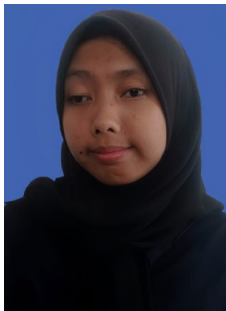




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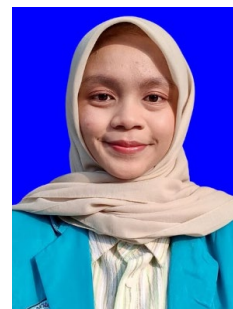
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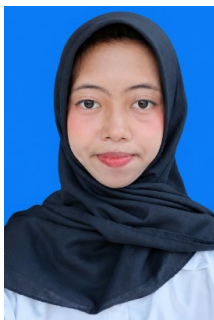
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OPTIMIZING CHILDREN'S LITERACY CULTURE THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERACY ACTIVITIES IN KAROYA VILLAGE

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Abstract

Background. Developing a sustainable literacy culture is essential for strengthening children's reading comprehension, communication skills, creativity, and capacity to process information.

Aims. This community service program aimed to strengthen children's literacy culture in Karoya Village, Cipicung District, Kuningan Regency, by implementing participatory, engaging, and context-based literacy activities while optimizing the role of the Cahaya Qolbu Village Library as a community learning space.

Methods. The program employed a participatory-educational method with a qualitative approach consisting of four stages: initial observation, planning, implementation, and evaluation. The primary participants were students in Grades 3–5 of SDN 1 Karoya and SDN 2 Karoya, while selected activities also involved early childhood learners. The interventions comprised village library management, reading aloud, interactive book reviews, book-based creative projects, story writing, literacy visits, and literacy appreciation. Program outcomes were assessed qualitatively through observation, question-and-answer sessions, students' work, interviews, and documentation. The findings indicated increased student enthusiasm and active participation in literacy activities, greater confidence in reading and expressing opinions, improved engagement in understanding and communicating information from reading materials, and enhanced creativity through book-based projects and writing activities. The program also strengthened the utilization of the village library as a shared learning environment.

Conclusion. These findings demonstrate that literacy development is more effective when reading is integrated with discussion, writing, creative production, and direct interaction with accessible community literacy resources. However, the sustainability of these outcomes requires continuous mentoring and collaboration among schools, families, library managers, the village government, and the wider community.

Implementation. The program provides a practical community-based model for transforming village libraries from passive book-storage facilities into active and sustainable literacy-learning spaces.

Keywords: children's literacy; community-based literacy; literacy culture; literacy activities; village library



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INTRODUCTION

Literacy is a fundamental skill children need in education and daily life. Literacy is not only about reading and writing skills; it also includes the ability to understand, process, use, and communicate information. These skills are increasingly important because children face various sources of information that require them to understand and use them appropriately. Developing literacy skills from school age is an important part of shaping learning habits and supporting students' cognitive development. Therefore, schools, families, and communities must sustainably build a literacy culture.

Children's literacy culture is not formed only through the availability of books. A supportive environment, mentoring, engaging reading activities, and opportunities for children to interact with reading materials also shape successful literacy development. Reading activities should be designed to help students understand, discuss, and use information from

reading materials. Active, contextual literacy activities can also help build children's positive experiences with reading. This aligns with the service activities carried out by Nugroho et al. (2022), who show that reading literacy practices need support through activities that actively involve participants so reading habits can develop.

Efforts to build a reading culture can also be carried out by developing literacy movements in the community and schools. Senjaya et al. (2023) show that, through community service activities in the village environment, the reading literacy movement can be used as an effort to foster a positive culture of reading in children. These activities show that developing a reading culture requires planned activities tailored to local conditions. Literacy activities can also be strengthened by using reading rooms or libraries to expand children's access to reading materials.

Karoya Village, Cipicung District, Kuningan Regency, is a rural area that has the potential to develop community-based literacy activities. Karoya Village consists of 5 hamlets, 9 RWs, and 19 RTs, covering about 143 hectares. The community's social and economic conditions are supported by the agricultural sector, with rice and sweet potato commodities. This environmental potential can be developed as a source of contextual learning for children through reading materials related to the environment, agriculture, community life, and village potential. In addition, Karoya Village has the Cahaya Qolbu Village Library, which can become a learning space and information source for the community, especially children.

