

COMMUNITY BASED OUT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

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Abstrak:

This study aims (1) to explore the conceptual framework, key principles, and practical applications of community-based out-of-school education within the context of community empowerment; and (2) to examine the various obstacles and opportunities associated with its implementation in promoting self-reliance and sustainable development. Employing a qualitative approach with a literature study design, data were collected through document analysis and processed using triangulation techniques aligned with the analytical principles of Miles and Huberman. Findings reveal that community-based out-of-school education represents a non-formal, participatory, and context-driven learning model that is initiated by and intended for the community itself. Core values such as active involvement, local relevance, empowerment, and adaptability underpin its effectiveness. This model is commonly manifested through skill development initiatives, community learning centers, and targeted empowerment programs that contribute to strengthening local capacities, sustaining cultural heritage, and nurturing social cohesion. Despite its promise, implementation remains challenged by constraints such as insufficient resources, limited community engagement, lack of coordination among stakeholders, and socio-cultural as well as regulatory limitations. However, significant opportunities also exist—such as leveraging strong community networks, utilizing digital technologies, benefiting from supportive policy frameworks at both national and global levels, and aligning with the growing emphasis on sustainability. If implemented with a collaborative, sustained, and community-responsive approach, this educational model holds the potential to become a powerful catalyst for inclusive and resilient local development.

Keywords: *Community-based out-of-school education, community empowerment.*

Introduction

Education is a fundamental right of every individual, regardless of age, social status, or place of residence. In addition to formal education conducted in schools, non-formal or out-of-school education plays an equally important role in improving the quality of human resources, especially for marginalized groups or those with limited access to formal education.¹ Out-of-school education encompasses various forms of learning activities that are flexible, participatory, and contextual according to the needs of the community. This aligns with the core goals of out-of-school education.

Out-of-school education aims to meet the need for lifelong learning, which is not always accommodated by formal institutions, thereby offering a more flexible and universal approach. Its forms vary, including skill-based courses, vocational training, literacy programs, community

¹ Yasunaga, Mari. "Non-formal education as a means to meet learning needs of out-of-school children and adolescents." *Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics* (2014).

outreach, and community learning groups.² With a participatory and contextual approach, non-formal education is more easily tailored to local needs and the socio-cultural conditions of the community. This becomes a key strength in supporting sustainable community development.

However, the implementation of out-of-school education still faces several complex challenges. These include lack of policy support, a shortage of qualified educators, low community participation, and limited infrastructure and facilities. Moreover, out-of-school education is often viewed as a secondary alternative rather than an integral part of the national education system. As a result, its impact on community empowerment tends to be suboptimal. To overcome these challenges, a more contextual and locally driven approach is required.

Community-based out-of-school education, integrated with community empowerment efforts, can serve as an effective solution to address the issue of unequal access to formal education, especially in remote, impoverished, or marginalized areas. This approach positions the community not only as recipients but also as active agents designers, implementers, and evaluators—of learning programs that are relevant to their local context. As such, educational activities provide not only academic knowledge or technical skills but also enhance both individual and collective capacity to address real-life challenges faced by the community.³

Additionally, community-based education facilitates intergenerational knowledge transfer, the preservation of local cultural values, and the creation of spaces for dialogue and critical reflection among citizens. This process fosters a strong sense of ownership over education, which in turn increases active participation and the sustainability of programs. Within the framework of sustainable development, such education serves as a strategic tool to cultivate social awareness, solidarity, and the ability of citizens to organize themselves and innovate in improving their quality of life. By building education from the grassroots, the vision of a more just, inclusive, and sustainable social transformation becomes not merely a hope but a tangible possibility.⁴

The importance of community-based out-of-school education lies in its strategic ability to reach groups that have long been underserved or excluded by the formal education system. These groups often include the poor, women, persons with disabilities, indigenous communities, and residents of remote areas with very limited access to formal schooling. In this context, non-

² Mugabi, Racheal Ddungu, et al. "Formal and Non-formal Skills Improvement for the Marginalised Youth in Uganda." *Advanced Journal of Social Science* 9.1 (2021): 10-26.

³ Mbilu, Ellance Mathias. *Non-Formal Education and Quality Basic Education for All in Tanzania: A study of the Effectiveness of Non-Formal Education Programs for Children of School-going Age in Korogwe District*. MS thesis. 2019.

