

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background

A violation of human rights, child marriage is still a significant societal issue in the globe today. As per UNICEF's definition, a child marriage occurs when two people who are younger than 18 are married and the female spouse is not yet mature enough to take on the responsibilities of the marriage and raise a kid for herself. The number of women and girls who married before turning 18 is still estimated to reach 650 million today. With 457.6 thousand women between the ages of 20 and 24 who were married before turning 15, Indonesia has the seventh-highest incidence of child marriage worldwide, according to a UNICEF research in 2021.<sup>1</sup>

UNICEF estimated that 640 million girls and women alive today were married in childhood. This statistic indicates that, as of 2018, approximately 21% of young women aged 20 to 24 were married before reaching adulthood. Nearly half of child brides live in South Asia (45 percent) with the next largest share in sub-Saharan Africa (20 percent), followed by East Asia and the Pacific (15 percent) and Latin America and the Caribbean (9 percent).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Adelita Lubis et al., "NGOs and Child Marriage Problem in Indonesia: Analysis of Issues, Strategies and Networks," *Gorontalo Journal of Government and Political Studies* 4, no. 1 (2021): 85–95.

<sup>2</sup> Annisa R Beta and Ryan Febrianto, "Are Indonesian Girls Okay? An Examination of The Discourse of Child Marriage, Victimization, and Humanitarian Visuality of Global South Girls," *Jurnal Studi Pemuda* 9, no. 2 (September 30, 2020): 163-176, <https://doi.org/10.22146/studipemudaugm.57432>.

In Indonesia, one in nine females is married before turning 18 according to official statistical data. By comparison, the percentage of boys between the ages of 20 and 24 who are married while still minors is one in 100. Indeed, among all ASEAN members, Indonesia comes in second. In Indonesia, the percentage of child marriages dropped from 14.67% in 2008 to 10.82% in 2019. In 2019, however, the number of child marriages in 22 out of 34 Indonesian provinces remained higher than the country as a whole. The greatest rate was recorded in South Kalimantan (21.2%), followed by Central Kalimantan (20.2%) and West Sulawesi (19.2%).<sup>3</sup>

Due to its multifaceted nature, child marriage is a complicated issue. It has its roots in cultural values and practices, which are connected to a number of other structural elements and social influences. Socioeconomic variables including poverty, cultural norms, inadequate educational possibilities, the social standing, education level, and employment of the potential bride are some of the reasons that contribute to child marriage in Indonesia, according to data from UNICEF and the National Socio-economic Survey.<sup>4</sup>

Since child marriage has an immediate negative impact on the children's education, health, and psyche, it is a violation of their human rights. It is thought that child marriage will restrict children's rights and take away their potential to survive, thrive, and accomplish their goals in life. The risk of depression, cervical cancer, mother and child mortality, the spread of sexually transmitted infections,

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<sup>3</sup> Adelita Lubis et al., "NGOs and Child Marriage Problem in Indonesia: Analysis of Issues, Strategies and Networks," *Gorontalo Journal of Government and Political Studies* 4, no. 1 (2021): 85–95.

<sup>4</sup> Muliani Ratnaningsih et al., "Child Marriage Acceptability Index (CMAI) an Essential Indicator: An Investigation in South and Central Sulawesi," *Global Health Research and Policy* 7, no. 32 (2022): 1–18.

and other conditions can also rise with child marriage.<sup>5</sup> The practice of child marriage frequently results in divorce and domestic abuse, which has a detrimental effect on a number of other areas, including the social and economic spheres. Additionally, child marriage restricts prospects for better jobs or higher education and puts financial strain on families. In its most severe form, child marriage can result in the exploitation of young brides, who may become victims of domestic sex trafficking, both during their marriage and after divorce or abandonment.<sup>6</sup>

The issue of child marriage in Indonesia requires a multifaceted response. The year 2019 saw Indonesia commit at the Nairobi Summit of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) to put strategic policies and campaigns into action, increase national and subnational budgets to combat gender-based violence and harmful practices, and amend the 1974 Marriage Law to raise the age of first marriage to 19 years old for a girl and a boy. In the past, females in Indonesia could legally marry with parental approval at 16 years old, as stated by Marriage Law No. 1/1974.<sup>7</sup>

Nonetheless, the law has a crucial gap known as marital dispensation. Under Marriage Law Article 7(2), a legal procedure known as marriage dispensation permits marriage between individuals who are younger than the minimum marriage

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<sup>5</sup> Areta Ardita Putri and Palupi Anggraheni, "Is Indonesia Secure for All Children? Advokasi Transnasional oleh PLAN International Menangani Isu Hak Asasi atas Perlindungan dari Perkawinan Anak," *Journal of International Relations* 9, no. 2 (2023): 188–209.

