



# Enhancing Community Involvement in Implementing the Independent Curriculum: A Case Study of SMA Negeri 1 Anjir Muara

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**Abstract.** The independent curriculum, known as “Kurikulum Merdeka”, as part of the national education policy, provides more autonomy to schools in developing learning programs based on the potential and needs of students. The importance of community participation is one of the factors in the successful implementation of the curriculum. This study aims to analyze in depth the role of the community in the implementation of the independent curriculum at SMA Negeri 1 Anjir Muara, South Kalimantan. Through a qualitative approach with a case study method, the data collected shows the results of the study indicate that community involvement not only helps in providing additional resources for schools, but also increases students’ enthusiasm and motivation in learning. Several challenges were identified, such as the lack of community understanding of the concept and objectives of the independent curriculum, as well as minimal communication between schools and the community.

**Keyword:** Enhancing Community, Implementing, Independent Curriculum.

## 1 Introduction

The curriculum is the core of education and it is the obligation of every educational institution to develop innovative educational methods that are responsive to changes and challenges of the times by implementing an independent curriculum[1]. The Independent Curriculum functions as an effort by educational units to achieve national education goals [2]. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology designed this curriculum to provide flexibility and support quality learning, where students are also given the freedom to create and learn [3]. The Independent Curriculum is designed to focus on students, giving them the freedom to learn independently and develop their interests, talents, and abilities [4]. This curriculum is a solution to develop independent thinking that can make the nation's children smarter [5]. The formulation of the Independent Curriculum refers to several principles, including: 1) standards for achieving scientific disciplines that pay attention to the principles of focus, consistency, and coherence; 2) the ability to transfer interdisciplinary competencies and provide choices; 3) authenticity, flexibility, and alignment; and 4) involving students and providing empowerment or independence to students and teachers [6]. The Independent Curriculum is a new education policy that aims to improve the quality of

learning by providing more flexibility and autonomy for schools in determining the content and methods of learning [7].

The Independent Curriculum is expected to be a solution to overcome various previously existing educational problems, as well as directing education in Indonesia towards a more adaptive, flexible system that is able to improve the quality of learning for students [8]. In this case, the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum is very important to realize the vision of education that is responsive to changes in the times [9]. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum (IKM) aims to create education that is more adaptive and in accordance with the needs of students. It is hoped that the implementation of this curriculum can revitalize the Indonesian national education system, so that it not only produces graduates who are academically intelligent, but also prepares them with the skills and character needed to succeed in the 21st century [10]. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum is expected to improve students' ability to determine their own learning process through setting learning goals, reflecting on abilities, and taking proactive and responsible steps to achieve success [11].

The implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum has become a crucial step in improving the quality of education in various educational institutions in Indonesia [12]. Improving the quality of education is an integral part of human resource development. This effort must be carried out in a planned, directed, and intensive manner to prepare the nation to face the era of globalization which is full of competition [13]. The quality of education is regulated by the National Education System Law Number 20 of 2003, which aims to develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe in, fear God Almighty, have noble morals, are healthy, knowledgeable, skilled, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens [14]. The implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum also encourages closer cooperation between schools, students, parents, and the community. In this system, parents and the community play an important role as stakeholders in the education process [15]. They are involved in decision-making regarding curriculum and student development, thus creating a more inclusive educational community that focuses on shared success [12]. Thus, the quality of education is not only the exclusive responsibility of schools and teachers, but is a collective effort involving the entire educational community.

Community involvement is a form of participation in common life to support common goals, which involves interaction with the community and has responsibility for the sustainability of community life [16]. In the context of education, community involvement refers to the active participation of local communities in supporting and enriching students' learning experiences [17]. This emphasizes the importance of collaboration between schools, families, businesses, non-profit organizations, and other stakeholders to jointly contribute to student success [18]. The participation of the community and parents of students in the implementation of education is referred to as the participation process [19]. This process includes community and parent involvement in the school environment to provide input, decision making, and gather

necessary support, so that national development such as education can be encouraged and school quality can be improved [20].