Based on observations and the identification of initial conditions, several problems were found in developing children's literacy culture in Karoya Village. These problems include a lack of an optimal children's reading culture, limited structured and sustainable literacy activities, and underuse of the Cahaya Qolbu Village Library as a learning space and information resource. These conditions show a gap between the availability of literacy facilities and their use in children's activities. In fact, a reading room can introduce reading activities and create an environment that supports literacy habits. Basalamah and Rizal (2020) show that providing reading houses in the community can create a conducive space for the community to build a reading culture.

Literacy problems are also found in the elementary school environment in Karoya Village. The main target of the activity is students in grades 3, 4, and 5 of SDN 1 Karoya and SDN 2 Karoya. For this age group, literacy development cannot be achieved through mechanical reading activities alone; it must focus on understanding the content, identifying important information, expressing opinions, and developing information into ideas or work.

This matters because literacy activities do not stop when children finish reading a text; they continue as they use the information they gain.

One approach is to follow reading activities with activities that help students understand and retell the content. Read-aloud activities give students opportunities to practice reading while gaining an understanding of the text. Interactive reading experiences can also create a more engaging learning atmosphere for children. In addition, reading activities combined with other activities such as discussions, reviewing books, writing, and producing works can provide a more diverse literacy experience.

Various community service programs have developed literacy culture through structured activities. Lestari et al. (2021), for example, developed a community program that likes to read as an effort to increase reading interest. The results of these activities show the importance of activities that directly involve the community in building reading habits. Meanwhile, Nugroho et al. (2022) show that family involvement can develop reading literacy practices. These findings show that building a literacy culture requires broader environmental support and does not depend only on school learning activities.

School literacy programs can also support literacy development. Putriani et al. (2025) showed that support for preparing the School Literacy Movement program through the Read, Write, and Convey model can strengthen literacy activities for elementary school students. This approach aligns with the activities carried out in Karoya Village because students are directed to read, process information, and then reconvey what they learned from reading materials.

Based on these conditions, the main problems in this activity are how to increase children's involvement in reading activities, improve the ability to understand and process information from reading materials, train the ability to reconvey information in oral and written form, and optimize the use of the Cahaya Qolbu Village Library as a means of learning. These problems relate not only to the availability of books, but also to the need for literacy activities that are interesting, fun, and offer children opportunities to interact directly with reading materials.

As a problem-solving effort, we developed a series of literacy activities tailored to students' characteristics and needs. Activities include reading aloud, smart book reviews, making projects based on book content, writing stories based on books, and literacy visits to the Cahaya Qolbu Village Library. Reading aloud is intended to increase children's involvement and courage in reading. Book review activities build the ability to understand reading content and convey information. Projects based on book content give children opportunities to process

information into work, while story-writing activities build their ability to communicate ideas in writing. Literacy visits introduce the library as a learning space that children can use independently.

This series of activities aligns with the results of previous service, which positions reading activities as part of efforts to build a community literacy culture. Senjaya et al. (2023) show that the reading movement can foster a positive culture of reading in the village environment. Meanwhile, Lestari et al. (2021) show that a reading community program can increase reading interest through community-involved activities. Developing reading spaces can also support the formation of a reading culture by providing access and a conducive environment for the community to interact with reading materials (Basalamah & Rizal, 2020).

Thus, this service activity aims to strengthen children's literacy culture in Karoya Village through active, educational, and fun literacy activities. In particular, the activity aims to increase children's interest and involvement in reading, improve their ability to understand and process information from reading materials, strengthen their ability to communicate information through oral and written activities, and increase use of the Cahaya Qolbu Village Library as a learning resource. Through this series of activities, it is hoped that children will develop a positive literacy experience and that Karoya Village will foster an environment that supports the sustainability of reading culture.

METHODS

The service activities in the Literacy KKN-T Group 28 in Karoya Village used a participatory-educational method with a qualitative approach. This method was chosen because the activity involved students directly in various literacy activities and aimed to see changes in interest, involvement, reading comprehension ability, and the use of literacy facilities. The qualitative approach described the implementation process and the changes that occurred in students, based on observations during the activity.

