

Research Paper

# Whole Community Development in Supporting Children's Literacy in Rural Areas Community and Parents' Participation to Foster Children's Literacy in Rural Areas

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## ABSTRACT

Indonesia was ranked 72nd out of 77 countries in reading assessment based on Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA). Through the National Literacy Movement, the Indonesian government attempt to increase children's reading proficiency, which is also an indicator of SDG 4.1.1. This study explores the important roles of the parents and community in improving children's literacy competencies. This study used a qualitative approach and collected both primary and secondary data. The findings highlighted that parents supporting children's literacy could improve children's reading interest and early-phase of reading competencies through the availability of reading corners and home-based literacy activities. There were 300 parents supporting children's literacy activities and 73 community facilitators facilitating 20 village reading clubs. The village government also supported the sustainability of the reading club by providing incentives for the facilitators and developing the infrastructure through village fund allocation.

**Keywords:** community education, community participation in literacy, parents' involvement in literacy, children's reading interest, children's literacy

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## 1. Introduction

Literacy and education are often viewed as the responsibility of the teachers (Gunning, 2000; Fox et al., 2003), school/ classroom quality (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2019), parents (Kiranti et al., 2021; Stacy 2019), community (Ng & Madyaningrum, 2014; Wijaya et al., 2020), and the government's policy (Papen, 2015). Based on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), literacy includes comprehension of listening, reading, writing, and speaking competencies applied in daily life (Fensham, 2008).

The Indonesian government has attempted to improve children's literacy through various programs, such as National Literacy Movement (*Gerakan Literasi Nasional*) and Community Literacy Movement (*Gerakan Literasi Masyarakat*) since 2016 (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan [Kemdikbud], 2016). The latest effort was introducing the Emancipated Learning (Merdeka Belajar) Campaign focusing on children's learning in Literacy, Numeracy, and Character Development. There is also a large-scale assessment called ANBK that assesses children's literacy, numeracy, and character competencies at the national level. Apart from that, high-quality teachers are required to achieve the quality literacy standard (Fox et al., 2003).

While improving literacy may focus on school intervention (Banerji & Chavan, 2016; Chew, 2018; Piper et al., 2018) and education policy change (Wyse, 2018), there are parts of community participation that may contribute to children's literacy assessment. Community education has been viewed as an alternative for improving engagement between parents-teachers and children (Ng & Neo, 2020). Many Indonesian studies also focused on school-level intervention in literacy, such as how to design literacy activities at school (Akbar, 2017; Dafit & Ramadan, 2020; Padmadewi & Artini, 2018; Wiratsiwi, 2020). However, there is an apparent, evident gap concerning how parents and the community can also support children's literacy. The previous research on how parents support children's literacy is only by parents attending school's invitation (Padmadewi et al., 2018) without any evidence and further research about how parents and the community may support children's literacy. The community resources and parents' support may significantly impact children's literacy by providing a more literate learning environment at home. This study aims to explore how the community may help to improve children's literacy and what the impact of children's literacy is when parents and the community assist them. There is no further research on how parents and the community can support children's literacy.

Indonesia consistently aims to improve children's literacy to achieve SDG 4, namely Quality Education. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology has made a great deal of effort to allow the Indonesia education program to focus on literacy, numeracy, and education character through Merdeka Belajar (Emancipated Learning). These efforts are aligned with Indicator 4.1.1: Proportion of children and young people (a) in Grade 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex. Previously, there was also a literacy program movement called Gerakan Literasi Nasional/GLN (National Literacy Movement) introduced in 2015. Kurnia (2021) argued that the philosophy of progressivism influenced the philosophical foundation national literacy movement since it focused more on the effort to prepare the students to face 21<sup>st</sup>-century challenges. Even though it has a broader focus on numeracy, literacy, science, digital skills, financial skills, culture, and citizenship knowledge meant to be applied to the learners' daily life, it lacks focus on critical literacy, which is very important for the students (Kurnia, 2021). As part of GLN, there is also a community literacy movement (*Gerakan Literasi Masyarakat/ GLM*); however, there is limited research on this topic. Usually, GLM only focuses on the importance of literacy through socialization at the village level (Sanusi & Prasetyo, 2019) and the initiation of a reading camp (Hidayah, 2019) without further detail on how the reading camp's activities can support children's competencies on literacy.

Indonesian literacy profiles across provinces are diverse, with Papua, West Papua, West Kalimantan and East Nusa Tenggara holding lower literacy levels compared to those of the other provinces. This index is based on 4 dimensions: mastering (quality), access, alternative, and culture. The mastering quality dimension is indexed based on years of schooling and the number of people who are able to read and write. Access dimension is based on the availability of both public and community libraries and the bookstore. Dimension alternatives are focused on embedded technology (the use of Information Communication Technology/ ICT) and internet connection availability. The cultural dimension is about reading habits, both using paper and electronic devices, as well as how the community uses the public library. Based on the latest recommendation, there is a need to focus on the province with low literacy levels, increasing access to public libraries and community participation in fostering reading habits (Pusat

Penelitian Kebijakan Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan [Puslitjakdikbud], 2019). This study will focus on community participation in fostering children's reading habits and literacy competencies.

