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# Building an Inclusive Literacy Ecosystem for Children through Creative Activities at Kampung Emas UNY

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**ABSTRAK**

Pembangunan ekosistem literasi inklusif sejak usia dini merupakan langkah strategis untuk menumbuhkan budaya membaca dan belajar yang berkelanjutan di masyarakat. Penelitian bertujuan menggambarkan implementasi program literasi berbasis kegiatan mendongeng dan mewarnai sebagai sarana meningkatkan minat literasi anak. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan melibatkan 25 anak usia 5–6 tahun, orang tua, relawan mahasiswa, dan fasilitator komunitas. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara singkat, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil analisis kebutuhan menunjukkan bahwa anak-anak masih memiliki paparan yang terbatas terhadap aktivitas literasi berbasis cerita dan visual, serta minimnya pendampingan orang tua dalam kegiatan belajar di rumah. Program literasi dilaksanakan secara partisipatif melalui sesi mendongeng dan mewarnai yang dirancang untuk merangsang imajinasi, meningkatkan konsentrasi, serta mengembangkan kemampuan berekspresi anak. Pelibatan relawan mahasiswa dan fasilitator komunitas juga memperkuat suasana belajar yang menyenangkan dan interaktif. Hasil evaluasi menunjukkan adanya peningkatan minat anak dalam aktivitas literasi serta meningkatnya keterlibatan komunitas dalam mendukung penyediaan ruang literasi ramah anak. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa kegiatan literasi yang kreatif, kontekstual, dan kolaboratif dapat menjadi fondasi penting dalam membangun ekosistem literasi inklusif di lingkungan komunitas.

**ABSTRACT**

The development of an inclusive literacy ecosystem from an early age is a strategic effort to foster a sustainable culture of reading and learning in society. The study aims to illustrate the implementation of a literacy program based on storytelling and coloring activities as a means to enhance children's literacy interest. The research employed a descriptive qualitative approach involving 25 children aged 5–6 years, parents, student volunteers, and community facilitators. Data were collected through observations, brief interviews, and documentation, and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The needs analysis revealed that children had limited exposure to story- and visual-based literacy activities, as well as minimal parental involvement in supporting learning activities at home. The literacy program was implemented in a participatory manner through storytelling and coloring sessions designed to stimulate imagination, improve concentration, and develop children's expressive abilities. The involvement of student volunteers and community facilitators also strengthened a fun and interactive learning environment. The evaluation results indicate an increase in children's interest in literacy activities and greater community involvement in supporting child-friendly literacy spaces. These findings suggest that creative, contextual, and collaborative literacy activities can serve as an important foundation for building an inclusive literacy ecosystem within community settings.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Literacy is the primary foundation for children's cognitive, language, and social development from an early age (Neuman & Roskos, 2005). Literacy skills encompass not only the ability to read and write, but also involve critical thinking, communication, and self-expression skills (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Unfortunately, early childhood literacy development in many communities still faces complex challenges, especially in areas with limited access to learning resources and quality educational activities (UNESCO, 2020). This issue has become a key concern in the context of Kampung Emas at Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (UNY), a developing community initiative aimed at becoming a center for education and community empowerment. This issue has become a key concern in the context of Kampung Emas at Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (UNY), a community-based initiative developed by the university to strengthen the integration between academic knowledge and local community empowerment. Kampung Emas was established as a living laboratory that brings together residents, students, and academics in collaborative educational, social, and economic activities. Despite its potential, the community faces diverse literacy challenges, including disparities in educational background, access to learning resources, and participation of vulnerable groups such as women, the elderly, and informal workers. These conditions make the development of an inclusive literacy ecosystem essential, not only to enhance basic and functional literacy skills but also to ensure equal access to knowledge, critical thinking, and lifelong learning opportunities. In this context, building an inclusive literacy ecosystem in Kampung Emas UNY is crucial to support sustainable community development, strengthen social participation, and align the initiative with UNY's broader mission of social responsibility and inclusive education.