The activities are implemented in several stages: initial observation, planning, implementation, and evaluation. Initial observation identifies the conditions of literacy culture, students' reading interests, reading activities, and use of the Cahaya Qolbu Village Library. The observation results form the basis for determining activities that suit the needs of students in Karoya Village. The implementation stage includes several literacy activities: reading aloud, thoughtful book reviews, creating projects from book content, writing stories based on books, and literacy visits to the Cahaya Qolbu Village Library. The activity targets students in grades

3, 4, and 5 at SDN 1 and SDN 2 Karoya. Literacy visit activities also involve elementary school and early childhood students in the Karoya Village area. Each activity is carried out interactively through reading, listening, questions and answers, discussions, mentoring, and producing activities so that students can be actively involved in the literacy process.

The achievement of activities was measured qualitatively using several tools, namely observation sheets, questions and answers, assessment of work results, simple interviews, and documentation. The observation sheet assessed students' enthusiasm, activeness, courage, and involvement during the activity. Questions and answers were used to determine students' ability to understand the reading content and convey the information they obtained. Book reviews, projects, and stories were used to assess students' ability to process and convey information from reading materials. Simple interviews were conducted with students, teachers, and library managers to obtain information about responses to activities and perceived changes. Documentation was used as supporting data to describe the process and participants' involvement during the activity.

The success rate of activities is determined by changes observed during program implementation. In terms of attitudes, success is seen in increased student enthusiasm and interest in reading activities, the courage to read and express opinions, and active participation in activities. From a socio-cultural perspective, success is seen in increased interaction and cooperation among students in literacy activities and the growth of the habit of using books and libraries as learning resources. From the economic side, the activities are not oriented toward increasing income directly, but toward improving children's literacy knowledge and skills as part of developing the quality of human resources that can provide long-term benefits.

The data from observations, questions and answers, interviews, works, and documentation were then analyzed descriptively by comparing the initial conditions with the conditions during and after the activity. Thus, the success of the service is not only seen from the implementation of the activity, but also from the changes in interests, attitudes, literacy skills, social participation, and the use of literacy facilities by students in Karoya Village.

DISCUSSION

The Literacy KKN-T Group 28 implemented community service activities in Karoya Village, Cipicung District, Kuningan Regency, as an effort to strengthen children's literacy culture by developing their ability to read, understand, process, and convey information from reading materials. The service activities are carried out through several programs, namely

managing the Village Library, reading aloud, reviewing books intelligently, making projects from book content, writing stories based on books, literacy visits to the Village Library, and literacy appreciation. Target participants include students in grades 3, 4, and 5 at SDN 1 and SDN 2 Karoya, as well as kindergarten and early childhood education students in the Karoya Village area.

The implementation of activities shows that developing a literacy culture is not enough by providing reading materials alone; it also requires activities that encourage children to interact directly with books. Therefore, a series of programs is designed in stages, starting with activities that introduce and build interest in reading, followed by activities that help children understand and process information, and culminating in producing works based on reading materials.

Village Library Management

The management program of the Cahaya Qolbu Village Library is carried out as an effort to optimize the existence of the village library as a means of learning and a source of reading materials for the community, especially children. The activity involves arranging and managing reading materials so they are easier to find and creating library conditions that better support literacy activities. Library management is also an important part of supporting the literacy visit program carried out during KKN-T activities.

The results show that the village library has the potential to become a learning space for children in Karoya Village. With more focused management, the library can serve not only as a place to store books but also as a space for reading, learning, and literacy activities. This is a long-term outcome because the community can continue using the library after the KKN-T activities are completed.

The advantage of this program is that it uses facilities already available in Karoya Village, so it does not require constructing new facilities. However, the program's sustainability still requires the involvement of library managers, schools, parents, and the community so the library can be used regularly.



Figure 1 Management of the Cahaya Qolbu Village Library

Read Aloud

The reading aloud activity targets students in grades 3, 4, and 5 at SDN 1 and SDN 2 Karoya. The activity gives students opportunities to read texts or stories alternately, with assistance. After reading, students answer questions and discuss the content.