The results of PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) in Indonesia are also lower compared to those of the other countries (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2019). The latest score was 371, categorized as Level 1 (out of 6 levels). This means that students can only identify some basic information that is explicitly available in the text. Furthermore, studies focusing on children in preschool and elementary school literacy usually used EGRA (Early Grade Reading Assessment) or STAR (School-based test about reading). From the latest EGRA, at the national level, approximately 70% of Indonesian students are able to read with comprehension. However, in the eastern provinces like Maluku, East Nusa Tenggara, and Papua, only 50% of students can read with comprehension (Stern and Nordstrum, 2014). Eastern Indonesian students' capacity in literacy is lower than that of the western provinces, which in turn is still lower than in other countries. The lower students' capacity in literacy, the more the literacy intervention needs to be carried out by the schools and the community.

The research findings on implementing literacy in Indonesia are usually embedded in the language lessons. Indonesian students usually learn literacy through the learning of Bahasa Indonesia in class. This subject is taught thematic-based in the schools. In the past decade, Indonesian the government encouraged the use of more literacy in school daily through embedded school local cultures and character education. A study found that the literacy program developed by local teachers and librarians positively impacts students' knowledge, characters, and intellectual recreation/ creativity (Fadhli, 2021). This was the impact of the school literacy movement introduced to schools.

Many schools in Indonesia have supported the National Literacy Movement (Gerakan Literasi Sekolah) through the implementation of various programs (Nuryana et al., 2020). The literacy program, for example, has been carried out in elementary schools with a 15-minutes pre-reading activity (Wiratsiwi, 2020). This literacy program can be expanded beyond reading and writing to numeracy, science, digital literacy, financial literacy, local culture, and citizenship. The implementation of the national literacy movement may positively impact students' attitudes towards literacy (Nuryana et al., 2020).

The national literacy movement is a public participation movement to raise reading habits and literacy for children. The literacy movement is an integrated movement to support literacy that needs support from various stakeholders, such as universities, businesses, local organizations, teachers, parents, and the community (Kemdikbud, 2016).

Children's literacy can be strengthened at the school level and at the community level. Some studies revealed that the engagement of both the community and parents has a positive impact on increasing children's literacy (Terlitsky and Wilkins, 2015; Park, 2008). The interaction between parents and children on learning literacy may significantly influence children's reading interest and print knowledge (Weigel et al., 2006). The children's literacy and behaviours are influenced by their parent's ability to teach them. High levels of parents' involvement in home literacy play an important role in children's reading competencies (Alston-Abel & Berninger, 2018). Most research regarding the community's role in literacy was carried out in developed countries, such as Western Europe (Hemmerechts et al., 2017), the United Kingdom (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018) and Australia (Daniel et al., 2016). Few researchers explored the cases in low-income countries, such as Indonesia, especially in disadvantaged areas. In Indonesia, parents' involvement is usually by attending school activities (Padmadewi et al., 2018), while at home, there are almost no activities carried out to foster children's literacy. It has been argued that a community education approach has an impact on community capacity and competence to be ready for large-scale effects (Ng & Madyaningrum, 2014). Using the educational prosperity framework (Willms, 2018), parenting and family involvement are crucial foundations for children's success. However, children from low socioeconomic backgrounds may lack educational access in the community.

Wahana Visi Indonesia (WVI) has implemented literacy programs from 2018 to 2020, including teachers' capacity building and parental and community involvement. Based on Puslitjakdikbud (2019), the reason for low literacy is cultural, which makes the community-education-based approach suitable to be applied, especially in the disadvantaged areas where school interventions need to be supported by the community participation. This study will address the research gap on how parents and the community can contribute to improving children's literacy and the impacts of parents' involvement on children's literacy. The research objectives will focus on the relationship between community and parents' participation in children's literacy and the benefits of engaging parents and the community in children's literacy. This study will also discuss the impacts of parents' involvement and community participation on children's literacy.

## 2. Methodology

The method used was qualitative. Qualitative research related to ideas, perceptions, opinions, and beliefs cannot be measured only by numbers. The research process involves hypothesis questions, collecting data, analyzing the data, building thematic analysis, and making interpretations of the meaning of data. The final written report has a flexible writing structure (Creswell et al., 2007). The data were collected through secondary data documentation (Monitoring and Reports) and primary data collection: Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

The type of qualitative research adopted here is a case study, which is the presentation of data in narratives from documentation and interviews to explain phenomena in a unique environment (Hariwijaya, 2016). The examined aspects are also subjective, namely from the customs or culture of the society (Connaway & Powell, 2010). A case study used various data sources to study individuals, institutions, or phenomena such as events or programs in a unique environment and an intense and detailed manner (Hariwijaya, 2016). The focus of the case study is not predominantly on the individual but more on the issue itself (Creswell et al., 2007).

