

Implementation of Nonformal Education Based on Rural Communities

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Abstract. Nonformal education was implemented by Pelita Hati Foundation to empower community, particularly in rural areas. This study seeks to provide a detailed and comprehensive description of the situation and experiences of the community in the implementation of the Pelita Hati Foundation's nonformal education program, from the perspective of rural communities in Sumenep. Using a qualitative descriptive methodology, the research aims to offer an in-depth understanding of the Pelita Hati Foundation's nonformal education program in rural areas. The results indicate that the Foundation plays a multidimensional role in both education and community development. It manages various educational institutions, catering to both formal and nonformal education needs. The nonformal education programs run by the Foundation have proven effective in empowering local communities. Furthermore, the collaboration between the Foundation and the community has significantly enhanced local enthusiasm for corn cultivation. With the assurance of reliable buyers offering competitive prices and the potential for multiple harvests per year, corn farming has become a lucrative and attractive economic activity for the community. The Pelita Hati Foundation has successfully implemented an effective nonformal education program that has had a positive impact on the community, particularly in improving their economy and overall well-being. This research contributes valuable insights into the role of nonformal education in community empowerment in rural areas. It also underscores that collaboration between educational institutions and local communities can lead to significant positive impacts on the progress and welfare of the community.

Keywords: implementation; nonformal education; rural communities

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INTRODUCTION

A collaborative approach to education, involving families, governments, and the broader society, is recognized as essential for student success. This collaboration fosters the development of a more empowered and self-reliant community, equipped to make informed decisions that will shape its future (Savas, 2007). The degree of a community's autonomy and maturity serves as a barometer of its preparedness to navigate the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

The current model of public education, emphasizing standardization, academic focus, and a passive societal role in development, necessitates a shift towards a more dynamic approach. This new approach would position society as an active participant, with the right to determine educational programs and benefit from

development outcomes (Hayat, 2018; Moore, 1993; Raharjo et al., 2016). The standardized, market oriented model would be abandoned. Awareness of the significance of societal participation in educational development is crucial in the globalized era. This recognition does not signify a reluctance to embrace innovative educational strategies (Dale, 2000; Jarvis, 2007; Kamars, 1989). On the contrary, it represents a culmination of past successes, paving the way for a more inclusive and effective approach to education.

The emergence of a societal awareness regarding its untapped potential for development necessitates a paradigm shift in educational approaches. This new approach, ideally embraced by the community itself, aims to awaken this dormant power currently stifled by the misconception of society as a passive recipient. Existing standardized, academically focused educational programs lack real-world application and offer limited community involvement in planning, implementation, and evaluation. This results in a stifled environment lacking the creativity, independence, and dynamism necessary to foster education tailored to the needs and potential of the community (Batten, 1957; Uhar Suharsaputra, 2012).

Nonformal education, as an integral part of the education system, shares the same responsibility as formal education: to deliver the best possible service to the community, particularly its target audience. This target audience is no longer solely comprised of the underprivileged or those lacking basic education (underdeveloped, blind to basic education, dropouts from formal education). As science and technology advance, employment opportunities evolve, and societal culture shifts, the target group for nonformal education continues to expand. To address these evolving needs, nonformal education programs and activities must continuously adapt and expand alongside community development (Fakhrudin & Shofwan, 2019; Froehle et al., 2022). In essence, the growth of nonformal education should align with contemporary learning concepts, where learning is no longer confined to the traditional school setting and increasingly occurs outside of formal classrooms (Hoppers, 2006).

The development and expansion of nonformal education offer a fresh perspective on its role in educating communities, particularly adults. This approach caters to two groups: those who lack access to formal education and those who find formal education inadequate or irrelevant to their current needs and the evolving social and technological landscape. The very process of development hinges on the participation of millions of educated adults, yet existing formal institutions often fail to address the real-world educational needs of society (Burns, 2020; Pereira et al., 2018). In specific regions, residents may find the formal school system ill-equipped to equip them with the skills necessary to thrive in a technology driven society (Pereira et al., 2018; Robinson-Pant, 2023; Simándi, 2023).

