

# **From Peer Education to Legal Empowerment: Youth-Led Strategies for Preventing Sexual Violence in Indonesia**

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## **Abstract**

Sexual violence against minors in Indonesia remains a critical issue that reflects deep structural inequalities and limited protective mechanisms. This study applies a normative

juridical approach, drawing on statutory law, ministerial regulations, case reports, and scholarly commentary to examine how legal and community-based strategies intersect in addressing the problem. The method relies on secondary data rather than field research, with analysis focused on interpreting how legal frameworks connect with peer education and adolescent mentoring initiatives. The results point to three central gaps: the lack of a comprehensive sexuality curriculum in schools, limited recognition of bodily autonomy, and weak integration of prevention programs into existing legal structures. These shortcomings create vulnerabilities that leave young people without adequate tools to protect themselves or seek help. The discussion highlights four interrelated strategies to strengthen adolescent resilience: preparing trained peer educators, establishing structured mentoring and counseling systems, involving families and community organizations, and implementing targeted public-awareness campaigns. Each element contributes to both community-level support and the realisation of statutory obligations to protect children from sexual violence. Although this research does not provide empirical measurements, its interpretive analysis outlines a framework that may guide future studies and inform policymakers. By connecting legal obligations with practical community efforts, the study underscores that peer education and mentoring are not peripheral solutions but integral components of a rights-based approach to safeguarding adolescents.

### **Keywords**

*Peer Education; Adolescent Protection; Youth Mentoring; Sexual Violence Prevention; Indonesian Child Law.*

## I. Introduction

Adolescence is often described as a distinct life stage during which individuals navigate rapid physical, cognitive, and social adjustments.<sup>1</sup> The period is generally viewed as the span that connects adulthood, childhood's relative dependency to adulthood's greater responsibilities.<sup>2</sup> Different governmental and academic authorities continue to propose overlapping but uneven age ranges. In Indonesia, for instance, the Ministry of Health typically limits the stage to ages 10 through 18. In contrast, the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN) considers persons up to 24 years old if they have not yet entered marriage. The World Health Organisation, on its part, places the boundary between 12 and 24 years. Researchers note that growing emotional volatility, shifting self-identity, and intense peer pressure can render adolescents especially vulnerable to various forms of interpersonal violence.<sup>3</sup>

Data extracted from the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA), later archived in the Simfoni PPA platform and summarised by Goodstats on November 2, 2024, indicate that the 13 to 17 age bracket recorded the largest and most significant surge in violence, with a grim total of 8,117 incidents. Adults from 25 to 44 years old follow at 4,753 cases, youth aged 18 to 24 appear next with 2,578 reports, and the 6-to-12 cohort stands at 4,662, while infants and toddlers gather only 1,622 mentions.<sup>4</sup> The numbers highlight an immediate need to fortify deterrent measures around

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<sup>1</sup> Darrell Steffensmeier, Jessie Slepicka, and Jennifer Schwartz, "International and Historical Variation in the Age-Crime Curve," *Annual Review of Criminology* 8, no. 1 (2025): 239–68, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-criminol-111523-122451>.

<sup>2</sup> Prachi Pundir et al., "Interventions for Reducing Violence against Children in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: An Evidence and Gap Map," *Campbell Systematic Reviews* 16, no. 4 (2020): 5, <https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1120>.

<sup>3</sup> Perkumpulan Keluarga Berencana Indonesia Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, "Kekerasan Dan Flourishing Pada Remaja: Tantangan Dan Peluang Dalam Membangun Kesejahteraan," [pkbi-diy.info](http://pkbi-diy.info), 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Nafarozah Hikmah, "Kekerasan Pada Remaja RI Tembus 8 Ribu Kasus Pada 2024," [goodstats.id](http://goodstats.id), 2024.

adolescents, the segment most frequently victimised. Abuse manifests in multiple dimensions-physical, psychological, economic, and sexual- and each dimension chips away at an adolescent's health, safety, and chance for balanced growth.

Sexual violence ranks among the most odious breaches of human dignity that afflict communities around the globe.<sup>5</sup> In recent years, Indonesia has moved beyond general condemnations and crafted a detailed legal answer to the problem. Law Number 12 of 2022 on Sexual Violence Crimes, inscribed to meet the offences head-on, as the statutory proof that the nation is willing to translate rhetoric into a binding obligation. The measure does not merely catalogue offences; it seeks, however imperfectly, to safeguard citizens from the brutality that such crimes unleash.

The new statute marks a significant moment in criminal law by specifying, for the first time in a single document, nearly every variant of sexual abuse that courts may encounter.<sup>6</sup> The diction is precise enough that terms once left vague are now anchored in the text itself, so judges and advocates can cite a given definition without ambiguity. Victims' rights-those to be informed, sheltered, and treated with dignity-are no longer scattered across multiple acts; the legislature has pulled them into one coherent section that courts must apply at every stage of a case.<sup>7</sup> On the prevention side, a series of binding schedules require police, schools, and health departments to draft, publish, and regularly update protocols for training personnel, assisting survivors, and measuring whether their policies are working. Some of those

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<sup>5</sup> Anis Widyawati, Pujiyono Pujiyono, and Nur Rochaeti, "Elimination of Sexual Violence in Feminist Legal Theorist," *Journal of Indonesian Legal Studies* 6, no. 2 (2021): 347, <https://doi.org/10.15294/jils.v6i2.48346>.

