

Gender-Informed Curriculum Development Addressing Child Marriage and Stunting Prevention in Multicultural Communities, Singkawang City, West Kalimantan

Pengembangan Kurikulum Berwawasan Gender Mengatasi *Child Marriage* dan Pencegahan Stunting Pada Masyarakat Multikultur, Kota Singkawang, Kalimantan Barat

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Abstract

The prevalence of stunting in Indonesia remains alarmingly high, with West Kalimantan being one of the provinces with significant rates. One of the contributing factors is the limited parental knowledge of nutritional needs during pregnancy, compounded by the persistent practice of early marriage. This study aims to analyze the relationship between early marriage practices and stunting prevalence in Singkawang, West Kalimantan, while exploring the potential integration of a gender-sensitive curriculum as a preventive strategy. This qualitative study employs a case study approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and participatory observations involving parents, school-aged adolescents, university students, and community leaders in Singkawang. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify patterns linking early marriage practices with stunting prevalence and to formulate key elements for a relevant gender-sensitive curriculum. The findings reveal that early marriage directly impacts stunting prevalence through the inadequate biological and psychological readiness of adolescent girls for pregnancy and childbirth. Additionally, limited access to reproductive health and nutritional information exacerbates this risk. The study highlights the critical role of a gender-sensitive curriculum as a preventive intervention to enhance awareness among adolescents and parents about the impact of early marriage on stunting. This research contributes to the development of education-based strategies to reduce stunting prevalence, particularly through the implementation of gender-sensitive curricula in secondary schools. The study's implications include improving maternal and child health outcomes and supporting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to health and education..

Keywords: *stunting, early marriage, West Kalimantan, gender-sensitive curriculum*



Abstrak

Angka prevalensi stunting di Indonesia masih tergolong tinggi, termasuk di Kalimantan Barat sebagai salah satu provinsi dengan angka prevalensi yang signifikan. Salah satu faktor penyebabnya adalah kurangnya pengetahuan orang tua mengenai kebutuhan gizi selama kehamilan, ditambah dengan masih maraknya praktik pernikahan usia dini. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis hubungan antara praktik pernikahan usia dini dan prevalensi stunting di Singkawang, Kalimantan Barat, serta mengeksplorasi potensi integrasi kurikulum berwawasan gender sebagai strategi pencegahan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, diskusi kelompok terarah (FGD), dan observasi partisipatif yang melibatkan orang tua, remaja sekolah, mahasiswa, dan tokoh masyarakat di Singkawang. Analisis data dilakukan secara tematik untuk mengidentifikasi pola hubungan antara praktik pernikahan usia dini dan prevalensi stunting, serta untuk merumuskan elemen-elemen utama kurikulum berwawasan gender yang relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pernikahan usia dini memiliki dampak langsung terhadap prevalensi stunting melalui mekanisme kurangnya kesiapan biologis dan psikologis remaja perempuan untuk hamil dan melahirkan. Selain itu, keterbatasan akses terhadap informasi kesehatan reproduksi dan gizi juga memperburuk risiko ini. Temuan ini mengindikasikan pentingnya kurikulum berwawasan gender sebagai intervensi preventif untuk meningkatkan kesadaran remaja dan orang tua mengenai dampak pernikahan usia dini terhadap stunting. Penelitian ini berkontribusi dalam pengembangan strategi berbasis pendidikan untuk menurunkan prevalensi stunting, khususnya melalui implementasi kurikulum berwawasan gender di sekolah menengah. Implikasi dari penelitian ini mencakup peningkatan kesehatan ibu dan anak serta pencapaian target Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) di bidang kesehatan dan pendidikan.

Kata kunci: stunting, pernikahan usia dini, Kalimantan Barat, kurikulum berwawasan gender

Introduction

Stunting is a critical target of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically under Goal 3, which focuses on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all ages. According to data from the Vice President's Office and the Stunting Task Force, the Indonesian government has set an ambitious target to reduce stunting prevalence by 40% by 2025..

Stunting during infancy and childhood can lead to impaired cognitive development, increased susceptibility to infectious diseases, and, in severe cases, mortality. Furthermore, stunting is associated with reduced learning performance and

long-term decreases in productivity during adulthood (Rahmawati et al., 2018). It reflects growth disturbances caused by inadequate nutritional and health status during both the prenatal and postnatal periods.

