

STRENGTHENING LITERACY THROUGH LIBRARY REVITALIZATION AND READING TREE INNOVATION

Arafah Mazaya*, Rika Mutiara

Esa Unggul University, Jakarta, Indonesia

*Correspondence author, email: arafahmazaya28@student.esaunggul.ac.id

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Abstract. This community service program aims to improve students' literacy culture through library revitalisation and the development of literacy media, including "Reading Tree," a program designed to encourage reading, and "My Reflection Paper," a tool for students to express their thoughts on what they read. The background to this activity stems from low student interest in reading and the library's suboptimal layout. Implementation methods included reorganising the library, grouping books by category, creating visual literacy media, and conducting reading activities that concluded with student reflections. The results of the community service program indicate that the library has become more comfortable, structured, and engaging for students. The implementation of "Reading Tree" generated enthusiasm, as evidenced by the large number of students who attached "leaves" as a token of appreciation for reading. Meanwhile, analysis of "My Reflection Paper" indicates that the program fosters students' metacognition, creativity, and comprehension. Student reflections demonstrate increased enjoyment, curiosity, and the ability to summarise reading content. This program has proven effective in strengthening reading interest and building a sustainable literacy culture.

Keywords: library, literacy, reading reflection, reading tree

Abstrak. Program pengabdian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan budaya literasi siswa melalui revitalisasi perpustakaan dan inovasi media literasi "Pohon Membaca" serta "Kertas Refleksiku". Latar belakang kegiatan ini berangkat dari rendahnya minat baca siswa dan kondisi perpustakaan yang belum tertata optimal. Metode pelaksanaan dilakukan melalui penataan ulang perpustakaan, pengelompokan buku berdasarkan kategori, pembuatan media visual literasi, dan pelaksanaan kegiatan membaca yang diakhiri dengan refleksi siswa. Hasil pengabdian menunjukkan bahwa perpustakaan menjadi lebih nyaman, terstruktur, dan menarik bagi siswa. Implementasi Pohon Membaca berhasil memunculkan antusiasme, terlihat dari banyaknya siswa yang menempelkan "daun" sebagai bentuk apresiasi membaca. Sementara itu, analisis terhadap Kertas Refleksiku menunjukkan bahwa program mampu menumbuhkan metakognisi, kreativitas, dan pemahaman siswa. Refleksi yang dituliskan siswa memperlihatkan peningkatan rasa senang, penasaran, dan kemampuan menyimpulkan isi bacaan. Program ini terbukti efektif dalam memperkuat minat baca dan membangun budaya literasi yang berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: literasi, perpustakaan, pohon membaca, refleksi membaca

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INTRODUCTION

A culture of literacy is an important foundation for improving the quality of education (Iman, 2022). Literacy is not only about reading skills but also about the ability to understand, process information, and apply knowledge in real-life contexts (Putri et al., 2024). In educational practice, school libraries play a strategic role as learning resource centres that foster interest in reading and enrich students' learning experiences (Mdodana-Zide, 2024). However, according to Syukur et al. (2024), low reading interest among students is often caused by suboptimal library conditions, including layout, facilities, and support for literacy programs. The problem of low student engagement in reading activities can also be influenced by a lack of innovation in the library management system (Wardhana et al., 2025). When libraries are poorly organised or do not provide engaging literacy experiences, students tend to view reading as a boring and meaningless activity (Afrilia & Sulaeman, 2024). Therefore, library revitalisation is considered an effective intervention for creating a more comfortable, structured reading space that

encourages active student engagement. Revitalisation efforts should be accompanied by innovations that address student needs, so the library functions as a vibrant, interactive literacy centre. The Community Service Program (KKN) offers significant opportunities for students to contribute to strengthening school literacy.

Unfortunately, the ideal of the library as the heart of education has not yet been fully realised at SMPN Satap 1 Riung, Ngada Regency, NTT. Based on initial observations, the literacy culture at this school still faces significant challenges due to the lack of structured implementation of the School Literacy Movement (GLS). The GLS should be a comprehensive program involving the school ecosystem to foster student character through the habit of reading. However, at SMPN Satap 1 Riung, limited program innovation and a poorly organised library have led to low student engagement in literacy activities. Consistent implementation of the GLS has been shown to have a significant impact in other educational institutions. For example, previous research has shown that implementing innovative literacy strategies can positively affect students' learning behaviour (Mutiara, 2020). The study's findings confirm that literacy success depends heavily on administrators' creativity in designing interactive and participatory activities. The gap between the existing potential at SMPN Satap 1 Riung and the GLS standards underscores the need for intervention through the Community Service Program (KKN). Drawing on the success of literacy models in other schools, this community service program aims to address gaps in the GLS program at SMPN Satap 1 Riung through physical revitalisation and media innovations such as "Paper Reading" and "My Reflection Paper."

