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Empowering Rural Youth: Socialization of Higher Education Scholarships for the Karang Taruna Youth Organization in Dusun Kampir

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Abstract

Higher education plays an important role as a foundation in developing quality human resources who are able to compete in the global era. However, in many rural areas, access to and understanding of the importance of higher education is still limited due to factors such as low parental education, high costs, and a lack of information about scholarships. The community service program implemented by UNNES GIAT 12 in Kampir Hamlet, Plososari Village, Kendal, aims to address these challenges by providing comprehensive scholarship information to local youth. The objectives of this program include increasing knowledge about various types of scholarships, particularly distinguishing between KIP Kuliah and merit-based scholarships, as well as guiding participants on how to access scholarship information. Using educational and interactive methods, this intervention measured the knowledge of 10 participants through pre-tests and post-tests. The results showed a significant increase in understanding, with the average pre-test score of 1.32 increasing to 3.6 on the post-test. This remarkable increase confirms the effectiveness of targeted scholarship outreach in bridging the information gap and motivating rural youth to pursue higher education. Thus, this program contributes to increased educational participation and human capital development in underserved areas.

Keywords: empowerment, socialization, scholarships, higher education, karang taruna

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a crucial role in expanding individuals' opportunities to actively participate in various social, economic, and political sectors (Bileviciute *et al.*, 2019; Javed and Khan, 2016). Education opens up greater opportunities in various sectors, such as the economy and politics, while strengthening social resilience by creating a more aware and educated society (Hubel *et al.*, 2023). Financial constraints are often a major barrier to continuing to higher levels of study, which ultimately limits their opportunities to contribute optimally to national development (Yasin *et al.*, 2024). In addition, low awareness among students and parents about the importance of higher education often makes them unproactive in seeking scholarship opportunities (Irawati and Susetyo, 2017). In remote or rural areas, access to the internet and technology is still very limited, making it difficult for students to obtain information about scholarship opportunities (Yandra *et al.*, 2024). Other factors such as the lack of guidance from schools or educational institutions, as well as the complexity of the scholarship application procedure, also contribute to these limitations (Maulido *et al.*, 2024). Muhammad Nasir, special staff to the Vice President for Bureaucratic Reform, showed that the gross enrollment rate (GER) of high school equivalent students to higher education was only 34.58% (Maskar *et al.*, 2022). Educational scholarships are a solution to this problem, providing opportunities for underprivileged individuals to continue their studies to a higher level (Rettang, 2024).

Educational scholarships are assistance and rewards given by the government, institutions, or organizations to recipients for their achievements in order to continue to a higher level of education so that they can make a greater contribution to the nation and state (Ahmad, 2018). Scholarship programs

are driven by the principle of social justice, with the aim of equalizing educational opportunities and reducing social inequality (Masnawati, 2024). The financial support provided is expected to enable more students to continue their education, which will ultimately contribute to improving the quality of human resources in the region (Yusuf and Sari, 2022). Scholarships not only serve as financial support but can also increase student motivation and involvement in academic activities (Osman *et al.*, 2024). As an example of one of the scholarship programs held by the government, the Indonesia Smart Card (KIP) has succeeded in creating a broad impact in the field of education, particularly in encouraging equal access for low-income communities (Putri and Sarwono, 2024).

METHOD

The method of implementing the youth empowerment program through the dissemination of information on higher education scholarships for the Karang Taruna Dusun Kampir youth organization was carried out using a structured and systematic approach. The stages of implementation are illustrated in the flowchart in Figure 1.

