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Nurturing Literacy Ecosystem for Young Learners through the Gerakan Literasi Anak in Kendari to Support the Sustainable Development Goals

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ABSTRACT

Building a literacy culture among children requires more than providing reading materials; it demands collaboration and consistent engagement. This study explores the Children's Literacy Movement (Gerakan Literasi Anak or GLA) in Kendari, Indonesia, as a joint initiative between government institutions and local literacy communities. Employing a library research method, this study draws on documented programs, academic reports, and public policy materials related to literacy development in Kendari. The data were validated through focus group discussions (FGDs) with literacy practitioners and education stakeholders. Findings indicate that GLA promotes early literacy through both substantive and motivational strategies: diverse and engaging reading materials stimulate children's interest, while practices such as literacy greetings and public recognition of progress contribute to a positive and supportive environment. The synergy between the Kendari Language Office (KBST) and literacy communities has created meaningful spaces for students to express themselves, as seen in the publication of their writings in local magazines and newspapers. Despite challenges like limited vocabulary and low confidence in writing, students showed notable progress. The study concludes that GLA represents a replicable model

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for literacy promotion, contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals—especially SDG 4 (quality education) and SDG 17 (partnerships)—as well as fostering 21st-century skills and character development.

Keywords: Children’s Literacy; Literacy Ecosystem; Literacy Movement; Community Engagement; Sustainable Development

1. Introduction

The culture of literacy in Indonesia plays a crucial role in shaping an inclusive and knowledgeable society. Literacy encompasses not only the ability to read and write but also the capacity to think critically, comprehend information, and apply knowledge in everyday life. However, the literacy level among Indonesian students remains low. According to PISA data, Indonesia ranked 64th out of 65 countries in 2012 and 62nd out of 70 countries in 2019. In 2015, the reading ability of Indonesian children aged 9–14 was among the lowest, with scores stagnating between 396 and 397 points from 2012 to 2015. The 2021 National Assessment further revealed that one in two students had not reached the minimum level of literacy competency, highlighting a general lack of understanding of reading materials, particularly informational texts. This situation poses a significant challenge to the development of human resources in Indonesia^[1].

The low literacy rate presents a serious obstacle to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), which emphasize inclusive and equitable access to education for all. Poor literacy hinders mastery of 21st-century skills and contributes to the inequality, as individuals with low literacy skills often face limited access to social and economic opportunities. Moreover, strengthening literacy culture supports a sustainable community, as literate citizens are empowered to participate actively in regional development.

Educational interventions are needed to foster reading and writing interest from an early age, as literacy is a fundamental right essential for personal and societal development as well as lifelong learning^[2]. Several studies have explored approaches to improving literacy both in primary education and community settings. Hidayah and Rahmawati examined the supporting and inhibiting factors of school literacy movements in promoting reading interest as a response to 21st-century learning demands^[3]. Heryadi and

Anriani and Moi and Dopo highlighted the effectiveness of programs such as “15 minutes of reading before lessons,” which significantly boosted students’ reading interest and engagement^[4, 5]. At the community level, the Buru Reading Movement in Maluku successfully promoted reading habits through village libraries and mobile libraries, despite operational challenges^[6]. Daniels introduced the concept of “assemblage” to describe early childhood literacy as the dynamic interaction between children, classroom environments, and materials, challenging traditional ideas of individual agency in literacy development^[7].

These studies reinforce that literacy is the foundation of learning, both at the individual and community levels, and a driver of educational progress, 21st-century competencies, and character development. To build a robust literacy culture, activities that stimulate interest and motivation are essential^[8]. One effective strategy involves addressing psychological factors such as student interest and motivation. Research has shown that rewards—ranging from small gifts to symbolic incentives like star stamps—can significantly enhance children’s motivation to learn, especially in primary education. These rewards can boost enthusiasm, promote active participation, and stimulate positive behavior^[9–12]. Additionally, rewards play a key role in shifting motivation from extrinsic to intrinsic, especially when personalized and supported by a positive learning environment^[13].

Elements of competition, such as rankings in study groups or challenges like submitting articles for publication, can also motivate children to achieve and develop their skills^[14, 15]. In the long term, gradually increased challenges and opportunities for self-actualization that support creative expression and individuality are essential in cultivating a motivating and supportive academic environment^[16, 17]. Thus, a combination of rewards, challenges, emotional support, and a competitive yet collaborative atmosphere can significantly enhance student motivation and engagement in learning^[14, 15, 18].

The Indonesian government, through regional institu-

tions, has actively promoted literacy programs, most notably the National Literacy Movement (*Gerakan Literasi Nasional*, hereinafter referred to as GLN) launched in 2016. In Kendari, for example, the Southeast Sulawesi Language Office (*Kantor Bahasa Sulawesi Tenggara*, hereinafter referred to as KBST) collaborated with local literacy communities and schools to implement the Children's Literacy Movement (*Gerakan Literasi Anak*, hereinafter referred to as GLA). This initiative, guided by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, exemplifies collective efforts in promoting literacy^[4, 19]. Such collaborations align with SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), which emphasizes multi-stakeholder cooperation in achieving sustainable social transformation.

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the GLA program as a form of synergy between KBST, as a government institution, and various literacy communities in Kendari in promoting literacy culture among elementary school students. Framed within the paradigms of SDG 4 and SDG 17, this study describes the strategic practices of the GLA initiative and illustrates how primary school students in Kendari are given space for self-actualization through literacy. The findings of this study may serve as a model for cultivating a literacy culture that contributes not only to educational improvement but also to the achievement of SDG targets in human development, equitable access, and sustainable social progress.

