

Evaluation of Equivalency Education Programs: Promoting Access and Quality of Learning at Community Learning Centers

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Abstract

Background - Non-formal education plays a critical role in expanding access to learning for communities not fully served by formal education. PKBM Tunas Mulia Semarang provides equivalency programs that support educational equity, making evaluation essential to ensure the relevance and quality of learning implementation.

Research Urgency - The increasing need for quality assurance in non-formal education highlights the urgency of evaluating PKBM performance, especially amid challenges such as limited resources, heterogeneous learner needs, and the demand for flexible learning. A systematic evaluation is required to ensure that PKBM programs effectively expand access while maintaining learning quality.

Research Objectives - This study aims to evaluate the equivalency education program at PKBM Tunas Mulia Semarang using the CIPP model—Context, Input, Process, and Product—to provide a comprehensive overview of program relevance, implementation quality, and outcomes.

Research Method - A descriptive qualitative design was employed. Data was gathered through observation, interviews, and documentation, and validated using source and method triangulation. The CIPP model guided the analysis of contextual needs, resource readiness, instructional processes, and learning outcomes.

Research Findings - Findings indicate strong performance across all CIPP components. Context shows PKBM's role in widening access through community support; Input reflects improved tutor competence and relevant curriculum; Process highlights flexible, contextual, and participatory learning; and Product demonstrates increased competencies, rising participation, and higher graduation rates.

Conclusion - The CIPP evaluation provides a holistic understanding of the program's strengths and improvement areas. Overall, PKBM Tunas Mulia successfully enhances access and learning quality.

Research Novelty/Contribution - This study contributes a practical demonstration of the CIPP model as a comprehensive evaluation tool for non-formal education, offering insights applicable to similar institutions and enriching the limited research on PKBM quality assurance in Indonesia.

Keywords: program evaluation; equity in education; quality of learning; community learning centers

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INTRODUCTION

Ideal learning is a process that evaluates students as participants in learning activities based on their potential, creativity, and independence (Yahya et al., 2023). Learning in equitable education is flexible, contextual, and focused on the needs of learners, allowing them to learn according to their time, abilities, and life experiences. The quality of learning is reflected in the tutor's ability to manage an interactive, relevant, and meaningful learning process through the use of participatory methods, skill development, and educational technology that encourages students to be active. (Desmawati et al., 2023). Equitable education learning is designed to provide learning opportunities for the general public who do not understand conventional education by using flexible and need-based methods. The learning process connects the material to students' daily lives, encourages their participation in classroom activities, and provides resources to help them develop knowledge and skills that can improve their quality of life (Astikaningtyas, 2022).

The sustainability of a program plays an important role in the evaluation of education, learning, or training programs. This study evaluates the application of the CIPP model in the Equivalency Education Program at PKBM Tunas Mulia Semarang, evaluation is a continuous process to obtain accountable reports (Ratnaya et al., 2022). PKBM Tunas Mulia is a non-formal educational institution that offers Package A (equivalent to elementary school), Package B (equivalent to junior high school), and Package C (equivalent to senior high school) for individuals without formal education. Located at Jl. Nongkosawit RT 04/RW 01, Gunung Pati District, Semarang City, Central Java, this institution was established in 2007 with an official operating permit from the Education Office and has become an active and trusted community learning center in Semarang City to provide alternative education access.

Data shows that in the 2024/2025 academic year, the number of students in Indonesia was recorded at 52,913,427, a decrease of 0.56% from the previous year. There was an increase at the junior high school (60,548 students) and senior high school (46,678 students) levels (Anisah, 2024). Equivalency education itself, especially at PKBM Tunas Mulia, shows a positive trend, particularly Package C which increased by 38% and became the program with the most participants, while Package B declined slightly and Package A began in 2025/2026. Overall, participants in the equivalency program at PKBM have increased by 26% in the last five years, reflecting the community's awareness of the importance of education. However, the economic problems of students and the lack of digital facilities hinder the process of continuous learning. In addition, inconsistent student attendance is a challenge in maintaining quality and equitable access to education.