UNICEF reports that Indonesia ranks second among ASEAN countries for the highest prevalence of child marriage. Specifically, 1.8% of marriages involve girls under the age of 16, while 0.6% involve those under 15. In total, one in nine girls in Indonesia marries before turning 18. Nationally, child marriage accounts for 25.7% of all marriages, meaning that 25 out of every 100 marriages involve minors (Arimurti & Nurmala, 2018).

UNICEF emphasizes that malnutrition and disease are primary causes of stunting. These factors are closely linked to caregiving practices, access to nutritious food, healthcare services, and environmental sanitation. However, another fundamental driver of stunting risk is child marriage (Larasati et al., 2018). Child marriage refers to unions involving individuals below the minimum legal age for marriage as defined in Article 7 of the Indonesian Marriage Law No. 16 of 2019, which mandates a minimum age of 19 years for both men and women. Research indicates that child marriages are associated with a significantly higher risk of having children affected by stunting compared to marriages at the average legal age (Rumble et al., 2018).

Child marriage in Indonesia, particularly in Singkawang, has become a serious concern. In 2022, the Religious Court received 76 applications for marriage dispensation, with 75 of these requests being approved. While these numbers represent documented cases, unregistered child marriages often occur, especially in the Madurese community in Singkawang, where children under the age of 19 are married after completing junior high school.

According to Elrod (2007), biological inheritance plays a significant role in an individual's physical traits, such as height, which is influenced by genetic factors. Height, as an anthropometric indicator of growth, typically ceases to increase around the ages of 18–20 years. However, factors such as early marriage, malnutrition, and illness can negatively impact growth (Nalendra et al., 2008). A study conducted in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) revealed that children born to mothers aged 19

years or younger face a 20–30% higher risk of preterm birth and low birth weight (Fall et al., 2016).

Tan (2021) highlighted that early marriage is more prevalent among girls than boys. His findings showed that 56.1% of respondents approved of child marriage involving girls. The persistence of child marriage cases in Indonesia reflects the inadequacy, or even absence, of legal protections for children subjected to this harmful practice.

The inability of young girls to resist the constraints of local cultural norms and unfavorable social constructs exacerbates their vulnerability. Goetz (2014) argued that limited access and control over material resources, coupled with restricted decision-making power within households, result in higher fertility rates, insufficient investment in family welfare—such as nutrition and education—and suboptimal allocation of human resources in the economy. Barriers to education for women and girls, restricted access to healthcare (especially maternal and reproductive health services), limited opportunities for independent livelihoods, and inadequate control over property and income significantly contribute to underdevelopment and societal fragility.

Early marriage is a form of gender-based violence, particularly affecting adolescent girls. Within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically Goal 5, it is clearly stated that girls are the primary victims or subjects of child marriage. One of the main drivers behind the high prevalence of early marriage in Indonesia is economic hardship. In many cases, daughters are seen as a means to alleviate familial poverty by marrying them off to older men perceived as financially stable (Yoshida et al., 2023).

In West Kalimantan, initiatives linking child marriage prevention to stunting reduction have not yet been implemented. Existing curricula, which follow national guidelines from the Ministry of Education, lack local content. Incorporating localized materials, particularly on gender issues, is essential to provide a framework that can be applied to prevent stunting among young mothers who marry early. Therefore, there is a critical need to design a gender-sensitive curriculum in collaboration with teachers, enabling its application in classrooms.

This curriculum can be integrated into subjects such as natural sciences, social sciences, religious education, arts (e.g., theater), and extracurricular activities (e.g., media use), without increasing the existing academic burden. Gender-sensitive curriculum design should involve collaboration across these subjects, fostering active participation from both teachers and students to ensure its practical implementation.

Preventing child marriage among junior and senior high school students is expected to increase awareness and improve the quality of future generations, enabling them to actively contribute to enhancing the quality of life in Indonesian society. This improvement in societal quality of life will ultimately strengthen the resilience of the Republic of Indonesia. Raising awareness among junior high school students requires the dissemination of accurate and reliable information to support efforts in preventing stunting within the community. Disseminating such information through a curriculum designed to prevent child marriage, which has a significant impact on stunting, represents a practical approach derived from this study. The findings are intended to ensure that families, particularly parents and nuclear households, understand and actively implement strategies to prevent stunting. This approach aims to eliminate the perception that such efforts are mere programmatic slogans and fosters meaningful, sustainable change. The study aligns with the indicators and objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically in the domains of Quality Education and Good Health and Well-being.

