

Implementation of a Participatory Approach to Improve Access to and Motivation for Primary Education for Children in Boralan Hamlet

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to improve children's learning participation and motivation in Boralan Hamlet by addressing low school engagement caused by parents' limited understanding of education, not poverty. Through a participatory program, it involves families, schools, and the community to support dropouts and increase access to education.

Method: This study used a mixed-method approach, combining surveys and interviews with observations, document reviews, and community focus group discussions. The program had four steps: identifying education barriers, training parents and local facilitators, running learning activities through the Community Learning Center (PKBM), and providing ongoing mentoring and evaluation. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were grouped into themes to understand community experiences and opinions.

Practical Applications: The findings offer practical guidance for improving education in rural areas by involving families and communities to boost motivation and help dropouts return to learning. Strengthening PKBM centers and using community-driven approaches can support inclusive, non-formal education initiatives.

Conclusion: The participatory education program in Boralan Hamlet successfully increased children's motivation and learning participation. The structured, multi-stakeholder approach—focusing on empowering families and strengthening PKBM—proved to be a sustainable and replicable model for improving access to basic education in underserved communities.

594) Implementation of a participatory approach to improve access to and motivation for primary education for children in Boralan Hamlet, Rusmiyati, F. A. Nugroho, F., Gina, N. H., Raliya, R., Utaminingsih, R., A'yun, N., Zulkarnain, A. H., Az Zahra, F., Arbhi Maulana, M., Maulidi, M. N., Zuraifa, Kamal, M. B., Wulan Eka Septi Anggraeni, & Guspul, A.

Introduction

Basic education is a crucial early stage that shapes a child's future and serves as the foundation for developing quality human resources capable of competing in the global era. At this stage, children not only acquire fundamental knowledge and skills but also begin to internalize moral values, ethics, discipline, and social skills that will guide them throughout their lives (Laksana, Kaka, dan Bunga 2022). Success in this stage significantly influences a child's readiness to continue to higher levels of education and adapt to a rapidly changing world. Therefore, ensuring that every child has equal access to basic education and maintains high learning motivation is not only the responsibility of schools but also an essential part of sustainable national development strategies (Sari dan Karimaliana 2025).

However, complex challenges remain, particularly in rural areas such as Boralan Hamlet, Garung Subdistrict, an agrarian community where most residents depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Although the economic conditions in Boralan Hamlet are relatively stable, local data indicate that educational participation remains suboptimal. According to recent village education records, the school dropout rate in Boralan Hamlet is approximately 18%, and irregular attendance affects nearly 25% of school-age children. Moreover, literacy rates among children aged 7 to 15 are below the district average, and parental education levels are generally low, with over 60% of parents not completing primary education. These figures highlight the urgency of addressing educational challenges beyond financial constraints.

Non-economic factors play a significant role in hindering children's educational engagement. For instance, some parents lack sufficient understanding of the importance of education for their children's futures, student motivation is low due to a lack of role models and limited environmental support, and prevailing social habits do not adequately encourage learning (Eka Rosmitha Sari et al. 2025). These psychological, cultural, and social barriers require interventions tailored to the community's specific conditions.

Addressing these issues effectively requires a participatory approach that actively involves all stakeholders—families, schools, community leaders, and non-formal education institutions—in problem identification, program planning, and evaluation (Tambunan et al. 2025) (Aritonang et al. 2025). Such engagement fosters a sense of ownership and ensures that interventions are culturally appropriate and responsive to local needs. The synergy among families providing emotional and material support, schools delivering quality education, and communities creating a conducive learning environment is crucial for improving educational access and motivation (Saefullah et al. 2025).

One practical strategy to operationalize this approach is by strengthening the role of the Community Learning Center (PKBM), a flexible and adaptive non-formal education pathway. PKBM serves as an alternative learning space for school dropouts or children facing obstacles in formal education by offering remedial classes, skills training, and community-based learning activities (Mulyaningsih 2014). Additionally, PKBM functions as a hub for family and community empowerment, equipping parents with the knowledge and skills needed to support their children's learning at home. This dual role positions PKBM as a vital instrument in expanding educational access and enhancing children's learning motivation (Noviawati dan Masjidah 2020). Through the combined efforts of family empowerment, improved school learning quality, and active community involvement, this approach aims to develop an assistance model that is effective in Boralan Hamlet and replicable in other areas facing similar educational challenges.

