

Wukirsari Village Library: How a Village Library Works for Surroundings

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Abstract.

Wukirsari Village Library is one of the most popular village libraries in Indonesia. This observation aims to present the details on the library operations including the challenges faced. It was a community-based research studies employing semi-structured interview to collect the data. It reveals the activities conducted by the library were considered various including routine-visits-program in cooperation with nearby kindergartens and schools. The challenges faced were number fluctuations, limited information dissemination about the library's existence, and competition with gadget usage among children. It also struggles with the fundings from the government since the priority shifts to poverty. The positive impact of Wukirsari Village Library development includes increased children's reading interest in the village, creation of social interaction spaces amid challenging geographical conditions, and creativity development through various workshops. Wukirsari Village Library demonstrates that the success of a community initiative lies not only in the ease of having ideas or realizing them, but in consistency and sincerity in maintaining them.

Keywords: *community-based research; community development; community literacy; wukirsari library; village library*

I. INTRODUCTION

Wukirsari Village Library occupies a strategic location in Manggung Village, situated directly adjacent to the main road leading to the village hall office. This easy accessibility represents one of the library's primary advantages. Beyond its convenient location, the library facility also offers a visually appealing building that provides comfort for visitors. The visit and exploration of the library was based on what revealed by Li et al. (2023) related to how society views the public library especially on rural area.

Various types of literature are comprehensively available at this location. The collection encompasses academic books, multilingual dictionaries, health literature, culinary guides, fashion manuals, historical documentation, artistic works, literary works, natural science encyclopedias, general knowledge references, social knowledge sources, and religious literature. All these categories can be found at this location. Special facilities for children are also given attention, including coloring books, children's magazine publications, and various educational games. Additionally, several computer units are available to support visitor activities. The diverse novel collection occupies a special place on the building's second floor. This concept is considered similar to what revealed by Prihatin et al.

(2024) showing that library transformation is required to support community development in rural areas.

Wukirsari Village Library, located in Imogiri, Bantul, Special Region of Yogyakarta, has achieved remarkable accomplishments at the national level. This library, supported by the Medco Foundation, successfully secured third place in the 2008 Best Village Library Competition, defeating 18 outstanding village libraries from across Indonesia. The competition winner announcement was delivered during the pinnacle event of the National Library Excellence in Jakarta on Thursday, September 6, concluding the final competition series that had been ongoing since August.

The library's work agenda encompasses various aspects, ranging from enhancing community reading interest and writing capabilities, village library circulation services, to disaster mitigation programs. In recent developments, this library is also active in local arts and cultural heritage preservation activities. According to Ujang Purnomo as Chairman of Wukirsari Village Library Management, several flagship programs implemented include Reading Corner initiatives, Waste Emergency Workshops, River Education programs, Disaster Mitigation activities, Internet Training for Posyandu Cadres, Design Clinic services, Drawing Clinic, and Educational Puppet programs.

The agenda are based on the purpose of increasing the literacy, especially children's, around the village. This is in line with what proposed by Wijaya et al. (2020) that providing a reading corner can improve not only children's literacy but also the parents'. It is also supported by Selvi Handayani et al. (2024) that the literacy leads to the children's interest in reading while it is considered important to also include the schools in this agenda Kammer and Moreland (2021).

This Community Service activity addresses the needs of describing how Wukirsari Village Library operates at Wukirsari Village. This observation proposes novelty related to describing the details about Wukirsari Village Library and the challenges that may come within then operations.

II. METHODS

Community-Based Research is a research approach that involves the community as research partners in identifying problems, designing solutions, implementing interventions, and evaluating their impact. In the context of Wukirsari Village Library, CBR enables the community to become active co-researchers in building sustainable literacy solutions.

CBR Principles:

1. Community Ownership - The community owns and controls the research process
2. Participatory Process - Active involvement throughout the entire research cycle
3. Power Sharing - Equal power distribution between academics and community
4. Capacity Building - Enhancement of community research capabilities
5. Action-Oriented - Research that produces concrete actions for change

The implemented CBR methods include: 1) Walking Interview, where researchers and community members walk together exploring the village while discussing, and 2) Peer Learning Circles, where learning occurs among participants through mutual experience sharing. The sources were Wukirsari Village Library managers. This type of data collection was mentioned as semi-structured interview which focused on getting deeper comprehension on a phenomenon (Zhang, 2017).



Figure 1. Semi-structured interview with one of Wukirsari Village Library Managers

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this activity demonstrate that several solutions exist to address the problem formulation of the Community Service activity.

Geographical and Social Conditions

Wukirsari Village is located in a mountainous area with scattered settlement characteristics. The considerable distance between houses presents unique challenges in organizing communal activities such as group learning or collective play. This geographical condition provides the background for establishing the library as a venue for collaboration and social interaction among children and surrounding residents.

Management Structure

Managed by 5 founding members, one of whom is Mas Titah as a key figure. Youth Organization (Karang Taruna) is involved in certain situations, such as receiving guest visits. The management recruitment system is based on enthusiasm and sincerity, not specific formal indicators. Management works voluntarily without wages, based solely on cooperation agreements. The Village Library operates under village government auspices with funding recorded in APBD (Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget).

Routine Programs

1. Regular Kindergarten and Early Childhood Education Visits as a form of cooperation with early childhood education institutions around the village aiming to cultivate reading interest from an early age,
2. Creative Workshops including collage activities, cutting and pasting and other arts and crafts activities which were free and allowing participants to take their creations home,
3. TindesArt including stamp art creation program utilized for novel covers, poetry books, and other publication which involved founders' relationship networks for program development.



