Gender Equality Fact Sheet for Adolescents in Indonesia

October, 2019
ADOLESCENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Nearly one fifth (18.3%) of Indonesia’s population are adolescents aged 10-19 years old. As adolescents transition to adulthood, rural to urban migration is common contributing to rising rates of urbanization prompted by the movement of young people. This transition is demonstrated by the underrepresentation of adolescents aged 10-14 in urban areas (46.5%) as opposed to the overrepresentation of young people aged 15-19 in urban areas (51.5%), all relative to 49.8% of the total population living in urban areas. Reports estimate that Indonesia will experience its window of opportunity for the demographic dividend between 2020 and 2030. Given the large percent of the current youth population, and as we will see, the prevalence of gender inequalities, it is essential to understand what the inequalities are and strategies to address them.
The overwhelming challenge for Indonesia is low rates of participation in post-primary schooling, low quality of education and persistent problems faced by poor and marginalized youth as well as regional disparities in access.

There are virtually no difference in literacy rates between boys and girls, although youth illiteracy rates in general were higher in rural areas.

Starting at approximately 16-18 years of age, education participation rates are slightly higher for boys than girls. At all preceding levels of education the reverse is true where girls participate slightly more than boys.

In 2010, virtually the same proportion of 19-24 year old females had completed senior secondary school as males. The attainment of this equality has clearly been a more recent achievement than that observed for primary school education in the 1980s.

The most cited reason for school age children not attending schools is financial hardship, which was more commonly cited by girls than boys.

This financial hardship can be especially salient in the mid-late adolescent years as families may begin to consider marrying their daughters to older, established men in order to ease financial burdens on the family and provide her with a family and future.

A prevalent norm exists among schools that prevents girls from attending school when they become pregnant, inherently disadvantaging young girls. This is especially salient as the girls are then pressured to marry at young ages before completing their education. There is no law or regulation, either at the national or local level, which underlie this practice.

The Minister of Education and Culture of Indonesia has made a plea to the District Education Offices and the married girls and boys to finish 12 years of formal education.

From a national level there is near school enrollment parity for boys and girls at age 16-18 but at the provincial level there are wide variations. The following figure shows the gender parity index on school participation by province. The worst gender gaps were found to favor boys in DKI Jakarta and Bali versus favoring girls in Gorontalo and West Sumatra.
Young unmarried individuals cannot easily access contraceptives through the public health system due to the Population and Family Development Law No 52/2009 and Health law No 36/2009 that reserves family planning services explicitly for reproductive-age married couples.

While most of the studies show that economic hardship is the major force driving child marriage, the recent trend also indicates unintended pregnancy as a contributing factor of child marriage. Often, unmarried girls who become pregnant are forced to stop schooling and instead face rejection in their communities some decide - or are forced- to marry.

This issue is the missing link between child marriage and the need of sexual reproductive health education for adolescents in Indonesia.

SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH ACCESS/EQUALITY

- Young unmarried individuals cannot easily access contraceptives through the public health system due to the Population and Family Development Law No 52/2009 and Health law No 36/2009 that reserves family planning services explicitly for reproductive-age married couples.

TEEN MOTHERS’ CHARACTERISTICS FROM 2012 STATISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girls age 15 had begun childbearing and by age 19 it rises to one in four.</th>
<th>Those who didn’t go to secondary school were nearly 6 times more likely than those who completed secondary school to become pregnant.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 IN 100</strong></td>
<td><strong>29% vs 5%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural teens were more than 2 times as likely to give birth than those in urban areas.</th>
<th>Percent of teens living in households in the lowest wealth quintile had begun childbearing compared to 3% of those in the highest quintile.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>13% vs 6%</strong></td>
<td><strong>17%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While most of the studies show that economic hardship is the major force driving child marriage, the recent trend also indicates unintended pregnancy as a contributing factor of child marriage. Often, unmarried girls who become pregnant are forced to stop schooling and instead face rejection in their communities some decide - or are forced- to marry.

This issue is the missing link between child marriage and the need of sexual reproductive health education for adolescents in Indonesia.
CHILD MARRIAGE DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTS GIRLS

The rate of child marriage is still high with 1 in 6 married women aged 20-24 having been married before 18. Progress that had been made over three decades has plateaued in the years with the most recent data, and has actually increased in some periods.

According to census data, 17% of girls married in 2016 were under 18. In terms of marriages where at least one spouse is under 18 years old Indonesia ranks 2nd in Southeast Asia, and 7th in the world.

