### ***Approval and Coordination Meeting for the Community Service Program Team***

The community service program that was carried out in Pemalang Regency was initially designed through the preparation of a psychoeducation module on Psychological First Aid (PFA) and the prevention of sexual violence, followed by several coordination meetings with the Social Services and PPPA offices to ensure institutional alignment and readiness. The program culminated in a one-day training workshop involving PPPA cadres as participants. The training did not simply transfer knowledge through lectures, but was designed to integrate theoretical understanding, case-based discussions, role-play simulations, and a legal briefing. A pre-test was conducted at the outset to measure participants' baseline knowledge, while a post-test was administered at the end to evaluate learning outcomes. The pre-test results showed that cadres had a limited understanding of the proper boundaries of their role, often confusing psychosocial support with investigative or therapeutic tasks. At the same time, the post-test indicated significant improvement in their ability to apply empathetic listening, prioritize victim safety, and connect survivors with relevant services.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Wahyu Cahyono, "Psychological First Aid 'Sebuah Kesiapsiagaan Dari Kita Untuk Kita,'" *PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID "Sebuah Kesiapsiagaan Dari Kita Untuk Kita,"* 2015, 1–46.

Although the program's structure followed a pedagogical model, the significance of the intervention lies in its normative and legal implications. The improvement in cadres' knowledge and practice must be read against the statutory obligations that regulate the protection of women and children in Indonesia. Law No. 12 of 2022 on Sexual Violence Crimes provides the legal definition and classification of sexual violence. Article 4, paragraph (1) of this statute enumerates nine categories of sexual violence, ranging from non-physical sexual harassment to electronic-based sexual violence. Before the training, cadres tended to perceive sexual violence narrowly, usually only in terms of rape or physical assault. In contrast, they could better recognize the broader spectrum of behaviors that constitute legally actionable crimes after the program. This matters because PPPA cadres are frequently the first point of disclosure for survivors in the community, and their ability to identify that a disclosure corresponds to a statutory offense determines whether victims will be referred promptly to law enforcement and other services.

Equally important is the connection to Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection. Article 59A obliges the government, regional governments, and other state institutions to provide exceptional protection for children from all forms of violence, including sexual violence. This special protection is not merely an aspirational goal but a legal duty that requires prevention, early detection, responsive measures, and recovery services. The training helped translate this statutory mandate into practice by equipping cadres with skills to provide initial psychosocial support through the principles of look, listen, and link. The emphasis on confidentiality, non-revictimization, and respect for victims' dignity directly reflects the rights guaranteed in the Child Protection Law. In other words, the psychoeducation program functioned as a bridge between abstract statutory rights and concrete practices at the community level.

At the policy level, the program contributes to the realization of Presidential Regulation No. 25 of 2021 concerning the Policy on Child-Friendly Districts and Cities. Article 3 of this regulation establishes that the KLA policy aims to integrate government, regional government, and community resources to fulfill children's rights in a planned, comprehensive, and sustainable manner. One of the core indicators of KLA is the presence of mechanisms for the special protection of children who are victims of violence. By equipping cadres with empathetic communication skills and legal literacy, Pemalang strengthens its ability to meet these indicators. The psychoeducation program thus demonstrates how community-based initiatives can directly support national child protection policy.

The program's relevance is not limited to domestic law but also resonates with international standards. The World Health Organization defines PFA as humane, supportive, and practical assistance given to individuals suffering severe crises. The emphasis is not on therapy or detailed recounting of traumatic events but on immediate support, reassurance, and referral.<sup>19</sup> UNICEF stresses the importance of child-sensitive approaches, the respect for confidentiality, and the avoidance of coercion in dealing with child victims. UN Women and WHO have developed the Respect Framework, which emphasizes empowerment, equality, and the creation of safe environments. The training of PPPA cadres in Pemalang reflected these global standards by promoting empathetic listening and linking survivors to legal, medical, and psychosocial services.<sup>20</sup> In this way, the program not only advanced compliance with Indonesian statutory law but also aligned local practice with the country's international obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly

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<sup>19</sup> World Health Organization, "Psychological First Aid - Guide for Field Workers."

<sup>20</sup> International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *Training In Psychological First Aid For Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Healthcare Counselling & Psychotherapy Journal*, vol. 21, 2021.