Implementing the activity involves students in the reading process. Reading aloud gives children an opportunity to practice reading clearly and understand the content. The activity does not stop at reciting the text; it continues with questions about the characters, events, information, and messages in the story. Thus, reading aloud activities can develop reading skills and content understanding.

The activity's success is seen qualitatively through students' enthusiasm, their courage to read in front of their friends, their ability to answer questions, and their ability to convey information from the text. This activity has advantages because it is simple and easy to apply in the school environment. However, differences in students' reading ability make implementation challenging, so it is necessary to provide assistance and adjust reading materials to children's abilities.



Figure 2 Reading Aloud

Smart Book Reviews

The Smart Book Review program develops students' ability to understand and convey the content of reading materials. Students read books and then identify important elements or information, such as story content, characters, events, messages, and interesting details. Students then share their understanding through question-and-answer activities and discussions.

This activity shows that reading activities can be developed into more active activities. Students not only read books but are also directed to think about the information they obtain and communicate it back. This supports the purpose of service activities in improving literacy skills, which include the ability to understand, process, and convey information.

The activity's success is measured by students' ability to re-explain the book's content, answer questions based on the reading, express opinions, and participate in discussions. In terms of attitude, the activity also gives students space to build courage and confidence in expressing their opinions. The challenge in this activity is that some students still need assistance conveying their understanding, so activities should be carried out in an atmosphere that does not make children afraid of making mistakes.



Figure 3 Smart Book Review

Creating a Project from the Book

Making projects from the book's contents is a form of literacy development that connects reading activities with students' creativity. After reading and understanding the material, students create a work or project related to the book's information and content.

The results show that reading materials can provide ideas for creating works. Students not only receive information from books but also process it into a more concrete and creative form. This activity provides an experience that reading can be a fun and productive activity.

Indicators of success include students' ability to understand the relationship between the project and the book's content, their involvement in the process of making the work, their creativity, and their ability to explain the relationship between the work and the reading material. This activity increases student involvement because it combines literacy with practical activities. Meanwhile, time constraints, the availability of tools and materials, and differences in students' creativity abilities are challenges to consider when implementing the next activity.



Figure 4 Creating a Project from the Book Contents

Writing a Story Based on a Book

The activity of writing stories based on books is aimed at students in grades 3, 4, and 5 of SDN 1 and SDN 2 Karoya. The activity is carried out by providing students with reading materials; then students are directed to understand the content and develop the information or ideas they gain into stories. This activity gives students opportunities to develop literacy skills through writing. Students are required not only to understand the book's content, but also to use that understanding as the basis for their writing. This process shows the relationship between reading ability and writing ability.

The activity's success is evident in students' ability to understand the reading content, develop ideas, compose stories, and convey ideas in writing. In addition, the involvement of students during the writing process is an indicator of the observed change in attitudes. The challenges in this activity relate to differences in students' ability to put ideas into writing. Therefore, assistance and simple examples are needed so that students can more easily develop stories.



Figure 5 Writing a Story Based on a Book

Literacy Visit to the Village Library

The literacy visit to the Cahaya Qolbu Village Library involved elementary school and early childhood students in the Karoya Village area. The activity aimed to introduce the library as a fun place to read and learn. Students had the opportunity to explore the library environment, see various reading materials, and participate in age-appropriate literacy activities. The visit gave children direct experience that the library can be an open and fun learning space. This is important in building a positive relationship between children and books and the literacy environment. For early childhood, introducing the library from the beginning also helps introduce reading activities as something that can be done outside the school environment.

Indicators of the activity's success include students' interest in books, involvement in library activities, engagement during activities, and students' responses to the library environment. From a socio-cultural perspective, this activity encourages the use of village facilities as a shared learning space and can form the basis for building a sustainable habit of visiting the library.



Figure 6 Literacy Visit to the Village Library

Literacy Appreciation

Literacy appreciation acknowledges students' involvement and participation in a series of literacy activities. Appreciation aims to give children positive experiences so they see reading, writing, discussing, and producing works as fun and worthwhile activities to continue. Appreciation supports student motivation. Awards are not only aimed at final results, but can also recognize students' courage, activeness, creativity, and effort while participating in activities. Thus, appreciation is expected to strengthen children's positive experiences of literacy activities.



