



Strengthening Child-Friendly School Policy Implementation through Community Empowerment in Early Childhood Education Settings

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Received: 15-02-2025</p> <p>Revised: 30-04-2025</p> <p>Accepted: 22-07-2025</p> <p>Published: 30-08-2025</p> <p>Keyword: Children's Literacy, Character Building, Community Service, Family, Community Reading Center</p>	<p>Background: The implementation of Child-Friendly School (SRA) policies in early childhood education remains a critical issue, particularly in ensuring safe, inclusive, and rights-based learning environments. Many institutions still face challenges in translating policy into practical classroom implementation.</p> <p>Aims: This community service program aims to strengthen the implementation of Child-Friendly School policies through capacity building and mentoring for teachers in early childhood education settings.</p> <p>Methods: This program employed a community development approach with an empowerment strategy, involving collaboration between lecturers and teachers. The implementation consisted of three stages: (1) awareness building through socialization and workshops on child-friendly school principles, (2) mentoring teachers in designing and implementing child-centered and inclusive learning practices, and (3) evaluation through observation and reflective discussions. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, and analyzed descriptively.</p> <p>Results: The results indicate an improvement in teachers' understanding and application of child-friendly school principles, including the development of safe and inclusive learning environments, the use of non-discriminatory and child-centered approaches, and increased child participation in learning activities. In addition, stronger collaboration between teachers and parents was observed in supporting child-friendly practices. However, several challenges remain, such as limited learning facilities and teacher workload constraints.</p> <p>Conclusion: The implementation of child-friendly school policies through a community empowerment approach effectively enhances teachers' capacity and supports the creation of inclusive and child-centered learning environments. This program offers a practical and adaptable model for strengthening policy implementation in early childhood education.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education plays a fundamental role in shaping children's character, personality, and socio-emotional development, as this stage represents a critical period that determines long-term developmental outcomes (Maghfirah & Maemonah, 2019; Sari & Mukhlis, 2024). In this phase, children require not only cognitive stimulation but also a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment that respects their rights and promotes holistic development (Candrasari et al., 2023; Holid, 2024). The concept of Child-Friendly Schools (Sekolah Ramah Anak/SRA) emerges as a strategic approach to ensure that educational institutions provide protection, participation, and non-discriminatory learning experiences for children (UNICEF, 2021; Sobon et al., 2024). This approach is grounded in children's rights principles, emphasizing that schools must be free from violence, promote inclusivity, and support children's well-being. Moreover, the successful implementation of SRA is closely related to the ability of schools to integrate policy, pedagogy, and social interaction into a coherent educational ecosystem.

In recent years, the implementation of child-friendly education has gained increasing attention due to the persistent gap between policy and practice. Although regulatory frameworks such as child protection laws and violence prevention policies have been established, their translation into daily educational practices remains inconsistent (Holid, 2024; Sari & Mukhlis, 2024). Empirical evidence indicates that many early childhood education institutions still struggle to create fully safe and inclusive environments due to limited understanding of SRA principles, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient stakeholder collaboration (Amahoru & Ahyani, 2023; Rahma Mardia, 2024; Ulfadhilah, 2024). This indicates that the issue is not merely the absence of policy, but rather the lack of effective implementation mechanisms at the institutional level. In addition, the absence of structured mentoring and monitoring systems further weakens the sustainability of SRA practices in educational settings.

Recent studies further highlight that violence and non-child-friendly practices in schools continue to be significant concerns. National survey data reveal that a considerable proportion of children still experience verbal and physical violence in educational settings, reflecting a critical need for strengthening child protection mechanisms within schools (Sobon et al., 2024). In addition, previous studies have shown that the successful implementation of SRA is closely linked to teacher competence, parental involvement, and institutional commitment (Nurfadhilah et al., 2021; Prasetyo et al., 2022; Wulandari et al., 2023). However, many programs remain limited to policy socialization without sufficient follow-up in the form of mentoring and practical implementation, resulting in suboptimal impact. This condition suggests that awareness alone is insufficient without being supported by structured capacity-building and continuous assistance.

