



# Cultural intervention based on “Bhuppa Bhabhu Ghuru Rato” to overcome early marriage in Torjun Sampang

Safira Anisa Dewi, Maulia Gitawati Indiswari, Rhein Sasi Kirana, Salwa Humairo, Siska Novita Gozaly, Herdina Indrijati

Department of Psychology, Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Airlangga  
Jl. Airlangga No. 4-6, Surabaya, East Java, 60286, Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Torjun is addressing the high incidence of early marriages, which significantly impact students' education. Data shows that 41 percent of women in Torjun Village marry before 21, leading to issues like low educational attainment, health risks, and economic challenges. To combat this, a cultural intervention program, BHUPPA-BHABHU-GHURU-RATO, was developed in collaboration with partners. The program aims to increase students' knowledge about early marriage and assertive communication, raise parental awareness of early marriage impacts, and provide a curriculum and educational media on the subject. The initiative targets 77 students, 20 parents, 5 school administrators, health center staff, religious affairs office staff, and the sub-district head. The methods include psychoeducation and the dissemination of curriculum and educational media. The program comprises two parts: community empowerment, involving activities for students, parents, school administrators, and government officials, and cadre development, focusing on peer counseling and persuasive communication training. Results showed a 16 percent increase in students' understanding of early marriage dangers, a 3 percent increase in assertive communication knowledge, and a 10 percent increase in parental awareness. The program's sustainability is supported by curriculum integration, the use of educational media, and the Anti-Early Marriage Knights system.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Early marriage refers to the union of a couple or one of the partners who is still under the age of 19, according to Law No. 16 of 2019. East Java Province has the highest rate of early marriage cases, at 10.44 percent, exceeding the national average, and also the highest number of child marriage dispensations in Indonesia, at 29.4 percent (Wahyu, 2023). Among these, Madura contributes the most cases (Suyanto et al., 2023). The head of the Darussalam Islamic Boarding School has expressed concern about the high demand for blessings and child marriage dispensations before the minimum legal age (19 years, as per Law No. 16 of 2019) from the residents of Torjun Village, Sampang. The leader, who actually opposes early marriage, struggles to convince the people of Torjun not to rush into marriage, whether it involves the students (*santri*) or the parents marrying off their children prematurely. This phenomenon is supported

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by data from the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) of Torjun Village, which shows that 41 percent of girls were married before the age of 21 in the first trimester of 2016. He himself is the primary caretaker (*kiai*) of the Darussalam Islamic Boarding School, which is the largest in Torjun Village.

The Darussalam Islamic Boarding School, as a partner, states that early marriage leads to many students dropping out of school. This is supported by data showing that out of 105 alumni from their affiliated Islamic junior high school (MTs), only 23 students continued their education to a higher level. Data from the village head and local health center also indicates that this issue contributes to the high rate of stunting. Torjun Village itself is a stunting locus, with a stunting prevalence of 25.13 percent in 2022.

This issue is taken seriously by various parties, leading to several intervention programs aimed at addressing it. One such intervention program was the development of a Training of Trainers (ToT) on Reproductive Health (Kurniawati et al., 2022). The program involved 140 students and 8 teachers, focusing on reproductive health education, communication techniques, and digital poster-making training for promoting reproductive health. However, the intervention primarily targeted adolescents, whereas in reality, families and even government elements are significant contributors to early marriage in Madura. Kurniawati et al. (2022) also suggested that periodic interventions targeting parents are necessary. This consideration also influenced the selection of intervention targets by the author.

The author, along with the partner, identified several factors contributing to the issue of early marriage in Torjun Village, including low awareness of the impacts of early marriage, students' lack of motivation to study, poor communication skills in accordance with norms towards the opposite sex and parents, lack of parental awareness of the dangers of early marriage for their children, and the limited interactive education provided to the local community about early marriage. The partner has attempted to address these issues through the implementation of a more modern curriculum, but this approach has been difficult for conservative-minded students and parents to accept. Suyanto et al. (2023) stated that the root causes of early marriage are not merely economic but also socio-cultural factors. The *kiai* also mentioned that early marriage is a community issue closely tied to cultural factors. Therefore, this intervention is highly relevant to the local cultural perspective, specifically the BHUPPA-BHABHU-GHURU-RATO philosophy, where “BHUPPA” means Father, “BHABHU” means Mother, “GHURU” means Teacher, and “RATO” means Leader. This local wisdom signifies that an individual's priority of obedience is ordered according to status, namely Father-Mother-Teacher-Leader. These four figures are the primary objects of obedience, submission, and surrender in the life of the Madurese community.

