

School Committee Empowerment through Management and Partnership Training in Supporting the Educational SDGs

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Abstract

School committees play a strategic role in community-based educational governance. However, many school committees still lack a comprehensive understanding of their roles, functions, and mechanisms for building partnerships with schools and the wider community. This community service program aimed to empower school committee members through training in institutional management and school-community partnership strategies. The activity was conducted at SD Negeri Jatingaleh 01 in Semarang City, representing the Candisari District area. The approach employed was Participatory Action Learning (PAL) and Capacity Building, comprising several stages: needs assessment, training, assistance in preparing annual work plans, and the formation of a school-community partnership forum. The results showed a significant improvement in the understanding and skills of school committee members, the successful development of annual work programs, and the implementation of collaborative school-community initiatives. This intervention aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). The program is recommended for replication in other school clusters with policy support from local governments)

Keywords: educational management, empowerment, partnership, school committee, SDGs

Abstrak

Komite sekolah memainkan peran strategis dalam tata kelola pendidikan berbasis komunitas. Namun, banyak komite sekolah masih kurang memahami secara komprehensif peran, fungsi, dan mekanisme mereka dalam membangun kemitraan dengan sekolah dan masyarakat luas. Program pengabdian masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk memberdayakan anggota komite sekolah melalui pelatihan manajemen kelembagaan dan strategi kemitraan sekolah-masyarakat. Kegiatan ini dilaksanakan di SD Negeri Jatingaleh 01 di Kota Semarang, yang mewakili wilayah Kecamatan Candisari. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah Pembelajaran Aksi Partisipatif (PAL) dan Peningkatan Kapasitas, yang terdiri dari beberapa tahapan: penilaian kebutuhan, pelatihan, bantuan dalam penyusunan rencana kerja tahunan, dan pembentukan forum kemitraan sekolah-masyarakat. Hasil menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan dalam pemahaman dan keterampilan anggota komite sekolah, keberhasilan pengembangan program kerja tahunan, dan implementasi inisiatif kolaboratif sekolah-masyarakat. Intervensi ini selaras dengan Tujuan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan (SDGs), khususnya SDG 4 (Pendidikan Berkualitas) dan SDG 17 (Kemitraan untuk Tujuan). Program ini direkomendasikan untuk direplikasi di kelompok sekolah lain dengan dukungan kebijakan dari pemerintah daerah.

Kata Kunci: kemitraan, komite sekolah, manajemen pendidikan, pemberdayaan, SDGs

INTRODUCTION

The school committee, as a representation of the community within the educational environment, holds a crucial position in supporting the accountability and quality of education management. According to the prevailing regulation, namely Minister of Education and

Culture Regulation (Permendikbud) No. 75 of 2016, school committees function as advisory, supporting, controlling, and mediating bodies between schools and the community. However, in practice, this strategic role has not been fully optimized in many primary education institutions. School committees play a vital role in bridging schools and their surrounding communities, especially in creating participatory and accountable educational governance. As mandated in many education systems, school committees are expected to act as partners in planning, implementing, and evaluating school programs (Wijaya & Astuti, 2021). However, in practice, many school committees are often limited to administrative functions without significant involvement in strategic decision-making. This weakens their role in enhancing educational quality and inclusiveness. Strengthening the capacity of school committees through structured training programs in management and partnership is therefore crucial to ensure their active contribution in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4: Quality Education (United Nations, 2020).

The SDGs emphasize not only equitable access to education but also participatory governance and strong partnerships among stakeholders. In this regard, empowering school committees through management and partnership training offers an avenue for capacity building that directly aligns with the principles of inclusivity and sustainability (Rahmawati & Putra, 2022). Training enables committee members to acquire knowledge in organizational management, strategic planning, and accountability systems that are essential in supporting school development. Moreover, partnership training fosters collaboration between schools, parents, local communities, and external stakeholders such as NGOs and local governments. These collaborative practices ensure that schools do not work in isolation but rather as part of a broader ecosystem that sustains educational development (Anderson & Cawthon, 2020).

Findings from preliminary observations and interviews conducted by the community service team at SD Negeri Jatingaleh 01, Semarang City, identified several issues faced by the partner institution as follows: (1) Limited understanding among school committee members regarding their duties, functions, and organizational structure as mandated by regulations; (2) The absence of a systematic and well-documented annual work plan to support collaborative activities between the committee and the school; (3) Minimal active involvement in the school's decision-making process, including in RKAS (School Budget and Activity Plan) preparation and budget monitoring; (4) Lack of a regular and productive partnership forum between schools and the community; and (5) Insufficient communication and public advocacy skills among committee members, which are essential for their role as a bridge between schools and parents.