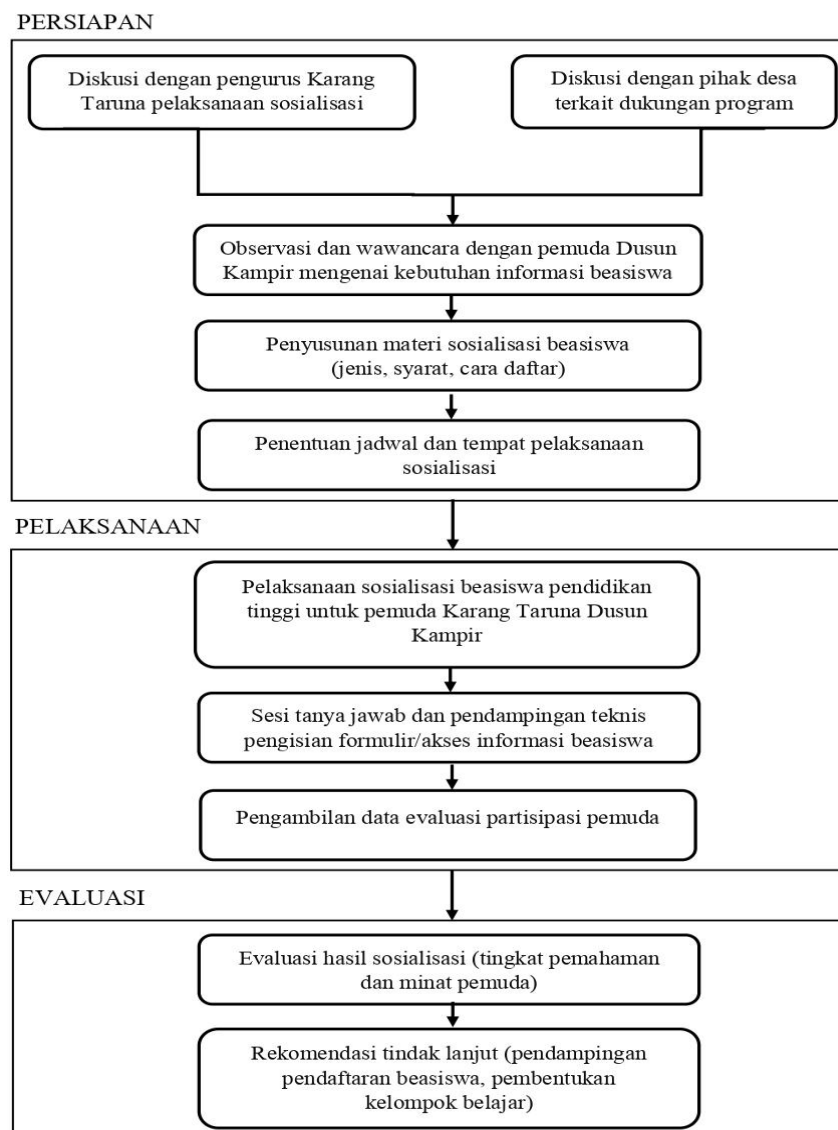


Figure 1. Flowchart of Youth Empowerment Program Implementation

The first stage was preparation, which began with coordination with the Karang Taruna administrators and village officials to align perceptions regarding the objectives and form of the activities. Next, field observations and interviews were conducted with several young people as samples to identify their initial knowledge, obstacles, and information needs related to scholarships.

The results of the observations showed that scholarship literacy among young people was still low, including a lack of understanding about the types of scholarships, document requirements, and how to register online. These findings became an important basis for the preparation of socialization materials so that they were in line with the real context and needs of the participants.

The second stage was the preparation of materials, which was carried out through a literature study from various sources such as the official websites of scholarship providers, registration guides, and the experiences of scholarship alumni. The materials developed include: (1) an introduction to various types of scholarships (KIP Kuliah, local government scholarships, university scholarships, and private institutions), (2) general and specific requirements, (3) technical steps for online registration, (4) strategies for preparing supporting documents such as motivation essays and recommendation letters, and (5) tips for facing interview selections. The development of the materials also involved discussions with students and alumni who have received scholarships to enrich the practical perspective.

The third stage is the implementation of socialization, which is designed using participatory methods so that it does not only provide one-way information, but also actively involves young people. Activities are carried out through presentations, group discussion sessions, and live simulations of online registration using mobile devices or laptops. During the simulation session, participants were instructed to try accessing the scholarship registration portal and complete the initial data so that they could familiarize themselves with the existing system. In addition, there was also a sharing session with scholarship alumni, which served to provide motivation, inspiration, and a realistic picture of the opportunities and challenges faced.

The fourth stage was evaluation and follow-up. The evaluation was conducted through questionnaires, observation of participant activity, and brief interviews to measure the level of understanding and interest of young people in applying for scholarships after participating in the activities. The evaluation results showed the extent to which the activities succeeded in increasing the knowledge and readiness of the participants. The follow-up to this program is the establishment of a Village Scholarship Information Center managed by Karang Taruna. This information center serves as a forum for consultation, assistance in preparing documents, and dissemination of the latest information on scholarship opportunities. In addition, the implementation team recommends continuous assistance through intensive study groups, including training in writing motivational essays and preparing for interviews.



Figure 2. Implementation of Higher Education Scholarship Socialization

Thus, the method applied not only focuses on information transfer but also creates a sustainable learning ecosystem. This is expected to increase the access of young people in Kampir Hamlet to higher education through scholarships, while strengthening the capacity of Karang Taruna as a driving force for youth empowerment at the village level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The community service activity carried out by KKN GIAT 12 UNNES in Kampir Hamlet, Plososari Village, Patean District, Kendal Regency, focused on scholarship socialization for the local Karang Taruna. This program aims to bridge the information and motivation gaps that often hinder young people in rural areas from continuing their education to the university level.