⁴ Uzorka, Afam, Oluwole Akiyode, and Sulaiman Muhammad Isa. "Strategies for engaging students in sustainability initiatives and fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility towards sustainable development." *Discover Sustainability* 5.1 (2024): 320.

formal education serves as a bridge, not only opening access to knowledge and skills but also functioning as an instrument of liberation and capacity-building, both individually and collectively.⁵

Through a community empowerment approach, non-formal education can play a critical role in improving basic literacy (reading, writing, and numeracy), while also expanding learning to more practical and contextual areas such as life skills, entrepreneurship, environmental management, public health, and civil rights advocacy.⁶ This fosters the development of critical consciousness among community members, enabling them to become active participants in processes of change and development, rather than passive recipients.

Programs such as vocational training, locally tailored functional courses, community learning groups, and reading centers are tangible examples of the synergy between education and empowerment.⁷ More than just channels of knowledge transfer, these initiatives create dynamic, collaborative spaces where community members learn, share experiences, and build networks of social solidarity. When education is aligned with the spirit of empowerment, the result is not only the enhancement of individual capacities but also the realization of communities that are more independent, resilient, and prepared to face the challenges of the times.

Several previous studies have highlighted the success of this approach. For example, a study by Nurlinah and Harianto found that community-based education programs in rural areas increased adult learning participation and strengthened household economies through entrepreneurship training.⁸ Another study by Hafman revealed that active community involvement in the planning and implementation of non-formal education programs significantly enhanced program ownership and sustainability.⁹

Based on the above explanation, community-based out-of-school education that is directed toward empowerment holds great potential in addressing disparities in educational access and promoting social development. Therefore, it is necessary to explore further how such educational models can be systematically designed, implemented, and evaluated to support more

⁵ Levine, Rebecca S., and Samantha Viano. "Promising Practices of Out-of-School Time Programs for Low-Income Adolescents: A Systematic Review." *Journal of Adolescence* (2025).

⁶ Dabrowski, Anna, et al. "Supporting out-of-school girls and children and youth from marginalised groups in the ASEAN region: A review of promising practices." (2024).

⁷ Hidayat, Ipan Ilmansyah, Sri Nurhayati, and Gumpanat Boriboon. "Vocational High School Community Service As Innovative Community Empowerment Program: A Case Study of Garut Vocational High School." *Jurnal Paedagogy* 11.1 (2024): 48-60.

⁸ Nurlinah, and Haryanto. "Transmigration village development: the state and community organizations in rural Indonesia." *Frontiers in Political Science* 6 (2024): 1441393.

⁹ Hafman, Ucu Nurhadi. "Exploring the Mainstreaming of Education for Sustainable Development and Indigenous Knowledge in Initial Teacher Education in Indonesia: A Comparative Study of Teacher Educators' Beliefs and Attitudes." (2023).

inclusive and sustainable social transformation. Accordingly, the objectives of this study are divided into three main parts: (1) To understand the concepts, principles, and implementation of community-based out-of-school education within the framework of community empowerment. (2) To analyze the challenges and opportunities in the implementation of community-based education to support independence and sustainable development.

Methodology

The research approach used is a qualitative approach with literature study research. In this approach, the researcher will describe phenomena, events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and thoughts of people, both individually and in groups, followed by descriptively examining what happens related to the research title.¹⁰

The data collection technique uses content review or document analysis. The data analysis technique uses the Miles and Huberman model.¹¹ Data analysis in qualitative research is carried out when data collection takes place, and after completing data collection within a certain time. According to Miles and Huberman, as quoted by Sugiyono, activities in analyzing qualitative data are carried out interactively and continue continuously until complete. Activities in data analysis are data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The data analysis technique in this study uses three data acquisition procedures.

Data Reduction is the process of refining data, both reducing data that is considered less necessary and irrelevant, as well as adding data that is still considered very lacking.¹² Data reduction means summarizing, choosing the main things, and focusing on important things. Thus, the data will provide a clearer picture, and make it easier for researchers to conduct further data collection, and search for it if needed.¹³

Data Display By displaying data, it can make it easier to understand what happened during the research, after which there needs to be a research design based on what has been understood. Data presentation is the process of collecting information that is neatly arranged. According to Miles and Huberman, as quoted by Sugiyono, in qualitative research, data presentation can be done with a brief description.