<sup>6</sup> Loudy Indah Sukma, "Implikasi Program 'Yes I Do' oleh Plan International dalam Mengurangi Perkawinan Anak di Indonesia (Studi Kasus Kabupaten Sukabumi)," *JOM FISIP* 9, no. 2 (2022): 1–20.

<sup>7</sup> Annisa R Beta and Ryan Febrianto, "Are Indonesian Girls Okay? An Examination of The Discourse of Child Marriage, Victimization, and Humanitarian Visuality of Global South Girls," *Jurnal Studi Pemuda* 9, no. 2 (September 30, 2020): 163-176, <https://doi.org/10.22146/studipemudaugm.57432>.

age. The Religious Court (for Muslims) or District Court (for non-Muslims) must receive a dispensation request from parents. Regardless of whether they approve the request or not, they are in charge of receiving it, processing it, and making the ultimate decision.<sup>8</sup>

Article 26 paragraph one letter C of Law Number 35 of 2014 about Amendments to Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection stipulates that it is the duty and responsibility of parents to avoid child marriages. While legislative changes are crucial, it is important to recognize that government action alone cannot dismantle this complex issue. Even with a raised minimum age, the existence of marital dispensation creates a loophole. A multifaceted approach is necessary. This means not only strengthening legal frameworks but also implementing effective social programs that address the root causes of child marriage, such as poverty, lack of educational opportunities, and cultural norms.<sup>9</sup>

Comprehensive solutions necessitate collaboration between governments, non-governmental organizations, international bodies, and local communities. While legislative measures and strategic policies are essential, they must be complemented by grassroots campaigns, education, economic support, and cultural change initiatives. Only through a coordinated and holistic approach can the deeply entrenched issue of child marriage be effectively addressed. Non-governmental

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<sup>8</sup> Kurnia Zulhandayani Rizki, et al., “Plan International and Its Alliances’s Role in Overcoming Child Marriage Problem and Supporting Sustainable Development Goals Through The “Yes I Do” Program in Lombok, Indonesia,” in Proceedings of the Southeast Asian Conference on Migration and Development, vol. 16, Atlantis Highlights in Social Sciences, Education and Humanities (Atlantis Press International BV, 2023), 203–20, [https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6463-362-7\\_16](https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6463-362-7_16).

<sup>9</sup> Areta Ardita Putri and Palupi Anggraheni, “Is Indonesia Secure for All Children? Advokasi Transnasional oleh PLAN International Menangani Isu Hak Asasi atas Perlindungan dari Perkawinan Anak,” *Journal of International Relations* 9, no. 2 (2023): 188–209.

organizations (NGOs) and state actors, such as central and regional governments, also play a role. The explication above is predicated on the idea that all parties engaged in the fight against child marriage are capable of enacting reforms at the local and national levels. One of the active parties comes from the NGOs, namely the Plan International Indonesia.<sup>10</sup>

Plan International is a humanitarian organization founded in 1937 by British journalist John Langdon-Davies and aid worker Eric Muggeridge. Initially named “Foster Parents Plan for Children in Spain,” its primary mission was to provide food, shelter, and education to children whose lives were disrupted by the Spanish Civil War. As global conflicts expanded, the organization extended its support to children affected by World War II across various European countries, including France, Belgium, and Italy. In the subsequent decades, Plan International shifted its focus toward long-term community development and children's rights, operating in numerous countries worldwide.<sup>11</sup>

Throughout its evolution, Plan International has remained dedicated to promoting children's rights and lifting millions out of poverty. Today, it operates in over 70 countries, with a particular emphasis on supporting girls, who often face the most significant barriers to education and equality. Their programs encompass areas such as education, health, water and sanitation, and child protection, striving to create a world where all children can realize their full potential.

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<sup>10</sup> Adelita Lubis et al., “NGOs and Child Marriage Problem in Indonesia: Analysis of Issues, Strategies and Networks,” *Gorontalo Journal of Government and Political Studies* 4, no. 1 (2021): 85–95.