This issue has prompted researchers to focus their studies on the Evaluation of Equivalency Education Programs. Therefore, an evaluation is necessary to ensure that the education program at PKBM Tunas Mulia has achieved its objectives and had a positive impact on improving the quality of education and community access to education. One way to describe evaluation is as a structured process that aims to determine the quality of a program by identifying several aspects relevant to the desired outcomes (Duan et al., 2023). The evaluation model most frequently used by evaluators when implementing programs is the CIPP model, in line with research highlighting the importance of evaluation in training programs by applying this model (Akhadi & Shofwan, 2024). The advantage of CIPP is that it is a comprehensive, superior decision-making model that has advantages over other evaluation models, covering four main components: *context*, *input*, *process*, and *product*, which can help in assessing the overall quality and benefits of a program (Stufflebeam, 1971).

The urgency of program evaluation using the CIPP model lies in the importance of ensuring that equity education programs run in accordance with the objectives and needs of the community. This evaluation serves as a basis for determining implementation, daily resource availability, and the alignment of educational processes in the local context (Akhadi & Shofwan, 2024). It is hoped that the evaluation results can provide specific recommendations for PKBM staff to increase participation, improve morale, and ensure the success of the equity education program (Salsabila et al., 2024). The purpose of this study is to evaluate the equity education program at PKBM using the CIPP model to assess the program's suitability to the needs of learners and its contribution to improving access and quality of community learning (Purba et al., 2024).

This study contributes to the development of theory by strengthening the application of the CIPP evaluation model in non-formal education, particularly in the equivalency program at the Tunas Mulia Community Learning Center (Rosa et al., 2025). From a practical perspective, findings regarding limited digital resources, participants' economic constraints, and inconsistent attendance provide recommendations for improvement for the managers of PKBM Tunas Mulia as well as input for the government in providing facilities, funding, and tutor training (Yahya et al., 2023). The novelty of this research lies in its focus on PKBM Tunas Mulia Semarang with a CIPP evaluation that comprehensively covers context, input, process, and product, thus demonstrating that equivalency education remains relevant and adaptive to the needs of the community (Alsya'bani et al., 2025).

METHODS

This research design uses a descriptive qualitative approach, with a focus on evaluating the CIPP program for equivalency education using aspects including: 1) Context, related to program needs analysis and program objectives, 2) Input, related to the characteristics of training participants, instructor qualifications, training curriculum, funding, and training facilities and infrastructure, 3) Process, related to the training schedule, training participant activities, instructor activities, learning strategies, and obstacles in implementation, and 4) Product, related to the results and benefits as well as the graduation of training participants.

Participants in this study consisted of one manager of PKBM Tunas Mulia and 12 tutors who were directly involved in the implementation of the equivalency education program. Research data was obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted directly at the Tunas Mulia PKBM to observe the learning process, interactions between tutors and students, and the use of available facilities and infrastructure (Akhadi & Shofwan, 2024). Interviews were conducted with the PKBM chairperson and 12 tutors to explore the implementation of the curriculum, learning strategies, and obstacles encountered in the program's implementation (Alsya'bani et al., 2025). Documentation includes activity reports, activity participation, curriculum, schedules, teaching materials, and websites used as supporting evidence to strengthen the results of observations and interviews (Desmawati et al., 2023).

The validity technique used in this study was triangulation of methods and sources. Method triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of several methods used in collecting research data, including observation, interviews, and documentation, to explore the implementation of the equality program at PKBM Tunas Mulia Semarang. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing the data from interviews with the Head of PKBM Tunas Mulia Semarang, PKBM Tunas Mulia Semarang tutors and students who had participated or were participating in the PKBM Tunas Mulia Semarang program to explore the truth and draw conclusions about the authenticity and reality in the field to be processed as research results. When data is collected using triangulation techniques, the researcher indirectly tests the credibility of the data (Carter et al., 2014). The data analysis technique used the technique from Miles & Huberman (1992) namely data collection, data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing.

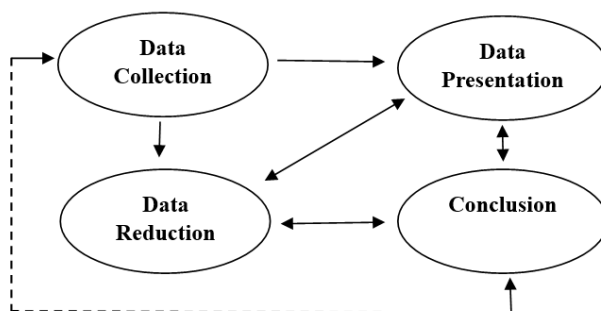


Figure 1. Data Analysis Table
Source: Miles & Huberman (1984)