Method

This assistance program to increase children's participation and learning motivation in Boralan Hamlet, Garung Subdistrict, Wonosobo Regency, was implemented under the Research-Based Thematic Community Service Program (KPM) of Universitas Sains Al-Qur'an Jawa Tengah in 2025. The program adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining

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qualitative and quantitative methods to provide comprehensive, valid, and objective data (Yurmaini et al. 2024).

The intervention lasted for two weeks, involving approximately 50 participants including children aged 7 to 15, their families, local school teachers, community leaders, and PKBM facilitators. Participants were selected purposively based on their involvement or influence in children's education in Boralan Hamlet. The study began with a baseline assessment through direct observations, interviews, and documentation to identify educational challenges, particularly focusing on social, cultural, and environmental factors influencing children's motivation and participation (Paramita, Sanjaya, dan Suastika 2025).

The program was structured into four main stages:

1. **Planning and Initial Identification:** The team coordinated with local officials and community leaders to identify children who had dropped out or attended school irregularly. Baseline data on attendance and learning conditions were collected.
2. **Socialization and Engagement:** Open forums, home visits, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted to engage children and families. The team used a humanistic and contextual approach to build trust and raise awareness about the importance of education (Aliyah, Fitria, dan Choiru Ummah 2025).
3. **Implementation of Learning Support:** Collaboration with community leaders helped establish alternative learning spaces emphasizing play-based and community-supported activities to make learning enjoyable beyond the formal school environment (Sudirman dan Wisnawati Budi 2024). This community involvement aimed to build a supportive educational ecosystem so that children do not see learning as something belonging only to school, but as an enjoyable and meaningful part of everyday life (Perdana dan Cahyono 2018). The Community Learning Center (PKBM) was strengthened as a non-formal education hub targeting school dropouts and low-motivation learners, providing remedial classes, skills training, and family empowerment programs (Yuliartati dan Firdaus 2022).
4. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regular monitoring and evaluation sessions were conducted with PKBM tutors, parents, and students to assess progress and address ongoing challenges.

The university team played a central coordinating role, facilitating communication among stakeholders, providing training for PKBM facilitators, and ensuring that activities aligned with local cultural contexts and educational needs.

Data collection methods included direct observation, documentation of program activities, interviews, and FGDs. Primary data were gathered from participants and program records, while secondary data included literature reviews and previous studies (Sari Rahmadhani, Abdullah Abdullah, dan Andi Kartika 2024). Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively to measure changes in participation and motivation, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis to capture participants' experiences and perceptions.

The mentoring strategy for the assistance program is summarized as follows:

Table 1. Mentoring Strategy

No.	Stage	Activities
1	Initial Identification and Data Collection	Observation and coordination with local officials and community leaders to identify children not attending school.
2	Socialization and Introduction to PKBM	Informing out-of-school children about PKBM, its benefits, learning system, and future opportunities through equivalency education.
3	Personal and Family Approach	Applying a persuasive and humanistic approach to build trust, understand barriers, and inform about non-formal education alternatives.

596) Implementation of a participatory approach to improve access to and motivation for primary education for children in Boralan Hamlet, Rusmiyati, F. A. Nugroho, F., Gina, N. H., Raliya, R., Utaminingsih, R., A'yun, N., Zulkarnain, A. H., Az Zahra, F., Arbhi Maulana, M., Maulidi, M. N., Zuraifa, Kamal, M. B., Wulan Eka Septi Anggraeni, & Guspul, A.

4	Facilitation of Registration and Initial Assistance	Supporting administrative processes at PKBM and acting as liaison between children, families, and PKBM management.
5	Monitoring and Evaluation	Ongoing evaluation involving PKBM tutors, parents, and students to ensure continuity and quality of education.

Source: Author's Work, 2025.

Through this structured and collaborative approach, the program aimed to create a replicable model that could be adapted in other rural areas facing similar educational challenges.

Result

Boralan Hamlet, located in Garung Subdistrict, Wonosobo Regency, is an agrarian community where most residents depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Despite relatively stable economic conditions and the community not being classified as poor, children's participation in basic education remains significantly below expectations. This indicates that educational challenges stem from non-economic factors, such as limited parental understanding of the importance of education and low learning motivation among children. These findings underscore the complexity of the problem and the need for context-sensitive interventions.