Research Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to investigate the relationship between early marriage practices and stunting prevalence in Singkawang, West Kalimantan. The research aimed to develop a gender-sensitive curriculum as a preventive strategy, incorporating local cultural content to raise awareness about early marriage and its health impacts. Singkawang was chosen as the research site due to its significant prevalence of stunting and early marriage, as well as its rich socio-cultural diversity, comprising ethnic groups such as Malay, Dayak, Madurese, and Chinese. This context provided an opportunity to explore the intersection of cultural practices, education, and health outcomes.

Participants were selected purposively to represent diverse stakeholders involved in the issue of early marriage and stunting. The study involved 30 participants, including junior and senior high school students, university students, parents, teachers, and religious leaders. These participants were chosen based on their relevance to the research objectives, ensuring a holistic understanding of the problem from various perspectives. The diverse backgrounds of the participants enriched the analysis, highlighting different viewpoints on gender, health, and education in the local context.

The research employed a combination of data collection techniques: Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Two phases of FGDs were conducted. The first phase mapped the roles of teachers and parents in addressing stunting and early marriage, exploring ethnic marriage customs, dietary practices, and existing educational programs in Singkawang. The second phase facilitated discussions to design a gender-sensitive curriculum by curating relevant educational content, particularly from YouTube, to address stunting and early marriage. Educational Material Design and Role-Playing: Participants engaged in role-playing activities to simulate real-life scenarios, enhancing their understanding of stunting and early marriage. These activities informed the development of educational materials for the proposed curriculum.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns. The analysis process involved transcribing and coding the FGDs, followed by categorizing the data into themes related to stunting, early marriage, and gender awareness. The findings were synthesized to propose key elements for a gender-sensitive curriculum that aligns with local cultural practices and educational needs. This iterative process ensured that the curriculum design was evidence-based and culturally relevant.

Ethical guidelines were strictly adhered to throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and their confidentiality and anonymity were ensured. Cultural sensitivities were respected, particularly given the multicultural nature of Singkawang's community. Participants were informed about their right to withdraw from the study at any stage, ensuring voluntary participation.

The research adopted a multidisciplinary framework focused on the Governance Framework in curriculum development for addressing child marriage and stunting prevention. This framework emphasized the identification of key actors, cross-sector collaboration, policy formulation, and resource management. By integrating perspectives from media and communication studies, gender anthropology, anthropometry, and gender sociology, the study provided a comprehensive approach to tackling the socio-cultural complexities of the Singkawang community. The identification of key actors highlighted the roles of local government agencies, educational institutions, community leaders, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in shaping and implementing the curriculum. These stakeholders played a pivotal role in ensuring that the curriculum design aligned with local cultural norms and educational needs.

The research also underscored the importance of cross-sector collaboration between education, health, and social sectors. Such collaboration facilitated a cohesive strategy for integrating gender-sensitive content into the curriculum, bridging gaps between policy implementation and practical application at the community level. In terms of policy formulation, the study emphasized participatory processes that included input from various stakeholders to ensure the curriculum addressed the root causes of child marriage and stunting while being sensitive to the local socio-cultural context. This approach aimed to enhance the relevance and acceptance of the curriculum within Singkawang's multicultural society. Lastly, resource management was identified as a critical component of the governance framework. The study highlighted the need for adequate allocation of financial, human, and material resources to support the curriculum's implementation. Challenges in resource distribution, particularly in multicultural settings, were addressed through targeted strategies that prioritized inclusivity and sustainability. This governance-oriented approach was instrumental in developing a gender-sensitive curriculum that not only addressed stunting and early marriage but also fostered critical thinking and cultural awareness among students and educators.

Results And Discussion

The prevention of early marriage, which has significant implications for stunting, can be undertaken by all levels of society, starting from families, communities, and schools. One effective measure is the design of a gender-sensitive curriculum that educators can implement with their students. This is crucial to ensure that students, especially adolescents, acquire adequate knowledge about the negative impacts of early marriage, which are closely linked to the risks of stunting. Adolescents, as a key demographic, can also serve as agents of change within their families, particularly in the Madurese culture, advocating for programs to prevent child marriage and reduce stunting rates. These efforts aim to improve the overall quality of life and societal welfare.

