



## Building an Environmentally Caring Community Through Dasawisma

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**Abstract:** Household environmental problems such as poor waste management, the practice of burning waste, and limited use of home yards remain major challenges in creating clean and healthy residential areas. Dasawisma, as the smallest unit within the PKK structure, holds a strategic role in fostering environmental awareness and pro-environmental behavior at the family level. This Community Service Program (PkM) aims to build an environmentally caring community through strengthening the role of Dasawisma, improving members' knowledge, and encouraging new habits in household environmental management. The method used a participatory approach consisting of problem identification, interactive counseling sessions, hands-on practice in waste management and yard utilization, and field mentoring. The results indicate an increase in members' understanding of environmental issues, behavioral changes in sorting organic and inorganic waste, simple composting practices, and the cultivation of plants in home yards. In addition, collective awareness and the emergence of local leaders helped sustain the environmental movement within the community. This program demonstrates that strengthening Dasawisma is an effective family-based empowerment strategy to support social transformation toward a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable environment.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Environmental issues in urban and residential areas are increasingly complex, particularly related to household waste management, environmental cleanliness, and low public awareness of environmentally friendly behavior. Data from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry shows that the majority of waste generated originates from household activities, making behavioral change at the family level key to sustainable environmental management (KLHK 2022). At the community level, women's and family groups play a strategic role in developing clean living habits, reducing waste, and reusing household waste (Chambers 2012). In this context, Dasawisma, as the smallest unit of the PKK movement, has great potential as an agent of family- and environment-based social change (KPPPA 2012).

Dasawisma is a group of approximately ten to twenty households that serves as a forum for community participation in various family empowerment programs. Structurally, Dasawisma members have a high level of social closeness, making them effective as a medium for disseminating information and promoting collective behavior change (Mardikanto 2014). However, based on initial observations of assisted communities, Dasawisma's role in environmental issues remains suboptimal. Dasawisma activities focus more on routine social

community activities, while environmental awareness programs such as waste sorting, waste bank management, or yard reforestation have not been systematically managed. This situation indicates a gap between Dasawisma's institutional potential and environmental management practices at the family level, often caused by limited organizational capacity and a lack of mentoring (Marliani 2018).

Theoretically, changes in community behavior in protecting the environment are strongly influenced by social learning processes and the reinforcement of group norms. Bandura emphasized that individual behavior is formed through observation, social interaction, and reinforcement from the surrounding environment (Bandura 1986). Therefore, small communities like Dasawisma can be effective social learning spaces for instilling environmental values. Furthermore, the community empowerment approach emphasizes the importance of active citizen participation in identifying problems and formulating joint solutions, ensuring that environmental programs are not top-down in nature but rather emerge from the collective consciousness of the community itself (Freire 1970; Chambers 2012).

The reason for selecting Dasawisma as the subject of community service is its strategic position as a family mobilizer and government partner in community welfare programs. The involvement of housewives in Dasawisma allows this group to play a direct role in household management, including consumption patterns, kitchen waste management, and cleanliness of the surrounding environment. Various studies have shown that women's empowerment in environmental issues contributes significantly to the success of community-based environmental management programs (Mardikanto 2014; Chambers 2012). Therefore, strengthening Dasawisma's capacity in the area of environmental awareness is seen as a strategic step towards building a community that is more aware and responsible for environmental sustainability.

Household environmental management behavior, including waste reduction and sorting as well as the adoption of clean and healthy living habits, is strongly influenced by individuals' attitudes, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioral control, which determine their intention to act in an environmentally responsible manner (Ajzen, 1991). At the community level, the spread of sustainable practices such as waste segregation, composting, and productive yard utilization depends on the diffusion of innovations through local opinion leaders, peer learning, and demonstration effects that gradually shape collective behavior (Rogers, 2003). Effective waste management in communities also requires an integrated approach that combines technical systems, institutional support, and active community participation to ensure that reduction, sorting, and proper disposal practices are consistently implemented at the

household level (UNEP, 2015; Wilson et al., 2015). Therefore, strengthening awareness, skills, and social reinforcement mechanisms is essential for fostering sustainable household environmental practices that contribute to broader public health and environmental quality. This problem impacts not only the quality of the physical environment but also family health and social well-being (KLHK 2022). Therefore, educational and participatory efforts are needed to strengthen the role of Dasawisma (village-based community development) as a driving force for environmentally conscious communities.

The goal of the Community Service Program (PKM) “Building an Environmentally Caring Community through Dasawisma” is to foster collective awareness among Dasawisma members regarding the importance of environmental protection, enhance knowledge and practical skills in household environmental management, and encourage the development of new, more environmentally friendly habits at the family level. The expected social change is not only in the form of increased knowledge, but also the emergence of concrete behaviors such as waste sorting, reducing the use of single-use plastics, and environmental greening initiatives. Thus, Dasawisma is expected to develop into an active and sustainable learning community in building a family-based culture of environmental care (Freire 1970; Bandura 1986).

