

Strengthening Islamic Learning Centers Through The Provision of Religious Books in Paya Gaboh Village, North Aceh

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ABSTRACT Community-based Islamic learning centers play an important role in supporting religious education and character development. However, some institutions continue to face limited learning materials and educational facilities. This community service program aimed to provide religious books for teachers and students and to strengthen the partnership between Universitas Malikussaleh and Islamic educational institutions in Paya Gaboh Village, Sawang District, North Aceh Regency. The program employed a participatory approach involving team coordination, assessment of book needs, supplier and price surveys, procurement, distribution, documentation, and evaluation. It was implemented from September to December 2023 and involved three target institutions: Dayah Assyufa Al Azziziah, Al Ikhlas Islamic Learning Center, and Tarbiatul Islamiah. The results showed that religious books aligned with the institutions' learning needs were distributed to all three partners. The program also strengthened communication and social ties among the community service team, leaders of the Islamic learning centers and dayah, village figures, and students. The activity directly improved access to religious learning materials and established a foundation for further mentoring in institutional governance, facility maintenance, and sustainability. Program evaluation indicated the need for follow-up activities involving monitoring of book utilization, improved asset recording, and the development of medium-term impact indicators.

KEYWORDS: *Islamic Learning Center; Religious Books; Community Service; Religious Education; University Surrounding Village*

1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic learning centers are non-formal educational institutions that play an important role in Qur'anic learning, the strengthening of religious knowledge, character development, and the preservation of social values within the community. Their presence is particularly important in rural areas because they provide accessible learning opportunities for children and adolescents within the context of everyday community life.

Paya Gaboh Village is located near the Reuleut Campus of Universitas Malikussaleh,

specifically on the northern side of the campus and in the southern part of Sawang District, North Aceh Regency. The village covers approximately 350 hectares and has a population of 919 people living in 243 households. Of this population, 535 people are of productive age, while 123 are adolescents aged 12–21 years. The local socioeconomic structure is dominated by farmers, livestock breeders, construction workers, and a smaller number of government employees.

Paya Gaboh Village has several Islamic learning centers, including Assyufa Al Azziah, Al Huda, Tarbiatul Islamiah, Albaraqah, and Babul Huda, with preliminary data indicating a total of 269 students and 16 teachers. However, some Qur'ans and religious books had been used for a long period and were already damaged. Teacher welfare was also limited, while institutional management was generally conducted through traditional practices. These conditions highlighted the need for improved learning facilities and sustained mentoring.

Previous community service activities in Paya Gaboh Village demonstrated the importance of university involvement in addressing community problems through socialization and mentoring (Ikhyanuddin & Raza, 2021). In the context of religious institutions, strengthening management and record-keeping is also relevant for improving accountability and organizational sustainability (Fitriyah et al., 2020; Rakhmawati et al., 2020). Based on these conditions, the present program focused on mapping needs, procuring religious books, and distributing them to the targeted Islamic learning centers and dayah.

The program aimed to: (1) meet the need for religious books among teachers and students; (2) improve the adequacy of religious learning facilities; (3) strengthen communication and social ties between Universitas Malikussaleh and communities surrounding the university; and (4) establish a foundation for sustainable mentoring in the governance of Islamic learning centers.

2. METHOD

The program was implemented from September to December 2023 in Paya Gaboh Village, Sawang District, North Aceh Regency. The main partners were Dayah Assyufa Al Azziziah, Al Ikhlas Islamic Learning Center, and Tarbiatul Islamiah. The implementation team consisted of lecturers with expertise in economics, accounting, and Islamic studies, assisted by university students.

The program used a participatory approach. Leaders of the Islamic learning centers and dayah were involved in identifying the types of books required so that the assistance matched the students' learning levels and the teachers' instructional needs. The program stages included preparation and coordination, needs identification, supplier and price surveys, procurement, distribution, documentation, evaluation, and dissemination.

Table 1. Stages of the community service program

Stage	Time	Activity	Output
Coordination	September 1, 2023	Team meeting to assign responsibilities and prepare technical steps.	Team roles assigned.
Needs identification	September 10–13, 2023	Assessment of religious book needs at three target institutions.	List of required books.
Supplier survey	September 17–19, 2023	Price survey at four religious bookstores.	Price and availability information.
Procurement	October 18–22, 2023	Purchase of books and survey and ordering of book racks.	Books prepared for distribution.
Distribution	October 25–26, 2023	Distribution of books to three partner institutions.	Books received by the partners.
Evaluation and dissemination	November–December 2023	Documentation, communication with partners, report preparation, and drafting of publication materials.	Program documentation and report.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Identification of Partner Needs

The initial stage involved relationship-building and direct communication with institutional leaders. Needs assessments at Dayah Assyufa Al Azziziah, Al Ikhlas Islamic Learning Center, and Tarbiatul Islamiah showed that the partners required not only books for students but also reference books for institutional leaders and teachers. The requested materials included books on Islamic jurisprudence, the life of the Prophet, Arabic–Indonesian dictionaries, moral education, and other religious reference works.

Partner involvement in preparing the list of required materials was essential to ensure the relevance of the assistance. This approach prevented the procurement of learning materials that did not correspond to the local curriculum or the students' levels of ability. Therefore, the procurement process was not merely focused on the number of items provided, but also on the relevance of the content and the instructional function of the books.