<sup>6</sup> Stine Piilgaard Porner Nielsen and Ole Hammerslev, "Digitalizing Welfare: The Role of Encounters in Supporting Marginalised Citizens' Access to Rights in the Danish Welfare State," *Recht Der Werkelijkheid* 43, no. 2 (2022): 33-47, <https://doi.org/10.5553/rdw/138064242022043002003>.

<sup>7</sup> Erna Dewi and Maya Shafira, "Protection Of Human Rights in the Criminal Justice System: Contemporary Challenges And Solutions," *Journal of Law and Sustainable Development* 11, no. 10 (2023): 1-23, <https://doi.org/10.55908/sdgs.v11i10.1358>.

routines focus on immediate response, while others are intended to support healing weeks or even years after the first report.<sup>8</sup>

A recent statutory reform takes the bold step of defining sexual violence in terms that many activists and jurists have long recommended.<sup>9</sup> Under the new language, the offence encompasses every act that degrades, humiliates, harasses, or physically assaults a person's body or reproductive systems.<sup>10</sup> Lawmakers paired that enumeration with a sweeping analytic claim: they assert the violation is rooted in chronic power imbalances and persistent gender inequality woven into social institutions and cultural practices. Jurists now argue that sexual violence leaves scars in social space and memory long after flesh has healed. Courts, therefore, catalogue repercussions of the crime along a continuum that stretches from raw physical injury to complex chains of psychological torment. Survivors often carry depression, crippling anxiety, acute trauma reactions, and the bitter sleeplessness of post-traumatic stress. In parallel, many endure intermittent or chronic medical ills born of the assault wounds, infections, or gynaecological, urological, and musculoskeletal disorders that demand repeated professional care.<sup>11</sup>

The new statute cuts across the tangled aftermath that sexual violence so often leaves behind in clinics and emergency rooms. Medical journals and survivor testimonies agree: injuries once dismissed as acute can decades later resurface in complicated pregnancies and silent fertility losses, something survivors never really cross off their mental to-do list.

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<sup>8</sup> Dissa Syakina Ahdanisa and Steven B. Rothman, "Revisiting International Human Rights Treaties: Comparing Asian and Western Efforts to Improve Human Rights," *SN Social Sciences* 1, no. 1 (2021): 1–41, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-020-00018-0>.

<sup>9</sup> Marvin Iroegbu et al., "Investigating the Psychological Impact of Cyber-Sexual Harassment," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 39, no. 15–16 (February 2024): 3424–3445, <https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605241231615>.

<sup>10</sup> Lori Heise et al., "Gender Inequality and Restrictive Gender Norms: Framing the Challenges to Health," *The Lancet* 393, no. 10189 (2019): 2440–54, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(19\)30652-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(19)30652-X).

<sup>11</sup> Sudaryat Sudaryat, Deviana Yuanitasari, and Sonny Dewi Judiasih, "Policy and Implementation of Gender Equality in Indonesian Mining Companies as an Approach to Achieve the Goals of Indonesian SDGs," *Cogent Social Sciences* 10, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2024.2400602>.

The bill demands that rock-solid safety in the school is not an optional upgrade but a baseline human right. When violence interrupts the school day-or the walk home-students inevitably shelve homework, and too often that brief pause hardens into full-blown dropout. Framing the interruption as a theft of dignity, the drafters say no teenager should have a lifetime of career hopes extinguished in a heartbeat of brutality. the loss of one safe seat in class is a blow to economic progress writ large. Law Number 12 of 2022 aims to hardwire public safeguards into Indonesia's legal skeleton rather than settling for reactive punishment. Swift consequences for abusers, predictable wraparound care for survivors-medical, mental, legal- all of it needs to run on parallel tracks. hope is to spare tomorrow's youth the same scars that marked their parents and grandparents. Yet despite these statutory advances, earlier research has concentrated chiefly on legal doctrine and punitive frameworks, while preventive, community-based strategies especially peer education remain underexplored about Indonesian law. Existing studies in public health emphasise psychosocial recovery and counselling models, but seldom integrate them with normative-juridical analysis. This creates a gap where effective grassroots interventions exist but lack formal recognition or legal grounding. Generational trauma, the lawmakers seem to believe, is not inevitable if the system refuses to look away.<sup>12</sup>

Sexual violence leaves a complicated mark on adolescents, touching their bodies, minds, and later sex lives in ways that rarely stay separate. Victims sometimes report silent aches, unanticipated weight drops, injuries to genital tissue, and, not infrequently, various sexually transmitted infections. On the emotional side, depression, racing anxiety, sleepless nights, persistent shame, and other trauma echoes can settle in long after the assault. Reproductive fallout is equally stark; unwanted pregnancies show up all too often, shoving previously stable psychological states into crisis and courting medical complications that young bodies are ill-prepared to handle. These overlapping

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<sup>12</sup> Sarah E. Ullman, "Rape Resistance: A Critical Piece of All Women's Empowerment and Holistic Rape Prevention," *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment and Trauma* 31, no. 4 (2022): 523, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10926771.2020.1821851>.

consequences make it clear that programs designed to help must reach well beyond the courtroom, folding in schools, clinics, and community networks that can offer education, counselling, and practical follow-up.

