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Local literacy initiatives program as a means of improving communities' literacy in Indonesia

Agus Marwan¹, R. Hamdani Harahap^{2*}, Humaizi³, Hatta Ridho⁴

^{1,2,3,4} Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

* Corresponding author e-mail: r.hamdani@usu.ac.id



Abstract

The Labuhanbatu District recognizes the pivotal role of literacy in community empowerment and launched the Local Literacy Initiative to address persisting challenges in achieving functional literacy levels. The initiative employs a diverse approach, incorporating adult literacy programs, mobile libraries, community reading groups, and school book drives. This qualitative research, utilizing a case study design with 15 informants, aims to comprehensively understand the initiative's impact on reading abilities, critical thinking skills, and overall community empowerment. Findings indicate positive developments in literacy skills and participant confidence, though challenges in implementation persist. Some argue that the program may not fully meet the diverse needs of different age groups, and access to reliable internet and digital resources remains unequal, particularly in rural areas. Economic constraints hinder accessibility to multi-faceted activities, such as workshops and community reading events. The study emphasizes the importance of designing inclusive literacy programs, considering population diversity, and overcoming access barriers. The insights gained offer guidance for governments and organizations to enhance the effectiveness of literacy initiatives at the community level, stressing the significance of addressing challenges to ensure widespread impact.

Keywords: community literacy, critical thinking, literacy initiatives



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Public Interest Statement

The Labuhanbatu District's Local Literacy Initiative is transforming communities through inclusive programs that enhance literacy and critical thinking. Despite progress, challenges persist, including unequal access to digital resources and economic constraints. This research underscores the need for inclusive literacy initiatives that cater to diverse needs and overcome access barriers. The findings provide valuable insights for governments and organizations seeking to improve community literacy programs, emphasizing the importance of addressing challenges to ensure widespread impact.

Introduction

Literacy plays a crucial role in empowering individuals and communities by providing the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the complexities of the modern world (Bhattacharyya, 1991; Ratmaningsih et al., 2019; Wagner, 1995). It enables individuals to access information, make informed decisions, and actively participate in social, economic, and political activities (Guyen, 2021; Ratmaningsih et al., 2019). Additionally, literacy is a fundamental human right and a key driver of sustainable development. Recognizing the transformative power of literacy, governments and organizations across the globe have deployed various initiatives to promote literacy and improve educational outcomes (Bhattacharyya, 1991; Wagner, 1995).

However, despite these efforts, many communities still face significant challenges in achieving functional literacy levels. These challenges can be attributed to various factors, including limited access to educational resources, low-quality instruction, socioeconomic disparities, and cultural barriers (McKay, 2020). As a result, these communities are often marginalized and have limited opportunities for personal growth and socio-economic development. The integration of local culture into literacy teaching has been recognized as a promising approach to overcome these challenges and empower communities (Wahyudin, 2015). By incorporating elements of the local culture, language, and context into literacy instruction, individuals are more engaged and motivated to learn, leading to improved outcomes and increased community ownership of the learning process (Hadianto et al., 2022).

The Labuhanbatu District Local Literacy Initiative is a community-driven program to promote and enhance literacy levels among the local population. This initiative is a crucial step towards improving educational outcomes and fostering a culture of reading and learning within the district. Sebagaimana yang telah dilakukan di daerah lain, program demikian the program aims to bolster the skills and knowledge of the community members, thereby empowering them to better navigate the modern world (Andalas & Sembada, 2020).

The initiative utilizes a multi-faceted approach, encompassing various strategies such as adult literacy programs, mobile libraries, community reading clubs, and school-based book drives. These strategies not only target different age groups but also cater to the diverse needs and preferences of the population (Ratmaningsih et al., 2019; Stanistreet, 2019). The program recognizes that literacy is not limited to just reading and writing but also includes critical thinking, problem-solving, digital literacy, and cultural intelligence. By encompassing these various aspects of literacy, the Labuhanbatu District Local Literacy Initiative aims to empower individuals and communities with the skills and knowledge necessary to actively participate in their local and global contexts (Wiyono, 2021).

The initiative's multifaceted approach includes workshops, community reading events, and the establishment of local libraries. These efforts are designed to not only improve reading and writing abilities but also to instill a love for learning and intellectual curiosity (Munawaroh et al., 2017; Pambayun et al., 2020). This comprehensive approach acknowledges that literacy goes beyond the mastery of basic reading and writing skills. It encompasses the development of critical thinking, communication skills, and cultural awareness (Hadianto et al., 2022). In addition to promoting literacy skills, the initiative also seeks to address the social change that has occurred in the rural society of Labuhanbatu District (Hadianto et al., 2022).