From a community service perspective, several recent programs have attempted to strengthen child-friendly education through training and awareness

campaigns. These programs have demonstrated improvements in teachers' knowledge and attitudes toward child protection and inclusive learning (Hidayat et al., 2022; Sari et al., 2023; Lestari et al., 2023). Nevertheless, most of these initiatives tend to focus on single aspects, such as teacher training or policy dissemination, without integrating family involvement and classroom practice into a unified framework. As a result, the sustainability of these programs remains a challenge, particularly in ensuring that changes in knowledge are translated into consistent behavioral practices. Therefore, there is a need for a more integrative and practice-oriented approach that bridges knowledge, action, and evaluation.

Another important aspect is the role of family and community in supporting the implementation of child-friendly education. Studies indicate that positive parenting and active parental involvement significantly contribute to the success of child-friendly school programs (Rahmawati et al., 2021; Putri et al., 2020). However, challenges persist due to limited parental awareness and cultural acceptance of non-violent communication practices. This condition highlights the need for an integrative approach that connects schools, families, and communities in fostering a child-friendly learning ecosystem. Strengthening this collaboration is essential to ensure that child-friendly values are consistently reinforced both in school and at home environments.

Recent community service programs conducted in various regions have provided additional insights into effective strategies for implementing child-friendly education. Several studies report that mentoring-based interventions combined with participatory approaches significantly improve teachers' ability to apply child-centered learning practices and reduce the use of punitive discipline methods (Hidayat et al., 2022; Lestari et al., 2023; Pratama et al., 2021). These programs also highlight that hands-on training and reflective discussions are more effective than one-way socialization in promoting meaningful behavioral change among educators. However, these initiatives often lack systematic integration with parental involvement and long-term evaluation mechanisms, which limits their broader impact.

Furthermore, other community-based PKM programs emphasize the importance of combining school interventions with family engagement to create a sustainable child-friendly environment. Findings indicate that when parents are actively involved through structured guidance and practical activities, children demonstrate more consistent behavioral improvements and emotional well-being (Rahmawati et al., 2021; Putri et al., 2020; Wulandari et al., 2023). Despite these promising results, most programs are still implemented in fragmented ways, focusing either on teachers or parents separately. This fragmentation highlights the need for a comprehensive model that integrates awareness, capacity building, and direct practice within a single intervention framework.

Despite the growing body of research, there remains a significant gap in the implementation of SRA programs in early childhood education settings, particularly in the context of community-based interventions. Most existing studies focus on descriptive evaluations or policy analysis, with limited attention to practical models that integrate awareness building, capacity strengthening, and real classroom implementation. Furthermore, few programs systematically combine teacher training, parental engagement, and child-centered practices within a single intervention framework. This gap indicates the urgency of developing a more holistic and operational model that can be directly applied in educational settings.

Addressing this gap, this community service program introduces an integrative model based on a community development and empowerment approach to strengthen the implementation of child-friendly school policies. The novelty of this program lies in its structured intervention that simultaneously targets three key components: awareness building among teachers and parents, capacity strengthening through mentoring, and direct implementation of child-friendly practices in learning environments. This approach ensures alignment between conceptual understanding and practical application, thereby enhancing the sustainability of the program. In addition, the model emphasizes collaboration across stakeholders, making it adaptable to various educational contexts.

Therefore, the objective of this community service program is to strengthen the implementation of Child-Friendly School policies by improving teachers' capacity, increasing parental involvement, and fostering child-centered and inclusive learning practices. Through this approach, the program aims to contribute to the development of safe, supportive, and rights-based learning environments in early childhood education settings. Ultimately, this program is expected to serve as a practical and replicable model for strengthening child-friendly education in diverse community contexts.

METHODS

Community Service Design

This community service program adopted a community development approach with an empowerment strategy, emphasizing collaborative engagement between lecturers, teachers, and school stakeholders. The approach aimed to strengthen institutional capacity in implementing Child-Friendly School (SRA) policies through participatory and context-based interventions. The program was designed not only to enhance knowledge but also to transform practices by integrating child protection, participation, and inclusive learning principles into daily school activities. This design allowed participants to actively engage in the process and contribute to sustainable implementation of SRA.

Problem Identification and Needs Analysis

The initial stage involved identifying problems and analyzing institutional needs through preliminary observations, document analysis, and discussions with teachers and school management. The findings revealed that although the school had adopted SRA policies, their implementation was not yet fully aligned with national standards. Several challenges were identified, including limited understanding of SRA indicators, constraints in physical facilities, and the need to strengthen teacher capacity in applying child-friendly approaches. The scope of the program focused on key SRA indicators, including physical safety, child participation, child-friendly curriculum, parental involvement, and teacher training. This needs analysis served as the foundation for designing a targeted and contextually relevant intervention.