Lack of Public Awareness on Stunting and Early Marriage

During the first day of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), various issues were identified. These issues reveal a general lack of awareness among the public, including schools, teachers, students, and parents, about gender and gender-sensitive curricula. Key findings include: (1) insufficient basic knowledge about gender concepts; (2) the need for gender-sensitive education at home, in schools, and within the community; (3) the persistence of the belief among some participants that early marriage is acceptable based on Islamic law, as children who have reached puberty are considered eligible for marriage—a practice perpetuated by their parents' own experiences; (4) limited understanding of the biological and psychological impacts of early marriage on children and the babies born to them; (5) the absence of gender-awareness curricula in most junior and senior high schools in Singkawang; and (6) inadequate literacy in evaluating information from social media regarding early marriage and stunting. Social media content often blends entertainment and misinformation, making it challenging to discern reliable educational material. Informant 1 (D) highlighted that stunting rates in Singkawang, particularly among the Chinese ethnic community, are among the highest in West Kalimantan, with many cases linked to children born from contract marriages.

"In Singkawang, the stunting rate is indeed the highest in West Kalimantan. In 2023, West Kalimantan in general reached 670 cases, with the majority being toddlers of Chinese ethnicity who are the result of contract marriages. So there are underage children who marry foreigners and this is not recorded in our data" - Informant 1

From the identification of issues and challenges faced by FGD participants and stakeholders, two main areas of instruction were subsequently provided. First, participants were taught fundamental concepts of gender and gender awareness through examples and role-playing activities. This instruction included materials on early marriage, covering the Marriage Law and the consequences of early marriage, such as stunting as one of its impacts. By employing various perspectives and approaches, including Gender Anthropology, Gender Sociology, and Media and Gender Representation, participants expanded their understanding of gender and related injustices, particularly in connection with early marriage practices that predominantly affect adolescent girls. This material was then disseminated to junior and senior high school teachers in attendance for integration into their classroom teaching. Additionally, for community leaders, the material was essential for public dissemination to reduce myths and misconceptions about early marriage within the cultural and subcultural contexts of Singkawang.

Second, training was provided on anthropometry, focusing on child growth and development, particularly height and age. Anthropometry was introduced as a valid tool for assessing childhood malnutrition. Through anthropometric measurements, it became evident that early marriage leading to stunting affects children's height, making it disproportionate to their age. This segment of the training was particularly engaging due to the use of visual aids that were direct and easy to understand. Junior and senior high school teachers expressed interest in incorporating this material into their classroom lessons.

Local cultural norms remain a significant barrier to reaching junior high school students and their families. This is largely because parents and extended families often hold the belief that a girl's future lies in the hands of men. This perception is especially prevalent among impoverished families, who view daughters as a means to improve their economic circumstances. This belief is not exclusive to the Madurese but is also found among the Malay, Dayak, and Chinese communities. Such cultural attitudes

contribute to Singkawang's reputation as the "Amoy city," where young girls are often associated with "mail-order bride" practices to China.

Dissemination and education on the impact of child marriage on stunting must be enhanced through the integration of local content into the national curriculum in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Culture. This initiative aims to ensure that the community, particularly junior and senior high school students, receives accurate and reliable information. Ultimately, students will be trained and encouraged to seek and process credible information, especially concerning the correlation between child marriage and stunting. Teachers participating in the program were also advised on the importance of designing a gender-sensitive curriculum by evaluating the local cultural content specific to the city of Singkawang. This approach ensures that the curriculum not only addresses gender awareness but is also tailored to the local context, thereby fostering a deeper understanding and more effective dissemination of information within the community.

Teaching Gender and Stunting Concepts

The results of the focus group discussions (FGD) revealed that in Singkawang, there remains a strong perception that early marriage aligns with religious principles if a child has reached puberty. Additionally, early marriage is often viewed as a solution to economic problems, particularly among impoverished families who hope that their daughters will improve the family's financial situation. This patriarchal culture is prevalent not only among the Madurese ethnic group but also within the Malay, Dayak, and Chinese communities in Singkawang..

" Many in the community are unaware of the issues surrounding early marriage and stunting, primarily due to a lack of education. As a result, many parents and families are unaware of the long-term impacts of early marriage and stunting." - V (Informant 2).