It is important to acknowledge the efforts made by the Labuhanbatu District Local Literacy Initiative in promoting literacy within the community. However, it is also important to consider potential drawbacks or opposing perspectives. Some may argue that while the initiative aims to empower individuals with various literacy skills, it may not fully address the specific needs and preferences of different age groups within the community (Mutiana et al., 2020; Nurmahanani, 2021). For example, the emphasis on digital literacy and critical thinking skills might cater more to younger members of the community, potentially leaving out older individuals who may require different forms of literacy support. Additionally, there may be challenges in ensuring equal access to reliable internet and digital resources, particularly in rural areas (Aruleba & Jere, 2022; Sahharon et al., 2014; Van Deursen & Van Dijk, 2011). This could limit the effectiveness of the initiative's digital literacy efforts and exclude those who do not have access to technology.

Moreover, the multifaceted approach, including workshops and community reading events, may not be accessible or practical for all members of the community (Aruleba & Jere, 2022). Factors such as economic limitations or lack of resources in certain rural areas may pose substantial obstacles to the widespread implementation of these initiatives (Alias, 2013; Sahharon et al., 2014). It is essential to consider the challenges faced in the development and execution of these programs, particularly in rural communities where resources and infrastructure may be limited.

Furthermore, there may be differing responses from the members of the Labuhanbatu District community regarding the initiative. While some may embrace and benefit from the program, others may have reservations or face challenges in engaging with the initiatives, particularly if they feel that their specific needs or interests are not adequately addressed. In considering the impact of the literacy teaching design in the context of social change, it is important to undertake a comprehensive analysis that also considers potential limitations and challenges in reaching and benefiting all members of the community (Fatmawati, 2022; Rangel & Valdez, 2017).

Overall, it is important to recognize and address potential drawbacks and perspectives to ensure that the Labuhanbatu District Local Literacy Initiative effectively meets the diverse needs of the community and maximizes its impact in promoting literacy.

To further investigate the impact of the intervention on reading skills and the broader implications on the community, we develop two research questions that will guide our exploration. These questions will delve into the specific aspects of the teaching design and the activities conducted by the participants, providing a nuanced understanding of the intervention's effects. Through this in-depth investigation, we aim to uncover the multifaceted impact of the literacy initiative on the reading skills, critical thinking abilities, and overall empowerment of the community members in Labuhanbatu District. The research question focuses on the effectiveness of the teaching design in improving reading skills and fostering a

love for learning among the participants.

In the case study of the Labuhanbatu District Local Literacy Initiative, researchers developed a literacy teaching design that was based on a geographical analysis of community needs and constructed according to local culture. The literacy teaching design developed in the Labuhanbatu District Local Literacy Initiative is a testament to the power of incorporating local culture into literacy instruction. This approach recognizes that literacy is not just about acquiring basic reading skills, but also about equipping individuals with the ability to navigate and solve real-life problems in their communities.

Literature View

The Local Literacy Initiative in Labuhanbatu District has successfully demonstrated promising results in empowering the community through literacy. This is evidenced by the attainment of the Literacy Priority Award from the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemendikbud RI). Recognized for its successful promotion of reading culture, Kemendikbud has included Labuhanbatu, along with 18 other districts/cities in Indonesia, as a region with the highest scores in the Regional Literacy Development Index (IPLD) in Indonesia (Edisimedan.com., 2017; Hetanews.com., 2017).