<sup>11</sup> PlanUSA, ‘Plan International Is More than 80 Years Strong. And We’ve Been Fighting for Girls’ Rights and Equality since Day One.’, 2024. [https://www.planusa.org/about-us/history/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.planusa.org/about-us/history/?utm_source=chatgpt.com).

Today, Plan International operates in 75 countries worldwide, having been formed in Spain in 1937. In 2017, Plan International Indonesia changed its name to Yayasan Plan International Indonesia after it had been operating in the country since 1969. Programs offered by Plan Indonesia include five main areas: community resilience, youth job opportunities, economic empowerment, child safety and growth, and adolescent sexual and reproductive health.<sup>12</sup> The high rate of child marriage has made it difficult for organizations like Plan International, which advocates for the rights of children, to launch programs and work with a number of relevant parties to lower the number of child marriages in Indonesia. These parties include Rutgers World Population Foundation (Rutgers WPF) Indonesia, Child and Adolescent Protection Agency (LPAR), Association for Small Business Development (PUPUK), and Indonesian Family Planning Association (PKBI).<sup>13</sup>

In 2016, Plan Indonesia, in collaboration with Rutgers WPF Indonesia and various national and local partners, launched the “Yes I Do” initiative to advance its objectives. “Yes I Do” demonstrates a multistakeholder approach by uniting organizations with diverse expertise to combat child marriage. While the specific roles of each organization within the program might not be explicitly mentioned, their inclusion underscores the importance of collaboration across sectors to achieve lasting change. Each organization brings a specific lens to the issue. PLAN

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<sup>12</sup> Fadhlizha Izzati Rinanda Firamadhina, Nabila Nurul Akmalia, and Maulana Irfan, “Analisis Kemitraan PLAN International Indonesia Menggunakan Strategi Community Relations,” *Jurnal Kolaborasi Resolusi Konflik* 4, no. 1 (2022): 59–65.

<sup>13</sup> St. Amaliah Ramli, “Transnational Coalition Building: The Role of The “Yes I Do” Alliance in Preventing Child Marriage Practices in Kediri Village, West Lombok,” *Jurnal Hubungan Internasional* 12, no. 1 (January 26, 2023): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.18196/jhi.v12i1.13288>.



International as the initiator, champions children's rights and possesses experience advocating against child marriage. Rutgers WPF Indonesia likely contributes knowledge and resources related to sexual and reproductive health, crucial for preventing child marriage's negative consequences. LPAR might have insights on child protection vulnerabilities. PKBI could offer data on family planning trends.<sup>14</sup>

This collective knowledge strengthens the program's understanding of the problem. PUPUK's expertise in economic empowerment could inform strategies to improve girls' future opportunities, while Rutgers WPF Indonesia might contribute to educational programs on sexual health. This collaboration creates a more robust solution set. LPAR's focus on child protection could be crucial in advocating for policy changes that discourage child marriage. PKBI's network might be valuable in disseminating family planning information within communities. Each stakeholder plays a role in implementing and advocating for the program's goals.<sup>15</sup>

In Indonesia, places like West Java, South Sukabumi, Rembang, and West Lombok are home to the “Yes I Do” initiative, with the four-year duration in 2016 until 2020. In addition to activities detrimental to girls' reproductive health, the “Yes I Do” initiative seeks to stop child marriage and adolescent pregnancies.<sup>16</sup> There are five pillars to the “Yes I Do” program: (1) Community-based social movements as the first step towards establishment of Komisi Perlindungan Anak

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<sup>14</sup> Fadhlizha Izzati Rinanda Firamadhina, Nabila Nurul Akmalia, and Maulana Irfan, “Analisis Kemitraan PLAN International Indonesia Menggunakan Strategi Community Relations,” *Jurnal Kolaborasi Resolusi Konflik* 4, no. 1 (2022): 59–65.

<sup>15</sup> Loudy Indah Sukma, “Implikasi Program ‘Yes I Do’ oleh Plan International dalam Mengurangi Perkawinan Anak di Indonesia (Studi Kasus Kabupaten Sukabumi),” *JOM FISIP* 9, no. 2 (2022): 1–20.

<sup>16</sup> Sofya Khlebnikova, “Plan International and Its Contribution to the Global Civil Society,” *Journal of Business Diversity* 21, no. 2 (2021): 83–88.