## **2. METHOD**

This Community Service (PkM) activity is designed using a community-based participatory approach, by placing Dasawisma members as subjects and active partners in every stage of the activity. The subjects of the service are Dasawisma groups in assisted urban villages characterized by dense settlements and problems with household environmental management, particularly waste and environmental cleanliness. The location of the activity is carried out in the residential area of residents who are part of the Dasawisma work area, by utilizing the community meeting hall or members' homes as the activity center. This location was chosen based on social closeness between members and the ease of building participatory and sustainable interactions.

The action planning process is carried out through community organizing stages involving Dasawisma administrators and members from the beginning. The PkM implementation team begins activities with field observations and initial discussions to identify environmental problems most felt by the community, such as the habit of mixed waste disposal, underutilization of yards, and minimal collective environmental care activities. The results of the problem identification are then discussed together in Dasawisma meeting forums to

determine activity priorities, the form of training needed, and the division of roles among members. In this way, the program implemented is the result of a mutual agreement, thereby fostering a sense of belonging and collective responsibility.

The methods used to achieve the activity's objectives include participatory outreach, group discussions, practical demonstrations, and field mentoring. Participatory outreach is used to increase members' understanding of the importance of environmentally friendly behavior at the household level. Group discussions are used as a space to share experiences and formulate local solutions appropriate to local environmental conditions. Practical demonstrations are conducted to train technical skills such as sorting household waste, making simple compost, and utilizing yards for productive plants. Furthermore, field mentoring is conducted periodically to ensure that the practices learned are truly applied in daily life.

The stages of PkM activities are carried out systematically, including: (1) the preparation and coordination stage with Dasawisma administrators and the sub-district; (2) the problem identification and needs mapping stage through participatory observation and discussion; (3) the joint action planning stage which produces a Dasawisma-based environmental activity plan; (4) the implementation stage of counseling and practical training; (5) the implementation assistance stage at the household level; and (6) the joint evaluation stage to assess changes in members' knowledge, attitudes, and behavior.

### **3. RESULTS**

The implementation of Community Service (PKM) activities demonstrated that the participatory approach used was able to foster active involvement of Dasawisma members from the initial stage. During the problem identification stage, members openly addressed various household environmental issues, such as the habit of burning trash, the lack of waste sorting, and the underutilization of yards. These discussions served not only as data collection but also as a process of collective reflection that fostered an initial awareness that environmental issues are a collective responsibility, not merely an individual matter (Freire 1970; Mardikanto 2014).

During the participatory outreach phase, members' understanding of the importance of environmentally friendly behavior increased. Material on household waste management, the impact of waste on family health, and the role of Dasawisma as agents of change was presented through interactive dialogue. Members not only received information but also compared it with their daily practices. The dynamics of the discussion demonstrated the emergence of critical thinking and a desire to correct inappropriate habits, which is part of the social awareness process (Freire 1970).

Practical activities and demonstrations were the most engaging part for participants. Dasawisma members were trained to separate organic and inorganic waste, make simple compost from kitchen scraps, and grow vegetables in their yards. These activities encouraged experiential learning (learning by doing), giving participants more confidence to practice independently in their own homes (Bandura 1986).

Fieldwork conducted after the training revealed consistent behavioral changes. Several households had established separate containers for organic and inorganic waste. Furthermore, yards were beginning to be planted with chilies, kale, and family medicinal plants. These changes not only improved environmental cleanliness but also fostered a sense of pride and concern for the local environment, an indicator of growing family-based ecological awareness (Chambers 2012).

From an institutional perspective, PkM activities have strengthened the role of Dasawisma as a platform for family-based social movements. Regular Dasawisma meetings now serve not only to discuss administrative matters but also as a forum for evaluating environmental cleanliness and sharing good practices among members. This demonstrates the emergence of a new social institution in the form of an unwritten agreement to maintain a clean environment together (Mardikanto 2014).

Social change is also evident in the emergence of several members who act as local leaders. They voluntarily encourage neighbors to sort waste, utilize their yards, and participate in community service activities. The presence of these local figures accelerates the spread of positive behaviors because messages are delivered by individuals with social and emotional ties to the local community (Northouse 2019).

In addition to individual behavioral changes, a collective awareness was also created that a clean environment contributes to family health. Follow-up discussions revealed that members began to associate waste management with the prevention of diseases such as dengue fever and respiratory problems caused by waste burning. This awareness provides crucial social capital for the sustainability of the environmental movement (Ministry of Environment and Forestry 2022).