In evaluating the effectiveness of the local literacy initiative in Labuhanbatu District, the holistic approach adopted in the development of literacy skills becomes critically important. This aligns with findings from various previous studies indicating that an approach encompassing aspects beyond reading and writing skills, such as digital literacy, reading culture, and critical thinking abilities, has a significant impact on enhancing community literacy (Fitrianti et al., 2021; Hadianto et al., 2022; Handayani et al., 2021; Kusuma, 2022; Lyesmaya et al., 2020; Nurhidayat et al., 2022)6 and the mean pretest control score in the experimental group was 67,3. In the experimental population, pretest and posttest data were usually distributed with a value of $km -0.71$ and 0.80 respectively. The hypotheses were calculated using *t*-test, which is pooled variants, and the result of *t* obtained was 8,598 at 0,05 relevant level and table 1,987. Therefore, H_0 was rejected and H_a was approved because the substantial level showed to obtain α table. The results of this study showed that the impact model of problem-based learning using LKPD based on the local benefits of South Sumatra had a substantial impact on the learning outcomes of studies at SDN 16 Prabumulih.”, ”container-title”: ”JPGI (Jurnal Penelitian Guru Indonesia. Many researchers on this issue argue that literacy development issues should be examined through a holistic approach. For a considerable number, the holistic approach is considered the first and foremost aspect when assessing the development of literacy skills (Bhattacharyya, 1991; Kusuma, 2022; Lyesmaya et al., 2020). A holistic approach to literacy development refers to an approach that considers comprehensive aspects of enhancing individual and societal literacy abilities (Bhattacharyya, 1991; Wagner, 2015). This approach not only focuses on reading and writing skills but also emphasizes digital literacy, reading culture, and critical thinking abilities (Easton, 2014). With a holistic approach, efforts to develop literacy are not limited to technical skills alone but also take into account the cultural, social, and environmental contexts in which individuals are situated (Bhattacharyya, 1991).

The holistic approach to literacy development aims to integrate local cultural values and consider the needs and interests of the community in selecting reading materials and designing relevant learning. This includes choosing themes for reading materials that not only enhance reading skills, but also provide practical knowledge related to everyday life and employment opportunities, such as environmental care, sustainable farming practices, and entrepreneurial skill development (Hadianto et al., 2022; Situmorang

et al., 2023).

Moreover, a holistic approach to literacy development also considers the use of technology as a tool to improve literacy skills. In today's digital age, access to digital resources and online learning platforms can be an effective strategy for increasing access to information and education.

Therefore, a holistic approach to developing literacy not only focuses on technical skills but also considers local cultural values and technological utilization as an integral part of efforts toward enhancing community literacy (Behrman, 2002; Carbondale, 2016; Kim & Byington, 2016). This provides a strong foundation for creating sustainable literacy programs that can have significant impacts on society. Based on theories proposed by several researchers, a holistic approach encompassing other aspects like digital literacy, reading culture, and critical thinking has positive effects in improving the community's overall literary abilities. This is consistent with previous studies highlighting the importance of developing comprehensive literacies beyond just basic reading and writing skills.

Furthermore, research findings revealing the significant contribution of a holistic approach in local literacy development towards enhancing community literacy underscore the importance of adopting this strategy on a broader scale (Lyesmaya et al., 2020). Further discussion on the integration of local cultural values into reading materials also becomes a crucial aspect within the context of this literacy initiative. Findings from previous research indicate that the integration of local cultural values not only improves reading skills but also imparts practical knowledge relevant to daily life and employment opportunities. Therefore, this underscores the importance of considering local cultural aspects in the development of reading materials within similar literacy initiatives across various regions.

Methods

This research has been conducted to gain a comprehensive understanding of the effects of the literacy initiative in the Labuhanbatu District community. The study utilizes a case study design to thoroughly examine the initiative's impact on participants, including their reading abilities, critical thinking skills, and overall empowerment (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Tight, 2017). Fifteen informants participated in the study, representing diverse backgrounds within the community. This included students from both junior and senior high schools, teachers, literacy advocates, community leaders, and religious figures. The selection of participants was based on purposive sampling to ensure a range of perspectives and experiences.

The data has been collected through interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with the informants to gain insights into their experiences and perceptions regarding the literacy initiative. The focus group discussions provided a platform for participants to engage in collaborative dialogue, offering a deeper understanding of the collective impact of the initiative. Observations supplemented the interviews and discussions by capturing the practical implementation and reception of the literacy programs within the community.

In addition to the primary data collected through interviews, focus group discussions, and observations, the researcher also gathered secondary data from official government data reports such as the Central Statistics Agency, relevant journals related to the research topic, and several credible media outlets. This extensive collection of secondary data provided a comprehensive foundation for the research, offering insights into the broader context of literacy, education, and community development within the Labuhanbatu District. Thematic analysis has been completed to identify recurring patterns

and themes within the data, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the initiative's impact on the community. The analysis involved coding and categorizing the data to extract valuable insights regarding the effectiveness and challenges of the literacy program.