Based on the initial needs analysis, it was found that children in the village tend to spend their free time using mobile devices, primarily to watch videos or play games. These activities are typically passive and repetitive, which may hinder the development of learning interest and reduce opportunities for children to build literacy and social skills (Fleer, 2011). The lack of alternative creative activities and limited access to reading materials further reinforces this tendency. Therefore, an intervention is needed that is not only educational but also engaging and enjoyable for children (Siraj-Blatchford & Sylva, 2004).

To address this need, a program titled *"Building an Inclusive Literacy Ecosystem for Children through Creative Activities"* was developed. The program is designed to enhance children's learning motivation through three main activities: shared reading, interactive storytelling, and thematic coloring. The program planning was carried out collaboratively by local youth, volunteer students from UNY, and local facilitators, using a participatory approach to ensure alignment with children's characteristics and the local social context (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000).

This literacy program was implemented as an integrated series of activities that combined visual, verbal, and affective elements through children's stories and creative expression. Children were not only invited to read or listen, but also to engage in dialogue about the story content and express it through coloring activities. The implementation of the program received a highly positive response from both children and the community. The participants showed enthusiasm, became more actively engaged in interactions, and demonstrated greater interest in learning activities.

As part of the effort to build a sustainable literacy ecosystem, the program was then evaluated collaboratively by involving local youth, parents, and community leaders. The evaluation indicated that the program is worth continuing, as it successfully created an inclusive and enjoyable learning space. However, the sustainability of the program greatly depends on the structural commitment of community leaders and village administrators, particularly in terms of providing facilities, activity facilitators, and a consistent schedule. This literacy

program was implemented as an integrated series of activities that combined visual, verbal, and affective elements through children's stories and creative expression. Unlike conventional literacy interventions that predominantly emphasise reading and writing skills in a linear manner, this program positioned children as active meaning-makers. They were not only invited to read or listen to stories, but also encouraged to engage in dialogical interactions about the narrative content and to reinterpret the stories through colouring and creative activities. This multimodal and participatory approach aligns with previous studies highlighting the importance of dialogic reading and creative expression in enhancing children's engagement and comprehension (Vygotsky, 1978).

The implementation of the program received a highly positive response from both children and the surrounding community. Participants demonstrated increased enthusiasm, more active social interaction, and a growing interest in learning activities. These findings corroborate earlier research showing that literacy practices embedded in enjoyable and culturally responsive activities tend to foster stronger motivation and sustained participation among children (Nasejje et al., 2022). However, this study extends existing literature by situating literacy practices within a community-based ecosystem rather than a formal or semi-formal educational setting.

Through this initiative, it is hoped that a collective awareness will emerge—one that recognizes that fostering children's literacy is not solely the responsibility of schools or formal educational institutions, but a shared responsibility among the community, families, and the surrounding environment. By cultivating a vibrant and participatory literacy ecosystem, Kampung Emas UNY has the potential to become a model for inclusive and sustainable community-based literacy development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Through this initiative, it is anticipated that a collective awareness will emerge—namely, an understanding that the development of early childhood literacy is not solely the responsibility of schools or formal educational institutions, but a shared obligation among families, communities, and the surrounding sociocultural environment. Accordingly, the Kampung Emas UNY program is designed with three main objectives: (1) to build an inclusive, community-based literacy ecosystem; (2) to strengthen active participation across different layers of society; and (3) to ensure that literacy practices are integrated into the daily lives of community members. The program also provides several practical benefits, including increased parental involvement in children's learning, expanded access to literacy resources, and stronger collaboration between educational institutions and local communities.

Theoretically, this research extends Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979) by demonstrating that children's literacy development is shaped not only through interactions at the microsystem level, such as within the home and school, but also through broader relationships at the mesosystem and exosystem levels. Community-based interventions within Kampung Emas illustrate how structured social support can create conducive conditions for the emergence of early literacy behaviour (Konok et al., 2022). Furthermore, the community-driven literacy approach employed in the Kampung Emas UNY program provides a concrete example of how actively engaged social environments can strengthen children's literacy foundations. By cultivating a vibrant, participatory, and sustainable literacy environment, Kampung Emas UNY demonstrates its potential as a community literacy empowerment model that can be adapted in other regions to address challenges related to access, engagement, and literacy disparities.

