



Empowering Women for Quality Educations

Jesika Puteri

Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Administrasi Lancang Kuning, Dumai, Indonesia

*Penulis Korespondensi: lilisuryani@stia-ld-dumai.ac.id

Article History:

Artikel Masuk: Oktober 15, 2023;

Revisi: November 17, 2023;

Diterima: Desember 28, 2023;

Terbit: Desember 30, 2023.

Keywords: Community Service; Participation; Quality Education; Women Empowerment; Women's Role Education.

Abstract: *Quality education is a fundamental foundation for human development and national progress. Women play a strategic role in supporting education at both family and community levels; however, they still face various barriers in accessing and participating in quality education. This community service program aims to empower women to support the realization of quality education through a participatory approach. The method employed is a participatory approach with a qualitative descriptive design, involving women actively in socialization, training, group discussions, and educational mentoring activities. The results indicate an increased awareness among women regarding the importance of quality education, improved understanding of women's strategic roles in family education, as well as enhanced self-confidence and participation in community-based educational activities. These changes in attitudes and behaviors serve as initial indicators of the success of women's empowerment in supporting educational quality improvement. The program demonstrates that women's empowerment through participatory approaches and continuous mentoring contributes positively to the development of inclusive and sustainable education at the family and community levels.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Quality education is the primary foundation for human development and the advancement of a nation. Education not only plays a role in enhancing individual knowledge and skills but also in shaping the character, values, and social awareness of society. In the context of sustainable development, quality education is one of the main goals proclaimed globally because it is believed to be able to break the cycle of poverty and improve the quality of life. However, access to and quality of education still face various challenges, particularly for women, who in many social contexts still experience limited roles and opportunities in education (UNESCO, 2020).

Women play a strategic role in education, both as students, educators, and as educational agents within families and communities. Women's educational attainment directly impacts the quality of education for the next generation, as women are often the first and primary educators of their children within the family. Therefore, empowering women in education not only improves individual capacity but also improves the quality of human resources more broadly. Various studies have shown that increased female education is positively correlated with improved family well-being, health, and social participation (Todaro

& Smith, 2017).

Despite this, social realities demonstrate that women still face numerous barriers to accessing quality education. These barriers include economic factors, cultural factors, gender stereotypes, and limited social and institutional support. In some regions, women are still perceived as having a predominantly domestic role, resulting in formal education often being under-prioritized. This situation results in low levels of women's educational participation and attainment, which ultimately impacts the overall quality of education (Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, 2021).

Women's empowerment is understood as the process of increasing women's capabilities, awareness, and independence so they can play an active role in decision-making and social development. In the context of education, women's empowerment includes increasing access to education, strengthening intellectual capacity and skills, and creating an inclusive and gender-responsive learning environment. According to Sen (2018), women's empowerment is key to creating equitable and sustainable development because women have great potential as drivers of social change.

Higher education institutions, as institutions that produce and develop knowledge, have a strategic role in supporting women's empowerment to achieve quality education through community service activities. Through mentoring, training, and education programs, universities can contribute to increasing women's capacity, both as individuals and as members of the community. The involvement of universities in women's empowerment also demonstrates the implementation of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, which focuses on human development and social justice (Chambers, 2017).

A participatory approach to women's empowerment activities is crucial so that women become not merely program objects but also active subjects in the education and development process. Through this approach, women are encouraged to recognize their potential, identify educational needs, and participate in the planning and implementation of educational activities. This participatory process aligns with the concept of adult education, which emphasizes participants' experiences and real-life needs as the basis for learning (Kolb, 2015).

Various studies have shown that women's empowerment programs integrated with education can improve the quality of learning and women's participation in both formal and non-formal education. Hidayati (2020) stated that women's empowerment through education significantly contributes to increasing women's self-confidence and social capacity. Meanwhile, Rahmawati and Sari (2022) emphasized that community-based educational mentoring is effective in improving access to and quality of education for women.

Based on this background, this community service activity aims to empower women to support the achievement of quality education. This activity is expected to increase women's awareness, knowledge, and skills in education, as well as contribute to improving the quality of education at the family and community levels.

