



## Youth Participation in the Genre Ambassador Program for Reproductive Health Education in Sukabumi Regency

Alfarisa Agisni, Khairunnisa Azahra, Siffa Noorjanah

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia

\*Correspondence: E-mail: [noorjanahsiffa@gmail.com](mailto:noorjanahsiffa@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT	ARTICLE INFO
<p>This study aims to analyze the level of adolescent participation in the Generation Planning Ambassador Program (Genre) and its contribution to reproductive health education in Sukabumi Regency. The Genre Ambassador Program is a strategic initiative of BKKBN that aims to form adolescents as agents of change in disseminating information about reproductive health, prevention of early marriage, and planning for a healthy future life. The research method used is qualitative descriptive with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. The informants consisted of 14 active Genre Ambassadors, program facilitators, and young beneficiaries in five sub-districts. The results of the study showed that adolescents had active participation in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of educational activities, including the preparation of materials, social media campaigns, and direct education in schools and communities. This level of participation is supported by individual motivation factors, coaching from related agencies, and access to regular training. However, obstacles are still encountered, such as the lack of digital literacy in rural areas, limited information facilities, and lack of parental involvement. The impact of the program can be seen from increasing knowledge and changing adolescents' attitudes towards reproductive health issues and early marriage. This program shows great potential in building youth awareness in a sustainable manner and is worthy of replication with local adjustments in other areas.</p> <p>© 2024 UPI Journals and Publications Office</p>	<p><b>Article History:</b> <i>Submitted/Received 25 Okt 2024</i> <i>First Revised 30 Okt 2024</i> <i>Accepted 23 Nov 2024</i> <i>First Available online 30 Des 2024</i> <i>Publication Date 30 Des 2024</i></p> <p><b>Keyword:</b> <i>Gender Ambassador, Teen Education, Reproductive health, teen participation, prevention of early marriage</i></p>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescents are a strategic age group in the development of quality human resources (Mayasari, S. 2017). Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2023, the number of Indonesians aged 10-24 years reached around 66.67 million people or 24.3% of the total population. This significant proportion makes adolescents an important actor in determining the direction of the nation's future. In the midst of the rapid flow of information and social change, the need for relevant and comprehensive education, especially related to reproductive health, has become very urgent (Firmansyah, A. S, et al. 2024). This is reinforced by the fact that there is an increase in cases of early marriage and teenage pregnancy, especially in areas with limited access to accurate health information.

Sukabumi Regency, as one of the regions with a fairly high number of adolescents in West Java, also faces similar challenges. BPS data for Sukabumi Regency in 2023 noted that around 27.8% of the population is in the age range of 10–24 years. On the other hand, the Sukabumi Regency Health Office noted that the rate of early marriage is still quite high, with an average of 18% of total marriages occurring under the age of 19. This phenomenon shows that there is an urgent need for an educational approach that is not only informative, but also transformative, by actively involving adolescents in the process.

The Generation Planning Ambassador Program (Genre) is present as a strategic response from the National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN) in overcoming these problems (Aziz, A. R. 2021). This program aims to produce adolescents as agents of change who are able to disseminate information about reproductive health, prevention of early marriage, and healthy and productive life planning (Karunia, I., et al., 2025). Through training, mentoring, and participatory spaces, Genre Ambassadors are expected to become a bridge between service provider institutions and youth groups in various communities.

However, the effectiveness of these programs is highly dependent on the level of youth participation itself. Active participation includes not only involvement in activities, but also in planning, implementation, and program evaluation. The concept of adolescent participation has long been part of participatory development theory, in which society — including young people — is encouraged to be subjects of change, not just objects of intervention (Setiawan, H. H., 2009). In this context, it is important to explore how the role and contribution of Genre Ambassadors in Sukabumi Regency really affects the quality of reproductive health education at the grassroots level.