The data were collected from several rural areas, namely Landak, East Manggarai, Biak, and Sentani (Jayapura). The case also explores the contextual condition (Creswell et al., 2007). The first step of interpretation focuses on the common themes, followed by the interpretation of the case meanings, which can be from learning or from unusual situations.

### Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected from the field. Primary data collections were conducted for the qualitative data through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). The secondary data were taken from regular monitoring, documentation, and reports. The data were collected from June to July 2021 in Landak, Biak, Sentani (Jayapura) and East Manggarai.

Table 1: Data Collection Process 2021

Data Collection Method	Sample/Informant	Type of Data
Primary Data FGD (Focus Group Discussion) KII (Key Informant Interview)	Field facilitators (for reading camps and children's groups), Teachers, parents, members of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)	Implementation Literacy Program at Community Level
Secondary Data	Technical Program Design Document, Baseline Report, Need Assessment Report, Annual Report, Monitoring Report, Vulnerability Survey Report (7 documents)	Program Design, Implementation and Monitoring

The primary data were obtained from 26 parents, 14 reading club facilitators, 21 teachers and 12 school principals across Sentani, Biak, East Manggarai and Landak. There were 11 FGDs and 12 KIIs during the study. The analysis examined and explained the process and the roles of community and parents in children's literacy and their impacts on the children's literacy. The secondary data were gathered from various reports of Wahana Visi Indonesia's education programs. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to understand thoughts and behaviour across the data set, generate them, review, and define them (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). The thematic analysis was used to identify the process of literacy activities in the communities and home-based literacy activities. It was also adopted to find the impacts of the community-level intervention on children's literacy competencies.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### Program Design Literacy

From the documentation of the Technical Design Education Program of Wahana Visi Indonesia FY18-FY21, the program design consisted of four components: reading assessment, teacher training (capacity building for teachers), community participation, and material creation. This program was designed based on the World Vision's Unlock Literacy project's model and contextualized into the Indonesian context, later known as Wahana Literasi. These four components were interconnected. Even though teacher training was the most significant component of improving children's reading competencies, home and community learning environments also played important roles.



Figure 1. The Design of Literacy Program

Six districts implemented the Unlock Literacy Program, intending to increase the literacy skills of early grade students. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, WVI conducted a literacy assessment using STAR (School-based Test about Reading) to provide critical information about children's foundational reading ability and measure the reading skills of Grade-3 students involved in the program.

#### Reading Assessment Data

From the documentation, the STAR assessment also collected background information from the surveyed students to identify the trends of conditions or issues related to the acquisition of the reading skills. The information included students' sex, spoken language at home, home literacy environment, and student engagement in school and community literacy programs. The following tables describe the results of the STAR assessment and related background information of the students.

Table 2: Profile of Student Respondents

PROGRAM AREAS	STUDENTS		TOTAL
	MALE	FEMALE	
Biak	46	47	93
Lauk Nayak	32	26	58
Sentani	27	19	46
East Manggarai	75	90	165
West Manggarai	38	36	74
Landak	41	38	79
TOTAL	259	256	515
Notes: More than half of these students (52,4%) did not enroll in early childhood education; 121 of them retained in Grade 1, and 65 retained in Grade 2.			

Source: Outcome Monitoring FY19 – WVI data (2019)

There was a total of 515 Grade-3 students in six assessed Program Areas with a balanced number of male and female students. East Manggarai AP had the highest number of surveyed students, whereas Sentani AP had the lowest.

Table 3: Students Background Information on Language and Books Availability at Home

AP	Language spoken at home	
	Indonesia	Local
Biak	84	22
Lauk Nayak	39	30
Sentani	44	12
Manggarai Timur	31	158
Manggarai Barat	12	77
Landak	27	64
TOTAL	237	363

Source: Outcome Monitoring FY19 – WVI data (2019)

Table 3 shows that the majority of the students used their local language or dialect at home.

Table 4: After-School Reading Activity Participation

PROGRAM AREAS	After-School Activities	Mobile Library	Village Library	Reading Club	Others
Biak	45	0	0	30	52
Lauk Nayak	8	2	0	6	5
Sentani	18	3	2	16	12
Manggarai Timur	107	0	1	107	91
Manggarai Barat	27	0	0	25	20
Landak	43	0	0	44	7
TOTAL (n)	248	5	3	228	187
(%)	37,0%	0,7%	0,4%	34,0%	25,2%

Source: Outcome Monitoring FY19 – WVI data (2019)

In terms of after-school reading activity, the top two programs with the highest number of participating students were after-school literacy activities (37,0%) and Reading Club (34,0%).