The assistance program successfully engaged multiple stakeholders, including families, schools, community leaders, and the Community Learning Center (PKBM), fostering a collaborative environment to address these challenges. Initial observations and interviews revealed that many parents lacked awareness of the long-term benefits of education, and children often lacked motivation due to insufficient role models and limited learning support at home.

Figure 1. Strategy Discussion with PKBM Management



Source: Private Documentation, 2025

Following the program's implementation, several positive outcomes emerged:

1. Increased student participation: Attendance records at PKBM and informal learning activities showed a 40% increase compared to baseline measurements. Many children who previously dropped out or attended irregularly re-enrolled or increased their participation in learning sessions.
2. Improved learning motivation: Feedback from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with children indicated heightened enthusiasm for learning, especially after the introduction of game-based and play-oriented activities. Children expressed that learning became more enjoyable and meaningful, both inside and outside the formal school setting.
3. Enhanced parental attitudes: Parents reported a better understanding of education's importance and showed greater willingness to support their children's learning. Home visits and dialogue forums helped build trust and improved communication between families and educators.

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4. Strengthened community involvement: The role of PKBM as a non-formal education hub was reinforced, providing remedial classes, skills training, and family empowerment programs. Community leaders actively supported alternative learning spaces, creating a more supportive educational ecosystem.

Figure 2. Focus Group Discussion



Source: Private Documentation, 2025.

The mentoring process fostered positive interactions between facilitators and students, with personalized guidance and continuous encouragement. The program's flexible approach allowed adaptation to local cultural and social norms, enhancing acceptance and participation. Moreover, the collaboration between families, schools, and community institutions contributed to the emergence of local champions parents and community members who voluntarily promoted education and motivated others. Institutional mechanisms, such as regular PKBM meetings involving parents and teachers, were established to sustain ongoing support for children's education. Overall, the results demonstrate that a participatory, multi-stakeholder approach can effectively increase children's participation and motivation in education within Boralan Hamlet. These findings support the potential replication of this assistance model in other rural communities facing similar non-economic barriers to education.

Discussion

The implementation of the participatory education assistance program in Boralan Hamlet provides critical insights into the challenges and opportunities related to increasing children's learning participation and motivation in rural, agrarian communities. The initial identification phase revealed that 26 children were out of school, with a higher proportion (54%) being junior high school graduates. This indicates that the transition from junior to senior high school is a key point of educational discontinuity likely influenced by non-economic factors such as limited parental support, low educational aspirations, and lack of access to flexible learning alternatives.

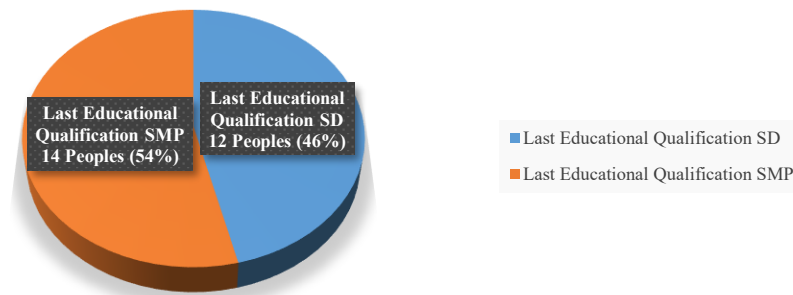
Subsequent data collection revealed a differentiated pattern of interest in continuing education through non-formal pathways. While only 25% of elementary school dropouts showed interest in enrolling at the Community Learning Center (PKBM), approximately 64% of junior high school graduates expressed a willingness to continue. This contrast suggests that older students, having experienced more years of formal education, may possess greater intrinsic motivation and awareness of education's long-term value. However, it also indicates the need for tailored interventions: younger children may require more intensive parental engagement and motivational strategies, while older youth may benefit from targeted career-oriented support.

These findings are consistent with prior studies emphasizing the role of stakeholder collaboration in addressing educational challenges. The participatory approach adopted in this study engaging families, schools, community leaders, and PKBM facilitators proved effective

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in building trust, enhancing communication, and fostering ownership. This synergy led to meaningful behavioral shifts: parents became more supportive, children engaged in alternative learning spaces, and local leaders contributed to sustaining educational momentum.