Various previous studies have shown that adolescents' involvement in health education programs is able to increase the effectiveness of the messages conveyed, especially because of the proximity of age and similarity of experiences (Guspita, 2017). According to BPS (2022), adolescents who obtain information from fellow adolescents (peer educators) have a 1.5 times higher level of understanding than those who only rely on information from teachers or conventional media. This shows that a community-based education strategy with a peer-based approach has great potential to be applied more widely.

However, various challenges still stand in the way of the implementation of this program, especially in rural areas that face limitations in terms of digital literacy, information infrastructure, and culture that is still conservative in discussing reproductive issues. BPS Sukabumi noted that in 2022, only 56% of households in rural areas had internet access, much lower than urban areas which reached 82%. This is a significant obstacle in the dissemination of digital-based information that is the mainstay of Genre Ambassadors today.

Therefore, it is important to conduct in-depth and contextual research to assess the extent of adolescent participation in the Genre Ambassador Program and its contribution to increasing knowledge and changing attitudes related to reproductive health. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to describe the dynamics that occur in the field, including the form of participation, the challenges faced, and the impact felt by the adolescent beneficiaries.

By understanding more comprehensively how the role of adolescents in this program is formed and contributes to social change, the results of this research are expected to be input for policy makers, program facilitators, and the wider community. The knowledge gained can be used as a basis to strengthen the implementation of the Genre Ambassador Program and adapt it to local needs in various regions of Indonesia, so that reproductive health education for adolescents can be more inclusive, relevant, and sustainable.

## **2. METHODS**

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to deeply understand the level of participation of adolescents in the Generation Planning Ambassador Program (Genre) and its contribution to reproductive health education in Sukabumi Regency. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the meanings, experiences, and social dynamics experienced directly by informants, in accordance with (Creswell's, 2014) emphasis that qualitative research aims to understand phenomena from the perspective of participants. The location of the research was determined purposively in five sub-districts that are actively implementing the Genre program, referring to data from the Sukabumi Regency Population Control and Family Planning Office (DPPKB) in 2023. Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews with 14 active Genre Ambassadors, 4 program facilitators, and 10 youth beneficiaries; participatory observation during educational activities; as well as documentation in the form of activity reports, training modules, and digital campaign content. Interviews are conducted in a semi-structured manner in order to provide space for exploration of aspects that arise contextually in the field (Patton, 2002).

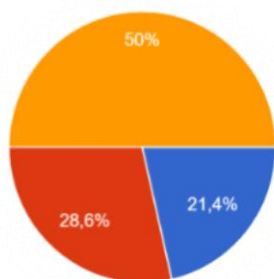
The collected data was analyzed using an interactive model by (Miles and Huberman, 2014) which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions/verification. Data reduction is carried out by grouping information based on predetermined themes and participation indicators, data presentation is displayed in the form of descriptive narratives and direct quotes from informants, while conclusions are drawn inductively and confirmed through triangulation of sources, techniques, and time (Sugiyono, 2017). The validity of the data is maintained through cross-verification between informants and the consistency of findings in various contexts of activities. This research is also based on ethical principles by ensuring the confidentiality of informant identities, obtaining informed consent, and maintaining the neutrality of researchers in the entire research process (Neuman, 2014). With this method, the research is expected to present a holistic, contextual, and scientifically accountable picture of the effectiveness of the Genre Ambassador program in mainstreaming reproductive health education among Sukabumi adolescents.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **a. Adolescent Participation in Reproductive Health Education by GenRe Ambassadors**

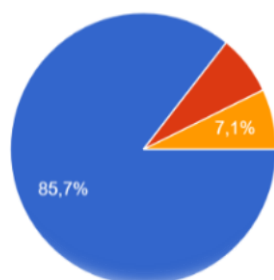
The level of participation of adolescents in the GenRe Ambassador program in Sukabumi Regency is very high, especially in activities organized by PIAR and the GenRe Forum. This

participation is not only seen from physical presence, but also from the contribution of ideas, program management, and material support. Adolescents are active in the process of planning and implementing the program, which shows that they are not just passive participants. Differences in participation are not based on gender, but on individual abilities, interests, and talents. Awareness of the importance of reproductive health and the desire to learn are the main motivations. However, some barriers such as distance, cost, and consistency of commitment affect participation. Socio-economic factors, family support, and access to information also greatly influence. To address the participation gap, interventions such as adolescent health monitoring and school and community involvement are carried out.