## 2. METHOD

The research method used in this initiative was a descriptive qualitative approach. This approach was chosen as it aligns with the main objective of the program, which is to build an inclusive and sustainable community-based literacy ecosystem through the direct involvement of local stakeholders, particularly youth, parents, and children in Kampung Emas UNY

(Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). The research was conducted in Kampung Emas UNY, a community development site actively engaged in empowerment initiatives. The research was conducted in Kampung Emas UNY, a community-based development site initiated and fostered by Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (UNY). Kampung Emas is administratively located in Bumijo Village, Jetis Sub-district, Yogyakarta City, Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and functions as a living laboratory for community empowerment, non-formal education, and inclusive literacy initiatives. This location was selected due to its active involvement in university–community partnerships and its diverse social composition, which provides a relevant context for studying the development of an inclusive literacy ecosystem.

The research subjects included children aged 4 to 8 years as the main participants, parents and community leaders as discussion partners, and local youth and student volunteers as facilitators in the implementation of the activities (Creswell, 2014). The research subjects consisted of multiple community actors who were directly involved in or affected by the literacy programme. Children aged 4–8 years served as the main participants, as they represent the early childhood group targeted by the literacy intervention. Parents and community leaders were involved as discussion partners to provide contextual insights and evaluative feedback, while local youth and university students participated as facilitators and volunteers supporting the implementation of activities. (Creswell, 2014).

Table 1. Location and Research Participant

| No. | Subject Category | Location / Characteristics | Age Range | Occupation / Social Role | Additional Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Research Site | Kampung Emas UNY, Bumijo Village, Jetis Sub-district, Yogyakarta City, Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia | – | UNY-assisted community area | Functions as a living laboratory for community empowerment and non-formal education |
| 2 | Children (Main Participants) | Residents of Kampung Emas UNY | 4–8 years | Early childhood education (PAUD/Kindergarten) and early primary school students | Primary target group of the story-based and creative-expression literacy programme |
| 3 | Parents | Residents of Kampung Emas UNY | 25–50 years | Informal sector workers, homemakers, labourers, small-scale traders | Act as children's companions and reflective partners in the programme |
| 4 | Community Leaders | Kampung Emas UNY | 40–65 years | Neighbourhood leaders (RT/RW), community activists, local figures | Provide structural support and social legitimacy for the programme |
| 5 | Local Youth | Kampung Emas UNY | 18–30 years | University students, community | Involved as facilitators of |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | volunteers, youth organisation members | literacy activities |
| 6 | UNY Students | Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta | 19–24 years | Students in education and social sciences | Support programme design, implementation, and evaluation |

This research consisted of four stages: needs analysis, planning, implementation, and program evaluation(Branch, 2009). The needs analysis stage was conducted through observation and informal interviews, which revealed that many children in the village preferred playing on mobile devices rather than participating in learning activities. This finding highlighted the urgent need for early learning stimulation (Patton, 2015). In the planning stage, the implementation team, together with local youth, designed a creative literacy program consisting of three main activities: reading children's storybooks, interactive storytelling, and thematic coloring based on the story content. The program was carried out as an integrated literacy session divided into these three segments. The children showed great enthusiasm in participating, and their interactions with facilitators and peers were actively observed throughout the process (B. Miles et al., 2014). This research consisted of four stages: needs analysis, planning, implementation, and program evaluation (Chen et al., 2022). The needs analysis stage was conducted through observation and informal interviews, which revealed that many children in the village preferred playing on mobile devices rather than participating in learning activities. This finding highlighted the urgent need for early learning stimulation (Khosyi'ah & Rusyana, 2022).

