

The Cooperation of Plan International Indonesia and the Local Government of Sukabumi and West Lombok to Combat Child Marriage Through the Gema Cita Program

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ABSTRACT. Child marriage remains a problem in Indonesia, despite the practice being banned in various international agreements and national regulations. Indonesia even ranks among the 10 counties with the highest prevalence of child marriage. As such, addressing this issue is important, particularly in fulfilling Indonesia's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This thesis explores the cooperation between Plan Indonesia and the local government of Sukabumi and West Lombok through the Gema Cita program, which aims to combat child marriage. The study uses the theories of liberal institutionalism and international regimes to explore the strategies, challenges, and impact of this cooperation and how it fulfills the SDGs, particularly Target 5.3. The study used a qualitative case study approach and gathered primary and secondary data. The result shows that the SDGs, as an international regime, shape Indonesia's national policies and local initiatives such as Gema Cita in addressing child marriage. Gema Cita's strategy includes a comprehensive approach that effectively engages adolescents, schools, and communities to create sustainable effort against child marriage. The program's strategy also aligns closely with Indonesia's National Strategy on the Prevention of Child Marriage (STRANAS PPA). Despite facing various challenges, such as low awareness of child marriage and lack of support in the community, the program demonstrated effectiveness in raising awareness, support, and influencing policy changes in the areas. The roles and responsibilities of Plan Indonesia and the local government contribute to the program's success. Plan Indonesia's focus on capacity building, advocacy, and evaluating complements the local government's role in formalizing agreements, enforcing policies, and coordinating efforts. The findings suggest that such cooperation is important for child marriage prevention program like Gema Cita.

Keywords: Gema Cita, Plan Indonesia, child marriage, local government cooperation, sustainable development goals (SDGs)

1. INTRODUCTION

Child marriage, defined by UNICEF (2019) as any formal or informal union where a child below 18 is wedded to an adult or another child, remains an issue that affects children globally. While child marriage affects both boys and girls, it is more prevalent among girls, with an estimated, 650 million women worldwide having been married as children and 12 million girls marrying before the age of 18 every year (OHCHR, 2014).

The causes of child marriage are deeply rooted in socio-economic and cultural factors, including

gender inequality, poverty, lack of education, and traditional customs that prioritize family honor and girls' virginity. In addition, legal frameworks that are insufficiently enforced allow the practice to persist (Plan International UK, 2024). The impact of child marriage is detrimental, limiting their education and economic opportunities, increasing their vulnerability to physical and sexual violence, and heightening health risks, particularly during pregnancy and childbirth. In addition, girls who marry early are often denied full social recognition, citizenship rights, and inheritance rights (Save the Children, 2020; Reid, 2022).

Given its severe implications, the practice becomes a direct violation of key human rights conventions, particularly the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), two of the most widely accepted human rights agreements. These conventions explicitly prohibit the practice of child marriage. Article 16 (2) of CEDAW states that “the betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect.” (OHCHR, 2023). The CRC, although it does not specifically address child marriage, also urges states to take necessary measures to end traditional practices that are harmful for the children’s health, as stated in Article 24 (3). Despite international efforts to combat child marriage, the practice continues to exist, including in Indonesia.

In 2018, 1.2 million women aged 20-24 in Indonesia had married before the age of 18, placing the country among the top ten countries with high rate of child marriage. In response to this, Indonesia has ratified CEDAW through Law No. 7 of 1984 and the CRC through Presidential Decree No. 36 of 1990 (Girls Not Brides, 2022). Indonesia also enacted Law No. 16 of 2019, which equalizes the legal minimum age of marriage with parental consent for girls and boys at 19 years old. However, the existing regulations still left provisions that allowed the application for marriage dispensation, allowing children to marry below the legal age (Flynn, 2021). The incidence of child marriage further increased during the Covid-19 pandemic, which is evident in the surge of marriage dispensation application—from 23,700 in 2019 to 34,000 in the first half of 2020. Out of these, 97% were granted, with 60% submitted by individuals under age 18, often due to unintended pregnancy (Jayani, 2021).

The urgency of addressing child marriage has been reinforced by the Sustainable Development Goals, a comprehensive framework aimed at achieving a more sustainable future by 2030. Target 5.3 specifically aims to “eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation” (United Nations, 2023). The inclusion of child marriage in the SDGs highlight its crucial impact on achieving other goals, including the eradication of poverty, food security, health and well-being, quality education, and gender equality (Bappenas & Central Agency of Statistics, 2020). Therefore, addressing child

marriage is important for ensuring a future characterized by equality, dignity, and social justice.

The SDGs encourage states to take comprehensive actions in addressing child marriage, emphasizing the importance of cooperation involving civil society, including community-based organizations, youth, and women’s collectives, in monitoring and advancing the progress of the SDGs (Girls Not Brides, 2020). In line with these global commitments, the Indonesian government has partnered with non-state actors to address child marriage. One prominent non-state actor is Plan International, an organization dedicated to advancing girls’ equality and children’s rights. Plan International has been active in Indonesia since 1969 and formally established as Yayasan Plan International Indonesia in 2017 (Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, 2022). This long-standing presence and commitment make Plan Indonesia a key player in addressing child marriage effectively.

Through initiatives like the (Generasi Emas Bangsa Bebas Perkawinan Usia Anak) program, which cooperates with local governments in Sukabumi and West Lombok, Plan Indonesia has employed advocacy and community engagement to combat child marriage. This program emphasizes the active involvement of adolescents and young people in implementing Community-Based Integrated Child Protection Program (Perlindungan Anak Terpadu Berbasis Masyarakat/PATBM) and Child-Friendly Schools (Sekolah Ramah Anak/SRA) (Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, 2022). Plan Indonesia’s cooperation with the local government provides a valuable case study on the cooperative efforts to address child marriage, allowing a detailed exploration of the partnership between an NGO and local governments.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This thesis draws from various studies related to child marriage, with a focus on existing studies that explore the efforts by NGOs and the government in Indonesia to address child marriage, including the strategies, challenges, and the cooperation between these actors.

