

# Environmental-Based Illiteracy Eradication in Owata Village, Bone Bolango Regence, Gorontalo Province

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**Abstract:** The program of Student Community Service – Community Empowerment (henceforth called as KKN-PPM) aims to eradicate illiteracy through the environment as a learning source in Owata Village, BulangoUludistrict, Bone BolangoRegency, Gorontalo Province. The environment as a learning source due to the consideration of potential and local wisdom in Owata Village towards the environment as stated in the vision of this village that emphasizes the economic strengthening throughgreen human resources. The target to be achieved from this activity is that the illiterates can read and write based on their observation to the surrounding area as well as to reduce the illiteracy rate in Owata Village. This activity is carried out by providing socialization, training, and observation to the environment as a source of vocabulary and sentence acquisition for reading and writing purposes. In addition, the training will involve the supervisors and students in motivating and developing the community to recognize and understand letters, syllables, and sentences so that it can be implemented in writing the discourse about their surrounding area. The results of this KKN-PPM program are the decreased illiteracy rate and the increased knowledge and skills of Owata Village community in writing and reading based on their environment so that it can be a means in emerging their love and awareness of environmental conservation.

**Keyword:**eradication, illiteracy, environmental-based, Owata village.

## 1. Introduction

Indonesia is one of the developing countries that often finds a way to implement illiteracy eradication program due to the low level of education in Indonesia. Government had made various efforts because the data from Central Bureau of Statistics in 2005 showed that the illiterate population in 10 years and above reached 8.57% or about 15.04 million people were spread all over Indonesia and most of them were women. Given the low level of literacy of the population, Indonesian government reveals that the number of illiterates aged 10-44 years was reduced from 8.57% to 5% until 2009. According to Directorate of Non-Formal Education and Youth, illiteracy eradication program or literacy education is an education organized for the illiterates to grow and develop literacy skills (reading, writing, and numeracy) and the required functional skills regarding literacy skills. Hence, they can master basic education needed in their community life [1]. Illiteracy eradication program is the responsibility of all people who are aware of the importance of education in Indonesia. As stated in Law Number 20 of 2003 on National Education System as well as Government Regulation Number 19 of 2005, and Law on Teachers and Lecturers, teachers as a profession must meet several competencies. Alongside teaching, competencies that must be mastered by

lecturers are to socialize and contribute to the community designed in the program of community service. The essential program to be implemented is illiteracy eradication program in improving people's lives and education system in Indonesia.

The problem of illiteracy experienced by Gorontalo people was evidenced by the data of the illiterates reaching 2.122 people from the total population of 1,097,990 consisting of 550,004 men and 547,986 women in 2013. One of which is in Owata Village, Bulango Ulu district, Bone Bolango Regency where most of the population still suffer from illiteracy from children to elderly [3-6]. The problem is caused by the difficulty of educational access due to the limited economy, school facilities, and the number of teachers, so that some people cannot get the education properly. They are only elementary school graduates, thus, they become unfamiliar with education, especially their low ability to read and write. In fact, Owata Village has an excellent potential in agriculture and plantation to be processed. As a result, it needs to have knowledge and skills in utilizing the land. They cannot have these skills because of the limited ability to read and write, so that it does not have a positive impact on the potential for village development in the field of environment. Owata villagers are mostly farmers and planters; however, with high illiteracy rates, there is an imbalance between economy and education. That is what underlies Owata Village to have the potential in agriculture because the villagers prefer their work, and pay less attention to education, to illiteracy eradication in particular. Therefore, it needs to be enlightened for people to carry out activities of community service by involving lecturers (as supervisors) and students in collaboration with the village government in eradicating illiteracy.

