

Improving Literacy through Reading Corner in Longkewang Village, Kuningan

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Abstract

This article is the result of community service activities that the author carried out in Longkewang village, Kuningan Regency. There are several problems faced by the people of Longkewang Village, including the lack of sources of information and knowledge that can be used to improve the quality of community literacy. Based on the problems above, the author is interested in carrying out a community service program with the theme "Socialization of Community Reading Corners in Longkewang Village, Ciniru District, Kuningan Regency". The methods used in implementing the service are socialization, mentoring with an individual approach, as well as training and evaluation regarding community and reading corner. Meanwhile, the implementation of the service will be carried out in July 2024. The results of the service can be concluded that the importance of university support in supporting development among village communities. Society can promote a culture of literacy to strengthen their mentality and ideas so that their understanding and knowledge increases. In the end, it is hoped that increasing community insight will create creativity and innovation in improving the quality of human resources in Longkewang Village.

Keyword : Literacy, Reading Corner, community service

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History of Article: Received: Oct 2024. Revision: Nov 2024. Published: Dec 2024.

DOI Prefix 10.32832/

Introduction

Reading is the activity of looking at reading material and the process of understanding the contents of the text aloud or silently. Reading is expressing an imagination of a reader that is liked by the general public and also understood by someone they love (Snowling and Hulme, 2020). Reading activities include reading aloud and reading silently. Reading aloud is a reading activity carried out by reading aloud in public. Meanwhile, the activity of reading silently is the activity of reading carefully which is carried out to understand and understand the author's intention or purpose in written media (Bowers and Kavanagh, 2019).

Reading is a type of language skill through receptive writing because by reading a person will gain information, knowledge and new experiences that have never been known before (Goswami, 2020). Everything that is obtained through reading will enable the person to increase their thinking power, sharpen their views and broaden their horizons. This has an impact on the ability to complete school and live life more easily.

The level of public literacy is positively correlated with the quality of life and progress of the nation. However, based on surveys from a number of institutions, the reading interest and literacy level of the Indonesian people is quite worrying. Data released by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2022 shows that the literacy index or reading level of Indonesian students is in 67th place out of 76 countries. UNESCO data also show the Indonesian people's reading interest index was 0.001. This is a very worrying condition.

Reading culture is a habituation process that cannot be done instantly. There needs to be a stimulus and a supportive environment. Reading activity is closely related to the depth of a person's insight. The most striking benefits of reading include increasing one's insight/knowledge regarding several things. With broad insight, a person will be easily accepted in various spheres of society (Snowling and Hulme, 2020). Everyone should have an understanding of the importance of cultivating an interest in reading, especially parents. Parents who have young children have an important role in motivating their children to start liking

reading activities. A culture of fondness for reading can be realized through one alternative by establishing a Reading Corner.

Each village has the potential to improve the economy in its respective village. The definition of village potential itself is all the natural resources and human resources owned by the village as basic capital that need to be managed and developed for the survival and development of the village. Longkewang Village, Ciniru District, Kuningan Regency is one of the villages that has quite large potential to improve the village's economy. There are many jobs carried out by Longkewang village residents. Starting from employees, drivers, pharmacists, to soldiers. However, the dominant occupation held by residents of Longkewang village is self-employment because as explained in the previous point, in Longkewang village the level of education is low so most residents choose to create their own businesses. This is also because some residents find it difficult to apply for jobs at other people's companies if they have minimal educational experience.

Based on the explanation above, the author concludes that reading community is really needed to improve the quality of human resources. Therefore, in this community service program, the author, as a lecturer in the English education study program is encouraged to socialize the Reading Corner in Longkewang Village, Ciniru District, Kuningan Regency.

Method

Based on the problems above, the method of implementing activities used in this activity uses methods including:

1. Socialization

This method is used to explain material about reading community and Reading Corner and how to manage them.

2. Mentoring

This method is carried out with an individual and classical approach. The classical approach is taken when providing the theory of the importance of reading, the stages in establishing a reading community and Reading Corner and its management.

3. Training

This method is used with the aim of providing training to village communities in establishing reading community and Reading Corner and managing them.

4. Evaluation

This method is used to evaluate the results of training that has been carried out for the people of Longkewang Village, Ciniru District.

This service activity was carried out for three days from 15 to 17 July 2024. This activity ran smoothly and in line with expectations, where 25 participants attended the socialization event or 100%. The participants were very enthusiastic and responded well. The schedule of community service activities is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Schedule of Community Service in Longkewang

Day/Date	Time (am)	Topic	Place
Monday, 15 th July 2024	09.00-11.00	Site preparation and survey	Longkewang Village Hall
Tuesday, 16 th July 2024	09.00-11.00	Socialization of Reading Corner	Longkewang Village Hall
Wednesday, 17 th July 2024	09.00-11.00	Evaluation and closing	Longkewang Village Hall

Results

On Monday 15th July 2024, the PkM team carried out preparations and surveyed the activity location. This aims to ensure that PkM activities can run smoothly. On that day, the community service team prepared the equipment needed for the activity, checked the activity location and arranged the necessary facilities, as well as confirmed the presence of speakers and activity participants. This activity

ran smoothly thanks to a solid team and support from the Village Head, Longkewang Village, Ciniru District, Kuningan Regency, PKK Women and Karang Taruna.



