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Holistic Sexuality Education as a Strategy for Preventing Early Marriage: A Participatory Approach to the PKK Group in Pondok Kelor Paiton Village, Probolinggo

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Abstract:
Early marriage remains a social problem with widespread impacts on the quality of education, health, and public welfare in Indonesia. One of the main causes is low sexuality literacy at the family and community level. This Community Service (PkM) program aims to increase the capacity of Pemberdayaan dan Kesejahteraan Keluarga (PKK) members in Pondok Kelor Village, Paiton District, Probolinggo Regency, to understand and implement holistic sexuality education as a strategy to prevent early marriage. This activity uses a participatory approach that involves the community in all stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation. Implementation methods include interactive counseling, focus group discussions, and parent-child communication simulations based on Islamic values and local culture. The results of the activity showed an average increase in understanding among PKK cadres of 43.7% and the formation of three small family education groups that actively conduct outreach at the hamlet level. This program also succeeded in shifting the community's paradigm regarding sexuality issues from a taboo to an important part of child protection and family resilience. In conclusion, a participatory and contextual approach that integrates religious and cultural values has proven effective in strengthening the role of village women's communities as agents of change in efforts to prevent child marriage.

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Holistic sexuality education; Early marriage prevention; Community participation; PKK

BACKGROUND

The issue of sexuality is still a sensitive topic and tends to be considered taboo in the context of Indonesian society, even in communication between parents and children. However, the increase in cases of sexual abuse against children has prompted some parents to start discussing this issue more openly. In Indonesia, sexuality education for adolescents is generally still limited to formal spaces and is often delivered by only one resource person at a time. In fact, the delivery of information and knowledge about sexuality should start early and be adjusted to the level of child development (Shirley & Kristiani, 2022)

Adolescents enter a phase of life that is characterized by various transformations, both physically, cognitively, and psychosocially. The physical changes that occur include primary and secondary sexual characteristics, such as hair growth in certain areas of the body, changes in body shape, the appearance of signs of puberty such as menstruation

and wet dreams, and the maturation of the reproductive organs (Papalia et al., 2012; Yoshino & Ono, 2025)

The encouragement of adolescents' curiosity about sexuality is the reason for the importance of mentoring by adults. A correct and healthy understanding of sexuality is a preventive step to maintain the overall well-being of adolescents. WHO emphasizes that sexuality education must be delivered in a contextual manner, in line with applicable cultural and religious values. These adjustments are important so that adolescents do not get caught up in risky behaviors that arise from a lack of understanding of the impacts and consequences of their actions (Banurea & Abidjulu, 2020; Gorumutchu et al., 2025)

This community service activity is a continuation of a similar program that was previously carried out with the PKK group of Pondokkelor Village. In the psychoeducational activity, there was a high interest and enthusiasm from the participants, especially teenagers, in obtaining information about sexuality. This condition underscores the importance of sexuality counseling among adolescents, especially in communities with minimal access to similar information. Given that adolescence is the transitional stage from childhood to adulthood, mentoring in terms of self-care, including an understanding of physical changes and the development of reproductive organs, is very important (Munawwaroh & Putri, 2024; Sugiarti & Erlangga, 2023)

It is important to realize that in adolescence, individuals have entered the phase of puberty and begin to show interest in the opposite sex. However, this interest is not always accompanied by emotional maturity or the ability to take responsibility. This imbalance between physical development and psychosocial maturity is often a source of concern for parents and educators, as it has the potential to encourage the emergence of risky behaviours during this developmental phase.

In Indonesia, sexuality education is still not a common part taught by adults, both by parents and educators in the school environment. The low delivery of this material is largely influenced by the social stigma that considers the discussion of sexuality as taboo and inappropriate to be discussed openly . In fact, proper sexual education is very important to help adolescents understand the body and relationships in a healthy way, as well as as a preventive effort against the risk of sexual violence and misunderstandings in understanding issues related to sexuality (Bonar et al., 2022; Joni & Surjaningrum, 2020)

Teens' lack of knowledge about sexuality education often encourages them to seek information from unverified sources, such as online videos, stories from peers, other people's experiences, or simply curiosity. In this search process, adolescents tend to explore behaviours that are trial and error, which has the potential to pose risks. Therefore, adolescents need access to valid information and a safe space to discuss openly, such as a dialogue with peers. The provision of a supportive discussion forum is very important as a preventive effort against the emergence of risky behaviour, including in the context of unhealthy dating relationships. Although various cases have shown the negative impact of unhealthy dating, adolescent companions still have opportunities to provide constructive interventions. One effective approach is psychological intervention, which is considered to be able to have a positive impact on the social and ecological well-being of adolescents (Deshpande, 2025) (São Paulo et al., 2013)