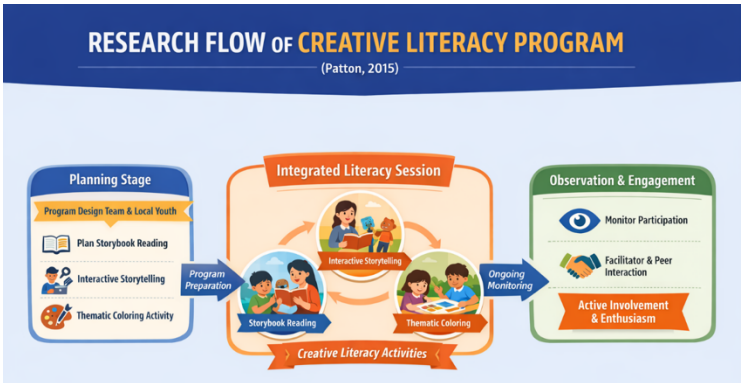



Figure 1. Research Flow

After the program was implemented, a participatory evaluation was conducted involving all parties involved—children, parents, local youth, and community leaders. The evaluation showed that the program was well received, had a positive impact on children's learning motivation, and improved both social interaction and reading interest. However, it was also found that the sustainability of the program requires strong support and concrete commitment from local community leaders.

Data collection techniques included participatory observation, open-ended and semi-structured interviews, as well as documentation in the form of photos, videos, and children's creative work. All data were analyzed thematically by categorizing them based on aspects such as children's participation, parental involvement, and community support. Data validity was strengthened through source and technique triangulation (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2015). This approach enabled the researcher not only to obtain descriptive data but also to encourage real change within the local community context (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000).

After the literacy programme was implemented, a participatory evaluation was carried out by directly involving all stakeholders who were present and active during the activities, including children, parents, local youth, and community leaders. In practice, the evaluation was conducted through informal group discussions held at the end of each literacy session, where parents and local youth shared immediate reflections on children's responses, levels of engagement, and changes in behaviour observed at home and in the neighbourhood. Community leaders were involved in reflective meetings to discuss the feasibility of continuing the programme and the availability of local resources.

Field observations indicated that children became increasingly confident in expressing opinions during storytelling sessions, showed greater willingness to interact with peers, and demonstrated sustained interest in reading-related activities, such as requesting additional storybooks or voluntarily participating in colouring tasks. Parents reported that several children began retelling stories at home and showed more frequent interest in books compared to prior to the programme. These findings suggest that the programme had a tangible impact on children's learning motivation, social interaction, and early reading interest. However, discussions with community leaders also revealed practical challenges, particularly related to the availability of space, learning materials, and consistent facilitators. As a result, the sustainability of the programme was found to be highly dependent on concrete commitments from local leadership, such as allocating communal space, coordinating schedules, and mobilising volunteers (Madan et al., 2024).

Data collection in this study was conducted through participatory observation, interviews, and documentation, all of which were implemented in ways that aligned with on-site conditions. Participatory observation was carried out throughout the literacy sessions, with the researcher actively present during reading, storytelling, and colouring activities. Field notes focused on children's participation patterns, verbal and non-verbal interactions, emotional responses, and engagement with facilitators and peers. Interviews were conducted in an open-ended and semi-structured manner with parents, local youth, and community leaders, often taking place informally after activities or during community gatherings to ensure participants felt comfortable sharing their experiences.

Documentation included photographs and short video recordings of activities, as well as samples of children's creative outputs, such as coloured illustrations and story-related drawings. These materials were used not only as supporting evidence but also as data sources to understand children's comprehension and emotional engagement with the stories. Data analysis was conducted thematically through a step-by-step procedure grounded in field practice. First, all field notes, interview transcripts, and documentation records were compiled and reviewed repeatedly to identify recurring patterns. Second, the data were coded manually by grouping similar observations and statements into preliminary categories, such as children's participation, parental involvement, facilitation processes, and community support. Third, these categories were refined into broader themes that reflected the actual dynamics of the literacy programme in Kampung Emas UNY. To enhance data validity, source triangulation was applied by comparing information obtained from children, parents, youth, and community leaders, while technique triangulation was employed by cross-checking observations, interview data, and documentation.

This field-based and participatory approach allowed the researcher not only to generate rich descriptive data but also to foster collective reflection and small-scale changes within the community, such as increased parental involvement and growing local initiative to sustain literacy activities. In this way, the research process itself became an integral part of community empowerment and learning, rather than merely an external evaluation exercise (Tamm & Tulviste, 2025).