Results and Discussion

A. Case Study Analysis: Results Of The Labuhanbatu District Literacy Initiative

The Labuhanbatu District is one of the districts located in the North Sumatra province, Indonesia. The district's capital is situated in Rantau Prapat. As of 2022, the population of Labuhanbatu District is 508,024 people, with a population density of 240 people/km². Labuhanbatu District holds a strategic position, situated along the eastern Sumatra corridor and serving as a junction toward West Sumatra and Riau provinces. It connects the development centers of Sumatra and Java, and it has adequate access to international routes due to its direct proximity to the Strait of Malacca (Figure 1).



Figure 1 Location of Labuhanbatu District. (Wikimedia, licensed Under CC BY-SA 4.0, 2018)

In 2015, the literacy movement was formally announced by the Indonesian government through the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation (Permendikbud) No. 23 of 2015: Literacy is part of the character-building movement. This literacy movement regulates reading and writing for 15 minutes every day. Permendikbud Number 23 of 2015 encourages the emergence of 1) School Literacy Movement (GLS) at the Directorate General of Primary and Secondary Education; 2) Gerakan Indonesia Membaca (GIM) in the Directorate General of Early Childhood and Community Education; 3) Gerakan Literasi Bangsa (GLB) at the Language Development Agency. All these programs are contained in the National Literacy Movement (GLN) (Arafik et al., 2020; Setiawati et al., 2023; Sulistyono & Dwikurnaningsih, 2020).

The Indonesian government's formal announcement of the literacy movement in 2015, under Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 23, showcases a strong commitment to integrating literacy into character development. Mandating 15 minutes of daily reading and writing reflects a practical approach to cultivating consistent literacy habits. Encouraging specific programs like the School Literacy Movement (GLS) and Gerakan Indonesia Membaca (GIM) demonstrates a tailored strategy for diverse educational levels. The establishment of the National Literacy Movement (GLN) as

an umbrella organization underscores a coordinated effort to amplify the impact of these initiatives at a national level.

Since 2015, the Labuhanbatu District Government has been actively involved in interventions to enhance literacy culture through various programs. As recorded on May 20, 2015, the then Regent/Government, Tigor Panusunan Siregar, launched the «Gerakan Gemar Membaca Labuhanbatu» (Labuhanbatu Reading Enthusiasm Movement) at the Children’s Playground (www.hariansib.com, 2015). Since the launch of this program, various literacy communities have flourished in Labuhanbatu District. These communities have grown and operated independently, adopting various institutional models such as Community Reading Gardens (TBM), writers’ communities, literary communities, cultural arts studios, and library communities. For more details, please refer to Table 1 below:

Table 1. List of Active Literacy Institutions and Communities to the Labuhanbatu Literacy Movement

No	Category	Quantity
1	Community Reading Gardens	12
2	Village Libraries	34
3	Sub-District Libraries	3
4	Worship Place Libraries:	
	- Mosque Libraries	37
	- Church Libraries	8
5	Community Health Center Libraries	3
6	Specialized Libraries	2
7	Youth Literacy Communities	10
8	Literacy Communities Based on Local Arts and Culture	4
Total		113

(Source: Processed by researchers from field data in the year 2023)

In contributing to the Labuhanbatu Literacy Movement, a diverse array of literacy institutions and communities remain active. There are recorded 12 Community Reading Gardens, 3 Sub-District Libraries, 34 Village Libraries, and 45 Worship Place Libraries (with 37 of them located in Mosques and 8 in Churches). Additionally, the inclusion of 3 Community Health Center Libraries and 2 Specialized Libraries adds diversity to the literacy initiatives in this area. Furthermore, the vibrancy is evident through the participation of 10 youth-driven literacy communities, such as Arus Kata, Malam Puisi Rantau Prapat, and Forum Lingkar Pena. Notably, there are also 4 literacy communities based on local arts and culture, such as Sanggar Budaya Pesona Permata and Sanggar Nusantara. With this diversity, the Labuhanbatu Literacy Movement encompasses not only the classical aspects of libraries but also ignites literacy enthusiasm through local activities and arts.

From the overview above, it can be understood that since 2015, the Labuhanbatu District Government has taken proactive steps to enhance literacy culture through the Labuhanbatu Reading Enthusiasm Movement. This program was launched on May 20, 2015, by Regent Tigor Panusunan Siregar, and since then, various literacy communities have independently grown and flourished in the

region. A total of 113 active literacy institutions and communities are recorded, including Community Reading Gardens, Village Libraries, Sub-District Libraries, Worship Place Libraries, Community Health Center Libraries, Specialized Libraries, as well as youth-driven and local arts and culture-based literacy communities. This diversification reflects the collective commitment of various stakeholders to creating a holistic and dynamic literacy environment (Ratmaningsih et al., 2019).

