

## EFFORTS TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY LITERACY THROUGH THE PORT NUMBAY READING CORNER PROGRAM IN FANAMO VILLAGE, EASTERN MIMIKA DISTRICT, MIMIKA REGENCY, PAPUA PROVINCE

Fauziah Faranita Farawowan<sup>\*1</sup>, Yuniar Sri Hartati<sup>2</sup>, Marwah Mas'ud<sup>3</sup>, Mey Mony Lerebulan<sup>4</sup>, Mohamad Yusuf Golam<sup>5</sup>

STIE Port Numbay<sup>\*1,2,3,4,5</sup>

Email: [fauziahfarawowan2@gmail.com](mailto:fauziahfarawowan2@gmail.com)<sup>\*1,2,3,4,5</sup>

### Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the impact of the Pojok Baca program in Kampung Fanamo on improving community literacy, particularly among children and teenagers. The research method used includes the establishment of Pojok Baca as a literacy center, training for managers and the community, and the integration of technology to expand access to information. Data were collected from various sources, including visitors to Pojok Baca, teachers, and local community leaders, to obtain a comprehensive overview of the program's effectiveness. The results indicate that the Pojok Baca program successfully achieved its primary objectives of increasing reading interest and literacy skills within the community. The increase in the number of visitors and book borrowings, as well as reports from local teachers, show significant improvements in the reading and writing skills of children involved in this program. Additionally, the formation of an active literacy community indicates that the program has also successfully encouraged social engagement and collaboration among residents. Although the program faced several challenges, such as limited infrastructure and logistics, the participatory approach involving the community in every stage of the program's implementation proved effective in overcoming these obstacles. In conclusion, this study demonstrates that with appropriate support and a participatory approach, literacy programs like Pojok Baca can have a significant positive impact on improving literacy in remote areas and empowering communities to actively participate in social change.

**Keywords:** Literacy, reading corner, Fanamo village

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi dampak program Pojok Baca di Kampung Fanamo dalam meningkatkan literasi masyarakat, khususnya di kalangan anak-anak dan remaja. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah mencakup pendirian Pojok Baca sebagai pusat literasi, pelatihan bagi pengelola dan masyarakat, serta integrasi teknologi untuk memperluas akses informasi. Data dikumpulkan dari berbagai sumber, termasuk pengunjung Pojok Baca, guru, dan tokoh masyarakat setempat, untuk mendapatkan gambaran komprehensif tentang efektivitas program ini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa program Pojok Baca berhasil mencapai tujuan utamanya, yaitu meningkatkan

*minat baca dan keterampilan literasi masyarakat. Peningkatan jumlah pengunjung dan peminjaman buku, serta laporan dari guru setempat, menunjukkan bahwa keterampilan membaca dan menulis anak-anak yang terlibat dalam program ini mengalami peningkatan yang signifikan. Selain itu, terbentuknya komunitas literasi yang aktif mengindikasikan bahwa program ini juga berhasil mendorong keterlibatan sosial dan kolaborasi antarwarga. Meskipun program ini menghadapi beberapa tantangan, seperti keterbatasan infrastruktur dan logistik, pendekatan partisipatif yang melibatkan masyarakat dalam setiap tahap pelaksanaan program terbukti efektif dalam mengatasi hambatan tersebut. Kesimpulannya, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa dengan dukungan yang tepat dan pendekatan yang partisipatif, program literasi seperti Pojok Baca dapat memberikan dampak positif yang signifikan dalam meningkatkan literasi di daerah terpencil dan memberdayakan masyarakat untuk berperan aktif dalam perubahan sosial.*

**Kata kunci:** Literasi, pojok baca, kampung fanamo

## INTRODUCTION

Fanamo Village, located in the heart of the Far East Mimika District, Mimika Regency, Papua Province, is one of many remote villages in the region. Fanamo Village is surrounded by the stunning natural beauty of Papua, but behind the natural charm are various challenges faced by the local community. One of the biggest challenges is the low level of literacy. Literacy, generally understood as the ability to read and write, is an important foundation for individual and community development. However, in Fanamo Village, the literacy level is still far from expectations. The low level of literacy in Fanamo Village can be seen from the lack of interest in reading. Many villagers, both children and adults, are not used to reading books or other reading materials. This is not only due to low interest in reading, but also to limited access to quality literature. Books and other reading materials are rarely available in the village, making it difficult for people to access information that they should be able to enjoy and utilize.