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Needs Analysis

The literacy training activities in Kampung Emas UNY were designed as part of an effort to build an inclusive literacy ecosystem that integrates participatory, creative, and contextual approaches (Nutbrown et al., 2005; UNESCO, 2017). Based on the needs analysis conducted through observation and interviews, it was found that children in the village community spent more time on mobile devices watching videos or playing games rather than engaging in activities that support basic literacy skills. The lack of shared reading, storytelling, or writing activities at home became a central concern in designing the program. This finding aligns with Neuman and Celano's (2001) study, which revealed that children from resource-limited communities tend to experience deficits in early literacy exposure due to limited access to reading materials and literacy-related interactions at home. One parent, Mrs. Wiwid (36 years old), stated:

*"My child prefers playing on the phone rather than reading books. At home, sometimes we don't even know what to read together because we don't have many books."*

This statement indicates that in addition to low motivation among children, limited access to reading materials is also a barrier to fostering early literacy interest (Bus et al., 1995; Hart & Risley, 1995).



Figure 2. Needs Analysis with a Parent



Figure 3. Needs Analysis with a Parent

In response to these conditions, the literacy training activities were carried out in two main sessions: interactive storytelling and thematic coloring. The stories used in the storytelling session were selected based on themes relevant to character values, such as honesty, friendship, and environmental awareness. Children were not only listening, but also actively engaged by answering questions, predicting story outcomes, and imitating character voices. This approach aligns with the concept of multimodal literacy, which advocates for the integration of various modes of communication—such as images, sound, and movement—to enhance children's comprehension (Walsh, 2011).

After that, the children participated in a coloring session featuring images related to the story. This activity provided space for them to develop their imagination while connecting the narrative to their visual expression (Wright, 2007).

One of the volunteers, Zahra (an Early Childhood Education student), explained:

*"At first, the children were a bit shy, but once the story got interesting, they became very engaged. Many of them could retell the story and even added their own imagination."*

This illustrates that interactive storytelling methods can enhance children's engagement in the learning process and create opportunities for critical and creative thinking (Isbell et al., 2004; Nicolopoulou, 2010).

The implementation of this program also received support from local facilitators and village youth. Their involvement was essential in creating a comfortable learning environment that felt familiar and approachable for the children. In addition, the activities encouraged parents to be present and take part in their children's learning. Family participation in children's literacy has been proven to be one of the key factors in the success of early education (Epstein, 2011).

The program evaluation was carried out through open discussions with residents, volunteers, and youth leaders in the village. The majority stated that the activity had a positive impact and was worth continuing on a regular basis.

One of the village youth leaders, Mas Eko (27 years old), said:

*"This activity is really great; the kids are not just playing on their phones anymore. But in the future, there really needs to be support from the neighborhood head or community leaders so that the program can keep running and become part of the culture."*

This statement highlights the importance of structural support and long-term commitment from community leaders in order for the literacy program to grow into a sustainable ecosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; McLeroy et al., 1988).

In general, this literacy training activity successfully fostered children's interest in reading and storytelling, increased parental involvement, and activated the community's role in supporting the growth of a literacy culture. A literacy ecosystem has begun to take shape through the relationships among children, their environment, and the community each supporting one another and providing space to grow together. However, challenges such as limited resources, program continuity, and local leadership in literacy still need to be strengthened to ensure the sustainability of the program in the future (OECD, 2019).

### 3.2 Program Planning

As a follow-up to the results of a needs analysis that showed low interest among children in literacy activities and high dependence on gadgets for entertainment, a literacy program plan was developed that focuses on strengthening children's motivation to learn through creative and enjoyable approaches. The primary objective of this program is to provide contextual literacy experiences that are close to children's world and engage their senses and emotions in an integrated manner.

The activity planning focuses on three main types of activities: 1) Reading children's storybooks together, 2) Interactive storytelling, and 3) Coloring thematic pictures relevant to the story.

These three activities were chosen because they integrate language (listening and speaking), visual (images and colors), and emotional (moral messages and affective engagement) aspects, which are crucial for literacy development in young children. This strategy is based on the principle of multimodal literacy, where children learn not only through written text but also through oral stories, images, and interactive experiences that touch their feelings and imagination.