These challenges underscore the urgent need for training and capacity building for school committees. This aligns with previous studies which argue that the effectiveness of school governance is strongly influenced by the quality of school committee participation (Mulyasa, 2021; Widodo, 2022). Similarly, research by Suryadi et al. (2020) found that community participation through school committees can improve budget efficiency and strengthen transparency in primary schools. This community service initiative becomes increasingly relevant when linked to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 on Quality Education and SDG 17 on Partnerships for the Goals. SDG 4 emphasizes the importance of inclusive, equitable, and quality education, while SDG 17 highlights the significance of inter-institutional collaboration in sustainable development

(UNESCO, 2022; United Nations, 2015). The school committee, as a partnership hub connecting parents, schools, and the wider community, holds great potential to contribute to these two goals if empowered systematically. The solutions offered in this program include: (1) Training on school committee institutional management; (2) Assistance in drafting the school committee's annual work plan; (3) Establishment and facilitation of a school–community partnership forum; and (4) Enhancement of communication and public advocacy skills through simulations and hands-on practice.

In addition, empowerment of school committees contributes to improving transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in educational practices. When committees are trained in effective management, they are better positioned to advocate for school needs, mobilize resources, and monitor program implementation. This active involvement helps align school policies with the educational targets of the SDGs while also reflecting local aspirations (Susanto & Kurniawan, 2023). Furthermore, partnership-based empowerment encourages schools to build stronger networks that can provide financial, social, and professional support. Such empowerment not only improves the quality of learning outcomes but also strengthens social cohesion by positioning education as a shared responsibility (García & Weiss, 2019). Thus, empowering school committees through management and partnership training is a strategic approach to advancing sustainable and inclusive education.

These solutions are designed based on the research findings of the implementing team and are supported by the Participatory Action Learning approach, which has been proven effective in community capacity development (Chambers, 2020; Suparlan et al., 2023). In addition, this initiative strengthens the implementation of school-based management, positioning the community as a key actor in local educational decision-making (Arifin & Sutopo, 2022). This program makes a significant contribution to strengthening community institutional literacy in the field of education and expands best practices in school committee empowerment, which remains a relatively underexplored focus of community service programs. Furthermore, it bridges school management practices with values of community participation, public accountability, and collaborative development. The objective of this community service activity is to enhance the competencies of school committee leaders and members in managing institutions professionally and in building effective partnerships with schools and communities, thereby contributing concretely to the achievement of SDG 4 and SDG 17 at the primary education level.

Previous publications have emphasized the importance of strengthening the capacity of educational actors in creating quality school environments. Susanto et al. (2025) demonstrated that discourse-based teaching training significantly improved teachers' competencies, underscoring the effectiveness of training-based interventions in education. In the context of school culture, a zero-bullying approach supported by teacher empowerment has been shown to foster child-friendly ecosystems (Susanto et al., 2024). The principles of community empowerment applied in the development of MSMEs (Susanto et al., 2021) and in strengthening the managerial roles of madrasah principals (Miyono et al., 2020) provide the foundation for strengthening school committee institutions. Moreover, community service programs based on Posdaya MDGs (Sudargo et al., 2018) demonstrated the effectiveness of community collaboration in supporting social development, which resonates with the spirit of educational and partnership-related SDGs.

Several previous studies provide relevant insights that strengthen the basis of this community service program. Zabella, Susanto, and Setyaji (2025) investigated directive speech acts in a movie text, highlighting the role of communication strategies in shaping interaction, which indirectly emphasizes the importance of effective communication in educational and organizational contexts. Pinandhita and Susanto (2025) demonstrated how teacher competence in elementary schools can be enhanced through technology-based training, proving that professional development initiatives significantly improve pedagogical practices. In another study, Pinandhita and Susanto (2025) provided training on digital entrepreneurship, showing the potential of community service programs to empower broader target groups. Meanwhile, Susanto, Bimo, and Pinandhita (2025) explored discourse-based teaching for deep learning in English classrooms, underlining the value of innovative approaches in teacher training. Complementing these, Setyaji et al. (2023) reported on Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) training for elementary teachers, further illustrating the impact of systematic and contextualized training programs in enhancing school governance and teaching quality.

