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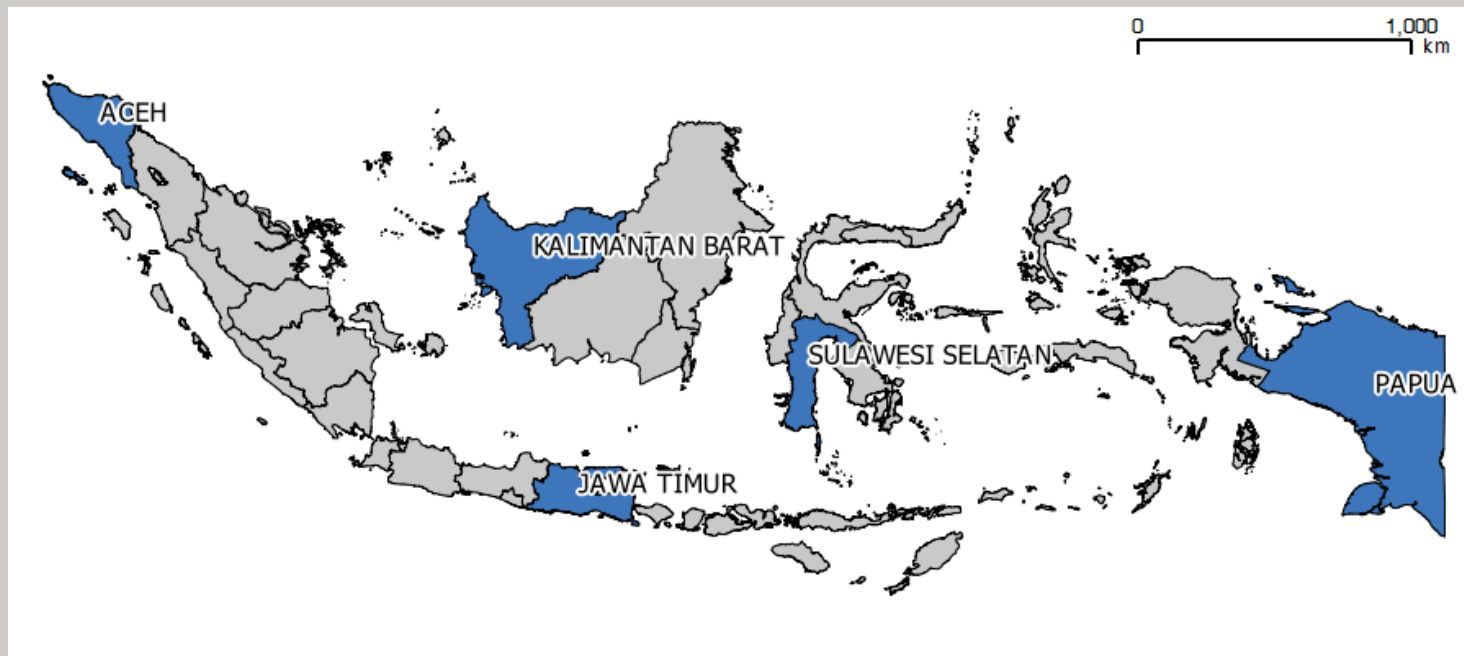
Photo: USAID

PREVENTING EARLY MARRIAGE IN BONDOWOSO, EAST JAVA

KINERJA

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- Five provinces (24 districts) in Indonesia
- Governance program working in three sectors: maternal health, basic education, and business-enabling environment
- Works on both supply side (service providers) and demand side (service users) to improve public service delivery



BACKGROUND

- High levels of early marriage in Bondowoso – around 50% of all marriages involve at least one person under the age of 20 (highest rate in East Java)
- Around 2,000 births/year to mothers under the age of 20
- Average of just 5.94 years of schooling per person
- Second-lowest Human Development Index of all 38 districts in East Java