Stages of Program Implementation

The implementation of this program consisted of three main stages, namely awareness building, capacity strengthening through mentoring, and evaluation of SRA implementation.

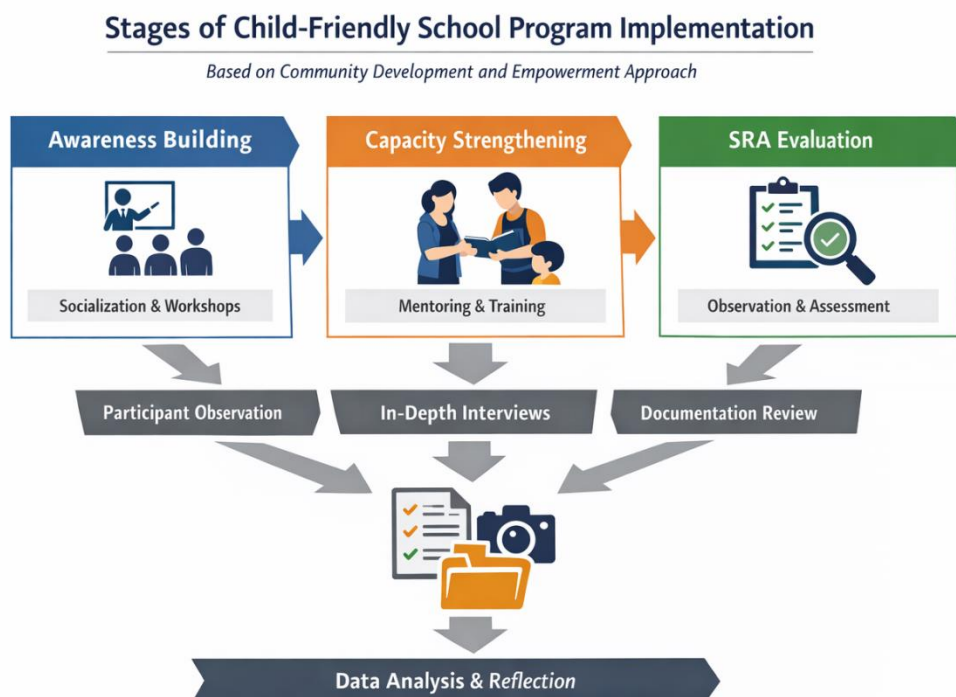


Figure 1. Stages of Child-Friendly School Policy Implementation Based on Community Development and Empowerment Approach

In the first stage, awareness-building activities were conducted through socialization sessions and workshops aimed at teachers and school stakeholders. These activities focused on strengthening participants' understanding of SRA

principles, including non-violence, non-discrimination, child participation, and the creation of a safe and inclusive learning environment. The sessions applied participatory and reflective learning approaches to encourage active engagement and critical understanding.

In the second stage, mentoring activities were conducted to support teachers in implementing child-friendly practices in classroom settings. Teachers were guided in applying child-centered learning approaches, fostering positive teacher-child interactions, and integrating SRA indicators into daily teaching activities. In addition, discussions were conducted to strengthen collaboration with parents and the community in supporting child-friendly practices both in school and at home.

In the third stage, evaluation was carried out through observation and reflective discussions to assess the level of SRA implementation. This stage aimed to identify the extent to which SRA principles were applied in practice, including classroom interaction, learning activities, and school environment conditions. The evaluation also explored challenges faced during implementation, such as resource limitations and teacher workload. This stage ensured alignment between awareness, capacity building, and practical application.

Target Participants and Setting

This program was conducted in Babakan Madang District, Bogor Regency, involving collaboration with the Kayuh Literasi community. The participants included parents, tutors of Taman Bacaan Masyarakat, and children participating in literacy activities. Teachers from early childhood education and elementary levels were also involved in the awareness-building stage. The selection of participants was based on their active involvement in literacy activities and their relevance to the program objectives. This setting provided a meaningful context for implementing a community-based literacy program.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using observation and documentation techniques. Observations were conducted during seminars, mentoring sessions, and literacy activities to capture participants' engagement, participation, and behavioral changes. Documentation included field notes, activity reports, and visual records to support and validate the findings. These techniques were applied systematically throughout the program implementation.