Figure 4. Program Planning Coordination



Figure 5. Program Planning Coordination

In the program development process, coordination between various parties was carried out to ensure the integration and relevance of activities. The program design team consists of: 1) UNY student volunteers with backgrounds in early childhood education, educational psychology, and community development, 2) local youth from Kampung Emas who are close to the children in the neighborhood and understand the local social conditions, and 3) community facilitators who have been active in community empowerment activities.

The planning meeting was conducted in several stages, including:

1) Identification of materials and stories to be used, taking into account local values such as mutual cooperation, politeness, and love for the environment,
2) Development of activity flow and role distribution, including who is responsible for reading, storytelling, and guiding coloring activities,
3) Collecting and preparing tools, such as children's storybooks, coloring pictures, writing instruments, crayons, and visual media to support the stories,
4) Mapping out the activity space so that children can participate in the activities in a safe, comfortable, and interesting environment.

Additionally, the planning also includes a scheme for involving parents and the community, such as inviting parents to accompany their children during reading and coloring activities, and encouraging community leaders to attend and provide symbolic support for the importance of literacy culture.

With this participatory and contextual activity design, it is hoped that the program will not only increase children's interest in reading and creative expression, but also strengthen the local literacy ecosystem involving families, communities, and educational institutions in a sustainable manner.

### 3.3 Implementation of Literacy Activities

The literacy training activities were conducted in the form of a one-day program designed thematically and structurally, with a creative approach tailored to the characteristics of young children. The main objective of this activity was to foster an interest in reading and instill the basics of literacy through enjoyable, interactive, and meaningful learning experiences (Leonia & Maryatun, 2025). The activity is divided into three main sessions: reading storybooks together, interactive storytelling, and thematic coloring.

**First session: Reading Story Books Together**

The activity began with a group reading session aimed at familiarizing children with books and introducing them to the basic structure of stories. The children sat in small groups, each accompanied by a volunteer or parent. The storybooks selected contained positive messages such as honesty, friendship, and caring for the environment.



Figure 6. Reading Books Together

Volunteers read stories with interesting and expressive intonation, while showing illustrations on the pages of the book. Children are invited to engage in light dialogue, such as guessing the continuation of the story, mentioning the names of characters, or expressing simple opinions. This activity encourages listening skills, expands vocabulary, and strengthens the emotional bond between children and their companions.

**Second session : Interactive Storytelling**

After the children have become familiar with the story textually, the activity continues with an interactive storytelling session conducted collectively in the open hall of Kampung Emas. A storyteller from the literacy community tells the story using props such as hand puppets, background images, and engaging body language to capture the children's attention. The story being told reinforces the book read earlier but is developed with a more dramatic and visual narrative.




Figure 7. Stroytelling

During storytelling, children are encouraged to imitate the voices of characters, answer questions about the content of the story, play roles in simple storylines (for example, voicing the wind, animals, or supporting characters), and summarize the moral message at the end of the story. Children's involvement is very high in this session. Many of them laugh, comment, or ask questions, which indicates the growth of curiosity and reflective thinking skills. Additionally, storytelling also strengthens the affective and social aspects of children's learning process.

**Third Session: Coloring Thematic Pictures**

As a follow-up to the reading and storytelling sessions, the children participated in coloring activities related to the story. The pictures provided were outlines of the main characters, situations in the story, or certain scenes that were considered important. The children were free to choose colors and were asked to retell the story through the colors they used.

Some children showed high creativity, for example, changing the color of the characters' clothes according to their imagination, or adding new elements to the pictures. The facilitator then engaged the children in a light discussion about their work, for example, by asking, “Why did you color this tree blue?” or “What is this character doing in your story?