- Consider here that child marriage is most common among 16-17 year olds.
- Starting at about age 16, child marriage begins to rise and over the next couple years there is a steep increase where up until recently it was legal.
- Recently the age of marriage for girls was changed from 16 to 19 consistent with that of boys.
- As of 2010 72% of 15-19 year old girls lived with their parents, compared to 80% of boys the same age. ~6% were already living in a household as a spouse, most likely being married to an older male, and ~2.3% were living in other people’s homes as domestic workers.
- In 2012 the median age at first marriage for women was 20.1. For men it was 24.3. The ensuing median age at first birth was 22.0 years old.

There are persistently strong links between child marriage and lower levels of education.

Poverty, and its associated characteristics, are heavily associated with child marriage. The rate of child marriage is 1.5 times higher in rural versus urban areas. The rates increase as housing conditions deteriorate, and girls from the poorest 20% of households are twice as likely to be married before 18 compared to girls from the richest 20%. Nonetheless, cultural norms carry throughout all economic levels and still nearly 1 in 6 girls from the richest households marry before 18.

Contributing to child marriage is the misrepresentation of a young girl’s age so that she could “legally” be married. The lack of a civil registration system creates a significant loophole in enforcing the legal age of marriage.

Notably, child marriage impacts boys as well. The 2010 census showed that 3.17% of boys between 10-19 were married.
GENDER DISADVANTAGE CAN NEGATIVELY IMPACT BOYS TOO

- Child marriage is not only between young girls and older men. For example, in December 2018, a 9-year-old boy married a 14-year-old girl in South Sulawesi. Such marriages are driven by the fear of adultery and unwanted pregnancy. In certain areas, such as South Sulawesi and neighboring districts, this practice is relatively common.
  - At least 720 cases of child marriage happened in 2018 in Indonesia.

- Boys experience disadvantage throughout adolescence as do girls. Consider the higher reported numbers of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in boys as compared to girls, and the potential these ACEs have to become intergenerational transmissions of gender inequality and perpetration of harmful norms.

GENDER-DISCRIMINATORY POLICIES/NORMS

1. 1974 Marriage Law: sets the minimum legal age of marriage to 19 for boys and 16 for girls. As it is, adolescents are still meant to be in school at the age of 16 whereas at 19 they are meant to be either at the end of, or having completed their studies in upper secondary school. As previously noted, this has now been changed so that the legal age for both boys and girls is 19 years.

2. Under-registration and incorrect registration of marriages is deeply entrenched.
   - Parents can petition marriage officers or district-level religious courts for an exemption to marry their daughter, with no minimum age limit.
   - In a study reported in 2014, religious courts approved more than 90% of dispensation (or exemption) requests, and the number of applicants has reportedly been increasing significantly in recent years.

3. A deeply entrenched norm persists limiting the opportunities of many girls as in many cases when a girl becomes pregnant she is forced to drop out of school - either by her family or the school/administration itself.
   - Additionally, schools often will not accept or retain the enrollment of girls who are married.

TRANSITIONING INTO ADULTHOOD AND WORK

According to Women and Girls in Indonesia: Progress and Challenges, as of 2010, among 15-24 year olds there was a distinct lack of parity in the gender index of working status. For those employed the gender index was 65.2, with a large number of boys relative to girls in work. For those unemployed the index was 113 demonstrating more girls are out of work. And for those not in the labor force the gender index was 133.7 suggesting many more girls relative to boys are not in the workforce. Among the subsequent age group of 25-29 year-olds these differences highlighted by the gender parity index grew even more stark. Gender imbalanced work patterns in late adolescence become even more pronounced in early adulthood.

Gender differences by industry exist for distinct areas that align with preconceived gendered norms of what is appropriate for men versus women's work. As of 2012, women comprise more of the industries pertaining to wholesale trade, retail trade, restaurant and hotel (10.3% difference), and community, personal and social services (8.8% difference). Men comprise a larger industry workforce in agriculture, forestry, hunting and fishing (76%)3.