Prior to the dissemination, a pre-test was conducted to measure the initial knowledge level of 10 participants from the Youth Organization regarding higher education scholarships, the differences between the Indonesia Smart Card (KIP) Scholarship and merit-based scholarships, and methods of searching for scholarship information. The pre-test results showed that the average score obtained by participants was 1.32. This score indicates that most participants had limited or very little understanding of these topics prior to the intervention. This lack of knowledge is in line with the phenomenon found in various regions, where the community, including high school students, still has limited knowledge about higher education pathways, scholarship programs, and career prospects after graduation. This condition is exacerbated by limited access to information in remote areas and a lack of awareness among parents about the importance of higher education.

After the socialization and briefing were carried out, a post-test was conducted to evaluate the increase in participants' understanding. The post-test results showed a very significant increase, with an average post-test score of 3.6. This increase reflects that the socialization activities succeeded in providing participants with a better understanding of the various scholarship opportunities that had been presented.

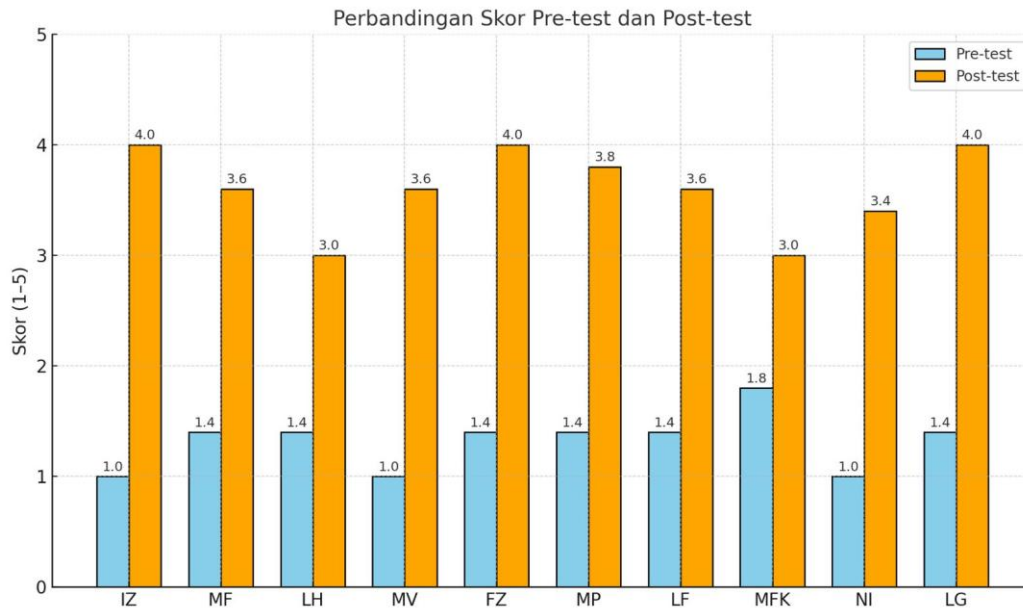


Figure 3. Increase in Average Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Table 1 Difference in Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Assessment Aspect	Average Pre-test Score	Average Post-Test Score	Score Improvement
Scholarship Knowledge	1.32	3.6	2.28

The significant increase in post-test scores of the 10 participants proves that this outreach activity successfully addressed the main obstacles of limited information and low understanding. With clear and accurate information, the members of the Karang Taruna youth organization in Kampir Hamlet are now more aware of the various opportunities they can achieve through higher education, both in terms of career, personal development, and contribution to society. Scholarships not only address financial problems but also motivate students to excel.

Factors such as low parental income and limited knowledge about higher education, which were previously major obstacles, have begun to be overcome through this outreach program. The program has successfully bridged this gap, in line with national development goals that place education as a key

pillar in creating an advanced, independent, and globally competitive society. It also opens up wider access to education for underprivileged communities and increases educational participation in the region.

CONCLUSION

The scholarship outreach program implemented by KKN GIAT 12 UNNES in Kampir Hamlet, Plososari Village, Patean Subdistrict, Kendal Regency, has successfully achieved its goal of increasing the understanding and interest of Karang Taruna members in higher education and scholarship opportunities. The increase in the average score from 1.32 on the pre-test to 3.6 on the post-test is clear evidence of the program's success in bridging the information gap and motivating participants. This activity provided a comprehensive understanding of the importance of higher education, the differences between KIP Kuliah scholarships and merit-based scholarships, as well as practical guidance on finding scholarship information. This significant improvement shows that targeted socialization can effectively change mindsets and provide new hope for the younger generation in rural areas to continue their studies to a higher level, regardless of financial or geographical constraints. The scientific contribution of this activity is the demonstration of the effectiveness of structured and relevant scholarship outreach interventions in improving higher education literacy among rural youth and motivating them to take advantage of scholarship opportunities for a better future.

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