Data Analysis

The data obtained in this program consisted of qualitative descriptive data, including observations of participant engagement, responses to activities, and changes in literacy practices. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive analysis by organizing, summarizing, and interpreting the data to evaluate program effectiveness. The analysis focused on changes in parental awareness, tutor capacity, and children's literacy development.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the program implementation. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from participants, particularly from parents for children's involvement. All documentation involving participants was handled carefully to ensure privacy and confidentiality. These measures were taken to ensure that the program adhered to ethical standards in community service activities.

Results and Discussion

Results

The results of this community service program are presented based on the stages of implementation, namely awareness building, capacity strengthening through mentoring, and evaluation of Child-Friendly School (SRA) practices. The findings demonstrate that the program has contributed to improving the implementation of SRA policies at the institutional level.

Awareness Building

Strengthening Understanding of Child-Friendly School Principles

Based on observations and interviews, the implementation of Child-Friendly School (SRA) policies showed a positive trend following the awareness-building stage. The school had previously applied several SRA principles informally; however, after structured socialization and workshops, the implementation became more systematic and aligned with national standards. This indicates that awareness-building activities successfully enhanced teachers' conceptual understanding of SRA as a holistic approach that integrates child protection, participation, and inclusive education.

The program also strengthened institutional commitment in creating a safe, comfortable, and child-centered learning environment. Teachers and school stakeholders demonstrated increased awareness of the importance of non-violence, non-discrimination, and respect for children's rights in daily educational practices. This shift in understanding became the foundation for further implementation stages.



Figure 2. Awareness Building Activities on Child-Friendly School Implementation

Capacity Strengthening

Implementation of Child-Friendly Practices

The mentoring stage showed significant improvements in the practical application of SRA principles. Teachers were able to translate conceptual understanding into classroom practices, including the creation of a safe and engaging learning environment, positive teacher-child interactions, and inclusive learning strategies.

Physical Safety and School Environment

The school has provided facilities that support children's safety and comfort, such as secure fencing, clean play areas, and child-friendly sanitation facilities. Observations indicate that approximately 80% of the school environment is free from potential hazards such as exposed cables or sharp objects. In addition, the school promotes a safe environment free from violence, smoking, and harmful substances through continuous education and teacher modeling. However, limitations remain, particularly in classroom space and a teacher-child ratio of 1:20, which may affect optimal supervision.

Prevention of Violence and Discrimination

Efforts to prevent violence and discrimination were strengthened through various initiatives, including anti-bullying campaigns, habituation of positive social behaviors, and the development of emotional bonds between teachers, children, and parents. The integration of character-based education further reinforced values such as empathy, cooperation, and independence. Teachers also actively involved parents in monitoring children's behavior, ensuring consistency between school and home environments.

Child-Friendly Learning Environment

Teachers played a crucial role in creating a positive learning atmosphere. Children were welcomed warmly each day with songs promoting kindness and positive values. Classrooms were designed with colorful and meaningful displays,

including class agreements that encourage respectful and responsible behavior. Play-based learning methods were implemented to promote active participation without pressure, resulting in increased children's confidence and enjoyment in learning.

Inclusive Approach for Diverse Learners

The school implemented inclusive practices by accommodating children with different abilities. Children with learning difficulties were supported through peer assistance and additional teacher guidance. This approach reflects the school's commitment to equality and respect for individual differences, ensuring that all children receive appropriate support.

Teacher Training and Curriculum Adaptation

Teachers participated in regular SRA-related training programs, approximately twice a year, organized by educational institutions and child protection organizations. These trainings enhanced teachers' competencies in early detection of bullying, understanding children's rights, and applying empathetic communication. The curriculum was adapted to align with SRA principles, focusing on socio-emotional and character development alongside cognitive skills.

Child-Friendly Facilities and Infrastructure

The school environment was designed to support children's developmental needs. Classrooms were organized in a clean, safe, and flexible manner, allowing children to explore different learning corners. Children's work was displayed on classroom walls, fostering a sense of appreciation and ownership. Outdoor play facilities, such as slides and swings, were designed according to safety standards and supported physical and social development. Supporting facilities such as child-sized toilets also promoted independence and healthy habits.