Through observation and needs identification, the KKN team designed a program to strengthen literacy. Library revitalisation was a primary focus aimed at addressing the library's lack of appeal and low student interest in reading. Reorganising the space, grouping books by category, and adding visual elements were the first steps in creating a more suitable and enjoyable literacy space for students (Diller, 2023). In addition to physical revitalisation, literacy innovation is also needed to ensure sustainable library use. Therefore, the "Reading Tree" program was developed as an appreciation strategy that visualises students' reading progress (Collins, 2015). Through leaves attached to a tree frame, students can visually see their contributions, fostering intrinsic motivation to continue reading.

The next program is "My Reflection Paper," a simple reflection sheet designed to encourage students to reflect on their understanding, impressions, lessons, and imaginations after reading a book. This reflection sheet is not only an effective evaluation tool but also serves to develop critical thinking skills, creativity, and the ability to express ideas in writing (Carter et al., 2017). The implementation of this program provides space for students to build personal connections with their reading, making the process more meaningful (Greenleaf et al., 2023). Although quantitative data on reading activities is often limited, the qualitative approach of "My Reflection Paper" provides a concrete picture of the impact of the literacy program on students' learning experiences. Through analysis of the content of student reflections, the literacy program not only increases interest in books but also fosters enthusiasm, curiosity, and understanding of reading materials (Parinsi et al., 2024). This phenomenon demonstrates that simple innovations can make significant changes in student learning patterns.

Community service activities such as library revitalization, the Reading Tree, and My Reflection Paper demonstrate that student-participatory literacy strategies can be effective as an instructional approach alone. When students are directly involved in the process of reading, evaluating, and appreciating themselves, literacy activities become part of an enjoyable learning experience (Afrilyasanti et al., 2025). Visual and reflective support also strengthens students' motivation to return to the library voluntarily, making the program more likely to continue (Novrita et al., 2025).

Based on observations and interviews at SMPN Satap 1 Riung, a significant and pressing issue related to students' low literacy culture was identified. Data showed that library visitors were minimal, with only a handful of students visiting the library in each week, and there were almost no regularly recorded book borrowing activities. This problem stems from the library's unattractive conditions: disorganized books, dusty rooms, and a lack of visual elements that could spark students' curiosity. Consistent with Mutiara's (2019) research, low student

engagement is often caused by a rigid learning environment and a lack of innovation in the delivery of literacy materials. At this school, students tend to view the library as merely a repository for books, rather than a center for scientific exploration.

Recognising the school's need for functional facilities and interactive support programs, this community service initiative aims to enhance literacy culture through library revitalisation and the development of engaging, easy-to-implement literacy innovations. This program is expected to have a long-term impact on increasing reading interest, critical thinking skills, and the quality of students' learning processes. Through collaborative engagement between students, teachers, and staff, this initiative not only focuses on improving physical facilities but also aims to foster sustainable literacy habits at SMPN Satap 1 Riung.

RESEARCH METHODS

The community service method in this program is implemented through a participatory approach involving university students, teachers, and pupils as key partners. This approach was chosen to ensure that each stage of the activity not only provides physical changes to school facilities but also encourages the active involvement of all parties in building a culture of literacy (Allen, 2023). The community service program is implemented through four main stages: initial observation, program planning, program implementation, and reflection-based evaluation. The first stage is initial observation, conducted to assess the library's condition and students' literacy habits. During this stage, a map is made of the physical condition of the space, the availability and arrangement of book collections, library visitation patterns, and the existing literacy system. Observations are also conducted through discussions with teachers to identify obstacles encountered in implementing reading activities. The observations indicate that the library needs reorganisation, grouping of collections, and more engaging literacy programs to increase students' reading motivation.

The second stage is program planning. During this stage, students design the library revitalisation concept and two literacy programs: "Pohon Membaca" (Reading Tree) and "Paper Refleksiku" (My Reflection Paper). The design included defining book categories, arranging the layout, specifying decoration requirements, designing leaf templates for the Reading Tree, and developing reflection sheets with simple guidelines to help students document their understanding. Planning was carried out collaboratively to ensure each step aligned with the school's needs and could be implemented and sustained. The third phase was the implementation of the library revitalisation. Implementation activities began with sorting the book collection, categorising books by theme, cleaning the shelves, and rearranging the space to improve user comfort. Next, visual decorations were created to enhance the reading room's appeal, including category labels and literacy-supporting visual elements. This phase also involved students in the arrangement process to foster a sense of ownership of the renovated library.