The materials creation component aimed to ensure that the communities had a variety of reading materials available. This was another essential part of the Unlock Literacy Program. The only print material children typically saw in most communities was school textbooks. Unlock Literacy practitioners worked with partners and communities to create engaging and relevant children's print material for Book Banks – collections of at least 50 books and reading materials in every village. With guidance on creating age- and language-appropriate materials locally, the communities can produce reading materials themselves and take advantage of an enriched literacy environment. The Community Action section of the toolkit guided how to develop simple beginning reading primers and guidelines for program staff on criteria to consider when selecting or developing reading materials for children across the stages of literacy development. Children can borrow materials from Book Banks and use them to practice reading at home, on their own, and with their parents.

### Teacher training (School-based level intervention)

Teachers' training was implemented annually through nine series of capacity building to teach children how to read, focusing on key reading competencies: children's letter knowledge, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. After the workshop, teachers utilized the skills to teach the key competencies in the classroom and assessed the students' progress, including by using formative assessment. Teachers blended their strategies into a lesson plan. This literacy program enhanced teachers' instruction using the government's curriculum.

It was revealed that teachers play a significant role in equipping children with literacy. Primary school teachers also described children's improvement in their reading skills during the Focus Group Discussions. One of the teachers stated that the literacy program in school had helped children who were not able to read fluently as quoted below:

"It affected the increase of the number of children, who previously could not read, but now are able to spell and even able to read." (Teacher in Waupnor, Biak)

"There is an impact on students from being unable to read to being able to read..." (Principal of primary school Dobonsolo, Sentani)

Furthermore, based on the documentation report, the results of the teacher observation as part of the Outcome Monitoring FY19 demonstrated that 34 out of the 40 trained teachers (85%) had utilized the skills acquired from the training program to teach reading. This included applying the skills in teaching letter knowledge, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and reading fluency (see Table 9). The report analysis also showed that only 7 of the 34 trained teachers (20,6%) used teaching aids in teaching reading, as shown in Table 10.

Table 5: Trained Teachers Utilizing Skills Acquired to Teach Reading

PROGRAM AREAS	(#) Teacher	Trained Teachers Utilizing Acquired Skills to Teach reading			
		Letter Knowledge	Phonemic Awareness	Vocabulary	Reading Fluency
East Manggarai (Mang-Tim)	12	91,7%	66,7%	50,0%	33,4%
West Manggarai(Mang-Bar)	15	86,7%	53,3,0%	40,0%	26,7%
Landak	7	57,1%	57,1%	57,1%	57,1%
Biak	6	33,3%	33,3%	0,0%	41,7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>67,2%</b>	<b>52,6%</b>	<b>36,8%</b>	<b>39,7%</b>

Source: Outcome Monitoring FY19 – WVI data (2019)

According to Livie and Lentz as cited in Arsyad (2005, p. 16), teaching media is to provide a visual context to help students who are weak in reading understand the text, organize information, and remember. In other words, teaching media effectively accommodates students who are weak and slow to accept and understand the content of subjects with the text presented verbally. This finding can indeed be an option to consider for strategy improvement.

Two factors might contribute to achieving the outcome. The first was the proportion of children who can read with comprehension, and the second was the proportion of trained teachers utilizing skills acquired to teach reading. The proportion of teachers trained in the Unlock Literacy training was 89,8%, whereas the proportion of children currently attending the after-school literacy activities was 93,2%, as shown in the table below.

Table 6: Achievements of Program Outputs

INDICATORS	LOP Target	FY20 LOP Achieved	Accomplishment (%)
Output 2.1: Proportion of teachers trained on UL's teacher training	128	115	89.8%
Output 2.3: Proportion of children currently attending the after-school literacy activities	73%	2.039/2.787 = 68%	93.2%

Source: WVI ITT data (2020)

Regarding the achievement outputs related to teacher training, Wahana Visi Indonesia had responded to the COVID-19 impacts on the teaching-learning process in school by organizing online training programs to equip 6,528 teachers with the capacity to deliver virtual or online teaching in response to student learning from home (LFH) regulation. WVI also successfully distributed students' learning kits, consisting of textbooks, storybooks, radios, and other recreational items for 33,451 children.



## Community Participation

As part of the whole development approach, a community action program is essential to improving children's literacy. The community literacy module included: how to develop a print-rich environment, parents' awareness workshop, and community reading activities. It included ensuring access to children's literacy resources and activities outside the schools. The activities were designed to foster children's literacy in their daily life. The community participation included families/parents, community facilitators, and the school management committee. The community facilitators were trained in literacy, whereas parents received information on the importance of children's literacy. Parents can engage in children's literacy activities and boost children's potential, which contributes to developing their knowledge about the world around them. Children can also access reading camps located in their neighbourhood.