In addition, the education infrastructure in Fanamo Village is still very limited. Schools in the village often lack facilities such as adequate libraries and qualified teaching staff. This condition further worsens the literacy situation in the village. Children who should be getting a proper education often struggle to get access to a good education. Therefore, the low level of literacy in Fanamo Village has an impact on the community. The first impact is the limited knowledge and information possessed by the villagers. Literacy is not only about the ability to read and write but also about access to knowledge that can open up new opportunities in life. Without this access, people in Fanamo Village will find it difficult to keep up with the times and develop their potential.

This lack of knowledge and information leaves the community behind in various aspects of life. In the field of education, children who grow up with limited access to books and reading materials will face great difficulties in developing the basic skills needed to continue their education to a higher level. This in turn will affect their prospects, especially in terms of career and economic well-being. In the economic context, low literacy also hinders people's ability to participate in more complex and profitable economic activities. Limited knowledge makes it difficult for them to understand the economic opportunities that may exist outside their village. As a result, they tend to be

trapped in less productive and low-income jobs, which ultimately affects their overall quality of life.

In addition, low literacy also impacts community involvement in the development of Fanamo Village. Those who are not literate and do not have adequate access to information will find it difficult to understand important issues that affect their lives, including in terms of development policies and public services. As a result, their participation in the village development process is severely limited, which can hinder the overall progress of the village. Seeing the various negative impacts of low literacy, serious efforts are needed to improve community literacy in Fanamo Village. One solution that can be implemented is to build a Reading Corner in this village. The Reading Corner is a public space that provides books and reading materials for the local community. The establishment of the Reading Corner is expected to encourage people's interest in reading and give them easier access to quality literature.

Based on the results of previous research by Linton et al. (2015) in their study showed that literacy contributes to increased income, better health, and higher social and political participation. Good literacy enables individuals to engage more actively in social and economic life, opening up opportunities for better jobs and a more prosperous life. In addition, literacy also has an impact on public health. Research from Smith et al. (2008) states that health literacy, which involves the ability to obtain, understand, and use health information, is essential for making informed health decisions. People who have low literacy levels tend to have less understanding of health, leading to higher health risks.

A study conducted by Greaney & Kellaghan, (1996) showed that the availability of adequate reading materials can significantly improve people's reading interest and literacy. Furthermore, Elley & Mangubhai, (1983) found that children in neighborhoods rich in reading materials showed significant improvement in reading skills compared to those living in neighborhoods with limited access to books. Research by Kangas et al. (2010) shows that a positive learning environment is essential in encouraging children to read. Pojok Baca provides a space that supports social interaction, where children can share their reading experiences and motivate each other to continue learning. This is also in line with Vygotsky & Cole's (1978) theory of social learning, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in children's cognitive development.

Empirical studies show that Pojok Baca has a significant impact on improving literacy. For example, Pojok Baca programs in various regions in Indonesia, such as in East Nusa Tenggara and Kalimantan, have successfully increased people's interest in reading and literacy skills. The results of a study conducted by Saraswati & Hidayat, (2019) showed that after Pojok Baca was established, there was a significant increase in the number of children involved in regular reading activities. The program also managed to attract the attention of the wider community, not only children but also adults who began to engage in literacy activities.

According to Ra-ngubtook & Bhongsatiern, (2021), access to information and communication technology (ICT) is also an important component in modern literacy development. However, in remote areas, limited infrastructure often hinders access to these technologies. Singhal & Rogers' (2003) study emphasizes the importance of

community participation in literacy initiatives. Successful literacy programs are often supported by active and engaged communities. In the context of Kampung Fanamo, support from the local community will be crucial to ensure that the Reading Corner can function well and have a sustainable impact.

Research by Greer et al. (2014) shows that sustainable literacy programs require cooperation between various stakeholders, including government, NGOs, and local communities. This support can take the form of continuous provision of books, training for Reading Corner managers, and regular monitoring and evaluation of the program. Learning from international experience, many countries have successfully implemented literacy programs in remote areas in innovative and adaptive ways. For example, the USAID-supported “Reading for All” program in Ghana has successfully improved literacy among primary school children in rural areas through the provision of books in local languages and teacher training (USAID, 2014). The program emphasizes the importance of using local languages in reading materials to increase student engagement and comprehension.