- 50% - **Socialization at School (Blue)**: The majority of participants received information about reproductive health through socialization programs held in schools.
- 28.6% - **Social Media (Red)**: A significant portion of participants got their information from social media platforms.
- 21.4% - **Friends/Family (Orange)**: A smaller group of participants learned about reproductive health from friends or family members.

Fig. 1 Respondent Information Resources About the GenRe Ambassador Program



- 85.7% - **Increasing Knowledge about Reproductive Health (Blue)**: The majority of participants joined the program to enhance their understanding of reproductive health.
- 7.1% - **Academic Responsibility (Red)**: A small group of participants engaged due to academic requirements or obligations.
- 7.1% - **Personal Interest (Orange)**: An equal portion of participants joined the program due to personal interest in the topic.

Fig. 2 Participant Motivation to take part in the GenRe Ambassador Program

Of the 14 respondents, 50% obtained information about the GenRe Ambassador program from friends or family, 28.6% from social media, and 21.4% from socialization at school. The main motivation for participating was to increase knowledge about reproductive health (85.7%), with only 7.1% engaging due to personal interest. These results show that social influence and direct interaction play an important role in the dissemination of information, while motivation is driven by the educational aspect of the program. However, there needs to be a strengthening of socialization in schools to increase the scope and impact of the program.

The results of the study showed that the level of participation of adolescents in the Generation Planning Ambassador Program (Genre) in Sukabumi Regency was very high, especially in activities managed by PIAR and the local Genre Forum. Adolescents are not only physically present in various activities, but are also active in planning, implementation, and evaluation, as well as contributing ideas and resources. This is in line with the theory of active participation from Arnstein (1969) which places citizen involvement in the decision-making process as a form of substantial participation. In this context, Sukabumi youth have gone

beyond the stage of tokenism and reached a level of collaborative participation, where they are involved as subjects, not objects of the program.

Engagement that is not determined by gender, but by ability, interests, and talents, demonstrates the importance of an individual potential-based approach to adolescent engagement. These findings are also relevant to Habermas' concept of deliberative participation, which emphasizes that every individual has the right to voice opinions and engage based on communicative rationality, rather than mere social background or demographic attributes. Awareness of the importance of reproductive health is the main trigger for engagement, reflecting Maslow's hierarchy of needs, particularly at the level of cognitive needs and self-actualization. A total of 85.7% of adolescents stated that their main motivation was to increase knowledge about reproductive health, while only 7.1% engaged on the basis of personal interest, indicating that the educational aspect was the main attraction of the program.

Furthermore, social and economic factors such as distance of residence, transportation costs, and consistency in commitment are obstacles to participation. These findings are in line with the view of (Rifkin et al, 1988) that community participation is not only determined by individual willpower, but also by the availability of access, support structures, and socio-economic contexts. Family support and access to information are determinants of the sustainability of participation. Therefore, the role of the social environment is very central, as evidenced by the data that 50% of respondents first learned about the Genre Ambassador program from friends or family. This confirms the influence of the innovation diffusion theory from Rogers (2003), who stated that interpersonal communication in social networks is more effective in spreading innovation than formal mass media.

Social media as a source of information (28.6%) does have a role, but it is still less effective than direct interaction. This reinforces the importance of a community approach in the dissemination of reproductive health information. The fact that only 21.4% of adolescents know about programs from schools indicates that the role of formal institutions in supporting Genre programs is still weak. Therefore, there needs to be a strengthening of socialization in schools through collaboration between BKKBN, BK teachers, and student organizations to expand the reach of information and encourage wider involvement of adolescents. In addition, interventions such as adolescent health monitoring, community engagement, and systemic support from schools and families are key strategies in addressing participation gaps. Thus, the results of this study confirm that the participation of adolescents in the Genre Ambassador Program is not only high in quantity, but also in quality, demonstrated by their active role in the management and development of the program. However, to achieve equal participation and expand impact, structural and cultural interventions need to be made, especially in strengthening support from formal institutions such as schools, as well as increasing access inclusivity in areas with geographical and economic barriers.

