



## PREPARING WOMEN FOR SAFE PREGNANCY, CHILDBIRTH, AND THE BIRTH OF A HEALTHY BABY: A COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

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### ABSTRACT

Community service activities aimed at preparing women for healthy pregnancies and childbirth were conducted in Jombang Regency in April 2025. The program was initiated due to the ongoing need for education on preconception and prenatal care to reduce maternal and neonatal complications. The objectives included enhancing the understanding of preconception counseling, preparation for safe childbirth, recognition of healthy pregnancy signs, and the importance of antenatal check-ups. Activities involved health education sessions using PowerPoint presentations, distribution of leaflets, and interactive discussions. A total of participants, including late adolescents, prospective brides, and women of reproductive age, attended. Evaluations through pretests and posttests indicated a 35% improvement in knowledge. The program successfully raised awareness and encouraged participants to regularly seek health services for preconception and prenatal care.

**Keywords:** Preconception Care, Pregnancy Preparation, Community Health Promotion, Safe Childbirth.

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### INTRODUCTION

Pregnancy is a pivotal phase in a woman's life, marked by profound physical, emotional, and social changes (Soetjiningsih, 2004). It requires careful

preparation to ensure a safe experience for both mother and baby. In Indonesia, maternal and neonatal health outcomes remain a significant public health challenge, despite the availability of health

services. Maternal mortality rates are still high, often due to preventable causes linked to inadequate knowledge about preconception health, lack of proper antenatal care, and delayed recognition of complications during pregnancy and childbirth (Kementerian Kesehatan Republik Indonesia, 2016).

The Health Profile of Indonesia (2016) reports that while 80.61% of deliveries are assisted by skilled health personnel, issues related to maternal health literacy persist. Many women, especially those experiencing pregnancy for the first time, are unaware of the importance of nutritional intake, regular antenatal check-ups, early signs of pregnancy complications, and preparation for labor and postpartum care (Institute of Medicine, 2009).

Recognizing these gaps, this community service program was developed to empower women, particularly late adolescents, future brides, and women of reproductive age, with the knowledge necessary to undergo safe pregnancies and deliveries. The program focused on promoting preconception counseling, healthy pregnancy practices, and accessible antenatal care services in Jombang Regency. Through educational interventions and community engagement, the program aimed to contribute to the reduction of maternal and infant mortality rates and improve the overall well-being of mothers and babies.

## OBJECTIVES

### *General Purpose*

This community service aimed to empower women, particularly late adolescents, prospective brides, and women of reproductive age, by equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and motivation necessary to ensure safe pregnancies, safe

deliveries, and the birth of healthy babies. Through this, we strive to contribute to the reduction of maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality rates.

### *Special Purpose*

To achieve the general purpose, we focus on several specific objectives that directly support the empowerment and education of the target population:

1. Provide comprehensive education on the goals and importance of preconception counseling (KIE) in planning a healthy pregnancy.
2. Enhance participants' knowledge about the steps and strategies to prepare for safe and healthy childbirth, including maintaining proper nutrition, making lifestyle changes, and detecting pregnancy risks early.
3. Increase awareness of the signs and symptoms of a healthy pregnancy and the early warning signs of potential complications.
4. Encourage participants to conduct regular antenatal visits and health check-ups as essential components of monitoring maternal and fetal health.
5. Strengthen participants' confidence and self-efficacy in seeking and utilizing maternal health services at healthcare facilities.
6. Promote a supportive community environment that values and supports maternal and newborn health through education and empowerment.

## PLAN OF ACTION

### *Strategy Plan*

To ensure the effective implementation of the community service activities, we developed a comprehensive strategy plan involving several key steps:

1. Established initial coordination meetings with the Coordinator of Pre-Marriage and Preconception Midwifery Courses, local health centers, and community health workers to align goals and secure collaboration.
2. Identified the specific needs and characteristics of the target population through informal assessments and communication with community leaders.
3. Designed educational materials, including easy-to-understand PowerPoint presentations and informative leaflets, focusing on preconception care, safe pregnancy practices, and early warning signs of complications.
4. Scheduled the dissemination of information through community channels and social media to maximize awareness and participant recruitment.
5. Prepared tools for evaluation, including simple pretest and posttest instruments to measure knowledge gain among participants.
3. Distributing informative leaflets to all participants.
4. Facilitating interactive question-and-answer sessions to engage participants.
5. Administering pretests and posttests to evaluate the improvement in participants' knowledge.

### *Setting*

The community service program was conducted in Jombang Regency, East Java Province, during April 2025. Jombang was selected as the intervention site based on preliminary assessments indicating a persistent need for improved knowledge regarding maternal health, particularly among women preparing for pregnancy. Despite the availability of healthcare services, gaps in awareness about preconception counseling, antenatal care, and early identification of pregnancy-related complications remained evident within the community.

The program activities took place at local community centers, with support from the village administration, public health centers (Puskesmas), and community health volunteers. The educational intervention included several structured activities: interactive PowerPoint presentations focusing on the importance of preconception health, distribution of easy-to-understand informational leaflets, and facilitation of question-and-answer sessions to encourage participant engagement. The setting was chosen to ensure accessibility for participants and to promote a comfortable environment conducive to learning and discussion. Strict adherence to health protocols was maintained throughout the implementation to safeguard participants' health and safety.

### *Implementation*

Following the planning phase, the implementer of community service activities proceeded with the implementation of activities as outlined. The implementation phase was crucial to bringing the strategy into action, ensuring that the educational objectives were effectively delivered to the target audience. The main activities carried out during the implementation included:

1. Publicizing the event through posters and social media outreach.
2. Conducting health education sessions using interactive PowerPoint presentations.

