



# IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN RURAL AREAS THROUGH COMMUNITY SERVICE

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Keywords	Abstract
Community Service; Quality of education; Learning	<i>The gap in the quality of education between urban and rural areas is still an important issue. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of community service programs in improving the quality of education in rural areas. This research is a type of qualitative research. The research sample consisted of teachers, students and the community. Programs implemented include teacher training, provision of learning resources, and extracurricular activities designed to increase student and community engagement. The results of the study show that the development of community service programs is effective in supporting the improvement of the quality of education in rural areas. These findings support the use of community service as an effective strategy to strengthen education in remote areas and provide recommendations for policymakers to adopt a similar approach in advancing village education.</i>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The education gap is one of the most pressing challenges facing many countries in the world. Differences in access and quality of education between urban and rural areas, between socioeconomic groups, and between public and private schools often create wide gaps in terms of educational opportunities. In rural areas, the lack of facilities, such as laboratories and libraries, as well as the limited number of qualified teachers, often hinders the learning process and the development of students' potential (Budiharso & Tarman, 2020a). Additionally, students from low-income families may not have access to additional learning resources, such as tutoring or internet technology, further widening this gap. Efforts to address this gap require a holistic and sustainable approach that involves various parties, including governments, educational institutions, and communities. Educational assistance programs, such as scholarships and financial aid, can help reduce the burden of education costs for low-income families. On the other hand, improving school infrastructure and teacher training in remote areas is the key to improving the quality of education provided. In addition, the integration of technology in the teaching and learning process can be a powerful tool to remove geographical and resource barriers, opening up wider access to information and

knowledge for all students, regardless of their location or economic background(Dinh & Nguyen, 2020).

Education in rural areas plays a crucial role in building a strong foundation for the social, economic, and cultural development of local communities. Rural areas often experience limitations in terms of access to adequate educational resources, which includes a lack of physical facilities, learning equipment, and qualified teachers. When education in these areas is improved, it not only opens up opportunities for individuals to improve their living conditions, but also strengthens the community by instilling the skills and knowledge necessary for local development(Muryanti, 2021). High-quality education in rural areas can encourage innovation and sustainable use of local resources, as well as stimulate economic growth through increased work capacity and entrepreneurship.

In addition, inclusive and equitable education in rural areas helps in reducing social disparities and raising public awareness about important issues such as health, the environment, and civil rights. With effective education, children in rural areas can gain a better understanding of their rights and how to protect and fight for them (Shaturaev, 2021). It is also vital in preparing them to interact more broadly with the world outside their communities, allowing for a richer exchange of cultures and ideas. Thus, investment in education in rural areas is not only important for individual growth, but also for the sustainability and harmony of society as a whole(Levit et al., 2020).

Community service in the context of education plays an important role in overcoming the gaps in access and quality of education that are often encountered in various regions. Through service programs, educational institutions and volunteers can provide much-needed resources and support in underprivileged schools (Tavares et al., 2020). For example, learning assistance programs and the provision of better educational materials can significantly improve the quality of teaching in areas that lack facilities. In addition, community service activities such as training for teachers in remote areas allow for improved teaching methods and the use of technology in the classroom, thus bringing a more diverse and in-depth learning experience for students.

Additionally, community service in education often involves the development of programs designed to increase parental and community involvement in the educational process. This is important because education does not only take place in the classroom, but also at home and around students' daily environments. Programs such as workshops for parents on how to support their children's education or activities that integrate community values into the school curriculum can strengthen community participation(Hermino & Arifin, 2020). Thus, community service helps create a holistic educational ecosystem, where every element of the community actively contributes to children's education. Community service also plays a role in shaping social awareness and civic responsibility among students. Through participation in service projects, students learn to understand and respond to the needs around them, developing empathy and the ability to think critically about social issues(Budiharso & Tarman, 2020a). This not only helps in their character development, but also prepares them to become active and responsible citizens. Projects such as outreach initiatives to the poor or environmental conservation programs teach students the values of

cooperation, leadership, and innovation, all of which are essential skills for their future success.