METHOD

Partner Profile

The partner of this community service program is the School Committee of SD Negeri Jatingaleh 01, Semarang City, located at Jalan Jatingaleh Raya No. 1, Candisari District, Semarang. The school committee consists of representatives from parents, community leaders, and educators. A total of 15 participants were involved in this program, comprising 10 men and 5 women, with ages ranging from 35 to 58 years. Most of the participants had never previously attended formal training related to organizational management or school–community partnerships.

This activity was selected based on the partner’s real needs to improve their competencies in managing school committee institutions, participating in school program planning, and fostering sustainable partnerships with the community. These challenges also align with the generally low level of public participation in educational decision-making in many primary schools (Mulyasa, 2021; Widodo, 2022).

Activity Implementation Stages

The program was carried out over a period of three months (April–June 2025) using the Participatory Action Learning (PAL) approach and a capacity-building strategy. This method was chosen because it is effective in enhancing participants’ active involvement in addressing the contextual problems they face (Chambers, 2020).

The implementation steps were divided into three main stages:

1. Preparation Stage

The initial activities focused on:

- a. Initial coordination with the school principal and school committee members.
- b. Development of training needs assessment instruments (questionnaires and FGD guidelines).
- c. Conducting a baseline assessment of the committee members’ knowledge and skills through interviews, observations, and open-ended questionnaires.

The assessment revealed that only 26% of participants were aware of the school committee's structure and functions as regulated by Permendikbud No. 75 of 2016.

2. Program Implementation

The core activities were carried out in the form of training and mentoring, divided into three main sessions:

Table 1. Program Implementation

No	Activity Name	Date	Materials Covered	Facilitator
1	School Committee Management Training	June 21, 2025	Structure, duties, and functions of the school committee	Andi Priyolistiyanto, S.Kom., M.Kom.
2	Workshop on Developing the School Committee's Annual Work Plan	June 28, 2025	Program planning, documentation, and reporting	Ajeng Setyorini, S.S., M.Pd.
3	School-Community Partnership Training	July 5, 2025	Collaboration strategies, public communication, and advocacy	Dr. Dias A. Susanto, M.Pd.

Each activity employed interactive methods, including group discussions, case simulations, and hands-on practice in document preparation.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation

The evaluation was conducted in two stages:

- Formative Monitoring: carried out during the activities through observation of participant engagement, daily reflections, and facilitator notes. The results indicated an increase in participants' active participation from one session to the next.
- Summative Evaluation: conducted after the completion of all training sessions by comparing pre-test and post-test results, in-depth interviews, and evaluation of the documents produced (Annual Work Plan).

The evaluation instruments included:

- Closed- and open-ended questionnaires to measure participants' perceptions and understanding.
- Semi-structured interviews to explore participants' experiences and feedback.
- Structured observations of group discussions and document preparation activities during the program.

The evaluation results showed an increase in the average understanding score from 48% (pre-test) to 86% (post-test), as well as improvements in participants' confidence and initiative in developing a collaborative work plan.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The training program on management and partnership for school committees brought about a noticeable transformation in how participants understood and carried out their responsibilities. Before the program, many committee members saw their role as limited to attending meetings or supporting fundraising activities without engaging in deeper aspects of governance. After the training, however, members began to display improved skills in planning, organizing, and monitoring school programs. They were able to design structured

work plans, set clear priorities, and align their activities with broader educational objectives such as literacy improvement, inclusive classroom practices, and environmental awareness. These outcomes also included enhanced confidence in financial oversight, where committees developed mechanisms for transparent reporting of resource use and ensured that information was openly shared with parents and community members. The improvement in accountability not only reduced the burden on school principals but also increased trust between schools and the wider community. Importantly, the results indicated that empowerment through systematic training shifted committees from passive advisory roles into more proactive and strategic partners. Members expressed a stronger sense of ownership over school initiatives, a change that reflected a growing understanding that school development is a shared responsibility rather than the sole duty of educators.

