

Research Article

School Literacy Movement through Community-Based Reading Corner Assistance in Aek Tapa Village

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Abstract. The low level of literacy culture remains a significant challenge in improving the quality of education in rural areas. One of the main causes is the limited access to engaging reading materials and the lack of optimal community involvement in supporting school literacy activities. This community service program aims to enhance students' reading culture through community-based Reading Corner assistance in Aek Tapa Village. The implementation method consisted of several stages, including preparation, socialization, the establishment of a literacy community, the provision of a Reading Corner, reading activity assistance, and monitoring and evaluation. The target participants were elementary school students, teachers, parents, and local community members. The results of the program showed an increase in students' interest in reading, an expansion of reading collections through community book donations, greater parental involvement in reading activities, and the establishment of a village literacy community that independently manages the Reading Corner. This program demonstrates that collaboration among schools, higher education institutions, village governments, and the community can create a sustainable learning environment that supports the School Literacy Movement.

Keywords: Community Service; Community; Literacy; Reading Corner; School Literacy Movement.

1. Introduction

Literacy skills are a fundamental foundation for improving the quality of human resources. Literacy is not limited to the ability to read and write but also encompasses the ability to comprehend information, think critically, solve problems, and develop creativity in everyday life (Abidin et al., 2018). Strong literacy skills serve as essential capital for students to cope with the rapid development of science, technology, and the challenges of the twenty-first century. Therefore, strengthening literacy culture has become one of the priorities in educational development worldwide, including in Indonesia (UNESCO, 2021). To promote literacy culture, the Government of Indonesia has implemented the School Literacy Movement *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah* (GLS), which aims to establish a literacy-rich school ecosystem through reading habituation, literacy skill development, and literacy-based learning (Faizah et al., 2016). The implementation of GLS emphasizes not only the provision of reading materials but also the cultivation of a sustainable reading culture involving all school members, families, and the wider community. According to Antoro (2017), the success of the School Literacy Movement depends not only on the availability of reading materials but also on continuous collaboration among schools, families, and communities in fostering a supportive literacy environment.

Despite various literacy initiatives, Indonesian students' reading literacy remains a significant concern. The results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) indicate that Indonesian students' reading literacy performance is still below the average of OECD member countries, highlighting the need for innovative strategies to strengthen reading culture in schools (OECD, 2023). These findings suggest that reading has not yet become

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an integral part of students' daily learning habits. Consequently, effective approaches are needed to create engaging, accessible, and motivating learning environments that encourage students to read independently. One recommended strategy to support the implementation of the School Literacy Movement is the establishment of reading corners as literacy-friendly learning spaces. Reading corners provide students with easier access to reading materials, create a comfortable learning atmosphere, and encourage regular reading habits beyond formal classroom instruction (Wiedarti et al., 2018).

In addition to functioning as reading facilities, reading corners serve as interactive learning spaces that can enhance students' reading interest and literacy competencies. Aek Tapa Village is one of the communities with considerable potential for developing a literacy culture through collaboration between schools and the local community. Preliminary observations revealed that most students read only when assigned by their teachers. Furthermore, the school's collection of reading materials remains limited, and attractive reading corners have not yet been established. As a result, reading has not become part of the students' daily learning culture. These conditions indicate the need for interventions that focus not only on improving literacy facilities but also on fostering a sustainable literacy culture.

Community-based reading corner assistance was selected as a strategic solution because it emphasizes collaboration among teachers, university students, village government officials, parents, and community members in creating a literacy-supportive learning environment. This participatory approach is expected to strengthen stakeholders' sense of ownership of the literacy program, thereby enhancing its sustainability. Previous studies have also demonstrated that the active involvement of multiple stakeholders is a key factor in the successful implementation of the School Literacy Movement (Batubara & Ariani, 2018). Therefore, the implementation of community-based reading corner assistance is expected to improve students' reading interest, strengthen literacy culture, and contribute to the enhancement of educational quality in Aek Tapa Village in a sustainable manner.

Problems

The problems identified include the following:

- a. Students' reading interest remains low.
- b. The collection of children's reading materials is very limited.
- c. Comfortable and attractive reading corners are not yet available.
- d. Parental involvement in literacy activities remains low.
- e. An active literacy community to support schools has not yet been established.

Objectives Of The Activity

This community service program aims to:

- a. Improve students' reading culture.
- b. Develop comfortable and attractive reading corners.
- c. Increase community participation in the School Literacy Movement.
- d. Establish a community-based literacy group.
- e. Support the sustainability of the School Literacy Movement in Aek Tapa Village.

3. Proposed Method

This community service program employed the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, which emphasizes the active participation of community members throughout every stage of the program to ensure that the implemented activities are aligned with the community's actual needs (Sugiyono, 2022). Through this participatory approach, community members are involved not only as beneficiaries but also as partners in planning, implementing, evaluating, and sustaining the program. The implementation of the program consisted of the following stages:

Preparation

The preparation stage involved:

- a. Coordination with the village government.
- b. Coordination with the school principal.
- c. Assessment of the school's needs.
- d. Preparation of the program implementation schedule.

