



# POWER TO YOU(TH)

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## **YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVES AND DECISION-MAKING REGARDING HARMFUL PRACTICES, SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND UNINTENDED PREGNANCY**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY INDONESIA



Ministry of Foreign Affairs



**KIT** Royal  
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# PREFACE

KIT Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), in collaboration with in-country research partners, is pleased to present this executive summary of the Power to You(th) baseline study conducted in Indonesia<sup>1</sup>. This was one of seven such studies conducted for the Power to You(th) programme in the seven programme implementation countries, namely Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Senegal, and Uganda. Power to You(th) is a five-year programme (2021–2025) with a specific focus on harmful practices (such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and child marriage), sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and unintended pregnancy. These are persistent ‘key issues’ on which insufficient progress has been made over the years in the participating countries.

Power to You(th) programme aims to ensure that young people (aged under 35) are meaningfully included in discussions and decisions, particularly those related to their SRHR. By increasing the participation of young people from a range of backgrounds and groups in political and civic space, the programme aims to improve youth-led and focused advocacy and accountability in relation to unintended pregnancy, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation/ cutting (FGM/C) in the seven focus countries.

The programme is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and globally the programme is coordinated by three partners: Amref Flying Doctors, Rutgers and Gender Justice (Sonke). In Indonesia, the Power to You(th) programme will be implemented by Rutgers Indonesia and Yayasan Prapta 2030 Nusa in West Java, East Java and West Nusa Tenggara provinces.

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<sup>1</sup> The full baseline study report is available here: <https://www.kit.nl/publication/power-to-youth-baseline-report-indonesia/>

## BASELINE FINDINGS: YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVES AND DECISION-MAKING REGARDING HARMFUL PRACTICES, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND TEENAGE PREGNANCY

The Power to You(th) baseline study was conducted to provide a comprehensive understanding of the perspectives (knowledge, attitudes, priorities and demands) of adolescents and young people on child marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), teenage pregnancy and violence against women (VAW). Conducted by Center of Gender and Sexuality Studies of the University of Indonesia and KIT Royal Tropical Institute, this mixed-methods was carried out in the districts of Garut, Jember and East Lombok Districts to inform the Power to You(th) programme. The study design included a desk review<sup>1</sup>, and quantitative and qualitative research techniques in the form of surveys, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. An online survey was conducted with 810 young people (15-24) to explore the above themes, while 18 change-makers working in Indonesia responded to an online survey to better understand the civic space in relation to SRHR in the country. Lastly, 92 participants were reached through the qualitative component.

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2 [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1dDGEoDKGhO\\_JKEqa67JSi\\_0CL0m1hImU](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1dDGEoDKGhO_JKEqa67JSi_0CL0m1hImU)

# KEY BASELINE RESULTS FOR THE POWER TO YOU(TH) PROGRAMME IN INDONESIA

The baseline study suggests the deeply interwoven and culturally entrenched nature of harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancy, as well as some key civil society success stories. Young people's knowledge, agency, and attitudes towards these issues was mixed; on the one hand, most were aware of the negative consequences of child marriage, but when it came to FGM/C they had limited knowledge of the negative effects, and most still wished to continue the practice. They felt relatively able to speak up about sexual assault, but did not feel confident doing so in cases of FGM/C and pregnancy due to limited awareness and taboos. Deeply rooted norms around gender and sexuality continue to restrict the agency and rights of all young people, with victim-blaming and abstinence-focused messaging found to be common.

Young people did not always feel comfortable speaking up in public, and often did not feel able to make decisions about important aspects of their lives such as careers and relationships. Those who were able to speak up faced ineffective reporting mechanisms and informal community solutions that did not address root causes in a rights-based way. For example child marriage was a common 'solution' to pregnancies occurring outside of marriage, which are heavily stigmatised. Many young people were involved in CSO activities, but young women were still often shut out of leadership roles. Youth activities are commonly directed by adults and the most meaningful engagement is too often limited to highly educated young men. However, many fora have been successful in resisting harmful practices, and in empowering young people to do the same. Health workers, CSOs, and different levels of government are increasingly collaborating with young people, and developing effective programmes through which to tackle SGBV and child marriage.