The first study, Implementasi Program Yes I Do Plan International dalam Mengurangi Perkawinan Anak di Kab. Sukabumi pada tahun 2017-2020 by Monita, focuses on the Yes I Do program by Plan Indonesia to combat child marriage in Sukabumi. The study found that the Sukabumi Regency has

the highest rate of child marriage in West Java. Plan International discovered that 13% of children in the region were married before the age of 18. To gather support and ensure the sustainability of the program, Plan Indonesia collaborates with the local government of Sukabumi. The program's success is highlighted by the enactment of the Sukabumi Regional Regulation No. 1 of 2018 on the Implementation of Child Protection. The Yes I Do program was also effectively implemented in West Lombok, evidenced by the issuance of Government Regulation No. 30 of 2018 on Marriage Prevention and Regional Regulation No. 9 of 2019 on the Maturation of Marriage Age (PUP). In Rembang, the impact of the program was shown in the significant drop of child marriage rate, achieving 85% decrease over a period of four years.

The second study, *Upaya Indonesia Dalam Mengatasi Pernikahan Anak Sebagai Implementasi Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Tujuan 5 (5.3)* by Yoshida, Rachman, and Darmawan, explore the effectiveness of implementing Goal 5 (5.3) of the SDGs as a part of the United Nations international development program to address child marriage in Indonesia. The study found that Indonesia has made significant effort in achieving Goal 5 by partnering with international organizations such as UNICEF and UN Women to establish gender equality programs, empower women, and protect children. Indonesia has also demonstrated its commitment by amending the marriage law to raise the minimum age marriage for both men and women from 16 to 19 years old. However, the implementation of Goal 5 is hindered by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include parenting style, family dynamics, and the lack of awareness regarding reproductive health and the risks associated with early sexual activity. External factors include peer influence, community expectations for youth to get married early, and parents' desire to have grandchildren.

The third study, *Kerjasama NGO Pada Program Pemerintah Dalam Mengurangi Angka Pernikahan Usia Anak di Kabupaten Mamuju* by Utami and Amin, examines the collaborative efforts between NGOs and government programs to reduce child marriage in Mamuju. It identifies economic factors, particularly poverty, as a primary driver of child marriage. The study reveals that NGO play an important role in cooperating with government programs to address child marriage. NGOs help by expanding access to education, providing skills training, and raising community awareness about

the detrimental impacts of child marriage. Meanwhile, government programs are important in policy formation, supervision, and resource allocation to support child marriage prevention initiatives. This cooperation also enables the exchange of knowledge and expertise between NGOs and government entities. The government has the opportunity to gain insights into best practices, successful interventions, and lessons acquired from the ongoing efforts to combat child marriage.

The fourth study, *NGOs and Child Marriage Problem in Indonesia: Analysis of Issues, Strategies and Networks* by Lubis, Baharuddin, Meganingratna, and Lubis, examines the strategies implemented by LBH APIK in South Sulawesi to address child marriage. The organization cooperates with various state and non-state actors, including International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGO) like OXFAM, to combat child marriage in South Sulawesi. The study emphasizes the important role of the government in enacting policy changes, establishing a gender-equitable legal system, and promoting societal norms aimed at preventing child marriage. LBH Apik implements five primary strategies. First, conducting socialization campaigns to end violence against women and girls in communities, schools, and public spaces. Second, transforming social norms among adolescents and parents. Third, empowering women and girl leaders by appointing Agent of Change in schools to serve as role models. Fourth, providing capacity-building for key stakeholders, government representatives, youth groups, and members of the LBH Apik South Sulawesi network. The last one, organizing public dialogues and creating campaign materials that involve adolescents, and children's forums in advocating against child marriage.

The last study, *Collaboration of Local Government and Stakeholders in the Prevention and Control of Child Marriage* by Kertati, Karningsih, and Astuti, analyze the roles of the government and stakeholders in child marriage prevention, particularly in Central Java. The study emphasizes the importance of collaboration between local government and various stakeholders, including community organizations, NGOs, businesses, and community leaders, to create an effective child marriage prevention. The study considered several elements that must be fulfilled to ensure effective collaboration, including the regional government's commitment to collaboration, commitment from

the stakeholders, the will to have a unified goal, the ability to develop networks with all stakeholders, strengthening the capacity of children and teenagers, and commitment from all stakeholders to be actively involved. The study also suggests implementing strategic steps for collaboration that are based on the National Strategy on the Prevention of Child Marriage (STRANAS PPA), such as optimizing children's capacity, creating a supportive environment, improving accessibility and expansion of services, strengthening regulations and institutions, and enhancing stakeholder coordination.

3. METHODOLOGY

The issue of child marriage in Indonesia highlights the need to understand the collaborative efforts between non-governmental actors and the government in addressing this issue. As such, this thesis explores the cooperation between an NGO, which is Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, and local governments in combating child marriage through a program called Gema Cita (Generasi Emas Bangsa Bebas Perkawinan Usia Anak). To provide a comprehensive explanation, this thesis uses a qualitative approach that is suited for exploring complex social phenomena and interpreting human experiences that are not easily quantifiable, which can be done through in-depth studies of particular events, phenomena, regions, nations, organizations, or individuals (Lamont, 2015). The approach also helps in exploring how organizations perceive and enact their roles in the effort to prevent child marriage (Tenny, Brannan, & Brannan, 2022).

Among the various methods of qualitative, this study uses the case study methods, which facilitates an in-depth exploration of specific instances of cooperation. The case study approach is appropriate for analyzing a specific case within a defined context such as the Gema Cita program. This method enables the researcher to gather and analyze data from multiple sources over a defined period. (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Cases can also be a concrete entity, such as individuals, a small group, an organization, or partnership (Creswell, 2013). For this thesis, Gema Cita serves as a representative case that illustrates the cooperation between an NGO and the local government in addressing child marriage and the broader implications of NGO-state cooperation in the context of Indonesia's commitment to achieving Target 5.3 of the SDGs, which targets the elimination of child marriage.