Parents (BHUPPA BHABHU) play a crucial role in many aspects of a person's life, especially during adolescence (Abidin et al., 2023). In many cases of early marriage, parents lack the necessary skills and knowledge to prepare their children for marriage (Wulandari et al., 2024). This is due to the socio-cultural context of the community, which has limited access to information on the impacts and urgency of addressing early marriage. The local community and government (RATO) play a significant role in shaping societal norms and perceptions of early marriage, especially in individual decision-making processes (Heryani et al., 2021; Suryandari & Holifah, 2022; Yulyani et al., 2019). On the other hand, religious leaders and educators (GHURU) are crucial in solidifying individual attitudes toward marriage, particularly in the Madurese context (Bahri, 2020; Suyono, 2018).

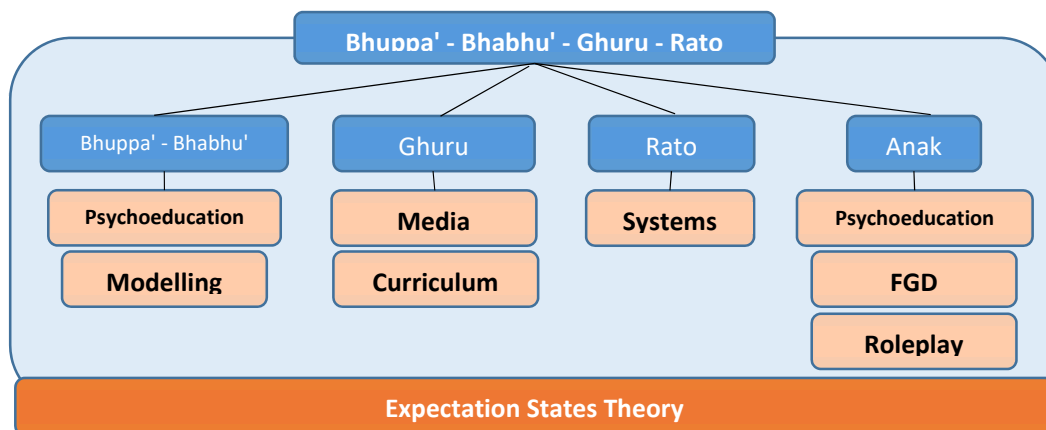
This intervention plan was designed in collaboration with community partners, involving all elements of society. Based on Expectation State Theory, which posits that an individual's behavior is influenced by interactions with society and the local cultural environment (Jr. Webster & Walker, 2014), this program has the potential to enhance the synergy of all community aspects according to the local wisdom of “BHUPPA-BHABHU-GHURU-RATO” in optimally addressing the issue of early marriage. The

program is expected to increase students' knowledge and motivation to study, improve their assertive communication skills in line with norms, and raise parents' (BHUPPA BHABHU) awareness of the importance of education for their children. Additionally, it aims to provide the interactive educational media needed by Torjun Village authorities (RATO) and religious leaders (GHURU) to prevent early marriage.

This community service program aims to increase awareness of the impacts of early marriage and to boost students' motivation to learn. Moreover, it seeks to enhance students' ability to communicate assertively and appropriately, enabling them to express their opinions and refuse early marriage when faced with such situations. The program also targets parents (BHUPPA-BHABHU) to increase their understanding of the consequences of early marriage and the importance of education for their children. The team will also provide the necessary interactive educational media for village authorities and religious leaders (GHURU-RATO) to emphasize the importance of preventing early marriage to the broader community.

## 2. METHODS

The activities were conducted at the Darussalam Islamic Boarding School in Torjun Village, Sampang Regency, Madura, from June to October 2023. The program was divided into four stages: preparation, implementation, the establishment of the "Ksatria Anti-Pernikahan Dini" (Knights Against Early Marriage) structure, and evaluation and controlling. The problem formulation process with the partner took place in December 2022, involving the reception of partner complaints, location observation, solution drafting, and discussions with supervising lecturers. Data collection was carried out through observation, documentation, government data document studies, and in-depth interviews with partners and local residents.