Early marriage is one of the critical issues that is still of national and global concern because of its impact on the quality of life of individuals and society. This practice not

only violates children's rights, but also correlates with increased dropout rates, risk of pregnancy complications, structural poverty, and ongoing gender inequality. In Indonesia, the Central Statistics Agency noted that in 2022 there were around 8.06% of women aged 20–24 years who were married before the age of 18, and this figure is higher in rural areas, including Probolinggo Regency (BPS, 2022). Pondok Kelor Village, Paiton District, is included in the area that has a high vulnerability to early marriage practices due to a combination of economic, cultural, and low sexuality literacy in the family.

One of the roots of the high rate of early marriage is the lack of understanding of healthy and responsible sexuality by adolescents and parents. Comprehensive sexuality education at the family and community level has not been carried out systematically. Most people still consider talking about sexuality to be taboo, so teens seek information from less credible sources such as social media or peer-to-peer stories that are not scientifically validated. As a result, risky trial and error behavior and unhealthy dating patterns occur, which in turn are driving factors for early marriage (Banurea & Abidjulu, 2020)

Holistic sexuality education comes as an approach that not only addresses biological and medical aspects, but also includes moral values, spirituality, interpersonal relationships, and healthy and responsible decision-making. This approach aims to equip adolescents and parents with a comprehensive understanding of reproductive health and healthy relationship dynamics within the framework of local values and culture (Women, 2018)

The Family Welfare Development Group (PKK) as a village community organization has a strategic position in delivering education to families. PKK members have social and psychological closeness to the community so that they are more effective in conveying educational messages that are preventive. However, it is necessary to increase the capacity of PKK cadres so that they understand holistic sexuality material and are able to become community facilitators in a participatory and empathetic manner (Monoarfa, 2020; Zamroni et al., 2025)

This Community Service (PKM) is designed as a strategic effort to increase the community's educational capacity through holistic sexuality training based on a participatory approach to PKK members of Pondok Kelor Village. Through a process that involves them in the preparation of materials, training, and community education simulations, it is hoped that PKK cadres will be able to become agents of change in preventing early marriage. In addition, this approach also encourages the achievement of several goals in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially the 3rd (healthy life), 4th (quality education), and 5th (gender equality) goals (Guterres, 2021)

Figure 1

The phenomenon of early marriage that still occurs in various regions, including in Pondok Kelor Village, Paiton District, Probolinggo Regency, shows that there is a fundamental problem related to low sexuality literacy in families and communities. Sexuality education, which should be an important provision in accompanying adolescent growth and development, is often considered taboo to be discussed openly, both in the home and community environment. This condition is exacerbated by the lack of educational role of parents and community cadres such as PKK members, who actually have strategic potential in preventing risky practices that encourage child marriage.

In this context, the holistic sexuality approach as an educational intervention has not been widely implemented participially at the village level. People do not fully understand that sexuality education is not just biological information, but also concerns psychosocial aspects, moral values, and healthy and responsible decision-making skills. The limited knowledge and skills of PKK cadres in delivering culturally sensitive and effective educational materials are a major obstacle in efforts to prevent sustainable early marriage.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This Community Service (PkM) activity is carried out with a community organizing approach that focuses on the active involvement of the target community in every process of planning, implementing, and evaluating activities. This approach aims to ensure that the resulting social change is participatory, sustainable, and rooted in the real needs of local communities (Munawwaroh et al., 2024; Zunaidi, 2024)

The main subject of service was members of the Family Welfare Development Group (PKK) of Pondok Kelor Village, Paiton District, Probolinggo Regency, East Java. The selection of PKK groups is based on their strategic role as agents of family empowerment who have social closeness to the community, especially in the fields of family education, health, and child welfare.

