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Community Empowerment Through Mobile Reading Houses To Foster Children's Interest In Reading The Quran In Muara Betung Village, Ulu Musi Subdistrict, Empat Lawang Regency

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ABSTRACT

Children in Muara Betung Village, Ulu Musi District, Empat Lawang Regency, faced limited access to engaging Quran learning resources and showed varying reading abilities. This community-service programme aimed to foster their interest, skills, and habits in reading the Quran through a mobile reading centre. Elementary-school-age children participated in a two-week programme facilitated by Universitas Dehasen Bengkulu students in collaboration with parents, religious leaders, and village authorities. Activities included Arabic letter recognition, Iqra and Quran reading, basic pronunciation and tajwid practice, memorisation of short surahs and daily prayers, and Islamic educational games. Evaluation used learning observations, initial and final reading assessments, parent and community-leader interviews, attendance records, and activity documentation. The reported findings indicated more regular attendance, greater learning enthusiasm, improved reading fluency, better understanding of basic tajwid, and increased memorisation according to individual ability. Children also showed greater confidence and discipline. These findings are descriptive because the source manuscript does not provide participant totals or numerical test results. The programme offers a locally accessible approach to Quran education, with continued community involvement needed to maintain learning opportunities.

Keywords: Children; Community Empowerment; Mobile Reading Centre; Quran Literacy; Reading Interest.

INTRODUCTION

Community empowerment is a process of strengthening people's capabilities, knowledge, and independence so that they can develop their potential sustainably. Education is one form of empowerment with long-term value, particularly religious education for children. Quran education from an early age provides an important foundation for character development, good conduct, and an appreciation of Islamic teachings. In this context, a community learning initiative can connect educational needs with the resources and participation available within the village.

Muara Betung Village, Ulu Musi District, Empat Lawang Regency, has considerable human-resource potential. Nevertheless, increasing children's interest in reading the Quran remains a challenge. The development of information technology and the limited availability of attractive learning facilities mean that some children spend more time playing than reading the Quran. Without attention from families and the wider community, these conditions may weaken motivation for religious learning. The source manuscript relates these concerns to Quran literacy in elementary education (Ernawati et al., 2024).

Existing learning facilities and media do not fully reach all children, particularly those living relatively far from centres of religious education. Quran lessons generally take place at particular times in mosques or Quran education centres. An additional approach is therefore needed to bring learning services closer to children's everyday surroundings. A reading centre is a deliberately established public facility that supports reading interest, habits, and culture, consistent with the purposes of the Indonesian Law No. 43 of 2007 on Libraries (Republic of Indonesia, 2007).

Students participating in the thematic community-service programme at Universitas Dehasen Bengkulu introduced the Mobile Reading Centre as an educational response. The programme brings learning services directly into residential environments using learning media, Islamic books, and copies of the Quran. It combines access to reading materials with Quran reading guidance, tajwid instruction, memorisation of short surahs, stories of the prophets, Islamic educational games, and encouragement to develop an appreciation of the Quran. These activities seek to make learning enjoyable and to encourage children to participate more enthusiastically. Relevant work on Quran reading and writing instruction provides a basis for this educational approach (Azizah et al., 2022).



Figure 1. Opening of the eighth thematic community-service programme in Muara Betung Village. Source: photographs supplied in the original manuscript.

Figure 1 documents the programme opening. The initiative was implemented by students in the eighth thematic community-service period and aligned with efforts to strengthen human resources through character education and religious literacy. The intended role of the community extends beyond providing a venue: local participation helps establish an inclusive, accessible learning environment that can support children after student facilitation ends.

The involvement of volunteers, religious leaders, village authorities, parents, and residents is central to strengthening Quran literacy within the village. The programme places the community in an active role in creating opportunities for learning. Its objective was to foster children's interest, ability, and habits in reading the Quran in Muara Betung Village, while encouraging participation in the development of a knowledgeable generation with good character. Attendance, active engagement, reading fluency, basic tajwid understanding, and memorisation formed the main areas considered in assessing progress.

COMMUNITY-SERVICE METHODS

Partners, setting, and period.

The programme took place in Muara Betung Village, Ulu Musi District, Empat Lawang Regency, during the eighth thematic community-service period of Universitas Dehasen Bengkulu in 2026. Quran teaching activities lasted two weeks. Participants were elementary-school-age children with differing abilities, ranging from recognising Arabic letters to reading the Quran with appropriate tajwid. The original manuscript does not specify the calendar dates or total number of participants. Village authorities, mosque administrators, religious leaders, and parents were involved in coordination and support.

Preparation and coordination. The team coordinated with the village administration, mosque administrators, and community leaders before teaching began. Participants were registered and grouped according to their Quran reading ability. This grouping was intended to make instruction suitable for children at different learning stages. The team prepared copies of the Quran, Iqra books, simple tajwid books, learning media, and stationery. A learning timetable and the material for each session were then arranged. The preparation process linked the educational activities to available village facilities and the children's learning needs.