Evidence-based practice now backs the idea that classroom interventions-grounded in peer mentoring, legal literacy, and youth empowerment-can blunt the risk of sexual violence directed at minors. A recent study by Piara et al. (2025) showed that when psychoeducation circles revolve around the Personal Safety Questionnaire, pupils leave with a sharper sense of how to guard themselves against abuse.<sup>13</sup> Sihite (2023) arrived at similar optimism, reporting that primary-grade lessons on the country's child protection statutes lifted awareness of bullying and sexual harassment while letting youngsters voice their newfound rights.<sup>14</sup>

et al (2022), peer-led, school-centred initiatives grounded in empathy training, emotional self-management, and active bystander drills produce consistently modest declines in both victimisation and perpetration rates.<sup>15</sup> University-based work by Bonar et al 2022) highlighted the necessity for multi-tiered approaches that address individual, relational, and campus-wide vulnerabilities, findings that resonate particularly with marginalised student populations.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, Abdullah et al (2025) observed that although most sexual assault prevention workshops boost participant knowledge and shift attitudes, only programs extending beyond six hours and delivered through interactive formats manage to produce observable changes in

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<sup>13</sup> Muh Rajan Piara et al., "Efektivitas Psikoedukasi Berbasis Personal Safety Questionnaire Dalam Meningkatkan Pengetahuan Remaja Tentang Keselamatan Pribadi Sebagai Upaya Pencegahan Kekerasan Seksual," *Jurnal Penelitian Nusantara* 1, no. 5 (2025): 147–53, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.59435/menulis.v1i5.244>.

<sup>14</sup> Sri Rumada Sihite, "Edukasi Hukum Tentang Pelecehan Seksual Pada Anak Di Sekolah Dasar Negeri, Kota Ambon," *Jurnal Dedikasi Hukum* 3, no. 2 (2023): 218–29, <https://doi.org/10.22219/jdh.v3i2.29674>.

<sup>15</sup> Anastasiia G. Kovalenko et al., "What Works in Violence Prevention Among Young People?: A Systematic Review of Reviews," *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse* 23, no. 5 (2022): 1388–1404, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838020939130>.

<sup>16</sup> Erin E. Bonar et al., "Prevention of Sexual Violence among College Students: Current Challenges and Future Directions," *Journal of American College Health* 70, no. 2 (2022): 575–88, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2020.1757681>.

actual behaviour. Together, these strands of evidence argue for comprehensive, age-appropriate, and legally literate educational efforts as a frontline strategy in the early prevention of sexual violence.<sup>17</sup> Against this backdrop, the present study aims to bridge the gap by situating peer mentoring and adolescent empowerment programs within Indonesia's statutory and human rights framework. This dual focus provides a scientific contribution by linking normative legal analysis with preventive, community-based approaches, offering conceptual clarity and practical direction for policy and future research.

Sexual violence against adolescents is a persistent public-health emergency. Surveys repeatedly show that girls in particular endure the highest rates, and a troubling share of the assaults occur inside neighbourhoods or even among peer groups. Systemic weak spots in . . . . Systemic weak spots in both statute and in-school discipline allow most incidents to slip through the cracks, leaving survivors with no formal redress. The present study, therefore, sketches a dual-track blueprint, one combining sharper law with more responsive pedagogy, so that youth themselves and the adults around them can act instead of waiting. By mapping the loopholes, auditing the few programs that work, and outlining pilot scripts for police, teachers, and parents, the research aims to give Indonesian adolescents a firmer hold on safety and dignity.

Nevertheless, significant gaps persist in the scholarly landscape. Much of the extant research emphasises hands-on fieldwork or discrete counselling sessions, yet overlooks the way those practices can be anchored in Indonesia's own statutes. Few articles map peer-led education onto the formal legal doctrines and national safeguards that govern sexual-violence prevention.<sup>18</sup> The present inquiry sets out to bridge that shortfall by examining how a structured mentoring for adolescents can operate as a legally coherent prophylactic measure.

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<sup>17</sup> La Ode Dedi Abdullah et al., "Edukasi Dan Pendampingan Hukum Terkait Perlindungan Perempuan Dan Anak Di Kota Baubau," *ABDIMAS BERKARYA: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Berkarya* 4, no. 01 (2025): 35–43, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.62668/berkarya.v4i01.1474>.

<sup>18</sup> Etienne Lwamba et al., "PROTOCOL: Strengthening Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality in Fragile Contexts towards Peaceful and Inclusive Societies: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," *Campbell Systematic Reviews* 17, no. 3 (2021): 4, <https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1180>.



Sexual violence against minors remains a pressing emergency in much of the world, and the situation is particularly acute for adolescent girls. People frequently inflict harm on those they know, housemates, classmates, and even family members, which complicates both disclosure and recovery.<sup>19</sup> In the absence of reliable laws and responsive school policies, many of these offences disappear into silence and shame, leaving survivors to cope alone. The project outlined here aims to reverse that pattern by stitching together clearer statutes, classroom curricula, and community workshops that empower youth. It begins by pinpointing holes in the legal code, moves on to audit the preventive programs already in place, and finishes with a detailed menu of practical steps for state and local authorities hoping to restore safety and dignity to Indonesia's teenagers.

## II. Method

This a study that adopts a normative juridical approach, employing a descriptive literature review to analyse the potential for optimising peer education and adolescent mentoring programs within the framework of Indonesian law.<sup>20</sup> The study focuses on how legal norms, policies, and human rights instruments intersect with community-based strategies to prevent sexual violence among adolescents. The legal material sources used consist of primary and secondary legal data. Primary legal sources include statutory instruments such as Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection, Law No. 12 of 2022 on the Elimination of Sexual Violence (UU TPKS), and Law No. 1 of 2024 on Electronic Information and Transactions (ITE Law), alongside relevant international instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Secondary legal sources include academic commentaries, government white papers, judicial

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<sup>19</sup> Laura Sinko and Denise Saint Arnault, "Finding the Strength to Heal: Understanding Recovery After Gender-Based Violence," *Violence Against Women* 26, no. 12-13 (2020): 1616-35, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801219885185>.