1.1. The Indonesian National Literacy Movement

The GLN is a government initiative aimed at enhancing the culture of literacy across Indonesia. GLN seeks to facilitate access to quality reading materials and to encourage communities to actively engage in reading and writing activities. The program encompasses a wide range of activities, such as the provision of reading materials, training for teachers and parents, and the development of child-friendly libraries.

GLN plays a critical role in bridging the literacy gap between urban and rural areas in Indonesia by promoting community-based literacy activities and expanding educational access. Through its various initiatives, GLN aims to cultivate a culture of reading and writing, particularly in underserved areas. It encompasses six dimensions of literacy: reading, writing, numeracy, scientific literacy, digital literacy,

and cultural literacy, thereby ensuring a holistic educational approach^[20]. These dimensions align GLN with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), which promotes inclusive and equitable quality education for all, and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

The Language Development and Fostering Agency (Badan Bahasa) plays a pivotal role in the implementation of GLN by facilitating coordination among various stakeholders, including government agencies, educational institutions, and the wider community. This agency addresses challenges such as limited resources and low public awareness regarding the importance of literacy. By serving as a coordinator and collaborator, Badan Bahasa fosters partnerships between the government and educational institutions, ensuring that literacy programs are effectively designed and implemented^[21]. These efforts help bridge educational access gaps among different social groups.

Moreover, literacy initiatives contribute to enhancing individual capacity and economic empowerment. Improved literacy skills enhance workforce competence and individual competitiveness in the job market. Therefore, strengthening a culture of literacy from an early age through synergy between government bodies, literacy communities, and the public represents a strategic step toward achieving sustainable development.

As part of this effort, Badan Bahasa delegates its duties and functions to technical implementation units in each province, including the KBST. Literacy activities constitute one of KBST's primary responsibilities, alongside programs for language and literature development and preservation. Between 2016 and June 2024, literacy initiatives conducted through the collaboration between KBST, and literacy communities have taken the form of training sessions, competitions, festivals, and seminars targeting diverse participants, including elementary, junior high, and senior high school students, university students, teachers, literary writers, and journalists. These initiatives not only reinforce literacy at the local level but also contribute more broadly to the achievement of the SDGs, particularly in areas of education, equitable access, and socio-economic development.

1.2. Substantive Strategy

The substantive strategy for literacy development focuses on enhancing the quality of content, methods, and ma-

materials delivered to children. Content enhancement includes the selection of relevant and engaging reading themes^[22], suited to the developmental stages of children, such as local folktales, motivational stories, or general knowledge packaged in entertaining ways. Additionally, literacy materials are strengthened through the integration of visual and multimedia elements, such as picture books, short animations, or interactive applications that facilitate children's understanding of key concepts^[23]. This approach contributes to SDG 4 (Quality Education) by ensuring that learning materials are inclusive, innovative, and accessible to all children, including those with diverse learning styles.

Literacy methods are also designed to be more innovative, incorporating approaches such as project-based learning^[24], in which children create written works or presentations based on what they have read. Group discussion methods can also be implemented to encourage children to share their perspectives and learn to appreciate different viewpoints. With these approaches, the substantive strategy not only enhances technical reading and writing skills but also nurtures critical and analytical thinking abilities, skills that are essential for future development. The emphasis on critical and creative thinking aligns with SDG 4 and SDG 17, which promote quality education that encourages cognitive skills, global understanding, and collaboration to achieve common goals.

1.3. Motivational Strategy

The motivational strategy aims to foster children's enthusiasm and interest in literacy through creative and enjoyable approaches^[25]. One effective way is to create a supportive literacy environment, such as attractively decorated reading corners, themed literacy festivals, or writing and storytelling competitions in which children actively participate. These activities not only provide engaging literacy experiences but also strengthen children's emotional connection to reading and writing. Such inclusive and creativity-inducing literacy environments contribute to offering equal opportunities for all children, including those in remote or underserved areas, to access high-quality literacy experiences.

This strategy also helps overcome boredom and transforms literacy into an activity that children look forward to. By embedding elements of healthy competition and recognition, children's motivation to keep learning can be sig-

nificantly increased^[26]. This approach supports SDG 4 by promoting participatory and enjoyable learning, and by ensuring that every child has access to learning methods suited to their needs and interests.

1.4. Content-Based and Literature-Based Approaches in Language Education

Research has demonstrated that content- and literature-based approaches can significantly enhance students' reading comprehension, critical thinking, and language skills. Content-Based Language Instruction (CBLI) has been demonstrated to improve reading performance and critical thinking skills among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students^[27]. Similarly, the use of literature activities grounded in Reader-Response theory can foster both reading and critical thinking skills in EFL learners^[28]. Literature-based reading programs that incorporate cognitive strategy instruction through student-centered activities have also shown positive effects on reading comprehension, critical thinking, and self-confidence^[29]. Furthermore, content-based EFL syllabi that integrate multiple subject areas have been found to improve language proficiency, critical thinking, and content knowledge^[30]. Collectively, these studies suggest that incorporating content- and literature-based approaches into language instruction can effectively promote students' reading comprehension, critical thinking, and overall language development.

Complementing these findings, recent studies in Asia reflect a growing interest in integrating literary texts into language instruction. A study conducted in Hong Kong found that undergraduate students responded positively to reading contemporary English fiction, reporting enhanced comprehension, writing skills, critical thinking, and increased motivation^[31]. Their findings reinforce the argument that literature-based, content-rich instruction, mainly when it includes authentic literary materials, can significantly benefit language learners in diverse contexts.