The Labuhanbatu District Local Literacy Initiative has demonstrated promising results in empowering communities through literacy. Since its implementation, there has been a noticeable increase in literacy rates among residents of the district. According to data published by the Central Statistics Agency of North Sumatra Province, the literacy rates in the district show a positive trend year by year (BPS, 2018). There is a notable difference between the period before the implementation of the program and the subsequent years, as depicted in the graph below:

Furthermore, participants in the initiative have reported improved confidence and self-esteem, as well as a greater sense of belonging and connection to their communities. Community members have expressed gratitude for the access to books, educational resources, and learning opportunities provided by the initiative. As stated by informant 1, «*Community members are more active in literacy now. They feel supported and have better access to literacy resources. I believe the use of relevant reading materials and group discussion approaches greatly helps community members to engage more deeply*» (Interview with Literacy Community Leader 1). In line with the statement from informant 1, informant 3 also mentioned:

«The community's response to this literacy initiative is very positive. They express gratitude for the access provided to them for books, educational resources, and learning opportunities. Community members feel greatly benefited by this access. They express that having access to various books has opened new windows of knowledge for them. These books are not just sources of information but also learning tools that help them develop various skills» (Interview with Literacy Community Leader 3).

In the excerpt, the reported improvements in confidence, self-esteem, and community connection among participants indicate that the literacy initiative in Labuhan Batu extends beyond academic gains, contributing positively to individuals' holistic development. The emphasis on relevant reading materials and group discussions, as highlighted by Informant 1, suggests that the initiative adopts a learner-centered and participatory approach, fostering active engagement within the community. Additionally, the expressed gratitude from community members and their acknowledgment of the initiative's impact underscores the significance of providing accessible literacy resources, demonstrating the initiative's success in addressing community needs and fostering a culture of lifelong learning.

Parents and caregivers have also reported positive changes in their children's academic performance and overall attitude toward learning, as stated by informant 5, «It is delightful to see our children becoming more enthusiastic about literacy. They no longer see reading as a tedious task but as an enjoyable and beneficial activity. Their overall learning attitude has also undergone positive changes; they are more motivated and confident» (Interview with Parent of Student 7). These findings align with the results of research conducted by other researchers in Central Lombok Regency, which found that community members are actively participating in literacy campaigns and events, demonstrating their enthusiasm for education and personal growth (Widodo et al., 2020).

B. Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing Local Literacy Programs

The Labuhanbatu District Local Literacy Initiative serves as evidence of the transformative power of literacy in community empowerment. This is an inspirational case study that highlights the positive outcomes of investing in literacy programs and initiatives at the local level. The effectiveness of the literacy teaching design, which integrates discourse and activities related to local culture, is evident in the improved reading skills demonstrated by the participants. The themes of reading materials used in the Labuhanbatu District Local Literacy Initiative include local history, customs and traditional beliefs, community development, environmental preservation, and entrepreneurship. This initiative also emphasizes the importance of fostering a reading culture and creating a literate community. The Labuhanbatu District Local Literacy Initiative has successfully brought the community together through collaborative efforts.

The Labuhanbatu District is an area still predominantly characterized by rural regions, with approximately 70 percent of the area being rural. Consequently, similar to challenges in other regions, implementing local literacy programs in rural areas comes with its own set of challenges and opportunities (Zakeri et al., 2021). However, with the right structure and support, these challenges can be overcome. Some challenges faced during the implementation of the Labuhanbatu District Local Literacy Initiative include a lack of clear and convenient organizational structures, an absence of sustainable funding sources, limited resources and infrastructure, and low community participation due to various barriers.

However, there are also opportunities to address these challenges and make the local literacy programs successful. For example, by establishing strong partnerships with local government institutions, NGOs, and community organizations, the initiative can tap into additional resources and expertise (Ibrahim et al., 2018; Nababan, 2020; Sharma, 2015). As implemented in other regions, these partnerships can help address funding gaps, provide training and capacity-building support, and increase community engagement (Widodo et al., 2020). Additionally, leveraging technology can also be beneficial in overcoming challenges (Chaerowati & Ibrahim, 2019). It can facilitate access to educational resources, provide distance learning opportunities, and improve communication and collaboration among stakeholders. Overall, implementing local literacy programs requires addressing the challenges while leveraging the available opportunities. As conveyed by literacy observers in Labuhanbatu District, informant 8 states that:

“By implementing a comprehensive approach that combines pedagogical strategies, community engagement, and resource mobilization, the Labuhanbatu District Local Literacy Initiative can create a sustainable and impactful program that empowers communities through literacy”. (Interview with informant 8).