Figure 2. A visit from nearby kindergarten

Learning Approach

The library focuses not only on reading activities in the literal sense but develops a holistic approach through various creative activities to enhance children's learning enthusiasm.

Resources and Funding

The book collection at Wukirsari Village Library is sourced from village government funds, community donations, and faces challenges related to limited variation and collection quantity. In recent years, fund allocation for the library has experienced reduction due to village priorities focusing on: food security programs, stunting prevention, and poverty alleviation.

Operational Challenges

Challenges faced relate to visitor number fluctuations, limited information dissemination about the library's existence, and competition with gadget usage among children. Regarding these challenges, management proactively conducts research and develops program innovations to reattract visitor interest when decline occurs.

Positive Impact

The positive impact of Wukirsari Village Library development includes increased children's reading interest in the village, creation of social interaction spaces amid challenging geographical conditions, and creativity development through various workshops. Short-term expectations of Wukirsari Village Library include expanded information outreach about the library's existence, increased variation and quantity of book collections, and shifting children's focus from excessive gadget usage to literacy activities. This is realized in the long-term vision to actualize the concept of "books are windows to the world" by making the library a learning center and character development hub for children in Wukirsari Village.

Reflection and Learning

The experience of Wukirsari Village Library demonstrates that the success of a community initiative lies not only in the ease of having ideas or realizing them, but in consistency and sincerity in maintaining them. The 15-year sustainability proves the strength of collective commitment of village residents in prioritizing collective advancement over individual interests.

The findings from Wukirsari Village Library reveal several original and significant aspects that distinguish this rural library initiative from conventional community library models. Most notably, the library's 15-year sustainability in a challenging mountainous terrain with scattered settlements demonstrates an exceptional model of community-driven literacy development. This longevity is particularly remarkable given the geographical barriers that typically hinder sustained community engagement in rural areas. The management structure based on "enthusiasm and sincerity" rather than formal qualifications represents a significant departure from traditional library governance models. This finding suggests that intrinsic motivation and community commitment may be more crucial factors for rural library success than professional credentials or formal training. The voluntary nature of management, sustained through cooperation agreements rather than financial incentives, challenges conventional assumptions about organizational sustainability in resource-constrained environments. The integration of creative workshops, TindesArt programs, and kindergarten visits reveals an innovative approach to community literacy that extends beyond traditional reading activities. This holistic model aligns with Li et al. (2023) findings on teens' vision of ideal library spaces, where multifunctional creative environments were preferred over conventional book-centered facilities. However, Wukirsari's approach is particularly significant as it demonstrates how this concept can be successfully implemented in a rural, resource-limited context.

The library's role as a social interaction hub addresses a critical gap identified in rural communities. In scattered settlement areas like Wukirsari, the library functions as what Prihatin et al. (2024) describe as a catalyst for social inclusion, creating essential gathering spaces that overcome geographical isolation. This finding is particularly significant as it demonstrates how community libraries can serve dual purposes: literacy development and social cohesion building.

The observation reveals that Wukirsari Village Library operates as more than a literacy center—it functions as a community development hub that supports broader social transformation. This aligns with Prihatin et al. (2024) framework of rural public libraries supporting social inclusion and library transformation. However, the Wukirsari model presents a unique bottom-up approach where community members themselves drive transformation rather than external interventions leading change. The involvement of local Youth Organization (Karang Taruna) in specific activities, such as receiving guest visits, demonstrates sophisticated community networking that maximizes local resources. This collaborative approach reflects what Kammer and Moreland (2021) describe as effective partnership models, though applied within a single community rather than between institutions.

The library's success in cultivating reading interest from early childhood through kindergarten partnerships represents a strategic approach to long-term literacy development. This finding supports Wijaya et al. (2020) emphasizing on community roles in supporting children's literacy development, but extends beyond parental involvement to include systematic institutional collaboration. The creative workshops allowing participants to take home their creations demonstrate an innovative

approach to literacy engagement that combines skill development with tangible rewards. This strategy addresses what identify as challenges in increasing children's reading interest in rural areas by making literacy activities immediately gratifying and personally meaningful.

The library's long-term vision to actualize "books are windows to the world" suggests potential for expansion beyond current programming. Given the demonstrated success in early childhood engagement and creative programming, the library could potentially serve as a model for regional replication. The involvement of founder relationship networks in program development indicates existing capacity for scaling successful interventions. However, the ongoing challenges related to limited information dissemination about the library's existence suggest that despite internal success, external recognition and support remain limited. This paradox, internal sustainability coupled with external invisibility, may limit the model's potential for broader impact and replication.

IV. CONCLUSION

The community service report activity regarding observation at Wukirsari Village Library has been successfully implemented. Based on observation results, it can be concluded that Wukirsari Village Library has become an important literacy center and community activity hub in the village. This activity has provided benefits to the village community, particularly in enhancing community reading awareness and interest. Wukirsari Village Library has become an active and dynamic community activity center. Literacy activities and other activities at the village library have provided benefits to the village community. The village library still requires support and attention from various parties to improve activity quality and quantity. As recommendations, there is a need to enhance the quality and quantity of activities at Wukirsari Village Library, cooperation with various parties is needed to increase community reading awareness and interest, regular evaluation and monitoring are needed to improve activity quality at the village library. Thus, it is hoped that the community service report activity regarding observation at Wukirsari Village Library can provide benefits to the village community and serve as a reference for improving activity quality at village libraries.

V. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to the International Community Service program for facilitating visits and observations in the Wukirsari Village Library environment.

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