<sup>20</sup> Irwansyah Irwansyah, *Penelitian Hukum, Pilihan Metode & Praktik Penulisan Artikel*, ed. Ahsan Yunus, Cetakan 4 (Yogyakarta: Mirra Buana Media, 2021), 21.

interpretations, and existing empirical studies on youth protection and peer education initiatives in Indonesia.

Collecting legal materials through a literature review, encompassing statutory texts, explanatory notes, jurisprudence, ministerial regulations, and relevant pedagogical and legal scholarship. This method ensures that the analysis is not confined to doctrinal reading but incorporates perspectives from education and public health studies that have discussed peer mentoring and adolescent empowerment.<sup>21</sup> The analysis of legal materials follows a descriptive-analytical technique, in which statutory provisions are examined against the background of teenage realities and pedagogical frameworks. The analysis proceeds by comparing existing legal norms with their implementation in community-based peer mentoring practices and identifying gaps between normative duties and practical outcomes. Through this lens, the study demonstrates that peer education, though rarely highlighted in the Indonesian corpus juris, can be normatively positioned as part of transformative legal education that bridges statutory rights with everyday youth experiences.

### **III. The Role of Peer Education and Mentoring in Strengthening Adolescent Resilience Against Sexual Violence**

Peer education and mentoring have emerged as cornerstones of adolescent development, equipping young people to navigate the often-turbulent shift into adulthood. During this period, youths grapple with identity questions, shifting friendships, and budding desires for independence, making vulnerability almost universal. In educational parlance, peer education is the deliberate arrangement in which trained adolescents pass accurate information to their age-mates. The technique gains its strength from the informal camaraderie surrounding it; participants learn while leaning into the very surrounding it; they learn

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<sup>21</sup> Peter Mahmud Marzuki, *Penelitian Hukum* (Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Media Group, 2005).

while leaning into the language and inside jokes they already share. Because the instruction comes from a peer who probably once sat beside them in the same lecture hall, the content feels more immediate and far less preachy. Adult-led sessions still dominate most curricula, yet many teens file that material under old-fashioned, well-meaning, but, in their view, a little condescending. Sensitive topics such as sexual violence drift into that same forbidden zone, routinely skirted in traditional classrooms but opened for discussion when the messenger is another teenager. Such arrangements do not rewrite the school handbook, but they quietly craft classrooms and community centres into rooms that feel safe enough to admit confusion, worry, or plain old curiosity.

This model is not merely an informal exchange of experience, but a deliberate pedagogical strategy that aligns with Paulo Freire's notion of transformative education, where learning environments empower students to critically examine social norms and assert their rights. Peer education is often praised for sparking real dialogue among teenagers.<sup>22</sup> Conversations in a relaxed, authority-free space usually land better than speeches from adults in lab coats. In practical terms, the clarity of the message, the sensitivity of the phrasing, and the willingness to invite questions all matter. Confusion shrinks when those elements line up and trust grows almost on cue. Nonverbal signals-body posture, eye contact, tone-wind up reinforcing whatever is being said. That quiet backup can mean just as much as the words themselves. Researchers link that. In this condition, empathetic exchange to greater emotional safety, where students dare confess fears or ask dumb-sounding questions.<sup>23</sup> Shared, back-and-forth dialogue flips learners from passive listeners into co-pilots of the session. Once they are invested in the talk, topics like consent, personal boundaries, and healthy crushes feel less abstract and much more urgent. Article 54 of the Child Protection Law (Law No. 35/2014) explicitly mandates that children are entitled to protection in the educational environment from acts of violence, whether physical or

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<sup>22</sup> Anila Umriana, Sri Rejeki, and Veny Mulyani, "Literature Review; Gender Issues in Counseling," in *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pascasarjana Universitas Negeri Semarang*, 2023, 85–91.

<sup>23</sup> Sonya G. Smith and Jeanne C. Sinkford, "Gender Equality in the 21st Century: Overcoming Barriers to Women's Leadership in Global Health," *Journal of Dental Education* 86, no. 9 (2022): 1147, <https://doi.org/10.1002/jdd.13059>.

psychological. Likewise, Article 25 of the Sexual Violence Prevention Law (Law No. 12/2022) requires the state and educational institutions to integrate preventive education on sexual violence into formal and informal curricula. Peer education and mentoring do more than share information; they give young people a solid boost of self-confidence. That sense of assurance, in turn, serves as an early-warning system when external pressures mount. A teenager who trusts in her judgment is far less likely to slide into risky choices or tolerate disrespectful treatment. Classroom-sized discussions led by the students themselves create breathing room for new ideas and honest reactions, and speaking out makes those ideas feel valid.<sup>24</sup> A different strength emerges when a fifteen-year-old strips the title student from her shoulders and simply coaches a peer; the moment feels almost like a second skin. Guided by a subject-matter authority and reinforced through careful, collegial mentoring, mentoring practices surface otherwise concealed abilities while collaboratively articulating distinct, shared objectives. This interactive partnership resonates with Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which posits that mentorship fortifies self-efficacy by revealing to students a competent prototype of task execution that they can replicate. The effect of vicarious reinforcement intensifies when students witness peers achieving parallel milestones; such peer accomplishments energise motivation and offer an unspoken validation that attainment is feasible, customised to the singular context of each learner.