A healthy civic space and media environment are necessary if these processes are to be further developed, and for constructive public conversations which hold duty-bearers accountable. Many CSOs described restrictions on the freedom of information and expression in Indonesia. However, they could engage in dialogue with government on some Power to You(th) issues, with less focus on FGM/C. Social media is becoming increasingly important for sharing information, and lobbying and advocacy. While the media can play a positive role, reporting can also be biased and stigmatising around issues like sexual violence. CSOs and change-makers face challenges around leadership, finances, lack of information, and occasional mistrust from communities concerned about 'Western values', but they continue to find ways to build these dialogues and defend the rights of young people, while respecting the culture and values of communities with which they work.

## YOUNG PEOPLE'S KNOWLEDGE AND SUPPORT

### *SRHR information is available, but is fragmented and lacks comprehensiveness*

SRHR information was largely accessed through social media, and in some cases through teachers, government and non-governmental programmes in the three districts. All three districts lacked comprehensive SRHR education, however there were few sources of information in the community, such as PIK-R and Adolescent Information and Counselling Centre in Garut and Jember, and family posyandu (integrated health service post) in East Lombok, although it was present only in some villages.

### *Child marriage is common due to religious reasons and to avoid adultery, although many youth wish to marry at a later age*

The number of child marriages in the three study areas was found to be quite high. This could likely be due to raised minimum age for marriage for girls, based on the revision of Marriage Law No. 16 of 2019, and which was worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the three study areas, the reasons for child marriage included the child's desire to marry at a young age, matchmaking/arranged marriages, financial conditions, premarital pregnancy, fear of committing adultery, the view that girls did not need to continue higher education, and the COVID-19 related restrictions that prevented young people from going to school. Many young people were aware about the negative consequences of child marriage through socialization about the new law and often wished to marry at a later age.

*"Wouldn't unwanted things happen, right? If unwanted things happen [referring to sex prior to marriage], parents have to be quick. They have to marry off the children, so that the children are prevented from committing adultery." (Ustaz Imam, religious leader, Jember)*

### *Young people have limited knowledge of FGM/C, and there are changes in the practice*

The baseline study found that young people were confident in their ability to express. Young people had limited knowledge about FGM/C and how it was practiced. Nevertheless, many young people (64%) still wished to circumcise their daughter in the future. There were several reasons for the practice which included its perceived health benefits, for female genital hygiene and to avoid 'hypersexuality' in women. There was still strong public opinion that FGM/C did not cause any negative medical/health effects. FGM/C was still carried out in Jember, by the Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA), while in Garut and East Lombok, this was not the case. In the study areas, particularly Jember and East Lombok, there has been a change in the practice of FGM/C over time into a symbolic practice, when carried out by health workers.

## ***Bodily integrity is important but young people are wary of perpetrators being brought to justice***

Over 40% of young people claimed to know someone who had experienced sexual harassment. Young people mentioned several ways to address VAW. However, many of these placed the responsibility on the young person/survivor themselves (e.g. avoiding travelling at night). Overall, 86% of respondents agreed that they would be confident to report cases of VAW, but many youth were wary of a lack of follow-up after reporting by relevant parties such as parents, village leaders or teachers. Moreover, cases of domestic violence were often resolved amicably and would prevent addressing domestic violence in a more structural and visible way.

## ***Teenage pregnancy is often 'solved' by child marriage***

When an unmarried teenage girl was found to be pregnant, the solution by the family and community was often to get her married. Religious considerations, and the perception that premarital pregnancy was disgraceful often played a role leading into child marriage. This resulted in several requests for marriage dispensation as these young women were underage. While young people had modest knowledge about contraceptive methods to prevent pregnancy, young women hesitated to seek out accurate information, as the topic was taboo.