Another significant outcome of the training was the strengthening of partnerships between schools and various stakeholders. Before the intervention, collaboration tended to be sporadic, limited to ceremonial occasions, or focused narrowly on fundraising. Following the training, committees initiated structured and purposeful partnerships that provided tangible benefits for both students and schools. Examples included literacy programs in cooperation with local libraries, student health campaigns organized with nearby health centers, and opportunities for practical learning experiences supported by local businesses. These initiatives not only widened the resource base available to schools but also cultivated a sense of mutual responsibility among different community actors. The partnership approach also encouraged a shift in perception, as committees began to be recognized as active and legitimate players in local educational governance. This recognition opened further opportunities for schools to engage with municipal authorities, community organizations, and even private sectors to support educational projects. The broader impact of these partnerships extended beyond schools, fostering stronger community cohesion and highlighting education as a collective endeavor. Ultimately, the findings demonstrate that empowerment through management and partnership training has a multiplier effect: it enhances committee capacity, improves accountability, and builds sustainable networks of support. These changes contribute directly to the realization of educational development goals by ensuring that schools are not isolated institutions but integral parts of a wider ecosystem committed to sustainability and inclusivity.

The implementation of the community service program at SD Negeri Jatingaleh 01, Semarang City, demonstrated positive outcomes in terms of improving knowledge, skills, and institutional products of the school committee. The level of program achievement was analyzed based on the methodological stages carried out, namely the initial assessment phase, the core training sessions, and the final evaluation.

1. Results of the Assessment and Preparation Stage

The initial assessment revealed that the school committee members' understanding of the structure, duties, and functions of the committee was still very limited. From the preliminary questionnaire, only 26% of participants were able to fully identify the strategic roles of the school committee as stipulated in Permendikbud No. 75 of 2016. Participants also lacked prior experience in systematically developing an annual work plan.

These findings reinforce the need for training-and mentoring-based interventions (Mulyasa, 2021; Suryadi et al., 2020), while also confirming that most school committees at the primary level still require fundamental institutional capacity strengthening.



Figure 1. documentation of activities

The assessment and preparation stage was a crucial foundation for the school committee empowerment program, as it ensured that the intervention was designed based on real needs rather than assumptions. The assessment process was carried out through interviews, observations, and document analysis to identify the committees' existing capacities and challenges. The findings revealed that most school committees had only a basic understanding of their formal functions, and their roles were largely limited to administrative assistance or ceremonial involvement. Participation in strategic tasks such as planning, budgeting, and evaluating school programs was still minimal, with many committees lacking structured work plans and clear mechanisms for financial accountability.

This condition was further compounded by the lack of confidence among members in voicing opinions during meetings with school leaders, resulting in a passive stance rather than active involvement. Collaboration with external stakeholders was also found to be fragmented and ad hoc, generally restricted to fundraising activities rather than sustainable partnerships that could enhance school programs. In response to these gaps, the preparation stage focused on designing training modules that addressed core competencies such as organizational management, transparency, participatory planning, and partnership building. Practical handbooks, case studies, and exercises were developed to ensure contextual relevance, while communication with principals and local education authorities was established to secure institutional support. This careful mapping and preparation created a solid pathway for committees to transition from supportive roles into proactive, strategic partners in advancing school development and contributing to educational sustainability goals.

2. Results of the Training and Workshop

The training and workshop stage provided school committee members with practical knowledge and hands-on experiences that directly enhanced their capacity to manage and support school development. Through interactive sessions, participants were introduced to key concepts of organizational management, participatory planning, financial transparency, and partnership-building strategies. The workshops were designed with a balance of theory and practice, allowing members to apply new insights through group discussions, role-playing, and case study analysis. As a result, committee members gained clearer understanding of their strategic roles beyond administrative functions and developed skills

to formulate structured work plans aligned with the school's vision and educational development goals. Many participants reported increased confidence in engaging with principals and teachers, contributing ideas, and participating actively in program planning and evaluation.



Figure 2. documentation of activities

The training also introduced practical tools for financial oversight and accountability, which equipped committees to monitor budget use and prepare transparent reports for parents and stakeholders. Equally significant were the partnership-focused sessions, which encouraged committees to explore collaboration opportunities with community organizations, local government units, and private sectors. This exposure broadened their perspectives on how schools can benefit from external resources and shared responsibilities. By the end of the workshops, committees not only improved their technical competencies but also demonstrated a more proactive and collaborative mindset, positioning themselves as active partners in school governance. These results marked a shift from passive support toward empowered participation, laying the groundwork for sustainable practices in achieving educational development goals.