¹⁰ Aspers, Patrik, and Ugo Corte. "What is qualitative in qualitative research." *Qualitative sociology* 42 (2019): 139-160.

¹¹ Hutahaean, Berman, et al. "Analysis of Innovative and Adaptive Higher Education Curriculum Development to Education 5.0 Based Challenges in Indonesia." *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 23.4 (2024): 76-98.

¹² Perera-Lago, Javier, et al. "Application of the representative measure approach to assess the reliability of decision trees in dealing with unseen vehicle collision data." *World Conference on Explainable Artificial Intelligence*. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2024.

¹³ Karunarathna, Indunil, et al. "Structured reviews: Organizing, synthesizing, and analyzing scientific literature." *Retrieved from ResearchGate* (2024).

Data Verification (Conclusions drawing/verifying) Data verification is the end of the data analysis technique that must be done. Of course, the existence of this data verification is to provide complete truth to data that was initially hypothetical. Data verification will provide changes if the evidence obtained is not complete and cannot be proven. However, data will be accepted if from the beginning everything refers to valid evidence presented at the next stage so that the data concluded will be credible.

Findings and Discussion

A. Concept, Principles, and Implementation of Community-Based Non-Formal Education within the Framework of Community Empowerment

Education is a fundamental right that should be accessible to every individual without exception. However, in reality, not all social groups can optimally access formal education due to various structural, geographical, economic, and cultural barriers. In this context, community-based non-formal education emerges as an alternative and complement to the formal education system, aiming to reach marginalized groups and strengthen community capacity from the grassroots level. This type of education adopts a different approach because it is more flexible, contextual, and based on local potentials. Its main goal is not only to intellectually educate individuals but also to empower them to become agents of change in their respective environments. Therefore, understanding the concept, principles, and implementation of community-based non-formal education is crucial to promote a just, inclusive, and sustainable social transformation.

1. Concept of Community-Based Non-Formal Education within the Framework of Community Empowerment

Community-based non-formal education is an educational approach that arises as a response to the limitations of formal education systems in reaching all layers of society.¹⁴ This concept positions the community not merely as an object or recipient of educational services but as an active subject with the capacity to design, manage, and evaluate the learning process according to their needs and local potential. According to UNESCO, this non-formal education is founded on the principles of local relevance, active participation, and flexibility. This means the education provided is contextual—adapted to the social, economic, cultural, and environmental conditions of the

¹⁴ Obiagu, Adaobiagu. "Health Pandemic and Education Access: Constraints and Possibilities of Non-Formal Community-Based Volunteerism in Education in Emergencies." *Journal of Education & Social Sciences* 11.1 (2023): 38-59.

community where it takes place. For example, in agrarian regions, community education programs may focus on organic farming training, harvest management, or village entrepreneurship.

In this approach, the community becomes the center of change. They serve as facilitators, resource persons, and even mentors during the learning process. The success of this education heavily depends on the extent to which the community feels ownership of the program. Therefore, it is important to build collaborative partnerships among the community, NGOs, local government, and other stakeholders. Functionally, community-based non-formal education has several main characteristics:¹⁵

- a. Based on real community needs: Programs are developed based on identified local needs, not solely on national standardized curricula.
- b. Participatory and dialogic: Learning processes are two-way, encouraging discussion, critical reflection, and knowledge exchange among community members.
- c. Action-oriented: Learning activities focus on solving practical problems faced by the community.
- d. Utilizes local resources: Instructors may be community leaders, local entrepreneurs, or individuals with practical experience and expertise.
- e. Flexible in time and methods: Schedules and methods are adjusted to the community's life rhythms, including planting seasons, market days, or local traditions.

This education has dual functions. On one hand, it serves as a means of disseminating knowledge and skills; on the other, it acts as an empowerment tool that enhances individual and collective capacities. Programs such as functional literacy training, digital literacy, reproductive health, and environmental preservation are concrete examples of non-formal educational interventions that directly impact community quality of life. Community-based non-formal education also plays an important role in reaching groups marginalized by formal education, including marginalized women, indigenous peoples, residents of remote areas, informal workers, and persons with disabilities. Through this approach, they gain access to relevant and applicable education.¹⁶

¹⁵ Rogers, Alan. "Second-generation non-formal education and the sustainable development goals: operationalising the SDGs through community learning centres." *International journal of lifelong education* 38.5 (2019): 515-526.