Community participation refers to community involvement in the process of identifying existing problems and potentials, selecting and making decisions about alternative solutions to address problems, implementing actions to address these issues, and involvement in evaluating changes that occur (Mustanir, 2017). In an effort to involve the community and parents of students, schools also need to pay attention to their needs as part of a positive responsibility, so that they can create a good working environment [21]. The process of community and parent participation can take place through planning, implementing, and evaluating activities, which in their implementation are seen in the form of direct or indirect support [2]. This theory explains that all activities and programs developed by educational institutions, including community and parent involvement, need to be planned in advance, and involve internal parties as those responsible for implementing educational activities in the area [22].

In South Kalimantan, especially in SMA Negeri 1 Anjir Muara, community participation is a crucial element in supporting the implementation of the Independent Curriculum and determining the success of the implementation of this policy. The community is expected to contribute in the form of resource support and active participation in educational activities [23]. However, community participation in rural areas still faces various challenges, such as a lack of understanding of education policies and low synergy between schools and the community [24]. Through the Independent Curriculum, the government provides freedom for educational units to develop learning programs that are more flexible and in accordance with local needs. In SMA Negeri 1 Anjir Muara, it is hoped that the Independent Curriculum can meet educational needs that are more relevant to the characteristics of the local community, most of whom work as farmers [25]. As an agricultural area, community support is very important in the implementation of this curriculum. The community is expected to play a role not only as a provider of material resources, but also to contribute to creating a conducive educational environment.

The current implementation of the Independent Curriculum has succeeded in improving student competency [26]. However, there are still challenges faced, especially related to the community's understanding of the concept and objectives of the Independent Curriculum. Therefore, socialization involving various parties, including the Anjir Muara Police, Koramil, and the School Committee, is very important to increase awareness and active participation of the community in supporting the implementation of this curriculum [27]. This study aims to analyze the role of the community around SMA Negeri 1 Anjir Muara in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum and to assess how collaboration between schools, communities, and local stakeholders can increase the effectiveness of the implementation of the curriculum. It is hoped that this study can provide input to education stakeholders in South Kalimantan regarding the importance of collaboration

between schools, communities, and local institutions in supporting the success of the Independent Curriculum policy, as well as provide recommendations to increase community involvement.

## **2 Method**

This study adopted a qualitative approach with a case study method, considering that the observed phenomena are very specific in the context of SMA Negeri 1 Anjir Muara and the involvement of the local community [28]. This approach allows researchers to explore in depth the dynamics of community participation in a unique and complex context. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews with the IHT Resource Person, the Curriculum Compiler for the Education Unit at the SMA Negeri 1 Anjir Muara School, which was held on Thursday, July 25, 2024, in the Physics Lab room of SMA Negeri 1 Anjir Muara, with participants being parents of students, school committees, community leaders, Polsek and Koramil. The event invited 66 parents of students. However, during its implementation, the event was only attended by about two-thirds of the total invitations, which were 46 people, and the remaining 20 people did not attend without any specified reason. The reason of choosing the participants was to give thorough view on community involvement trough all parts of community, from the closest to the students which is the parents to the ones who doesn't directly correlate to the students yet still are responsible in keeping the laws like Polsek and Koramil.

## **3 Result and Discussion**

From the results of interviews and documentation studies, it was found that the community around SMA Negeri 1 Anjir Muara, most of whom work as farmers, have an important role in providing support both materially and morally. Many parents of students contribute by donating agricultural products, such as rice, vegetables, and fruits, to support various school activities, such as providing food for farewell events, extracurricular activities, or additional food for the canteen, and helping to repair school facilities [23]. This contribution of harvest results is one form of support for the school. On the other hand, most of the community admitted that they did not fully understand the Merdeka Curriculum, mainly due to limited access to information and time to attend socialization [24]. To overcome these obstacles, schools can utilize their official websites or collaborate with local radio to convey information to the community who cannot physically attend meetings [29]. The use of media like this is very important to reach people in rural areas who have limited access to information. In addition, considering their busy schedules as farmers, socialization needs to be carried out at more flexible times, such as in the afternoon or weekends. By adjusting the meeting time, more parents will be able to attend and actively participate in

socialization activities, and obtain information about the Independent Curriculum without disrupting their farming activities.