## ***Limited knowledge and taboos prevent young people to speak up and take action around FGM/C and pregnancy***

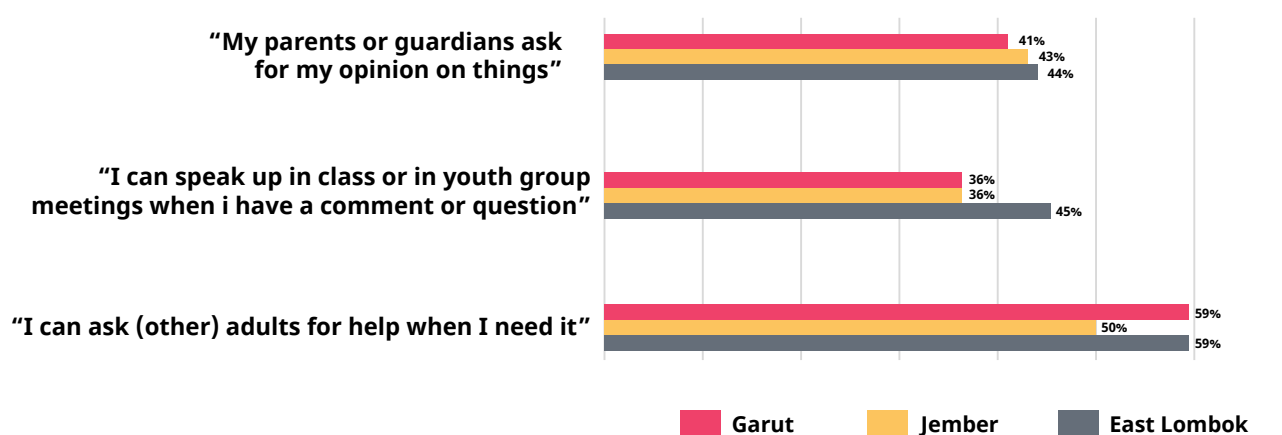
In general, only 39% of young people felt comfortable to speak in public (such as in a classroom). Young people in East Lombok and Garut shared that they had the courage to express themselves and follow their desires, compared to those in Jember. However, parents still played a large role in young people's decision making, including marriage-related decisions. In cases of sexual harassment experienced by others, 85.5% of young people felt confident to report it, but this was not the case for FGM/C and pregnancy due to limited awareness, taboos and decision-making ability on these topics.

In general, based on the survey results, young people in the three study areas discussed issues of child marriage, VAW, FGM/C and teenage pregnancy. Young people in the three study areas felt mostly supported by health workers (68%), teachers (66%) and parents (62%) while discussing Power to You(th) issues.

## YOUNG PEOPLE'S AGENCY AND MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

*Several youth organisations and activities exist, some of which focus on SRHR issues*

Young people were involved in various organizational activities at the school and community level, both as administrators and members of organizations. These were often based on hobbies or religion, some of which addressed the core Power to You(th) issues such as karang taruna (youth group) and children's forums, GenRe (Planned Generation), PIK-R (Adolescent Information and Counselling Centre) and Intan Muda. Some youth were involved in activities to prevent harmful practices, teenage pregnancy and VAW (35%), particularly at the district level. In East Lombok, young people were involved in *belas* (cancellation) of child marriages and handling cases of VAW at the village level, although not in the programme intervention villages. However, some youth initiatives promoted abstinence such as Insan GenRe in Jember, with its principle of "Say No to Child Marriage, Premarital Sex, and Drugs".



*Youth faced various obstacles in participating in activities related to the core issues*

A variety of obstacles were identified in participating in activities related to the Power to You(th) issues, such as the absence of available discussion forums—particularly for women, the lack of involvement of young people and adolescents in the *musrenbangdes*<sup>1</sup>, the absence of friends involved, and the lack of attention from village officials and other stakeholders for these issues. Active involvement in these issues, in general, took place at the district level. At the village level, youth lacked capacity to do lobbying and advocacy (L & A). Their involvement in strategic forums in villages such as the *musrenbang* (development planning forum) was also limited. In general, the engagement of young people with state actors was minimal, with the exception of the GenRe organization, which was initiated by the local government.

3 Development planning forum



### ***Young women play an active role in youth organisations, but face more obstacles than young men to participate***

Based on qualitative data from the three districts, particularly in Jember, both young women and men theoretically had the same opportunity to be engaged in youth organizations, but in practice, the opportunities for young women are different, with males still dominating as leaders or administrators of youth organizations in the three districts. Parents supported young women in participating but very often, young women still occupied feminized positions in the organisation such as that of secretary.

