

Building Environmental Awareness of the Alpha Generation at SMPN 1 Simpang Pesak Belitung Timur

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ABSTRACT

Efforts to build environmental awareness from an early age are a need today so that in the future a young generation will be born who care and are quick to preserve the surrounding environment. These efforts are carried out by education, socialization and providing examples of good practices. This service activity aims to educate environmental law in accordance with the competence of the proposer team with the target of the alpha generation who are currently in junior high school. Students as the alpha generation are equipped and instilled with awareness of environmental laws from an early age will have a positive impact on environmental sustainability in the future. This service activity provides education from an early age to students of SMP Negeri 1 Simpang Pesak to be concerned and directly involved in protecting the environment through their daily activities such as saving electricity by turning off lights when not in use, using water as necessary, disposing of garbage in its place and reducing the use of plastic. In this activity, the service team also handed over X-banners and stickers to socialize environmental care to the school and tumblers to all participants as a concrete step to reduce plastic waste, so that they no longer use plastic cups/bottles.

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INTRODUCTION

Simpang Pesak is an expansion sub-district based on Regional Regulation Number 3 of 2010 concerning the Establishment of Damar District, Simpang Renggang District, Dendang District and Simpang Pesak District in East Belitung Regency, (Peraturan Daerah, 2010). Administratively, this sub-district has an area of 246 KM consisting of 4 (four) villages, namely Tanjung Kelumpang Village, Tanjung Batu Itam Village, Dukong Village and Simpang Pesak Village. The current population is 8,595 people consisting of men consisting of 4,390 men and 4,205 women, with the composition of Simpang Pesak village as the largest population (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2023). Based on age composition, the age of 10-14 years is the most compared to other age groups. This is also a consideration that the alpha generation (born in 2010-2024) is currently between 10-14 years old and in junior high school is the main target to instill environmental law awareness from an early age.

Educational facilities in this sub-district include 2 Kindergartens (TK), 10 Elementary Schools (SD), 2 Junior High Schools (SMP) and 1 Senior High School (SMA). Partners in this service activity are SMPN 1 Simpang Pesak with the number of students in the even semester of 2023/2024 as many as 208 people consisting of 105 males and 103 females, (Kemendikbud, 2024).

The Environment and Forestry Service of the Bangka Belitung Islands Province based on the Decree of the Director General of PDAS Number 49/PDASRH/PPPPDAS/DAS.0/12/2022 states that the number of critical and very critical land is 167,104 hectares. The details include East Belitung Regency 38,884 hectares, South Bangka 31,232 hectares, Central Bangka 30,948 hectares, Bangka 24,463 hectares, Belitung 21,919 hectares, West Bangka 19,562 hectares and Pangkalpinang City 96 hectares, (Antara Babel, 2023).

Especially in East Belitung itself, there are 38,884 hectares which are critical and very critical land. Of course, this condition must be evaluated and strategies for short, medium and long term. Medium- and long-term strategic steps that can be taken are to educate early on related to instilling the character of caring for the environment which starts with caring for simple things. Through education, socialization and examples of good practices based on environmental law can instill the values of environmental awareness for the present and the future. This is in line with environmental education playing a very important role in sustainable development, preparing environmentally conscious and healthy communities for future generations, (Hamidah et al., 2023). Therefore, the purpose of providing environmental education is to ensure that all individuals grow as environmentally literate people, (Scannella & McCarthy, 2014).

Current junior high school students who are in the alpha generation have the character of tending to be practical and behave instantly, love freedom and changed behavior, be confident, get recognition, stay away from books and magazines, get used to digitalization and look for answers from the internet, (Yasir & Susilawati, 2021). The alpha generation can be interpreted as a generation that is surrounded by technology, more educated than the previous generation, and very friendly to technology. The term alpha generation is given to children born in 2011 to 2025, with the oldest generation in 2023 being 13 years old or it can be said that they are studying in grade 6 elementary school (elementary school). So it is not surprising that the name of the youngest generation is a nickname specifically for children who enter the alpha generation category with births in 2011-2025, (Shaleha et al., 2023). This character in terms of concern for the environment can have a negative impact because they were raised with technological habits and rarely interact with nature and the environment. The negative impact caused by technological developments is the emergence of instant culture. This instant paradigm has made humans want to quickly get everything without going through a process. This condition also has an impact on the way humans treat nature, (Suyud et al., 2020).

Instant culture, free living, emphasis on recognition and minimal through a process can give birth to an attitude of indifference to the environment. A simple example, in terms of consumption in the era of the

instant alpha generation by using plastic or *styrofoam boxes*, for example, which is clearly not environmentally friendly. Then the garbage is thrown away carelessly. Excessive water use and so on shows the importance of environmental legal awareness education starting from an early age to the alpha generation so that their characteristics can be directed to positive things and can give birth to a digital-based alpha generation but also have a high concern for the environment so as to support sustainable development.

Human behavior is the main factor causing environmental damage, the amount of environmental damage caused by anthropogenic factors encourages efforts to improve the environment. Human behavior is the main factor causing environmental damage, the amount of environmental damage caused by anthropogenic factors encourages efforts to improve the environment, (Iswari, 2017). Therefore, humans always strive to get the comfort of life that has an impact on exploratory actions, (Rahmawati, 2015). As environmental problems become more complex, environmental concern must be instilled in everyone through refraction to maintain environmental cleanliness.