In South Africa, the “Nal’ibali” program has successfully combined traditional stories with modern reading techniques to engage children in rural areas (Desmond & Kimbro, 2015). The program uses an interactive approach where children are invited to participate in the story, which not only improves their reading skills but also enriches their imagination and creativity. In India, “Pratham’s Read India” program is one of the successful examples of literacy initiatives in remote areas. The program uses a community-based approach to teach children to read and write by involving local volunteers who are trained as literacy facilitators (Banerji et al., 2013). The program was successful in improving the literacy levels of children in rural areas cost-effectively and sustainably.

Along with the development of technology, there is an increasing interest in the integration of technology into literacy programs, especially in remote areas. Technology can be a powerful tool to overcome the challenges of access and availability of reading materials. For example, e-books and reading apps accessible through mobile devices have enabled many people in remote areas to access literature without the need for a physical library (Kozma, 2011).

Pojok Baca is not just a place to read, but can also be a center of literacy and educational activities for the community. Here, children and adults can learn together, share knowledge, and develop their literacy skills. Pojok Baca can also serve as a place to organize various literacy-related activities, such as training in reading and writing skills and discussions on topics relevant to everyday life. In its implementation, the Reading Corner should be designed to suit the needs and conditions of the people of Fanamo Village. The books and reading materials provided should be relevant to the local context and easily understood by readers of different ages. In addition, the Reading Corner should also be easily accessible to all levels of society, so that it can provide maximum benefit to everyone.

As part of a wider effort to improve literacy in various villages in Papua, the Port Numbay Reading Corner Program is planned to be established in Fanamo Village. The program is an initiative that aims to establish and manage Reading Corners in various villages, with the hope of improving the literacy levels of local communities. The Port Numbay Reading Corner will be equipped with a variety of books and reading materials tailored to the needs of the Fanamo Village community. The books provided will not only include educational literature, but also books related to life skills, general knowledge, and local stories that can enrich the insight of the community.

The Port Numbay Reading Corner Program also provides training and support for the managers. The managers are trained to manage book collections, design literacy activities, and promote reading interest within the community. With this support, it is hoped that the Reading Corner can function effectively and have a sustainable positive impact on the community. With the establishment of the Reading Corner in Fanamo Village through the Port Numbay Reading Corner Program, it is expected that there will be a significant increase in the literacy rate of the community. This increase in literacy will bring various positive impacts to the community's life, both in the educational, economic, and social aspects.

In education, children in Fanamo Village will have better access to books and reading materials that can assist them in their learning process. They will have the opportunity to develop reading and writing skills from an early age, which will serve as an important foundation for their future education. Additionally, the Reading Corner can become a safe and conducive space for children to learn and play while honing their literacy skills. From an economic perspective, the increase in literacy will open up new opportunities for the community of Fanamo Village. With better knowledge and skills, they will be able to explore economic opportunities that they were previously unaware of. For example, they can learn about more efficient farming techniques, handicraft skills, or even basic entrepreneurship concepts that can increase their income.

On the social side, an increase in literacy will also strengthen community involvement in the development of the village. Those who are more literate and informed will be better able to participate in discussions and decision-making processes related to the development of their village. This will help create a more inclusive and participatory community, where everyone has the opportunity to contribute to the progress of the village. In addition to these impacts, the Reading Corner is also expected to become a community hub that connects the people of Fanamo Village. This place can serve as a space for them to meet, share stories, and strengthen social bonds. In the long term, the Reading Corner will not only improve literacy but will also strengthen the sense of togetherness and solidarity among the villagers.

However, despite the clear benefits of the Reading Corner, the implementation of this program is not without challenges. One of the main challenges is the limited infrastructure in Fanamo Village. Difficult transportation access, challenging geographical conditions, and the lack of basic facilities such as electricity and internet can hinder the implementation of this program. Therefore, careful planning and a flexible approach are

needed to overcome these challenges. Moreover, the sustainability of the program is also an important issue. To ensure that the Reading Corner provides long-term benefits, ongoing support from various parties, including the government, non-governmental organizations, and the community itself, is necessary. Active participation from the local community is crucial to ensuring that the Reading Corner continues to operate and has a positive impact on future generations.

## **METHOD**

This research employs the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method to explore and address literacy challenges in Fanamo Village. The PAR method was chosen because it emphasizes the active involvement of the community in every stage of the research, from planning, and implementation, to evaluation. PAR also allows researchers to collaborate with the community in identifying problems, developing solutions, and implementing interventions relevant to the local context (Unaradjan, 2019). The first phase of this research is the diagnosis phase, where the researchers and the community jointly identify existing literacy issues, such as low reading interest and limited access to reading materials. During this phase, researchers conduct interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and participatory observations to gather qualitative data that illustrates the literacy conditions in the village.