**Figure 1.** BHUPPA-BHABHU-GHURU-RATO intervention program basis

The solution design was then coordinated with the partner to develop a program that aligns with the local cultural perspective. During this process, the concept of "BHUPPA-BHABHU-GHURU-RATO" emerged, representing the order of obedience in Madurese society: Father-Mother-Religious Leader-Local Leader. This intervention is based on Expectation State Theory, which suggests that individual behavior is influenced by societal structures and the local cultural environment (Jr. Webster & Walker, 2014). Cultural interventions like this have the potential to be effectively implemented because they are

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tailored to the local wisdom that the community lives by daily (Marsiglia and Booth, 2015). The results of the data analysis and processing were conducted through data display and verification, ultimately leading to the program foundation as shown in Figure 1.

Given the program base involving several elements of society, it is important to conduct an approach and coordination process with the Torjun community. This pre-implementation stage is assisted by mediation from the *kiai* of the Darussalam Islamic Boarding School. Coordination is carried out with representatives of students, representatives of student guardians (BHUPPA-BHABHU), Islamic boarding school administrators (GHURU), and government aspects (RATO), such as sub-district heads, health centers, and the Torjun Village KUA. The intervention design and activity modules are prepared to meet the needs of partners who adjust to the situation of each cultural element. Furthermore, a technical location survey and the necessary permits are carried out.

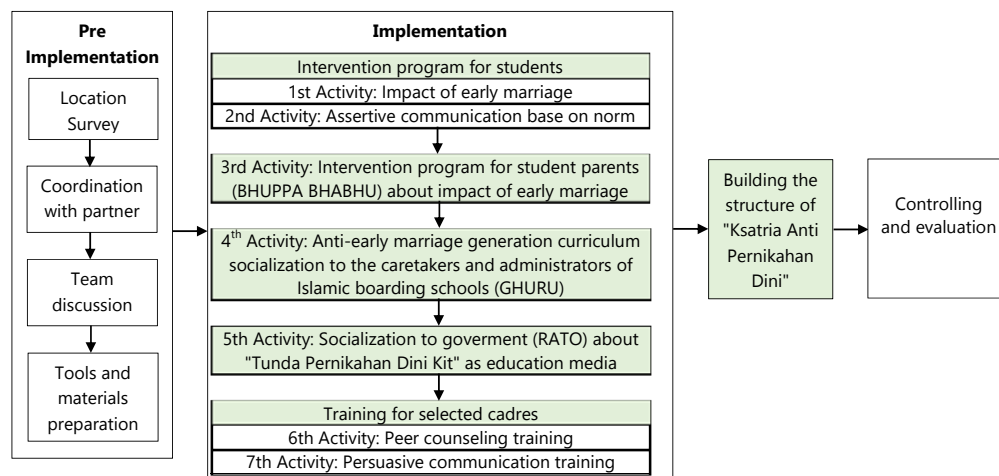


Figure 2. BHUPPA-BHABHU-GHURU-RATO program implementation framework

The implementation phase consisted of seven activities divided into two main parts: empowering each community element (5 activities) and cadre training (2 activities). All activities were carried out from August 12 to 27, 2023, at the Darussalam Islamic Boarding School. Each activity was designed to enhance the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of the participants.

The first two activities focused on empowering the students, involving 77 male and female students in grades 7 and 8 at Darussalam Islamic Boarding School. To increase the participants' understanding and motivation, psychoeducation on the impact of early marriage was provided, along with Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and the interactive game “Pohon Cita-Cita” (Tree of Aspirations). This intervention program heavily utilized the psychoeducation model, which has proven effective in increasing participants' understanding of specific topics (Gusain et al., 2020). In the subsequent stages, students were trained to communicate assertively and in accordance with norms through psychoeducation, role-playing, and FGDs. These two activities required several materials, including a projector, whiteboard, colored markers, and sticky notes.

In the third empowerment activity, parents (BHUPPA-BHABHU) were provided with psychoeducation on the impacts of early marriage, along with a talk show and modeling session to convey the potential and importance of education for their children. The modeling stage involved one of the team members

serving as a role model, who was a local Madurese resident and a student at Airlangga University. This activity was attended by 20 parents and required materials such as a projector and writing tools.