The program offered is environmental-based illiteracy eradication, given the enormous potential in Owata Village is agriculture, plantation and environmental conservation. Accordingly, to make the nuances of learning familiar to the villagers, the environment is utilized as a learning source to accelerate the process of their comprehension and knowledge towards the learning objectives. The potential of the village as outlined in the vision of Owata Village is *"The better realization of the Economy of Owata Village must be supported by adequate human and natural resources towards the improvement of green agricultural and plantation production."* Based on that vision, it is clear that the government is also paying attention to human resources through education in strengthening the increase of green agricultural and plantation production. In realizing this vision, there needs to be cooperation from the government in improving human resources through illiteracy eradication program for Owata villagers. [7] notes that the people's ability in education at least is free from illiteracy, numeracy and the use of Indonesian language which become one of the indicators of human development index. It means that if the people can read, write, count and speak Indonesian language, they already have the asset to improve their ability to meet their needs. The higher the level of education and people's capacity, the easier it is to empower oneself and other people.

## **2. Methodology**

In order to solve the problem faced by the illiterates in Owata Village, Bulango Ulu district, the development, empowerment, and assistance are implemented related to the problem. The methods of implementing this program are done through the following stages:

- a) Program Socialization

This socialization is conducted to provide an initial description to the illiterates, village government, and students of KKN-PPM regarding the learning materials, media, methods, and sources. This is to facilitate the learning process as well as provide awareness to the villagers and government to solve the problem of illiteracy in improving human resources that impact on the improvement of their economy.

- b) **Participants Identification and Mapping**  
Identification and mapping are intended to select the targets becoming participants in illiteracy eradication program. It is taking into account the willingness to participate in the program, implementation schedule, venue, learning facilities, media, and methods that are considered to be able to complete the learning outcomes.
- c) **Pre-Test Administration to the Participants**  
After the participants are identified, they are then given a pre-test to evaluate their ability in reading and writing which then the evaluation results will be supervisors' consideration in mapping the study group for the assistance of KKN-PPM students.
- d) **Students Training as Tutor Candidates**  
After the illiterates groups have been formed based on their ability in reading and writing, the students who will become tutors need to be given special training by the supervisors and the headman in adjusting the learning process by the background of the target community. In this training, the headman also needs to provide some advice to these students towards the environmental-based learning for the illiterates, so that this can facilitate their interaction with the people and the utilization of environment as a learning source.
- e) **Local Themes and Learning Sources Identification**  
Before starting the learning process, the next activity is to identify local themes chosen based on the local wisdom of Owata Village and the selection of the appropriate source of learning for the villagers. The learning source is more emphasized on the surroundings of Owata Village where will become the specific place in the learning program for the illiterates.
- f) **Learning Materials and Media Preparation**  
Material and media are created according to the identification of green local potential themes. The materials will be organized in line with the needs of the participants by selecting the appropriate media and organized with the supervisors, students, and Owata Village government.
- g) **Learning Activity**  
Learning activities are conducted in several groups that will be formed. They will be given learning materials according to the tutors starting from reading materials, including an introduction to letters, syllables, words, and sentences regarding the environment. Reading materials will be directed to a concrete object such as the environment that will stimulate the participants in reading sentences written through environmental observation.
- h) **Activity Evaluation**  
The evaluation of activity is carried out after the whole process of learning activities is completed by evaluating the success rate of the participants by doing post-test, and comparing the results to the pre-test. The success of this program can be measured by the improvement of the participants' reading ability by using the environment as the learning media. Evaluation is also to consider the program sustainability.

### **3. Findings: Preliminary**

The main program implemented in KKN-PPM is "Environmental-Based Illiteracy Eradication." The targets of this program are dropping-out children and illiterate elderly, particularly those who work as farmers. The main activities program is applied in several stages. The first stage is socialization themed "Illiteracy: Causes, Effects, and Solutions". This topic is conveyed to motivate the illiterates to participate in a learning program to reduce illiteracy rates in Owata Village. In this socialization, people are highly enthusiastic proven by their attendance, participation, and motivation in joining the program. This is because the programs offered are environmental-based learning that is very close to their lives. The socialization goes smoothly and is ended with interviews and pre-test regarding the recruitment of illiteracy eradication participants. Based on the results of interviews and pre-test, all participants are classified as illiterates, so that all are selected to be participants with a total of 30 people divided into several groups.