In addition to farmers, most of the parents of students at SMA Negeri 1 Anjir Muara work as police officers, civil servants, private employees, traders, and entrepreneurs where they generally still do not have a high level of awareness and concern for education. This is indicated by the low level of participation of parents in providing support for the development of education at SMA Negeri 1 Anjir Muara which only reached 45%. In addition to the lack of awareness of the importance of education, this is also caused by less than ideal economic conditions where most students come from families in the pre-prosperous economic group.

The process of socializing the independent curriculum at SMA Negeri 1 Anjir Muara was carried out by involving various parties, including the Anjir Muara Police, Koramil, and the School Committee. In this case, the Police and Koramil as stakeholders in rural areas play a role in maintaining order and security during socialization, as well as providing motivation to the community to support this education policy, because in this case they have great authority and influence in the local community. The School Committee also acts as a communication bridge between the school and the community, ensuring that information about the curriculum reaches all levels of society [27].

The results of community involvement in the implementation of the independent curriculum are an increase in community understanding and involvement. This study is expected to show that with more intensive socialization, as proposed in the annual work plan, it will be able to increase community understanding of the independent curriculum. This is important because one of the main challenges is the lack of community understanding of the concept and objectives of the independent curriculum, with a more collaborative and community-based approach, this level of understanding can increase significantly.

Strengthening community support for schools, with structured programs such as increasing parental involvement in school activities, this study can also reveal how the community provides greater moral and material support, both in terms of providing additional resources and active participation in school activities. This study can also show that stronger community involvement can increase student motivation and achievement, so that community involvement can help increase student enthusiasm for learning. The implementation of priority programs such as improving teacher competence and developing student creativity, has the potential to have a positive impact on the quality of learning and student academic achievement [30].

Access to information is also likely to identify ongoing challenges in rural areas. Although this has been included in the plan to improve technology and access to learning, research can show that equal access is still an obstacle, which needs to be addressed through a more inclusive approach, thus overall, the results of this study are expected to provide insight into the importance of synergy between schools and

communities in the implementation of the independent curriculum, while also offering recommendations for improving the approach to socialization and collaboration in rural contexts.

One of the most prominent factors that causes the lack of community understanding to the importance of education is the lack of resource that could help them to understand it in the first place. Lack of information can keep them from being aware of the dangers of hoax and lack of knowledge. The lack of resource can also create a catastrophical circle where parents who are lacking in the awareness of importance of education raise children who share the exact same quality with them. Those children the in turn raise kids of their own with the same quality as mentioned previously.

## 4 CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Anjir Muara, community involvement in supporting the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum appears quite significant, especially in the form of material and moral support. Most people in this area work as farmers, so their contribution to the school in the form of agricultural products such as rice, vegetables, and fruits, plays an important role in supporting school activities. This support shows the community's commitment to the sustainability of activities at school, although in a different form than usual, namely through agricultural products. On the other hand, the results of interviews and documentation studies show that most people still do not understand the concept and objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum in depth. Limited access to information and time are also major obstacles in the socialization process. People who are busy with agricultural activities are often unable to attend socializations carried out by schools; to overcome this problem, schools can use more inclusive strategies, such as utilizing technology through the school's official website and collaborating with local media such as radio to disseminate information more widely.

Several priority programs aimed at increasing community understanding and involvement, such as increasing parental involvement in school activities and training and development for teachers are also very important, because increasing community understanding of the Merdeka curriculum will support effective implementation of the curriculum, in addition there needs to be an adjustment to more flexible meeting times, such as in the afternoon or weekends, so that more people can participate without disrupting their activities as farmers. Collaboration with external parties such as the Police and Koramil also strengthens the socialization of the Merdeka curriculum at SMA Negeri 1 Anjir Muara. The involvement of these parties not only maintains security during the socialization process, but also provides motivation to the community to further support education policies. The school committee can also act as a

communication bridge between the school and the community, so that information about the curriculum can be conveyed properly.

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