¹⁶ Zikargae, Mekonnen Hailemariam, Amanuel Gebru Woldearegay, and Terje Skjerdal. "Empowering rural society through non-formal environmental education: An empirical study of environment and forest development community projects in Ethiopia." *Heliyon* 8.3 (2022).

Besides economic and social functions, this education also has cultural roles. It helps preserve local culture through documentation and transmission of local values, traditions, and knowledge from generation to generation. For instance, learning activities may involve local arts practices, introduction to traditional medicinal plants, and customary ceremonies embodying moral and social values. Community-based non-formal education not only builds technical capacity but also strengthens collective identity and social solidarity. This forms a crucial foundation in building resilient communities capable of adapting to global changes without losing their cultural roots.

2. Key Principles of Community-Based Non-Formal Education within the Framework of Community Empowerment

Community-based non-formal education is not merely technical or administrative but stands on philosophical and ethical foundations emphasizing active involvement, social justice, and cultural transformation.¹⁷ The following key principles underpin the design, implementation, and evaluation of this approach:¹⁸

a. Active Participation

Referring to Paulo Freire's idea (1970), liberating education occurs only when learners are not passive recipients of information but active subjects critically engaged in the learning process. In community-based non-formal education, this principle translates into involving residents from the beginning—starting from needs identification, program planning, activity implementation, to reflection and evaluation. Active participation strengthens ownership, increases internal motivation, and creates a respectful dialogic space. It also opens opportunities for communities to articulate local knowledge and experiences as part of a living, dynamic curriculum.

b. Contextuality

This principle emphasizes that education must be rooted in the social and cultural realities of the target community. Contextual learning materials prevent learners from experiencing alienation from their daily lives. For example, instead of teaching literacy through irrelevant academic texts, community education can use examples from the local environment, such as social aid forms, village notice boards, or traditional song lyrics. Contextuality also includes using local languages, cultural symbols, and pedagogical approaches familiar to the community. This not only

¹⁷ Dzulkifli, Suriani. *The art of social consciousness: An exploration of the impact of formal education, non-formal adult education and informal learning on international students*. Diss. University of Victoria, 2024.

¹⁸ Brown, Maria. "Pedagogical development in older adult education: A critical community-based approach." *Studies in the Education of Adults* 52.1 (2020): 16-34.

makes learning more effective but also reinforces local values often marginalized in nationally standardized formal education systems.

c. Empowerment

Community-based education aims not only to create technical skills but also to foster critical awareness and empowerment (conscientization)—the ability of individuals and groups to recognize oppressive social structures and play roles in changing them. This principle positions education as a tool for social transformation, not just knowledge transmission. Through empowerment, individuals previously excluded from decision-making can now actively participate in local development, advocate for their rights, and create community-based solutions to challenges faced. Practically, this might be women becoming facilitators of financial literacy in villages or indigenous youth initiating nature schools based on local wisdom.

d. Accessibility and Flexibility

This principle highlights the importance of ensuring education is truly accessible to all community groups, including those living in remote areas, physically challenged, or economically burdened. Community-based non-formal education overcomes these barriers by adopting adaptive approaches regarding time, place, and methods. For example, learning activities can take place in village halls, homes, or even farms; timing can align with work schedules or harvest seasons; methods may include group discussions, educational games, hands-on practice, or cultural performances. Accessibility also involves eliminating fees or providing incentives so participants are not economically burdened. Flexibility does not mean lack of structure but enables learning to remain directed yet responsive to real-time community dynamics and needs. This respects the rhythms and realities of community life.

e. Integration of Principles in Practice

In implementation, these four principles complement each other. Active participation encourages contextuality because communities are directly involved in material development. Contextuality strengthens empowerment as learning becomes more meaningful. Empowerment is possible because education is delivered flexibly and accessibly, allowing participation from previously marginalized groups.