The educational process extends beyond the confines of formal schooling. It encompasses a new, multifaceted system that incorporates diverse experiences, thoughts, and informal interactions facilitated by readily available resources. Nonformal education plays a crucial role in complementing, supplementing, or even substituting for formal education. This configuration is highly contextual and directly relevant to real-life experiences, paving the way for strategic and functional nonformal education programs that effectively serve the community's needs (Ivanov & Zviagintsev, 2023).

The rise of lifelong learning as a central concept compels individuals, institutions, associations, communities focused on education, and even businesses to collaborate in developing innovative approaches to meet society's evolving educational needs. Formal schooling is no longer the sole domain or provider of education. Both schools and businesses are transcending their traditional roles to participate in the management of education, particularly nonformal forms. The emergence of new education-oriented organizations and unlabeled educational institutions, along with their expansion, creates a more accessible and convenient learning landscape for individuals to pursue self-directed learning. These entities become "self-supporting organizations," fostering the development of a learning society.

The establishment of a learning society embodies a new spirit and understanding of education within a community. This transformation serves as a tangible manifestation of the lifelong learning model. This environment fosters opportunities for continuous learning across individuals, organizations, social institutions, industries, and society as a whole. The positive outcomes of embracing nonformal education concepts include

increased enthusiasm and motivation for self-directed learning to fulfill lifelong needs, and a strengthened capacity for communitywide education, where individuals and the community itself become continuous learners within their environment.

Located in East Lenteng Village, Sumenep, Indonesia, Pelita Hati Foundation is an educational institution that fosters strong ties with the surrounding community. The foundation views itself as an integral part of the community, established to serve its educational needs and contribute to its overall development. The community, in turn, desires a positive reciprocal relationship, seeking both educational advancement and support from Pelita Hati. Pelita Hati actively engages with the community, welcoming its ideas, needs, and values. Beyond its educational focus, the foundation extends its efforts into areas like Maduraese cattle breeding and maize silage production, aiming to empower the community by preparing its human resources according to local aspirations.

METHODS

This research adopts a qualitative, descriptive approach. Qualitative research strives to understand phenomena in their entirety, considering the context (holistic contextual). Data collection occurs in natural settings with the researcher acting as the primary instrument. This study aims to present a comprehensive picture of the situation and experiences of specific groups within the Pelita Hati Education Foundation's nonformal education program for rural communities in Sumenep Regency. By focusing on the implementation process and seeking the underlying meaning behind observed phenomena, the research seeks to obtain a rich and in-depth understanding.

Given the qualitative nature of the research, data will be collected in the form of words, images, and not solely numerical data. Everything encountered during data collection has the potential to be relevant to the research question. Therefore, the research report may include participant quotes to provide a more nuanced understanding of the program.

Data collection will involve visiting the Pelita Hati Education Foundation to gather information and descriptions about the program's implementation. Data analysis will follow a multistep process involving data condensation, presentation, verification, and potentially field testing to ensure the findings are accurate and reliable. Finally, the research will culminate in the formulation of well supported conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pelita Hati Foundation and Nonformal Education

Rural communities constitute a significant portion of the global population, particularly in developing nations, and represent a vast potential consumer base for nonformal education programs. Population growth in rural areas is driven by a multitude of factors, including birth rates, mortality rates, and migration patterns. While inadequate family planning practices often contribute to higher birth rates, migration from rural to urban areas is often motivated by the pursuit of better employment opportunities. Conversely, migration from urban to rural settings is often driven by a desire for a simpler lifestyle and a closer connection to nature (Galbraith, 1992; Piper & Zuilkowski, 2015; Rahabav & Souisa, 2021).