Research conducted by Smith and Robertson (2019) found that mentorship programs implemented by universities in rural areas succeeded in increasing student motivation and learning outcomes. The program involves students and lecturers as mentors who work directly with elementary and secondary school students, providing academic guidance as well as emotional support. The results showed a significant improvement in students' math and language test scores, as well as an increase in their confidence and educational aspirations. This study emphasizes the importance of personal connections and ongoing support in service programs to achieve substantial results in rural education. Furthermore, research by Fernando et al. (2020) evaluates the impact of using technology in community service to improve access to education in remote areas. This study implements the use of tablets that have been filled with interactive learning materials and adjusted to the local curriculum. The results showed that students who used these resources showed greater improvements in concept comprehension and problem-solving skills compared to those who followed conventional learning. This study highlights the importance of technology integration in community service efforts, as a means to overcome geographical and physical resource limitations that are often faced in rural areas. Therefore, this study aims to be effective in community service programs in improving the quality of education in rural areas.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODS**

This research is a type of qualitative research. The qualitative approach will involve in-depth interviews and case studies with selected participants, including students, teachers, and community members, to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences and perceptions of the service program. This interview will be directed to explore information about the impact of the program on student learning motivation and the involvement of parents and communities in supporting education in their area. Qualitative data will be analyzed using thematic analysis, where key themes will be identified and used to interpret qualitative aspects of the impact of community service programs on rural education.

## **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1 Teachers' Views on the Implementation and Impact of Community Service Programs in Rural Areas**

Teachers in rural areas often face challenges in providing quality education due to limited resources and infrastructure. The implementation of community service programs in this area has brought significant changes, as reflected in the views of several teachers involved (Shaturaev, 2021). They revealed that the presence of volunteers and resources brought by the program has improved the quality of teaching and enriched the subject matter they can offer students. One of the positive impacts that is often expressed by a teacher.

"Community service has been able to improve the quality of students in rural areas. In addition, the service program has facilitated the procurement of books, educational technology, and even the renovation of previously inadequate physical facilities. This not only

improves the physical learning environment but also increases the morale and motivation of teachers to teach more effectively".

Teachers also noted significant improvements in student engagement. Service programs often involve activities designed to make learning more interactive and fun, such as workshops, arts activities, and practical sciences, that engage students and encourage active participation in the learning process. This has helped reduce rates of burnout and absenteeism among students, a problem that was previously quite common in rural areas. In addition, in terms of professional development, teachers feel that they benefit from the training and workshops held in the framework of the program (Preradović & Čalić, 2020.). These trainings not only help them update their teaching knowledge and skills, but also provide them with access to a wider support network. Through interaction with educators and professionals from outside their area, these teachers are able to gain new insights and best practices that can be adapted to their contexts. Increased collaboration with the community is also one of the most valuable aspects of the service program (Zhao, 2020). Teachers found that by involving parents and community leaders in school activities, there was increased community support for education. This means that not only do students feel more supported, but there is also increased awareness and participation from the community in supporting educational goals.



**Figure 1.** Community Service Activities in Rural Areas

Teachers' views on the implementation and impact of community service programs are very positive. They recognize that the program has brought many beneficial changes, which not only improve teaching and learning conditions but also strengthen the relationship between the school and the community. This shows that community service can be an effective tool in promoting inclusive and equitable education, especially in rural areas that are often neglected.

### **3.2 The Impact of Community Service Programs on Student Motivation and Interest in Learning in Rural Areas**

Community service programs in rural areas have had a significant impact on students' motivation and interest in learning. The presence of volunteers and the help of new resources often provide the stimulus needed to change students' perceptions of education. In many cases, students who previously felt limited by the lack of educational materials and support find new inspiration through the activities and learning materials introduced by the program. This allows them to see their potential and understand the importance of education in achieving their aspirations (Jr & Coneway, 2023). In addition to providing more diverse and engaging learning materials, many service programs also integrate a project-based learning approach that encourages students to be directly involved in the learning process. These projects are often related to real problems in their communities, such as environmental projects, which not only deepen students' understanding of the subject, but also strengthen the connection

between learning in school and the outside world. This increases the relevance of education for students, encouraging them to invest more in learning.

