IMPLEMENTATION OF EQUIVALENCY EDUCATION AND URBAN FARMING PROGRAMS AT PKBM SATRIA TAMA PURWOKERTO

Hadya Salsabila, Tarisa Esti Kinasih, Zahwa Haifa Aqilah, Layla Mardliyah
UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto, Indonesia
Jl. Jenderal Ahmad Yani No. 40A, Karanganjing, Purwanegara, Kecamatan Purwokerto Utara, Kabupaten Banyumas, Jawa Tengah, 53126
Email: 234110401013@mhs.uinsaizu.ac.id

Abstract: *This study aims to describe the implementation of the equivalency education program and the urban farming initiative at PKBM Satria Tama Purwokerto as strategic efforts to expand access to learning opportunities and strengthen community empowerment. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis to obtain a comprehensive understanding of program planning, management, learning strategies, and implementation processes, as well as the challenges encountered. The findings show that the equivalency education program, which applies the learning model "siang bekerja, malam belajar" (working during the day and studying at night), effectively accommodates adult learners who have limited time due to work and family responsibilities. This flexible learning arrangement enables participants to continue their education without disrupting their livelihoods. In addition, the urban farming program plays a significant role in developing learners' practical skills, particularly in agricultural cultivation techniques that are suitable for limited urban spaces. The program also encourages environmentally friendly practices and the productive use of unused land in urban areas. Overall, both programs contribute positively to improving learners' literacy levels, self-confidence, self-reliance, and economic potential. However, the study also identifies several challenges, especially limited facilities, infrastructure, and learning resources. These findings highlight the importance ofstrengthening institutional support, improving infrastructure, and providing continuous capacity- building for tutors and program managers to ensure the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of the programs.*

Keywords: *Equivalency Program, Urban Farming, Community Empowerment, Nonformal Education.*

INTRODUCTION

Nonformal education plays a very important role in providing learning opportunities for people who cannot access formal education. Through its flexible, contextual character and its orientation toward learners' needs, nonformal education can be a strategic alternative for overcoming various limitations arising

from economic, social, and geographic factors. Its existence serves not only as a complement to formal education but also as a vehicle for community empowerment that promotes a better quality of life through expanded access, more equitable services, and strengthened competencies. According to research (Aini, N.), nonformal education serves as a platform for improving literacy, developing skills, and strengthening community empowerment through learning that is flexible and easily adapted. This flexibility allows adult learners, workers, and individuals with limited time to still receive relevant educational services. This is in line with the findings of (Sari, D.R., Wulandari), which state that the success of nonformal education is strongly influenced by an institution's ability to adjust learning time and methods to learners' needs. Therefore, the "work by day, study by night" system implemented by PKBM Satria Tama Purwokerto is a fitting example, as it gives residents room to fulfill their economic responsibilities while continuing their education.

In addition to equivalency services, PKBM Satria Tama also develops an urban farming program as a form of empowerment and life skills training. Urban farming is used to train learners to manage small plots of land in urban environments so that they become productive and useful. This program not only adds practical knowledge but also supports the development of economic self-reliance and raises public awareness of sustainable agriculture. As an institution that is active in providing equivalency education, PKBM Satria Tama Purwokerto implements a learning pattern that adapts to the rhythm of learners' activities. Through this approach, residents who were once cut off from formal education have the opportunity to improve their academic and nonacademic competencies again. Not only focusing on equivalency education, this PKBM also develops an urban farming program as part of life skills training oriented toward community empowerment. Urban farming does not merely improve technical gardening skills but also strengthens food security at the household level and fosters environmental awareness. This shows that urban farming can be used as a sustainable training strategy with a direct impact on residents' daily lives (Rahmadani, F.).

In addition, urban farming practices are able to involve residents more actively and encourage the use of limited land to become more productive, especially in urban areas. The program is considered capable of producing practical skills that are easy to apply at home. Meanwhile, urban farming activities not only provide economic benefits but also help build self-reliance and sustainable lifestyles in urban communities (Lestari, S., Yunita). Thus, the implementation of urban farming at PKBM Satria Tama provides added value for learners, both in strengthening knowledge and in improving practical skills that can support their quality of life.

Despite its great potential, PKBM Satria Tama still faces a number of challenges, including limited facilities, inadequate practice equipment, and varying levels of resident participation in several programs. A number of studies also show that the success of nonformal education and urban farming is strongly influenced by the quality of mentoring, the availability of equipment and materials, and residents' motivation to participate consistently (Putra). Even so, PKBM Satria Tama continues to strive to maximize program implementation through independent internal management, the use of simple resources, and the support of the Educational Operational Assistance (BOP) for Equivalency Education to sustain its activities (Putra, A.B.).