3. Implementation of Community-Based Non-Formal Education within the Framework of Community Empowerment

The implementation of community-based non-formal education reflects a dynamic, adaptive, and responsive approach to local contexts. Each community has distinct characteristics, challenges, and potentials, so educational interventions must be diverse, flexible, and participatory. This education is often initiated by the community itself or through cooperation between communities, local organizations, and government agencies. Some concrete forms of implementation include:¹⁹

a. Skills Training and Literacy Courses

One of the most common forms of community-based non-formal education is basic literacy and life skills training programs. These are designed to address practical community needs not met by formal education, especially for groups facing structural barriers such as poverty, geographic isolation, or domestic workloads.²⁰

Training may include:

- 1) Functional literacy—reading, writing, and arithmetic related directly to daily activities (e.g., reading medicine labels, writing harvest reports, managing household finances).
- 2) Vocational training such as sewing, handicrafts, local food production, livestock raising, organic farming, or light mechanical work.
- 3) Technology-based training like basic digital literacy, online marketing, and managing online shops, increasingly relevant in rural communities connected to digital ecosystems. These initiatives not only provide technical skills but also open opportunities for expanding knowledge, boosting confidence, and creating alternative economic prospects.

b. Community Learning Groups (Kelompok Belajar Masyarakat/KBM)

Community Learning Groups are collective learning spaces emerging from internal community awareness and needs. KBMs are usually informal, self-managed by residents, and can function as discussion forums, experience exchanges, or social laboratories for collaboratively solving local problems. Their features include:²¹

- 1) Autonomy in program management, without reliance on formal structures or rigid curricula.

¹⁹ Leal Filho, Walter, et al. "The role of higher education institutions in sustainability initiatives at the local level." *Journal of cleaner production* 233 (2019): 1004-1015.

²⁰ Mees, Heleen LP, et al. "From citizen participation to government participation: A n exploration of the roles of local governments in community initiatives for climate change adaptation in the N etherlands." *Environmental Policy and Governance* 29.3 (2019): 198-208.

²¹ Rook, Michael M., et al. "Forming and sustaining a learning community and developing implicit collective goals in an open future learning space." *Journal of Learning Spaces* 9.1 (2020).

2) Democratic and inclusive, welcoming anyone interested regardless of age, educational background, or social status.

3) Action-oriented, such as forming cooperatives, establishing waste banks, or managing reading gardens.

c. Thematic Empowerment Programs

Community-based non-formal education is often developed around thematic programs focused on specific community issues. Themes vary widely and are highly contextual depending on local situations. Common examples include:

1) Local entrepreneurship, such as training in producing local food products and digital marketing strategies

2) Sustainable agriculture, including education on soil conservation, organic fertilizers, or water management.

3) Public health, like nutrition counseling, environmental sanitation, or reproductive health facilitated by local cadres.

4) Advocacy for citizen rights, e.g., basic legal training, land rights socialization, or political education ahead of elections.

d. Participatory Planning and Evaluation

A critical pillar of successful non-formal education is participatory planning and evaluation, involving the community at every stage. This is not just about technical efficiency but also about social legitimacy of programs. In participatory planning:

1) Residents engage in identifying needs through focused group discussions, local asset mapping, and community SWOT analysis

2) Program priorities are determined collectively, reflecting real and urgent local needs.

In participatory evaluation:

1) The community helps formulate success indicators based on meaningful measures to them.

2) Reflection processes occur openly, for example, through community forums, village deliberations, or video screenings documenting program activities

B. Challenges and Opportunities in the Implementation of Community-Based Education and Community Empowerment to Support Self-Reliance and Sustainable Development.

1. Challenges in the Implementation of Community-Based Education

a. Limited Resources

Many communities, especially in remote or marginalized areas, face various obstacles in providing and managing resources that support education and community empowerment.²² These limitations include:

1) Lack of Trained Facilitators

Often, the number of available facilitators is insufficient compared to community needs. Moreover, the quality of their training and competencies varies, resulting in ineffective delivery of material and inadequate guidance for citizens. Opportunities for further training or capacity building remain limited.

2) Inadequate Facilities and Infrastructure

Many communities lack proper learning spaces, teaching materials, libraries, visual or digital aids, and internet connectivity. This greatly limits teaching and learning activities, especially in the digital era, where information technology should be a key enabler of education.