Article 19, which requires State Parties to protect children from all forms of violence and ensure appropriate measures of reporting, referral, and recovery.<sup>21</sup>

The findings of this program are also consistent with comparative studies in other regions of Indonesia. In Konawe, similar cadre training programs were found to increase early detection and the number of formal referrals, thereby improving survivors' access to justice and medical services. This indicates that the combination of PFA skills with legal literacy is a model that can be replicated across districts to strengthen the child protection system. The Pemalang case thus forms part of a broader movement to empower community-level actors as first responders, while ensuring that their actions remain anchored in legal obligations.<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, the analysis also reveals essential gaps that must be addressed if the positive outcomes are to be sustained. One of the most pressing issues is the absence of binding Standard Operating Procedures that clearly define the limits of cadres' authority. Without such SOPs, cadres risk acting ultra vires, for example, by attempting to collect evidence, interrogate survivors, or provide therapeutic counseling beyond their competence. These practices not only threaten to compromise victims' rights but can also undermine criminal investigations and prosecutions. Another significant gap concerns data protection. Information disclosed by survivors is highly sensitive, and without clear protocols on data minimization, consent, storage, and access, there is a risk of confidentiality breaches. Such breaches violate victims' dignity and may expose institutions to liability under emerging data protection frameworks. Inter-agency coordination is another area requiring improvement. Effective referral

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<sup>21</sup> Azizatul Adni, Adib Asrori, and Gisella Tani Pratiwi, "Dukungan Psikologis Awal ( Psychological First Aid - Pfa ) Jarak Jauh Selama Pandemi Covid-19," *Journal Publicuho* 3, no. 1 (2020): 129.

<sup>22</sup> Venus Eleonora and Veronica Iswinahyu, "Panduan Pertolongan Pertama Psikologis (Psychological First Aid) Bagi Pembela HAM LGBTIQ+ Di Indonesia," 2022.

depends on formalized agreements between the PPPA office, health services, law enforcement, and legal aid institutions. Without these agreements, referral practices rely on individual discretion and may be inconsistent or unreliable.

The legal significance of these findings is clear. Several benefits follow when cadres are trained to apply PFA properly and in line with statutory mandates. Victims are less likely to experience secondary trauma, increasing their willingness to participate in legal proceedings. Referrals are more likely to be timely, ensuring that forensic examinations and medical treatment are conducted promptly, thereby strengthening evidentiary value. At the same time, when PFA is misapplied, the consequences can be severe. Pressure to recount traumatic events in detail, mishandling of notes or records, or disclosure of confidential information without consent can all prejudice prosecutions and erode victims' trust in the protection system.

For this reason, program outcomes must be measured by knowledge tests and indicators that connect directly to legal obligations. These include the number of cases referred through official channels, the timeliness of referrals, the quality of documentation, the proportion of cases that proceed to legal investigation, and the degree to which victims report that confidentiality and dignity were respected. District authorities can use such indicators to evaluate whether their obligations under the TPKS, Child Protection, and KLA policies are fulfilled.

The sustainability of this community service initiative depends on institutionalization. The PFA module should be standardized and accredited by the PPPA or Health Office to ensure that cadre training is recognized as part of the official competency framework. Regular refresher training should be mandated to prevent knowledge erosion. At the regulatory level, district governments should issue regulations, either a Peraturan Bupati or a Peraturan Daerah, that codify cadres' responsibilities, referral pathways,

confidentiality requirements, and supervisory mechanisms. Budgetary commitments also support training, monitoring, and secure data management. Without such legal and financial reinforcement, there is a risk that the positive outcomes will remain temporary and project-based rather than becoming a permanent feature of Pemalang's child protection system.

The Pemalang psychoeducation program demonstrates that community service activities can bridge psychosocial practices and legal obligations. The cadres' improved knowledge and skills are significant, but their broader value lies in operationalizing statutory mandates and international commitments. By embedding PFA within the framework of Indonesian child protection law and aligning it with global standards, the program strengthens the rule of law at the community level. At the same time, the analysis underscores the importance of moving beyond short-term interventions toward institutionalized, legally reinforced systems of protection.

### ***Implementation and Evaluation of the PFA Psychoeducation Program***

Implementing the psychoeducation program in Pemalang Regency demonstrated effective alignment between participant needs, scheduled activities, and the stated learning objectives, reinforcing its credibility as a community-based legal and psychological intervention model. Seventeen PPPA cadres actively engaged throughout the sessions, participating in lectures, structured discussions, roleplay simulations, and interactive question-and-answer exchanges. Their consistent attentiveness indicated strong motivation and recognition of the program's relevance to their statutory duties as mandated under Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection and Law No. 12 of 2022 on Sexual Violence Crimes. The provision of a standardized PFA module further ensured sustainability by enabling cadres

to continue practicing independently, thus institutionalizing the knowledge beyond the duration of the training.