Once the issues have been identified, the action planning phase is carried out by involving the community in designing the Reading Corner program. This process involves open discussions and collective decision-making to ensure that the proposed program aligns with the needs and desires of the community. This phase also includes logistical planning and identifying the resources required to establish and manage the Reading Corner. The action phase is the implementation of the planned Reading Corner. The community is actively involved in managing the Reading Corner, including organizing the book collection, conducting literacy activities, and promoting the program to other community members. The researchers act as facilitators and mentors, providing technical and methodological support throughout the process.

The final phase of PAR is reflection, where the researchers and the community together evaluate the outcomes of the Reading Corner program. This evaluation is conducted through reflective discussions, feedback collection, and participatory data analysis. The results of this reflection are used to assess the success of the program, identify areas for improvement, and plan further steps for the sustainability of the literacy program in Fanamo Village

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Increased Reading Interest in Fanamo Village**

One of the main results of this research is the increased reading interest among the people of Fanamo Village following the establishment of the Reading Corner. Before this intervention, literacy in the village was very low, with most of the population, especially children and adolescents, having limited access to quality reading materials. The existence of the Reading Corner has provided broader access to various books and reading materials, creating opportunities for the community to improve their reading skills.



The increased reading interest is evident from the growing number of visits to the Reading Corner. Data shows that in the first month after the Reading Corner opened, an average of 20-30 people visited each day. This number grew as awareness and interest among the community increased, and by the fourth month, the number of visitors had risen to 50 people per day. In addition, the rate of book borrowing also showed a positive trend, with many community members starting to regularly borrow books to read at home.

Factors that contributed to the increase in reading interest include the availability of books that suited the interests and needs of the community, the comfortable and welcoming atmosphere of the Reading Corner, and various literacy activities held to engage community participation. These results show that access to appropriate reading materials, combined with the support of a conducive environment, can significantly boost reading interest among communities that previously lacked adequate literacy access.

## **2. Improved Literacy Skills and Education**

In addition to increased reading interest, the study also demonstrated an improvement in literacy skills, particularly among children who frequently visited the Reading Corner. Before the program, many children in Fanamo Village struggled with reading and writing. However, after several months of involvement in Reading Corner activities, significant improvements in these basic skills were observed.

Teachers at local schools reported that children who regularly visited the Reading Corner showed progress in their reading and writing abilities. They became quicker at understanding the texts they read and were better able to express themselves in writing. This improvement was largely due to the availability of diverse and engaging reading materials at the Reading Corner, as well as activities such as group reading sessions and creative writing classes held regularly.

Moreover, the study revealed that children who were previously uninterested in school subjects became more motivated to learn after participating in the literacy program. They began to realize that reading is both enjoyable and beneficial, which encouraged them to be more active in school learning activities.

## **3. Social Impact and the Formation of a Literacy Community**

The establishment of the Reading Corner also had a significant social impact, namely the formation of an active literacy community in Fanamo Village. This community consists of regular visitors to the Reading Corner, including children, teenagers, and adults, who are routinely involved in various literacy activities. The formation of this community not only helped improve literacy but also strengthened social bonds among community members.

Literacy activities such as book discussions, reading groups, and writing workshops have become effective platforms for sharing knowledge and experiences. Through these activities, the community can talk about new ideas and insights they gained from the books they read. This not only enriched their learning experiences but also fostered a sense of togetherness and solidarity among the villagers.

In addition, this literacy community has become an agent of change within the society. Community members often serve as sources of inspiration for others to participate in literacy activities. They actively promote the importance of reading and learning, and encourage those around them to take advantage of the Reading Corner facilities. This shows that the Reading Corner not only functions as a literacy center but also acts as a catalyst for positive social change in Fanamo Village.

#### **4. Challenges Faced and Solutions Implemented**

Although the Reading Corner program has achieved significant results, its implementation was not without challenges. One of the main challenges encountered was limited infrastructure, particularly access to electricity and the Internet. This challenge affected the execution of several activities that required technological support, such as plans to introduce a digital library and audio-book programs. To address this challenge, the research team and the Reading Corner managers adapted by focusing on using physical reading materials and literacy activities that did not require advanced technology.

