

THE ROLE OF LIBRARY OUTREACH PROGRAMS IN INCREASING READING INTEREST IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES

Khoirunnisa Surbakti¹, Annur Rosida Harapan², Silva Lestari Hasibuan³

^{1,2,3}Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: khoirunnisa0601212027@uinsu.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Article history:

Received :
Accepted :
Published :
Available online
<http://aspublisher.co.id/index.php/perspektif>

E-ISSN: 3063-3494

How to cite:



This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license

Reading is a fundamental pillar in the development of a highly skilled human resource base. However, reading interest in Indonesia remains low, particularly in remote areas that face several challenges, such as limited access to reading materials, insufficient library facilities, and a lack of effective literacy programs. This study examines the strategic role of library outreach programs in addressing these challenges. These programs encompass mobile libraries, literacy training, and the use of digital technologies to reach communities that have previously struggled to access library services. Using a qualitative descriptive approach based on a literature review, the study demonstrates that outreach programs can broaden access to information, foster early literacy development in children, and enhance community engagement. In this way, libraries evolve from mere book repositories into catalysts for social change, contributing to the creation of an educated, information-literate, and empowered society, particularly in remote regions.

Keywords: Outreach Library, Reading Interest, Community

1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary era, fostering a reading culture has become an essential priority, as reading plays a pivotal role in shaping high-quality education. Within families, schools, and broader social environments, all stakeholders must synergize and support one another to transform reading into a fundamental necessity. Literacy is not merely the responsibility of governments or educational institutions; rather, it is a collective duty that involves families and communities alike.

One of the fundamental prerequisites for developing a highly competent human resource base is the enhancement of reading interest. A strong reading culture significantly impacts daily life, as knowledge is primarily acquired through reading and writing. In developed nations, literacy is deeply embedded not only within formal educational settings but also within societal traditions and cultural practices.

In Indonesia, the low level of reading interest remains a pressing concern for the government. In response to this issue, former President Joko Widodo launched several

national literacy initiatives, including the "Gerakan Indonesia Membaca" (GIM), "Gerakan Literasi Nasional" (GLB), and "Gerakan Literasi Sekolah" (GLS) (Fitriani & Harjanty, 2023). However, empirical evidence suggests that literacy levels in Indonesian society remain relatively low, particularly in remote areas. The limited reading interest in these regions can be attributed to multiple factors, including restricted access to reading materials, inadequate library facilities, and the absence of effective literacy programs. Surveys indicate that public reading interest remains concerning, despite the increasing usage of the internet and social media—an apparent contradiction that highlights the complexity of literacy development in the digital era.

Libraries serve as critical institutions in promoting literacy. Traditionally, libraries have been perceived as repositories for book storage and lending. However, this paradigm must evolve as libraries seek to implement creative strategies to attract readers and nurture a sustainable reading culture. In this context, library outreach programs present a strategic solution to bridge the literacy gap, particularly in remote areas.

Library outreach programs represent proactive efforts by libraries to reach and engage specific communities or user groups who may otherwise have limited access to conventional library services. These initiatives encompass a wide range of activities, including educational programs, service promotion, partnerships with community organizations, and the provision of specialized services for children, the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and marginalized rural communities (Jamridafrizal et al., 2024). Through these programs, libraries aim to cultivate awareness about the significance of reading and facilitate access to information. By actively involving communities, outreach programs not only enhance reading interest but also contribute to the establishment of a sustainable literacy culture.

Given this background, this study seeks to examine the role of library outreach programs in enhancing reading interest in remote areas. With the right approach, such programs can foster more educated, knowledgeable communities capable of contributing to social and economic development within their respective regions.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research method with a library research approach, which involves collecting relevant scientific information and bibliographic literature for the literature review. The research integrates both descriptive and qualitative methodologies, presenting data without manipulation or additional processing. The primary sources of information for this study include previous academic research closely related to the literature review, such as research methodology books, journal articles, online articles, and other relevant documents (Ridwan et al., 2021).

The primary objective of this research is to provide readers with a comprehensive understanding of the application of literature review methods. In the future, by implementing a systematic and accurate literature review approach, readers will be able to analyze research using different methods and concepts, gain deeper insights, and ultimately produce high-quality research outcomes. Furthermore, it is anticipated that intellectual property rights will be secured as a result of this study.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Library Outreach

Outreach encompasses a wide range of activities designed to support community engagement and provide access to specific resources. These activities include, but are not limited to:

1) Outreach Programs

Outreach involves activities such as educational sessions, trainings, or workshops that aim to convey information about library services, information literacy, and research strategies to the public. The main objective of this program is to assist communities, especially in remote areas, in optimizing library usage. In addition, the program aims to improve the community's skills in finding, evaluating and utilizing information effectively.

2) Guidance Services

Through guidance services, libraries provide personalized support for individuals in accessing information resources relevant to their needs. These services may include guidance in using library databases, recommending efficient search strategies, and assisting with the interpretation of research results.

3) Marketing and Promotion

Marketing and promotion efforts are an integral part of the outreach program, aimed at increasing public awareness of library services while encouraging active user engagement. These strategies may include using social media platforms, creating promotional materials such as posters and brochures, and other digital campaigns.

Outreach services are generally defined as initiatives that aim to reach, engage, or provide support to individuals or groups who have limited access or special needs. These programs are designed to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to access necessary services.

For example, outreach services may be aimed at individuals with special needs, such as children with disabilities, single parents, specific communities based on ethnic or cultural backgrounds, or people living in remote areas. The main objective of these programs is to prevent neglect or marginalization of vulnerable groups, and to ensure that they receive support that is appropriate to their needs.