The scope of this research is limited to exploring the cooperative efforts between a non-governmental organization (Yayasan Plan International Indonesia) and the local government in Indonesia, specifically in Sukabumi and West Lombok. By focusing on the Gema Cita program, the study highlights the collaborative strategies implemented to achieve Target 5.3. While this study represents a specific case within the broader context of NGO-state cooperation, it serves as an example of how such cooperation can contribute to global development goals.

This study uses both primary and secondary data to explain the topic in this study. Primary data were collected through a semi-structured interview, a method commonly used in social sciences to obtain in-depth insights while allowing flexibility in responses. (Mashuri, Sarib, Alhabsyi, Syam, & Ruslin, 2022). An interview was conducted with the Project Manager of Gema Cita. This interview provided insights into the program's strategies, challenges, and impacts. The qualitative data gained from the interview are important to understand the program's role in addressing child marriage, particularly to see its impact and contribution in fulfilling the Target 5.3. To complement the primary data, secondary data were also collected from various sources, including official reports of Gema Cita by Plan Indonesia, which is essential for verifying the interview data and offer a holistic perspective of the program's impact. Other secondary data are academic journals, news articles, and digital platforms of the local government and Plan Indonesia., which offer updates, campaign materials, and reports related to Gema Cita.

This study used data processing and analysis method based on Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2014), which are as follows:

1. Data reduction, which involves selecting, focusing, simplifying, and transforming the data. After that, the data is coded to identify key themes and patterns. A similar process was also applied to the secondary data. The data was constantly checked to ensure relevance in answering the research questions.
2. Data display, where the result of the previous step was presented as descriptive and analytical text, which is supported by tables and figures to further support the findings.
3. Conclusion drawing or verification, where the analysis based on the processed qualitative data,

along with the liberalism institutionalism theory, international regime theory, the concept of SDGs, and the concept of child marriage became a tool to develop the conclusion of this thesis.

4. RESULT

Child marriage remains as a significant issue across various regions in Indonesia. All provinces in Sulawesi and Kalimantan report child marriage rates above the national average. Notably, West Sulawesi has the highest prevalence at 19.43%, while West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) in the Java-Bali-Nusa Tenggara region reports a prevalence of 15.48% (Bappenas & Central Agency of Statistics, 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated this issue, as reflected from the surge of marriage dispensation applications, a legal permission granted by the court allowing children to marry. Data indicates a sharp increase in these applications, from 24,864 cases in 2019 to 64,225 in 2020 and 62,890 cases in 2021 (Julianto, Kamsi, Haq, Shofa, & Liem, 2022). Moreover, a study by the Australia Indonesia Partnership for Justice 2 (AIPJ2) (2022) found that judges granted 95% of the 55,000 marriage dispensation cases, with only 1% being rejected and 4% withdrawn by the parents.

Multiple factors contribute to the persistence of child marriage in Indonesia. These include social, health, economic, educational, information technology, and religious and cultural traditions (Yayasan Plan International Indonesia & Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia, 2021). In rural areas, limited access to information, education, and transportation correlates with higher cases of child marriage, with 27.1% cases occurring in rural areas compared to 17.1% in urban areas (UNICEF, 2016). Another research shows that girls in rural areas are twice more likely to marry as children compared to their counterparts in urban areas (Bappenas and the Central Agency of Statistics, 2020).

Health-related factors, such as teenage pregnancy, unstable emotional and mental states in adolescents, and limited knowledge of reproductive health and sexuality, also contribute to child marriage. A 2017 study highlighted that refusal to provide sex education to children only increases vulnerability among adolescents, as they are in a critical stage of curiosity and identity formation (Putri, 2019). Economic factors are similarly significant; impoverished families often view child

marriage as a means to alleviate financial burdens. Girls from low-income households are perceived as a financial burden, prompting families to marry off their daughters at a young age. This often results in lower educational attainment for these girls, with the majority only completing elementary or junior high school (Bappenas and the Central Agency of Statistics, 2020).

Easier access to the internet and social media has also influenced child marriage rates. Exposure to harmful online content, including pornography, and misinformation about sexuality and reproduction system, has been linked to promotion of child marriage practices. For example, in 2021, the Indonesian Child Protection Commission reported Aisha Wedding Organizer for promoting child marriage and siri marriages, raising concerns about the influence of such content on adolescents (Purnamasari & Meiliana, 2021). Cultural and religious norm further perpetuates child marriage in Indonesia. Some communities continue to believe that girls and women should be subservient to their husbands, with younger brides perceived as more obedient (Plan International & Coram International, 2015). Child marriage is also often seen as a preventive measure against zina (premarital sex) and unintended pregnancies (Pakasi, 2019).

Despite recent declines in child marriage rates, which fell from 19.06% in 2018 to 13.45% in 2022, the issues remain prevalent. Approximately 330,000 children, primarily girls, enter into marriage each year (Australia Indonesia Partnership for Justice 2, 2022).

CHILD MARRIAGE IN ASSISTED AREAS

Child marriage remains a critical issue in the areas assisted in the Gema Cita program, specifically Sukabumi and West Lombok. In West Java, the child marriage rate reached 8.65%, surpassing the national average of 8.06% (Fatimah, 2024). Furthermore, the Central Agency of Statistics (2024) reported a higher proportion of child marriages in the province, with 10.09% marriages involving children in 2021, again exceeding the national average.