The behaviors and norms adolescents grow up with and are surrounded by from childhood transform their opportunities and chances as they enter adulthood. The trajectories of boys and girls may be set very early on, and entrenched gender norms create the environments in which future generations will be raised.
EVIDENCE THAT PROGRAMMING WORKS

IMPROVING CONTRACEPTIVE METHOD MIX PROJECT

This project aimed to investigate the impact of applying knowledge management principles to support targeted advocacy activities. As of 2018, it appears to have had success addressing the reliance on short-acting methods by couples who wanted to stop childbearing. In districts where family planning was prioritized this saw couples more likely to use the contraceptive method they wanted, namely long-acting contraceptives. A lack of method choice often results in discontinuation of contraceptive use increasing the chance of unplanned pregnancy. The project shows that advocacy improves political commitment, which is essential in the decentralized district-level family planning provisioning.

UNALA PRIVATE HEALTHCARE CLINICS

The UNFPA model initiated in 2014 works to increasingly incorporate the private sector in health service and information delivery for youth in Yogyakarta. The intended goal was to increase access to SRH services and expected to reach 15-24 year-olds. With an aim to empower youth to make their own SRH decisions, the program created a network of private practitioners working alongside youth network to offer a youth-friendly package of SRH services utilizing voucher promotion. Given the intended youth demographic UNALA’s website and social media presence have played a key role in the program’s outreach.

- From 2014 to 2016 they had 964 clients visit UNALA doctors.
- They used outreach events like Youth-gether and Youth-care, and reached 324,769 through social media alone.
- In those two years they built working relationships with 21 organizations serving youth people including government, private and religious schools at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels.
- UNALA had ambitious goals for 2018 to expand provision of services and outreach to more youth. Results are forthcoming.

With a model that keeps youth at the forefront of the process to best understand and accommodate their needs, this project appears well-founded and ambitious.
“Men are most likely to commit violence because they learned as a boy that being a man means they have to be strong and powerful - but being strong and powerful doesn’t mean to dominate others and use violence. We need to reshape masculinity. A narrow understanding is just not working for anyone anymore.”

-Michael Kaufman, Co-Founder, White Ribbon Campaign

MENCARE INDONESIA

The MenCare+ program in Indonesia, known as Laki-Laki Peduli, engaged men and women to work together towards gender equality. It challenges existing norms and patriarchal values with a full set of strategies implemented to engage boys and men in social change and as caregiving partners in order to improve the health of women, men and children, to stop gender-based violence and to build respectful relationships. MenCare+ rolled out two campaigns:

- The Generasi Jagoan (Hero Generation) campaign was aimed at young men ages 15-24. It used public service announcements, posters, merchandise and digital media to redefine what it means to be a hero. This program used a positive approach to demonstrate what it means to be a young man as an effort to reduce violence against others, specifically within the relationships of young people. This emphasized dialogue instead of violence when resolving problems. Other messaging focused on the aim to reduce teenage pregnancies. The media campaign used #GENERASIJAGOAN across social media platforms to engage youth more actively.

- The other campaign highlighted was the filming and dissemination of the documentary, A Little Piece of Heaven in Bondowoso, following an imam from Bondowoso, East Java who promotes gender equality in his life and through his teachings in the community, especially to young people. Setting an example in his own life to support his wife he often preaches about the moral need for men and women to respect and support each other, and emphasizes that gender equality has educational, professional and economic advantages.

Other approaches by MenCare+ emphasize celebrities as role models, and targeted implementation efforts in education and service provision (group education, engaging with the health sector, counseling men on gender-based violence) as well as in advocacy (advocating for implementation of laws and the sharing of expertise).
CONCLUSION

The takeaway for adolescent gender equality in Indonesia is to recognize the stark realities of child marriage and persistent inequalities in accessing effective health services to educate on and prevent pregnancy, which disproportionately disadvantage girls. Deeply entrenched cultural norms continue to allow for such inequalities as boys and girls grow into adulthood, but issues such as these must be addressed as Indonesia reaches the window for its demographic dividend. Examining gender discriminatory policies/norms demonstrates the clear opportunities for promoting change, namely amending the legal age of marriage to be equal for boys and girls and aligning it with the international standards of 18 years old. Beyond legal measures, programs continue to impact change throughout the country’s adolescents and will be key in setting the foundations for cultural change in support of gender equality amongst young people.

Throughout this process it is critical to involve youth themselves at the center of decision-making and the development/implementation of programs. Such efforts must consider: what do adolescents want and how can we get those things to them effectively? This resonates with the UNDP’s effort to promote: inclusive youth participation in effective and democratic governance, economic empowerment of youth, strengthened youth engagement in building resilience in their community and the inclusion of youth in the future development agenda, including through consultations and discussions\(^23\).
REFERENCES