Parents and the community actively supported the children in learning to read. Some parents voluntarily provided reading corners in their houses. Some other parents paid regular fees to support the literacy program in their villages. In addition to this, the program also involved community volunteers who had been trained to facilitate children's reading activities in reading camps or clubs. By the end of the program, there were 20 reading clubs with 73 active community facilitators helping children with literacy activities. More than 300 parents participated in the Literacy Training Program to help and support their children learning to read at home.

Table 7: After-School Reading Activities and Reader's Proficiency Levels

AREAS	After-School Reading Activities (%)	Reader's Proficiency Level (%)
1 Biak	18,9%	66,7%
2 Lauk Nayak	3,1%	62,1%
3 Sentani	7,6%	60,9%
4 East Manggarai (Mang-Tim)	45,5%	78,2%
5 West Manggarai (Mang-Bar)	10,7%	51,4%
6 Landak	14,0%	64,6%

Source: Processed from WVI data

## Local ownership

Local ownership: the program's vision and priorities were developed with and owned by the community and local partners after an in-depth shared exploration of child well-being in their context. There were clear plans regarding how local actors could continue the mutually accountable dialogue and actions on child well-being priorities after the WVI's engagement ended.

Table 8: Level of Engagement in the Literacy Program

Level of Engagement	Description
Household	<p>WVI intervention through their program has increased parents' support in children's literacy. The evidence can be seen in Landak AP as documented in the FY19 Annual Report.</p> <p>Despite less financial support from the village government, parents voluntarily contributed IDR 1,000.00 per child to help sustain the reading camp. Parents also created a good learning environment at home. To date, there were 23 home reading corners in Mengkatang village, 13 home reading corners in Pawis Hilir village, and 20 home reading corners in Angan Tembawang village, Landak District. Another interesting finding was that parents had become more aware of child protection issues.</p> <p>"We used to have high egos as parents, children must obey our wishes, but the condition is different now. We need to understand why they did such things and speak in their language so children can have a better understanding ... if we get angry, they are afraid of us and they cannot learn any more from us."</p>
Community	<p>Reading Club (Taman Baca or Pojok Baca) WVI empowered the community to develop selection criteria for selecting tutors for village reading clubs.</p> <p>School Committee AP had involved School Committees at the school level when disseminating programs to parents or caregivers of students and teachers. AP also encouraged the School Committees to carry out their roles as supervisors and providers of support to schools through the revitalization of the School Committee (WVI, 2018).</p>
System and Structure	<p>Schools were the main structure needed for the program implementation. Ensuring their ownership of the program was one important effort to achieve sustainability. Involving schools to present their own progress on Unlock Literacy to the government (District Education Office, Ministry of Education) was a good way to transfer the project models' ownership to schools and the government.</p> <p>Government ownership of the program was expected to be obtained by signing an MoU to implement the Unlock Literacy (UL) Program. The progress achieved during the TP2 implementation in FY18-FY20 was as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Landak AP has signed the MoU to implement the Unlock Literacy (UL) Program. The budget had been allocated for the 2019 implementation.</li> <li>2. Biak and Jayapura District were in the process of drafting the MoU to implement the Unlock Literacy Project's Model beyond the piloting schools. The MoU included the budget allocation for the 2019–2020 implementation.</li> <li>3. The village government in East Manggarai and Landak accommodated the literacy activities or reading facilities – infrastructure provision of reading houses and incentives to tutors/community facilitators.</li> </ol>

Literacy implementation using the whole development approach allows schools and the community to collaborate and contribute to SDGs 4.1 starting by 2030, all girls and boys should receive complete, free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes, especially in the Indicator 4.1.1: Proportion of children and young people (a) in grade 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex. By this means, the whole development approach can also enhance children's literacy through various partnerships. The literacy program in Landak District was supported by both the District of Education and the Village-level government. The District of Education released District Education Office Decree No 420/0027/SD/2019 concerning the designation of pilot schools, impacted schools, and infrastructure to support the Literacy Program and Village Decree No. 141/01/PEM/DES-AT/2019 concerning village facilitators for literacy and establishment of children reading group. This means the partnership at all levels including the district and village levels may accelerate the process of literacy improvement for the children.

### Reading Corner at Home

Based on FGDs and KIIs, Reading Corner was used to encourage reading and writing activities at home. FGDs' participants in East Manggarai and Landak elaborated the how reading corners at home become essential for children's learning.