The increase in marriage dispensation in West Java further highlights the severity of the problem. The number of such applications rose from 8,321 in 2020 to 8,607 in the third quarter of 2022 (Ramdhani, 2023). Meanwhile, the Cibadak Religious Court in Sukabumi reported 595 cases

from 2019 to March 2024, with a significant number of applicants already pregnant, reflecting both the impact of legal changes to Law No. 16 of 2019 and cultural pressures to get married in younger age (Fatimah, 2024).

Meanwhile, in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), almost half of the mothers had their first marriage between the ages of 15 and 19, with 2.11% marrying before 15 years old (as cited in Dewi & Jumaah, 2022). Research by Benedicta et al., (2021) also revealed that 26% of female respondents aged 18-24 in West Lombok were married before 18, highlighting the high probability of children in the region. The Covid-19 pandemic further exacerbated child marriage in NTB, with cases increasing from 370 in 2019 to 1,132 in 2021 (Zakaria, 2022). West Lombok, in particular, saw a high prevalence, with 50.87% of marriages in 2020 involving children aged 10-19 (Dewi & Jumaah, 2022). Despite ongoing efforts, the persistence of child marriage in these regions indicates the need for more comprehensive and sustained interventions to address this complex issue.

SDGS AS AN INTERNATIONAL REGIME

Krasner's definition of international regimes as sets of principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures that shape actors' expectations in international relations is central to understanding the role of the SDGs as an international regime (Ari, 2018). Regimes, by facilitating cooperation among states and other actors, address global challenges that are beyond the capacity of any single actor to resolve (Bradford, 2007). The SDGs exemplify this, serving as a comprehensive international regime that encourages cooperation among various actors to address a wide range of global issues while also achieving the objectives in the SDGs.

The SDGs function by setting universal goals and targets that guide the actions and decisions of states and non-state actors alike. These goals reflect a global consensus on the necessity to tackle sustainable development challenges, providing a framework of principles, norms, and rules supported by the UN. The legitimacy of the UN, along with peer pressure from other states, compels states to adopt and integrate the SDGs into their policies.

In Indonesia, the influence of the SDGs as an international regime is evident in the interrogation of these goals into national policies through

Presidential Regulation No. 59 of 2017, which incorporates the SDGs within Indonesia's national development planning framework Goals, such as the Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) (Bappenas, 2021). For instance, the RPJMN 2020-2024 divides the SDG Goals and Targets into four pillars: Social, Economic, Environment, and Law and Governance, with national targets that are aligned with the SDGs serving as benchmarks for various ministries and local governments in implementing, monitoring, and evaluating progress (Republic of Indonesia, 2021).

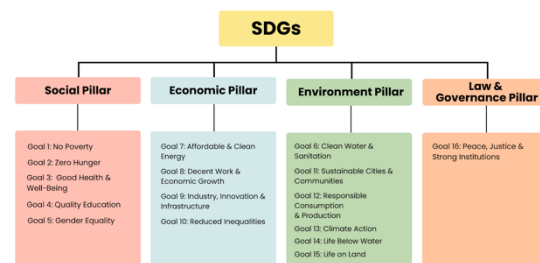


Figure 1. Four Pillars in RPJMN
Source: (Republic of Indonesia, 2021)

A specific example of the integration of SDGs can be seen through the incorporation of Goal 5 particularly Target 5.3, with the National Strategy on the Prevention of Child Marriage (STRANAS PPA), which was launched as part of the 2020-2024 RPJMN. STRANAS PPA seek to reduce child marriage rate from 11.21% in 2018 to 8.74% by 2024, employing five key strategies that address the root causes of child marriage, such as poverty, lack of education, and cultural norms, while also empowering communities to resist this harmful practice. These strategies include: (1) Optimization of Children's Capacity; (2) Environment Enabling the Prevention of Child Marriage; (3) Accessibility and Service Expansion; (4) Strengthening Regulations and Institutions; and (5) Strengthening Stakeholder Coordination (Bappenas, 2020).

The strategies are closely aligned with the broader objectives of Goal 5. For example, the first strategy that focused on optimizing children's capacity through Sexual and Reproductive Health and Right (SRHR) education directly supports Target 5.3 by helping girls pursue their education and delay marriage. Similarly, efforts to change societal norms and perceptions about child marriage through community engagements and the promotion of child-friendly schools resonate with the SDGs' overarching goals of eliminating

gender-based discrimination and harmful practices (Bappenas, 2020).

Furthermore, the third strategy aims to improve access to essential services, such as healthcare and education, for girls and their families, addressing structural barriers that contribute to child marriage. The legal framework and institutional support emphasized in the fourth strategy, including the enforcement of laws like Law No. 16 of 2019, ensures alignment with Target 5.3, therefore reinforcing Indonesia's commitment to eliminate child marriage. Finally, the fifth strategy highlights the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration, reflecting the SDGs' emphasis on cooperation for sustainable development (Bappenas, 2020).

The interconnectedness of each goal in the SDGs further enhances their influence as an international regime. Bradford (2007) argues that the interconnection of issues can facilitate adherence to commitments, as progress in one area can significantly impact progress in others. For example, eliminating child marriage (Target 5.3) is closely linked to at least nine other goals, such as ending poverty (Goal 1), ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being (Goal 3), ensuring quality education (Goal 4), and reducing inequalities (Goal 10), among others (Girls Not Brides, 2023). This interconnectedness helps to foster compliance, as addressing child marriage is integral to the overall development goals and progress. As such, STRANAS PPA's contribution to preventing child marriage not only advance Goal 5 but also other interconnected goals, such as ensuring more girls can finish their education (Goal 4), which in turn support efforts to reduce poverty (Goal 1) and promote economic growth (Goal 8).

The influence of the SDGs extends beyond shaping national policies to also fostering cooperation among various actors, such as governments, civil society organizations, and other international organizations. The SDGs recognize that achieving sustainable development could not be done by a single actor alone, it requires collaborative efforts that utilize the strengths and resources of diverse stakeholders (United Nations, 2015). This collaborative approach is also adopted in the fifth strategy of STRANAS PPA. By aligning STRANAS PPA with the SDGs' focus on cooperation, the national policies encourage local initiatives to draw on a wide range of expertise, resources, and support networks, improving its

effectiveness and contributing to the global effort to eliminate child marriage.