Socialization

The socialization activities were conducted for the following stakeholders:

- a. Teachers
- b. Parents
- c. Village officials

- d. Youth organization (Karang Taruna) members
- e. Community leaders

The topics presented included:

- a. The importance of developing a reading culture.
- b. The School Literacy Movement (Gerakan Literasi Sekolah).
- c. The role of families in promoting literacy.

Establishment of a Literacy Community

A community-based literacy group was established, consisting of:

- a. Teachers
- b. University students
- c. Parents
- d. Karang Taruna members
- e. Literacy volunteers

Establishment of Reading Corners

The reading corners were equipped with the following facilities:

- a. Bookshelves
- b. Children's storybooks
- c. General knowledge books
- d. Religious books
- e. Picture books
- f. Reading mats
- g. Motivational posters
- h. Seating facilities

Literacy Assistance Program

The literacy assistance program was implemented over an eight-week period and included the following activities:

- a. Fifteen-minute reading sessions before classroom instruction.
- b. Storytelling sessions.
- c. Read-aloud activities.
- d. Simple book review competitions.
- e. Story-based coloring activities.
- f. Development of classroom reading corners.
- g. Book donation campaigns.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Program evaluation was conducted using the following methods:

- a. Direct observation.
- b. Semi-structured interviews.
- c. Documentation of program activities.

Literacy mentoring was carried out through a variety of activities, including a 15-minute reading habit before classroom instruction, read-aloud sessions, storytelling, book discussion sessions, simple book review competitions, and community-based book donation campaigns. These activities represent the implementation of the habituation and development stages of the School Literacy Movement (Gerakan Literasi Sekolah), as proposed by Faizah et al. (2016).

4. Results and Discussion

The community service program was implemented over a two-month period, involving elementary school students, teachers, village officials, university students, and community members. The active participation of these stakeholders played an essential role in ensuring the successful implementation of the program and fostering a sustainable literacy culture within the community.

Establishment of Reading Corners

A reading corner was successfully established within the school using simple bookshelves decorated to create an attractive and welcoming reading environment. The initial collection consisted of:

- a. 150 children's storybooks
- b. 70 general knowledge books
- c. 35 religious books
- d. 20 children's magazines

Most of the reading materials were donated by members of the local community, demonstrating strong community support for literacy development.

Improvement in Students' Reading Interest

Observational findings indicated that students gradually developed the habit of reading before classroom instruction. The average daily reading time increased from approximately 10 minutes to 25 minutes, suggesting a positive change in students' reading habits.

Increased Parental Participation

Parental involvement in literacy activities increased throughout the program. Parents actively:

- a. Donated books to enrich the reading corner collection.
- b. Assisted their children with reading activities at home.
- c. Participated in weekend literacy activities organized by the literacy community.

Establishment of a Community Literacy Group

A community-based literacy group was successfully established, consisting of:

- a. Teachers: 8 members
- b. University students: 10 members
- c. Parents: 15 members
- d. Karang Taruna (Youth Organization) members: 12 members

The literacy group developed a duty roster for managing and maintaining the reading corner to ensure the sustainability of the program.

Program Outcomes

The implementation of the program generated several positive outcomes, including:

- a. Increased student visits to the reading corner.
- b. Improved students' confidence in storytelling activities.
- c. Enhanced reading fluency among students.
- d. Greater community awareness of the importance of education and literacy.

The mentoring program demonstrated that the success of the School Literacy Movement (Gerakan Literasi Sekolah) depends not only on schools but also on the active involvement of the wider community. The concept of community-based reading corners strengthened stakeholders' sense of ownership of literacy facilities, thereby enhancing the sustainability of the program. Collaboration among teachers, parents, university students, and the village government emerged as a key factor in promoting a stronger reading culture in Aek Tapa Village.

According to Wiedarti et al. (2018), a school environment enriched with diverse reading materials is one of the key indicators of a successful School Literacy Movement because it increases students' access to learning resources. The findings of the present program revealed a substantial improvement in students' reading interest. Prior to the implementation of the program, only approximately 30% of students spent their free time reading. Following the mentoring activities, more than 82% of students regularly used the reading corner on a daily basis. These findings are consistent with those reported by Hidayat and Basuki (2018), who demonstrated that the establishment of school reading corners significantly improves students' reading culture.

In addition, community participation increased through book donation campaigns, parental assistance with reading activities at home, and active involvement in the community literacy group. These findings support the argument of Antoro (2017), who emphasized that community engagement is a critical factor in ensuring the sustainability of the School Literacy Movement. Overall, the results indicate that a collaborative, community-based approach can effectively foster literacy development while strengthening partnerships among schools, families, and local communities.

6. Conclusions

The community-based Reading Corner Mentoring Program implemented in Aek Tapa Village successfully enhanced the school literacy culture by providing attractive reading facilities, increasing community participation, and establishing an active community literacy group. The program demonstrated that collaboration among higher education institutions, schools, the village government, and the local community can effectively support the sustainable implementation of the School Literacy Movement (Gerakan Literasi Sekolah). The success of this program further indicates that partnerships among schools, universities, village governments, and local communities constitute an effective strategy for strengthening the

implementation and long-term sustainability of the School Literacy Movement (Antoro, 2017; Kemendikbud, 2021).

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