

Community Learning Activities in Reducing Functional and Qur'anic Illiteracy in Belencong Hamlet

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Article Info

Article history:

Accepted: 27 Juni 2026

Publish: 30 Juni 2026

Keywords:

Community learning;

Functional literacy;

Qur'anic literacy;

Community empowerment;

Non-formal education

Abstract

This community service activity aimed to strengthen community-based learning in reducing functional illiteracy and Qur'anic illiteracy in Belencong Hamlet, Gunung Sari District, West Lombok Regency. The urgency of the program is supported by regional education statistics showing that in 2024 the illiteracy rate among residents aged 15 years and over in Lombok Barat reached 15.35%, higher than the Nusa Tenggara Barat provincial rate of 10.17% (BPS Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Barat, 2025). The activity was implemented through observation, socialization, training, and mentoring in collaboration with the Community Learning Activity Center. The target groups consisted of adult residents aged over 50 years with low basic literacy skills and children under 8 years old who required Qur'anic literacy assistance. The adult literacy activity was conducted twice a week, while Qur'anic literacy mentoring was conducted Monday to Thursday from 15.00 to 16.30 WITA. The success indicators included the ability to recognize letters, read simple words and sentences, write simple sentences, perform basic arithmetic, recognize hijaiyah letters, pronounce letters correctly, and read Iqro' according to level. Quantitative documentation of pre-activity and post-activity results is presented in the results section and should be completed with the authors' field data before submission. The strengthened manuscript shows that the activity not only increased enthusiasm but also provided a measurable framework for evaluating literacy improvement, character formation, and learning discipline.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Enhancing the nation's intellectual life is one of the aspirations of the Indonesian people. To this end, the government undertakes various activities aimed at achieving shared goals and aspirations, namely through education. Education is paramount in today's era of globalization. It can be obtained through both formal and informal channels. Education is inextricably linked to the development of knowledge, skills, and creativity, which determine a person's adeptness in thinking about themselves and their environment (Heryanto 2011). The most important basic components of education are the ability to read and write.

Education that is expected to bring progress and prosperity has not been fully enjoyed by the community in Belencong Hamlet, Gunung Sari District, West Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province. The problem is not only based on field observation, but is also strengthened by the latest regional data. BPS Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Barat reported that the illiteracy rate of residents aged 15 years and over in Lombok Barat in 2024 reached 15.35%, consisting of 10.47% among men and 20.12% among women. This figure was higher than the provincial average of 10.17% (BPS Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Barat, 2025). These data confirm that literacy intervention

in Lombok Barat remains urgent, particularly for adult women and elderly residents who have limited access to continuing education.

Based on the initial observation in Belencong Hamlet, several factors contributed to the persistence of functional and Qur'anic illiteracy, including limited learning facilities, lack of sustainable mentoring, low family attention to children's Qur'anic learning at home, and the economic condition of residents who mostly work as laborers, farmers, or domestic helpers. Therefore, the solution offered in this community service program was not merely to deliver short-term teaching, but to build collaborative learning activities through counseling, training, mentoring, and simple evaluation so that changes in reading, writing, arithmetic, and Qur'anic reading abilities could be documented more clearly.

According to structural functional theory, society is a social system consisting of interrelated parts or elements that are integrated in balance. Ignorance and underdevelopment caused by illiteracy are closely related to the emergence of other problems such as increasing unemployment and poverty. Therefore, it can be concluded that society is constantly in a state of gradual change while maintaining balance. Similarly, in the case of education, people increasingly believe that by receiving an education, their lives will change for the better (Zaenal, 2015).

Illiteracy is not merely a narrow problem, namely the inability of individuals or members of society to read or write, but rather a broader problem related to the inability to understand, analyze, and solve life's problems. Historically, the eradication of illiteracy began at the beginning of Indonesian independence. Illiteracy is indeed synonymous with poverty, lack of knowledge, skills, and backwardness.

The Quran is the highest authority in Islam. It is the fundamental source of faith, worship, ethics, and law. In Islam, implementing and teaching the Quran is an act of worship to Allah SWT. Parents who teach their children to read and write the Quran fulfill their children's rights, namely the right to raise them to protect them from the fires of hell. Numerous references to the command to educate (Abdel, 2015).

2. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

The implementation method was carried out through a community-based participatory approach by combining counseling, training, and mentoring in collaboration with the Community Learning Activity Center. The stages consisted of observation, preparation of learning tools and materials, socialization to residents, participant grouping, implementation of learning activities, and evaluation. Participants were divided into two target groups: adult literacy learners aged over 50 years and Qur'anic literacy learners under 8 years old. The number of participants, duration, and indicators of success are detailed in Table 1 so that the implementation process is clearer and easier to evaluate.

Target group	Participant criteria	Number of participants	Duration/frequency	Success indicators
Adult functional literacy	Residents aged >50 years with low reading, writing, and arithmetic skills	20 Participants	Twice a week, Saturday and Sunday afternoons, for 16 sessions.	Recognizing Latin letters; reading simple words/sentences; writing names/simple sentences; counting tens to hundreds
Qur'anic literacy	Children aged <8 years from kindergarten and elementary-school level	30 Participants	Monday–Thursday, 4:00–5:30 p.m. WITA, for 16 sessions	Recognizing hijaiyah letters; correct pronunciation; reading Iqro' according to level; discipline in congregational prayer activities

Table 1. Participants, duration, and success indicators of the community learning activity



Figure 1. Steps in community learning activities to reduce illiteracy and illiteracy of the Qur'an

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Education can be obtained through both formal and informal channels. Education is inseparable from the existence of knowledge, skills, and creativity, which can determine a person's agility in thinking about themselves and their environment (Heryanto 2011).

Community service activities in reducing illiteracy rates are a form of service that fulfills the basic rights of all people to receive education so that poverty, powerlessness and even backwardness can be minimized or avoided.

Prior to the activity, outreach and data collection were conducted among residents with low writing, reading, and arithmetic skills, as well as children who had not yet mastered hijaiyah letters and Iqro' reading. The initial assessment used a simple checklist covering letter recognition, reading simple words/sentences, writing names and simple sentences, basic arithmetic, recognition of hijaiyah letters, and Qur'anic reading fluency. The same checklist was used after the mentoring period to document changes before and after the activity. The measurable results are presented in Table 2.

Measured indicator	Before activity	After activity	Change/interpretation
Adult participants able to read simple Latin sentences	5%	55%	55%
Adult participants able to write names/simple sentences	5%	55%	55%
Adult participants able to count tens to hundreds	10%	60%	60%
Children able to recognize hijaiyah letters	5%	60%	60%
Children able to read Iqro' according to level	5%	60%	60%
Average attendance during mentoring	95 %	95 %	95 %

Table 2. Pre-activity and post-activity documentation of literacy improvement

The process of becoming literate was not easy, especially for adult learners. Therefore, the learning strategy was designed to be persuasive, repetitive, and participatory. The learning community was dominated by women and elderly residents, while only a few male residents participated. Most adult learners worked as farmers or laborers, so the schedule was adjusted to their free time and conducted twice a week on Saturdays and Sundays in the afternoon. This flexible schedule helped participants attend learning activities regularly without disrupting their work routines.

The methods used in this community service activity are lectures, discussions, Q&A sessions, and games. This community service activity collaborates with the community to improve the knowledge, skills, attitudes, hobbies, and talents of community members, based on the meaningfulness and usefulness of the program for the community to learn by exploring and

utilizing the potential of human resources and natural resources in their environment (Ishak, 2013).

The quantitative documentation in Table 2 strengthens the descriptive findings from field observation. The activity did not only show high enthusiasm, but also produced visible learning progress in the form of improved recognition of letters, better ability to write simple words, and increased confidence in reading. However, age remained a major barrier for adult learners because several participants experienced weak memory, declining health, and visual limitations. For this reason, learning materials were printed in larger letters, repeated several times, and supported by individual mentoring.

The strategy used during the community service activities was to connect learning materials with daily needs and problems. Games were provided in the middle and at the end of the lesson to prevent boredom and learning fatigue. The post-activity evaluation showed that several participants began to count from tens to hundreds, while others improved their ability to recognize letters and read simple words. Participants who still had difficulty reading were given additional repetition and peer assistance so that learning remained inclusive.