Evaluation Stage

Participation and Collaborative Ecosystem

The evaluation stage revealed that the implementation of SRA principles had extended beyond classroom practices into broader school culture, particularly in terms of participation and collaboration.

Children's Participation

Children were actively involved in learning processes through role-playing, group discussions, and activity selection. The provision of a "suggestion corner" allowed children to express their ideas and feelings. This approach helped develop children's confidence, responsibility, and respect for others' opinions, reflecting democratic values in early childhood education.

Parental and Community Involvement

Parental and community involvement emerged as a key strength in the implementation of SRA. Parents actively participated in parenting programs and regular meetings, enhancing their understanding of child development and positive parenting practices. Approximately 70% of parents expressed satisfaction with the communication between school and families, indicating strong trust and collaboration.

In addition, partnerships with local health institutions supported children’s well-being through health education and developmental monitoring. Community members and alumni also contributed to maintaining a safe school environment and supporting school activities. This collaboration created a supportive ecosystem in which children’s growth and protection are collectively ensured.

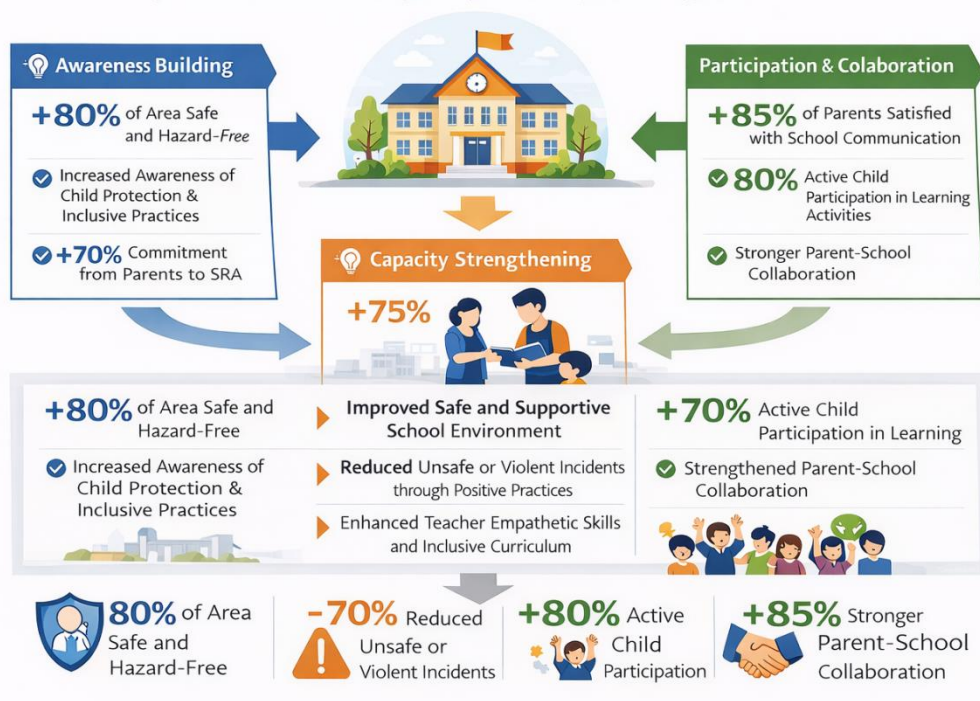


Figure 2. Result of Child-Friendly School Program Implementation

Reflection on Implementation

Overall, the results indicate that the integration of awareness building, mentoring, and evaluation stages has effectively strengthened the implementation of Child-Friendly School policies. The program successfully bridged the gap between policy and practice by transforming teachers’ understanding into concrete actions. Furthermore, the involvement of parents and the community enhanced the sustainability of the program, making SRA not only a school policy but also a shared social commitment.

Discussion

The findings of this community service program confirm that strengthening the implementation of Child-Friendly School (SRA) policies requires an integrated approach that connects awareness, capacity building, and practical application. The improvement in teachers' understanding and classroom practices indicates that participatory training combined with mentoring is more effective than one-time socialization activities. This result is consistent with recent studies highlighting that continuous professional support significantly enhances teachers' ability to apply inclusive and child-centered learning approaches (Anwar et al., 2022; Budiarti et al., 2023; Kurniawan et al., 2021). In addition, the observed shift toward positive teacher-child interactions reflects the importance of reflective practices in transforming pedagogical behavior (Dewi et al., 2022; Pramono & Sari, 2023). Compared to previous PKM programs that often focused on theoretical dissemination, this program demonstrates stronger alignment between conceptual understanding and real classroom implementation.