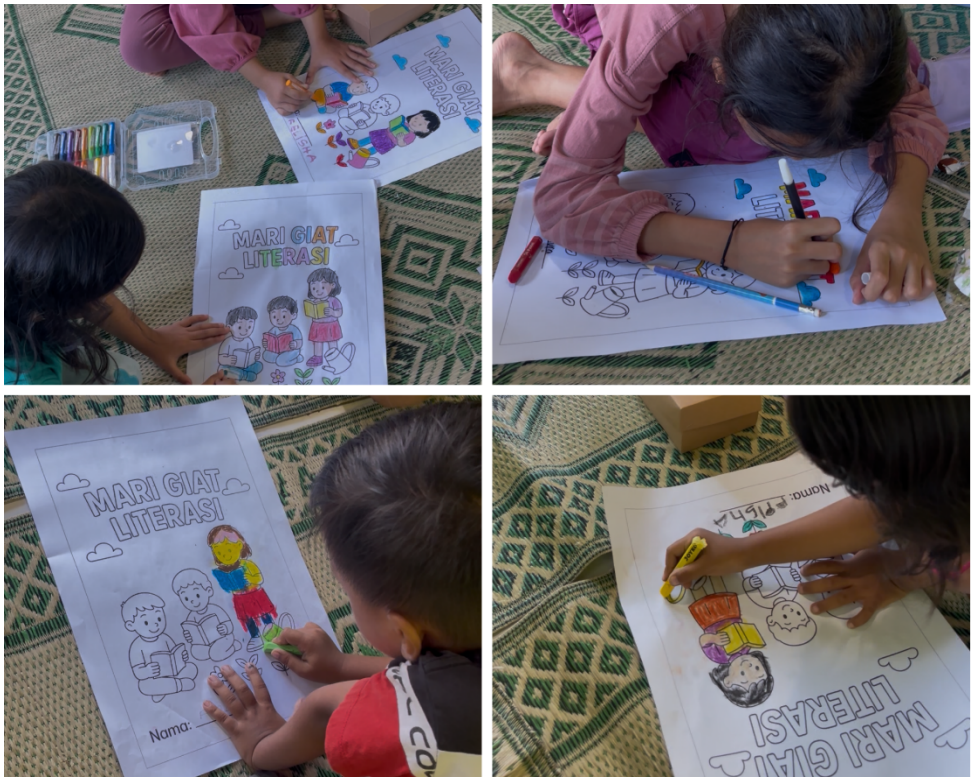



Figure 8. Children's coloring activities

This activity not only trains fine motor coordination, but also develops narrative and visual expression skills. Children who tend to be passive during reading and storytelling sessions appear to be more active when coloring.

### 3.4 Program Evaluation

The literacy program evaluation was conducted in a participatory and reflective manner, involving all parties engaged in the activities, including village youth, student volunteers, parents, local facilitators, and the children participating in the program. The evaluation took place immediately after the program's implementation through focused group discussions (FGDs) and brief interviews to gather impressions, feedback, and suggestions from participants and stakeholders.

The evaluation results showed that the program received highly positive responses from various groups. Children appeared more enthusiastic and actively involved, particularly during storytelling and coloring sessions. Some children even took the initiative to reread the storybooks independently and retell the stories to their peers or parents at home. This indicates an increase in learning motivation and the emergence of interest in literacy activities presented in enjoyable and meaningful ways.

From the parents' perspective, most expressed that the program brought a refreshing change to their children's routines, especially since they previously spent much of their time playing on mobile phones. Through this program, children were introduced to alternative forms of entertainment that also sharpened their thinking, language, and imagination skills. Parents hoped that similar activities could become regular weekly or monthly programs, as they themselves witnessed positive behavioral changes in their children after participating.

Village youth and facilitators also recognized the program's great potential to strengthen community-based literacy efforts. Simple activities such as reading together, storytelling, and coloring proved to be effective mediums for inclusive, intergenerational interaction that is both fun and educational.

However, the evaluation also identified several challenges and important notes that must be addressed for the program's sustainability. One key issue is the lack of supporting facilities for literacy activities, such as dedicated reading spaces, an adequate book collection, and complete coloring tools. Additionally, there is a need for more systematic scheduling to avoid clashes with other community events and to allow integration into the village's regular routines.

Most crucially, the evaluation highlighted the importance of commitment from community leaders and the village leadership structure to integrate this literacy program into the village development agenda. Without strong structural support in the form of policies, budgeting, and local mobilizers, the literacy ecosystem that has begun to take root through this initiative will be difficult to sustain or expand.