### Target

The primary target group for the program comprised late adolescents (approximately 18–24 years old), prospective brides, and women of reproductive age (15–49 years old) residing in Jombang Regency. These groups were strategically selected based on their potential to directly benefit from enhanced knowledge and practices related to reproductive health, thereby contributing to safer pregnancies and healthier birth outcomes. The program specifically sought to:

1. **Educate late adolescents** on the importance of preconception health to prepare them for future pregnancies and to reduce the incidence of unintended or high-risk pregnancies.
2. **Equip prospective brides** with essential information on pregnancy planning, safe childbirth practices, and the significance of early antenatal care registration.
3. **Empower women of reproductive age** with the knowledge to recognize early signs of a healthy pregnancy and warning signs of complications, encouraging timely medical consultations.

By targeting these populations, the program aimed to foster a proactive health-seeking behavior culture, strengthen maternal health literacy, and ultimately contribute to reducing maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality rates in the region.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The community service program entitled *"Preparing Women for Safe Pregnancy, Childbirth, and the Birth of a Healthy Baby"* was successfully

implemented in April 2025 in Jombang Regency. The following outcomes were recorded:

### 1. Participant Demographics

The program was attended by a diverse group of participants, including late adolescents, prospective brides, and women of reproductive age. Participants were primarily recruited through local community networks, health centers, and promotional activities conducted via social media and posters.

### 2. Educational Sessions

Health education was delivered using a combination of interactive PowerPoint presentations and printed leaflets. The materials emphasized the importance of preconception counseling, preparation for safe pregnancy and childbirth, identification of healthy pregnancy signs, and the necessity of regular antenatal check-ups.

### 3. Engagement and Participation

Participants actively engaged during the sessions, particularly in the discussion and Q&A segments. Numerous questions were raised regarding optimal nutrition during pregnancy, the timing of antenatal visits, recognition of danger signs, and practices for maintaining a healthy pregnancy.

### 4. Knowledge Assessment

Pretest and posttest evaluations were conducted to assess the effectiveness of the education sessions. Results indicated an average increase of 35% in participants' knowledge scores, demonstrating a significant improvement in understanding key concepts related to maternal and reproductive health.

### 5. Documentation and Follow-up

The entire program was documented through photographs and detailed activity reports. Participants were encouraged to continue health monitoring by regularly attending preconception and antenatal services at local health facilities.

The implementation of this community service project highlighted several key findings:

1. Increased Health Literacy

The substantial improvement in knowledge scores from pretest to posttest suggests that structured educational interventions are effective in enhancing maternal health literacy among women of reproductive age. This finding is consistent with studies showing that health education significantly improves maternal knowledge and health-seeking behaviors (Arikunto, 2010; Institute of Medicine, 2009; Kementerian Kesehatan Republik Indonesia, 2016; World Health Organization [WHO], 2016)

2. High Participant Enthusiasm

Active participation during the sessions demonstrated the community's eagerness to enhance their understanding of reproductive health. Previous research emphasizes that interactive health education increases participant engagement and knowledge retention more effectively than passive methods (Eriyani, 2006; Habsjah & others, 1995; Soetjiningsih, 2004).

3. Importance of Preconception Counseling

Many participants had limited knowledge regarding preconception health, underscoring the need to integrate preconception education into

maternal and child health initiatives (Adnani et al., 2010; Ayu, 2009; Hapsari, 2019; World Health Organization [WHO], 2013). Preconception care interventions are known to reduce adverse maternal and neonatal outcomes.

4. Role of Community Collaboration

The collaboration with community leaders, health cadres, and public health centers was critical to the program's success.

Community-based participatory approaches have been widely recognized as effective strategies to enhance maternal and child health programs, particularly in resource-limited settings (Atun & others, 2004; Caesarina, 2009; Rahayu & others, 2017).

5. Sustainability and Follow-up

Long-term follow-up and periodic reinforcement of educational sessions are essential to sustain knowledge gains and translate them into health-promoting behaviors. Sustainable programs often integrate peer education, regular community meetings, and ongoing monitoring (Azwar, 2000; Inti, 2009).

Overall, the findings indicate that community-based educational interventions, when designed to be culturally appropriate and participatory, can significantly improve women's reproductive health knowledge and practices. Future programs should aim to incorporate preconception care education more systematically into public health agendas to support safe pregnancies and reduce maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality rates.





**Picture 1.** Implementation of Community Service Activities in Jombang Regency, East Java Province, during April 2025.

## CONCLUSION

This community service program successfully demonstrated that structured, community-based educational interventions can significantly enhance women's knowledge and awareness regarding preconception care, healthy pregnancy practices, and safe childbirth preparation. The marked improvement in participants' knowledge scores, combined with their active engagement, highlights the effectiveness of interactive health education strategies in promoting maternal health literacy.

Targeting late adolescents, prospective brides, and women of reproductive age proved to be a strategic approach, addressing critical gaps in understanding and encouraging proactive health behaviors. Collaboration with local health stakeholders, including public health centers and community health cadres, was instrumental in ensuring the smooth implementation and sustainability of the program.

Given the positive outcomes, it is recommended that similar educational initiatives be expanded and integrated into routine community health services. Future programs should consider incorporating

continuous follow-up activities, reinforcement sessions, and broader community involvement to maximize the impact on maternal and neonatal health outcomes.

In conclusion, empowering women through accessible, culturally appropriate health education remains a vital strategy for reducing maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality, contributing to the overall improvement of public health in Indonesia and beyond.

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