Implementation and shared roles.

Student facilitators delivered the learning activities and provided guidance during practice. Parents supported children's attendance, while village authorities and religious leaders helped provide a comfortable setting. The activities began with prayer and encouragement. Beginners received an introduction to Arabic letters, followed by gradual reading practice using Iqra and the Quran. Children then practised articulation points, known as makharij al-huruf, and basic tajwid rules. Memorisation of short surahs and daily prayers was included alongside reading practice.

Islamic educational games and quizzes were used to sustain interest and make the lessons more approachable. Individual mentoring was provided to children who experienced reading difficulties. Participants at the Iqra stage received attention appropriate to their level, while children already reading the Quran received guidance on fluency and tajwid. The programme therefore combined group learning with individual assistance rather than expecting all participants to follow the same reading task.

Evaluation and participant protection.

The evaluation combined observation during learning, initial and final Quran reading assessments, interviews with parents and community leaders, and documentation through photographs, attendance lists, and participant progress notes. The approach followed the descriptive evaluation procedures cited in the original manuscript (Sugiyono, 2023). An initial assessment identified reading ability before instruction. Weekly evaluation considered changes during learning, and the final assessment reviewed reading progress after the activities. Attendance, engagement, and interest were observed throughout the programme.

Brief parent interviews considered changes in children's Quran reading habits at home. These interviews complemented classroom observations by examining whether children were motivated to practise outside the facilitated sessions. Documentation provided a record of the activities and their implementation. Figure 2 shows Quran instruction in a resident's home, illustrating how the mobile approach brought learning into a familiar community setting.



Figure 2. Quran learning in a resident's home in Muara Betung Village. Source: photograph supplied in the original manuscript.

Data analysis. Quantitative information was intended to be analysed descriptively by comparing initial and final reading assessments. Qualitative observations and interviews were analysed descriptively to describe changes in interest, motivation, and participation (Arikunto, 2021). The source reports directional changes but supplies no numerical scores, participant denominator, assessment rubric, or individual matched records. Consequently, the results are presented as qualitative descriptions rather than calculated percentages, average score gains, or statistical effects. No numerical values have been inferred from the photographs or narrative.

The original manuscript describes coordination with local authorities but does not document a formal ethics approval, parental consent procedure, or photograph-publication permission. These matters require author confirmation, particularly because the activities involved children. The manuscript therefore reports only the documented coordination and avoids assigning an approval number or asserting that consent was obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation, outputs, and outcomes

The two-week Quran teaching programme was implemented with elementary-school-age children in Muara Betung Village. Coordination with village authorities, mosque administrators, religious leaders, and parents preceded registration, ability-based grouping, and preparation of the learning schedule. Delivered activities included Arabic letter recognition, Iqra instruction, Quran reading practice, basic tajwid and articulation exercises, memorisation of short surahs and daily prayers, and Islamic educational games. These learning services constituted the immediate programme outputs.

Observations during implementation indicated changes in attendance, reading interest, fluency, basic tajwid understanding, and memorisation. Table 1 summarises the initial and subsequent conditions reported in the original manuscript. The entries describe observed directions of change; they do not represent numerical measurements or evidence that every child reached the same level of proficiency.

Table 1. Reported changes in children's participation and Quran learning

Indicator	n	Baseline	After	Evidence / instrument
Attendance	NR	Irregular	More regular and active	Attendance and observation
Reading interest	NR	Low	Increased	Learning observation
Iqra / Quran fluency	NR	Most not fluent	Most showed improvement	Reading assessments
Basic tajwid	NR	Limited understanding	Beginning to understand basic rules	Reading practice
Short-surah memorisation	NR	Limited	Increased according to ability	Learning observation

Source: qualitative programme descriptions in the original manuscript, 2026. NR = not reported; n denotes participant number; no participant totals, individual scores, or matched observations were reported.

Attendance was described as more regular and active after the programme. Children showed increased enthusiasm for learning, and most participants were reported to have improved their reading fluency. Basic tajwid understanding began to develop, and memorisation of short surahs increased in line with individual ability. These results suggest that the learning format was acceptable to the participating children, although the evidence cannot establish the size of the improvement or a causal effect of the intervention.

Children also showed changes in learning behaviour. They became more confident when reading in front of their peers, more disciplined in attending according to the schedule, and more motivated to practise the Quran at home with their parents. These observations complement the reading-related findings, while remaining descriptive accounts of behaviour over a short programme period.

Interpretation, limitations, and sustainability

Interactive and enjoyable instruction was one factor associated with the programme's reported success. Educational games, Islamic quizzes, and simple rewards helped encourage participation and reduce boredom. The combination of reading practice and activities that children found engaging offered a practical way to support learning motivation. This interpretation is consistent with the source's use of Quran literacy and reading-instruction literature (Azizah et al., 2022; Ernawati et al., 2024). It remains an explanation of the observed pattern rather than a separately tested mechanism.