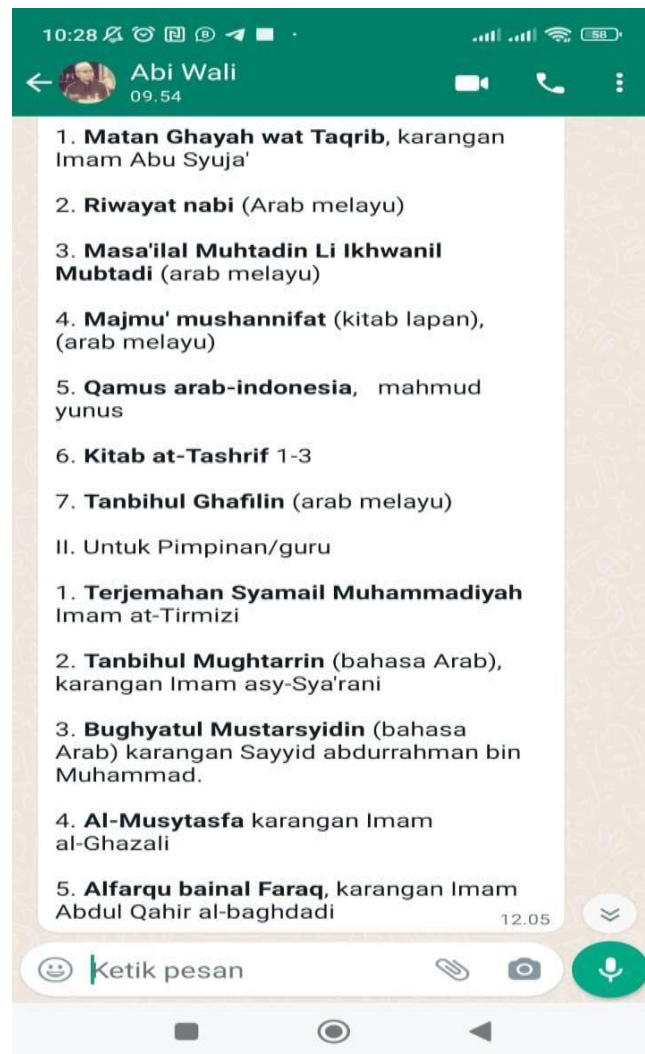


Figure 1. Example of a list of religious books requested by a partner institution

3.2 Procurement and Distribution of Religious Books

After the needs had been identified, the team conducted price surveys at Rahmat Bookstore in Lhokseumawe, Huda Bookstore in Krueng Geukuh, Bahagia Bookstore in Bungkah, and Nabawi Bookstore in Krueng Mane. The books were purchased on October 18, 2023, from Bahagia Bookstore in Bungkah. The team also surveyed and ordered book racks as part of an effort to maintain the organization and proper storage of the learning materials.

The religious books were distributed on October 25, 2023, to Al Ikhlas Islamic Learning Center, led by Tgk. M. Amin, M.A., and Tarbiatul Islamiah, led by Tgk. Umar Mahdi. On October 26, 2023, the books were delivered to Dayah Assyufa Al Azziziah under the leadership of Abi Wali Yunis. The handover was conducted directly and involved institutional leaders, students, and the implementation team.



Figure 2. Handover of religious books to the leader of an Islamic learning center/dayah

3.3 Program Impacts

The immediate impact of the program was the availability of religious books needed by teachers and students to support religious learning. The distribution also helped replace learning materials that had been used for a long time or had become damaged. Although the program did not quantitatively measure changes in student learning outcomes, access to appropriate learning materials is an important prerequisite for sustaining the educational process.

In addition to material support, the program strengthened relationships between Universitas Malikussaleh, village figures, and leaders of the Islamic learning centers and dayah. The geographical proximity of the partner institutions to the Reuleut Campus facilitated communication and created opportunities for further mentoring. These relationships constitute social capital for future programs, particularly in simple institutional governance, asset recording, facility maintenance, and support for teacher welfare.

Governance mentoring may be directed toward the use of simple cashbooks and standardized recording forms. Orderly record-keeping practices can improve the accountability of religious institutions and assist administrators in planning institutional needs (Fitriyah et al., 2020; Rakhmawati et al., 2020). More broadly, the management of social and religious resources may also contribute to community welfare when developed in a systematic manner (Utami et al., 2017).



Figure 3. The implementation team, institutional leaders, and student beneficiaries

3.4 Implementation Evaluation

Supporting factors included the geographical proximity of the partner institutions to the Reuleut Campus, positive acceptance by the leaders of the Islamic learning centers and dayah, and the involvement of team members with established social and religious networks in the target area. These factors enabled the needs assessment and distribution of assistance to be conducted directly.

Areas requiring further strengthening include post-program documentation of book utilization, asset recording at each institution, and the measurement of medium-term impacts. Indicators for future activities may include the frequency of book use, the number of students using the materials, the condition of the books after a specified period, the level of teacher involvement, and changes in the quality of institutional management.

Table 2. Summary of program outputs

Output	Status	Description
Materials/products	Achieved	Religious books were purchased and distributed to three target institutions.
Improvement in educational and social values	Substantively achieved	Support for learning materials and strengthened relationships with institutional leaders and village figures.
Online media publication	Manuscript submitted	The manuscript was submitted to Warta Aceh on November 2, 2023.
Scientific article	Prepared	The article was prepared based on the final program report.
Cooperation document	Further action required	A formal cooperation document was not included among the available program evidence.

4. CONCLUSION

The program to strengthen Islamic learning centers in Paya Gaboh Village was implemented through coordination, needs identification, price surveys, procurement, and distribution of religious books to three target institutions. The program improved access to religious learning materials that corresponded to the needs of teachers and students and strengthened communication between Universitas Malikussaleh and communities surrounding the university.

Program sustainability should focus on monitoring the utilization of the books, recording and maintaining assets, providing basic governance mentoring, and developing medium-term impact indicators. Through these follow-up efforts, the provision of religious books can develop from a one-time material assistance activity into a more measurable and sustainable institutional empowerment program.

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