2. Methods

This study employed a desk study approach, which involves collecting data from library-based sources, including existing literature and official documents^[32]. Within qualitative research, desk studies are commonly used to re-

construct information from multiple sources and to highlight the role of existing literature in understanding a given phenomenon^[33]. Rather than gathering new empirical data, this method emphasizes the analysis of pre-existing policy documents^[34]. Such an approach aligns with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), particularly in promoting access to research-based information to support inclusive, evidence-based educational policies and collaborative partnerships. Moreover, desk studies often draw data from government agencies, publications, and internal libraries, providing insight into specific locations while identifying both known and previously unexplored conditions^[35].

The primary data in this study consisted of literacy activity reports issued by the KBST, which had collaborated with literacy communities in Kendari. Supporting data were obtained from digital documentation, including content from the official KBST website and the social media accounts of local literacy communities, covering the period from 2014 to 2023. The analysis of this data is relevant to SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) because it highlights collaborations between government institutions and grassroots literacy communities aimed at promoting literacy culture at the local level, which ultimately contributes to achieving SDG 4 through the enhancement of quality education.

In 2023, KBST did not conduct school-targeted literacy programs in the form of training but instead focused on organizing competitions and publishing works in mass media. Following the principles of data collection, data reduction, data classification, and data analysis^[36], this study limited its data scope to literacy activities targeting elementary and secondary school students. The data collected were then verified through a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) involving the literacy coordinator of KBST and representatives from local literacy communities. The involvement of various stakeholders in the data verification process aligns with the principles of SDG 4 and SDG 17, which emphasize quality education and the importance of multi-sectoral partnerships in advancing sustainable development goals.

Subsequently, the verified data were reduced and classified based on the year of implementation. Data identification was conducted by analyzing the technical aspects and strategic approaches employed in the execution of literacy activities. This served as the foundation for conducting in-

depth analysis to address the research questions. As such, this approach not only offers a comprehensive overview of the development of literacy culture in Kendari but also contributes to the formulation of evidence-based policies to improve the effectiveness of literacy programs, in line with the targets of SDG 4 and SDG 17.

3. The Children's Literacy Movement (Gerakan Literasi Anak-GLA) in Kendari

The launch of the GLN in 2016 served as the foundation for implementing children's literacy activities in Kendari. Since then, the KBST has actively collaborated with various literacy communities in Kendari to carry out these activities. Every year, KBST organizes literacy programs under different event names. However, the core activity remains the same, literacy initiative involving multiple stakeholders, particularly school-aged children from elementary to high school levels. Between 2014 and 2022, KBST consistently conducted literacy training programs in synergy with schools and literacy communities in Kendari.

3.1. Kendari Children's Literacy Movement, 2016

The Kendari Children's Literacy Movement was held from April 1 to April 30, 2016. This initiative involved literacy delivery and practice in 21 public and private elementary schools throughout Kendari, with four sessions conducted at each school. The materials introduced included reading habits, the identification of various text types, and writing exercises for narrative, procedural, poetic, and descriptive texts. The sessions employed methods such as writing practice and assignments, educational games, and lectures to explain the materials and activities.

The first session began with introductions, an overview of the Children's Literacy Movement program, the teaching methods to be used, and a description of the text types to be learned. In the following sessions, students were guided to write or create based on one of three text types: personal recounts, poetry, and procedural texts. Students were given the freedom to choose their own writing topics. Throughout the program, students worked on assignments both in

class and at home. These assignments aimed to stimulate and guide students' thoughts to focus on the writing process. Once completed, the students read their work aloud and received feedback from the KBST literacy team. In general, most students were able to write according to the themes and text types selected. However, some still experienced difficulties in writing effectively. Those who had shown proficiency in writing were encouraged to refine and clarify their language to enhance their work. Meanwhile, students who struggled were given continuous guidance and motivation to keep practicing.

This initiative resulted in several key outcomes, including the successful synergy between KBST and numerous elementary schools in Kendari. All participants, who were students from the 21 participating schools, engaged enthusiastically in this program. The students' written works were documented in an annex to the program report. Selected pieces were published in the "Kolom Anak" (children's column) section of the *Harian Rakyat Sultra*, a local daily newspaper. Overall, the synergy between KBST and the elementary schools in Kendari was well established and yielded positive outcomes.

3.2. Literacy Program for Senior High School Students in Kendari, 2016

The Literacy Program for Senior High School Students in Kendari was held in two periods: July to August and September to October 2016, in the KBST Hall. Each period included five sessions. The program was facilitated by KBST, featuring resource persons who were either literacy activists or KBST functional staff members. This event, held annually, was attended by 40 students from ten senior high schools across Kendari.

The objectives of the program were to bring together students from across Kendari into a shared community, gather feedback from students regarding challenges in literacy writing, introduce the concept of text conversion, provide theoretical understanding, and foster students' literacy skills. Key topics included identifying text types, text conversion, writing and conversion practices, discussions and evaluations, and student presentations of their work.

This program exemplified the implementation of SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) by promoting the publication of students' written

work while strengthening partnerships with communities representing local creativity.

3.3. The Literacy Ceria Program, 2017

In 2017, KBST intensively promoted literacy programs within communities, particularly those focused on children. The program was labelled as Literasi Ceria which means *joyful literacy*, implemented in four community libraries: Pustaka Kabanti, Pustaka Teluk Kendari, Komunitas Meohai, and TBM Tanjung Tiram. Each had its own unique characteristics. Pustaka Kabanti and Komunitas Meohai were located in residential areas where children had limited outdoor play space and minimal interaction with nature, making them more exposed to digital technology due to easy internet access. In contrast, participants from Pustaka Teluk Kendari and TBM Tanjung Tiram had access to open coastal environments and less exposure to digital devices.