Based on the findings of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) we conducted, we arrived at the interesting conclusion that The Labuhanbatu District Local Literacy Initiative has been successful in empowering communities through literacy by implementing various strategies. These strategies include:

- a) Establishing literacy centers in strategic locations within the district, providing easy access to educational resources and opportunities for learning;

- b) Providing professional development and training for teachers and community volunteers to enhance their instructional practices and literacy skills;
- c) Developing culturally relevant and inclusive literacy materials that reflect the local context and interests of community members;
- d) Collaborating with local schools and educational institutions to integrate literacy programs into existing curriculum and activities.
- e) Engaging parents and caregivers in literacy activities through workshops, parent-teacher associations, and home-based reading programs.

The Labuhanbatu District Local Literacy Initiative has also focused on community outreach and awareness campaigns to promote the importance of literacy and encourage community participation. In conclusion, the Labuhanbatu District Local Literacy Initiative has successfully empowered communities through literacy by implementing a comprehensive approach that includes establishing literacy centers, providing professional development and training, developing culturally relevant materials, collaborating with local schools, engaging parents and caregivers, and conducting community outreach campaigns.

C. Influence of the Labuhanbatu District Literacy Initiative on the Community

The Labuhanbatu District Local Literacy Initiative has had a profound influence on the community. There has been a significant increase in literacy rates among community members, including both children and adults. This is evident through the improved reading and writing skills demonstrated by individuals who have participated in the program. Additionally, the initiative has fostered a love for reading and learning within the community. Some student informants acknowledge the presence of changes in their social environment, as expressed by one of the informants below:

“According to me, this literacy initiative has truly brought a significant impact. I see my peers becoming more interested in reading and writing. The literacy activities organized also provide opportunities to expand our knowledge and enhance our skills. This indicates that literacy is not only seen as a necessity but as something enjoyable and beneficial”. (Interview with informant 6).

Community members are now more eager to access educational resources, visit literacy centers, and engage in literacy-related activities. Furthermore, the Labuhanbatu District Local Literacy Initiative has brought communities together through collaborative efforts. Community members, educators, and volunteers are now working hand-in-hand toward the common goal of enhancing literacy skills. Through this collaboration, a sense of unity and shared responsibility has been cultivated, resulting in a stronger and more connected community. In line with that, informant 5 conveys the following:

“I see a closer collaboration among them. Engaging in literacy activities together forms a sense of unity and shared responsibility. This creates a more harmonious and supportive environment, reflecting spiritual values applied in daily life”. (Interview with Informant 5).

Overall, the Labuhanbatu District Local Literacy Initiative has not only improved individual literacy skills but has also transformed the community as a whole. The initiative has sparked a ripple effect, inspiring other districts and communities to implement similar literacy programs and initiatives.

Conclusion

The Labuhanbatu District Local Literacy Initiative serves as a powerful case study that highlights the importance of a comprehensive and community-driven approach to literacy. By involving various stakeholders, including local government, schools, teachers, parents, and community members, the initiative has been able to create a supportive ecosystem that fosters sustainable literacy development. Through the implementation of a well-designed literacy teaching design in the learning process, individuals in the Labuhanbatu District have experienced positive changes in their reading and writing abilities, which have had direct and indirect impacts on their personal, educational, and professional lives. The themes of the reading materials used in the lesson units were carefully selected to align with the specific goals and objectives of the Labuhanbatu District Local Literacy Initiative.

The themes of the reading materials covered a wide range of subjects, including local history, customs and traditional beliefs, community development, environmental preservation, and entrepreneurship. By incorporating these diverse themes, the initiative has not only enhanced participants' reading skills but also equipped them with essential life skills and knowledge relevant to their daily lives. Furthermore, the initiative's integration into the local education system has ensured that literacy development becomes a sustainable and long-term endeavor. The initiative has also provided ongoing support to teachers and learners through regular monitoring and evaluation, professional development workshops, and access to resources and materials. Overall, the successful implementation of the literacy teaching design in the Labuhanbatu District has demonstrated its usefulness in changing reading skills, training life skills required in daily activities, and improving individuals' daily earning activities.

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