The cooperation between Plan Indonesia and local governments in implementing Gema Cita in Sukabumi and West Lombok exemplifies the cooperative spirit of the SDGs in addressing child marriage.

GEMA CITA

Yayasan Plan International Indonesia (Plan Indonesia), affiliated with Plan International, has been a key actor in advancing children's rights and equality for girls since its establishment in Indonesia in 1969. The organization, officially recognized as Yayasan Plan International Indonesia in 2017, focuses on empowering children, youth, and communities to address the root causes of girls' discrimination, exclusion, and vulnerability, while promoting policy changes at various levels (Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, 2023).

Plan Indonesia's Gema Cita (Generasi Emas Bangsa Bebas Perkawinan Usia Anak) program targets the prevention of child marriage and teenage pregnancy by strengthening adolescents' and young people agency regarding SRHR, creating a supportive environment through Community-Based Integrated Child Protection Program (PATBM/KPAD), Child-Friendly School (SRA), and Children's Village Forum (FAD), and advocating for policy changes at multiple levels (Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, 2022).

Gema Cita, which continues the efforts of the Yes I Do program (2016-2020) was implemented over 24 months in Sukabumi and West Lombok. Targeting junior and senior high school students, young people aged 13-24, parents, teachers, and community leaders, the program aims to build awareness and capacity to combat child marriage (Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, 2024). The involvement of adults and broader community members is crucial given the complex and multifaceted nature of child marriage, which requires a comprehensive and holistic approach as emphasized by STRANAS PPA (Bappenas, 2020; Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, 2024).

The Gema Cita program implemented a multifaceted strategy that integrates schools and communities as focal points. The strategy also emphasizes advocacy efforts to address child marriage.

To enhance access to SRHR, Gema Cita adopts a peer education approach, encouraging knowledge sharing and behavior modification among adolescents and young people (Abdi & Simbar, 2013). Peer educators, who undergo specific training, play an important role in fostering trust and facilitating discussion on sensitive topics. This method not only increases participation but also cultivates leadership skills among adolescents and young people.

Plan Indonesia initiated the training of Master Trainers in SRHR, Gender and Inclusion, Gender-Based Violence, and other related topics. These trainers, drawn from diverse stakeholders including Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD), health centers, schools, and children from the Regency and Village Children's Forums, subsequently trained peer educators. The peer educators then led their peers through 18 discussion sessions covering SRHR, Child Rights, violence prevention, and more (Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, 2022, 2024).

Peer educators also serve as channels for reporting child marriage. They collaborate with the Child-Friendly Schools (SRA) team to intervene in potential child marriages (M. Zaini, personal communication, May 24, 2024). This strategy aligns with Target 5.6 and STRANAS PPA's first strategy, emphasizing the optimization of children's capacity and universal access to SRHR as key elements in combating child marriage and achieving Goal 5 (United Nations, 2023).

Child-Friendly School (Sekolah Ramah Anak/SRA) is a policy initiated by UNICEF and its framework is grounded in the CRC. In Indonesia, the SRA is implemented through the Regulation of the State Minister of Women Empowerment and Child Protection No. 8 of 2014 (Hajaroh, Rukiyati, Purwastuti, & Saptono, 2020). Gema Cita enhances the capacity of SRA by training schools and relevant stakeholders in child protection and SRHR. For instance, a training session at SMPN 1 Sukaraja, organized by Plan Indonesia and Sukabumi DP3A, improved knowledge and services related to child protection in schools, which helps to foster a safe environment (AliansiNews, 2022).

Plan Indonesia also emphasized the active involvement of children in SRA, which is based on

Plan Indonesia's finding in one of the assisted schools that did not involve the children in the SRA team. To address this, Plan Indonesia provided capacity building to the school and emphasized the importance of involving children so their opinions and aspirations could be heard (M. Zaini, personal communication, May 24, 2024). This strategy not only advances Goal 5 but also aligns with Goal 4, which emphasizes the need for inclusive and equitable quality education and the creation of safe, non-violent, and inclusive learning environments. It also supports STRANAS PPA's objectives of creating a supportive environment for child marriage prevention.

The Community-Based Integrated Child Protection Program (PATBM) is a child protection initiative created by the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection and is managed by the local residents in a village or sub-district (Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak, 2017). PATBM plays a critical role in preventing child marriage at the grassroots level. To enhance PATBM's capacity, Plan Indonesia provides capacity building to the PATBM members through several activities, such as workshops, discussions, and campaigns. For example, the PATBM in Margaluyu Village conducted discussion on preventing child marriage, while in Warung Kiara Village, the parents were involved in child marriage prevention campaigns (Ginancar, 2024; Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, 2024).

Plan Indonesia also conducted joint review and monitoring of PATBM and SRA, such as the monitoring activity in Sukabumi that involved related government agencies and the Children's Forum (Forum Anak Jawa Barat, 2023). This activity ensures accountability and progress toward the program's objectives.

The strategy of involving PATBM is related to Goal 5, where PATBM helps to address the cultural norms and belief that perpetuates child marriage. PATBM also focuses on mobilizing communities to actively participate in child marriage prevention efforts, which aligns with the second strategy of STRANAS PPA. This strategy is important to strengthen the collective efforts at the grassroots level, making it an essential part of the national strategy to eliminate child marriage (Bappenas, 2020).

Advocacy is central to Gema Cita, it helps to amplify the adolescent and young people's voices

in policy discussions. The program integrates peer educators with the Children's Forums, providing training in GESI, policy advocacy, and research. These efforts help to empower youth to create policy briefs and advocate for stronger measures against child marriage, such as the inclusion of SRHR in school curriculum and the establishment of PATBM in all villages (Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, 2024). Advocacy activities also include creating educational content and leveraging social media (Plan Indonesia [@planindonesia], 2024).