Pelita Hati Foundation is an educational foundation located in East Lenteng Village, exemplifies the provision of diverse educational opportunities in rural communities. The foundation operates two formal educational institutions and one nonformal education institution, catering to the diverse educational needs of the community. The formal education institutions include an Early Childhood Education (PAUD) program, encompassing both Playgroup and Kindergarten levels, as well as an Islamic Elementary School. To address the nonformal educational needs, the foundation offers an afternoon Madrasah Diniyah program (Fahmi, 2019; Pamungkas, 2020; Tkachenko, 2021).

Pelita Hati Foundation success stems from its strong human resource foundation, comprising creative, innovative, and dynamic individuals. The teaching staff consists of highly qualified professionals, holding bachelor's degrees (Strata 1) and associate degrees (D3) from both public and private universities. The foundation's management structure is characterized by its strength and unwavering commitment to establishing a superior educational institution that fosters character development and competitiveness. The foundation's chairman, with his extensive background as a lecturer, educational consultant, and research consultant, brings valuable expertise in building educational institutions. Furthermore, Pelita Hati Foundation enjoys a broad national network of support, further enhancing its capacity to deliver quality education.

Recognizing the importance of a comfortable learning environment, Pelita Hati Foundation has invested in well-equipped facilities. These include a representative school building with a pleasant, green, and conducive environment to support teaching and learning activities. Comfortable classrooms, a library, sports fields, Wi-Fi access points, an auditorium, prayer facilities, and other supporting amenities further enhance the learning experience. These facilities contribute to the foundation's mission of nurturing a young generation grounded in Islamic principles and strong moral values.

Educational entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in addressing current educational needs and supporting parents in their efforts to educate their children. Pelita Hati Foundation exemplifies this commitment to serving rural communities through its diverse educational offerings. Agricultural activities, particularly crop cultivation and livestock rearing, significantly contribute to the economic landscape of East Lenteng Village. Pelita Hati Foundation actively engages in two agricultural ventures to empower the local community: Cattle Farming, Maize Silage Production: Cattle Farming, this initiative involves the participation of nine residents and a veterinarian who regularly monitors the health of the cattle. The cattle are primarily raised for sale to various regions in Java, with increased demand during the Eid al-Adha holiday season. Maize Silage Production, Pelita Hati Foundation produces maize silage and concentrate feed for its cattle, ensuring a tailored diet that meets their specific needs. This self-sufficiency in feed production sets the farm apart from traditional methods.

Key Strengths of Pelita Hati Foundation's Cattle Farming, *Modern Practices*: The farm employs modern techniques, including the use of maize silage and concentrate feed, to optimize cattle health and productivity. *Quality Control*: The farm adheres to strict weight standards for incoming cattle and continuously monitors their weight gain. *Market Appeal*: The high quality of the meat produced attracts buyers, leading to a high demand for the farm's cattle. Pelita Hati Foundation commitment to providing a conducive learning environment, engaging in educational entrepreneurship, and actively contributing to the agricultural sector in East Lenteng Village exemplifies its multifaceted approach to community development. The foundation's success stems from its innovative practices, strong community engagement, and dedication to empowering the local population. In collaboration with the Bupati Sumenep, Dandim 0827/Sumenep, and other stakeholders, Pelita Hati Foundation has established a maize silage production facility in Kalianget Sumenep. The extensive land requirements for heavy machinery necessitated the location choice. The silage production process emerged from a collaborative effort between the foundation and the local community, with the knowledge and techniques disseminated to the factory workers.

The maize silage enterprise actively engages the local community in various aspects: *Contract Farming*: The foundation contracts with local farmers to purchase their maize harvests, providing a guaranteed market for their produce. *Knowledge Sharing*: The foundation shares its expertise in maize cultivation techniques with the community, empowering them to improve their agricultural practices. *Employment Opportunities*: The silage production facility creates employment opportunities for local residents, contributing to the community's economic wellbeing. The growing population places increasing demands on food and clothing production. However, shrinking arable land and rising living costs necessitate enhanced land productivity. To achieve this, farmers must embrace advanced agricultural knowledge and technologies: *Sustainable Practices*: Adopting sustainable agricultural practices, such as crop rotation and soil conservation techniques, can maintain soil fertility and productivity. *Precision Agriculture*: Utilizing precision agriculture technologies, such as GPS

guided tractors and variable rate fertilizer application, can optimize resource use and minimize environmental impact. *Value-added Products*: Exploring value-added products, such as processed foods or biofuels, can increase agricultural income and diversify revenue streams.