### ***The engagement of youth in lobbying and advocacy activities in Garut and Jember is limited, while the age-appropriate approach for *belas* in East Lombok was successful***

Most of the young people said that they were not very involved in L & A activities targeting the government, especially on SRHR issues. Young people in Garut were engaged only when they were members of programmes under the auspices of the government, such as GenRe. In Jember, many young people, especially in villages, were not yet aware that their opinions were important in advocacy processes. In East Lombok, advocacy efforts, especially in terms of preventing child marriage through the *belas* process, were carried out by the FAD known as the Children's Forum. The head of the Pandan Wangi FAD stated that this was important, since village heads and other regional heads could provide advice to adults of a similar age, while the youth could reach out to the prospective brides and groom. This strategy could defuse the situation as the youth would address them as peers.

### ***Migration of youth, norms around seniority, educational status and gender influence youth participation***

Youth were involved in organisations often as 'participants' but not as 'leaders'. Youth participation continued to be directed by adults, both the village and district governments and religious/community leaders. In addition, youth who were members of organisations affiliated to the government (eg. GenRe), could more likely participate meaningfully up to the district level in hearings, lobbying and formulating local government policies, however they were often highly educated, and male. In addition, many of the youth had migrated outside of the village for job opportunities which meant that the institutional knowledge was lost with these youth.

## NORMS AND ATTITUDES OF SOCIETAL ACTORS ON HARMFUL PRACTICES, SGBV AND UNINTENDED PREGNANCY

### *Attitudes and actions of societal actors are also influenced by sexist social norms*

A positive view of the Power to You(th) programme was shown by various social actors in the three study areas, although there are actors who support child marriage to prevent 'adultery' and to handle cases of teenage pregnancy. Some parents still believe that girls should not pursue higher education as they have to marry, and societal actors adopt a sexist approach to dealing with cases of VAW.

*"... parents were only graduates from elementary school and junior high school, so they only gave us instructions that we were to go up to high school, later the boys would go to Malaysia to become migrant workers to find work, or to work in the fields and become farmers. The girls were to marry, generally it's like that, Mbak [older sister], these had been instilled in our minds by the community from the beginning." (Sabrina, 15-19 years, East Lombok)*

### *Societal actors in Jember and Garut have limited concern and coordination in addressing the Power to You(th) core issues*

Unlike in East Lombok where societal actors play a major and coordinated role, particularly in handling cases of child marriage and preventing gender injustice, the role of societal actors in Garut and Jember is limited. In Garut, various (women's) organisations were campaigning against child marriage at the district level. Moreover, a community leader stated that a task force for handling domestic violence and adolescent issues had been formed at the village level, however the task force has not implemented any activities yet. In Jember, the issue of child marriage has not become a common concern for all existing societal actors at district, sub-district or village level. At the district level, stakeholders worked in silos. Although there is a cooperation agreement between several district-level agencies, lack of budget has prevented the creation of a task force for preventing child marriage, VAW, FGM/C and teenage pregnancy.

### *Religious leaders actively raise awareness about child marriage*

Religious leaders took the initiative of visiting people's homes to have casual chats, as they felt that parents were more comfortable talking about problems related to their children more openly. As per a leader, reactivating positive youth activities—including religious, sports-based and other activities for youth would engage young people and distract them from marriage matters. At the village level, in Jember, religious leaders raised awareness of the new minimum age for marriage through KUA (Office of Religious Affairs), in collaboration with youth organizations on university campuses and village youth organizations.

### ***Health workers counsel, provide services and raise awareness on Power to You(th) core issues***

In Jember, health workers alongside state actors examined survivors of VAW at the village level, advised prospective adolescent bride/grooms to postpone pregnancy and routinely checked on adolescents experiencing pregnancy. In Garut, the midwife interviewed firmly stated that she did not perform FGM/C at all, but instead pretended to do so to reassure the mother of the baby girl, so that the mother would not go to the traditional birth attendant (TBA). Health workers in East Lombok worked closely with the village authorities and the community police to provide counselling during the *belas* process. They also collaborated with youth groups through the formation of PIK-R and trained and supported youth to handle reports of problems pertaining to youth SRHR issues.