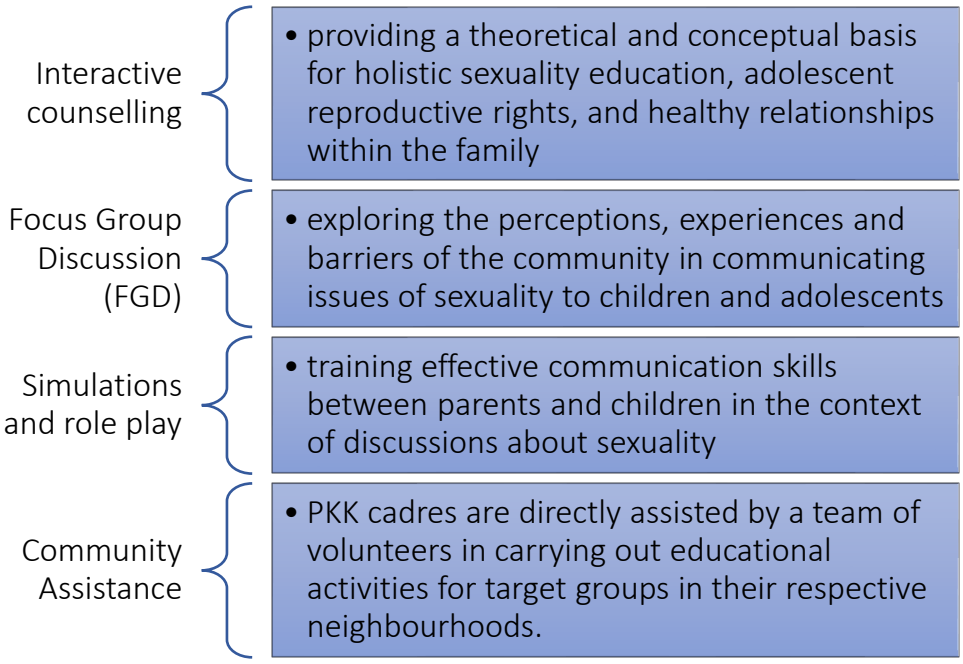
The activity was carried out at the Pondok Kelor Village Hall and several surrounding hamlets that became active work areas for PKK cadres. This location was chosen because it is a rural area with a high level of vulnerability to the practice of child marriage due to economic, cultural, and lack of sexuality literacy.

The program planning stage was carried out collaboratively between the service team from Nurul Jadid University with the PKK management of Pondok Kelor Village and local community leaders. This process began with problem identification and social mapping activities through field observations, semi-structured interviews, and open discussions with PKK representatives, adolescents, and religious leaders.

The mapping results show that most members of the community consider the issue of sexuality as a taboo topic that is not suitable for open discussion, resulting in an information gap between parents and adolescents. This condition is the basis for the team to develop an education-based intervention, but still sensitive to the local religious and cultural values of Madura.

This program uses a participatory action approach strategy that emphasizes two-way dialogue between service providers and the community. This strategy combines educational and reflective methods with the principles of andragogy (adult learning), so that participants are able to internalize knowledge through experience and hands-on practice.

The main methods used include:



The activity is carried out through the following five systematic stages:

Yes	Stages	Description
1	Situation Identification and Analysis Stage	Field observations and preliminary interviews were conducted to find out social conditions, sexuality literacy levels, and public perceptions of early marriage. This data is the basis for the preparation of program baselines.
2	Program Planning Stage with Partners	The PKK service team and cadres designed an educational module "Family-Based Holistic Sexuality" that adapts to Islamic values and local culture. In this stage, the schedule, location, and division of the role of facilitators are also determined.
3	Training and Workshop Stage	The training activities were carried out in the form of an interactive workshop for two days at the Pondok Kelor Village Hall, involving 50 PKK cadres. The training material includes basic concepts of sexuality, assertive communication, and family-based early marriage prevention strategies.
4	Participatory Implementation Stage in the Field	PKK cadres who have been trained carry out educational activities in their respective RT/RW environments, including through social gathering forums, Posyandu, and citizen meetings. The service team provided direct assistance and conducted field observations on the effectiveness of message delivery.
5	Program Evaluation and Reflection Stage	Evaluation is carried out through two approaches: • Quantitatively, using pre-test and post-test to measure the improvement of cadre understanding; • Qualitative, through in-depth interviews and FGDs to assess changes in attitudes, participation rates, and program sustainability.

As a result of the implementation of the above method, three small family education groups were formed in three hamlets, which now routinely hold discussions and counseling for adolescents. In addition, local education modules based on Islamic values and Madurese culture were also produced which were agreed to be used in routine PKK activities. The village government is committed to including this sexuality education activity in the village women's empowerment program the following year.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the Community Service (PkM) program carried out by lecturers and students of the FAI UNUJA Family Law Study Program in Pondok Kelor Village, Paiton District, Probolinggo Regency, showed significant achievements in the aspects of increasing cadre capacity, social acceptance of sexuality education issues, and growing active community participation in efforts to prevent early marriage.

1. Capacity Building of PKK Cadres

   The final results of the program evaluation showed that the understanding of PKK cadres regarding the concept of holistic sexuality has increased substantially. Based on a comparative analysis of *pre-test* and *post-test* conducted in a structured manner on 30 PKK cadre participants, there was an increase in the average comprehension score of 43.7%, slightly higher than the provisional results. The most significant improvement was the understanding of the psychosocial and religious dimensions of sexuality, which were previously considered sensitive to be discussed in village public spaces.