Data was collected through various stages of the research method, such as documentation of activity reports, participation in activities, curriculum, schedules, teaching materials, websites, and correspondence with several research data sources, such as participants, students, and instructors. Data collection was carried out by first analyzing and summarizing the results of data collection, then aligning them with the research objectives, such as analyzing the context, procedures, and products. After data collection, the next step was data analysis. Data analysis was carried out by first presenting the information obtained from the data collection results, then summarizing the information into sentences that clarified and illustrated the research findings so that the analyzed data could clarify the information obtained from the research findings. The data collected is based on the results of data collection and analysis. After that, a summary of the evaluation of the CIPP program training outcomes is presented.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study were obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation of the implementation of the Equivalent Education Program at PKBM Tunas Mulia. The analysis was conducted using the CIPP evaluation model, which measures program effectiveness, goal achievement, and relevance to the needs of the general public. This model was chosen because it can provide comprehensive information about the implementation of various programs, including the objectives and background of PKBM, the availability of daily support resources, the implementation of educational activities, and the results obtained by students (Stufflebeam, 1971).

This study is divided into four main categories based on the CIPP model: context, input, processes, and products. These components are closely related and provide an overview of the activities of PKBM Tunas Mulia Semarang in improving the quality and accessibility of education through learning programs. Through this analysis, researchers can identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program, including various issues such as the economic crisis and digital disruption that affect students. It is hoped that the findings of this evaluation can assist PKBM and the government in improving access to education and increasing student engagement and sustainability in the general community (Alsya'bani et al., 2025).

Context Evaluation

Context evaluation is an important initial stage in program evaluation because it aims to analyze needs, initial conditions, and potential obstacles before the program is implemented. Through this evaluation, planners can set appropriate goals, adjust resource use, and ensure that the program is relevant to the needs of the target group (Purba et al., 2024). Context evaluation also helps identify gaps, strengths, and weaknesses of institutions and participants, resulting in more adaptive and sustainable interventions (Khoiruumah et al., 2023).

Table 1. Context Evaluation Results

	Indicators	Results
<i>Context Evaluation</i>	Program Needs Analysis	Public awareness of equitable education has increased following the introduction of a community leader approach. Many prospective students still face financial constraints and have difficulty paying monthly fees.
	Program Objectives	The program aims to educate the community and develop skilled and independent students. PKBM Tunas Mulia participates in the National Assessment of Basic Competencies (ANBK) by borrowing computer facilities from other schools. Goal evaluation is conducted periodically through student feedback.

An analysis of the program needs at PKBM Tunas Mulia shows that community awareness of equitable education has increased after the introduction of a community leader approach, but many prospective students are still constrained by costs and find it difficult to pay monthly fees. PKBM Tunas Mulia has had a positive impact on the community by increasing awareness of equitable

education through the support of local leaders such as village heads, neighborhood association (RW) heads, and community association (RT) heads, who play an important role in socializing the program and strengthening the legitimacy of PKBM as an alternative educational institution (Hermawan et al., 2025). The support of these leaders fosters trust and motivation among residents to return to learning through an approach that is appropriate to the local social and cultural conditions. This community-based approach has succeeded in creating an inclusive learning environment and encouraging active community participation in equivalency education programs. However, the main challenge faced is the low economic status of the community, which makes it difficult for many prospective students to pay monthly fees. These economic limitations become a barrier to the sustainability of community members' participation in learning programs, despite the high interest in equivalency education. Therefore, PKBMs need to find more adaptive and sustainable financing strategies to ensure the programs can continue and reach more students (Ramadhan et al., 2025).

The program aims to educate the community and develop skilled and independent students, including through the participation of PKBM Tunas Mulia in ANBK by borrowing computer facilities from other schools as an effort to strengthen digital literacy. The evaluation of objectives is carried out periodically through student feedback. The equivalency education program at PKBM Tunas Mulia aims to educate the community and develop skilled and independent students, with academic learning complemented by skills training such as sewing to encourage economic independence (Imamil et al., 2025). This program provides the dual values of education and empowerment and also participates in ANBK as an effort to strengthen digital literacy even though the facilities must be borrowed from other schools. Program objectives are evaluated periodically through student satisfaction surveys, which then form the basis for curriculum and teaching method development. The novelty in this research lies in the finding that the success of PKBM does not only depend on the curriculum and government assistance, but also on a community-based social engagement model that places local figures as enhancers of legitimacy and drivers of citizen participation. This model shows that the sustainability of PKBM is more successful when developed through community social capital, rather than merely through bureaucratic support.