2. METHOD

The implementation method for this community service activity uses a participatory and qualitative descriptive approach. The participatory approach was chosen to actively involve women in all stages of the activity, emphasizing their role as active subjects rather than passive recipients of development programs (Freire, 1970; Cornwall, 2008). Meanwhile, the qualitative descriptive approach was applied to capture and explain the process and impact of women's empowerment in improving the quality of education within the family and community context (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The planning stage was carried out through coordination with community leaders and women's groups to identify educational needs, existing problems, and local potential. This needs assessment process is essential to ensure that empowerment programs are context-based and responsive to community realities (Mardikanto & Soebiato, 2015; Chambers, 2012). The results of this identification were then used as the basis for developing training and mentoring materials that are relevant to women's educational needs.

The implementation phase included outreach activities, training sessions, group discussions, and educational mentoring. The activity materials focused on increasing awareness of the importance of education, strengthening women's roles in family-based education, and developing practical skills to support children's learning processes (UNESCO, 2015). The evaluation phase was conducted through observation and reflective discussions with participants. The evaluation focused on changes in women's knowledge, attitudes, and participation in supporting quality education within both the family and the broader community (Kabeer, 1999).

3. RESULTS

The results of the community service activities demonstrated a clear increase in women's awareness of the importance of quality education as a primary foundation for family and community development. Prior to the activities, most participants viewed education as merely a formal obligation left entirely to schools. However, after participating in the series of activities, the women began to understand that education is a continuous process that requires

the active involvement of families, particularly women's roles as mothers and primary companions for children in the learning process.

This increased understanding was reflected in the participants' ability to identify women's strategic role in supporting their children's education, such as creating a conducive learning environment at home, accompanying children in daily learning activities, and instilling the values of discipline, responsibility, and motivation to learn. The female participants also demonstrated a broader understanding of the importance of education not only for their children but also for improving the family's overall quality of life. This awareness led to a shift in participants' perspectives on education as a long-term investment that impacts their children's future and their family's well-being.

In addition to improving cognitive aspects, this activity also had a positive impact on the affective and psychosocial aspects of the participants. The women involved demonstrated increased confidence in communicating, expressing opinions, and sharing experiences related to educational practices within their families. Throughout the activity, participants appeared more active in discussions, asking questions, and expressing critical views on the educational challenges they face. This demonstrates growing self-confidence and awareness of their own capacity as individuals with a vital role in educational decision-making within their families.

This increased self-confidence subsequently led to increased participation by women in educational activities within the community. Several participants began to actively participate in child learning support activities, school meetings, and community-based educational activities. This participation was not merely passive but reflected women's initiative in fostering a social environment conducive to children's education. This demonstrates that empowerment activities not only impact individuals personally but also contribute to strengthening women's roles in the broader social sphere.

Changes in the attitudes, understanding, and behavior of women participating in the program serve as early indicators of the success of the women's empowerment program in supporting improvements in the quality of education. While long-term impacts require ongoing monitoring, these initial results demonstrate that an education-based and participatory empowerment approach is effective in increasing women's capacity as agents of education support. Thus, this program makes a significant contribution to strengthening women's role as key actors in realizing quality, inclusive, and sustainable education at the family and community levels.

4. DISCUSSION

The results of community service activities indicate that women's empowerment through a participatory approach is effective in increasing women's awareness, capacity, and role in supporting quality education. The participatory approach provides space for women to actively engage in learning processes, decision-making, and reflection on their roles in family and community education. These findings align with empowerment theory, which emphasizes the importance of increasing women's capacity, self-confidence, and independence as agents of social change (Sen, 2018). When women are involved as the primary subjects in empowerment activities, they become not only beneficiaries but also actors capable of initiating change in their environment.

Continuous educational mentoring has been shown to have a positive impact on the internalization of educational values among female participants. Through direct involvement and real-life experiences, women can relate the knowledge gained to everyday life, particularly in assisting children in learning and creating a family environment that supports education. This supports Kolb's (2015) view that experiential learning is more effective in shaping attitudes and behavior than purely theoretical learning. Direct experience allows women to understand the contextual meaning of education, thus encouraging more sustainable attitudinal changes.