The implementation of the training and workshop, which was conducted in three main sessions, resulted in several concrete achievements:

a. Improved Knowledge and Skills

The pre-test and post-test results indicated an average score increase of 38%, from 48% (pre-test) to 86% (post-test). This improvement covered participants' understanding of organizational structures, their roles in supervising and supporting school policies, as well as their skills in preparing program work documents.

b. Document Output

One Annual Work Plan (RKT) document for the school committee was successfully developed in a participatory manner. The document outlines strategic activities for one year, including the "Parents as Teachers" program, "Education Dialogues," and the "Student Creativity Fair," which directly engage both schools and the wider community.

c. Establishment of a School–Community Partnership Forum

A communication and partnership forum was established, consisting of school committee members, the principal, parent representatives, and local community

leaders. This forum is expected to serve as a sustainable coordination platform to support school programs.

d. Involvement in School Planning

The school committee began to be actively involved in school forums such as RKAS (School Budget and Activity Plan) meetings and teacher–committee consultation forums. This indicates that the program not only enhanced capacity but also improved patterns of relationships and trust among education stakeholders (Chambers, 2020; Widodo, 2022).

3. Results of Monitoring and Evaluation

Formative evaluation during the activities showed that participants' active involvement increased from session to session. Observations indicated that in the first session, only about 40% of participants actively asked questions and engaged in discussions, but by the third session, active participation had risen to 87%. Summative evaluation through interviews and reflections revealed that:

- e. 93% of participants felt the program was highly relevant and applicable to their duties in the school committee.
- f. 87% of participants reported increased confidence in interacting with schools and the community.
- g. One institutional product in the form of a revised organizational structure and working procedures of the school committee was successfully updated and officially ratified.
- h. These achievements confirm the effectiveness of the participatory action learning model in empowering educational communities (Suparlan et al., 2023), while also supporting the implementation of SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) at the micro level of primary education (UNESCO, 2022).

4. Challenges Encountered

Although the program generally ran smoothly, several technical and non-technical challenges were faced during implementation:

- a. Limited time: Many committee members were actively employed, making it difficult to adjust training schedules. The solution was to hold sessions in the afternoons or on weekends.
- b. Varied educational backgrounds: Some participants had lower levels of formal education, which created disparities in understanding. To address this, materials were delivered using visual and narrative approaches.
- c. Lack of documentation habits: The committee was not accustomed to preparing written work plans. Therefore, the service team provided templates and sample documents to facilitate the process. Initial resistance to structural changes: Some senior members were reluctant to revise the organizational structure. However, this resistance was successfully overcome through reflective discussions based on field experiences.



Figure . documentation of activities

These challenges represent common dynamics in community empowerment activities, as Chambers (2020) notes that social transformation processes always require time, trust, and consistent facilitation.

CONCLUSION

The community service program conducted at SD Negeri Jatingaleh 01 Semarang has successfully contributed to the empowerment of school committee members through training in institutional management and school–community partnerships. Based on pre-test and post-test evaluations, the program resulted in a **38% increase in knowledge (hard skills)**, particularly in understanding the role of the school committee, developing annual work plans, and managing organizational governance in accordance with regulations.

In addition, participants also demonstrated improvements in **soft skills**, such as communication, collaboration, and active participation in school forums. Active participation increased significantly from **40% to 87%** across the training sessions. Participants further reported enhanced confidence and initiative in building partnerships with the wider community. Other tangible achievements include:

- a. A collaboratively developed Annual Work Plan Document for the School Committee.
- b. A revised and more functional organizational structure.
- c. The establishment of a School–Community Partnership Forum, which has begun initiating collaborative activities.

Overall, this program supports the achievement of SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), particularly by strengthening community participation in the implementation of primary education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the sustainability and further development of this community service program, several recommendations are proposed as follows:

1. Development of a School Committee Training Module

It is necessary to design a locally contextualized training module that can be continuously used by schools within the same cluster or working area.

2. Ongoing Mentorship

The program should be continued in the form of regular semester-based mentoring to ensure that the school committee’s work plan is consistently implemented and properly monitored.

3. Replication in Other Schools

The training and partnership model can be replicated in other schools in the Candisari Subdistrict or Semarang City more broadly, with the support of the Education Office and other partner institutions.

4. Further Research

Follow-up studies are required to evaluate the effectiveness of school committee work plans in improving the quality of educational services and parental satisfaction, using quantitative and longitudinal approaches.

5. Integration with Child-Friendly School and Social Literacy Programs

The outcomes of this community service can also serve as a foundation for the development of future programs or research that integrate the role of school committees in child-friendly schools, social literacy, or student character-building initiatives.

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It is our sincere hope that the outcomes of this program will provide sustainable benefits for strengthening community-based educational governance and serve as an inspiration for similar community service initiatives in the future.

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