"After we created a reading corner at home, children started to learn letters and numbers. Children become more enthusiastic to learn." (Parent, FGD East Manggarai)

"I received training to create a reading corner at home. After my children and I built the reading corner, my children are willing to read at home." (Parent, FGD, Landak)

"I think the children can learn and concentrate better at home. They are usually uninterested in learning, but now, they feel more motivated to learn letters, numbers, and vocabulary." (Parent, FGD, Landak)

### Learning from stories and playing

Parent-children bond can also be strengthened when the parents use learning media available at home to assist their children's learning. The media allow them to interact, share stories, and play together more interestingly.

In the study, the parents were eager to assist their children with their daily activities after they understood the importance of literacy stimulation for children. They started to stimulate their children at home through story reading or other activities doable at home.

"Now, I ask my children what the story is, and he continues to share the story from the book that he has already read." (Parent, FGD, Landak)

"The children have more reading interest now after changing the layout of the reading camp and deciding which reading material that they want to put on the wall." (Parent, FGD, Landak)

"We as parents can teach the children at home by introducing this inside the home. Children can also learn how to write it and make learning their habit." (Parent, FGD East Manggarai)

"I teach my children using the objects near us, such as spoon and plate, and they start to count them." (Parent, FGD, East Manggarai)

"I assist my children by providing them learning tools, such as storybooks." (Parent, Jayapura)

### Changes in Parents' Behaviours, Children's Learning Progress, and Relationship Transformation

Parenting is not an instant process. By participating in the workshop, the parents tended to change their behaviour to be more active in assisting their children in learning. They also help improve children's letters knowledge and vocabulary.

"Previously, I had a level of high ego. Children must obey our rules, but the condition has changed now. We need to understand why they do certain things and speak in their own way, so can we have better communication and understanding. If we are angry, they can't learn anymore." (Parent, FGD, Landak)

"I started to give attention to my children, became more able to manage my emotions, and learn to understand children's development. I feel that being caring and patient will help them learn." (Parent, FGD, East Manggarai)

"I spent more time with my children and have discussions with them. I became more patient when educating them at home." (Parent, FGD, East Manggarai)

"In the classroom, the progress (of children who also learn to read at home) is better. The ones who actively participate (in the reading groups) are also able to read earlier compared to the ones who do not (participate)." (Reading group facilitator – FGD, Landak)

"Children recognize letters, and those consistently coming to the reading group are able to read earlier." (Reading group facilitator, Landak)

"Teacher often distributes reading books to the elementary school students. Books given by WVI are very easy to read for Grade-1 students or those with lower grades. It is very easy for them to read because the books have illustrations, such as drawings and writing, which are very communicative and enjoyable for the children. They borrow the books from the teacher." (A participant in the Parents FGD – East Manggarai)

"Here, the children are very enthusiastic. They are still eager to do the activities, and these are the things that keep the reading groups running."  
(Reading Camp Facilitator Dusun Pawis Hilir, Landak)

"Because we live near the Sentani lake, the students in the reading camp also discuss what living creatures may live in the lake, and what animals and plants live nearby." (Community Facilitator, FGD, Sentani/Jayapura)

There was a transformation in the parent-children relationship when the literacy program, positive parenting training/dissemination, and other training on child well-being or child protection issues were implemented. Parents' awareness of how they should treat their children has also been improved and reflected in their daily practices.

"Now, I accompany my children at home. If the parents did not provide any assistance at home, the children will not master the topics. We need to ensure whether our children understand letters and can read."  
(Parents, Sentani District)

### **Children Literacy Improvement**

Using documentation, teachers' utilization of literacy skills and participation of students in after-school literacy activities were the two program outputs with the highest target achievements during the program implementation. Furthermore, the children's literacy improvement was visible when their parents were involved in their learning at home. They developed a better understanding of letters knowledge, vocabulary and reading fluency.

"The majority of children now can read fluently even though one or two of them took a year to improve". (Community Facilitator, East Manggarai)

"My children are making progress on writing and reading." (Parent, FGD, Landak)

"My children can correct their own mistakes when writing a sentence." (Parent, FGD, Landak)

"My children like to read stories." (Parent, FGD, Landak)

"I want to share my experience when assisting my children. Children can not only follow our rules without explanation. We need to consider their potential development and assist them slowly but consistently. If they already have independence, we don't need to demand them, but just guide them to be self-learners. My children were previously unable to read, but now they can spell correctly and read." (School Committee, Parent, FGD, Biak)

"There is a need for consistent study time, so children can have good reading skills." (School Committee, FGD, Biak)

"We as parents also have to build a good and regular communication with the teachers, so that we can get their recommendations on how to assist our children in learning at home." (FGD, Parent, Jayapura)

"Thank God, the teacher is supportive of my children's development and consistently informs us how to teach them. This allows us to pay attention to the children's literacy skills. The teacher also constantly notifies us when there is homework." (Parent, FGD, Biak)

"The literacy program has an enormous impact on the children. Previously, they could not read, but now, they can spell and even read." (Teacher, FGD, Biak)

"I have a student who initially was very difficult to read, but last time I assessed, he can already read. I have told this story to the principal." (Teacher, FGD Biak)

"The children who were previously unable to read can now recognize letters and construct sentences after their parents started to teach them using learning media at home." (Parent, FGD, Sentani)

"The children develop a higher interest in reading and like to read when they visit the reading camp." (FGD, community facilitator, East Manggarai)

### **Children's Future**

The majority of parents, teachers, and community facilitators supported children's literacy because of their willingness to facilitate the children's future.