Literacy activities were essential to enhance children's reading interest, promote community and parental involvement in literacy development, and create a literacy-friendly atmosphere in their environments. Each community hosted 20 literacy sessions. A KBST staff member led each site, responsible for coordinating participants, scheduling, liaising with resource persons, assisting in evaluating student assignments, reporting activities, and more. Every Sunday from February to July 2017, children participated enthusiastically in various literacy activities including reading and writing different types of texts, listening to and retelling stories, writing poetry, drawing, and crafting.

One memorable literacy learning activity was the storytelling session held on Sunday, February 19, 2017, at Pustaka Teluk Kendari. The children listened eagerly to stories told by a guest speaker and were later asked to retell them. Several children volunteered to perform, including two with speech impairments who bravely shared their versions. Their enthusiasm and confidence were remarkable. As a token of appreciation, organizers gave gifts to those who performed. Before concluding, the children were assigned to write about their most memorable experiences.

3.4. Literacy Community Development, 2018

In 2018, KBST continued literacy programs across sev-

eral communities, including Pustaka Kabanti, Komunitas Tanjung Tiram, Taman Baca Meohai, and Pustaka Teluk Kendari. Participants were children residing near each community location. Each group included 30 children, none of whom had previously participated in similar programs. Most were in Grades IV and V of elementary school. Each community conducted 20 literacy sessions. The program content expanded beyond basic reading and writing literacy to include numeracy and cultural literacy (e.g., performing dramas based on local stories). Numeracy literacy was designed to improve understanding of mathematical concepts, while cultural literacy aimed to nurture creativity, strengthen self-expression, and make literacy learning more interactive and enjoyable.

The facilitators came from diverse backgrounds, including members of the IKA Duta Bahasa KBST alumni association. Their skills ranged from storytelling and drawing to public speaking. They also came from various professions, such as educators and private sector employees, bringing collective experience to the sessions.

Learning methods emphasized hands-on practice. For example, during a procedural text writing session at Pustaka Kabanti, children planted salam trees in small pots. Divided into eight groups, each received soil, salam saplings, and pots. The instructor demonstrated the planting process, assisted by two IKA Duta Bahasa volunteers. After planting, the children regrouped and were tasked with writing procedural texts describing the planting activity. Since they had just performed the task, the writing process went smoothly. Before the session ended, the children submitted their writing assignments. The resource person reviewed and selected five works to be read aloud in front of the class. The five student authors received gift packages from KBST. At the end of the session, the resource person reminded the children to water and care for the trees they had planted so they could eventually benefit from them.

The lesson on writing procedural texts through the activity of planting trees helped broaden the students' knowledge and offered valuable experiences. It encouraged them to cultivate a sense of responsibility by engaging in activities that have a positive impact on the environment, understanding the growth process of plants, recognizing the importance of plants in life, and realizing the interconnection between nature and sustainable living.

3.5. The Reading Community Development, 2019

In 2019, KBST conducted a Community Reading Program in four communities: TBM Tanjung Tiram (Konawe Selatan Regency), TBM Pustaka Keluarga Pesisir, SDN 05 Abeli, and MI Al Fath (Kendari). Each community hosted 30 students as participants. Over the course of 20 sessions, participants received a variety of materials including reading and writing different types of texts (recount texts, procedural texts, narrative texts, and descriptive texts), public speaking (as an MC, delivering speeches, and storytelling), listening to inspiring stories, and making crafts (such as photo frames, keychains, flannel decorations, pencil holders, etc.). Other topics included an introduction to photography, writing and reading poetry, and creating wall magazines.

Activities were held every Sunday to avoid interfering with the students' school schedule. In each session, students were assigned to write texts related to the topic discussed. For example, during the craft-making or wall magazine session, they were instructed to write procedural texts related to the craft-making process. In the poetry writing session, students were asked to write poems on a theme of their choice. They were given approximately 15 minutes to complete their writings, which were then submitted to the instructors. Five of the best pieces were selected to be read aloud by the authors in front of the class, and the writers received gift packages from the Language Office. Different students were chosen in each session to ensure everyone eventually received a gift. The students participated in the entire activity series with enthusiasm and joy, which was evident from their excited response to the KBST team and resource persons. The humorous and friendly demeanor of the resource persons contributed significantly to the students' enjoyment. In addition, the interactive teaching methods, incorporating games and songs, encouraged the students to complete their tasks with enthusiasm.

One of the most engaging topics during the 2019 literacy program was a session featuring professionals such as doctors, lawyers, soldiers, prison officers, architects, and mining workers. They came to the classroom in their professional attire. These interactions provided students with broader insights into various careers and allowed them to interact directly, hear about real-life work experiences, and

understand the roles and responsibilities of different professions, fostering mutual respect. The session also inspired students to pursue their dreams and emphasized the importance of hard work to achieve their aspirations. During this session, students were tasked with writing about their dream jobs.

3.6. The Children's Reading Community Development, 2020

In 2020, KBST organized a Children's Reading Community Development Program involving four schools in Kendari: MI DDI Al-Muhajiddin, SDN 1 Moramo Utara, SDN 105 Kendari, and SDN 33 Kendari. Each school was represented by 30 students from grades 4 and 5. The program aimed to enhance students' literacy knowledge and experience and increase their motivation to read and write.

Development and assistance activities for children's reading communities were conducted through material presentation, practice, games, and discussions lasting two hours per session. One hour was allocated for material presentation, and another hour for practical activities and discussion. Topics included an introduction to six basic literacies, text types, folktales, medical tools, and poetry. The program was held from February to March and was originally planned for 20 sessions per school, expected to continue until August. However, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the program to stop in March, leaving several sessions unfulfilled.

