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Environmental Education in The Omah Sawah Community Through The Photovoice Method

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Abstract

The Omah Sawah community focuses on environment-based education for children aged 7-13 years. One of the activities is a weekly school held at the Omah Sawah Pavilion every weekend. Activities include environmental observation, flora-fauna identification, yoga, natural batik dyeing introduction, and writing. The limited skills of facilitators, consisting of teenage alumni of Omah Sawah, in innovating learning, and the lack of supporting facilities at Omah Sawah pose challenges. One alternative to enhance learning innovation and instructor skills is by introducing and studying Photovoice. This community service began with preparation, including permission requests and field surveys, followed by curriculum development training using the Photovoice method through lectures and practice. Evaluation was carried out through pre-test and post-test methods. The results showed an increase in participants' knowledge of the Photovoice method and its use in environmental education.

Keywords: Omah Sawah; Environmental education; Photovoice

INTRODUCTION

Environmental awareness is an attitude that involves managing and improving the environment in a sustainable way, so that it can be enjoyed without degradation. Omah Sawah has institutionalized this principle through informal education since 2012, aiming to strengthen environmental care character using an exploration-based learning approach. Omah Sawah is located in Gempol Hamlet, Ngesrepbalong Village, Limbangan District, Kendal Regency.

Educational activities at Omah Sawah are conducted every weekend through the "Weekly School" program, attended by children aged 6-13. The teaching team consists of seven facilitators who alternate shifts and are alumni of the Weekly School. Using the "outing class" model, learning takes place in nature, with activities like exploration, observation, and note-taking. The goal is for participants to sustainably manage their environment, avoid harmful behaviors, and foster environmental sensitivity and responsibility. Students are expected to become environmental stewards wherever they go.

One teaching method supporting the outing class at Omah Sawah is Photovoice, which uses a visual approach to facilitate learning and information sharing. Photovoice involves participants in capturing their environment through photos and using these for group discussions, promoting storytelling based on the visual materials they create.

METHOD

This community service was carried out in three main stages: preparation (including permission and field surveys), training (through lectures and practice), and evaluation (using qualitative descriptive analysis with pre-test and post-test methods).

Stages of Activities

1. **Initial Socialization and Coordination:** Introducing the community to the planned

- service activities and agreeing on the concept and implementation.
2. **Photovoice-based Learning Training:** Delivering theory and practical demonstrations of Photovoice to support Omah Sawah's educational activities.
 3. **Assistance:** Ongoing monitoring and evaluation during the community service, addressing challenges and providing solutions.
 4. **Evaluation:** Pre-test evaluations were conducted to assess participants' initial understanding, followed by post-tests after the training to gauge progress.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The community service activities conducted at Omah Sawah have improved the capacity of Omah Sawah's facilitators. Initial coordination meetings outlined the general plan. Photovoice training took place on May 7, 2023, with 18 participants, including Omah Sawah facilitators and Semarang State University students. The training began with a pre-test and included discussions to gather participants' experiences and challenges in learning. This input helped shape a future curriculum for Omah Sawah.

Participants were given Photovoice materials through lectures and simulations. The participants actively engaged in discussions, asking questions about Photovoice's objectives, benefits, and how to narrate the photos they took. The facilitators provided guidance on how photography could be a powerful tool for conveying environmental messages. The participants were taught to narrate photos by considering what is seen, what is happening, how it relates to life, why it matters, and what can be done to address the situation.

CONCLUSION

The community service project, "Environmental Education in the Omah Sawah Community through the Photovoice Method," was successfully implemented. It resulted in an environmental education curriculum and an alternative learning model using Photovoice. The key indicator of success was the increase in participants' knowledge, as evidenced by the training and support provided.

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