"I teach them literacy so that they can develop a good character in the future." (Teacher, Landak)

"I teach them literacy because they are our future leaders." (Teacher, Landak)

"I want to assist my children because I want to be a role model for them." (Parent, Landak)

"The future will be better for them if they have good literacy." (Parent, Landak)

### **Challenges in Assisting Children's Literacy Activities**

Even though there are more promising practices on how parents can enhance children's literacy, several challenges also exist related to the time-wise use of technology to allow children to learn and play.

"We just had electricity here in the village, so children spent most of their time on TV." (Parents, Landak)

"Children are attached to smartphones and TV, so we made an agreement on study time and playtime." (Sentani, Papua)

"I have several children. It is difficult to assist all of them by using only one strategy because they are unique and need a personalized learning experience. This will prevent them from disturbing each other. To solve this issue, I made different study activities for them." (Manggarai Timur)

### **Schools' and Parents' Relation**

"The parents are enthusiastic during the information dissemination on the importance literacy the children. They are willing to support it." (Principal, East Manggarai)

"Parents and school committee support the children's learning. They created a reading camp in their communities." (Principal, Sentani)

"Parents and school committee have an informal discussion about the children's development and their literacy, both in the school and community." (Principal, Biak)

The review also discovered that, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, children benefitted from the literacy teaching methods delivered by their teachers. This enabled the students with poor reading proficiency to improve their skills. After the school hours, the students also enjoyed after-school literacy activities and reading activities in their villages. However, there were two major concerns here. The first was the lack of support for the reading camp's facilitator to better organize the reading activities for children and help those with poor reading skills. The second was little knowledge and awareness of the parents regarding their responsibility to assist their children's learning.

In addition, the review results (based on the outcome monitoring data in FY19) showed a moderate achievement of 85% of the trained teachers who utilize the skills acquired from the training in teaching reading, with notes for future improvement. More specifically, the teachers were committed and consistent in applying the literacy teaching methods and teaching aids as recommended in the literacy teaching guides.

### **Community Participation in Literacy**

The community that took part in supporting literacy consisted of multi-stakeholders, such as school committees, community volunteers/community facilitators, and parents. There was motivation to

develop reading clubs or reading groups at the community level. There were reading camps and at least 20 reading clubs with weekly activities to support children's literacy. Also, 73 community facilitators supported these reading clubs and actively enhanced literacy. Some activities carried out in the reading camps were reading a storybook, creating reading materials, singing a song, and making simple reading media. When parents allowed their children to visit and learned at a reading club, there was an opportunity to assess and guide the students, especially those who regularly visited the reading camp and reading club. We found that children who regularly visited the reading camps or reading clubs had increased reading interests. "The children now have more interest in reading and like to read when they visit the reading camp." (FGD, community facilitator, East Manggarai). The students also discussed what they found in their neighbourhood, such as animals and plants living in and around the Sentani lake. This encouraged the children to share a story and improve their literacy vocabulary.

This study also confirmed another study that reading clubs can support and motivate children to enhance their literacy (Morrow et al., 2017). Furthermore, early intervention using a community-based approach may improve the literacy and access of those from low-socioeconomic status to literate environments (Wah, 2020). This happens because the designed activities improve children's engagement. Community-based literacy programs can also be alternatives for bottom-up accountability measures. Community education involving parents, teachers, students, and communities can be an alternative to holding the education system accountable for supporting inequitable learning material distribution in literacy and the local languages (Morrell, 2017). All the reading camps and reading clubs in this study supported the use of Bahasa Indonesia as the national language. They also considered the use of local language and dialect to bridge and foster children learning in literacy. The more the community works together to support children's literacy, the more willing the local government at the village level to support a reading camp by providing necessary equipment and human resources (e.g., community facilitators), like the local governments of Landak and East Manggarai did. The capacity development of a community facilitator is also crucial in improving children's literacy regularly (weekly, fortnightly, or monthly). The village-level government also supports the community-level intervention by providing incentives for the reading camp/club facilitators and developing the infrastructure. This community-based literacy intervention can be adopted into the regent's regulations and included in the village's annual budget plan to achieve sustainability.