The advocacy efforts are directly linked with Goal 5, specifically Target 5.3. By empowering adolescents and young people to engage in policy advocacy, the program advances the goal of gender equality and the empowerment of girls. These advocacy activities also align with STRANAS PPA's fourth strategy, as it strengthens the legal and institutional frameworks aimed at preventing child marriage.

The implementation of Gema Cita faced significant challenges, primarily the low awareness of child marriage in the community (M. Zaini, personal communication, May 24, 2024). About 36% of community members do not perceive child marriage as problematic. Traditional beliefs further complicate discussions on SRHR, with parents and community leaders initially resistant to the program's education initiatives. In addition, adolescents and young people still perceive discourse on sexual and reproductive health as taboo (Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, 2022).

The next challenge is at preventing child marriage, with the program successfully intervening in only 10 out of 15 identified cases. Contributing factors include children already expelled from school and parents proceeding with marriage dispensation applications or arranging sirri marriage (M. Zaini, personal communication, May 24, 2024). While not legally recognized, these marriages still pose significant risks for the children involved (Idris, Lestari, & Erma, 2023; Tambunan, Sriono, & Siregar, 2021).

Lack of support from the community presents another challenge. For example, inadequate support from the Margaluyu village government resulted in the PATBM activities' budget for child marriage prevention being returned to the village (Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, 2024).

Moreover, there were incidents of schools expelling children experiencing unintended pregnancies (M. Zaini, personal communication, May 24, 2024). Expelling pregnant girls would disrupt their education and further increase their vulnerability to child marriage (Wulandari, Laksono, & Matahari, 2023).

Moreover, coordination among government agencies during the implementation of Gema Cita has also been relatively low (M. Zaini, personal communication, May 24, 2024). Effective coordination is crucial for achieving development objectives and implementing policies that require actions from multiple government agencies. (James & Nakamura, 2015). However, inadequate coordination could lead to inconsistent support that affects both the implementation and the sustainability of the program. For instance, the Sukabumi Health Department faced difficulties in providing effective reproductive health counseling activities due to the needs for cross-sectoral coordination with various agencies (Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, 2022). Similarly, Afandi, Anomsari, & Novira (2021) highlighted poor cross-sectoral coordination between government agencies as one of the challenges to effectively implement the SDGs.

This study focuses on the first two objectives—strengthening adolescents' and young people's agency on SRHR and creating a supportive environment for them. The third objective, which concerns strengthening policies and laws, is excluded due to extension of the program in Nagekeo, East Nusa Tenggara (Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, 2024). To assess the first objective, Plan Indonesia conducted a survey involving 365 adolescents and youth aged 13-24 years across both regencies. The survey measured their agency, defined by their confidence and ability to discuss topics related to SRHR, which include menstruation, sexual health, making informed decisions about sexual behavior, and more (Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, 2024).

The result shows an increase in the agency of adolescents and young people, with the percentage of those capable of making informed decisions about SRHR increased from 20.4% at baseline to 54.8% after the intervention (Figure 2). This improvement indicates that SRHR education and campaigns effectively empowered adolescents and young people to make responsible health decisions.

In addition, there was a notable increase in confidence among the respondents to discuss SRHR topics; 54.2% felt more confident discussing these topics with their peers (increase from 34.3% at baseline) and 40.8% expressed more confidence discussing SRHR with their parents, compared to 21% at baseline (Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, 2024).

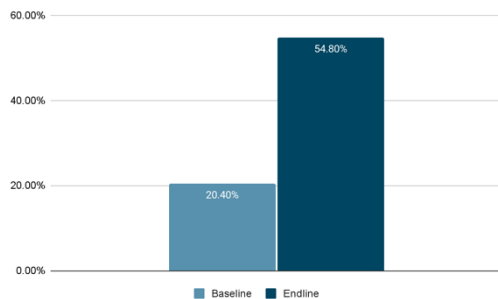


Figure 2. Adolescents and Young People Able to Make Informed Decisions about SRHR
Source: (Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, 2024)

These outcomes demonstrate the success of Gema Cita in improving the agency of adolescents and young people and facilitating open discussions on previously taboo subjects such as SRHR. This increase in agency contributes directly to achieving Goal 5 and Goal 3, which advocate for universal access to SRHR education, and support the first strategy of STRANAS PPA that aims to optimize children's capacities.

To evaluate the second objective, Plan Indonesia surveyed 251 parents/guardians and 35 community members, including PATBM members, teachers, community leaders, midwives, religious leaders, and village heads. The survey assessed community support for adolescents' and young people's autonomy in marriage-related decisions. The result shows a significant shift in attitudes. Initially, only 3.6% of community members supported adolescents and young people making their own decisions about marriage; this figure increased to 60.4% after a year of Gema Cita (Figure 3) (Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, 2024).

The program also influenced parental attitudes, with 85.7% of parents acknowledging the health risks associated with child marriage, and 94.4% recognizing its potential to increase the risks of divorce, poverty, and school dropout.

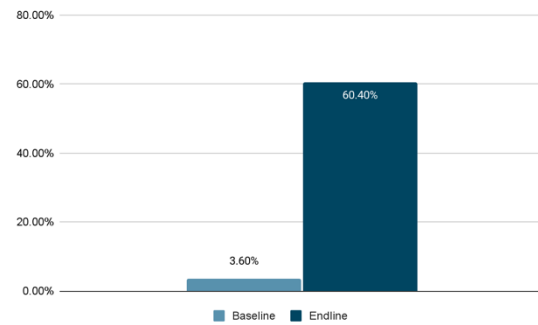


Figure 3. Community Members that Support Adolescents and Young People to Make Their Own Decisions About Marriage
Source: (Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, 2024)

The shift in attitude reflects the program's success in changing community perspectives on adolescents' and young people's rights, particularly regarding marriage. This outcome directly contributes to the overall goal of eliminating child marriage as outlined in Target 5.4 and STRANAS PPA's second strategy, which aims to transform cultural norms and beliefs that perpetuate child marriage.