Figure 7 Literacy Appreciation

Achievement and Impact of Activities

The achievement of service activities is measured qualitatively through observation during activities, questions and answers, students' work, participants' responses, and documentation. Success indicators are seen not only in the implementation of the entire program, but also in the changes observed in students during the activity.

In terms of attitude change, observations show that the activity gives students space to be actively involved, builds courage to read and speak, and fosters interest in book-related activities. From the socio-cultural aspect, the series of activities encourages interaction, cooperation, discussion, and the use of the library as a shared learning space. The activity also introduces a culture of reading in early childhood so literacy development can begin at an early.

From an economic perspective, the program does not produce direct economic change because its main focus is developing children's literacy. However, improving the ability to read, understand information, think, communicate, and produce work is an investment in human resources with long-term benefits. These abilities can become capital in knowledge and skills that support children's future education.

Advantages, Weaknesses, and Development Opportunities

The literacy activities have advantages because they are adapted to the conditions and needs of students in Karoya Village. The activities not only focus on reading but also develop literacy through reading aloud, reviewing books, making projects, writing, and library visits. The variety of activities helps students gain literacy experience through different activities according to their abilities and characteristics.

The main weaknesses of the activities are limited time for implementing KKN-T, differences in students' literacy skills, and the need for continuous mentoring. Literacy culture cannot be formed through activities alone in a short period, so program sustainability is an important factor. Optimal library use also requires the involvement of managers, schools, parents, and the community.

The opportunity to develop activities in the future is significant because Karoya Village already has a Cahaya Qolbu Village Library, which can serve as a center for literacy activities. The program can be developed through routine reading activities, children's writing classes, book discussions, book-based creative activities, and regular library visits. Collaboration

among schools, village governments, library managers, parents, and the community is also needed so literacy activities do not stop after the KKN-T program ends.

Thus, KKN-T Literacy Group 28's implementation of these activities contributes to strengthening children's literacy culture in Karoya Village. Developing activities that actively involve children can be the first step in building a pleasant reading experience, improving the ability to understand and process information, and strengthening the use of village libraries as a means of learning. The sustainability of activities and the involvement of various parties are important factors so that the impact of service can continue to grow in the long term.

CONCLUSION

Based on the implementation of the Literacy KKN-T Group 28 activity in Karoya Village, Cipicung District, Kuningan Regency, it can be concluded that the development of literacy activities through various activities that actively involve students can be an effort to optimize children's literacy culture. The conclusion of this activity is as follows:

The results of the activity show that a series of literacy programs that include the management of the Cahaya Qolbu Village Library, reading aloud, reviewing books intelligently, making projects from book content, writing stories based on books, literacy visits, and literacy appreciation are able to provide a more diverse literacy experience to students. The activity not only focuses on reading skills but also encourages students to understand, process, convey, discuss, and produce work based on reading materials. The activity's impact is evident in students' increased involvement and enthusiasm during literacy activities. Students gain space to increase their courage to read and express opinions, develop creativity, and interact and collaborate with friends. In addition, literacy visits also introduce the library as a fun learning space for children, including those in early childhood. The advantage of the activity lies in the variety of activities adjusted to students' characteristics. Combining reading, discussion, writing, project-making, and library visits makes literacy activities more active and less monotonous. The program also uses facilities available in Karoya Village, especially the Cahaya Qolbu Village Library, to support the sustainability of activities after KKN-T implementation. The shortcomings of activities include limited time for the implementation of KKN-T, differences in reading and writing skills between students, and the need for continuous mentoring. Changing literacy culture requires a process that cannot be achieved in a short time. Therefore, implementing these activities still requires the involvement and support of schools, library managers, parents, village governments, and the community. Further development can

be carried out by making the Cahaya Qolbu Village Library a center for regularly held literacy activities. Activities can include reading programs, children's writing classes, book discussions, reading-based creative activities, and regular library visits. With sustainability and collaboration among various parties, Karoya Village's children's literacy culture is expected to develop consistently and provide long-term benefits for improving children's knowledge and skills.

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