**Table 1.** Indicators of success of the BHUPPA-BHABHU-GHURU-RATO program

Subjects	Activities	Indicators of Success
<b>Activity 1: Understanding the Impact of Early Marriage</b>		
Students	Psychoeducation	- Increase in knowledge from pre-test to post-test score by at least 10 percent.
	Modelling	- Listening to team sharing sessions with Torjun residents who are pursuing advanced education.
	Interactive Games	- Being able to write down goals and dreams for the next 5-10 years specifically.
<b>Activity 2: Mastering Assertive Communication</b>		
Students	Psychoeducation	- Increased knowledge from pre-test to post-test score of minimum 10.
	Focus Group Discussion	- Actively involved in group discussions and presentation of results.
	Roleplay	- Able to practice assertive communication in roleplay groups.
<b>Activity 3: Understanding the Dimensions of Early Marriage</b>		
Parents (BHUPPA-BHABHU)	Psychoeducation	- Increase in knowledge from pre-test to post-test score of minimum 10.
	Focus Group Discussion	- A minimum of 30 percent of parents have negative attitudes and 50 percent have neutral attitudes towards early marriage.
	Roleplay	- Parents express their opinions and experiences and discuss early marriage.
<b>Activity 4: Socialization of the Anti-Early Marriage Generation Curriculum</b>		
<i>Kiai</i> (Teachers, GHURU)	Socialization	- <i>Kiai</i> and administrators of Islamic boarding schools know the functions and parts of the curriculum.
	Discussion	- <i>Kiai</i> and administrators of Islamic boarding schools have a positive attitude towards the curriculum. - <i>Kiai</i> and administrators of Islamic boarding schools express their opinions regarding the curriculum
<b>Activity 5: Socialization of Educational Media "Postpone Early Marriage Kit"</b>		
Health Center, KUA, and Sub-district Head (RATO)	Socialization	- Government representatives understand the function and role of the Postpone Early Marriage Kit. - Government representatives foster positive attitudes towards the Postpone Early Marriage Kit media.
	Discussion	- Government representatives master how to access the Postpone Early Marriage Kit poster.
<b>Activity 6: Peer Counseling Training</b>		
Cadres	Psychoeducation	- Increase in knowledge from pre-test to post-test score minimum 10 percent.
	Focus Group Discussion	- Cadres are able to distinguish good and bad non-verbal body language.
	Roleplay	- Cadres can ask, listen, and answer in the roleplay process.
<b>Activity 7: Persuasive Communication Training</b>		
Cadres	Psychoeducation	- Increase in knowledge from pre-test to post-test score minimum 10 percent.
	Focus Group Discussion	- Cadres are involved in negotiation and communication activities.
	Roleplay	- Cadres can convey arguments clearly in the persuasion process.

The fourth empowerment activity targeted the Islamic boarding school and government by introducing the "Generasi Anti Pernikahan Dini" (Generation against Early Marriage) curriculum and the

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“Tunda Pernikahan Dini Kit” (Delay Early Marriage Kit) educational media. The curriculum integrated the “BHUPPA-BHABHU-GHURU-RATO” philosophy into psychoeducation on early marriage and supporting learning activities. Additionally, the Delay Early Marriage Kit included posters and educational videos accessible via QR codes. This educational media aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of early marriage to the Torjun community, making the material more engaging and improving concentration and individual understanding through audiovisual stimulation (Boelan et al., 2022). This was then socialized to five boarding school caretakers (GHURU) and government representatives from the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), health center, and sub-district head (RATO). The socialization activity included explanations of the essence, function, and components of each educational medium, including how to access, use, and integrate them into existing systems. The required materials included the Generation against Early Marriage curriculum and the Delay Early Marriage Kit.

To ensure the program’s sustainability, cadre training was conducted for 40 selected cadres from the “BHUPPA-BHABHU-GHURU-RATO” elements. In the first training activity, cadres were trained to become effective peer counselors through psychoeducation, modeling, and role-playing. In the final activity, cadres were trained in persuasive communication and guiding students towards achievement and entrepreneurship as alternatives to early marriage through psychoeducation, role-playing, and the interactive game DealMakers. These two activities required several materials, including a projector, GROW Cards, markers, and manila paper.

The evaluation of the BHUPPA-BHABHU-GHURU-RATO intervention program was conducted both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative evaluation was measured through knowledge questionnaires (pre-test and post-test) and the Attitude to Early Marriage questionnaire (Nirmalasari et al., 2022). Qualitative evaluation involved participant observation, analysis of participants’ short essays, and output from activities such as the Tree of Aspirations. Feedback and suggestions from participants and partners were also collected on evaluation sheets at the end of each activity. The success of this activity-based program was marked by the achievement of predetermined indicators. Monitoring and control of the program’s sustainability were carried out on October 22, 2023 (discussion with the *kiai* as the main advisor and head of cadre training to ensure the program’s application), October 28, 2023 (discussion with the curriculum division coordinator to ensure the cadre work program’s implementation), and October 31, 2023 (discussion with the HR and peer counselor coordinator, external affairs coordinator, and the sub-district head as the supervisor).