Pelita Hati Foundation maize silage production enterprise demonstrates the foundation's commitment to community empowerment, sustainable agriculture, and addressing food security challenges. By engaging the local community, sharing knowledge, and embracing innovative technologies, the foundation contributes to the overall wellbeing of the region (Fakhruddin & Shofwan, 2019; Ivanović et al., 2023; Khan et al., 2023).

The conceptualization of rural development goals has undergone a significant transformation. Early approaches prioritized solely agricultural and economic growth (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974; Galbraith, 1992; Zhang et al., 2023). However, contemporary perspectives advocate for a more balanced approach that emphasizes social equity and opportunity creation alongside economic advancement (Blowfield & Frynas, 2005; Nelson & Nguyen, 2023). This shift is reflected in the current focus on achieving the following development targets: *Employment generation*: Expanding job opportunities for rural populations is crucial to enhancing their livelihoods and fostering economic inclusion. *Equitable land distribution*: Ensuring fair access to arable land is essential for promoting agricultural productivity and reducing rural poverty. *Income equality*: Mitigating income disparities within rural communities is necessary to achieve sustainable development and social justice. *Improved social services*: Enhancing access to quality healthcare, nutrition, and housing services is fundamental to improving the overall wellbeing of rural populations. *Educational expansion*: Expanding educational opportunities for all individuals in rural areas empowers them to reach their full potential and contribute meaningfully to their communities. *Community participation*: Granting rural communities a voice in decision-making processes that impact their lives fosters a sense of ownership and promotes more effective development interventions.

Fostering agricultural growth stands as a cornerstone of comprehensive rural development initiatives. Empowering farmers to enhance their productivity through modern agricultural practices is a crucial step in this process. This can be achieved through tailored educational programs that cater to their specific needs. Rural development emerges from the interplay of various forces, including widespread education that actively engages the populace (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974; Urch, 1984; Zhang et al., 2023). They contend that conventional primary education, in particular, serves as a catalyst for dynamic rural development. Advancing education spurs progress across other sectors. Agricultural improvements stimulate increased demand for goods and services, leading to a surge in ancillary businesses such as carpentry, crafts, and small-scale retail establishments.

Rural areas transform into hubs for diverse rural development endeavors. As the process unfolds, new technologies and products infiltrate these regions, fostering specialization, division of labor, and structural shifts in rural employment patterns. Sustained growth enables rural centers to evolve into commercial, administrative, and cultural hubs for their surrounding areas, bridging the gap between villages and the broader, more advanced external world. While the aforementioned framework provides a general blueprint for rural development, its success is not guaranteed across all regions. Each area possesses unique characteristics, particularly in terms of natural resource endowments, infrastructure, and the determination to advance. It is crucial to acknowledge that many rural regions transition from subsistence agriculture to a broader, more integrated economic system at varying paces. This momentum presents an opportunity for educational institutions to contribute to the creation of new employment opportunities. The design and implementation of educational programs should be tailored to meet the demand for new skills and expertise. Strategies for enhancing rural productivity and employment opportunities was a more effective approach, beginning with a critical evaluation of past nonformal education programs (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974; Urch, 1984; Zhang et al., 2023).

Education plays a pivotal role not only in national advancement but also in navigating an increasingly competitive global market. It should be viewed as a tool to empower societies, fostering a workforce equipped with theoretical knowledge, practical skills, technological proficiency, and specialized expertise. This forms

the basis for continuous evaluation and improvement of education systems worldwide. Acknowledging the significance of education, the emergence of nonformal education can be seen as a government initiative to elevate the educational standards of populations in various countries, including Indonesia.