The children's enthusiasm was evident during the third meeting at SDN 33 Kendari on March 5, 2020. The session was led by Ramis Rauf, a former Language Ambassador and university lecturer. He continued the topic from the previous session, "Understanding the Six Basic Literacies." The students engaged in reading, writing, and games, such as alphabet games, musical chairs, and clapping games—all done joyfully. During the writing session, students were asked to write about their experiences during the month of Ramadan. The stories shared varied—from the struggle to wake up for *suhoor*, resisting food temptations from younger siblings, the excitement of hunting for *takjil*, the joy of getting new clothes for Eid, the happiness of returning to their hometowns and reuniting with relatives, to the delight of receiving Eid money, and many more.

3.7. The Poetry Writing Workshop, 2021

This activity was conducted in the form of presentations, practice, and discussions, each lasting three hours per session. The workshop was held at Ummul Qurra Islamic Boarding School from March 15 to 19, 2021, focusing on poetry writing. Participants were students from grades 7, 8, and 10. The workshop began with a presentation on poetry and how to find inspiration for writing poetry. After the introduction, the students were divided into two groups to ensure a more focused and directed training process.

Each student was then asked to write a poem on a theme of their choice. The best poems were selected by the resource person, and the writers received gift packages from KBST. Selected poems were also published in *Media Glitera*, a local magazine. The activity was supported by *Relawan Akhirat* Indonesia Foundation and *Harian Rakyat Sultra*.

3.8. The Storytelling Workshop, 2021

This program was also conducted through a combination of presentations, practice, and discussions, each lasting three hours. The workshop was held at Darul Mukhlisin Islamic Boarding School from March 22 to 26, 2021, with a focus on storytelling. The activity was led by a professional storyteller and supported by IKA Dubas Sultra. Participants were students from grades 7, 8, and 9.

The session started with an introduction to storytelling, including its definition, types, and elements. Students also learned how to make storytelling props using yarn. After the presentation, the students were divided into small groups to make the training more effective. Each group was tasked with creating and practicing a story with guidance from the instructor. After practicing, each group presented their story, and the three best performances received gift packages from KBST. The event was supported by *Relawan Akhirat* Indonesia Foundation.

3.9. The Short Story Writing Workshop, 2021

This workshop also followed the format of presentation, practice, and discussion, lasting three hours per session. Held from July 28 to 31 and on August 1, the workshop focused on short story writing for students at MA Asy-Syafi'iyah. Participants were from grades 10, 11, and 12. The workshop began with an introduction to short stories, including defi-

nitions and elements. Students also learned how to develop ideas into full narratives. After the presentation, participants were asked to write short stories based on their ideas, with guidance from the instructor during the writing process. The three best works were selected by the instructor and awarded gift packages from KBST. The top story was published in *Media Glitera*.

4. Discussion

4.1. Substantive Strategies in the Implementation of GLA

The substantive strategies in GLA activities include reading, writing, and retelling what has been read or written. In practice, KBST integrates these aspects into its GLA initiatives. The GLA content in Kendari comprehensively

covers the introduction to basic literacy, various text types, writing practices, and storytelling. This strategy supports the sustainability of inclusive and quality education through collaborative efforts.

The initial activity begins with brainstorming. Participants are then introduced to different types of texts^[37], including both literary and non-literary texts. These text types, with their distinctive characteristics, form the core material in the writing workshops. The materials are simplified and include literary texts (narrative and poetry) and non-literary texts (descriptive, recount, and procedural texts). Participants are assigned to write specific text types. **Figure 1** shows the atmosphere of GLA activities in Kendari. **Figure 1(a)** depicts GLA activities held in a school classroom, while **Figure 1(b)** shows GLA activities conducted in a literacy community space.



(a)



(b)

Figure 1. Implementation of GLA in Kendari: (a) in School Classroom and (b) in a Literacy Community Space.

(Source: Facebook KBST and Facebook Pustaka Kabanti).

In the GLA writing classes, various strategies were employed to deliver the materials. For example, instructors introduced different text types such as description, narrative, poetry, procedure, and report. Participants were then asked to randomly pick a slip of paper with the name of an object found around the school and create a simple text based on the object they selected. In another session, during the lesson on procedural text, participants were provided with plant seeds, small pots, and soil, allowing them to practice planting. They were then guided to write the steps of the planting process, which resulted in a complete procedural text.

GLA activities were not only held for students in schools but were also implemented at the Kendari Juvenile Detention Center in 2021. The Youth Language Ambassadors of Southeast Sulawesi facilitated the event. The activ-

ity, titled “Their Voice, Our Voice”, was held to commemorate National Education Day 2021. One of the highlights was the “Dream Wall,” where the juvenile residents could write down their hopes and aspirations. The examples of their written works can be seen in **Figure 2**.

Practically, participants were trained to reread their texts and received suggestions for improvement. Since each participant had varying levels of ability, different approaches were applied accordingly. The most important goal was to instill the value and benefit of literacy. During the sessions, participants were informed that the ability to write well is a valuable achievement. Through writing, one can produce works that are read by many people across various media platforms, which helps them become known to a wider audience. “You are what you write, so write only good things.”

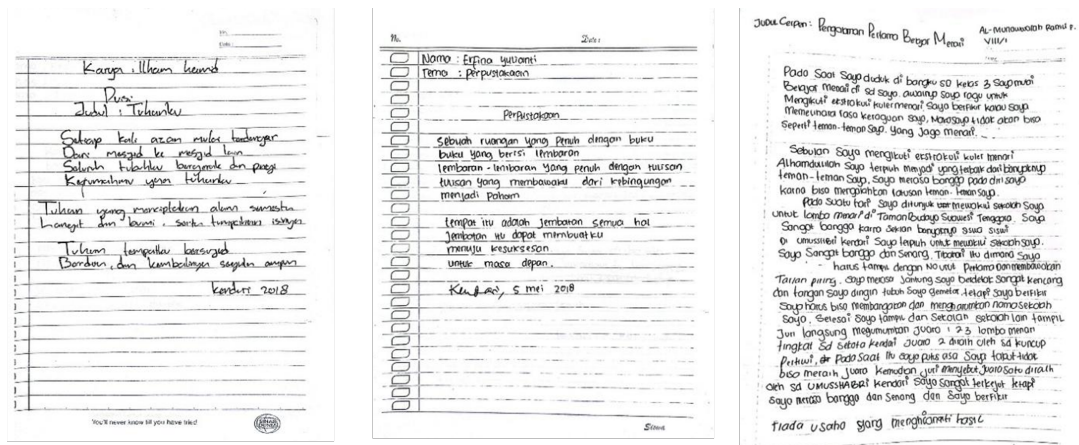


Figure 2. Writing Samples from GLA Participants.