Overall, the results of the Community Service Program (PKM) demonstrate that the combination of outreach, practice, and mentoring can foster social transformation at the household and Dasawisma community levels. The changes are not only technical but also involve attitudes, awareness, and patterns of social interaction that are more environmentally conscious (Freire 1970; Bandura 1986).

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

The results of the Community Service Program (PKM) activities demonstrate that a participatory approach is effective in building community awareness and changing behavior. This aligns with Freire's perspective, which emphasizes the importance of dialogue and active community involvement in the social learning process, positioning the community not as an object but as a subject of change (Freire 1970).

Active member involvement from the problem identification stage strengthens a sense of ownership in the program being implemented. From a community empowerment perspective, participation from the planning stage is key to the success of social interventions because it encourages collective responsibility and program sustainability (Mardikanto 2014; Chambers 2012). The hands-on practice methods used in training have also been shown to improve participants' skills and confidence. This approach aligns with Bandura's social learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of direct observation and experience in shaping new behaviors (Bandura 1986).

The emergence of behavioral changes in household waste management indicates the internalization of environmental values. This change does not occur instantly, but rather through repetition, mentoring, and social reinforcement within the group. Routine interactions among Dasawisma members serve as a social control mechanism that reinforces the consistency of new behaviors (Bandura 1986; Mardikanto 2014). The strengthening of Dasawisma institutions as a forum for environmental discussion and action demonstrates the formation of social capital at the community level. Social capital in the form of trust, shared norms, and social networks facilitates the coordination of collective action (Chambers 2012).

The emergence of local leaders from among Dasawisma members is a crucial factor in expanding the program's impact. Community leadership theory explains that social change is more easily accepted when spearheaded by figures with close social ties to the community (Northouse 2019). Changing awareness of the relationship between environmental cleanliness and family health demonstrates the relevance of a family-based approach to environmental issues. The household environment is an effective entry point because it directly relates to the family's basic needs, while also strengthening women's roles in community-based development (KPPPA 2012; Chambers 2012).

Theoretically, the processes occurring in these Community Service (PKM) activities reflect the stages of empowerment, from awareness-raising to capacity-building to collective action (Freire 1970; Mardikanto 2014). Counseling serves as the awareness-raising stage, practical training serves as capacity-building, and joint activities with Dasawisma serve as a

form of collective action. The program's success is also influenced by a mentoring approach that goes beyond training. Field mentoring helps overcome technical and motivational barriers faced by members. This aligns with community development principles, which emphasize the importance of ongoing facilitation for long-term sustainability of behavioral changes (Chambers 2012).

However, the sustainability of the environmental movement still requires cross-stakeholder support, including from sub-district governments and relevant institutions. This collaboration is crucial for strengthening resources, expanding program reach, and integrating Dasawisma activities into local environmental policies (KLHK 2022). The findings of this Community Service Program provide a theoretical contribution that women's group-based community organizing, such as Dasawisma, can be an effective strategy for building environmental awareness. The resulting social changes are not only individual but also collective and institutional, which are important indicators of community-based social transformation (Freire 1970; Mardikanto 2014).

Thus, this discussion confirms that the combination of participatory approaches, practice-based learning, and strengthening local institutions is a relevant strategy for building environmentally conscious communities in a sustainable manner (Bandura 1986; Chambers 2012).

## 5. CONCLUSION

The Community Service (PkM) activity "Building an Environmentally Conscious Community through Dasawisma" demonstrated that strengthening Dasawisma's role as a family-based community is effective in encouraging environmentally friendly behavior changes at the household level. Through a participatory approach, members are not merely recipients of information, but are actively involved in identifying problems, formulating solutions, and practicing environmental management skills. This process resulted in increased knowledge, skills, and collective awareness of the importance of maintaining environmental cleanliness and sustainability. These changes are evident in new habits such as waste sorting, simple composting, yard utilization, and increased concern for the health of the family environment.

Reflectively, the results of this activity confirm the relevance of community empowerment and social learning theories in the process of community-based behavior change. Group interactions within Dasawisma serve as a social learning space that allows for mutual influence, the reinforcement of positive norms, and the collective formation of new habits. The

emergence of members acting as local motivators also demonstrates that social change is more sustainable when supported by leadership from within the community. Thus, Dasawisma serves not only as a forum for social activities but also as a local institution with educational, motivational, and transformational functions in environmental issues.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that the Dasawisma environmental awareness strengthening program be implemented sustainably through regular mentoring and collaboration with village governments and environmental agencies. Local policy support, the provision of simple waste management facilities, and the integration of environmental programs into Dasawisma's routine agenda are also needed. Furthermore, the development of cadres or local leaders needs to be continuously facilitated so that the education and motivation process can run independently within the community. With this strategy, Dasawisma has the potential to become an effective community organizing model for building a sustainable, family-based culture of environmental awareness.

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