In reality, everything in life depends on and interacts with each other. Because the environment is a place where humans stand, breathe, and receive their source of life, humans need it, (Sukarno Putri, 2023). School is one of the places to instill an attitude of caring for the environment, especially in students. Education is one of the most important variables in shaping environmentally conscious behavior, (Dewi Tiara et al., 2019). Environmental education carried out by schools can form the character of caring for the environment in students. The formation of this character is certainly through a process that is carried out repeatedly with the support of the environment, (Andriyati & dkk, 2017). This can be interpreted that this character can be formed not only through habituation, but also through school policymaking that integrates environmental education in its curriculum, (Bahrudin, 2017). Based on the description above, the University of Bangka Belitung through the Tri Dharma of Community Service with existing resources, both lecturers and students must contribute with clear and measurable targets and outputs.

The targets and outputs that will be produced from this program are to provide education and awareness of environmental care to students of SMPN 1 Simpang Pesak East Belitung, as part of the alpha generation whose characteristics require the cultivation of environmental awareness from an early age.

METHODS

This community service program will be carried out for a period of approximately 6 (six) months, which will take place from May to October 2024. The location of the activity was held at SMPN 1 Simpang Pesak East Belitung which was located in the hall building involving the Principal, Teachers and Education Personnel, as well as students. The main participants of this activity were students of SMPN 1 Simpang Pesak, totaling 50 people consisting of 25 women and 25 men.

This activity is carried out with the principles of participation, collaborative, and creative. Participatory because it involves junior high school students as the alpha generation who will be the next generation when Indonesia is golden. Collaborative because this activity is a form of collaboration between the service team and SMPN 1 Simpang Pesak as an education provider that is the right institution to instill character education, including concern for the environment, and creativity. This activity is indeed designed to be as creative as possible through dialogical socialization.

In addition, in this activity, various creative props in the form of X-banners and stickers were handed over that can be placed at various strategic points of the school according to their functions. Various types of stickers handed over by the service team are, water-saving stickers that can be placed in toilets, in ablution places, and other irrigation facilities. Then, stickers inviting people to dispose of garbage in their place can be placed in school canteen areas, classrooms, teachers' rooms, public areas in schools, and so on. Then, there are also stickers inviting to reduce the use of plastic bags that can be placed in school

canteen areas, classrooms, recycling bins, and other school environment areas. Finally, an invitation sticker to save energy or save electricity, this sticker can be placed in any area where there is electricity, such as lights, electronic devices, power outlets, and so on.

In addition, the service team also handed over tumblers to all participants and the school as a concrete step to reduce plastic waste, so that they no longer use plastic cups/bottles. The following is the initial plan for the implementation of service that has been carried out by the service team.

1. Coordination and discussion with SMPN 1 Simpang Pesak as a Partner.

The service team has coordinated with SMPN 1 Simpang Pesak as an offline and online partner to prepare activities and explore the condition of students' concern for the environment. So that the main activities can be carried out properly.

2. Preparation of dialogical, participatory, collaborative and creative activity materials.

The service team has compiled materials for socialization and education about dialogical, participatory, collaborative and creative environmental law awareness with two-way dialogue methods, discussions, and case studies. Students are given the opportunity to express their opinions, problems around their environment, including ideas and ideas from the alpha generation regarding the environment in the future.

3. The creation of the alpha generation X-banner cares about the environment.

The form of education is also carried out through the creation of an x-banner that has been submitted to the school to be used as a literacy corner for the alpha generation caring for the environment so that it can be seen and understood by all school residents who do not participate in the socialization directly, including by parents of students or guests who are visiting SMPN 1 Simpang Pesak.

4. Making stickers that care about the environment.

The service team has designed various stickers containing information and appeals for environmental concern that can be installed in various corners of the school, in classrooms, in bathrooms, in public spaces that are adjusted to the content of the information/appeals contained in the stickers. By seeing, reading repeatedly will give rise to the understanding and awareness of students to collectively protect the environment from small and simple things.