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Results

##### Understanding the impact of early marriage

Psychoeducation is an activity aimed at enhancing understanding and/or skills as an effort to prevent the emergence of psychological disorders (Kamil & Qamaria, 2021). In this particular program, psychoeducation focused on providing knowledge about the definition, impact, and complexities of early marriage. After delivering the psychoeducation material, a focused group discussion (FGD) was conducted to review the participants’ understanding of the material previously presented.

The next activity was modeling, which involved a Q&A session with the model—one of the female students from Madura—about the opportunities available if one does not marry early. Participants observed the model’s behavior and learned to imitate it. Initially, the participants’ enthusiasm was low, as indicated by their lack of responsiveness during the discussion. However, this behavior changed after the intervention, with participants beginning to listen attentively and ask questions enthusiastically.

The interactive game “Pohon Cita-Cita” (Tree of Aspirations) followed the modeling activity. Participants were asked to write down their aspirations for the next five to ten years as a reminder of the opportunities they would have if they did not marry early. As a result, the participants were able to articulate specific goals during the “Pohon Cita-Cita” game. On the other hand, the results of the pre-test and post-test showed a 16 percent increase in knowledge.



**Figure 3.** Implementation of the activity “Understanding the Impact of Early Marriage”:  
(a) Psychoeducation; (b) Tree of ideals

### **Mastering assertive communication**

Assertive communication-themed activities include psychoeducation, modeling, FGD, and roleplay. Participants are given an explanation of the principles, concepts, and strategies of assertive communication, as well as behaving well according to applicable norms, especially towards the opposite sex. The next thing that is done is modeling, which aims to provide examples of how someone can communicate assertively effectively. This method is used as a guide for participants to develop their assertive communication skills. Afterwards, participants are divided into several groups to conduct FGDs through games. In the FGD activity, participants discuss cases of premarital sex and how to overcome it with assertive communication. Participants are asked to demonstrate (roleplay) the results of the FGD with their group in front of other participants. Through this series of activities, it shows that participants who were initially still hesitant to express their opinions in front of the class, finally confidently present the results of the discussion in front of their friends. Participants are also not shy in demonstrating assertive communication in their respective groups through roleplay sessions. Assertive communication is important so that students can express their desires and feelings firmly and politely, including in terms of early marriage. Through the Mastering Assertive Communication activity, participants’ understanding of assertive communication increased. This is seen based on comparative data from the pre-test and post-test which showed an increase of 10 percent.

### **Understanding the dimensions of early marriage**

Parents (BHUPPA-BHABHU) were engaged in the activity “Understanding the Dimensions of Early Marriage” through psychoeducation, modeling with interactive educational media on the impacts of early marriage, and an interactive talk show about the potential opportunities for children if they do not marry early. There was a noticeable shift in attitudes toward early marriage, with initial attitudes being 60 percent positive and 40 percent neutral, which changed to 10 percent positive, 60 percent neutral, and 30 percent negative after the intervention. Participants also demonstrated increased engagement by actively expressing their opinions and asking questions during the interactive talk show Q&A session.

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**Figure 4.** Implementation of the activity “Mastering Assertive Communication”

Cognitively, this activity impacted participants’ understanding of the dimensions and complexities of early marriage in children, as evidenced by a 10 percent increase in understanding based on the pre-test and post-test results.

### **Socialization of the anti-early marriage generation curriculum**

*Kiai* and administrators of Islamic boarding schools (GHURU) were involved through the Socialization of the Anti-Early Marriage Generation Curriculum which the team had designed by adjusting to the needs of partners. Through this socialization, *kiai* and administrators of Islamic boarding schools understood the function and parts of the curriculum and the process of integrating it into teaching and learning activities, namely the Budi Pekerti lesson. *Kiai* and administrators of Islamic boarding schools also responded enthusiastically to the curriculum and were committed to implementing it. In order to achieve a curriculum that meets the needs of partners, *kiai* and administrators of Islamic boarding schools also did not forget to provide constructive feedback and evaluations related to the curriculum design.