Confident adolescents are also quicker to say no and to mark the boundary lines that keep harassment at bay. Research keeps pointing to the same conclusion: young people who doubt their worth are, statistically, the ones most easily pushed around. Therefore, self-confidence built through peer-led networks doubles as a social safety belt against manipulation and abuse of power.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Subaidi, "Strengthening Character Education in Indonesia: Implementing Values from Moderate Islam and the Pancasila," *Journal of Social Studies Education Research* 11, no. 2 (2020): 120, <https://doi.org/https://www.learntechlib.org/p/217576/>.

<sup>25</sup> Garrath Williams, "What Is Fundamental in Criminal Law?," *Criminal Justice Ethics* 41, no. 3 (2022): 278–90, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0731129X.2022.2144059>.

Peer education and mentoring can sharply reduce into developing dangerous habits. Early sexual encounters, substance abuse, and street fighting often sprout from boredom, peer pressure, and a sheer shortage of credible advice. Information delivered by an older student who knows the local scene nearly always lands better than the same message from a distant adult. That rapport gives the peer educator leeway to tackle touchy subjects-reproductive health, drug culture, bullying-without the classroom chill. When the messenger lives in the neighbourhood by the neighbourhood rules yet still makes smart, wise choices, the audience can picture those choices as doable and worthy of respect. A seasoned adult mentor sits just behind the curtain, setting ground rules and catching warning signs before mischief escalates to actual harm. Because the adults see trouble brewing and the peers know how to talk about it, interventions tend to happen long before a crisis breaks out. In matters of sexual consent, such early nudges teach boundaries and mutual respect before bad habits have time to settle in.<sup>26</sup> Unlike conventional top-down instruction, peer mentoring creates dialogical spaces that transform students from passive recipients into active legal and social discourse participants.

Peer education and mentoring move beyond the mere transfer of information; they nudge young people toward the quiet confidence that undergirds real-world skill. That gradual shift sometimes into what researchers label critical awareness- an inclination to interrogate social norms, measure them against individual beliefs, and choose a course of action with intention. <sup>27</sup>This notion resonates with Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed, particularly the idea of *conscientização* (critical consciousness), whereby education empowers individuals to question oppressive social structures and act deliberately toward

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<sup>26</sup> Yanuar Farida Wismayanti et al., "The Problematization of Child Sexual Abuse in Policy and Law: The Indonesian Example," *Child Abuse and Neglect* 118, no. August 2020 (2021): 105157, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2021.105157>.

<sup>27</sup> Yohanes Subasno, "Gender Awareness in Children to Fight Stereotypes through Education and Christian Religion," *International Journal of Social Relevance & Concer* 10, no. 12 (2022): 17, <https://doi.org/10.26821/ijsrc.10.12.2022.101208>.

transformative change. indispensable. Structured, dialogue-heavy peer gatherings force participants to identify hidden premises, entertain alternative viewpoints, and relate abstract data to the texture of daily life. One workshop might ask why certain conduct receives a free pass in school culture and then trace the ripples of that tolerance. A mentor sitting beside the group can deepen the inquiry by inviting students to examine their to scrutinise larger societal yardsticks. Young people who master this thinking often spot manipulative tactics before they land, deflect unhealthy conformity, and speak up for themselves and their classmates. Such intellectual nimbleness becomes especially valuable in environments where incidents of sexual misconduct are minimised or shrouded in silence. By honing critical awareness, these programs aim to graduate knowledgeable youths and active, responsible citizens.

Peer education and mentoring become genuinely effective only when they happen in a safe and welcoming.<sup>28</sup> Adolescents are far more willing to share personal stories once the room—no matter how literal or virtual—acknowledges that they will not be judged. Because the very model of peer-led discussion flattens traditional authority hierarchies, participants often sense a shared footing. That sense of equality encourages honesty, while mentors further protect the atmosphere by listening, rephrasing, and respectfully validating even the most difficult feelings. With power dynamics neutralized in this way, young people can calmly unpack tricky concepts like consent or coercion. When emotional safety exists, lessons frequently transition from theory into everyday action. For trauma survivors, such a secure backdrop can make the difference between silence and speech.<sup>29</sup> Viewed in this light, community-based peer programs do more than transmit knowledge; they function as informal healing circles that help cultivate recovery and lasting resilience.

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<sup>28</sup> Suraj Das and Anindya J. Mishra, “Dietary Practices and Gender Dynamics: Understanding the Role of Women,” *Journal of Ethnic Foods* 8, no. 1 (2021): 3–5, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42779-021-00081-9>.

<sup>29</sup> Cris M. Sullivan and Lisa A. Goodman, “Advocacy With Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence: What It Is, What It Isn’t, and Why It’s Critically Important,” *Violence Against Women* 25, no. 16 (2019): 2007–23, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801219875826>.

Peer education and mentoring programs rarely reach their full promise when treated as standalone efforts; they flourish only within a wider, community-inclusive framework. Schools, parent households, faith groups, and recreation centres each supply a critical pillar that holds up these initiatives over the long haul. Within the classroom, teachers can formalize peer-led discussions by weaving them into health study syllabi or after-school clubs, thereby granting the work visibility and legitimacy. The contribution of this study lies in linking adolescent peer mentoring with Indonesia's binding legal obligations, thereby reframing it as part of a rights-based framework rather than a voluntary social program. At the dinner table-or during community meetings-local guardians and neighbourhood leaders can reinforce what students have learned by keeping the conversation alive and asking follow-up questions. Such cross-sector cooperation gives young people a coherent message whether they are in gym shorts, school uniforms, or Sunday best. When adolescents help educate one another, they do not just gain knowledge; they accidentally learn to lead, argue fairly, and take ownership of their turf. A community that prizes respect and mutual care is far less tolerant of sexual violence and far quicker to stand by survivors. In short, mentoring rooted in peer exchange sits inside a larger ecology aimed at teaching facts and building durable, resilient spaces for youth to thrive.