Despite facing obstacles such as limited facilities and low participation in several other programs, PKBM Satria Tama continues to optimize its resources through independent management and the support of BOP for Equivalency Education. Based on these conditions, this article aims to describe the implementation of the equivalency and urban farming programs at PKBM Satria Tama Purwokerto and their contribution to improving learning quality and residents' self-reliance. Overall, the synergy between equivalency education and urban farming at PKBM Satria Tama Purwokerto demonstrates a real contribution to improving residents' learning quality, expanding mastery of life skills, and strengthening the community's economic self-reliance. Recent literature increasingly affirms that this kind of nonformal education model is an effective strategy for community empowerment and for supporting the realization of lifelong education. With an approach that is responsive to residents' needs and relevant to the social context, PKBM Satria Tama can serve as a model for other nonformal institutions in developing education that is adaptive and empowering.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to clearly describe how the equivalency and urban farming programs are implemented at PKBM Satria Tama Purwokerto. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand the processes and real conditions in the field in line with the findings of the observations and interviews conducted during the research activities. Data were collected through several techniques. *First*, observation, namely direct observation of learning activities in the equivalency program, urban farming activities, classroom conditions, and the institution's facilities. *Second*, interviews, conducted with PKBM managers, tutors, and learners to explore information about program implementation, obstacles encountered, and learning management patterns, including the implementation of the "work by day, study by night" schedule. *Third*, documentation study, covering the collection of institutional profile data, organizational structure, number of program participants, activity schedules, and

other administrative documents that support the analysis process.

The collected data were analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In the reduction stage, information was selected and simplified according to the research focus. Next, the data were organized in the form of descriptive narratives so that they were easy to understand. Finally, the researchers drew conclusions about how the equivalency and urban farming programs were implemented and their impact on learners and the surrounding community. With this method, the study is able to provide a comprehensive picture of the nonformal education practices carried out by PKBM Satria Tama.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Nonformal education holds an important position in efforts to expand access to education and empower communities in Indonesia, especially for groups that face social, economic, or geographic barriers and therefore cannot attend formal education. One form of nonformal educational institution that has developed significantly is the Community Learning Center (Pusat Kegiatan Belajar Masyarakat, PKBM). This institution exists as an alternative provider of various lifelong learning programs that focus on improving the community's knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In addition to providing equivalency education services, PKBM also functions as a community empowerment center that prioritizes the development of life skills and entrepreneurial abilities (Nurhayani et al.).

The research findings show that the equivalency education program remains the core activity that runs consistently at PKBM Satria Tama Purwokerto. The Package A, B, and C programs continue to be implemented and are the institution's main focus in providing educational services for people who have not completed formal education. Of these three programs, Package C recorded the largest number of participants because it is considered the most relevant to learners' need to obtain a senior high school equivalency certificate as a requirement for continuing their education or improving their job prospects. The continuity of this program indicates that PKBM is able to maintain public trust and carry out its strategic role as an alternative education service provider.

The learning system is designed to be flexible through the “work by day, study by night” pattern, a strategy that is characteristic of nonformal educational institutions oriented toward community needs. This flexibility not only makes it easier for learners who work during the day but also reflects the application of andragogical principles. The adult learning approach is applied through activities that emphasize experience, discussion, problem solving, and learners' active

involvement in planning and evaluating their own learning process. This shows that learning takes place not only cognitively but also leaves room for developing motivation, self-reliance, and the relevance of the material to learners' real lives.

In addition to the equivalency program, the research results also show that PKBM Satria Tama develops an urban farming program as part of its community empowerment efforts. This program uses the limited land around the PKBM environment for growing plants such as vegetables or simple ornamental plants. Although its scale is still small and more demonstrative in nature, this activity provides hands-on practical learning experiences for learners. Urban farming not only provides basic knowledge about urban agriculture but also instills values of self-reliance and responsibility, as well as life skills relevant to the socio-economic context of urban and semi-urban communities. Through this activity, PKBM is able to deliver learning that integrates academic aspects, practical skills, and economic empowerment.

However, the research reveals that not all planned programs can run optimally. Several services, such as the Community Reading Gardens (Taman Bacaan Masyarakat, TBM), tutoring, and entrepreneurship programs, have experienced obstacles in terms of both public interest and limited facilities and infrastructure. The low level of community participation indicates the need for a more intensive outreach strategy, more attractive service innovations, and strengthened facilities so that these programs can provide added value that is felt directly by local residents. These limitations also affect the institution's accreditation, which is still in category B, so improving service quality and program diversity is a challenge that needs to be addressed.

Although various obstacles are still found, PKBM Satria Tama is still able to sustain its priority programs thanks to funding support from the Operational Assistance for Program Delivery (BOP) for Equivalency Education and voluntary contributions from learners. The availability of this support is an important factor for PKBM in maintaining operational stability, improving learning quality, and opening space for program innovations relevant to community needs.

Overall, the research results illustrate that PKBM Satria Tama Purwokerto is able to run the equivalency education and urban farming programs sustainably despite limitations in facilities, community interest, and accreditation aspects. Both programs have proven to provide tangible benefits in expanding access to education for communities that are underserved by the formal system, while strengthening learners' capacity through practical skills that can support economic self-reliance and improve their quality of life. These findings affirm the importance of PKBM's role as a nonformal educational institution that is adaptive, inclusive, and

responsive to community needs.