The next program is training for tutors by the supervisors, i.e., students participating in KKN-PPM and Owata villagers who can read and write. Accordingly, after KKN-PPM program has been finished, the tutors from the community can continue the program to realize the empowerment through illiteracy eradication in the village. The training is held one day by focusing on learning media and methods which will be applied in the learning process. The participants and the tutors from the community are paying attention the training activities that they seem ready to work together to eradicate illiteracy for the local people. This activity ends with the commitment of the tutors both from the community and students participating in KKN-PPM to be ready to help the illiteracy eradication program through the learning process that can be accepted by illiterate participants.

Before starting the learning process, the next activity is to identify local themes chosen based on the local wisdom of Owata Village and the selection of the appropriate source of learning for the villagers. The result of the tutors' identification is that the chosen theme is adjusted to the village potential of agriculture in order that the learning process is prioritized on the ecological diction. The selected learning source is the environment such as rice fields, gardens, and rivers that are the centers of the local community activities.

The program is continued to the preparation of learning materials and media by tutors and supervisors and assisted by the government. This activity aims to facilitate the tutors and the illiterate participants in the learning process so that the objectives of the program can also be achieved. The preparation of this material produces a pocket book about letters and ecological diction to make it easier for the participants to learn and memorize the alphabets that have been studied. The next stage is the teaching and learning process by the tutors by using the environment as a learning source with the teaching materials that have been prepared. Participants are divided into three groups according to the number of sub-villages and begin with an orientation meeting about the introduction to letters. The orientation session consists of four meetings until the participants master the alphabets. At the next meeting, learning is done by choosing the environment as a learning source. In this case, the tutors visit both the rice fields and the gardens as the participants' livelihood; then, the tutors ask them for a few minutes to teach the vocabulary by selecting an ecological diction in line with things around them. Learning process is carried out by directing the participants to mention what they see, such as rice. Then, the participants are asked to mention any letters and direct them to write the word in a paper provided by the tutors. Such learning is fun for them because it is directly dealing with their work environment. The learning process is also accompanied by the supervisors in some meetings so that they can find out the progress of the participants.

At the last meeting, the participants are asked to gather in one class as an evaluation by asking them to write the ecological diction they have learned and to write the environmental discourse in a paragraph. The results of their writings are contested as a motivation for them to complete the final task. Based on the evaluation results, it is found that 23 participants out of 30 are finally able to read and write. The seven participants still find it difficult to identify some letters and to write the known diction into a sentence. This is due to the factors of age and the attendance. Nevertheless, by looking at the evaluation results of all participants, the learning process of environmental-based illiteracy eradication is very appropriate to be implemented, in Owata Village in particular. This is considering that Owata Village has potential in agriculture, so that the potential needs to be explored through the improvement of human resources by improving the participants' ability in reading and writing as well as speaking Indonesian language. In the context of community empowerment in Owata Village, the supervisors continue the intensive training for the tutors from Owata community to continue the illiteracy eradication program for the people who have not been recruited. Thus, the number of illiterates is decreased, and they can help to improve human resources in the village. Literacy mastery is helpful to improve the economic strength of the community because by reading and writing, they gain knowledge and skills that are more in line with their potential. In consequence, the program of illiteracy eradication should be followed up through the village programs for achieving the vision and mission of Owata Village, Bulango Ulu District, Bone Bolango Regency, Gorontalo Province.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Efforts that have been implemented through KKN-PPM program can be summarized as follows.

- a. The illiteracy eradication activities in Owata Village need to be continued due to the high illiteracy rate in the village.
- b. The socialization has been successfully motivating the people to read, write and speak Indonesian language.
- c. The socialization is continued to tutors training, assisting and learning activities of environmental-based illiteracy eradication.
- d. By the learning evaluation, it is revealed that the illiteracy eradication program is successful in accordance with the objectives, so that it can reduce the number of illiterates in Owata village.
- e. Coaching of the program sustainability is performed by training the tutors from Owata community for community empowerment through learning process for the illiterates after KKN-PPM has been finished.

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