Child marriage is frequently associated with patriarchal attitudes toward girls, including the perceived need to safeguard family honor (Riskianti & Fajriah, 2024). These patriarchal practices suppress the roles and potential of women, particularly in cases of early marriage, where women are expected to marry promptly and assume

domestic responsibilities. This highlights the critical importance of comprehensive education to raise public awareness of the long-term consequences of child marriage. Contrary to the belief that child marriage offers an economic solution, it exacerbates health issues for children born from such unions, ultimately contributing to the high prevalence of stunting in the region. Addressing these misconceptions through education and community awareness initiatives is vital to mitigating these adverse effects and promoting healthier societal practices.

Strategic Steps

Following the direct lecture and learning sessions conducted with participants, the subsequent day involved training on curating social media content related to gender, early marriage, and stunting. Before commencing the curation process, several strategic steps were collaboratively formulated with participants as a foundation for future action plans. These steps focused on enhancing participants' abilities to identify issues, cases, and challenges, as well as selecting and filtering information to support the development of a gender-sensitive curriculum aimed at preventing early marriage and stunting among middle and high school students. The strategic steps proposed as solutions to address existing issues include the following:

(1) **Identifying Social Determinants of Early Marriage.** The first step involved identifying the social determinants that influence early marriage within various ethnic groups in Singkawang, including Madurese, Malay, Dayak, and Chinese communities. These determinants significantly impact health outcomes during early childhood. This identification process aims to establish safe early childhood conditions for families, enhance child development, and devise strategies to address challenges while leveraging potential resources. In addition to fostering safe early childhood conditions, this initiative aligns with promoting child well-being, as outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Goal 8.

(2) **Documenting Information, Communication, Education, and Literacy Efforts.** The second step involved documenting information, communication, education, and literacy initiatives implemented in middle and high schools in Singkawang, West Kalimantan, particularly those with a high representation of specific ethnic groups. This step aims to

disseminate information and develop gender-awareness-based curriculum content used in teaching processes in the region. The documentation will facilitate progress tracking, monitoring, and evaluation to measure the effectiveness of these initiatives.

(3) Mapping and Redesigning the Curriculum. The third step entailed identifying and mapping the existing curriculum to determine subjects that could be redesigned or integrated with gender-awareness content. This approach ensures that the substance of core subjects remains intact while enabling collaboration with local content to address gender-related issues.

(4) Developing a Digital Platform for Learning. The fourth step focused on creating a digital platform as a medium for disseminating creative, informative, and innovative content to educate teachers on effective techniques for delivering information to students. The platform consists of two primary components: A website offering comprehensive, detailed content to serve as a robust learning resource. Social media platforms designed for persuasive and interactive communication, featuring visually appealing presentations that utilize engaging photos, captions, and narratives to capture the audience's interest.

(5) Collecting and Disseminating Data on Early Marriage and Stunting. The fifth and most critical step involved collecting, compiling, and presenting data on early marriage and its impact on stunting, gathered by middle and high school students during fieldwork. This data is shared with teachers and policymakers, ranging from village to district levels, to advocate for measures to prevent early marriage and mitigate its contribution to stunting prevalence.

Curation of Communication and Information Materials Related to Stunting and Early Marriage from Social Media

This research focused on equipping participants with digital and information literacy skills for evaluating and curating content related to gender, early marriage, and stunting. Participants were introduced to curated examples, such as educational YouTube videos and informative posters, which were free from misinformation, engaging, and easily comprehensible for middle and high school students. These

materials were designed to attract interest and educate both teachers and students while enabling further dissemination to those who did not participate in the training.

The first step involved guiding participants to review and evaluate preselected YouTube content for its educational value. Teachers were encouraged to integrate these videos into their respective subjects, such as using health and nutrition content in biology lessons while emphasizing gender equality. This integration aimed to raise awareness among adolescents about the importance of education, prevent child marriage, and promote healthy relationships. In addition, curated social media content emphasized gender equality and early marriage prevention, addressing the region's high rates of early marriage, particularly within Singkawang's multicultural population.

Community stakeholders, including parents, community leaders, and health workers, were actively involved in providing feedback on the curated content. Their input supported the development of gender-sensitive and nutrition-focused curricula while fostering collaboration at the community level. These stakeholders were also encouraged to assist in implementing the program and disseminating key messages.