Input Evaluation

Input evaluation is an evaluation conducted in a program that includes support in achieving program objectives and requirements. Input evaluation helps regulate decisions, determine available resources, and alternatives to be taken. Aristya & Zamroni (2024) state that the components of input evaluation include the following: 1) human resources, 2) supporting facilities and equipment, 3) funds or budget, and 4) various necessary procedures and rules.

Table 2. Input Evaluation Results

	Indicator	Results
<i>Input Evaluation</i>	Students	Participants aged 17–40 years with open registration and document verification. Flexible schedule with fee reductions for underprivileged participants
	Tutors	Tutors are graduates with teaching experience. Tutor training and competency development are conducted regularly. Tutor performance evaluation is conducted informally through observation, student feedback, and reflection by administrators.
	Curriculum	KBM Tunas Mulia follows the Merdeka Curriculum and guidelines from the Education Office. Materials are restructured to be simpler, more relevant, and more applicable. PKBM Tunas Mulia develops Lesson Plans (RPP) for each subject.
	Financing	Program funding comes mainly from student fees and BOP. PKBM implements a cross-subsidy system and fee reductions for participants who cannot afford to pay. Financial management is simple but accountable.

	Facilities and Infrastructure	Facilities and infrastructure are complete, including tables, chairs, blackboards, and stationery. Maintenance of facilities is carried out jointly by participants, tutors, and administrators to foster a sense of ownership and togetherness in the learning community.
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Students at PKBM Tunas Mulia generally come from lower-middle-class families with incomplete formal education and are between the ages of 17 and 40. This characteristic is in line with the concept of lifelong education, which emphasizes that learning is not limited by age (Ayyusufi et al., 2022). This condition encourages PKBM to implement flexible and contextual learning to accommodate the time constraints and needs of students. The participant selection process at PKBM Tunas Mulia is open and not strict because it prioritizes the principles of inclusivity and access to education for anyone who has the will to learn, especially those who do not yet have a diploma (Hermawan et al., 2025).

PKBM Tunas Mulia tutors are education graduates who have teaching experience and are recruited based on their pedagogical abilities, patience, and social sensitivity to the conditions of the students. To overcome competency limitations, PKBM conducts regular internal training and briefing, both through training from the education office and regular discussions between tutors (Suminar et al., 2021). Tutor performance is evaluated through participant feedback, manager reflections, and formative assessments, which are effective in monitoring learning outcomes (Dianti et al., 2025).

The curriculum refers to the Merdeka Curriculum and the Education Agency guidelines with an emphasis on flexibility and the real needs of learners (Munir et al., 2025). The material is presented in a practical and contextual manner and is equipped with life skills as a form of community empowerment. Tutors are given the freedom to adjust their teaching approach according to the dynamics of the class. In addition, tutors are also given the flexibility to adjust the lesson plans in the field if needed. This process reflects flexibility that is the main strength of non-formal education. The success of learning in non-formal education is greatly influenced by the tutor's ability to flexibly manage strategies and adjust learning plans to the diverse needs and backgrounds of students (Syaadah et al., 2022). Tutors not only need to understand the material being taught, but also must be able to adjust teaching strategies to suit the characteristics of students (Fikri et al., 2025).

Funding for programs at PKBM Tunas Mulia comes from very affordable participant fees and government operational assistance (BOP), and is supported by a cross-subsidy system and fee waivers for participants who cannot afford to pay, as a form of inclusivity (Apriliansyah et al., 2025). Financial management is carried out in a simple yet accountable manner through regular reporting, while learning facilities are provided independently by utilizing the center's own building and collaborating with other schools to borrow computer facilities when needed. These facilities are considered sufficient to carry out non-formal learning and encourage participant motivation (Astari et al., 2024).

