

Reading for The Future: Literacy Movement at SB Wira Damai Selangor, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The Wira Damai Learning Studio in Selangor, Malaysia, is a non-formal educational institution that focuses on basic literacy for the children of Indonesian migrant workers. Through literacy-math teaching (calistung) activities and social skills development, the program aims to provide basic education for children who have difficulty accessing formal schools. With the support of volunteer teaching staff and KKN students, this activity also introduces children to relevant social values and life skills. The results showed a significant increase in children's basic literacy skills and selfconfidence. This article highlights the importance of this program as an educational model for the migrant community in Malaysia. **Keywords:** Literacy, Non-formal education, Migrant Workers, Children, SB Wira Damai

INTRODUCTION

The children of Indonesian migrant workers (PMI) in Malaysia face major challenges in accessing formal education due to economic limitations, legal status, and other social factors. Research shows that migrant children often lag behind in literacy and numeracy due to these limitations, which makes them increasingly vulnerable to social isolation and low levels of integration (Lasmiatun, & Istifaroh, 2024). The Wira Damai Learning Studio (SB Wira Damai) in Selangor is present as a non-formal effort to bridge the basic education needs of these children, especially in reading, writing, and numeracy skills (calistung), which are important for the development of their early literacy and confidence (Paredes et al., 2023).

Non-formal education programs such as those implemented at SB Wira Damai have proven effective in answering the educational needs of migrant children in various countries. In Greece, for example, non-formal language programs for refugees and migrants help accelerate their integration into the formal education system (Mouti et al., 2021). Another study in Nigeria shows that non-formal learning programs can help improve the reading skills of children who were previously outside the formal education

system, bringing them closer to the literacy levels of their formal school counterparts (Daryani et al., 2024).

In addition, case studies in Ontario revealed that language support in non-formal education is essential to overcome socio-economic barriers that prevent migrant children from accessing quality education (Eka et al., 2024). This underscores the importance of providing a curriculum that suits the needs of the migrant community. In SB Wira Damai, the Indonesian curriculum-based approach ensures linkages with the original education system, which has been proven to be able to maintain the culture and identity of the children (García et al., 2019).

While formal education is often difficult to access for migrant children, non-formal education has become an alternative that offers long-term benefits. A report from UNESCO reveals that non-formal education plays an important role as a means of lifelong learning for vulnerable groups, including migrants and refugees (Firdaus, 2022). In the context of SB Wira Damai, this program not only provides basic skills but also equips children with social and moral skills that are relevant to their lives in foreign environments.

By understanding the non-formal education framework for migrant integration, SB Wira Damai seeks to develop an inclusive approach that prioritizes the welfare of migrant workers. Research shows that a flexible and child-friendly pedagogical approach is helpful in increasing students' enthusiasm and confidence, especially in the context of non-formal education (Wiseman & Damaschke-Deitrick, 2023).

The challenges faced by SB Wira Damai, such as limited space and facilities, are also common problems faced by similar programs around the world and demand more sustainable support from various parties (Kantzou & Gkaintartzi, 2017). Thus, SB Wira Damai is an important solution for the education of migrant children in Malaysia, in line with findings from various countries that show that non-formal education can be an important bridge to reduce the literacy gap for migrant children in communities with vulnerable knowledge (Haryanti et al., 2024)

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to understand the effectiveness of the Literacy Movement in SB Wira Damai, Selangor, Malaysia, in increasing students' interest in reading and literacy skills. This approach was chosen to

describe in depth the implementation of literacy activities, including the role of storybooks, literacy activities, and the obstacles faced (Kosasih et al., 2024).

1. **Research Design** This qualitative descriptive research focuses on collecting and analyzing data in depth through observation and interviews. The design of this study aims to document the process, challenges, and impacts of the implementation of the literacy program at SB Wira Damai.
2. **Location and Subject of Research** The research was conducted at SB Wira Damai, Selangor, Malaysia, with research subjects consisting of students, teaching staff, and SB managers. The selection of this subject aims to get a comprehensive perspective on the literacy program implemented in this school environment.
3. **Data Collection Techniques**
 - a. **Observation:** Direct observation is carried out during a certain period to observe literacy activities in school, including the habit of reading for 15 minutes before the lesson starts, as well as the use of reading corners or literacy in each class.
 - b. **Interview:** Interviews were conducted with managers, teachers, and students at SB Wira Damai to gain views on the implementation of literacy, motivation, and challenges faced in increasing students' interest in reading.
 - c. **Documentation:** Documentation in the form of photos of activities related to the importance of reading is used as supporting material in data analysis.
4. **Data Analysis** Data analysis was carried out with an interactive model, which included:
 - a. **Data Reduction:** Data simplification is carried out by summarizing and focusing relevant information from the results of observations, interviews, and documentation.
 - b. **Data Presentation:** Reduced data is presented in the form of a descriptive narrative to provide an overview of the implementation and impact of literacy programs.
 - c. **Drawing Conclusions and Verification:** Conclusions are drawn after verifying the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. Data triangulation is carried out by comparing findings from various sources to increase the validity of research results.

5. **Data Validity** To ensure the accuracy of the data, this study applies source triangulation techniques and triangulation techniques. Source triangulation is carried out by combining data from various informants, such as SB managers, teaching staff, and students. Meanwhile, triangulation techniques include the use of various data collection methods (observation, interviews, and documentation).
6. **Program Evaluation** Periodic evaluations are carried out to assess the success of literacy activities. The evaluation includes observation of the level of student participation in reading activities, such as book reviews and storytelling competitions, as well as the measurement of students' reading interest before and after the program. This method integrates qualitative and descriptive literacy approaches with an emphasis on data collection through observation, interviews, and documentation. This research also utilizes triangulation and evaluation to understand the effectiveness of the Literacy Movement carried out at SB Wira Damai.