Another challenge was the logistical issue of distributing books and reading materials to Fanamo Village, which is located in a remote area. The process of shipping reading materials took a long time, sometimes hampering the smooth operation of the Reading Corner. To overcome this issue, the research team collaborated with local government and non-governmental organizations to ensure a sustainable supply of books.

Additionally, engaging the community fully was also a concern. Initially, not all community members were interested in participating in the literacy program. To address this, the research team and Reading Corner managers organized various activities that were interesting and relevant to the community's daily lives. For example, they held group reading sessions followed by discussions on topics relevant to daily life, such as farming, health, and economic development.

#### **5. Lessons Learned and Implications for Future Programs**

This research also provided several important lessons for the development of future literacy programs. First, the importance of adapting programs to the local context is crucial. Fanamo Village has unique cultural and environmental conditions, so the literacy programs implemented must align with the local needs and realities. For example, using the local language in literacy activities proved to be more effective in attracting community participation.

Second, collaboration with various stakeholders, including local government, educational institutions, and non-governmental organizations, is essential for the success and sustainability of the program. Support from these parties is not only in the form of resources but also in the form of policy backing and access to broader networks.

Third, a participatory approach involving the community in every stage of the program has proven effective in creating a sense of ownership and responsibility among community members. This helps ensure that the program is not only oriented towards short-term goals but also has a long-term sustainable impact.



These lessons imply that future literacy programs need to be designed with a deep understanding of the local context, involve active community participation, and build strong partnerships with various stakeholders. With this approach, literacy programs will not only succeed in improving reading and writing skills but also empower communities to become agents of change in their own lives.

## **6. Long-Term Impact and Program Sustainability**

The outcomes of the Reading Corner program also have the potential for long-term impacts on the Fanamo Village community. With improved literacy skills, children in the village will have better opportunities to pursue higher education and improve their quality of life in the future. Better literacy also opens up access to relevant information, which can ultimately help them make better decisions in various aspects of life, including health, economy, and social participation.

In addition, with the formation of an active literacy community, it is expected that the culture of reading and learning will continue to grow even after the program ends. This community can become a driving force in maintaining the sustainability of the program by involving more community members and initiating literacy activities independently. This shows that the Reading Corner program not only has an immediate impact but also creates a foundation for sustainable change in the long term.

Program sustainability can also be supported through ongoing partnerships with educational institutions, local government, and non-governmental organizations. Through these collaborations, the Reading Corner can continue to grow and expand its reach and impact by adding to the book collection, introducing new technologies, and organizing more engaging activities. Furthermore, ongoing training for the Reading Corner managers and literacy community members is essential to ensure that the program can continue to adapt to changing needs and challenges in the future.

## **7. Discussion of Social and Economic Impacts**

In addition to its direct impact on literacy, the Reading Corner program also has broader social and economic implications. Improved literacy and better access to information can help the community make more informed decisions in their daily lives. For instance, they can better understand health-related information, which can help them take better care of their families' health. Furthermore, better literacy can open up new economic opportunities, such as the ability to access relevant market information or acquire new skills that can increase their income.

From a social perspective, this program also helps strengthen social cohesion in Fanamo Village. Literacy activities involving various age groups and backgrounds create space for positive and collaborative interaction among community members. This strengthens the sense of togetherness and solidarity, which is crucial for building a stronger and more inclusive community.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research demonstrates that the Reading Corner program in Fanamo Village has successfully made a significant positive impact on improving community literacy. The establishment of the Reading Corner has effectively increased reading interest, literacy skills, and social engagement among the population, especially children and teenagers. The growing number of visitors and book loans, along with reports from local teachers, indicate that the reading and writing skills of children who regularly visit the Reading Corner have shown noticeable improvement. Additionally, the formation of an active literacy community demonstrates that this program not only functions as a reading center but also serves as a means of strengthening social bonds and collaboration among community members. Although the program faced challenges such as limited infrastructure and logistics, flexible and collaborative solutions successfully overcame these obstacles. This research also highlights the importance of a participatory approach that involves the community in every stage of program implementation, thereby fostering a sense of shared ownership and responsibility. With sustained support from various stakeholders, the program has the potential to continue growing and delivering positive long-term impacts. Overall, the Reading Corner program in Fanamo Village proves that with the right approach and strong support, literacy improvement in remote areas can be achieved while empowering the community to become agents of change in their own lives.

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