The facilities and infrastructure at PKBM are quite complete, including tables, chairs, blackboards, and stationery that support the learning process. These facilities are used alternately and maintained to ensure that learning activities run smoothly. Maintenance is carried out jointly by students, teachers, and administrators as a form of active participation that fosters a sense of ownership and strengthens teamwork in the learning community (Hidayah et al., 2025). The novelty of this study lies in the discovery of a funding mechanism based on community solidarity, which does not only rely on government funds but also involves the social participation of community members and joint self-help efforts, resulting in a more independent and flexible program sustainability model that differs from most other PKBMs that rely entirely on BOP.

Process Evaluation

Process evaluation plays a strategic role in providing constructive feedback to program implementers to ensure that program implementation runs according to the established plan (Rahayu et al., 2022). In addition, this evaluation also serves as a basis for consideration in revising or modifying the plan if inconsistencies or ineffectiveness are found in its implementation.

Table 3. Evaluation Results Table

	Indicator	Results
<i>Process Evaluation</i>	Activity Schedule	The learning schedule is arranged flexibly according to the availability and preferences of the tutor. Learning often takes place face-to-face with a flexible schedule.
	Participant Activities	Participants in the PKBM program are involved in various activities, including life skills such as sewing and computer skills. The program includes tutorials, face-to-face sessions, and assignments.
	Learning Strategies	Planning includes Developing an academic calendar, learning schedule, and syllabus and lesson plans tailored to participants' needs. Materials are designed to be practical and relevant to everyday life. Meanwhile, program implementation includes Tutors use a dialogical and contextual approach through discussions, question and answer sessions, and practice. Implementation is monitored through classroom observation and routine evaluation. Learning Evaluation is conducted through exams, assignments, and skill observation. Participants provide feedback through questionnaires or direct communication. Evaluation results are used to improve lesson plans and teaching strategies.
	Obstacles	The main obstacle faced by PKBM Tunas Mulia in reaching potential students is the low economic status of the community.
	Documentation	Documentation includes program implementation, student participation, curriculum, schedule, teaching materials, and the use of the website as a medium for education and publication.

The learning schedule at PKBM Tunas Mulia is flexible, taking into account the availability of tutors and the needs of adult students. Learning is conducted face-to-face and emphasizes direct interaction as part of an inclusive program design, where flexibility is key to sustaining participation (Salsabila et al., 2024). This schedule is evaluated periodically through attendance and competency achievement analysis; if there are imbalances, adjustments are made so that all subjects and skills are optimally achieved, in line with the principle of continuous evaluation in flexible learning programs (Müller et al., 2023).

Participants in this program not only engage in academic learning but are also involved in life skills activities such as sewing and computer training. Learning activities consist of tutorial sessions, face-to-face meetings, and independent assignments. This shows that the learning process is designed holistically, adapting to the practical needs of participants. Hidayah et al. (2025) emphasizes the importance of integrating skills material into the equivalency program as a form of adaptation to local needs and increasing participants' motivation to complete non-formal education programs.

At the planning stage, tutors at PKBM develop syllabi and lesson plans tailored to the characteristics of adult learners, such as the need for flexibility in time, the relevance of material to real-life contexts, and a more experience-oriented approach to learning. This process is in line with the principles of adult learning (andragogy), which emphasizes the active involvement of learners in determining learning objectives. Billa (2025) emphasizes the importance of continuous professional development in the context of non-formal education. Tutor performance evaluations are conducted informally by administrators through direct observation, reflective dialogue, and feedback from students, which is considered more effective in PKBM environments than formal evaluation models because it allows for quick and adaptive feedback. Participatory-based evaluations have been successful in improving the quality of learning interactions and learner satisfaction (Nurgas et al., 2025).

The learning strategy in the PKBM equivalency education program is developed through stages that include planning, implementation, and continuous evaluation. In the planning stage, the academic calendar, study schedule, syllabus, and lesson plans are tailored to the needs and characteristics of the

students so that learning is contextual and applicable. The implementation stage uses a dialogical and contextual approach, in which tutors act as facilitators through discussions, question and answer sessions, and practices that are relevant to the lives of participants. Learning evaluation at PKBM is conducted through midterm and final exams, individual assignments, skill observations, and participant satisfaction questionnaires, so that the monitoring process comprehensively covers academic and skill aspects (Sanusi & Sahono, 2019). The evaluation results are used to continuously improve the lesson plans and teaching strategies.

However, the implementation of the program still faces economic constraints for participants, which causes inconsistent learning participation, in line with findings that family economic instability is an external factor that reduces attendance in the Package C program (Pratama et al., 2023). The novelty of this program lies in the combination of schedule flexibility, face-to-face learning based on local needs, and the integration of life skills as a sustainability strategy that strengthens the motivation and participation of learners.