Furthermore, increased awareness and capacity in women have an impact on changing interaction patterns within the family. Women who have a better understanding of the importance of education tend to be more active in providing emotional support, motivation for learning, and supervision of their children's educational process. This contributes to the creation of a conducive learning environment at the family level, which is a key foundation for improving the quality of education. Thus, women's roles are not limited to domestic aspects but also expand to include educators and primary directors in children's educational development.

The impact of women's empowerment is also evident at the community level, where increased participation in educational and social activities has the potential to strengthen social networks that support children's education. Women's involvement in educational forums, learning mentoring activities, and community-based educational initiatives reflects a growing collective awareness of the importance of inclusive education. This demonstrates that women's empowerment has a multiplicative effect, not only on individuals but also on the broader social environment.

With the increasing role of women in education, the quality of education at the family

and community levels has the potential to improve sustainably. Education supported by a family environment that is aware of and responsive to children's learning needs tends to result in a more effective learning process. Therefore, women's empowerment can be seen as a crucial and sustainable strategy for achieving quality and inclusive education. This discussion emphasized that investing in women's empowerment not only impacts individual capacity but also strengthens the education system and overall social development.

5. CONCLUSION

This community service activity demonstrates that women's empowerment significantly contributes to increasing women's awareness, capacity, and role in supporting the realization of quality education. Through a participatory approach, women are positioned not only as beneficiaries but also as active subjects involved in all stages of the activity. Planned and ongoing mentoring is a key factor in the success of this activity, encouraging changes in women's attitudes, understanding, and behaviors toward education within their families and communities.

The results of the activities indicate that women who receive adequate support and participation tend to have a better understanding of their strategic role in supporting their children's education. This increased awareness results in women's more active involvement in the education process, both through mentoring their children's learning, making educational decisions at the family level, and participating in educational activities within the community. This strengthens women's role as agents of change, contributing directly to the sustainable improvement of education quality.

Overall, women's empowerment can be viewed as a strategic and fundamental strategy for improving the quality of education at the family and community levels. Education supported by empowered, aware, and adequately equipped women tends to be more inclusive and responsive to children's needs. Therefore, women's empowerment impacts not only individuals but also strengthens the education system and broader social development.

Going forward, community service activities focused on empowering women in education need to be implemented sustainably and expanded to a broader scope. Strengthening collaboration between universities, communities, and local governments is crucial to ensure the program's sustainability and expand its social impact. With careful planning and ongoing support, women's empowerment is expected to become a key pillar in supporting equitable, inclusive, and sustainable educational development.

REFERENCE LIST

- Chambers, R. (2012). *Rural development: Putting the last first*. Routledge.
- Chambers, R. (2017). *Can we know better? Reflections for development*. Practical Action Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.3362/9781780449449>
- Cornwall, A. (2008). Unpacking “participation”: Models, meanings and practices. *Community Development Journal*, 43(3), 269–283. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bsn010>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum.
- Hidayati, N. (2020). Pemberdayaan perempuan melalui pendidikan dalam meningkatkan kapasitas sosial. *Jurnal Pemberdayaan Masyarakat*, 5(2), 85–96.
- Kabeer, N. (1999). Resources, agency, achievements: Reflections on the measurement of women’s empowerment. *Development and Change*, 30(3), 435–464. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7660.00125>
- Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak Republik Indonesia. (2021). *Profil perempuan Indonesia*. KemenPPPA.
- Kolb, D. A. (2015). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education.
- Mardikanto, T., & Soebiato, P. (2015). *Community empowerment in public policy perspective*. Alfabeta.
- Rahmawati, D., & Sari, P. (2022). Pendampingan pendidikan berbasis komunitas bagi perempuan. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat*, 9(1), 45–56.
- Sen, A. (2018). *Development as freedom*. Anchor Books.
- Todaro, M. P., & Smith, S. C. (2017). *Economic development* (12th ed.). Pearson Education.
- UNESCO. (2015). *Education 2030: Incheon declaration and framework for action*. UNESCO Publishing.
- UNESCO. (2020). *Global education monitoring report 2020: Inclusion and education—All means all*. UNESCO Publishing.