Gema Cita also promoted significant changes within local governments. The program helps to increase the awareness of child marriage and contributed to the development of Regional Action Plan (Rencana Aksi Daerah/RAD) for Child Marriage Prevention in Sukabumi (2023-2027) and NTB (2023-2026), with legal backing from regional regulations, such as the West Nusa Tenggara Governor Regulation No. 34 of 2023. These regulations also established a Task Force consisting of various government agencies to implement strategies for preventing child marriage (Pemerintah Kabupaten Sukabumi, 2023; Pemerintah Provinsi NTB, 2023). Gema Cita's impact extended beyond Indonesia, as Sukabumi was selected as a learning site for child marriage prevention by Plan International Cambodia and the Cambodian Government (Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, 2024).

The success of Gema Cita can be largely attributed to the collaborative efforts between Plan Indonesia and the local government, each bringing unique strengths to effectiveness address child marriage and promote gender equality.

Plan Indonesia's involvement is driven by its mission to promote children's rights and equality for girls, recognizing child marriage as a significant barrier to achieving these goals (Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, 2023). The organization employs a comprehensive approach including advocacy, community engagement, and capacity building to tackle the systemic issue that led to child marriage. Through Gema Cita, Plan Indonesia can implement these strategies at the grassroots level, working directly with communities to raise awareness and build resilience against child marriage and teenage pregnancy (Plan International, 2016). Partnering with local governments enhances these efforts by leveraging additional resources and advocating for stronger enforcement of laws protecting children.

For local governments, cooperating with Plan Indonesia aligns with the implementation of STRANAS PPA, which is also linked to the SDGs. STRANAS PPA outline strategies for preventing child marriage, many of which are directly supported by activities in Gema Cita, such as raising awareness about SRHR among adolescents and young people and providing capacity building for communities through PATBM and SRA. STRANAS PPA also emphasizes strengthening cooperation with various stakeholders to accelerate the elimination of child marriage (Bappenas, 2020). As such, cooperating with Plan Indonesia through Gema Cita allows local governments to effectively implement STRANAS PPA strategies and make progress towards the elimination of child marriage. Furthermore, the cooperation is motivated by the government's need to address a shortage of human resources and limited funding for child marriage prevention initiatives (Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, 2022).

The cooperation aligns with the principles of liberal institutionalism, which emphasizes the importance of cooperation between state and non-state actors in addressing complex global issues. Cooperation with other actors improves the capacity of the government to tackle challenges that would be more difficult to address independently (Steans, Pettiford, Diez, & El-Anis, 2010). Plan Indonesia can contribute valuable expertise, resources, and advocacy strategies, while local governments provide a supportive policy framework, enforcement of policies, and coordination with various government agencies.

The cooperation between Plan Indonesia and the local government has begun prior to the implementation of Gema Cita through a startup workshop where both entities identify villages and schools that need assistance to address child marriage and teenage pregnancy. Plan Indonesia also explains about the program to the relevant stakeholders (Forum Anak Sukabumi, 2022a, 2022b).

Plan Indonesia further strengthens its cooperation with the local government through formal agreement. In 2022, Plan Indonesia and the NTB Provincial Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Cooperation Agreement (PKS) regarding child marriage prevention. This agreement also aims to strengthen the implementation of NTB Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2021 on the Prevention of Child Marriage (Pemerintah Provinsi NTB, 2022; Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, 2022). In 2023, Plan Indonesia signed another MoU with the West Java Provincial Government that focused on protecting and fulfilling the rights of children, (Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, 2023).

Plan Indonesia plays a pivotal role in Gema Cita by enhancing community capacity and raising awareness among government officials about the urgency of addressing child marriage. The organization conducts regular capacity-building activities and engages government officials in joint monitoring of villages and schools, allowing them to observe best practices and identify challenges (M. Zaini, personal communication, May 24, 2024).

Plan Indonesia also advocates for increased budget allocations for child marriage prevention and promotes the integration of PATBM and SRA into the PPA Task Force (Satgas PPA) in the Regional Action Plan (RAD) (M. Zaini, personal communication, May 24, 2024). This aligns with the interest of NGOs to increase the likelihood of government compliance with international commitments like the SDGs through monitoring, publicizing, and organizing efforts (Simmons, 2009). Plan Indonesia systematically monitors and evaluates program outcomes, providing feedback to local governments to ensure alignment with Target 5.3 and progress in combating child marriage.

Furthermore, Plan Indonesia leverages its domestic and international influence to raise awareness and

advocate for stronger government action. Domestically, Plan Indonesia empower local actor with the knowledge and skills needed to sustain child marriage prevention efforts through capacity-building initiatives and community dialogues. Internationally, Plan Indonesia's connections with transnational networks, such as Plan International Cambodia, enhance its ability to advocate for greater attention in addressing child marriage at both national and international levels. The organization's strategic use of media and campaigns also plays a crucial role in holding governments accountable and driving policy changes related to child marriage prevention.

The local government is essential in formalizing agreements that enhance cooperation between Plan Indonesia and the local government. The MoU and Cooperation Agreement ensures a more coordinated effort to combat child marriage by defining specific roles and responsibilities, aligning their efforts with the established norms and standards for child protection and gender equality. The government agencies also assist in coordinating with other agencies, contributing to module development, and participating in information dissemination (Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, 2022). This active involvement lends credibility to the program, fostering community trust and engagement to achieve the program's objectives.

According to Steans, Pettiford, Diez, & El-Anis (2010), cooperation is maintained through frameworks that provide rules and procedures to guide the interaction between the actors involved. In the context of Gema Cita, the local government and Plan Indonesia work within such a framework that promotes cooperation and ensures both parties fulfill their obligations. This formalized partnership helps to leverage the strength of both entities by combining their expertise, resources, and innovative strategies, which might be difficult for either entity to do independently.