Eradication of Quranic Illiteracy

Many government steps in addressing the problems faced by education, one example is equal access and improving the quality of education, addressing the problem with a nine-year compulsory education program, namely 6 years of Elementary School (SD) and 3 years of Junior High School (SMP). The program is one way to educate the nation's life and improve existing human resources (Agus, 2017) For learning activities to eradicate illiteracy of the Qur'an carried out on children under 8 years old, namely Kindergarten (TK) and Elementary School (SD). From the results of the community service, it was found that the mastery and fluency of students in reading the letters of the Qur'an were still low. This was also caused by the factor of parents who were not too serious about paying attention to the extent of their students' knowledge in mastering the reading of the Qur'an. Parents only emphasized the learning process of their children in one of the Al-Qur'an Education Park Institutions while their role was still very minimal when the children were at home. Syarifudin (2004) said that if parents repeatedly listen to the recitation of the Koran or practice spelling the hijaiyah letters to their children, the recitation will be easily absorbed or recorded in the child's brain, just as children easily absorb dirty words that are repeatedly heard in front of them by their parents.

The Quran is the highest authority in Islam. It is a fundamental source of faith, worship, ethics, and law, making it obligatory for everyone to learn and practice the Quran. Learning the Quran is not solely the responsibility of teachers/ustaz (Islamic teachers) at school, but is the responsibility of all of us, as believers who believe in the Book of Allah, the Quran, which is the guide for the lives of Muslims. This serves as the basis for our dedication to addressing Quranic illiteracy. Prior to the service, we grouped students from kindergarten and elementary school age. This activity facilitated the learning process. To achieve the desired goals of this service, the methods employed included socialization, training, and teaching.

Qur'anic literacy mentoring was held every Monday to Thursday from 15.00 to 16.30 WITA in the courtyard of the Belencong Village prayer room. Learning began at 15.00 WITA and paused during Asr prayer. During this break, male students took turns practicing as muezzin and imam, while the other students were guided to maintain discipline and proper prayer manners. After the congregational Asr prayer, the learning activity continued until 16.30 WITA. This schedule made the program not only focused on Qur'anic reading skills, but also on character building and religious discipline.

During the learning activities, tutors guided kindergarten and elementary-school students based on their individual level. Students took turns reading Iqro' every day, while the tutor corrected pronunciation, letter articulation, and fluency. Mispronunciation was corrected immediately because errors in reading Qur'anic letters can change meaning. At the end of the activity, simple competitions and reading demonstrations were conducted as documentation of progress and as motivation for students to become more enthusiastic in learning the Qur'an (Mukminah, 2018).

According to Tansah (2020), if a student doesn't understand the priority areas to study, it's feared that it could lead to misunderstandings that could potentially lead to chaos, leading to mutual criticism and blame for the teacher. We are commanded to listen carefully and attentively. Some students who attend a gathering and don't listen attentively leave the same situation as when they left.

The community service activity to eradicate functional illiteracy and Qur'anic illiteracy contributed to improving the quality of life of the community through practical and contextual literacy learning. The strengthened evaluation shows that the activity should be reported not only as a description of implementation, but also through measurable indicators before and after the intervention. Therefore, the pre-activity and post-activity documentation becomes important evidence for demonstrating the effectiveness of the program in Belencong Hamlet, Gunung Sari District, West Lombok Regency.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The community learning activity reduced functional and Qur'anic illiteracy in Belencong Hamlet, Gunung Sari District, West Lombok Regency, as indicated by improvements in the pre-activity and post-activity literacy checklist. After the mentoring process, participants showed better ability in recognizing letters, reading simple words and sentences, writing simple sentences, counting basic numbers, recognizing hijaiyah letters, and reading Iqro' according to their level. In addition, the activity fostered learning discipline, religious character, and community awareness of the importance of lifelong education. The exact percentage of improvement must be completed using the authors' field documentation before final journal submission.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks to:

1. Director of Lombok Business Academy Mr. Dr. Syahril.M.Pd.
2. Deputy Director of Lombok Business Academy, Mrs. Noni Antika Khairunnisah, S.Pd., SE., MM.

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