DIAGRAM 1. Community Service Program at SMPN 1 Simpang Pesak

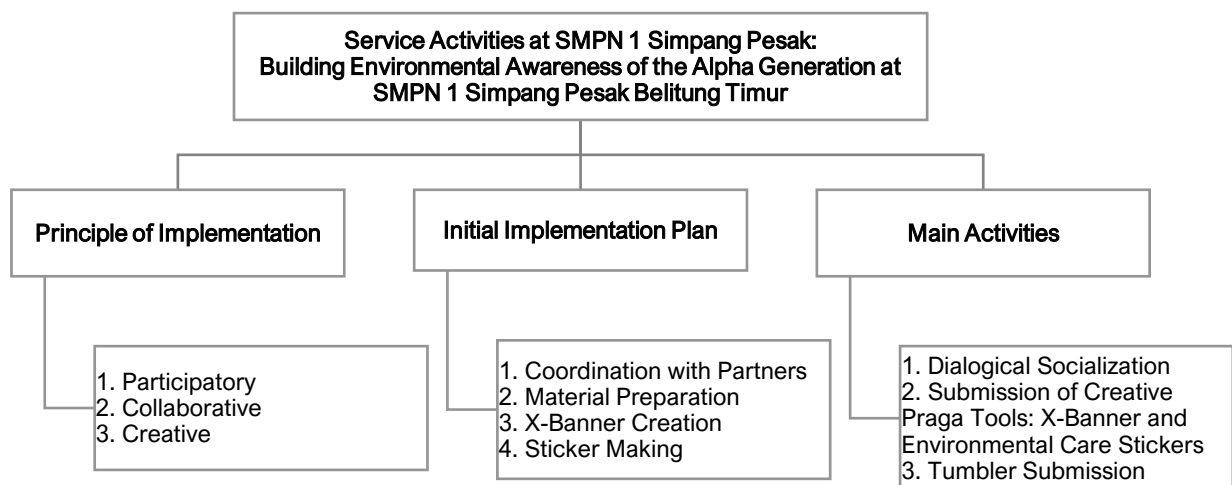


FIGURE 1. Community Service Program diagram

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Current junior high school students are the alpha generation in the future. Therefore, it is important to instill various positive characters, including caring for and protecting the environment. The University of Bangka Belitung, which has the task of tridharma of community service, has an important role to be involved in real actions of environmental love. Through collaboration with SMPN 1 Simpang Pesak as a partner, it held a socialization of environmental law awareness to SMPN 1 Simpang Pesak students on May 7, 2024. This activity was opened by the Principal, Herman Sujono S.Pd., who expressed his positive appreciation for this activity to foster environmental awareness among students. In addition to providing education about environmental awareness, various activities have also been carried out at the school in this activity.

First, this activity has provided socialization to increase students' knowledge with various materials, namely about laws, objectives, and rights and obligations of environmental management and protection. The service team also delivered material in the form of an overview of environmental impacts and problems such as limited access to clean water, excessive use of electricity, the threat of plastic waste in the sea and in rivers, and even plastic waste that accumulates and takes years to decompose. Also, providing education through environmental care stickers as an effort to avoid the various problems above.

Second, the service team handed over an X-banner containing environmental awareness behaviors that contained invitation materials to save water, dispose of waste in its place, save electricity use, and reduce the use of plastic waste. X-banners have been handed over to the school as many as 2 pieces to be placed in public areas in the school.

Third, the service team handed over stickers to save water, save electricity, dispose of garbage in its place, and reduce plastic waste to the school, as well as students who participated in the activity, so that they could be taken home to build environmental awareness in their families and residences.

Fourth, handing over tumblers to all participants as a concrete step to reduce the amount of plastic waste produced and often comes from single-use use, such as the use of plastic cups/bottles. Therefore, the service team advises students to always bring drinking water from home using the tumbler that has been distributed.

The active participation of students in maintaining and caring for the environment will create a generation that is more concerned and responsible for the preservation of nature. Hopefully this activity can build environmental awareness both in the school environment and the students in their respective homes.



FIGURE 1. Community Service Team of Faculty at SMPN 1 Simpang Pesak

The results of the environmental law awareness socialization activity at SMPN 1 Simpang Pesak show a strategic step in instilling positive values in the alpha generation, which is the future of the nation. Instilling the character of caring for the environment at an early age is very important considering that this generation will face increasingly complex environmental challenges in the future. The University of Bangka Belitung, through the Tridharma of community service, plays a key role in shaping this awareness, by directly involving educational institutions such as SMPN 1 Simpang Pesak.

Previous research has shown that environmental education at the elementary and secondary school age is able to foster an attitude of care and responsibility for the environment, including that schools can play a more active role in creating areas that care about the environment and can create students who are aware of the environment, (Afriyeni, 2018). Activities such as socialization carried out by the University of Bangka Belitung not only provide legal knowledge, but also directly practice concrete steps in protecting the environment, such as reducing plastic waste and saving energy. This environment-based education is in line with Piaget's 3 Cognitive Development Theory which says that elementary school students are able to think logically and organized about real events, understand the concept of conservation, and use inductive logic, (Chery, 2022).

Overall, this activity shows a good synergy between educational institutions and the community in preparing the alpha generation to be more aware and responsible for the environment. This research is in line with a continuing education approach that integrates environmental values into the school curriculum and students' daily lives, which is expected to bring about long-term positive changes in the behavior of future generations towards the environment.

CONCLUSION

The University of Bangka Belitung has carried out community service activities that are able to increase awareness of environmental law among the younger generation, especially at SMP Negeri 1 Simpang Pesak. Through the socialization and education activities held, the service team succeeded in instilling the values of environmental awareness to the students, which is expected to form a positive character in protecting the environment from an early age. The support from the school in welcoming this activity shows collective awareness to advance the quality of education and the environment.

The service team, through this activity, suggested that the school can take advantage of the x-banners, stickers, and tumblers that have been handed over to increase environmental awareness literacy to all school residents, especially students and the surrounding environment so that they can be an example for other schools.

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