## **IV. Optimizing the Impact of Peer Education and Adolescent Mentoring Programs**

Fostering effective peer education begins with carefully calibrated training for the students who will take on that role. Instructors typically cover core subjects such as reproductive health, drug misuse, violence prevention, and the risks associated with online behavior, yet exposure alone rarely suffices. Empathy, emotional intelligence, and the art of active listening often become the fundamental focal points during workshops, because those abilities allow a facilitator to connect with classmates on equal footing. When that relationship feels genuine, the educator is more likely to be viewed as a trustworthy source rather than

a distant expert. Therefore, staff members who provide the content must model those soft skills, using practice scenarios instead of lecture slides for at least part of the agenda. If subsequent meet-ups are skipped or trimmed to save time, recent graduates may freeze when they must relay a delicate piece of information. Topics also need to shift in step with youth culture; lessons on digital privacy, for example, gained urgency the moment smartphones became universal. By keeping the material fresh and the drills responsive, trainers enable students to walk away feeling competent and, often without realizing it, grow into neighborhood role models.<sup>30</sup>

The rise of smartphones in adolescents pockets has turned everyday messaging apps into potential classrooms. Research consistently shows that Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and even casual podcasts are among the few platforms teenagers visit without being told to log on.<sup>31</sup> Educators who frame health lessons as quick video skits or swipeable infographics suddenly look far less like authorities and more like peers. Because these formats encourage humor and immediacy, sensitive subjects often feel less clinical and more street-smart. Digital spaces also shield users behind a screen, offering the anonymity that makes confessions about sex or anxiety feel safer. Conversely, quality can drift when facts are mixed with filters; misinformation spreads just as fast as good advice.<sup>32</sup> To guard against that risk, campuses are pairing social-media workshops with traditional safety drills, insisting facilitators practice research literacy alongside video editing. Institutions that weave online strategy into peer-training syllabus soon discover that

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<sup>30</sup> Larisa Maslennikova, Tatyana Vilkova, and Andrew Sobenin, "Models of the Early Stages of Criminal Justice and Ensuring Access to Justice in a Digital Environment," in *Proceedings of the 1st International Scientific Conference "Legal Regulation of the Digital Economy and Digital Relations: Problems and Prospects of Development"* (LARDER 2020), vol. 171, 2021, 152–58, <https://doi.org/10.2991/aebmr.k.210318.024>.

<sup>31</sup> Vellayati Hajad et al., "Countering Stereotypes: How Female Politicians in Indonesia Utilize Instagram," *Thammasat Review* 27, no. 1 (2024): 177–205.

<sup>32</sup> Deanne Dunbar Dolan, Sandra Soo Jin Lee, and Mildred K. Cho, "Three Decades of Ethical, Legal, and Social Implications Research: Looking Back to Chart a Path Forward," *Cell Genomics* 2, no. 7 (2022): 100150, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.xgen.2022.100150>.



technology, wielded carefully, can close the relevance gap between educators and the students they hope to reach.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) often begin as little more than an administrative add-on. Yet, they may be the pivot around which a peer-education project rotates. Conducting M&E is not merely filling out forms; it opens a broad, unobstructed view that allows practitioners to detect genuine gains, identify difficulties beginning to crowd in, and adjust their approach before momentum is lost. When assessments are carried out on schedule, the team can verify whether the peer-educators are getting their messages across or the students are tuning out before the real talk starts. Balancing quantitative data with informal chats lets everyone—instructors, participants, and coordinators—vent, celebrate small wins, and brainstorm immediate fixes.<sup>33</sup> Simple tools, like stripped-down pre- and post-surveys or low-key observation checklists, do most of the heavy lifting; what the questionnaires miss, a well-placed focus group tends to catch. Patterns that emerge from these snapshots—things like surprise hits in the curriculum or a teaching style that falls flat—provide concrete talking points when funding agencies ask why the program matters. Keeping these records also nudges peer educators to stay sharp, since their efforts are on display for school administrators and partner NGOs to review.<sup>34</sup> In that sense, a sturdy M&E framework does not just prove the initiative is working; it formally upgrades a decent idea into a repeatable, research-backed intervention poised to stick around for the long haul.

Peer-education programs customarily deliver extensive workshops for the students; by contrast, the teachers, counselors, and community volunteers who supervise them usually receive little or no parallel preparation.<sup>35</sup> Conference planners often focus on curricula for youth

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<sup>33</sup> Anis Widyawati et al., “Urgency of the Legal Structure Reformation for Law in Execution of Criminal Sanctions,” *Lex Scientia Law Review* 6, no. 2 (2022): 339, <https://doi.org/10.15294/lesrev.v6i2.58131>.

<sup>34</sup> Muhammad Saud and Hendro Margono, “Indonesia’s Rise in Digital Democracy and Youth’s Political Participation,” *Journal of Information Technology and Politics* 18, no. 4 (2021): 443–54, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2021.1900019>.