BACKGROUND

- Why do people get married young in Bondowoso?
 - Cultural belief that children should be married by the age of 15
 - Marriage is seen as a filial duty that makes parents happy
 - Religious and social pressure to avoid ‘free sex’
 - Talking about sex is taboo, leading to low knowledge of sexual and reproductive health and rights
 - Financial pressure
 - Only nine years of free/compulsory schooling, plus education is not seen as important
 - State-endorsed legal and ideal marrying ages are unequal
 - 1974 Marriage Law: legal marrying age is 16 for girls, 19 for boys
 - Health Ministry: advocates women to delay marriage until 21, and men to delay marriage until 25 (‘ideal marrying ages’)
 - Contraception is legally unavailable to unmarried people

KINERJA'S PROGRAM IN BONDOWOSO

- Program (2011-2015):
 - Program followed a request from the Bondowoso District Head.
 - Worked with Bondowoso government, CSO partners, and media to develop a reproductive health and 'delaying early marriage' program for students, parents, and broader society.
- Objectives:
 - To increase awareness of the importance of reproductive health education for teenagers.
 - To reduce the frequency of child marriage.
 - To reduce maternal and neonatal mortality rates.
 - To reduce the number of girls dropping out of school.

KINERJA'S PROGRAM IN BONDOWOSO

- Local government partnership
 - Kinerja worked closely with Bondowoso government
 - District Head was a key partner from the start. He issued a District Head decree on safe delivery, and two decrees on 'Mothers of Maternal Health' and reproductive health ambassadors.
 - District Health Office (DHO) and community health centers
 - District Education Office (DEO) and schools
 - Family Welfare Body (PKK)
 - Local Planning Agency (Bappeda)