### **Socialization of educational media “Postpone Early Marriage Kit”**

The team has created the Postpone Early Marriage Kit, which is an interactive educational media for preventing early marriage packaged in the form of posters and videos. The posters contain regulations related to the minimum age for marriage in Indonesia, factors underlying the prohibition of early marriage, and the impact of early marriage on children. Meanwhile, the video contains the dangers of early marriage and marriage between cousins, according to the requests and needs of the partners. The Postpone Early Marriage Kit was then socialized in the Socialization of Educational Media “Postpone Early Marriage Kit”, which involved representatives of health centers, KUA, and sub-district heads (RATO). After this socialization, representatives of health centers, KUA, and sub-district heads understood the function, substance of the material, and the role of the Postpone Early Marriage Kit itself. In addition to understanding, representatives of health centers, KUA, and sub-district heads were also able to access, operate, and deliver the Postpone Early Marriage Kit. The team also received appreciation from representatives of health centers, KUA, and sub-district heads for the innovation of the Postpone Early Marriage Kit as an interactive educational media.

### **Peer counseling training**

Cadres were selected based on their activeness, absence, knowledge, and recommendations from the *kiai*, then coaching was carried out in two activities. The first coaching was carried out by



realizing the function of cadres as peer counselors through peer counseling training activities. During the modeling session, cadres paid close attention to how the team gave examples and demonstrated non-verbal body language. As a result, cadres were able to differentiate and practice good non-verbal and verbal body language. The team also provided roleplay media as a place for cadres to practice how to be peer counselors in pairs. The cadres were also seen actively asking, listening, and answering stories with empathy during the roleplay session. The knowledge and understanding of cadres related to peer counseling also increased during the peer counselor training activities. This is based on pre-test and post-test data which showed an increase of 16 percent.

### **Persuasive communication training**

Coaching continued with Persuasive Communication Training activities that focused on how individuals can convince their friends not to marry early. Through psychoeducation methods, participants understand personality types and basic persuasive communication techniques. Cadres also understand alternatives that can be done if they do not marry early, such as continuing their education and becoming entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurial alternatives are carried out through culinary arts extracurriculars and vocational high school majors at the Darussalam Islamic Boarding School. Cadres were also given media to practice directly through the interactive game 'DealMakers Challenge' and roleplay. 'DealMakers Challenge' is an interactive game where cadres negotiate and actively communicate to reach an agreement from the results of the negotiations. From these results, cadres present the results of the agreement that has been reached. In the roleplay session, cadres use GROW Coaching cards as a medium for communication stages and goal setting, as well as their relationship to persuasive communication. Through the provision of techniques and personality types that have been presented by the previous team, cadres are also able to formulate arguments that are in accordance with their personalities.



**Figure 5.** Interactive talk show on the activity "Understanding the Dimensions of Early Marriage"



**Figure 6.** Peer counselor roleplay session



**Figure 7.** GROW coaching card briefing: Personality types

The results of the pre-test and post-test also showed that activity 7 had an impact on the level of understanding and knowledge of the cadres. The increase in understanding and knowledge of the cadres can be seen in the increase of 12 percent from the pre-test results to the post-test results. The following are changes in the behavior of BHUPPA-BHABU-GHURU-RATO program participants that were seen during the activity process.

### **Discussion**

This community service program aims to reduce the rate of early marriages in the Torjun Village, Sampang, Madura. The intervention is based on the local wisdom system of the Torjun community, namely

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BHUPPA-BHABHU-GHURU-RATO. This cultural approach was a primary consideration in designing the intervention, aligning with the perspectives of [Rahayu \(2021\)](#) and [Bahri \(2021\)](#), who emphasize that culture is a manifestation of the society itself, making culturally appropriate interventions potentially more effective. The program participants included elements encompassed by the BHUPPA-BHABHU-GHURU-RATO system, such as students (*santri*), their parents (BHUPPA-BHABHU), religious leaders (GHURU), and government representatives from KUA, the health center, and the subdistrict head (RATO).