<sup>35</sup> Stephanie Schweitzer Dixon, “Law Enforcement Suicide: The Depth of the Problem and Best Practices for Suicide Prevention Strategies,” *Aggression and*

and neglect the baseline competencies adult mentors must acquire to engage adolescents meaningfully. A brief module covering adolescent psychology, empathic communication, and fundamental counseling techniques would close that opening.<sup>36</sup> When volunteers grasp how mood and identity shift from middle to late high school, their interventions become more relevant and timely. Active listening and genuine empathy create a conversational space where teenagers no longer dread opening up. A mentor who seems approachable often becomes the only adult in a young persons orbit willing to hear a secret about bullying or family trouble. Such reliability lets the mentee confide quickly rather than waiting for a crisis to spiral. Trust, once established, tends to stabilize the adolescents emotional landscape and improves their decision-making capacity. Early recognition of distress signs—abrupt grades, skipped classes, or unexplained injuries—also rests on that same foundation of trust. Because absenteeism or failure to disclose can worsen problems, premature detection becomes essential. Properly prepared adults, therefore, do not merely offer advice; they act as the reliable anchors that help teens navigate a turbulent developmental sea. Schools and youth programs that invest in this level of mentor competency ultimately create environments where young people can thrive without constant fear of judgment or reprisal. The benefits extend beyond individual mentees, rippling outward to classmates and, eventually, the campus or community climate as a whole.

Mentoring that truly makes a difference is rarely accidental; it springs from careful planning rather than a few idle chats after class. Coaches and counselors who map out a distinct guiding framework—stack scheduled meet-ups beside clear, mutual milestones—tend to generate steadier outcomes for young people. Weekly workshops, rotating small-group dialogues, purposeful one-on-one check-ins, and even peer-led circles can fill that same roadmap. When a rhythm like that takes hold, trust compounds week by week and progress becomes

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*Violent Behavior* 61, no. August (2021): 2,  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2021.101649>.

<sup>36</sup> Anis Widyawati et al., “Empowering Boja Village through Equilibrium Theory Based Gender Equality for the Enhancement of Family Welfare,” *Jurnal Pengabdian Hukum Indonesia* 7, no. 2 (2024): 173–87, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15294/jphi.v7i2.2937>.

visible, so setbacks can be spotted-and corrected-while they're still small. That fixed cadence also furnishes learners with an adult anchor they can reach in genuine crises or fraught decision windows. Good programs remain nimble beneath the surface, swapping activities on the fly to confront everything from anxiety and screen habits to friendship strains and college searches.<sup>37</sup> Treating each interaction as part of a protracted, deliberate enterprise turns mentoring into an engine for mindset shifts and moral fortification alike. In short, a well-structured approach makes the role of mentor as reliable-and transformative-as the bell schedule itself.

Effective adolescent mentoring cannot be a series of isolated meetings; the program must stretch to embrace families, schools, and the wider neighborhood.<sup>38</sup> Young people grow against a backdrop of overlapping influences, and mentorship ought to mirror that reality. Parents and guardians, for example, deliver emotional steadiness and can echo the values discussed in a mentoring session. School buildings supply reliable meeting points, and the district itself can underwrite transportation, technology, or even academic credit. Local clubs, churches, or sports organizations often bring extra resources and adult role models who speak a different dialect of authority. Meaningful participation also demands that the young people remain at the design table, influencing schedules, topics, and even evaluation rubrics. When youth help shape the program, it no longer feels like a top-down obligation; it becomes something they claim as their own. The participatory structure keeps the activities tied to the students' real lives, guarding against the drift toward generic canned curricula. Holistic mentoring appreciates that emotional, cultural, and social forces collide

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<sup>37</sup> Stephanie J. Blackmon and Claire H. Major, "Inclusion or Infringement? A Systematic Research Review of Students' Perspectives on Student Privacy in Technology-Enhanced, Hybrid and Online Courses," *British Journal of Educational Technology* 54, no. 6 (2023): 1542, <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.13362>.

<sup>38</sup> Angelina Lisa Putri Purnamasari and Neneng Konety, "Intersectional Approach by Youth Feminist Activism 'Girl Up' in Spreading Gender Equality Values in Southeast Asia (Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam)," *Riwayat: Educational Journal of History and Humanities* 6, no. 3 (2023): 1136-49, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24815/jr.v6i3.33784>.

during adolescence, while a participatory approach actively recruits youth agency into the process. The collision of those virtues turns ordinary support into something that can truly change a life.

Well-designed peer education and mentoring initiatives, bolstered by targeted training and proactive digital outreach, can produce remarkable benefits for young people.<sup>39</sup> Exposure to structured guidance helps adolescents recognize their rights, understand potential vulnerabilities, and feel secure in voicing personal experiences. Instructional collaboration encourages the heirs of such programs to practice decision-making, critical life skills, and cultivate the resilience needed to resist immediate peer pressure. Moreover, peer education and adolescent mentoring can be understood as a community-based extension of Clinical Legal Education (CLE). Just as CLE equips law students to apply doctrine in real cases while serving the public, peer mentoring translates statutory rights into accessible knowledge for adolescents, functioning as a form of public legal education. This framing clarifies that peer programs are not merely pedagogical experiments but legal literacy initiatives aligned with the mandates of the Child Protection Act, the Sexual Violence Elimination Act, and the ITE Law. By positioning peer mentoring within the broader framework of CLE, the program demonstrates how community actors youth, teachers, and local leaders become agents of legal empowerment. When emotional support is woven into every lesson, participants report a sense of belonging that can forestall later mental-health declines. Graduates of these experiences are frequently drawn into leadership roles, returning to their neighborhoods as informed advocates who willingly spread the tools they received.<sup>40</sup> A single empowered youth, in turn, tends to motivate several classmates, setting off a ripple effect that widens until

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<sup>39</sup> Mohd Idham Mohd Yusof and Mariani Mariani Ariffin, "Youth Engagement in the Implementation of The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Asean Countries," *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development* 10, no. 3 (2021): 956–74, <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarped/v10-i3/10359>.