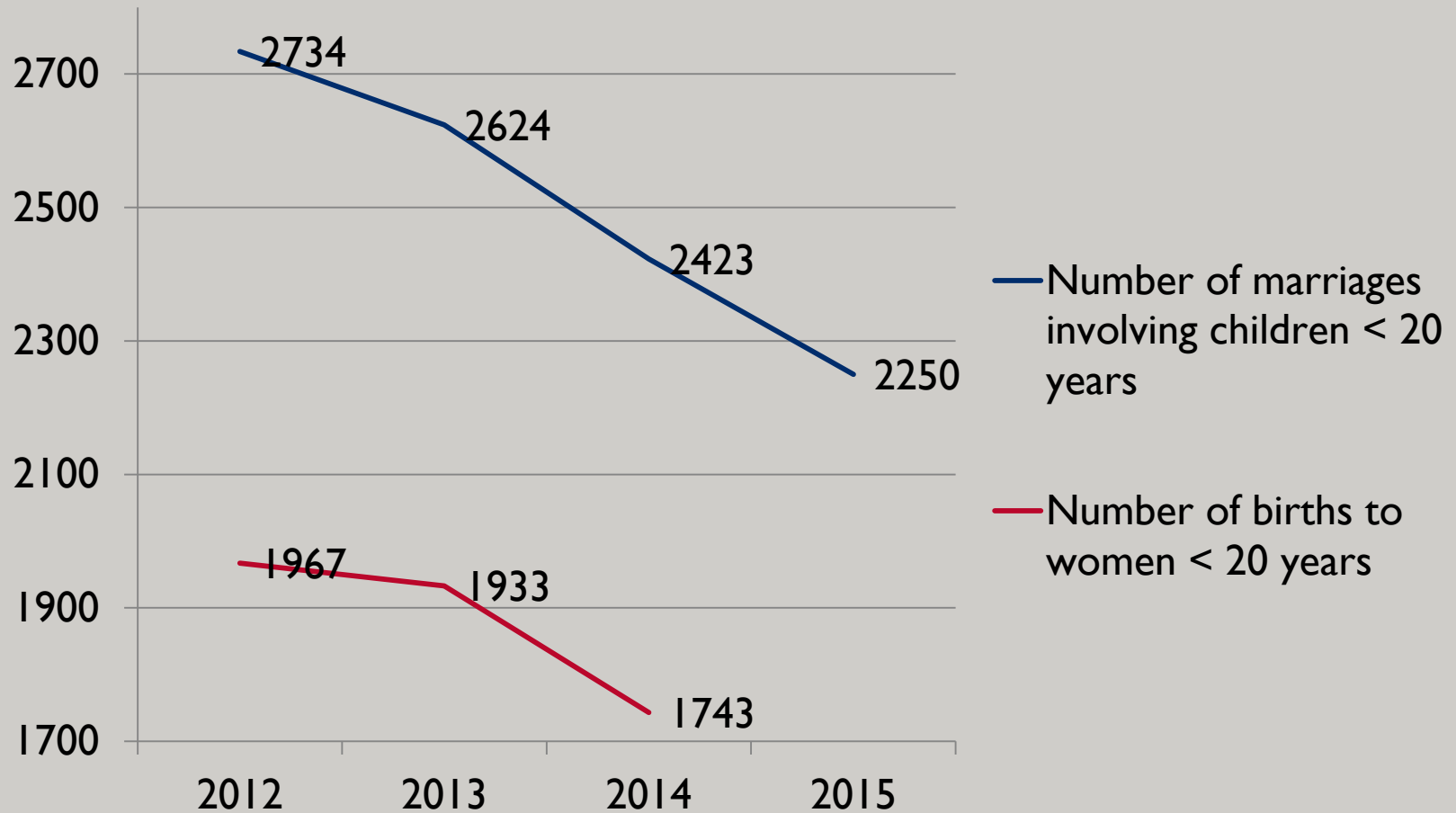
KINERJA'S PROGRAM IN BONDOWOSO

- Local government partnership
 - Trained teachers on reproductive health and early marriage
 - Led to establishment of Union of Teachers who Care about Reproductive Health, who as one of their activities, developed a roadshow and visited every sub-district to spread the message of how early marriage endangers young women
 - Inclusion of adolescent reproductive health (ARH) material in student orientation sessions and in classes, with ARH material now provided in all junior high schools in Bondowoso
 - 23 schools established Youth Counselling and Information Centers, and displayed 'Stop Child Marriage' banners
 - Elected 219 wives of village heads and 23 wives of sub-district heads as reproductive health ambassadors, plus the District Head's wife inaugurated as 'Mother of Maternal Health'
 - Community health centers trained to provide reproductive health counselling for teenagers