A system for ongoing monitoring and evaluation was introduced to measure the program's long-term impact on reducing early marriage rates and stunting prevalence. Community stakeholders were encouraged to share accurate, engaging content through their social networks, ensuring continuous reinforcement of awareness. Through these efforts, the research aimed to enhance adolescent awareness, reduce early marriage rates, and improve nutritional outcomes, ultimately contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of promoting well-being and fostering a conducive environment within Singkawang's multicultural society.

Governance Framework for Curriculum Development in Preventing Child Marriage and Stunting

Preventing child marriage and stunting requires a comprehensive governance framework that integrates education, health, and social awareness into curriculum development. These issues, deeply rooted in cultural, economic, and social contexts, demand multifaceted interventions. Key strategies include identifying relevant actors, fostering cross-sector collaboration, formulating effective policies, and managing

resources efficiently. This approach is critical for addressing the systemic drivers of child marriage and stunting, particularly in communities such as Singkawang, where socio-cultural norms and limited awareness perpetuate these challenges. By implementing such a framework, the goal of healthier, more informed communities becomes achievable.

Identification of Actors.

The identification of key actors is fundamental to designing effective interventions for child marriage and stunting prevention. Educators, health professionals, policymakers, and community leaders play pivotal roles in this process. Research underscores the significance of parental education, as lower maternal educational levels are strongly linked to higher child marriage rates (Iustitiani & Ajisuksmo, 2018). In Singkawang, cultural norms perpetuate patriarchal practices, further exacerbating these issues. Engaging fathers is equally crucial, as their educational backgrounds significantly influence family health outcomes, including stunting (Sugianti, 2024). Collaborative efforts to educate and involve parents holistically strengthen the foundation for sustainable change.

Cross-Sector Collaboration.

Cross-sector collaboration enhances the effectiveness of efforts to address child marriage and stunting. Programs integrating education, health, and social protection services create synergistic outcomes. For instance, cash transfer programs contingent on school attendance mitigate economic drivers of child marriage while promoting educational retention (Gambir, 2024). In Singkawang, initiatives combining nutrition education with gender-sensitive curricula empower families to make informed decisions, reducing stunting prevalence. Collaborative actions between educators, health workers, and community leaders foster environments that promote educational attainment, health awareness, and gender equality, ultimately benefiting adolescents and their families.

Policy Formulation.

Evidence-based policy formulation tailored to local contexts is essential for sustainable impact. Policies addressing socio-economic drivers such as poverty and

educational barriers are critical for preventing child marriage (Malhotra & Elnakib, 2021). In Singkawang, enforcing legal frameworks like minimum marriage age laws is imperative to safeguard girls from early marriage. Integrating comprehensive curricula on nutrition, gender awareness, and health into educational policies enhances their effectiveness (Mulyati, 2023). These policies must prioritize accessibility and inclusivity to ensure equitable implementation across diverse cultural and socio-economic contexts.

Resource Management.

Efficient resource management ensures the sustainability of interventions addressing child marriage and stunting. Investments in girls' education yield long-term benefits, reducing marriage rates and improving health outcomes (Raj et al., 2014). In Singkawang, allocating resources for training educators, developing digital platforms, and supporting community engagement activities enhances program impact. Empowering local stakeholders, such as parents and community leaders, fosters resource utilization aligned with community needs (Antarsih et al., 2023). Effective resource distribution not only strengthens educational initiatives but also promotes a sense of ownership, ensuring long-term community commitment to the cause.

Conclusion

This study highlights the critical importance of raising awareness among communities, students, educators, and the general public regarding the impact of early marriage on stunting prevalence. The lack of understanding about gender issues and the challenges faced by adolescent girls forced into early marriages, often justified by cultural and religious norms, perpetuates these problems. By equipping students, teachers, community leaders, and parents with knowledge about these pressing issues and providing practical training on strategic planning and digital literacy, this research offers a novel approach to addressing the challenges of early marriage and stunting.

The integration of curated, reliable, and non-misleading social media content into gender-sensitive local curricula serves as a strategic intervention. This approach not only raises awareness but also empowers stakeholders to actively participate in preventing early marriage and reducing stunting rates. For the multicultural and ethnically diverse population of Singkawang, implementing a gender-sensitive curriculum tailored to local needs is a vital step

toward achieving these goals. Such efforts contribute significantly to improving maternal and child health and align with broader Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in health and education.

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