**Table 2.** Behavioral changes of BHUPPA-BHABHU-GHURU-RATO program participants

Indicators	Changes in Behavior and Attitude		Achieved Success Indicators
	Before	After	
Aspirations	Confused and doubtful about aspirations and dreams.	Able to write down his/her goals and dreams on the Dream Tree specifically	100 percent of program participants were able to formulate their ideals and dreams.
Self-confident	Shy in introducing oneself, expressing one's opinion, speaking in public, and passive in responding	Dare to introduce yourself, express your opinion, ask questions, speak in public, and be active in responding	100 percent of program participants had increased self-confidence.
Negative attitudes of parents towards early marriage	Having the perception to quickly marry off your child after graduating from school	Considering not marrying off his child at an early age	10 percent positive attitudes, 60 percent neutral attitudes, and 30 percent negative attitudes in participants (BHUPPA-BHABHU) towards early marriage
Positive Attitudes Towards the Anti-Early Marriage Generation Curriculum	<i>Kiai</i> and administrators of Islamic boarding schools (GHURU) are passive in responding to the explanation of the curriculum	<i>Kiai</i> and administrators of Islamic boarding schools (GHURU) responded enthusiastically to the explanation of the curriculum	100 percent of participants (GHURU) of the program have an increase in positive attitudes towards the Generation Against Early Marriage Curriculum.
Access to educational media posters and QR codes	Government representatives (RATO) cannot access educational media posters and QR codes	Government representatives (RATO) can access educational media posters and QR codes	100 percent of program participants (RATO) can access posters and educational media QR codes so that they can convey the substance of the Postpone Early Marriage Kit.
Active listening	Less able to listen and respond to friends' stories actively and with empathy	Listen and respond to friends' stories actively and with empathy	100 percent of program participants had improved active listening skills
Persuasive	Not yet able to reach negotiation results	Achieve negotiation results from the roleplay process with clear arguments	100 percent of program participants have improved their skills in persuading their interlocutors.

According to [Notoatmodjo \(2012\)](#), knowledge can be acquired through traditional non-scientific methods or through modern approaches. In this program, participants were provided with education focused on the substantive aspects of the dimensions of early marriage, aiming to enhance intrinsic awareness of its dangers and negative impacts. Education, as one of the main components of behavioral change, can be a powerful tool in influencing an individual's behavior, particularly in seeking and utilizing information to improve their quality of life ([Yuliana & Wahyuni, 2020](#)).

In the first intervention activity, initially, the students appeared confused and uncertain about their aspirations. However, after participating in the activities, they were able to articulate specific goals through the interactive game "Pohon Cita-Cita" (Tree of Aspirations). This is crucial as aspirations are a key factor influencing learning motivation ([Masni, 2017](#)). The second activity, focusing on assertive communication, demonstrated the students' active participation in expressing opinions, presenting discussion results, and practicing assertive communication throughout the event. Assertive communication is vital for students to express their desires and feelings clearly and politely, including regarding early marriage. The most effective communication strategy for rejecting something is assertiveness—firmly maintaining one's thoughts but in a positive manner ([Belinda & Savitri, 2021](#)).

The third activity, which focused on understanding the dimensions of early marriage, targeted parents as the audience. This understanding was fostered through psychoeducation, modeling with interactive educational media on the impacts of early marriage, and an interactive talk show on the potential opportunities for children if they do not marry early. This activity utilized the andragogical method, which explains that adult learning processes are carried out by enhancing the ability to cope with life challenges ([Rahman & Elshap, 2016](#)).

In the implementation of the program, the four aspects of BHUPPA-BHABHU-GHURU-RATO were actively involved to reinforce the delivery of the education provided. Parents (BHUPPA-BHABHU) participated in psychoeducation sessions focused on the dimensions and negative impacts of early marriage. The religious leaders of the *pesantren* (GHURU) helped by providing facilities, ensuring the orderly conduct of participants, discussing the program's design, and selecting cadre members. The government representatives (RATO) assisted in integrating the system for regulating early marriage licenses for minors. These aspects are interconnected, forming a sustainable system that ensures the continuity of the program.

Based on the needs of our partners, the team developed the "Generasi Anti Pernikahan Dini" (Generation against Early Marriage) curriculum. This curriculum was designed to reinforce behavior change to prevent early marriage, acknowledging that human behavior change is achieved through continuous learning ([Aslan, 2018](#)). Additionally, the team created the "Tunda Pernikahan Dini Kit," an interactive educational medium that has a positive impact on students' learning outcomes ([Panjaitan et al., 2020](#)). These two tools were intended to integrate early marriage education and support the learning process based on the BHUPPA-BHABHU-GHURU-RATO system. The curriculum and educational media were then socialized among the *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) administrators, Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) representatives, health center officials, and the subdistrict head to ensure the sustainability of the BHUPPA-BHABHU-GHURU-RATO cultural intervention program.

To further ensure the program's sustainability, the team conducted training for 40 selected cadres based on their participation, attendance, knowledge, and recommendations from the kyai (religious leader). The training included peer counseling, persuasive communication skills, psychoeducation, modeling, and role-playing. In the peer counseling training, the team equipped the cadres and *pesantren* administrators with the skills to be good listeners, enabling them to support their peers in discussions about early marriage through psychoeducation, modeling, and role-play ([Asyari, 2019](#)). The results

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showed that the cadres could differentiate and demonstrate verbal and non-verbal body language, actively engage by asking questions, listening, and responding with empathy during the peer counseling role-plays.