This also aligns with the arguments by Bradford (2007) in which a regime could reduce a transaction cost by formalizing cooperation and minimizing the expenses associated with future agreements. In the context of Gema Cita, formalizing the cooperation helps to streamline efforts between Plan Indonesia and local governments. It reduces complexities and costs associated with negotiating and establishing new agreements from scratch. Integrating their programs within the SDGs

framework also benefits Plan Indonesia and the local government, as they can utilize existing guidelines and initiatives, reducing the time and resources needed to develop and implement new initiatives.

The local government also plays a critical role in implementing and enforcing policies related to child marriage prevention, such as the PATBM, SRA, and Regional Action Plan (RAD). The effectiveness and sustainability of these policies depend on the government's commitment to enforce them. For instance, the success of PATBM relies on the local government's ability to develop, implement, and monitor these plans across communities. The government's support is also important for coordinating with stakeholders and ensuring that initiatives like PATBM are effectively carried out.

In addition, the local government facilitates coordination among various government agencies involved in Gema Cita. Without this specific role, aligning efforts among government agencies would be more challenging. This coordinated approach also promotes sustainability because when various government agencies are involved, the program's efforts and knowledge are more likely to be integrated into the local policies and maintained over time.

5. CONCLUSION

This thesis looks into the cooperation between Plan Indonesia and the local government through the Gema Cita program to understand its effectiveness in eliminating child marriage in Sukabumi and West Lombok and its contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The findings reveal that the SDGs function as an international regime that guides states and non-state actors to address global challenges in a collaborative manner. Indonesia's commitment to the SDGs, particularly Target 5.3 that aims to eliminate harmful practices such as child marriage, is reflected in the adoption of the SDGs into its national policies, such as the National Strategy on the Prevention of Child Marriage (STRANAS PPA). STRANAS PPA outlines several strategies that address the root causes of child marriage while also empowering children and communities to prevent this practice.

The Gema Cita program aligns with STRANAS PPA by focusing on optimizing children's capacity, changing societal norms, improving access to

important services, strengthening regulations, and fostering cooperation among stakeholders. This is reflected in the program's strategies that not only target adolescents and young people but also schools and communities to prevent child marriage through providing Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) education, enhancing the capacity of Child-Friendly Schools (SRA) and the Community-Based Integrated Child Protection Program (PATBM), and advocacy efforts.

The program was met with several challenges, such as low awareness of child marriage and SRHR in the community, lack of community support, and low coordination between government agencies. These challenges highlight the need for stronger coordination and consistent support from all stakeholders to effectively address child marriage and protect children's rights. The aforementioned strategies that Gema Cita implement help to overcome these challenges. As a result, there was increased awareness and positive shifts in attitude within the community, which shows the effectiveness of the program in preventing child marriage. The impact was further evidenced by the adoption of policies by local governments to strengthen child marriage prevention. The program's success has also been recognized internationally as a model for adoption by other governments.

The impact of Gema Cita significantly contributes to the SDGs and STRANAS PPA. The program's impact extends beyond Target 5.3, contributing to other interconnected goals, such as reducing poverty, promoting quality education, and improving good health and well-being. The comprehensive approach in Gema Cita reflects the SDGs' emphasis on addressing interconnected development challenges, demonstrating how Indonesia's policies and local efforts for child marriage prevention are shaped by this international regime.

The roles and responsibilities of Plan Indonesia and the local governments were crucial to the program's success. Plan Indonesia plays a role in providing capacity-building, engaging government officials, advocating for a stronger government action and a better child protection system, and evaluating the effectiveness of Gema Cita. Meanwhile, local governments play important roles in formalizing agreements, enforcing policies, and coordinating efforts across various government agencies. This partnership emphasizes the

importance of cooperation between non-governmental organizations and governmental institutions in achieving social change. The cooperation also exemplifies the SDGs' emphasis on partnership and cooperation among various stakeholders. By leveraging each other's expertise and resources, both entities enhanced the effectiveness of Gema Cita to prevent child marriage. The cooperation also aligns with STRANAS PPA that highlights the need for cooperation among different actors, recognizing that elimination of child marriage requires a collective effort. This cooperative approach not only facilitates the implementation of Gema Cita but also strengthens the overall efforts to end child marriage in Indonesia.

There are several recommendations that can be made to improve the cooperation and effectiveness for child marriage prevention efforts in Indonesia:

1. Plan Indonesia should continue to build and strengthen cooperation not only with governments but also with other NGOs, private sector entities, and international donors. These partnerships can support the expansion of Gema Cita to other regions in Indonesia where child marriage remains a challenge. Local governments should likewise establish and strengthen cooperation with other stakeholders to access additional resources, expertise, and support for child marriage prevention.
2. Effective coordination among various government agencies involved in child protection initiatives is crucial. The low level of coordination found during the implementation of Gema Cita posed significant challenges. To address this, the government should establish a task force that includes representatives from the relevant agencies. This task force would be helpful in streamlining efforts, sharing resources, coordinating with other stakeholders, and ensuring all agencies are aligned in their objectives and activities.
3. To sustain the impact of Gema Cita, local governments should integrate best practices and successful strategies identified in the program. This includes incorporating the principles of SRHR, gender equality, and community empowerment into local policies and regulations. The government should also invest in continuous capacity-building activities for government officials and communities to maintain and pass on the knowledge and skills gained.
4. For broader cooperation between government entities and NGOs, establishing formal frameworks for cooperation would be beneficial. These

frameworks should include shared objectives and clear mechanisms for joint decision-making. Capacity building to improve mutual understanding and respect between government officials and NGO staff can also improve cooperation. By fostering cooperation, both actors can address complex social issues like child marriage more effectively.

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