As a follow-up, recommendations were formulated to position this activity as a pilot project that can be replicated in other parts of the village, while also fostering synergy among community members, universities, and local governments. The aim is to establish *Kampung Emas* as a model of a sustainable, community-based literacy village.

The evaluation of the literacy programme was conducted in a participatory and reflective manner, involving all actors engaged in the activities, including village youth, student volunteers, parents, local facilitators, and the children participating in the programme. This evaluation was not positioned merely as a post-activity assessment, but as an integral part of the process of building and strengthening a community-based literacy ecosystem. It was carried out immediately after programme implementation through focused group discussions (FGDs) and brief interviews, aimed at capturing lived experiences, collective reflections, and practical suggestions from participants and stakeholders (Shilfani et al., 2022).

The evaluation findings demonstrate that the programme contributed directly to the cultivation of literacy practices at the grassroots level. Children showed increased enthusiasm and active participation, particularly during storytelling and colouring sessions, which functioned as entry points to literacy engagement. Several children independently reread storybooks and retold stories to peers or parents at home, indicating that literacy activities had begun to extend beyond the programme setting into everyday family life. This shift reflects the development of literacy as a social practice, where reading and storytelling become embedded in daily interactions rather than remaining isolated instructional activities (Husadani et al., 2021).

From the parents' perspective, the evaluation revealed that the programme played a meaningful role in reshaping children's daily routines. Parents noted a reduction in excessive mobile phone use and observed increased interest in activities that stimulated language development, imagination, and critical thinking. These observations suggest that parental recognition and support are crucial elements in sustaining literacy practices, as families serve as the primary environment in which early literacy habits are reinforced (Stoykova, 2021). Parents' aspirations for the programme to become a regular weekly or monthly activity further indicate the emergence of community ownership, a key condition for sustainable literacy ecosystems.

Village youth and facilitators also highlighted the programme's potential to strengthen community-based literacy initiatives. Simple activities such as shared reading, interactive storytelling, and colouring proved effective in fostering inclusive, intergenerational interactions that bridge children, youth, and adults. This aligns with studies emphasising that literacy ecosystems are strengthened when multiple generations participate collaboratively in learning processes (Yie et al., 2024).

However, the evaluation also identified structural challenges that directly affect the long-term development of literacy in the community. Limited facilities—such as the

absence of a dedicated reading space, insufficient book collections, and incomplete learning materials—were recognised as barriers to sustaining regular literacy activities. In addition, the lack of systematic scheduling made it difficult to integrate literacy programmes into existing village routines. These findings underscore that while participatory activities can initiate literacy engagement, institutional and infrastructural support is essential for transforming short-term programmes into enduring literacy ecosystems (Zhao & Liu, 2022).

Most importantly, the evaluation highlighted the central role of commitment from community leaders and the village governance structure in embedding literacy initiatives within the village development agenda. Without clear policies, budget allocation, and designated local mobilisers, the literacy practices fostered through this programme risk remaining fragmented and temporary. This reinforces the argument that sustainable literacy development requires alignment between community initiatives and local governance structures (Yu, 2024).

As a follow-up to the evaluation, recommendations were formulated to position the programme as a pilot project that can be institutionalised and replicated in other neighbourhoods within the village. Strengthening synergy between community members, universities, and local government is viewed as a strategic pathway to establishing Kampung Emas as a model of a sustainable, community-based literacy village, where evaluation functions not only as an assessment tool but also as a mechanism for continuous learning, collective reflection, and social change.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The literacy training program in Kampung Emas UNY has successfully built the foundation for a participatory, contextual, and enjoyable literacy ecosystem through the integration of reading, storytelling, and coloring activities. This program was designed based on the results of a needs analysis that revealed low literacy interest among children and high gadget usage. Through a multimodal approach and support from various stakeholders—including student volunteers, local youth, and community facilitators—children demonstrated increased learning motivation, active participation, and creativity in expressing story content. A post-activity participatory evaluation confirmed the positive impact of this program on children, parents, and the community. However, to ensure sustainability, institutional support, adequate facilities, and commitment from the village leadership structure are required. This activity has the potential to become a community-based literacy model that can be replicated in other areas with consistent cross-sectoral support.

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