In Indonesia, formal education holds high regard, often determining employment prospects. To address this, the government has expanded access to formal education, enabling individuals to acquire the necessary qualifications for employment and reduce unemployment rates. However, a challenge arises when the number of formal education graduates exceeds available job opportunities. This intensifies competition for employment, and formal education alone often proves insufficient to meet the stringent requirements of the job market. Nonformal education emerges as a complement to formal education, equipping individuals with additional skills to enhance their employability.

Research conducted between 1950 and 1980 in Latin America and the Caribbean focused on innovation and initiatives in nonformal education. This sector often serves as a hub for strategies aimed at socioeconomic change and empowerment for the underprivileged. Nonformal education programs are designed to build regional infrastructure, cultivate capable human resources, and prepare individuals for positions that align with global market demands. Human Capital oriented programs provide support and foster social and political stability within the status quo. This presents an opportunity for policymakers to develop strategies and advocate for the interests of marginalized populations.

The Transformative Power of Nonformal Education: A Paradigm Shift

Nonformal education transcends the boundaries of traditional schooling, playing a pivotal role in fostering individual and societal transformation. It serves as a catalyst for change by equipping individuals with the essential skills and knowledge to navigate an evolving world. Transformative power of nonformal education lies in its ability to address the limitations of formal education. While formal education excels in imparting foundational knowledge, nonformal education bridges the gap between theory and practice, empowering individuals to apply their learning to real-world challenges.

Role of nonformal education in facilitating radical social change by providing access to political and economic resources. Unlike formal education, which often focuses on individual advancement, nonformal education empowers communities to challenge societal norms and advocate for their rights (Widodo & Nusantara, 2020). The scope of nonformal education extends beyond its traditional target audience of marginalized communities. As societies evolve, nonformal education adapts to meet the diverse needs of individuals across all social strata. Its significance lies in its ability to provide lifelong learning opportunities, ensuring that individuals remain equipped to thrive in a dynamic world. Srinivasan (1989) highlights the inadequacy of formal education in preparing individuals for the demands of a technologically driven society. Nonformal education emerges as a complementary force, providing the skills and knowledge necessary for success in a rapidly changing world (Easton, 2014; Kumar Chaudhary et al., 2020; Mulyadi et al., 2020).

The effectiveness of nonformal education hinges on collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including individuals, institutions, and communities. This collaborative approach fosters a contextualized and life relevant learning environment, ensuring that nonformal education programs align with the specific needs and aspirations of target populations. The emergence of the "learning society" concept underscores the shared responsibility for education. Schools, businesses, and community organizations play a crucial role in promoting lifelong learning opportunities, empowering individuals to take charge of their own education.

Nonformal education empowers communities to take ownership of their educational development. This manifests in the establishment of community-based learning centers, vocational training programs, and religious education initiatives. These endeavors not only impart knowledge and skills but also foster a sense of self-reliance and community empowerment. The realization of a learning society fosters a pervasive culture of lifelong learning. This shift in mindset opens up a myriad of nonformal education opportunities, enabling individuals to pursue knowledge and skills relevant to their personal and professional development. The positive outcomes of nonformal education extend beyond individual empowerment, strengthening

communities and fostering societal progress. It cultivates a spirit of self-directed learning, enabling individuals to continuously educate themselves and contribute to the collective wellbeing (Faisal et al., 2019; Ismaniar & Ilbad, 2021; Lestari, 2021).

Nonformal education transcends the limitations of traditional schooling, offering a transformative approach to learning and societal development. Nonformal education empowers individuals and communities by providing essential skills, knowledge, and opportunities for lifelong learning. Its significance lies in its ability to address the diverse needs of individuals across all social strata, fostering a culture of self-reliance, community empowerment, and lifelong learning. Nonformal education emerges as a collaborative endeavor, requiring the active participation of individuals, institutions, and communities to achieve its transformative potential.