Individual mentoring provided each child with guidance suited to their reading level. Children still using Iqra received additional assistance, while those already reading the Quran practised tajwid and fluency. Ability-based grouping helped address differences among participants and allowed facilitators to adapt instruction. The source identifies differences in ability and limited teaching time as obstacles; grouping and adjustments to the teaching strategy were the responses used during implementation.



Figure 3. Student preparation and coordination with the local Quran teacher. Source: photograph supplied in the original manuscript.

Figure 3 documents the preparatory interaction between students and the local Quran teacher. Community participation supported delivery: parents brought children to the sessions, while village authorities and religious leaders helped provide a comfortable learning space. This cooperation created support both during lessons and at home. The programme thus connected individual learning assistance with the participation of people already involved in children's education.

Reading resources are essential to operating a mobile reading centre because they provide access to religious knowledge and support teaching. Materials should be acquired according to the needs of children in Muara Betung Village. The collection should reflect the centre's purpose and remain relevant to current learning needs so that the available materials attract readers. Quran copies, Iqra books, simple tajwid resources, and appropriate Islamic reading materials can support the range of ability levels described in the programme.

The original manuscript also identifies limited material availability as a concern. Collaboration with literacy volunteers and regional libraries may expand collections through loans, exchanges, or donations from groups sharing the same community-empowerment goals. This resource-sharing approach is linked to the discussion of community reading centres in Nasrullah et al. (2021). Such collaboration is a proposed way of supporting continuation, rather than an arrangement demonstrated to have been established by this programme.

The principal limitation is the short two-week teaching period. The original manuscript reports favourable changes but provides no participant total, detailed scores, assessment rubric, or follow-up results. The available descriptions therefore do not show how consistently improvement occurred across children, whether gains were maintained, or whether reading habits continued after student facilitation

ended. Observations and parent accounts are useful for describing local experience, but longer-term educational outcomes should not be inferred from this evidence.

Continued delivery would require cooperation among village authorities, religious leaders, parents, and local Quran teachers, together with adequate learning materials and a workable schedule. Future monitoring could retain the programme's existing indicators: attendance, reading participation, fluency, basic tajwid understanding, and memorisation appropriate to individual ability. Any continuation should distinguish the services delivered from the outcomes actually assessed. The source recommends sustaining the approach and extending it to other villages, but it does not provide evidence that either step has already occurred.



Figure 4. Community-based Quran learning during the mobile reading centre programme. Source: photograph supplied in the original manuscript.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The community-empowerment programme through a mobile reading centre was implemented in Muara Betung Village by students of the eighth thematic community-service period of Universitas Dehasen Bengkulu in 2026. Preparation, learning activities, and evaluation involved children, parents, religious leaders, and village authorities. The reported results indicated more regular attendance and participation, improved Iqra and Quran reading fluency, developing knowledge of articulation and basic tajwid, and increased memorisation of short surahs and daily prayers. Children also showed greater confidence and discipline.

Interactive instruction, individual mentoring, and cooperation with local partners supported implementation. Differences in reading ability and limited teaching time were addressed through grouping and adapted learning strategies. The findings remain descriptive because participant totals and numerical assessment results are unavailable. Local partners are encouraged to continue accessible Quran instruction, maintain materials suitable for different learning levels, and document progress consistently. Extension to other villages should be considered in relation to local needs, resources, and the capacity of community members to sustain the activities.

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DECLARATIONS

1. **Statement on the Use of Artificial Intelligence**. ChatGPT, an OpenAI language model, was used to translate the supplied manuscript into English and assist with language editing, organisation, and template formatting. No new participant data or numerical findings were generated. The authors remain responsible for verifying the translation, references, declarations, and final manuscript before submission.
2. **Author Contribution**. **MO, DR, EK, AJ, S**, and **YE** are the initials of the authors listed in the source manuscript. The source attributes programme implementation to the student team collectively but does not specify each author's individual contribution. Individual CRediT roles and approval of the final manuscript must be confirmed by the authors before submission.
3. **Funding Statement**. No external grant, grant number, or specific funding allocation is reported in the source manuscript. Village authorities and community members supported coordination and access to learning spaces. Any self-funding or other financial support should be confirmed by the authors.
4. **Conflict of Interest**. No financial or nonfinancial conflict of interest is reported in the source manuscript. The authors should confirm this declaration before submission.
5. **Ethics and Participant Consent**. The source describes coordination with village authorities, mosque administrators, religious leaders, and parents. It does not report an ethics approval number or document parental consent, child assent, privacy procedures, or permission to publish identifiable photographs. The authors must confirm the applicable institutional requirements and consent arrangements before publication. No approval or consent has been inferred or backdated.

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