In addition, outreach programs cover various fields, such as education, social services, health, or other community services. As an illustration, in the education sector, special outreach programs can be developed for children with disabilities or people with low socio-economic conditions. The main principles of outreach services are to create equality of access, support equal opportunities, and promote social inclusion for all individuals.

Mobile libraries are a type of service developed (extension) in public libraries, called mobile library service units (Riskha Arumsari, 2022). Mobile libraries are also one of the outreach activities provided by various libraries for the community. The mobile library functions as a representation of the main library by providing collection lending (circulation) services for the community. The main focus of mobile libraries is people who are in remote areas and have limited access to local libraries. This is due to the limited services provided by local libraries, which are usually only available in one location and located in the center of the district or city. Mobile libraries target important objects in

rural and remote areas, such as schools and non-formal education institutions, to ensure information accessibility for communities in need (Andri & Ganggi, 2018). This program aims to improve literacy, provide access to books, and encourage reading habits in various communities, especially those in remote areas.

The collections brought by mobile libraries often arouse curiosity and motivate people to read. For example, mobile libraries usually provide interesting and useful collections, such as materials on cultivation, agriculture, and animal husbandry. The selection of these collections is done by considering the needs and interests of the community, especially for those living in remote areas who have limited access to conventional libraries (Santi et al., 2014).

The Role of Library Outreach Programs in Increasing Reading Interest

Library outreach programs have a significant contribution in encouraging increased interest in reading among people in remote areas. Through the provision of reading materials, literacy training, and the use of technology, this program acts as a means to overcome the gap in access to information in hard-to-reach areas.

Some of the strategic roles of the library outreach program can be described as follows:

1) Expanding Access to Information

One of the main challenges faced by communities in remote areas is limited access to reading materials. Outreach programs, such as mobile library services, provide access to a wide collection of books, magazines and other educational materials. Thus, people in remote areas can take advantage of these reading materials without having to travel to urban centers.

2) Promoting Literacy in Children

Children in remote areas often face limitations in accessing adequate reading resources. Through activities such as children's reading corners, storytelling activities or literacy training, outreach programs can instill an interest in reading from an early age. This is important to build a sustainable literacy culture among the younger generation.

3) Increasing Community Participation

Library outreach programs often involve active participation from the local community, for example through volunteer training, group discussions or literacy-based art activities. This participation not only increases ownership of the program but also strengthens collective awareness of the importance of reading and literacy.

4) Utilization of Digital Technology

In the digital age, library outreach programs can also adopt technology to expand access to information. An example is through the provision of digital libraries or e-book applications that can be accessed using simple devices. With the support of electronic devices provided by the program, the community can access thousands of books in digital format more practically.

4. CONCLUSION

Library outreach programs play an important role in increasing people's interest in reading in remote areas. The program not only provides access to reading materials through mobile libraries, but also holds various educational activities, literacy training,

and the use of digital technology such as e-books. The program aims to address the gap in access to information that is often a major barrier to reading interest in remote areas.

It also targets the younger generation with activities such as children's reading corners and storytelling, which aim to build a culture of literacy from an early age. In addition, active community participation through volunteer training and literacy discussions increases ownership of the program.

Through a creative and inclusive approach, the library's outreach program not only increases interest in reading but also fosters equitable access to information, supports quality education and builds a sustainable literacy community. In the digital era, the use of technology is key to expanding the reach of this program and addressing the information needs of the modern era.

References

- Andri, A., & Ganggi, R. I. P. (2018). Peran Perpustakaan Keliling Kabupaten Semarang Dalam Interaksi Sosial Masyarakat Di Desa Jetis Kecamatan Bandungan. *Jurnal Ilmu Perpustakaan*, 7(3), 161–170. <https://ejournal3.undip.ac.id/index.php/jip/article/view/22929>
- Fitriani, L., & Harjanty, R. (2023). Peran Perpustakaan Dalam Meningkatkan Minat Baca Anak Usia Dini. *NUSRA: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Ilmu Pendidikan*, 4(2), 213–224. <https://doi.org/10.55681/nusra.v4i2.844>
- Jamridafrizal, Zulfitri, & Wajdi, M. F. (2024). Perpustakaan Sebagai Institusi.
- Moleong, L. J. (2017). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif: Edisi Revisi*. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Ridwan, M., AM, S., Ulum, B., & Muhammad, F. (2021). Pentingnya Penerapan Literature Review pada Penelitian Ilmiah. *Jurnal Masohi*, 2(1), 42. <https://doi.org/10.36339/jmas.v2i1.427>
- Riskha Arumsari, I. K. (2022). Peran Perpustakaan Keliling dalam Menumbuhkan Minat Baca Masyarakat Desa Kepek Kecamatan Saptosari Kabupaten Gunungkidul.
- Santi, R., Wiryawan, I. W., & Kandia, I. W. (2014). Peranan Perpustakaan Keliling Dalam Meningkatkan Minat Baca Masyarakat Di Kabupaten Tabanan. *Jurusan Pendidikan Pancasila Dan Kewarganegaraan Institut Keguruan Dan Ilmu Pendidikan Saraswati Tabanan*, 6(3), 128–134.
- Saputri, E., & Khairani, S. (2021). Peran Pemerintah dalam Meningkatkan Minat Baca melalui Pojok Baca Digital (POCADI) di Kota Lhokseumawe, Aceh. *JIPKA: Jurnal Informasi, Perpustakaan, Dan Kearsipan*, Vol. 1(1), 27–39.