Figure 2

   In addition to increasing knowledge, there are also positive developments in the aspect of cadre communication skills. As many as 83% of participants stated that they felt more confident to convey information related to reproductive health, healthy relationships, and prevention of early marriage in community forums, such as social gatherings, posyandu, and regular PKK meetings.

2. Strengthening Community Engagement and Local Knowledge Production

   As the provisional results have been reported, the involvement of cadres in the preparation of community education modules is a crucial point in the empowerment process. In the final phase of the activity, the module has gone through a refinement stage based on field trials and input from religious leaders and local traditional leaders. This module contains an educational narrative that is not

only based on scientific principles, but also integrates Islamic values and local wisdom of the Madurese people, so that it is easier to accept and understand by the community.

In addition, the formation of three small family education groups in three different hamlets shows the existence of grassroots initiatives in continuing education independently. This group periodically holds family discussion forums and counseling for adolescents, which are initiated and facilitated directly by PKK cadres who have participated in the training.

3. Social Transformation and Acceptance of Sexuality Issues

   One of the important achievements is the beginning of the development of a more open social climate in discussing sexuality issues, especially in the framework of preventing early marriage. Based on the results of *the Focus Group Discussion* (FGD) with cadres, community leaders, and village officials, it is known that the issue of sexuality is no longer completely considered taboo, but is beginning to be seen as an integral part of efforts to protect children and family resilience.

   The community, especially PKK mothers and some teenagers, showed a positive response to the early marriage prevention campaign which was packaged through visual media, faith-based lectures, and interactive discussions. Some community leaders even provide tangible support, such as providing a place for youth discussion activities and encouraging youth involvement in community meetings.

4. Challenges and Strategies to Overcome Them

   Despite the positive achievements, the program also faces challenges, especially resistance from a small part of the community who still view sexuality education as a sensitive issue that is taboo to discuss in the public sphere. This mainly comes from community groups that hold conservative interpretations of religious and customary norms.

   In response to these challenges, the PkM team together with cadres and religious leaders developed a communication strategy based on a persuasive-religious approach, emphasizing that sexuality education is not solely a biological issue, but part of the moral and religious responsibility in safeguarding the honor and future of children. This approach has proven to be quite effective in reducing resistance and opening up a more constructive dialogue space.

5. Recommendations for Sustainability

Figure 3

The results of the program show that a participatory, community-based, and contextual approach is the key to success in building public awareness and capacity

related to holistic sexuality education. Therefore, the sustainability of the program is an important aspect that needs to be seriously designed.

Recommendations resulting from the evaluation with partners include:

a. Advanced training with a focus on intergenerational communication and adolescent discussion facilitation skills;
b. Strengthening networks between PKK cadres, youth, and community leaders to form a community support system in preventing early marriage;
c. Development of additional educational media, such as short videos, posters, and booklets that are easy to understand and appropriate to the local context;
d. The involvement of the village government is more intensive for the integration of this program into the routine agenda of the village, such as the Village Deliberation forum or Posyandu activities.

Figure 4

The holistic sexuality education program as an early marriage prevention strategy implemented in Pondok Kelor Village shows the effectiveness of a participatory approach in increasing community capacity, building social acceptance of reproductive health issues, and triggering local initiatives in educating the community. Although there are still cultural challenges, the results show that social change can occur gradually through contextual, religious, and empowering communication strategies.

CONCLUSION

The Community Service Program (PkM) "Holistic Sexuality Education as an Early Marriage Prevention Strategy" which was carried out in Pondok Kelor Village, Paiton District, Probolinggo Regency, succeeded in achieving its main goal, which is to increase the knowledge, skills, and awareness of PKK cadres in educating the public regarding healthy sexuality and the prevention of early marriage. A participatory approach that is integrated with Islamic values and local culture has proven effective in building social acceptance of sexuality issues that were previously considered taboo.

This program resulted in a significant increase in cadre capacity, the formation of family education groups at the hamlet level, and the preparation of local modules based on cultural and religious wisdom. These results show that sexuality education can be well received when delivered through contextual, persuasive, and religious methods.

Although there is still resistance from some communities, this activity is a strategic first step in creating a community-based early marriage prevention movement. The success of this program emphasizes the importance of synergy between PKK cadres, village governments, and religious leaders to strengthen family resilience and realize a healthy, intelligent, and dignified young generation.

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