(Source: KBST activity report).

The implementation of this program has resulted in a positive collaboration (SDG 17) between KBST, various literacy communities, and elementary schools in Kendari. The students' works have been compiled into a report, and further synergy has been realized through the provision of facilities, resource persons, and other literacy development needs, serving as a meaningful contribution within the framework of quality education (SDG 4).

4.2. Motivational Strategies in the Implementation of GLA

Students from various schools and community environments are given the opportunity to join the literacy program organized by KBST. Students who wish to join gain the chance to meet instructors, receive learning materials, make new friends, gain new experiences, and develop creative skills.

These benefits motivate prospective GLA participants to join the program. As a form of engagement, a literacy greeting using the index and thumb to form the letter "L" is practiced. **Figure 3** shows the literacy greeting with the "L" finger pose, which has become a hallmark of the literacy activities.

Additionally, the GLA activities select the five best works from each learning session. The definition of "best" varies for each child. In principle, all participants are given equal opportunities to present their work in front of the other participants. Of course, some are eager to present, while others feel shy and need encouragement. Appreciation is given in the form of rewards for every achievement. The rewards vary in each session, such as bags, foldable study tables, notebooks, reading books, pens, and coloring tools. Prizes are awarded to participants who answer specific questions, are active, creative, or are based on the quality of their work or presentation.



Figure 3. Literacy Greeting with the "L" Finger Pose.

(Source: Facebook Pustaka Kabanti Kendari, March 25, 2028).

Participants are tasked with reading their work aloud in front of the class. Those who are confident and able to produce high-quality writing receive appreciation. Participants who were initially shy but later overcame their lack of confidence and presented their work also receive rewards as recognition for their bravery. The rewards are given as an acknowledgment to further motivate participants to engage in lessons, encourage active involvement, and serve as a stimulus for the creation of positive behavior^[11, 12]. **Figures 4 and 5** show examples of rewards given to boost motivation in literacy activities.

The world of children brings its own excitement when it comes to engaging in literacy activities, and GLA in Kendari has applied the right strategy. Children need appreciation as motivation to continue nurturing their love for literacy activities. Such appreciation should also serve as a lasting

memory that they will carry with them into adulthood. They have participated in activities that introduce them to a literacy culture that helps shape their character.

The appreciation given in various literacy activities is an integral part of fostering joy and enthusiasm in children. They become more motivated in the world of literacy culture, which is consciously promoted and organized by KBST. Appreciation in the form of rewards is particularly meaningful as it resonates with the world of children, who require such motivation. In other words, to enhance the literacy culture, there needs to be a program from KBST that acts as a “celebration space” for the literacy events themselves. If the various literacy programs reaching different schools in Kendari provide a “space” for meetings between students, literacy activists, and writers, a publication medium is needed to immortalize these moments, such as a magazine or newspaper.



Figure 4. Distribution of Books as Appreciation for Participation in GLA.

(Source: Facebook Syaifuddin Gani, April 23, 2017).



Figure 5. Rewards Given to Five Participants for Their Improvements.

(Source: Facebook Kantor Bahasa Sulawesi Tenggara, April 28, 2017).

The works produced by GLA participants should not “vanish” without a trace. A more official publication medium is required to reach a wider audience. To support this idea, a children’s magazine *Media Glitera* was launched. This stage is considered a motivational effort to enhance writing

through internal competition among GLA participants. Naturally, students whose work is featured in *Media Glitera* will feel a sense of recognition and pride, knowing their work will be read by anyone who collects the magazine. **Figure 6** shows several editions of *Media Glitera*.



Figure 6. Several Editions of Media Glitera.

(Source: <https://balaibahasasultra.kemdikbud.go.id/glitera/>).

KBST has also initiated a mass media publication for children, namely a children's column in daily newspaper. This is a collaboration with *Harian Rakyat Sultra*. In practice, the works published in this column are not only the creations of GLA participants in Kendari but also works by other young writers from throughout the Southeast Sulawesi Province. This means that the children's literary column is open and serves as a collective celebration of all young

writers in Southeast Sulawesi. At this stage, motivation for broader competition is fostered.

The publication of children's works is another form of appreciation and motivation that shapes the culture of literacy. Thus, KBST contributes to and envisions the advancement of literature and the literacy culture for all children in Southeast Sulawesi. An example of the publication of children's works in the newspaper can be seen in **Figure 7** below.



Figure 7. Children's Column in Harian Rakyat Sultra.

(Source: KBST's archives, *Harian Rakyat Sultra*, *Dunia Anak dan Remaja* 'Childrens and Teenager's World').