Furthermore, the findings emphasize that the effectiveness of SRA implementation is strongly influenced by environmental and institutional factors, including infrastructure, school culture, and teacher workload. The availability of safe and child-friendly facilities supports the creation of a conducive learning environment, which is essential for children's participation and well-being. Similar findings have been reported in recent studies showing that physical environment and school climate play a crucial role in fostering children's engagement and emotional security (Hapsari et al., 2022; Liyana & Fauzi, 2024; Nurhayati et al., 2023). However, challenges such as limited classroom space and high teacher-child ratios remain significant barriers to optimal implementation. These findings align with previous research indicating that structural constraints often limit the effectiveness of child-friendly school policies despite strong institutional commitment (Rahman et al., 2022; Setiawan & Putra, 2021).

Another important finding of this program is the strengthening of collaboration between schools, parents, and the community, which contributes to the sustainability of SRA practices. Active parental involvement and community participation create a supportive ecosystem that reinforces child-friendly values beyond the classroom. This result supports recent evidence that multi-stakeholder collaboration is a key determinant of successful child-friendly education programs (Utami et al., 2023; Wibowo et al., 2022; Yuliana & Fitri, 2024). In contrast to fragmented interventions that focus only on schools, this program demonstrates that integrating family and community engagement leads to more consistent and sustainable outcomes. Therefore, the findings highlight that the success of SRA implementation is not solely dependent on teachers, but also on the collective commitment of all stakeholders in creating a child-friendly environment.

Community Service Contribution

This community service program provides significant contributions at both the community and academic levels. At the community level, the program strengthens the implementation of Child-Friendly School (SRA) principles by improving teachers' understanding, fostering safe and inclusive learning environments, and increasing children's participation in learning activities. The program also enhances teachers' pedagogical competence in applying child-centered and non-discriminatory approaches, while strengthening collaboration between schools, parents, and the community. From an academic perspective, this program offers an integrative model based on community development and empowerment that connects awareness building, capacity strengthening, and practical implementation, which can be adapted and replicated in similar early childhood education settings.

Limitations and Suggestions

Despite its positive outcomes, this program has several limitations that need to be acknowledged. The implementation was conducted within a limited time frame, which restricts the observation of long-term impacts on children's development and sustainability of SRA practices. In addition, the program was implemented in a specific institutional context, which may influence its applicability in different socio-cultural and educational settings. Therefore, future programs are recommended to be implemented over a longer duration, expanded across diverse contexts, and supported by continuous mentoring and systematic evaluation to ensure sustainability and broader impact.

CONCLUSION

This community service program demonstrates that the implementation of Child-Friendly School (SRA) policies can be effectively strengthened through a community development approach with an empowerment strategy. The integration of awareness building, mentoring, and evaluation stages successfully improved teachers' understanding, enhanced the application of child-friendly practices, and fostered a safer, more inclusive, and participatory learning environment. In addition, the program strengthened collaboration among teachers, parents, and the community, contributing to the development of a supportive ecosystem for children's growth and well-being. These findings indicate that SRA implementation is more effective when supported by participatory, context-based, and sustainable intervention models. For future implementation, it is recommended that similar programs be conducted over a longer period to capture long-term impacts on children's development and institutional practices. Expanding the program to diverse educational settings is also important to test its adaptability and scalability. Continuous mentoring and structured evaluation mechanisms should be strengthened to ensure consistency and sustainability of SRA implementation. Furthermore, strengthening multi-stakeholder collaboration will enhance the

effectiveness of child-friendly education programs in broader contexts.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

YA contributed to the conceptualization, coordination of the community service program, and manuscript writing. AWN contributed to language editing, proofreading, and verification of data and overall manuscript accuracy. Both authors approved the final version of the manuscript.

AI DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

During the preparation of this manuscript, language assistance tools were utilized to enhance clarity, grammar, and overall academic expression. All outputs generated through these tools were carefully examined, revised, and validated by the authors. The authors remain fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the content presented in this article.

CONFLICTS OF INTERES

The authors declare that there are no financial, institutional, or personal conflicts of interest that could have influenced the conduct of this study, the analysis of the data, the preparation of the manuscript, or its publication.

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