The fourth phase was the implementation of the literacy program, which included the Reading Tree and My Reflection Paper. In this phase, students were introduced to how both programs work. In the Reading Tree, each student writes the title of the book they read on a leaf-shaped piece of paper and attaches it to the tree frame as a visual appreciation (Kurniati et al., 2020; Rosmiati et al., 2023). Meanwhile, the My Reflection Paper helps students reflect on their reading experiences by highlighting the most intriguing passages, favourite characters, and lessons learned (Alterio & McDrury, 2003). This phase was implemented in stages, through simulations and mentoring, to ensure that students understood the program's mechanisms. The fifth stage is a reflection-based evaluation conducted by analysing the results of students' "My Reflection Paper" submissions.

This analysis is used to determine how students understand the reading content, the emotions that arise during reading, the moral values they draw out, and the level of creativity in developing ideas (Pekrun, 2022). This qualitative evaluation serves as the basis for assessing the program's effectiveness in increasing students' interest in reading and the quality of their understanding. Furthermore, the evaluation is conducted through direct observation of students' enthusiasm for participating in literacy activities and using the library after the revitalisation. The

service model used in this program is a combination of Sigmon, R.'s (1979) service learning and Chambers' (1994) participatory development, in which students not only provide technical interventions but also involve the school community in the improvement process. This approach allows for the transfer of knowledge and the formation of new, more sustainable habits. With this model, service not only focuses on providing facilities but also on empowering students and teachers to maintain the sustainability of a culture of literacy in schools (Polleck et al., 2022).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The community service program delivered three main outcomes, focusing on library revitalization, the implementation of the reading tree, and the implementation of my reflection paper. These three programs were designed to strengthen students' literacy culture through an approach that not only improved facilities but also built a participatory system that encouraged students to actively engage in reading activities (Irmayanti & Mustiningsih, 2025). The following discussion outlines the results of these activities in detail.

Library revitalization

The library revitalization was carried out by rearranging the space and grouping the book collection to make it more accessible to students. Books that were previously disorganized were classified into thematic categories such as history, arts and culture, general knowledge, fiction, and language. This grouping helped students find reading material that suited their interests (Prabowo & Ratnasari, 2025). Furthermore, the library space was cleaned and labelled with categories, and simple decorations were added to make the reading space more attractive and comfortable to use (Adetayo & Lawal, 2024). The revitalization results showed a significant change in the library atmosphere. Students visited more frequently and began exploring various book categories independently (Peng et al., 2022). Teachers also revealed that after the reorganisation, reading activity increased because students felt the library was more organised and easily accessible. This demonstrates that improvements to physical facilities have an impact on increasing literacy motivation (Ermiana et al., 2025).



Figure 1. Results of the library revitalisation at SMPN Satap 1 Riung

Implementation of the reading tree program

The Reading Tree Program was implemented as a means of appreciation that visualized students' reading achievements. Each student who completed a book wrote the name and title of the book on a piece of paper to attach to the tree. This visual progress provided students with a tangible sense of recognition, fostering a sense of pride (Kessler, 2000). On the first day of implementation, the number of leaves attached was small, but this increased rapidly in subsequent days. Students demonstrated high enthusiasm for adding new leaves, with some even volunteering outside of library hours. This trend demonstrates that the Reading Tree is not only a means of appreciation but also serves as an effective motivational trigger (Guthrie & Alao, 1997). The following table illustrates the progress of the reading tree implementation.

Table 1. *Development of the implementation of the reading tree*

Time	Results	Criteria
Day 1	The tree is starting to fill in with some leaves.	Initial participation
Day 3	Leaves increase significantly, and enthusiasm increases	High engagement

This program demonstrates that simple visual media can create a healthy, competitive atmosphere among students and encourage them to read more without pressure (Dey & Munshi, 2025). This aligns with behaviourist motivation theory, which explains that providing clear and visible rewards can increase the frequency of positive behaviours, including reading habits. This program demonstrates that simple visual media can create a healthy, competitive atmosphere among students and encourage them to read more without pressure (Dey & Munshi, 2025). This aligns with behaviourist motivation theory, which explains that providing clear and visible rewards can increase the frequency of positive behaviours, including reading habits (Ladipo et al., 2025).



Figure 2. *Students filling in the reading tree*

Implementation of the "My Reflection Paper" program

The reflection paper serves as an assessment instrument designed to evaluate students' depth of comprehension following independent reading activities. Rather than functioning as a conventional test or quiz, the reflection sheet is structured around open-ended questions that invite students to engage critically and emotionally with the texts they have chosen (Abdolreza Gharehbagh et al., 2022). The questions cover a range of dimensions, including identifying the most interesting parts of the story, describing their favourite characters, articulating lessons learned, and expressing emotions felt during reading (Mar et al., 2011). This multidimensional approach ensures that assessment captures not only cognitive understanding but also affective and personal engagement with literature. The rationale behind this instrument lies in the belief that true comprehension goes beyond recalling facts or summarizing plot points, but rather requires students to internalize the content, connect it to their own values and experiences, and reflect on its broader significance (Kahn & Agnew, 2017). In this way, the reflection paper transforms passive consumption of text into an active, meaningful, and intellectually enriching process (Wanggai et al., 2025).