3) Unsustainable Funding

Education and empowerment programs often rely on grants or donations from external institutions. When funding stops, activities halt due to the lack of strong local financial alternatives. The absence of long-term financing mechanisms is a serious challenge to program sustainability.

b. Low Public Awareness and Participation

Some communities still perceive education as solely the responsibility of formal institutions. As a result, their involvement in non-formal education or empowerment programs remains minimal morally, materially, and in terms of time.

1) Lack of Collective Concern

Many citizens do not yet see the importance of actively participating in community education activities. This could stem from a lack of information, negative past experiences, or a lack of trust in the program's effectiveness.

2) Passive or Skeptical Attitudes

Distrust in the long-term or non-material results of programs makes some community members hesitant to participate. They tend to focus more on daily economic activities that offer immediate benefits.

3) Minimal Involvement in Planning

²² Saaida, Mohammed, and Ibraheem Saaidah. "Understanding the Dynamics of Failure Development in Marginalized Areas: A Comprehensive Analysis." *Alpha-Beta* 4.5 (2023): 85-97.

Programs are often designed by external parties without fully involving the community in the needs assessment or activity design stages. As a result, a lack of "sense of ownership" arises, which leads to low participation.

c. Program Fragmentation and Lack of Coordination

Various initiatives run by government, NGOs, or private institutions are often not effectively coordinated, leading to several consequences:

1) Lack of Continuity

Good programs often do not continue or are not followed up due to lack of inter-agency integration or leadership changes. This limits their long-term impact on the community.

2) Duplication and Inefficiency

Without proper coordination, one community might receive similar programs from multiple institutions, while others are left untouched. This causes resource waste and an imbalance in benefit distribution.

3) Minimal Stakeholder Synergy

The absence of communication and collaboration forums among local governments, NGOs, universities, and communities results in disjointed approaches. Programs become fragmented and fail to complement each other.

d. Socio-Cultural Challenges

Social and cultural aspects strongly influence the dynamics of implementing education and empowerment, especially in Indonesia's diverse society.

1) Limited Role for Vulnerable Groups

In some cultures, women, youth, or people with disabilities are often not given adequate space in community activities. Conservative norms restrict their access to education and public participation.

2) Dependence on External Parties

Ideally, empowerment processes should foster independence. However, in practice, many communities become reliant on external aid, which hinders the development of sustainable local initiatives.

3) Value Conflicts with Local Culture

Educational interventions from outside sometimes introduce new values that conflict with local traditions. If not handled with a culturally sensitive approach, this can cause resistance and reduce program effectiveness.

e. Lack of Policy Support

An underdeveloped policy framework that does not fully support the integration of non-formal education into local development systems is a major barrier to expanding program impact.

1) Absence of Inclusive Regulations

Many regions lack local regulations or policies that explicitly recognize and promote the role of non-formal education in development. As a result, such programs do not receive strategic placement in development planning.

2) Lack of Incentives and Recognition

Community members actively involved in education activities often do not receive moral or material incentives. The lack of recognition from the government or other institutions lowers motivation and interest in ongoing participation.

3) Poor Integration with Regional Development Programs

Non-formal education is still seen as supplementary rather than an integral part of development. In fact, if properly integrated, it can become a key driver in improving local human resource quality.

2. Opportunities in the Implementation of Community-Based Education and Empowerment

a. Potential of Community Social Capital

Many Indonesian communities possess strong social capital, such as close social networks, mutual cooperation values, and a spirit of collectivity. This social capital forms a crucial foundation for supporting the implementation of community-based education. The strong bonds among citizens enable mutual support in various learning activities, including manpower, time, and material contributions. Additionally, the presence of respected local figures such as religious leaders, traditional elders, or inspiring youth can serve as effective facilitators and primary drivers of programs. The trust already established within the community also enhances collaboration, making program planning and implementation more efficient and inclusive.²³

b. Rise of Social Entrepreneurship and Local Economy

Community-based education not only aims to improve knowledge but also contributes to economic welfare. Many communities are now leveraging learning

²³ Bernita, Bertha. "Social Networks and Risk Management: The Role of Social Capital in Community Resilience in Indonesia." *International Journal of Innovation and Thinking* 1.1 (2024): 1-12.