DISCUSSION

Through direct observation for 28 days, the researcher noted a significant increase in student participation in implementing the School Literacy Movement. The implementation of the School Literacy Movement among students at SB Wira Damai has proven to be successful in increasing their interest in literacy. This increase reflects a higher commitment from the students to their literacy practices. With their increasing consistency in reading, writing, and understanding the content of the story, it is clear that this program not only improves reading and writing skills, but also is able to add new knowledge and vocabulary for the students. From the literacy activities at SB Wira Damai, significant results were seen in the improvement of basic literacy skills, including reading, writing, and numeracy skills (calistung) as well as the improvement of children's social skills. Through the support of teaching staff, this program is able to build the confidence and learning motivation of Indonesian migrant workers (PMI) children in Malaysia. In addition, the program also introduces relevant social values and life skills, so that children not only experience improvements in literacy, but also in their confidence and social engagement. Another positive impact is the increase in learning motivation, which creates a more inclusive learning environment and encourages children to participate more actively in literacy activities.k,lio



Figure 1. Observation Activities in the Studio

Implementation Of The Literacy Movement Program

The implementation of the Literacy Movement program at SB Wira Damai is carried out with a comprehensive strategy, which includes various aspects of learning and social support. The teachers, consisting of volunteer teachers and students who are undergoing KKN, use active learning methods. This approach combines educational games, group activities, and story simulations to foster children's interest in literacy. Teaching is carried out in stages, starting from the recognition of letters and numbers, then to the stage of basic reading, writing, and arithmetic.

In addition, SB Wira Damai implements literacy programs based on daily life. Children are given tasks that are relevant to their life situation, such as making a simple shopping list, writing notes for the family, or recounting their experiences in the form of short stories. This strategy aims to build a relationship between literacy and the real world, so that they better understand the importance of these skills in daily life.

The Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur plays an important role in supporting learning materials, providing modules, storybooks, and basic writing equipment. In addition, cooperation with the local community allows for additional activities such as visits to community libraries, which help children understand the importance of literacy in the wider community.



Figure 2. Teaching and Learning Activities at the Studio

Challenges During The Implementation Of The Literacy Movement Program At SB Wira Damai

The challenges faced during the implementation of the program are quite diverse. One of the main challenges is the limited facilities. Small learning spaces and lack of learning facilities often limit learning activities and affect the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. In addition, some children are often absent due to their parents' erratic work conditions. The high mobility of migrant workers' families also results in instability in the presence of children in the classroom.

Another challenge is the psychological and social problems experienced by some children, who may feel isolated or lack confidence. Many migrant workers come from low socio-economic backgrounds, which contributes to their low motivation and self-confidence. Language barriers also sometimes arise, especially in children who are not familiar with Indonesian because they use more regional or local languages in their daily lives.

In terms of teachers, volunteers face challenges in adapting effective teaching methods in an environment with limited facilities. With the lack of technological support such as computers or audio-visual devices, they must be creative in delivering material to keep it interesting and easy to understand.



Figure 3. The Makeshift Room in SB Wira Damai

Problem solving

To overcome these challenges, the program develops creative solutions. The limitations of facilities are overcome by the use of adaptive learning methods. For example, teachers hold classes outdoors or use alternative media such as portable whiteboards and learning materials that can be used repeatedly. In addition, they designed activities that did not require expensive equipment, such as word games, reading activities together, and group discussions.

To overcome the problem of child absenteeism, SB Wira Damai designed a flexible learning module that children can learn independently when they return. Additional support was also provided by the Indonesian Embassy and local communities who provided donated books, stationery, and other basic supplies.

In overcoming psychological challenges, teachers try to create a supportive environment by paying special attention to children who seem shy or lack confidence. The program incorporates group-based activities to enhance social interaction and a sense of community. This approach has helped children feel more accepted and supports the development of their social skills.

CONCLUSION

The Literacy Movement Program at SB Wira Damai makes a great contribution in supporting the education of PMI children in Selangor, Malaysia. Through this non-formal education program, children who previously did not have access to formal education can acquire basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and social development. The program not only enhances their academic abilities, but also equips them with the social

skills necessary for daily life, boosts their self-confidence, and helps them be better prepared to face challenges in a wider social environment.

The success of this program underscores the importance of non-formal education as a bridge to answer the educational gap for migrant children. Despite the challenges, the creative approach and ongoing support from the community and the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur have helped the program run effectively. For the sustainability of the program, there is a need for increased facility support and funding, as well as further collaboration with relevant parties to ensure that more migrant children in Malaysia can be reached by the program.

The implications of this program indicate that non-formal education can serve as an effective and inclusive model for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, offering them hope for a better future. By providing access to educational opportunities outside of the formal system, this approach helps bridge gaps for children who may otherwise be excluded from traditional schooling, equipping them with skills and knowledge that can improve their lives and open doors to a brighter future.

In addition to benefiting the children, this program offers valuable opportunities for KKN students to contribute in a cross-cultural setting, allowing them to enhance their teaching skills and gain practical experience. It also helps to strengthen the relationship between the Indonesian migrant community in Malaysia and other supportive entities, fostering collaboration and mutual understanding. This cooperation can improve the welfare of the migrant community and create stronger, more interconnected networks between different cultural and support groups.

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