The publication of GLA participants' works in *Media Glitera* from 2016 to 2023 amounts to 206 works from 206 young writers, with the following breakdown: in 2016, there were 111 works; in 2017, 18 works; in 2018, 43 works; in 2019, 124 works; in 2020, 20 works; in 2021, 9 works; an-

other 193 works in 2021; in 2022, 1 work; and in 2023, 2 works. The works published in *Media Glitera* encompass a variety of text types, such as procedural texts, personal recounts, descriptive texts, poems, and various other types of writing. Generally, literacy participants focus on themes

related to their own lives, such as the poem “Matahari” (The Sun), the story “Ikut Perkemahan” (Going to Camp), and the procedural text “Cara Membuat Bunga dari Botol Bekas Air Mineral” (How to Make a Flower from a Used Mineral Water Bottle).

The publication of literacy participants’ works in the *Harian Rakyat Sultra*’s children’s column is part of an effort to motivate children to develop writing habits, produce creative works, and foster a sense of competition. Since 2017, a variety of children’s works, including poems and stories, have been published. Year after year, this children’s column alternates with other columns. By 2023, at least 50 titles had been published in the children’s section of *Harian Rakyat Sultra*, including poems such as “Rumahku” (My House), “Ibu” (Mother), stories such as “Karena Tamak” (Because of Greed), “Bati dan Ica” (Bati and Ica), and recount texts like “Mengikuti Lomba Adiwiyata” (Participating in the Adiwiyata Competition).

Media Glitera and the children’s column in *Harian Rakyat Sultra* are two key media outlets for publishing children’s works. KBST plays a significant role in fostering a literacy culture in Kendari, particularly for schoolchildren, both in schools and in the community. While the first prize, in the form of material rewards, can be lost at any time, the second prize is “eternal” because it serves as a lasting reference for each child. It is sent to schools, libraries, and communities, where it will continue to be discussed for a long period of time.

4.3. The Impact of *GLA*

The findings of Lo and Shi highlight the necessity of curriculum designs that are attentive to students’ interests, learning goals, and linguistic readiness^[31]. Recommendations from their study include selecting texts that are contextually relevant, incorporating interactive group work, and providing supplementary materials in the students’ first language to support understanding of complex literary ideas. These pedagogical insights are applicable to first language-based literacy efforts. In the context of literacy programs in Kendari, the use of familiar narratives in the first language inherently addresses some of the barriers identified in ESL contexts. However, Liu and Chan’s findings suggest that further enhancement could be achieved by integrating

more learner-centered strategies, such as enabling students to co-select texts, encouraging dialogic engagement, and incorporating multimodal resources to facilitate comprehension and reflection.

The implementation of the Children’s Literacy Movement in several schools in Kendari has had a positive impact on students’ reading interest and academic achievements. Harliati, the Principal of SDN 5 Kendari, explained that the literacy activities carried out at her school have had a significant influence on students’ reading interest and performance. The reading corner in the school environment has become increasingly popular, with children visiting it more often. Many children utilize their free time to access reading materials available in the school’s reading corner. This opinion is echoed by Zaenab, a teacher at MI Al Fath Kendari, who stated that the Reading Community Development activities at MI Al Fath have positively impacted students’ enthusiasm to return to reading. The development sessions, which took place over several meetings, not only provided students with opportunities to read more books but also created a space for them to share experiences and discuss the content of their readings with their peers.

This activity successfully fostered a sense of togetherness and mutual support among students in developing a love for reading. Additionally, during each development session, students were given the chance to write summaries or share their opinions about the books they had read, which also helped develop their writing and critical thinking skills. The development sessions also involved teachers and parents as partners, providing additional support and encouragement for children to continue reading. Through these interactions, students not only learned to read but also learned how to appreciate and retell the content of their readings in an engaging manner. Zaenab further added that after these development activities, students appeared more enthusiastic about participating in school literacy activities and began visiting the library more frequently to borrow books. In fact, many students started asking about new books they wanted to read, indicating a shift in their mindset towards reading. This Reading Community Development initiative has successfully cultivated a stronger reading culture within the school environment, which has, in turn, positively impacted the academic and character development of the students.

In line with Harliati and Zaenab, Asmawati, a teacher at MI DDI Al-Mujahiddin Kendari, explained that after the implementation of the “Literasi CERIA” (Cheerful Literacy) program at MI DDI Mujahiddin in 2020, students’ interest in reading had significantly increased. Various children’s stories, including popular reading materials, were in high demand among students. Several children’s story titles were available for reading in the school library.

The increased interest in reading among students was also supported by the government-initiated literacy program, which included the habit of reading for 15 minutes before lessons. This activity provided students with the opportunity to access a wide range of reading materials available in the school library. The motivation provided by the speakers during the Children’s Literacy activities acted as an additional boost for students to become more diligent readers and improve their understanding of learning materials. Furthermore, Asmawati explained that the speakers also emphasized the importance of reading for personal development and expanding knowledge, which sparked students’ curiosity about various topics. In addition, the “Literasi CERIA” program also gave students the opportunity to develop their language skills, including reading, writing, and speaking.

The literacy program, supported by a diverse range of reading materials in the school library, from children’s stories to educational books, allowed students to broaden their imaginations and perspectives. With the increasing amount of time spent reading, their comprehension of learning materials also improved. Teachers have also acknowledged that through these literacy activities, they have observed significant improvements in students’ reading and writing skills, which have, in turn, influenced their academic performance. The emergence of a writing culture among the children participating in these activities marks an important impact, serving as a tangible trace of literacy development.

Overall, the implementation of the Children’s Literacy Movement in Kendari has not only improved students’ reading interest but has also fostered a stronger literacy culture among children, which, in turn, supports their academic achievement. Structured and engaging literacy activities have helped establish positive habits that benefit students not only in the classroom but also in their daily lives. This success demonstrates the importance of collaboration between schools, the government, and the community in creating

a supportive learning environment for the development of children’s literacy.