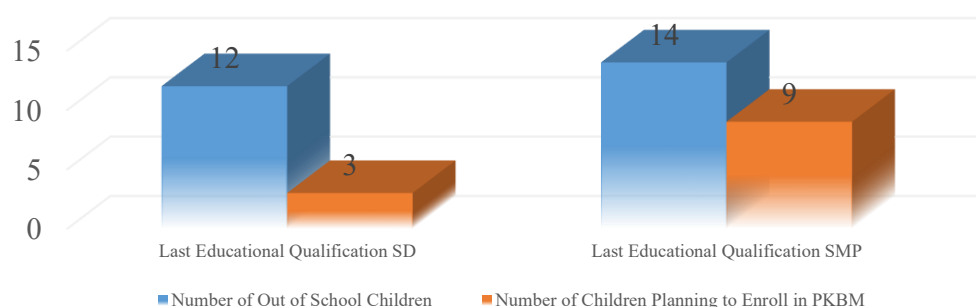
Figure 3. Number of Out of School Children



Source: Private Documentation, 2025.

However, the program also faced several challenges. Time constraints (limited to two weeks) restricted the depth of mentoring and limited the number of follow-up sessions with families and children. In addition, although the PKBM was strengthened institutionally, its capacity to accommodate a large number of learners remains limited due to infrastructure and tutor availability. These limitations underscore the importance of long-term planning and institutional support for the sustainability of community-based education initiatives.

Figure 4. Number of Children Planning to Enroll in PKBM



Source: Private Documentation, 2025

Another important observation relates to the social dynamics generated by the intervention. The emergence of local champions community members who became advocates for education was a key success factor. Their role in motivating families and facilitating communication between stakeholders highlights the importance of nurturing leadership at the grassroots level. Furthermore, the creation of informal learning spaces such as reading corners and game-based sessions helped reshape perceptions of learning as enjoyable and accessible beyond school walls, aligning with findings from Perdana and Cahyono (2018) on the importance of contextual and enjoyable learning models.

In light of these findings, it is evident that the program met several of its core objectives: it increased awareness, enhanced motivation, and reconnected out-of-school children with educational opportunities. Yet, for long-term impact, follow-up interventions must include capacity-building for PKBM, continued parental engagement, and integration of local government policies to institutionalize the program's gains. Overall, this initiative contributes to the broader discourse on participatory education models by offering a replicable framework grounded in empirical evidence and contextual understanding. Future studies could expand on this model by incorporating longitudinal tracking of student outcomes, comparing interventions across multiple hamlets, or assessing the economic and social returns of re-

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enrolling dropouts into education.

Conclusion

The results of this participatory assistance program in Boralan Hamlet demonstrate that active collaboration among families, schools, and the community can significantly enhance children's participation and motivation in basic education. This integrated approach not only addressed academic barriers but also fostered a socially supportive environment that holistically nurtures children's growth and development. A key success factor was the strengthened role of the Community Learning Center (PKBM) as an inclusive, non-formal educational hub. PKBM effectively bridged the gap for children who had dropped out or faced difficulties in accessing formal education by offering flexible learning opportunities and acting as a center for family and community empowerment. This dual function education and social support proved vital in sustaining children's learning interest and engagement.

These findings reinforce the importance of applying context-sensitive interventions tailored to the socio-cultural and psychological realities of rural communities. Differentiated strategies were particularly effective in reaching both elementary and junior high school dropouts, reflecting the value of customized motivational and communication approaches. Importantly, the participatory education model applied in this program has strong potential for scalability and sustainability. It provides a replicable framework for other agrarian and rural regions facing similar educational challenges. The program's success offers valuable lessons for policymakers and educators, emphasizing the need to institutionalize mechanisms for ongoing family engagement, strengthen community-based educational platforms like PKBM, and integrate participatory strategies into rural education policy.

Future initiatives should consider longer implementation periods, enhanced infrastructure for PKBM, and policy support to embed this model into local education systems. By doing so, rural communities can move closer to achieving equitable and inclusive education, ensuring that every child regardless of background has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

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600) Implementation of a participatory approach to improve access to and motivation for primary education for children in Boralan Hamlet, Rusmiyati, F. A. Nugroho, F., Gina, N. H., Raliya, R., Utaminingsih, R., A'yun, N., Zulkarnain, A. H., Az Zahra, F., Arbhi Maulana, M., Maulidi, M. N., Zuraifa, Kamal, M. B., Wulan Eka Septi Anggraeni, & Guspul, A.

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