Moreover, through persuasive communication training, the cadres learned to construct persuasive arguments tailored to the personalities of their counterparts. By aligning with the preferences of the person they are communicating with, individuals can change attitudes and behaviors through persuasion (Siregar et al., 2022). The cadres were also guided to continue excelling academically and exploring entrepreneurship as alternatives to early marriage.

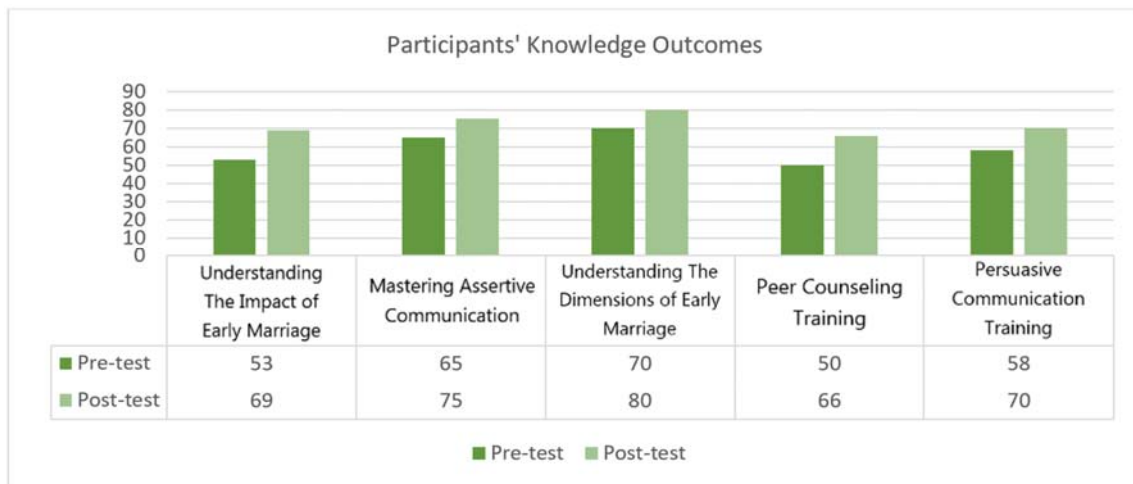


Figure 7. Participant knowledge achievement results graph

The pre-test and post-test results demonstrate the achievement of success indicators, with a minimum increase in participants’ knowledge by 10 percent. Broadly, the improvements in pre-test and post-test scores can be observed as follows: (1) A 16 percent increase in the ‘Understanding the Impact of Early Marriage’ activity; (2) A 10 percent increase in the ‘Mastering Assertive Communication’ activity; (3) A 10 percent increase in the ‘Understanding the Dimensions of Early Marriage’ activity; (4) A 16 percent increase in the ‘Peer Counseling Training’ activity; and (5) A 12 percent increase in the ‘Persuasive Communication Training’ activity.

These findings align with a study by Shivaraju et al. (2017), which indicated a significant increase in knowledge following instruction compared to prior knowledge levels. This emphasizes the effectiveness of the pre-test and post-test evaluation model in enhancing learning outcomes.

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The culturally-based intervention program “BHUPPA-BHABHU-GHURU-RATO” aimed at reducing early marriage rates in Torjun Village, Sampang Regency, has successfully met its primary objective of curbing early marriages by achieving the set intervention goals. The program effectively increased knowledge about the impacts of early marriage and boosted students’ motivation to learn. Additionally, the students have become more adept at communicating assertively and appropriately, enabling them to refuse and express their opinions when faced with early marriage pressures. The program also successfully involved parents (BHUPPA-BHABHU) through psychoeducation, raising awareness of the

consequences of early marriage and the importance of education for their children. Furthermore, the intervention effectively engaged village officials and religious leaders (GHURU-RATO) by providing educational media and fostering relevant collaborations. As a result, the integration of the "BHUPPA-BHABHU-GHURU-RATO" aspects within the intervention and cadre training process is expected to create a proactive community environment in Torjun Village, Sampang. This, in turn, should contribute to the prevention and reduction of early marriage, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of life in the community.

There needs to be socialization and promotion of this program, so that participants are not limited to high school graduates in one area. Considering that this problem is a long-standing culture, additional implementation time is needed to increase knowledge and also change community attitudes. Continuous mentoring and monitoring are needed for partners so that this program can be continued periodically. It is better if the program can be followed up through collaboration with other partners who have similar problems, in order to find out a wider response to the implementation of the program.

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