In the future, the findings of this research will be valuable, as it captures a literacy movement at a specific point in time. This will serve as a reference to assess the long-term impact of this movement on the community in Kendari and provide a comparative study for other cities in Indonesia. Furthermore, the results of this research will serve as a foundation for policymaking by relevant institutions, particularly regarding literacy movements in formal and non-formal education for children.

4.4. Barriers in the Implementation of GLA

Several challenges have been identified in second-language literary instruction, such as the difficulty level of texts, the perceived irrelevance of thematic content, the limited interactivity of learning activities, and the overwhelming volume of reading required. These barriers often affect students’ motivation and enjoyment, particularly when the materials do not align with their personal or professional aspirations^[31]. Similar patterns of challenge can also be observed in the literacy programs in Kendari. For instance, educators frequently encounter difficulties in selecting texts and instructional approaches that are both pedagogically effective and culturally engaging for young learners. Although the literacy activities in Kendari are conducted in the students’ first language, which removes the obstacle of linguistic unfamiliarity, several other barriers persist and hinder active participation. The following section outlines some of the key obstacles identified in the implementation of GLA in Kendari:

First, limited vocabulary knowledge. The lack of vocabulary knowledge is not only experienced by Indonesian children. Jabbar found a similar case during research with students in Tamil Nadu, India^[38]. The students struggled with basic grammar and were unable to use the appropriate vocabulary to construct good sentences. The good news is that this issue can be addressed by teaching writing through AI-based methods. Waziana et al. found that integrating AI chatbots can be beneficial for improving writing skills^[39].

Second, a lack of self-confidence in writing. A similar issue was found by Thoms in his study^[40]. Students

expressed that they were not good writers. They faced challenges in specific aspects of composition such as word choice, forming ideas, grammar, organization, etc. To address this lack of confidence, McConnel & Beach proposed a three-component framework: identity, context, and authority, which relies on creating a community with students^[41]. The potential of this framework is highly creative, offering both teachers and students several ways to engage in dialogue about writing that not only boosts confidence but also creates a classroom culture where various writing strategies and perspectives are valued.

Third, low ability to form sentences. Sentences in written texts are far more complex and varied than those typically encountered by children in spoken language. Sorenson Duncan et al. emphasized that children, at the very least, understand sentences they have mastered through spoken language^[42]. Therefore, it is not wrong for children to learn how to construct sentences using basic sentences (typically used in spoken language) instead of complex sentences.

Fourth, low ability to write coherently. To address this, Long et al. recommend that writers first jot down their main ideas in outline form and then use this visualization to develop a comprehensive thesis statement^[43]. Additionally, Silvani suggested using animated films in writing lessons. He found that using animated films in the classroom can enhance students' ability to write coherently, as films are typically presented sequentially in each scene^[44].

Fifth, low ability to understand concepts explained by the teacher. This could be due to a lack of emotional connection between the students and the teacher. According to Osterman^[45], when students feel a sense of belonging within the school community, their need for connection is met in ways that affect their attitudes and behaviors. They enjoy school more and become more engaged in learning. This could also be the cause of the sixth barrier: a lack of seriousness in participating in the GLA activities.

Nevertheless, with the diligent guidance of the instructors, the GLA participants were able to produce written work in each class session. While it may not be perfect yet, the growth in their willingness to complete writing assignments is already a significant source of joy.

4.5. Limitation

One limitation of this study is the absence of direct

empirical data from children, teachers, or parents. While the research employs triangulation by incorporating perspectives from government institutions and literacy communities, the voices of those who are most directly affected, namely the children and their parents, are not included. This limitation was partly due to the study's focus on institutional and community-based strategies in fostering literacy. Future research is encouraged to integrate the perspectives of children, teachers, and parents to provide a more comprehensive understanding of literacy development at society.

5. Conclusions

Building a literacy culture is not merely about providing learning materials but also requires a holistic approach that places literacy as a fundamental element of education. Literacy not only enhances the capacity of individuals and communities but also drives progress in quality education (SDG 4) and partnerships for the common good (SDG 17), the development of 21st-century skills, and character building. The Children's Literacy Movement (GLA) in Kendari is a concrete example of this approach, combining substantive and motivational strategies. Substantively, varied and engaging learning materials maintain participants' interest, while motivationally, recognizing individual progress and fostering a positive atmosphere through literacy greetings creates a supportive and conducive environment.

The synergy between KBST (Kendari Literacy Community) and literacy communities has been effective in promoting literacy among elementary school students in Kendari. This initiative provides a "space" for students to express themselves, as seen from the publication of their works in the *Media Glitera* and the *Harian Rakyat Sultra*. The strategic practices demonstrated by the GLA highlight their potential as a replicable model to cultivate a literacy culture in various contexts. This study reaffirms that collaboration between government institutions and local communities can serve as a sustainable foundation with a real impact in advancing literacy and empowering the younger generation.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, S. (Syaifuddin), H.B.P.H., R. and M.; methodology, S. (Syaifuddin) and R.; formal analysis, M., S.B. and B.K.F.; investigation, S. (Syaifuddin),

H.B.P.H., R., I.R.S. and S. (Suyadi); literature review, H.B.P.H., F.A.M., and D.S.H.D.; data curation, I.R.S., S.B. and B.K.F.; writing—original draft preparation, H.B.P.H.; writing—review and editing, S. (Syaifuddin), H.B.P.H., R. and M.; project administration, I.R.S. and S. (Suyadi); funding acquisition, S. (Syaifuddin). All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and approved by the Ethics Committee on Social Studies and Humanities, National Research and Innovation Agency (NRIA) (protocol code 180/KE.01/SK/02/2024 and february 2024).

Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available upon reasonable request to Syaifuddin (email: syai007@brin.go.id).

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest. The funders had no role in the design of the study; in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript; or in the decision to publish the results.

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