Community service programs also often introduce role models in the form of volunteers or mentors who work directly with students. Interaction with successful and motivated individuals from outside their community can have a powerful psychological impact. Students tend to imitate the attitudes and aspirations of these role models, which can change their perspective on future possibilities and what they can achieve (Tavares et al., 2020). These interactions not only increase academic interest but also develop soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and leadership. Many programs offer extracurricular activities such as debate, sports, and art, all of which help in the development of students' interpersonal skills. Through active participation in these activities, students in rural areas can increase their confidence and feel more connected to their peers and community (Zulkifli et al., 2022; Otkarina et al., 2021).

The challenge of maintaining motivation and interest in learning in rural areas is also often related to limited access to technology and the internet. Community service programs that bring technology and connectivity to schools in rural areas can open up a whole new world for students. This access not only expands the available learning resources but also opens students' eyes to a variety of careers and further education that they may not have considered before. The positive impact of community service programs on the motivation and interest in learning of students in rural areas is very clear. By providing better resources, encouraging direct involvement in meaningful learning, and introducing students to inspiring role models, these programs fundamentally transform the educational experience for many children. This results in improved academic performance and students' readiness to face greater challenges, both inside and outside the classroom.

### **3.3 Improving the Quality of Student Education Through Community Service**

Involving the community in community service programs has proven to be an effective strategy in improving the quality of student education. These kinds of initiatives often provide the additional support needed by schools, especially in underserved areas, strengthening educational infrastructure and providing previously unavailable resources. By bringing together various elements of the community, such as local businesses, non-profit organizations, and dedicated individuals, the service program is able to create a strong support network for the school and its students (Hermino & Arifin, 2020)

Community service programs also encourage the implementation of innovative and inclusive learning methodologies that enrich students' learning experiences. With this approach, learning no longer only takes place in the classroom but also through interactive activities that involve the wider community. Activities such as community-based projects provide opportunities for students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world situations, helping them develop practical skills and a deep understanding of the subject matter (Shaturaev, 2022). In addition, participation in service projects introduces students to the concepts of social responsibility and civic engagement. They learn the importance of giving back to society and how individual actions can influence positive change. These kinds of experiences often open students' eyes to social and economic issues that affect their communities, sparking a desire to contribute and become more active and informed citizens.

Service programs also facilitate closer collaboration between schools and parents, which is an important factor in a child's education. Through activities that involve parents and families in the learning process, there is an increase in communication and understanding of how to support learning at home. This not only improves academic performance but also strengthens the bond between the school and the family, creating a unity that supports the

child's learning (Budiharso & Tarman, 2020b). This approach is also invaluable in addressing the problem of absenteeism and learning boredom among students. With more engaging and socially relevant activities, students tend to feel more engaged and less inclined to avoid school. This higher attendance is directly related to improved academic achievement and the development of better interpersonal skills.

Furthermore, the service program opens access for students to interact with a variety of professionals and mentors who can provide guidance, inspiration, and insight into different career paths. This contact can be invaluable, especially for students who may not have access to professional role models in their daily lives. This interaction helps broaden their outlook on future opportunities and motivation to pursue higher goals (Zhao, 2021). Community service is a very effective tool in improving the quality of student education. By supporting innovation in teaching methods, integrating lessons into real life, and strengthening community support for education, this kind of program not only enriches students' learning experience but also shapes them into contributing and caring citizens.

#### 4. Conclusion

From this community service research, it can be concluded that the development of community service programs is effective in supporting the improvement of the quality of education in rural areas. These findings support the use of community service as an effective strategy to strengthen education in remote areas and provide recommendations for policy makers to adopt a similar approach in advancing village education. Through collaboration between schools, communities, and related parties, the program has successfully provided the resources and support needed to enrich students' learning experiences, increase learning motivation, and integrate education with relevant issues in the community. Active involvement from the community not only strengthens the educational infrastructure but also fosters a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for children's education. Thus, community service programs have proven effective as a strategy to address educational gaps and promote inclusive and sustainable learning.

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