A PKBM is an educational institution formed and managed by the community to organize learning activities outside the formal education system, in both urban and rural areas. This institution provides access to education for all levels of society to support self-development and improve their quality of life (Neni). PKBM is established by the community, owned by the community, and managed by the community as an effort to expand educational services according to residents' learning needs (Azizah). Its existence aims to expand access to educational services for groups not reached by formal education. Through a flexible, participatory, and locally needs-based approach, PKBM provides learning spaces that enable the community to improve its knowledge, skills, and life skills. Thus, PKBM functions not only as a provider of educational programs but also as a means of empowerment that encourages active community involvement in the learning process, the development of personal potential, and the sustainable improvement of quality of life.

The development of PKBM has several main objectives. *First*, empowering the community to achieve self-reliance. *Second*, improving the community's quality of life, both socially and economically. *Third*, fostering sensitivity to various problems in the environment so that the community can find appropriate solutions. PKBM can also encourage cohesion and harmony among residents. This is important because the culture of mutual cooperation (gotong royong) has begun to decline as technological developments encourage a tendency toward individualism (Karlis).

The research results illustrate that PKBM Satria Tama Purwokerto is able to run the equivalency and urban farming programs in accordance with the character of a nonformal educational institution that emphasizes flexibility and an orientation toward community needs. The implementation of the "work by day, study by night" schedule shows that the institution strives to adjust the learning process to the conditions of learners, most of whom work during the day. This adjustment reinforces the principle of andragogy, in which learners' experiences and situations become the basis for designing learning activities (Maulani et al.).

The equivalency program at PKBM Satria Tama functions as more than just a provider of services for obtaining a certificate equivalent to formal education. The program is also a forum for adult learners to improve their abilities through tutor-guided learning. The tutor's role is not limited to delivering material but also extends to being a mentor and facilitator who supports participants' active participation, in line with the concept of nonformal education that emphasizes participatory approaches and adaptive learning methods (Suhartono S Fitriani, 2022). However, program implementation is still confronted with limited facilities,

so the creativity of tutors and managers becomes the key to the continuity of activities. This condition reflects the reality that PKBM management often proceeds adaptively under limited resources, even though the principles of effective and efficient management remain the basis of its operation (Abdurrochman et al.).

Meanwhile, the implementation of urban farming at PKBM is a concrete example of community empowerment efforts through the use of limited land in urban environments. This activity gives learners basic gardening skills that can be applied in everyday life. Although its scope is still modest, urban farming has educational and economic value because it can improve life skills and open up opportunities for small agriculture-based entrepreneurship in urban areas. With appropriate development, this program has the potential to become an applicable and sustainable learning model (Maulani et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, the research also found several obstacles that need serious attention in order to improve the effectiveness of the programs being run. The low community participation in several services such as the Community Reading Garden (TBM), tutoring, and entrepreneurship training shows that not all PKBM programs fit the needs, interests, or socio-economic conditions of local residents. This may be caused by several factors, including a lack of outreach, a mismatch between activity schedules and the community's free time, and the perception that these services do not yet provide direct benefits for improving their skills or income. In addition, limited facilities and infrastructure also affect service quality and contribute to the institution's accreditation not yet being at its maximum. This condition underscores the importance of strengthening facilities and increasing cooperation with various parties to support PKBM operations more effectively (Rochman, 2024). This situation emphasizes the need for institutional strengthening strategies, whether through improving physical facilities or developing partnerships with local governments, the business sector, local communities, and other educational stakeholders. More intensive cooperation can open opportunities for funding support, the provision of facilities, and capacity building for tutors and managers.

Thus, the discussion results show that both the equivalency and urban farming programs have been run fairly well and have made a real contribution to improving the capacity and self-reliance of learners. The equivalency program is able to provide flexible access to education for people who cannot continue formal schooling, while urban farming opens opportunities for economic empowerment through gardening skills that are easy to apply in urban environments (Suhartono S Fitriani, 2022). Even so, there are still aspects that need attention to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the programs. Developing learning facilities, improving tutor competence, and expanding strategic partnership networks with government agencies, the business sector, and local communities are important steps to optimize

program achievements. These efforts are expected not only to improve the quality of activity implementation but also to deliver a broader and more significant impact on improving the quality of life of the communities targeted by PKBM services.

CONCLUSION

The equivalency education program at PKBM Satria Tama Purwokerto operates as a main service that is able to meet the needs of learners who work during the day. Through the "*work by day, study by night*" learning system, PKBM has succeeded in providing learning that is more flexible and suited to the characteristics of community needs. This approach shows that PKBM is able to adapt to the community's social conditions while maintaining the sustainability of the equivalency program. In addition, the urban farming program developed by PKBM gives learners practical skills in utilizing limited land in urban areas. Although still carried out on a small scale, this activity can increase participants' knowledge and life skills, particularly in simple gardening. The program strengthens PKBM's role as an institution that focuses not only on academic education but also on community empowerment through practical training

However, the running of both programs still faces challenges such as limited facilities and low community interest in several other services. This condition shows the need to strengthen facilities and infrastructure and to improve management quality so that PKBM can provide more optimal nonformal education services. Overall, the equivalency and urban farming programs at PKBM Satria Tama provide real benefits to the community, both in expanding access to education and in developing functional skills.

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