## **b. Reproductive Health Education Strategy by GenRe Ambassadors**

GenRe ambassadors act as role models, facilitators, and peers, delivering education through various platforms including social media. They work with schools, health institutions, and other organizations, which are important to achieve program goals. Challenges include managing time between duties as a GenRe Ambassador and academic obligations, as well as reproductive health topics that are often considered taboo. The strategy implemented uses

a top-down approach, but the implementation is adjusted by GenRe Ambassadors to local needs .

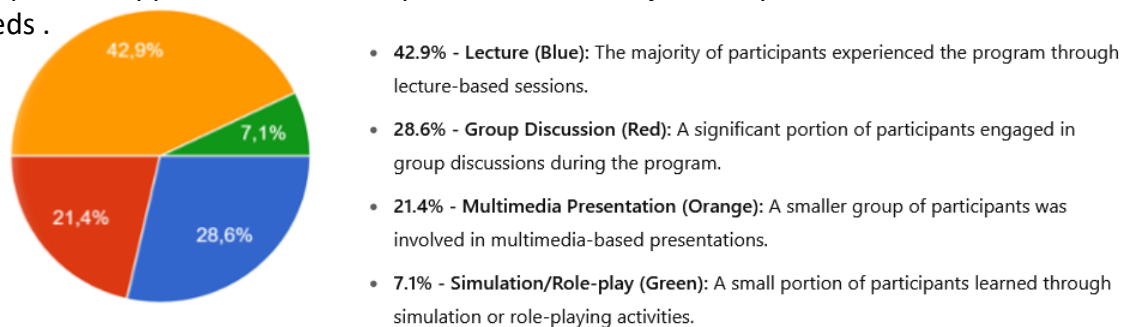


Fig. 3 Methods in delivering materials in the GenRe Ambassador Program

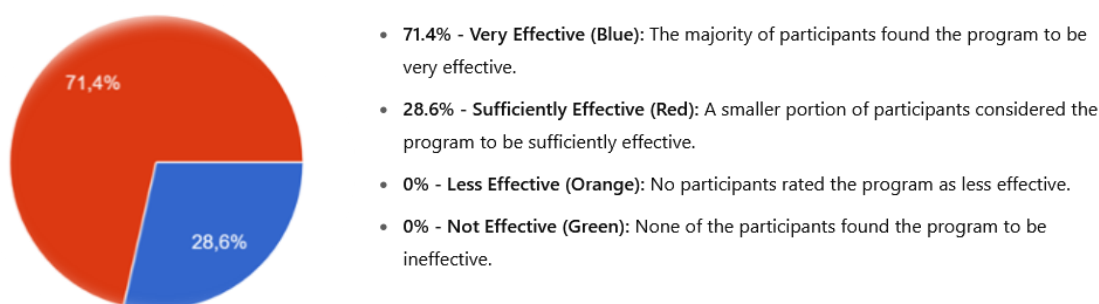


Fig. 4 Effectiveness of Strategy in Delivering Materials in the GenRe Ambassador Program

The multimedia presentation method was most commonly used (42.9%), followed by lectures (28.6%), group discussions (21.4%), and simulation/role-play (7.1%). 71.4% of respondents rated this strategy as quite effective, while 28.6% felt very effective. This shows that the combination of educational methods used has successfully achieved the main objectives of the program, with the majority of respondents benefiting significantly. The strategy implemented by the GenRe Ambassador shows compatibility with the strategy theory by Assauri, where the use of social media and digital platforms increases the effectiveness of the program. The variety of educational methods used provides a comprehensive and engaging learning experience for adolescents, demonstrating alignment with learning theories that emphasize the importance of diversity in educational approaches. Challenges such as timing and stigma require a more individualized and sensitive approach to improve program acceptance and effectiveness.