### ***CSOs are active in resolving cases of VAW in the three districts***

In Garut, there are many CSOs working on the issue of VAW, including sexual violence, such as the SEMAK Foundation and KPI (Indonesian Women's Coalition). In Jember, several CSOs are involved in reporting and handling cases of VAW as referral agencies for PPT (Integrated Service Centre). However, due to a new district head, previous programmes on VAW were discontinued. For cases of domestic violence in East Lombok that occurred at the village to the district level, LPSDM, a CSO cooperated with several complaint posts from the women's school, having opened complaint centres and safe houses for survivors of domestic violence or violence against children.

### ***Laws and policies exist to address child marriage and VAW and there are some efforts to enforce them***

Policies exist in the three districts on prevention of child marriage and VAW, but none for teenage pregnancy or FGM/C. In Garut, there were at the time of the study no regulations regarding child marriage, although the STOP KABUR (Integrated Strategy for Optimizing the Prevention of Underage Child Marriage) programme for the prevention of child marriage, involving various stakeholders, has been created. In Jember, a circular regarding the prevention of child marriage has been published, and currently a regulation to prevent child marriage is being drafted at the district level. In East Lombok, prevention of child marriage is supported by policies down to the village level, although implementation is still lacking in all villages. Regulations regarding gender mainstreaming exist in Garut and East Lombok, while regulations regarding violence against women and children have been enacted in Jember and Garut.

### ***Various opportunities exist for young people to be involved through state organisations, the musrenbang and children's fora, but social norms and budgetary challenges remain obstacles***

Political will to support young people's involvements in policy processes has become visible in the three districts. Children's forums have also been established, although they have limited budget and policy support to carry out activities in the intervention

villages. In involving youth, governments from the village to the district level provide opportunities for the karang taruna, although not all members were actually young people. The karang taruna have not been fully engaged or involved in sharing opinions with regional heads and village heads in the villages that will become the intervention areas of the Power to You(th) programme. In East Lombok, district head and village regulations supported youth in collaborating with community stakeholders. Young people are also involved in the musrenbang, from the hamlet up to the district level, but this involvement limited as only karang taruna organizers (who are often not young people) are involved in this process. Other programmes such as youth posyandu, and family posyandu, still have to reach their full potential in terms of coverage and quality.

*“So far, in the last musrenbang, from the youths, only the karang taruna was involved, Mbak [older sister]. I involved karang taruna, Village LPM, community leaders, Kyai, and so on. For the others, because the budget is still not available, I am worried that if we invite all of them, then there will be no budget.” (Doni, Karangharjo village official, Jember)*

## CIVIC SPACE AND ROLE OF MEDIA

### *Constrained civic space on the Power to You(th) issues exist in Indonesia*

Many youth and CSO change-makers, as per the online civic space survey, largely felt that freedom of information and expression in Indonesia was constrained. Change-makers highlighted restrictions such as costs and requirements for authorization or criminalisation for certain activities that limit freedom of assembly and legitimate protest. Some groups, such as LGBTI+ groups also had more difficulty gathering and organizing. However, as per the qualitative data, at the district level, some organisations had carried out street protests, demonstrations, hearings and discussions with the government and other CSOs.

### *CSOs are invited to dialogue with the government, but struggle with capacity, funding and image*

As per the civic space survey, change makers categorized the existing dialogue with the government on Power to You(th) issues as constructive, with most stating that the government approached CSOs/change-makers to be actively involved in decision-making or for meaningful consultation on policies relating to child marriage, FGM/C, sexual and gender-based violence and teenage pregnancy. However, the focus on FGM/C was limited. A lack of funds and sufficient knowledge about policy processes and technical capacity/skills were mentioned as problems encountered by (youth-led) CSOs engaged in policy processes. Change-makers felt threatened for their safety, as being perceived as Western 'minions', and they experienced violence and discrimination (e.g. not being invited to strategic forums). Several respondents mentioned collaboration and government support, the role of data and funding as important issues that need attention to build a better civic space.