Effective Nonformal Education Strategies for Community Development

Effective implementation of nonformal education programs hinges upon several key strategies aligned with the core principles and learning methods of Nonformal education. Furthermore, maintaining quality and societal sensitivity are crucial for success of nonformal education (Robinson-Pant, 2023; Sudjana, 2000). Five fundamental strategies are outlined: *Humanistic Approach*: This approach views society as an active participant in its own development, recognizing its inherent potential for self-improvement and empowerment. *Participatory Approach*: Community development thrives on the active involvement of community members, relevant institutions, and potentially neighboring communities, in both program design and implementation. *Collaborative Approach*: Successful nonformal education programs require cooperation, coordination, and synergy with other stakeholders, fostering an integrated approach to development. *Sustainable Approach*: Long-term impact necessitates a commitment to continuous development efforts. The cornerstone of this strategy is the development of local leaders and educators within the community. *Culturally Sensitive Approach*: Respect for existing cultural norms and traditions is essential in nonformal education programs. These values should be integrated into the development process (Robinson-Pant, 2023; Sudjana, 2000).

By employing these strategies, nonformal education programs can deliver programs tailored to community needs. These programs can empower individuals and communities to improve their quality of life, leading to increased income (economically), heightened social awareness, and the development of self-improvement skills. Further elucidating the fundamental principles for nonformal education programs, the following are essential elements: *Developing nonformal education programs*: These programs should foster adaptability, flexibility, and an innovative and entrepreneurial spirit within the community (Robinson-Pant, 2023; Sudjana, 2000). *Poverty reduction*: Nonformal education programs should address poverty reduction in both rural and urban areas through skills development and educational offerings that directly target real and pressing needs within the community ("felt needs"). *Community problem-solving*: Nonformal education programs should be designed to address specific challenges faced by the community, aligning with the core principles of "community development by and for the community itself." *Technological innovation*: Nonformal education programs should leverage new, innovative, and cost-effective educational technologies while remaining grounded in the established principles of the field.

Pelita Hati Foundation: A Model for Sustainable Nonformal education

The Pelita Hati Foundation exemplifies a unique approach to nonformal education. Recognizing the high demand for both formal and nonformal education, the foundation has established a business venture to generate profits that benefit the surrounding community. This innovative approach allows the foundation to offer high-quality formal and nonformal education at a reduced cost. The positive impact of the Pelita Hati Foundation's Nonformal education programs extend beyond the educational realm. Profits from the foundation's business are used to improve the overall wellbeing of the community by financing formal and nonformal schools, alleviating the financial burden on local families. Additionally, profits are used for

infrastructure projects such as road widening and public space beautification, further enhancing the community's overall environment (Mfum-Mensah, 2003; Riethmuller et al., 2023; Wallace, 1992).

CONCLUSION

The Pelita Hati Foundation plays a multifaceted role in education and community development. It operates a range of educational institutions, catering to both formal and nonformal learning needs. Nonformal Education and Community Empowerment: Beyond formal education, the foundation actively engages in nonformal programs that empower local communities. One such program involves collaborating with rural communities in cattle farm management and corn silage production. This initiative fosters knowledge sharing and skill development amongst villagers in livestock rearing and silage preparation. Furthermore, the program offers significant financial benefits to the community. The foundation purchases corn grown by villagers at a premium price, and the high-quality silage is used to feed the cattle. The profits generated from these activities are strategically reinvested in two key areas: providing free formal education (eliminating tuition fees) and uplifting community infrastructure around the foundation's location. Collaboration for Shared Success: The Pelita Hati Foundation's success stems, in part, from its collaborative approach. By working alongside the Sumenep military district command, the Sumenep district government, and rural communities, the foundation has fostered a strong spirit of cooperation. This collaboration has significantly boosted villagers' enthusiasm for corn cultivation. With the assurance of a reliable buyer offering high prices, and the potential for multiple harvests within a year, corn farming has become an attractive and lucrative endeavor for the community. The program's success extends beyond the local economy, as the high-quality corn silage also contributes to the export industry.

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