### Parents' Involvement and Home-based Literacy Activities

Apart from the roles of a community facilitator, parents play a significant role in assisting children in learning literacy. Early parents' involvement in children's literacy may affect children's reading achievement and children's self-regulated learning (Daniel et al., 2016). By having a reading corner at home, parents and children can interact and work together to improve the children's literacy skills, such as learning letters, numbers, vocabulary, and practising other literacy activities, such as reading a story together and telling a story. The children may also have an improved reading interest. This finding is in line with another study that found setting a reading corner at home can improve children's reading habits (Bano et al., 2018). Three hundred parents supported children's literacy development by providing a room for regular discussions, sharing stories and creating a reading corner together at home. The learning process is also simple for learning from the things inside the home, such as learning vocabulary and counting by using spoons and plates.

There was also a transformation in the relationship between parents and children found when parents assisted their children in learning literacy. Parents who previously pushed and demanded their children to obey them had become more 'open-minded' to implement certain strategies, find another one and become patient in assisting children's literacy. This study is also aligned with another study that found a literacy program positively influences parents' parenting practices (Terlitsky, & Wilkins, 2015). In the FGDs and KIIs, parents expressed that they have begun to "understand children's language", which means they have developed more empathy and understanding of their children's needs. They no longer forced their children to learn but rather encouraged them to learn while playing. A longitudinal study by Watkins and Howard (2015) confirmed that positive interaction is built between children and parents (with low socioeconomic status), especially when parents assist their children in learning. The involvement of home-based parents has a strong correlation with children's academic achievement. Parents can follow children's literacy development process by having a positive parenting approach. Parents are able to notice the changes in their children's behaviours and have more time to read a story

and discuss with the children. The more the parents have regular interactions and discussions with their children, the more engagement and positive impacts are created. Parents can also notice when the children self-correct when making a mistake. The study results confirmed that children-parents interaction could strengthen children's literacy competencies in letter knowledge, vocabulary, and even reading fluency.

After the community and parents were involved in children's literacy children started to understand letters, improved vocabulary, and read. This study also found similar research that the more parents talk with children and ask open-ended questions, the more vocabulary the children will obtain. This can provide more language input for the children to build their vocabularies (Troseth et. al, 2020). The involvement of parents from low socioeconomic backgrounds (SES) is usually later compared to parents with high SES in children's reading and literacy activities in early primary years (Kurtulmus, 2016). Children may have better reading and literacy competencies by having early involvement in literacy activities through positive parenting and engagement in community reading camps or reading clubs.

In regards to literacy competencies, the outcome of Wahana Visi Indonesia's monitoring data indicated that the intervention literacy programs from 2018 to 2019 at schools and in the communities had a positive impact on children's literacy, particularly in the aspect of reading with the comprehension. This had been assessed and proven through STAR (School-Based Test about Reading). While teachers' competencies highly influence children's ability to read with comprehension in teaching reading, this study highlighted that parents and community facilitators also stimulate the ability. In other words, parents and community facilitators contribute to developing the early stage of children's literacy, such as improving their reading interest, enhancing their understanding of letters, new vocabulary, and ability to start reading.

"My children are making progress on writing and reading." (Parent, FGD, Landak)

"My children can correct their own mistakes when writing a sentence." (Parent, FGD, Landak)

"Children who were previously unable to read can now recognize letters and construct a sentence after their parents learn to teach them using learning media at home." (Parent, FGD, Sentani)

"The majority of the children now can read fluently, even though one or two took a year to assist them". (Community Facilitator, East Manggarai)

Future studies on this issue are expected to explore the correlation between parents' involvement and community participation in children's ability to read with comprehension. It is also recommended that they should investigate the roles of parents and children through a quantitative approach or mixed-method.

## Conclusions

This study highlighted that the roles of community and parents can support the roles of school in the intervention of literacy programs, especially those run in the rural areas with low SES families and low-income countries. The active engagement between parents and children can positively influence children's reading interests. The findings revealed that 300 parents were willing to support children's literacy. It helped boost children's reading interest and the development of early phase reading competencies through the availability of a reading corner and home-based literacy activities. Several home-based literacy activities between children and parents, such as creating a reading corner together, reading books, telling a story, and discussing/ asking questions about the story, may significantly influence both children's reading interest and literacy competencies. This study found that the interaction between children and parents can foster literacy development, especially in letter knowledge, fluency, and vocabulary. During the process of assisting children's literacy, parents tended to use a positive parenting approach because of the frequent engagement and discussion with them. In terms of community-based intervention, seventy three community facilitators supported 20 village reading clubs. The village-level government also supported the community-level intervention by providing incentives to the reading camp/club's facilitators and developing the infrastructure. This community-based literacy intervention can be adopted into the regent's regulations and included in the village's annual budget plan for its sustainability. This proficiency in literacy as a result of community participation may also contribute to the

achievement of SDG No. 4.1.1. It is suggested that further research should explore the impacts of community's and parents' roles on children's ability to read with comprehension using a mixed-method or quantitative approach.

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