Data shows that multimedia presentations are the most dominant method (42.9%), followed by lectures (28.6%), group discussions (21.4%), and role-play/simulation (7.1%). This diversity of methods shows compatibility with constructivistic learning theory, where active, interactive, and contextual learning experiences are essential in improving the understanding and internalization of values (Bruner, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978). With 71.4% of respondents stating that educational strategies are quite effective and 28.6% consider them to be very effective, it can be concluded that the combination of these methods has succeeded in creating a relevant and impactful learning process, especially in the context of informal education carried out by peers.

However, the implementation of this strategy is not free from challenges. One of the main obstacles is the difficulty of GenRe Ambassadors in managing time between academic assignments and advocacy activities, as well as the persistence of social stigma towards the



topic of reproductive health, especially in an environment that views the issue as taboo. This is in line with the participatory communication theory of Paulo Freire (1970), which states that transformative communication will face obstacles when the social structure still refuses openness to changes in values or sensitive topics. To overcome these challenges, the approach implemented remains top-down based from the institution, but the GenRe Ambassadors adapt flexibly at the local level. This means that the communication strategy remains within the central policy framework, but its implementation accommodates the social, cultural, and psychological context of local adolescents.

Furthermore, the use of multimedia approaches and participatory methods not only facilitates the delivery of information, but also encourages active participation of participants, which is in accordance with the experiential learning model by (Kolb, 1984). In this model, effective learning occurs when individuals engage directly in experience, reflect, and apply knowledge in real-world situations. As such, methods such as group discussions and role-play—although used in smaller portions—remain important as a complement to a more reflective and personalized learning experience.

**c. The Role of GenRe Ambassadors in Improving Adolescent Reproductive Health**

The GenRe Ambassador program has had a significant positive impact, especially in increasing adolescents' understanding of reproductive health and healthy lifestyles. Adolescents begin to apply knowledge in their daily lives and show greater involvement in related discussions. Challenges such as stigma and timings still exist, but support from schools and communities helps overcome these barriers.

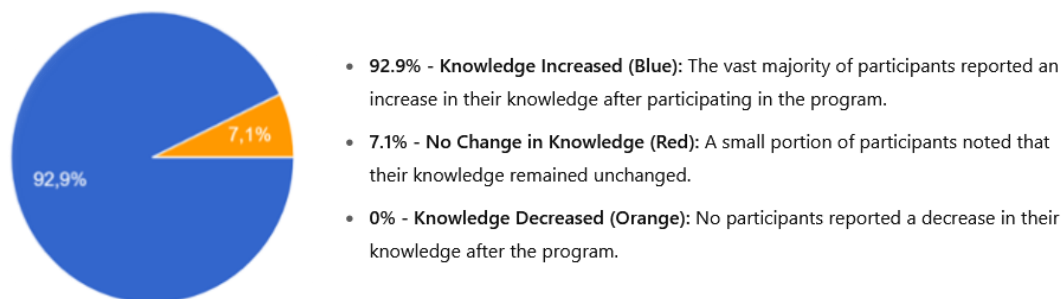


Fig. 5 Short-term impact after participating in the GenRe Ambassador Program

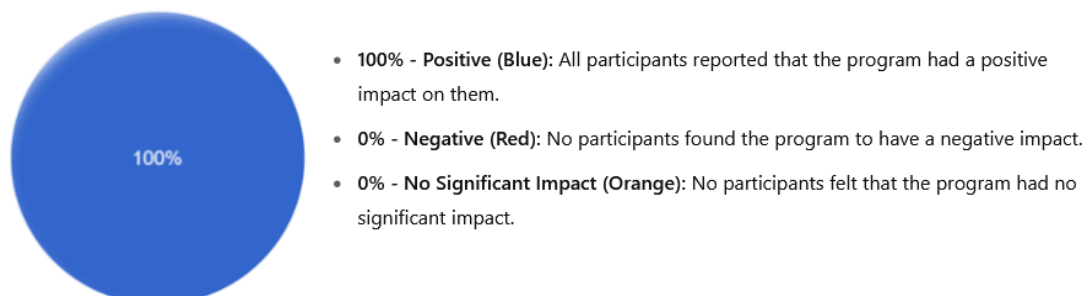


Fig. 6 Long-term impact after joining the GenRe Ambassador Program in terms of Reproductive Health