activities to foster social entrepreneurship, particularly through the development of micro-enterprises based on local potential. Learning groups can transform into incubators for various economic initiatives, such as agricultural processing, handicrafts, specialty food products, or cultural tourism development. Education linked directly to entrepreneurial skill development provides tangible and immediate benefits to the community. This also strengthens economic self-reliance and reduces dependence on external assistance.²⁴

c. Digital Transformation and Information Access

Advances in digital technology have significantly expanded access to information and knowledge even for remote communities. This digital transformation is a major opportunity for developing community education, enabling online learning, remote training, and sharing of best practices between communities. With sufficient digital literacy, communities can attend online courses, access global learning resources, and even market local products through digital platforms. Moreover, social media and online forums can be used to build inter-community networks, exchange experiences, and strengthen digital community solidarity. However, this must be accompanied by efforts to improve infrastructure and equitable digital skills.²⁵

d. Support from Global and National Policies

Challenges in community-based education are increasingly being addressed with support from global and national policies. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4 on Quality Education and Goal 11 on Sustainable Communities, provide strategic space for developing community-based education. Nationally, the Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture, has launched programs such as Community Learning Centers (PKBM), Smart Villages, and Literacy Villages, which support non-formal education. These policies create opportunities for communities to access resources, training, and legal recognition in organizing relevant and contextual education.²⁶

e. Trend Toward Local Roots and Traditional Wisdom

²⁴ Santosa, Fajar Julian, Retno Setyowati, and Agung Wibowo. "The social capital ability to communal cattle survive in rural of special region of yogyakarta, Indonesia." *Indonesian Journal of Social Research (IJSR)* 5.2 (2023): 168-180.

²⁵ Wahyudi, Fendy Eko, and R. Slamet Santoso Santoso. "The Role of Social Capital in Community Based Ecotourism: A Case of Batang District, Central Java, Indonesia." *Research Horizon* 2.5 (2022): 511-531.

²⁶ Mustapha, Alade Adebisi, et al. "Community-Based Mental Health Interventions: Empowering Local Leaders and Organizations." (2025).

Amid globalization and modernization, there is a growing awareness of the importance of preserving local culture, environmental sustainability, and community self-reliance. This creates a new space for education based on local wisdom, such as the use of local languages, folklore, traditional farming practices, and community value systems. Such contextual education not only strengthens cultural identity but also enhances the relevance of learning to everyday life. More youth are becoming interested in sustainability issues such as ecology, local food systems, and circular economy—allowing them to serve as agents of change connecting traditional knowledge with modern innovation. This presents a great opportunity to build resilient, self-reliant communities deeply rooted in local values.²⁷

Conclusion and Suggestion

Conclusion

1. An understanding of the concept, principles, and implementation of community-based out-of-school education shows that this approach represents a form of non-formal, participatory, and contextual education organized by and for the community itself. Principles such as active participation, contextual relevance, empowerment, and flexibility serve as the core foundations that make this type of education both relevant and impactful. Its implementation is realized through various initiatives such as skills training, community learning groups, and thematic empowerment programs—all aimed at enhancing community capacity, preserving local culture, and fostering social solidarity.
2. In its implementation, community-based education faces several challenges, including limited resources, low participation, weak coordination, as well as socio-cultural and regulatory barriers. Nevertheless, there are also strategic opportunities to be leveraged, including the strength of community social capital, advancements in information technology, supportive global and national policies, and growing awareness of the importance of sustainable development. Therefore, this form of education has great potential to become a key driver of community self-reliance and a foundation for inclusive and sustainable development provided it is carried out collaboratively, sustainably, and oriented toward the real needs of the people.

Suggestion

²⁷ Sokk, Vutthy. "Tradition in Transition Investigating the Impact of Modernization on Indigenous Cultures." *Journal Social Humanity Perspective* 2.1 (2024): 15-23.

To improve the quality of community-based out-of-school education for community empowerment, it is recommended that the government and stakeholders strengthen the capacity of local facilitators through continuous training, develop stable and inclusive funding mechanisms, and actively involve the community in the planning and evaluation of programs. In addition, the use of digital technology should be optimized to expand access to education, while policies supporting non-formal education need to be reinforced to ensure program recognition and sustainability. An approach that integrates the preservation of local wisdom is also crucial so that education not only enhances skills but also strengthens community identity and solidarity in supporting self-reliance and sustainable development

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