



# **POLICY BRIEF**

## **Stunting Reduction Intervention Program through Early Marriage Prevention in Bantul Regency, Yogyakarta**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The prevalence of stunting in Yogyakarta Province in 2021 has reached <20%, but in some areas the number are still high. Dlingo Sub-District is one with the highest stunting prevalence, i.e at 26%. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of dispensational marriages increased in Bantul Regency, citing early pregnancy as the dominant cause. Teenage pregnancy contributes to the incidence of low birth weight (LBW), as well as stunting and inter-generational poverty. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out massive adolescent reproductive health literacy with various methods and media, the implementation of communication strategies for behavior change in adolescent pregnancy prevention and optimization of adolescent organizations in health sector.

### **TARGET AUDIENCE**

1. Religious Affair Office of Bantul Regency
2. Women Empowerment, Children Protection, Population Control and Family Planning Office of Bantul Regency
3. Health Office of Bantul Regency

### **INTRODUCTION**

Stunting is chronic malnutrition experienced by children since pregnancy [1]. Stunting is a priority for national health problems, with a target of 14% achievement by 2024. Based on the results of the Indonesia Nutrition Status Survey in 2021, the prevalence of stunting in Yogyakarta Province was 17.3% [2]. Meanwhile, according to a regional survey by The

Health Office of Yogyakarta, there were still several sub-districts with prevalence of stunting >20%. The highest prevalence in 2020 was Dlingo Sub-District of Bantul Regency [3].

Early pregnancy contributes to the occurrence of poor pregnancy outcomes such as LBW, stunting, and growth disorders from the womb (intra uterine growth restriction) [4][5]. The results of previous studies stated that adolescent mothers have risk of giving birth to shorter babies (Body Height/Age -0.53 SD), thinner (Body Weight/Age -0.40 SD), and smaller (Body Weight/Body Height -0.16 SD), lower than babies born to mature mothers [6].

The Demographic Health Survey (DHS) study in Indonesia reported that there was an increase in the number of adolescent girls aged <18 years old, i.e from 5% in 2012 to 18% in 2017 [7]. This is in line with the report of the Ministry of Religious Affairs which states that the number of dispensational marriages or under aged marriages in Yogyakarta has increased. In the period of 2019-2020 the increase was 3.2 times (from 294 to 948 pairs), and a slight decrease in 2021 by 757 pairs although this figure remains high [8]. Furthermore, Bantul Regency reported that there has been an increase in dispensational marriages during the Covid-19 pandemic, namely 24 couples in 2019, to 157 in 2020, and increased to 162 in 2021 [9].

Several factors are related to early marriage, such as economic factors, unwanted pregnancy, promiscuity, the influence of gadgets, not continuing school [9]–[11], but the most reason is pregnancy [4].

## **PROBLEMS**

- The prevalence of stunting in Dlingo Sub-District of Bantul Regency, Yogyakarta is the highest.
- Teenager pregnancy are high and tend to increase during the Covid-19 pandemic in that area.
- Teenager pregnancy is both the cause and impact of complex social problems, increasing the risk of divorce, LBW, as well as stunting and inter-generational poverty.

## **POLICY RECOMMENDATION**

- For Religious Affair Office of Bantul Regency:
  - a) Increase the capacity of counseling officers in providing education about building healthy stunting-free generation
  - b) Conduct massive and structured education to brides-to-be
  - c) Together with Family Planning Office, socialize the Elsimil application

- For Women Empowerment, Children Protection, Population Control and Family Planning Office of Bantul Regency
  - a) Socialize and provide education to the community about Bina Keluarga Remaja/BKR (English: Adolescent Family Development) dan stunting
  - b) Socialize and foster Family Planning Villages
  - c) Foster pre-conception Posyandu (English: integrated health care post)
  - d) Empower women in various activities of creative economic potential
  - e) Campaign of youth health through the selection of adolescent health ambassadors
- For Health Office of Bantul Regency:
  - a) Campaign of massive adolescent reproductive health literacy with various methods and media
  - b) Implement behavior change communication strategies for adolescent pregnancy prevention
  - c) Optimize adolescent organizations in health fields

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