KINERJA'S PROGRAM IN BONDOWOSO

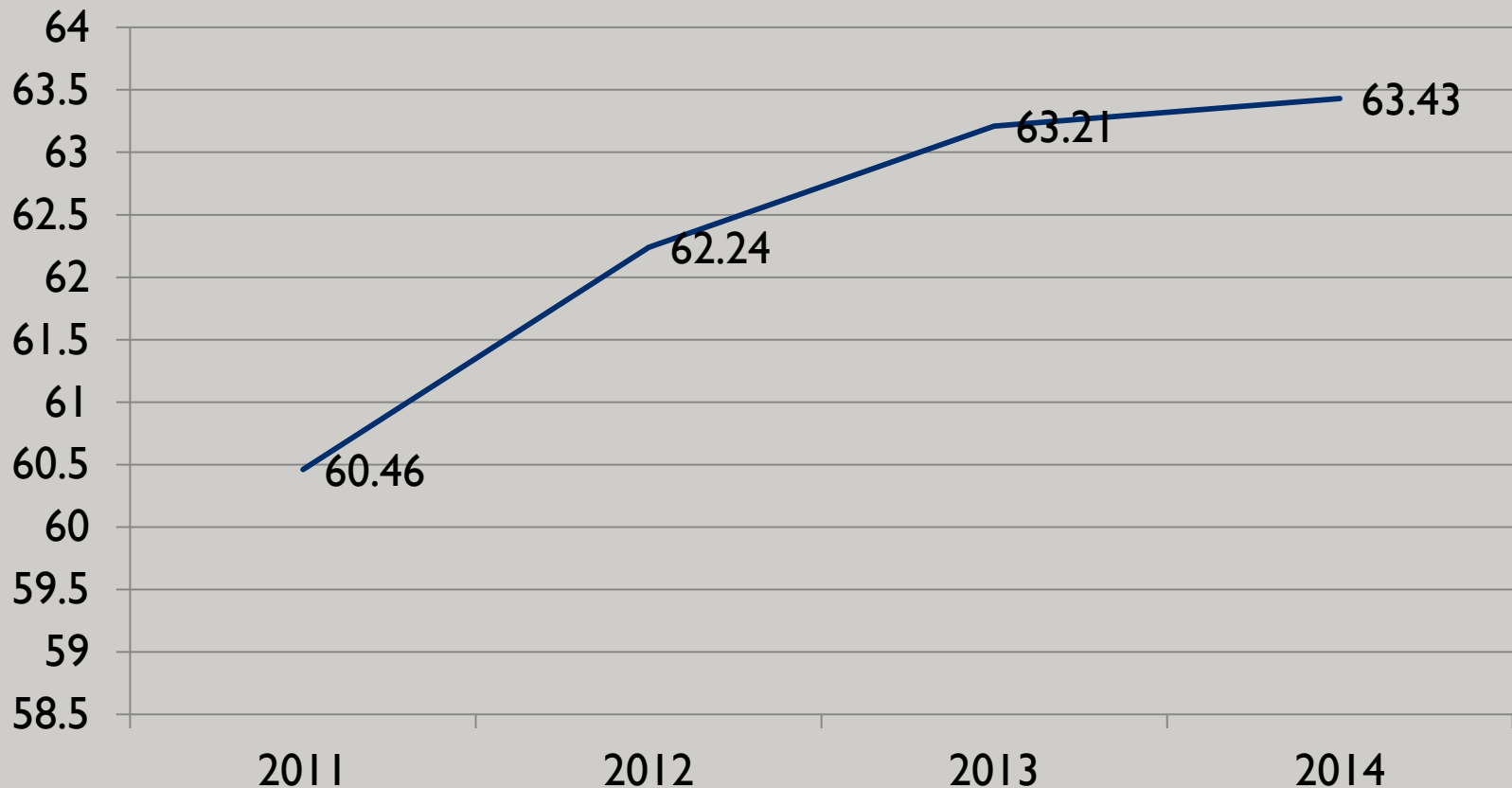
- Community involvement
 - Established a Multi-Stakeholder Forum (MSF) who advocated to the District Head to give extra attention to youth reproductive health
 - Established a peer training program for students: 24 students trained initially, now 279 students active as peer educators
 - Students founded the 'Blue Sky Community', a youth media group aimed at spreading information on reproductive health and rights. The members make art work, write articles for local newspapers, make short films, and participate in radio talk shows
 - Religious clerics trained on reproductive health and early marriage
 - 50 clerics participated in a 'Seven Minute Lecture' competition with the theme of delaying marriage; clerics now regularly incorporate ARH and early marriage into their weekly lectures
 - Awareness raising through radio, printed media, festivals, competitions, and visits to villages by reproductive health ambassadors

RESULTS



RESULTS

Human Development Index



Fastest-improving HDI in East Java. In 2012 was #37 of 38 districts; now #31. District Head of Bondowoso directly links HDI improvement with decreasing child marriage.


WHY DID KINERJA'S APPROACH WORK IN BONDOWOSO?

- Politically smart, locally led, and adapted to work with local culture
- None of the programs implemented are new ideas – Kinerja brings together multiple programs and incorporates governance principles
- Kinerja took a very broad, multi-pronged, participatory approach and built a coalition to solve a social problem:
 - Government departments (Health, Education, Planning, Women, etc)
 - District Head (and his office)
 - Service delivery units (schools, health centers)
 - Community members (as individuals and through community forums)
 - Students
 - Religious clerics
 - Media (mainstream media and citizen journalists)

CONCLUSION

- Causes of social issues must be understood before designing a program.
- Cultural change is possible through building a broad coalition, even on 'taboo' topics.
- Genuine support and interest from a champion is key (e.g. District Head).
- Legal basis is important in building support for activities in Indonesia.
- Religious figures are hugely influential and open to change.
- Young people as leaders: youths listen to other youths! Give them the freedom to explore issues that are important to them through creative methods.





“Through the reproductive health program and mentoring from Kinerja USAID, many steps have been taken and breakthroughs have been achieved. Bondowoso can stand as a useful example for other places.”

- Bondowoso District Head, H.Amin Said Husni