The program successfully emphasized that Psychological First Aid does not require professional psychiatric or medical credentials but demands empathetic, timely, and context-sensitive interventions that respect survivors' dignity and confidentiality. This finding is critical in legal terms, as it situates cadres within the role of first responders who provide immediate, humane assistance without exceeding their authority, while ensuring referrals to healthcare professionals or law enforcement where necessary. By mastering the "Look–Listen–Link" skills, cadres strengthened their capacity to observe survivors' conditions, provide non-judgmental listening, and facilitate access to appropriate services. This aligns with Article 59A of the Child Protection Law, which obliges government apparatus—including community-level cadres—to guarantee special protection mechanisms for children in crises.

Evaluation of the program through structured observation of discussions, Q&A sessions, and reflective exercises confirmed that cadres internalized the theoretical content and translated it into practice. They demonstrated a nuanced understanding of the importance of survivor-centered approaches, learning to provide information on available services without coercion, to gather information in a sensitive rather than interrogative manner, and to assess the need for counseling while respecting the survivor's autonomy. This reflects a shift from a previously paternalistic orientation toward a rights-based model, consistent with national law and international child protection frameworks under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The qualitative dimension of the Q&A session offers further insights into how cadres have begun to operationalize legal and psychosocial principles in practice. For instance, when confronted with the issue of

assisting a child involved in an incest case who was already married, cadres explored approaches such as considering the survivor's premarital status, preparing family counseling, and prioritizing the survivor's perspective of justice. This reflects sensitivity to Article 4 of Law No. 12 of 2022, which categorizes forced marriage and incestuous abuse as forms of sexual violence, while also acknowledging the complex sociocultural dynamics that influence survivors' pursuit of justice. Similarly, when asked whether cadres could intervene directly with a child suspected of pregnancy, facilitators emphasized that cadres' role is limited to providing accurate information on services and procedures, without coercion or intrusive home visits. This clarification underscores the legal boundary between supportive assistance and investigative action, preventing potential privacy violations and ensuring adherence to confidentiality principles mandated in the Child Protection Law and the ethical standards of victim handling under the Ministry of Health's guidelines.<sup>23</sup>

These discussions highlight the importance of clearly defining the role of cadres not merely as volunteers but as legally recognized actors within the child protection framework. Their interventions must remain survivor-centered, non-judgmental, and strictly within the scope of PFA, avoiding practices that could lead to secondary victimization or legal irregularities. The findings thus illustrate that psychoeducation, when integrated with legal literacy, is a tool for enhancing psychosocial competencies and a mechanism for realizing enforceable rights under Indonesian law and fulfilling state obligations to create child-friendly districts as mandated in Presidential Regulation 25 of 2021.

## Conclusion

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<sup>23</sup> World Health Organization, "Psychological First Aid - Guide for Field Workers."

The psychoeducation program on Psychological First Aid for PPPA cadres in Pemalang Regency strengthened survivor-centered skills and clarified the supportive role of cadres as first responders. The outcomes align with Law No. 12 of 2022 on Sexual Violence Crimes, Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection, and Presidential Regulation No. 25 of 2021 on Child-Friendly Districts/Cities, reinforcing statutory obligations at the community level. The program demonstrates that psychoeducation can bridge psychosocial practice and legal protection by ensuring early detection, referral, and safeguarding victims' rights. Nonetheless, reliance on knowledge-based evaluation and the lack of standardized operating procedures and data protection remain limitations. Future policy should institutionalize cadre responsibilities through local regulations, strengthen inter-agency coordination, and establish monitoring mechanisms to ensure sustainable implementation.

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**Declaration of Conflicting Interests**

There is no conflict of interest in the publication of this manuscript

**Funding Information**

The research and community service activity entitled “Mewujudkan Kabupaten Layak Anak: Penguatan Keterampilan Psychological First Aid pada Kader Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak (PPPA) di Kabupaten Pemalang” is fully funded by the DPA LPPM of Universitas Negeri Semarang under the Number: DPA 139.032.693449/2025.01. This funding is also supported by the Assignment Agreement for Implementing Community Service Funded by DPA LPPM UNNES 2025, Number 437.14.3/UN37/PPK.11/2025, dated March 14, 2025.

**Acknowledgment**

We sincerely thank the LPPM of Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES) for their support in facilitating this activity and the managers and reviewers of the Indonesian Journal of Legal Community Engagement for their guidance and review of this manuscript. The outcomes of this activity and publication will provide valuable insights and tangible benefits to the community and its readers.