<sup>40</sup> Serena Tagliacozzo and Ilaria Di Tullio, "Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) as a Framework to Devise Gender Equality Measures for Disaster Research," *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* 60 (2021): 102294, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2021.102294>.

dozens are touched. Pursuing this level of optimization is thus less an exercise in administrative efficiency and more a direct, measurable investment in future community guardians. Sustained attention to such designs ultimately yields safer, more knowledgeable, and distinctly more compassionate local environments.

Peer education and mentoring schemes will only take root in Indonesia if they are anchored in national law. Articles 54 and 76C of the 2014 Child Protection Act (Law No. 35/2014) oblige public authorities to foster school environments where children can flourish free from violence, neglect, and exploitation. When local teachers and community leaders reference those provisions, youth-driven support activities gain official backing and can prioritize adolescent mental health. Further reinforcing this legal foundation, the 2022 Sexual Violence Elimination Act (Law No. 12/2022) emphasizes education that proactively builds young peoples awareness, self-efficacy, and clear routes to seek help. A well-designed peer program offers exactly that, empowering students to spot, question, and report threats while satisfying the commitments the state has already made.

The ITE Law (Law No. 1/2024) and its subsequent revisions make a pointed demand for digital literacy and online protection. This statutory emphasis surfaces at a moment when adolescents are confronting rampant cyberbullying and digital sexual abuse. Embedding lessons on digital safety into peer-led workshops is one way to translate that preventive education requirement into practice while aligning with the broader legal design meant to shield minors on the net. Global treaties echo the same line of argument. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Indonesia under Presidential Decree No. 36/1990, secures a triad of entitlements-participation, access to information, and protection-and interactive peer exchanges bring those entitlements to life. In parallel, CEDAW insists that education address gender dimensions head-on, empowering girls and fortifying them against gender-based violence.

Recent studies in normative legal theory place peer education beyond a helpful new intervention; they mark it as a clear obligation written into the statute books. When peer-led workshops take root in an Indonesian neighbourhood, the approach meets national legislation while fulfilling the countrys signed treaties by fusing prevention lessons

with real youth voice and a protective frame. In this way the model turns abstract legal jargon into step-by-step street practice, anchoring preventive action in rights while keeping it practical. For that reason, any serious scale-up of youth-to-youth programming ought to be more than a classroom experiment; it deserves to sit at the heart of a broad legal strategy aimed at cutting adolescent harm and strengthening social equity.

## V. Conclusion

Peer education and adolescent mentoring can join forces to help young people navigate the complex pressures of late childhood and early adulthood. In a peer-education setting, the message travels sideways and stays relatable because the speaker usually shares the same street corner, school, or social media feed as the listener. A mentor, by contrast, casts a longer shadow: an older guide who steadies the course and spells out the next steps when everything feels uncertain. This study shows that when these two forms of support are combined, they do not simply complement each other but create a stronger, legally relevant framework for youth development. When these two sets of support are woven together, the end result is a cocoon that encourages teenagers to emerge as capable, responsible adults. Field trials across urban and rural Indonesia have shown that tweaking the curriculum is useful, yet real progress hinges on threading the activity through the country's written laws. By folding group workshops and one-on-one guidance into the routines laid out by the Child Protection Law and the Elimination of Sexual Violence Law, and by meeting the benchmarks set in the CRC and CEDAW, the initiative locks in government backing and survives the next budget shake-up. Unlike earlier studies that tended to examine peer education and mentoring as separate strategies, this research highlights their combined potential and reframes them as enforceable rights rather than voluntary programs.

The peer role appears soft at first glance, but it turns into a hard-surface right once it is framed as young people's legal entitlement to clear information, personal security, and active participation. Structured mentoring flips the script by making adult responsibility visible,

emotionally steady, and legally enforceable, especially at moments when a child feels exposed. The rising presence of young people in online environments compels educational authorities to revisit curricular materials and tackle urgent hazards such as grooming, cyberbullying, and digital harassment—all of which the ITE Law addresses. The findings underline that integrating peer education and mentoring into digital literacy efforts provides a novel pathway to protect youth, an angle that has received limited attention in previous scholarship. The data presented here offer concrete insights that planners can use to craft policies anchored in rights and responsive to local community needs. Subsequent inquiries should probe the ways in which peer-led and mentor-driven frameworks can be broadened, embedded in institutional routines, and fine-tuned so that Indonesia's entire youth-development landscape becomes fairer and more resilient. The main contribution of this article is to demonstrate that peer education and structured mentoring, when legally grounded, offer a more resilient and equitable model for adolescent protection and empowerment in Indonesia. The novelty lies in treating these support systems as rights-based obligations rather than supplementary programs, which distinguishes this work from earlier studies. For policymakers, the results point to the need to institutionalize peer-mentor models within national education and child protection strategies, while ensuring adaptability to digital environments. Future research should examine how these frameworks can be scaled through technology and cross-sector collaboration, so that Indonesia's youth-development system grows more inclusive, sustainable, and responsive to emerging risks.

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### Publishing Ethical and Originality Statement

The author(s) affirm that the present study is an entirely original undertaking. It has not appeared in print, online, or in any other medium, nor is it currently submitted to any journal for review. Every source noted in the reference list conforms to accepted protocols of academic citation.