Activity documentation consists of routine records of learning implementation, participant participation, and the results of each meeting compiled by tutors and PKBM administrators. The curriculum covers program structure, basic competencies, and learning plans tailored to student needs and based on the Merdeka Curriculum. The schedule is flexible to suit students' schedules, as most of them are already working. The teaching materials are designed to be contextual and applicable to everyday life, including academic learning and skills training such as sewing and computer skills. We obtained further information from the official website and photo documentation of activities showing how the program is implemented. This gave us an accurate picture of the learning activities and level of student participation at PKBM Tunas Mulia.

Product Evaluation

Product evaluation is an evaluation that aims to measure, interpret, and assess the success of the program (Pratama et al, 2023). The results of this evaluation can be used as a basis for decision-making regarding the continuation of the program and efforts to improve it in the future.

Table 4. Process Evaluation

	Indicators	Outcomes
<i>Product Evaluation</i>	Results and Program Benefits	The program has a real social impact by promoting educational awareness and encouraging positive change in the community. PKBM adapts to the times through the integration of digital learning to maintain the sustainability of services.
	Graduation	The program successfully graduates students from various levels as a requirement for obtaining certification.

The results and benefits of the program contribute to raising public awareness of the importance of education, especially for groups with limited access to formal education. Through an inclusive and locally-based approach, this program is able to reach adults who previously did not have the opportunity to learn (Fakhruddin & Shofwan, 2019). PKBM also acts as an agent of social change that promotes independence and welfare through strengthening literacy and practical skills training (Hayat et al., 2025). Innovation is a pillar of program sustainability at PKBM Tunas Mulia, especially with the implementation of a digital-based learning system to expand access and encourage learning flexibility. This digitization of learning encourages better engagement, motivation, and understanding among students (Afriyani et al., 2023).

The graduation of students from the A, B, and C packages at PKBM Tunas Mulia shows positive results that reflect the success of the implementation of the equivalency education program. Additionally, competency tests are used as a final evaluation to assess knowledge and practical skills according to BNSP standards, so that graduates receive official certificates that can be used to continue their education or enter the workforce (Afriyani et al., 2023). This success is supported by the dedication of tutors, the commitment of students, and adequate learning facilities (Suhendro S. et al.,

2024). The success is evident through data reduction in the form of mapping the needs of learners, presenting data through monitoring and digitizing the learning process, and drawing conclusions that confirm the improvement in literacy, independence, and readiness of participants in facing socio-economic demands (Miles & Huberman, 1992). The novelty of the program lies in the integration of the functional literacy model with the digitization of learning, so that participants not only obtain an equivalency certificate but also adaptive competencies relevant to local economic needs.

CONCLUSION

The context evaluation shows that the establishment of PKBM was based on the low level of education among the community, with this program successfully promoting educational awareness through a local figure approach, despite being constrained by the economic problems of participants, which required innovative financing strategies. The input evaluation highlights productive-aged learners (17-40 years old), qualified tutors who participate in competency development, a curriculum based on the Merdeka Curriculum with structured lesson plans, accountable financing from fees and operational funds, and complete facilities and infrastructure that are maintained through mutual cooperation. The process evaluation noted flexible learning schedules (Wednesdays, Saturdays, Sundays) that were evaluated periodically, participant involvement in life skills and computer activities, and dialogic, contextual, group discussion, question and answer, and hands-on practice strategies with regular monitoring. The product evaluation showed positive social impacts, such as increased awareness of education and digital innovation, with participants graduating from Packages A, B, and C through competency tests. Overall, this program is good and beneficial to the community, although it needs to be adapted to economic challenges, so that the CIPP evaluation supports the implementation of the equity program at PKBM Tunas Mulia Semarang. Based on the results of the program evaluation, it can be concluded that the evaluation of the equality program at PKBM Tunas Mulia Semarang, which was reviewed using the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation model, has supported the implementation of the equality program at PKBM Tunas Mulia Semarang. The novelty of this research lies in the community-based social collaboration model that places local figures as drivers of citizen participation, combined with schedule flexibility, local needs-based learning, and the integration of functional literacy and digitization so that participants not only obtain an equality certificate but also adaptive competencies relevant to economic needs.

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