Daerah (KPAD); (2) engaging youth in different forums or events, like Forum Anak Desa (FAD); (3) establishing teenage integrated service post (*posyandu*) to make it easier for females to receive services and information on sexual and reproductive health; (4) giving teenagers, especially girls, options for both official and informal schooling, and (5) support policies or advocate for government regulations at the local, regional, and federal levels.<sup>17</sup>

By fostering collaboration and leveraging the unique strengths of each stakeholder, the program aims to create a comprehensive and sustainable solution to this pressing issue. This thesis explores **“Plan International’s Role through the “Yes I Do” Program in Ending Child Marriage in Indonesia (2016–2020).”**

## 1.2. Research Questions

This research focuses on Plan International's role in fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration to combat child marriage in Indonesia and exploring the mechanisms and strategies employed by Plan International to build and nurture effective collaborations among nongovernmental organizations, local communities, and governmental bodies. Moreover, it examines the outcomes of the collaborative efforts facilitated by the “Yes I Do” program in 2016–2020. Considering the background and intended scope of the research described above, this thesis aims to answer the following research questions:

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<sup>17</sup> Siti Khusnul Rifani and Tengku Ezni Balqiah, “The Impact of Strategic Planning Implementation on Non-Profit Organization’s Performance Effectiveness,” *Parahyangan International Accounting & Business Conference*, 2020, 256–76.



1. How does the “Yes I Do” program foster partnerships between NGOs, local communities, and governments to address child marriage in Indonesia?
2. In what ways does this multistakeholder approach contribute to the program's effectiveness and sustainability in Indonesia?

### **1.3. Research Objectives**

In light of the previously indicated research issues, the following are the aims of this study. First, is to examine the ways in which the “Yes I Do” initiative promotes collaborations between governments, local communities, and nongovernmental organizations in order to combat child marriage. Second, is to assess the multi-stakeholder approach's contributions to the “Yes I Do” program's sustainability and efficacy in tackling child marriage in Indonesia.

### **1.4. Research Significance**

Child marriage is a pervasive issue globally, including Indonesia with far-reaching consequences for the health, education, and overall well-being of young girls. This research sheds light on the ongoing efforts to combat this issue, offering a comprehensive analysis of the strategies and outcomes of the “Yes I Do” program. The research delves into Plan International's strategies for fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships to address child marriage. By analyzing the “Yes I Do” campaign as a case study, the research sheds light on the effectiveness of MSPs in tackling complex social problems like child marriage in the Indonesian context.

By documenting and analyzing the role of various stakeholders in the “Yes I Do” program, the research empowers those involved by validating their efforts and highlighting their contributions. This recognition can motivate continued engagement and inspire other communities and organizations to adopt similar collaborative approaches. Moreover, it raises awareness about the importance of community involvement in addressing social issues. This research not only addresses a critical social issue but also provides a framework for effective multi-stakeholder collaboration.

### **1.5. Structure of Writing**

This research is organized into five chapters, the first of which is the introduction. The research questions, objectives, and significance are covered in this chapter. This provides the fundamental structure for the analysis and discussion in the sections that follow.

The introduction is followed by the second chapter, which discusses the theoretical background. This is divided into two parts: a theory or concept and a review of the literature. The literature already written previously in this research topic is examined in the second chapter. Apart from the necessary theories and concepts needed to comprehend the research, the literature review can be classified into three main categories: (1) Child Marriage in Indonesia, (2) Plan International and Multi-Stakeholder, and (3) “Yes I Do” Program by Plan Internasional. In order to better grasp the research issue and answer the research question, this chapter ends with the application of the Neoliberal theory followed by three supporting concepts,

namely (1) Interdependence, (2) International Regime Theory, and (3) International Non-Governmental Organizations.

The research's methodology is outlined in the third chapter and comprises crucial elements of the research process, such as the data collection techniques, data gathering techniques, research methodology, and research method.

This research is centered on the fourth chapter, which offers a comprehensive examination. In order to answer the research questions, a systematic research analysis is conducted. Through the prism of theory and concepts, the presentation provides the pertinent data discovered in the whole research. There are three main subchapters in this chapter, namely the (1) Description of the “Yes I Do” Program in Indonesia, (2) Analysis of Partnerships in the “Yes I Do” Program, and (3) Evaluation of the Multi-Stakeholder Approach.

Conclusion and Recommendations, the last chapter, lists the important summary of the research results, and key point. Furthermore, the chapter culminates with perceptive suggestions for prospective investigations into associated societal matters and occurrences.