A total of 92.9% of respondents felt that their knowledge improved after participating in the program, and 100% saw the long-term impact of the program as positive. It demonstrates the program's success in increasing the knowledge and awareness of adolescents and motivating them to actively participate. The positive impact of the program is in line with behavioral theory that emphasizes the importance of open discussion and a persuasive approach in changing behavior. The success of the program in improving the knowledge and attitudes of adolescents shows the effectiveness of the approach used, in accordance with the theory of program implementation by Mulyasa. Support from PIK-R and family and community involvement are essential in supporting healthy and responsible adolescent development, in line with Tjilen's theory of the importance of a supportive and stigma-free environment.

The findings of the study show that the GenRe Ambassador Program has a significant positive impact on improving adolescents' understanding of reproductive health and healthy lifestyles. A total of 92.9% of respondents reported an increase in knowledge after participating in the program, and 100% rated the long-term impact of the program as positive. These results show that the program has succeeded in systematically shaping behavior and awareness changes, which is in line with the Theory of Planned Behavior by (Ajzen, 1991). In this theory, it is explained that behavior change occurs when individuals have positive attitudes, supportive social norms, and a perception of control over the behavior. In the context of GenRe Ambassadors, open discussions on reproductive issues and adolescents' active participation in educational activities form positive attitudes and new norms that support healthy behaviors.

Furthermore, the success of this program also reflects the effectiveness of participatory-based program implementation, as explained by (Mulyasa, 2009) who emphasized that the success of program implementation is highly determined by the right strategy, participant involvement, and system support. In this case, the persuasive approach taken by GenRe Ambassadors—through peer education methods, digital campaigns, and direct dialogue—succeeded in increasing youth participation and understanding in a sustainable manner. This approach is not one-way, but opens up a space for dialogue that allows adolescents to understand reproductive health issues according to their social and cultural context.

Although programs face challenges such as social stigma and limited time for teens due to academic obligations, the findings suggest that support from schools and communities is instrumental in minimizing these barriers. This analysis is in line with (Tjilen, 2006) social environment theory which states that healthy and responsible adolescent development is strongly influenced by a supportive, inclusive, and stigma-free environment. The active role of PIK-R, teachers, and parents creates a conducive social atmosphere, encouraging adolescents' openness to information that was previously considered taboo. In this theory, changes in adolescent behavior are not only the result of individual interventions, but also due to the existence of emotionally and structurally supportive social systems.



#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the study, adolescents' participation in reproductive health education held by GenRe Ambassadors in Sukabumi Regency generally showed a high level of attendance, but tended to be limited to physical presence without active participation in activities. This is in contrast to members of the PIK-R and GenRe Forum who show higher motivation, driven by awareness of the importance of reproductive health. The strategies applied in this program, such as lectures, personal approaches, the use of appropriate educational modules, interesting games, and campaigns through social media, are considered quite effective in increasing adolescent participation. GenRe Ambassadors act as role models, facilitators, peers, and educators in conveying information about reproductive health. Most of the teenagers in Sukabumi consider GenRe Ambassadors to be a credible source of information, given their in-depth knowledge of the topic. Although challenges such as cost, time, and taboo stigma still exist, the program has been successful in making a significant positive impact, making adolescents more open to discussing reproductive health, having a clearer life plan, and adopting a healthy lifestyle. Positive feedback from participants showed that they benefited from the program, which is an indicator of success in achieving reproductive health education goals.

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