Figure 1. The Opening of Reading Corner in Longkewang

Then, on the next day, Tuesday, July 16th 2024, the main activities began. The event starts at 09.00 am. The opening of this PkM activity was held in the Village Hall hall, Longkewang Village, Ciniru District, Kuningan Regency, and was officially opened by the Village Head. In his opening speech, he advised that this activity should not be temporary, but he hoped that this activity could become a routine activity carried out in the village. In Figure 1, you can see the Village Head, Longkewang Village, Ciniru District, Kuningan Regency, namely Mr. Uci Sanusi, S.Ag., along with PKK women and the community service team in Longkewang Village. After the opening was complete, PkM activities regarding the socialization of reading corner continued, which was attended by village officials, PKK mothers, and school students in Longkewang.

The aim of socializing the reading community and reading corner is as a means to increase people's interest in reading and to become a forum for supporting community lifelong learning. According to the Guidebook for organizing reading community and Reading Corner (2016), they have function to foster interest, love in reading, and provide learning experiences for the community. In fulfilling its role as a learning resource that can facilitate lifelong learning, reading community and Reading Corner have a function as a place to learn and search for information that society needs, both regarding issues directly related to education and those not related to education.



Figure 2. Socialization of Reading Corner

It is hoped that this community service activity will be in line with the theory put forward by Sutarno (2016) regarding the role of community reading parks, including having a media or bridge role which functions to connect sources of information and knowledge which are sometimes in the collections they own. Reading corner also has a role as a means of establishing and developing communication between fellow users, and

between organizers of community reading parks and the communities they serve. Apart from that, Reading corner can act as an institution to build interest in reading, a passion for reading, reading habits and a reading culture, through providing various reading materials that suit the wishes and needs of the community. Reading corner also plays an active role as a facilitator, mediator, motivator for those who want to seek, utilize and develop their knowledge and experience (Bowers and Kavanagh, 2019). It is hoped that Reading corner will become an agent of change, an agent of development, and an agent of human culture as well as acting as a non-formal educational institution for community members and supporting community reading corner. They can learn independently (self-taught), conduct research, explore, utilize and develop sources of information and knowledge (Perfetti and Stafura, 2014; Norton and Wolf, 2019).

Reading community officers can act as mentors and provide consultations to users or provide user education and guidance and instill an understanding of the importance of community reading parks for many people. With the existence of reading corner, the public can collect and preserve collections of library materials so that all invaluable human works remain in good condition.

At the end of the socialization material, the speaker stated several factors that were considered to influence the success of community reading corner, as quoted from Hapsari (2019), including the following:

a. Public Interest

The public interest factor is very determining in the use of reading community and Reading Corner. With the public's interest, especially in reading the books available at reading corner, it will help the public's need for information (Snow, C. E., & Juel, C. (2022). Reading community and reading corner can foster people's interest in reading by making the society active and conducive. Reading community and reading corner can hold reading groups, book reviews, story telling, various kinds of competitions for example; write short stories, read poetry and book reviews.

b. Management Staff

This factor plays a very important role in determining the success or failure of a reading corner. Therefore, to create a reading corner that is useful in accordance with its tasks, functions and objectives, managers and organizers can be aware of the importance and position of reading corner for society, understand the needs of the community and then master the intricacies of the activities and techniques of reading corner work itself.

c. Reading Corner buildings and facilities

Regarding the condition of the reading corner building, what must be considered is the location, number of rooms and spatial layout. The location of the reading corner is expected to be strategic so that it is easily accessible to the target community. reading corner facilities are important, apart from books and library materials which support the community, namely equipment or facilities which include bookshelves, newspaper racks, magazine racks, circulation tables, catalog cupboards/cabinets, display boards, notice boards, reading tables and other equipment that is used indirectly. Apart from the completeness of the reading corner facilities, what needs to be paid attention to is the arrangement of the reading corner room so that it makes things easier for the management in organizing the reading corner, as well as visitors in general.

Conclusion

The socialization of the reading corner in Longkewang Village is going well. This is marked by the enthusiasm of the socialization participants and the follow-up from the village head who will soon initiate the creation of a reading community and reading corner in Longkewang. It is hoped that the results of this activity will provide understanding, knowledge and insight to the people of Longkewang Village, Ciniru District. So that people's thinking becomes broader in the field of literacy and can motivate them to increase interest in reading so that it can help improve the quality of human resources in Longkewang Village, Ciniru District, Kuningan Regency.

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