Analysis of the reflections collected from students revealed encouraging outcomes across multiple dimensions of literacy. Students demonstrated a clear ability to articulate the essence of their chosen stories, identify moral values, and showcase creativity by developing their own alternative endings (Nurhidayati & Yasmin, 2024). One student's reflection even indicated an understanding of the scientific term "anemometer," suggesting that self-selected reading

materials successfully enriched students' knowledge across different fields. From an affective standpoint, students conveyed a rich range of emotional responses, including curiosity, joy, and awe, all of which are meaningful indicators of genuine engagement in the literacy process (Beattie, 2022). Collectively, this evidence affirms that the program has successfully fostered a more meaningful and student-centered reading experience, in which students are actively involved in rethinking and processing what they read rather than merely fulfilling a reading requirement.

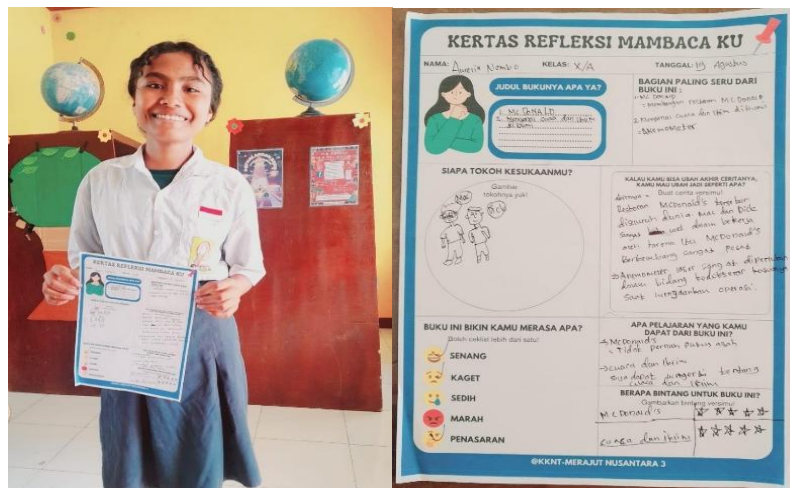


Figure 3. Students completed my reflection paper

The results of the community service program indicate that the three literacy programs developed at SMPN Satap 1 Riung complement each other. The library revitalization successfully created a comfortable physical environment that supports reading activities. The Reading Tree provided visual reinforcement that increased student motivation and engagement, while My Reflection Paper strengthened the cognitive and affective aspects of the literacy experience. All three synergize to form a comprehensive literacy system, encompassing facilities, motivation, and understanding (Rahayu et al., 2024).



Figure 4. Reopening ceremony of the SMPN Satap 1 Riung library

To ensure the sustainability of the program, regular monitoring and evaluation were conducted. Monitoring was carried out through intensive communication with the school librarian regarding the technical aspects of the school's independent use of the program (Rahman & Susilana, 2024). Evaluation was conducted through qualitative analysis of the results on My Reflection Paper to gauge the depth of student understanding, as well as direct observation of the

consistency of student visits to the library (Goss, 2022). Furthermore, as a token of appreciation and strengthen intrinsic motivation, the author presented a reward package to the school to be given to the most active students who completed the program's reading challenges (Brandt et al., 2024). Overall, this community service program has proven to have a positive impact on improving students' literacy culture and can serve as an effective model for simple literacy development for implementation in other schools (Pratiwi et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

Community service activities focused on library revitalization, the implementation of the Reading Tree, and the implementation of My Reflection Paper have had a tangible impact on improving students' literacy culture. The library revitalization has successfully created a more organized, clean, and attractive reading space, encouraging students to actively visit and utilize the facility. The arrangement of the collection and grouping of books by category also makes it easier for students to select reading materials that suit their interests. The implementation of the Reading Tree is an effective appreciation strategy for motivating students to read. Visualizing reading progress through attaching leaves to the tree creates a sense of accomplishment that students can directly feel. The increasing enthusiasm throughout the program demonstrates that this simple yet meaningful approach can foster intrinsic motivation in students.

My reflection paper plays a crucial role in strengthening students' comprehension and reflection skills. Through this sheet, students not only remember reading content but also process it into new ideas, express emotions, and identify moral values from the stories they read. Analysis of the reflections shows that this program is able to improve students' critical thinking skills, creativity, and cognitive engagement in the literacy process. The development of these three programs demonstrates that strengthening literacy requires not only adequate facilities but also a system of activities that actively engage students. This approach, which combines physical, motivational, and cognitive aspects, has been proven to create more enjoyable and meaningful literacy experiences. It is hoped that this program can become a model that schools can implement sustainably and replicate in other educational contexts to improve student literacy.

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