*"The first time I met an official, namely an official for people's welfare in the regional government, my words were denied, because I did not speak based on facts and data. There, I realized that there was still a lot lacking in data and facts. From that mistake, every time we wanted an audience, we prepared the data first." (Aldi, Chairperson of a youth organization in Garut)*

### *Although there is strong cooperation, a lack of leadership remains a challenge*

In Garut and Jember, although there has been collaboration between local governments and CSOs and among CSOs, there was no joint working group on the issues of child marriage and VAW, unlike in East Lombok, where a task force for the protection of children and women has been formed. However, the child-friendly district task force had not yet been formed, even though it was one of the objectives of the District Head Regulation (Perbup) to prevent child marriage. In this context, a challenge was the lack of strong leadership that unites various stakeholders with diverse interests in a wide district area, resulting in difficulties working together on SRHR issues. The sexist approaches of many government stakeholders in dealing with child marriage and VAW cases was reported as a challenge.

## *Lobbying and advocacy efforts are strengthened through the positive role of (social) media*

Social media is widely used by CSOs, government initiatives and youth organisations to disseminate information and conduct L&A advocacy etc. Local media report data on child marriage and VAW, and the efforts of several youth groups. For instance, the Garut local government is promoting the application-based and interactive STOP KABUR programme, while in Jember, a women's rights organisation uses a WhatsApp group to cover 31 sub-districts to share information about free consultation services and case advocacy. Although the local media played a positive role, reporting tended to be biased and stigmatized survivors of sexual violence. Furthermore, social media were used during the COVID-19 pandemic by various actors to campaign and advocate on SRHR issues.

*"..But due to the pandemic, we were maximizing our work online. We made educational and informative content for adolescents, webinar collaborations, live IG, TikTok competition on the theme of Stop Child Marriage, posters, all of those." (Heri, GenRe youth group, Garut)*

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PTY PROGRAMME

### *Pathway 1. Young people demand accountability and responsiveness on harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancy*

- There is need for capacity-building for youth groups through training on leadership, organizing, advocacy, digital literacy for campaign activities, L&A and social entrepreneurship, as well as on understanding the Power to You(th) issues.
- Inclusive youth forums (such as children's forum) must be established, if they don't yet exist. This forum can oversee all organizations and groups of young people in the village.
- Youth groups and organisations should be allocated funding from village and district governments and given autonomy in the use of these funds

**Stakeholders involved:** Village and district governments, Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, Bappeda (Regional Development Planning Agency), Office of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, Office of Youth and Sports, CSOs, Community leaders

### *Pathway 2: CSOs amplify young people's voices to claim, protect and expand civic space*

- A working group or task force must be established between CSOs and the government that focuses on Power to you(th) issues
- Capacity-building must be provided for CSOs including value clarification, strengthening knowledge on SRHR and meaningful participation of young people
- The leadership capacity of young people in the advocacy network must be developed to create youth champions who can voice the aspirations of young people

**Stakeholders involved:** CSOs, Village and district government, Youth organizations/groups, Community leaders

### *Pathway 3: Societal actors support and promote youth rights and progressive social norms and attitudes to youth rights.*

- Awareness-raising must be conducted about SRHR and Power to You(th) issues among societal actors in the form of discussions at the community and district levels, in collaboration with CSOs working on these topics
- The leadership capacity of social and L&A actors must be increased so that change agents are formed to carry out L&A activities
- Local journalists must be sensitised on the issues of SRHR and gender to improve reporting

**Stakeholders involved:** Religious leaders, Public figures, Youth figures, Teachers, Health workers, Parents, Village and district governments, CSOs and Media and journalists

*Pathway 4: State actors improve policymaking, budgeting and implementation at the local, national, regional and global levels on harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancy*

- The enactment of local regulations on preventing child marriage in Garut and Jember, as well as a local regulation on preventing violence against women in East Lombok must be encouraged
- A monitoring and evaluation mechanism for existing policies and regulations must be built
- Capacity-building must be conducted for stakeholders to improve handling and monitoring cases of harmful practices (including child marriage) and VAW from a gender-transformative perspective
- The Health Office must be encouraged to monitor the practice of FGM/C by midwives and TBAs and to collaborate with traditional and religious leaders to promote FGM/C prevention campaigns

**Stakeholders involved:** Regional and village governments, Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, Public Health Office, Midwives, TBAs, Religious leaders and community/ customary leaders, CSOs



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