

## Exposure of Gender Equality through Children Stories for Students of Kranggan Lembur Mandiri Kindergarten, Jatirangga, Bekasi

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### ABSTRACT

*This community service activity aims to expose students to understand the concept of gender and gender equality to minimize oppression, discrimination, and bullying that mostly occurs against girls. This activity also aims to improve students' understanding of the value of character education and positive attitudes. The partner of this community development are students and teachers of Kranggan Lembur Mandiri Kindergarten, Jatirangga, Jatisampurna District, Bekasi. This community service activity is carried out through the method of assisting story reading, designing syllabus of story reading based on thematic reading, and providing material in the form of children's storybooks, as well as making children's storytelling videos about gender equality, which can be used for students' independent learning. Monitoring and evaluation activities are carried out through observation and interviews. This activity helps improve students' understanding of the role and empowerment of women through education, enrichment of character and positive attitudes on gender justice (can work together, competence, active, empathize, problem-solving), improve linguistic competence and visual literacy (recognition of colors and images) and also understanding of cultural literacy through children's stories containing local Indonesian culture and gender perspective.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The increase in cases of violence and bullying against children, especially girls, provides a clear picture of the lack of understanding of gender understanding and character education. Awareness of gender equality needs to be increased because the understanding of gender equality has not been explicitly reflected in the Indonesian education curriculum. Based on the KPAI report, throughout 2019, there were 21 cases of sexual violence in education with the number of victims reaching 123 children, consisting of 71 girls and 52 boys. This means that both boys and girls are vulnerable to becoming victims of sexual violence at school.

Violence against children, especially girls, can occur anywhere. Based on the supervision of the Indonesian Commission of Child Protection (KPAI), various cases of violence in the world of education throughout 2019 shows that schools as public spaces have turned out to be unsafe and comfortable places for students (<http://www.harianterbit.com/nasional/read/114865/KPAI-123-Student-So-Victims-Violence-Sexual-Throughout-2019>). Noviana (2015) adds that violence against children can have a long impact. Besides having an impact on health problems later in life, it is also related to prolonged trauma, even into adulthood. The impact of trauma due to violence experienced by children includes betrayal or loss of trust in adults (betrayal), trauma (traumatic sexualization), feeling powerlessness, and stigma (stigmatization). For these reasons, comprehensive efforts are needed to make students, especially female students, aware of gender equality, by prioritizing gender respect and not internalizing the subject-object position, where men are considered subjects and women are considered objects, as the social construction internalized so far. Understanding gender equality is as important as character education. Without an understanding of gender equality, students or children will be vulnerable to cases of violence.

One of the efforts that can be done is to use literary works with a gender perspective as gender learning materials. The use of literary works, especially children's literature, has a positive effect not only through language but through images, which are the characteristics of children's literature. Gender education can be implemented with character education because both are mutually supportive aspects. Barone (2011) explains that children need the opportunity to explore books emotionally and intellectually, and they are not just using books to learn reading. Children can make reading books a fun activity if they can have emotional and intellectual connections with the books. Emotional and intellectual ties can be easily built by reading literary works.

Character education in the Indonesian education system was implemented since the enactment of Law no. 20 of 2003. The government realizes that with the very rapid development in all fields, substantial aspects of people's lives are starting to shift, namely morals, ethics, and culture. The government then determined that the primary, secondary, and higher education system in Indonesia must refer to three

important aspects of education; knowledge, skills, and attitudes. These three aspects are very important in the framework of forming a whole Indonesian human being who is knowledgeable, skilled, and has character. This goal cannot be achieved optimally in educational institutions because of many external factors that contributed impacts on it, including the very rapid development of media and technology, and the consumption of pop culture by the younger generation as a media product. Popular culture products also develop massively and are highly consumed in everyday life, which does not fully have positive content and values. This causes an imbalance between the moral values expected by Law no. 20 of 2003 with values adapted from media and technology. Most of them display and contain cultural values which are not suited to Indonesian local culture. Early childhood, primary and secondary education is the spearhead of achieving government goals. Basic education emphasizes the introduction of basic knowledge, basic skills, and basic values regarding morals and ethics. Besides, gender education is a supporting aspect in education to improve students' awareness of gender equality. Subrahmanian (2005) describes that the issues raised within the area of education with aspects of gender relations are multi-dimensional and complex (in Hekkia, 2018). To accomplish gender equality in practice in preschools and schools, gender, therefore, needs to be looked at and studied in that way—as multi-dimensional and complex processes implemented in everyday life in preschools and schools (Hekkia, 2018). Character education and gender understanding at a basic level can be done through children's literature because it contains many moral messages. Besides, children's stories can also be used to provide positive moral and character messages for learners at the early childhood education level.

Character building can be done through literary works because they contain substantial moral values like gender equality. Literature has the essence of elevating reality into literary works. The use of children's stories will greatly enrich learning at an early age, not only in moral aspects, but also in social, cultural, geographic, and children's personality aspects (Trim, 2004; Cullingford, 1998). Not only providing interesting material, children's literature or stories also allow teachers and students to discuss many things through communicative learning. The provision of children's stories supports the learning process. Children's stories will also make children interested because they provide illustrated pictures that can stimulate children's cognition. This apparently must be done with a teacher's guidance as a facilitator and learning mentor.

One of the education units that provide early childhood education is the subsidized Kranggan Lembur Mandiri kindergarten, located on Jl. Lembur RT 01/03, Jatirangga Village, Jatisampurna District, Bekasi. This kindergarten was founded in 2015 under the Koperasi Kranggan Lembur Mandiri foundation. There are 35 students registered initially, who come from underprivileged communities around Jatirangga sub-district, Bekasi.

The problem faced by target partners is the lack of availability of adequate learning materials, especially materials regarding gender equality and empowerment, and character education. This condition will cause an impact that they can not maximize the exposure of positive values and attitudes, character education, and gender equality through teaching materials and the learning process. This school has three teachers, and school activities are held every day Monday to Friday from 07.30-11.00. This school was established with subsidies from the Kranggan Lembur Mandiri Cooperative, Jatirangga Village, Jatisampurna District, Bekasi. This school also conducts a TPA activity called TPA Kranggan Lembur Mandiri, held every day from 16.30 -17.30. This school carries out teaching and learning activities like core learning activities, religion, arts and sports, and extracurricular activities based on the PAUD and Kindergarten education regulations by referring to the KTSP curriculum.

The foundation provides full learning facilities, namely tuition fees, and classes, which occupy the building owned by the Koperasi Kranggan Lembur Mandiri foundation located on Jl. Lembur Rt 01 / RT 03, Jatirangga Village, Jatisampurna, Bekasi. This school previously occupied the hall at the Nurul Iman mosque but was later moved to a building owned by the Kranggan Lembur Mandiri Cooperation. This building has a small play yard and playground.

The school has learning resources, but they are still not optimal, especially children's books about gender education and character education. By referring to the condition, there are several problems of the target partners; a) How is the planning and selection of story reading material with gender equality and empowerment carried out as learning support material carried out at Kranggan Lembur Mandiri Kindergarten in Jatirangga Village? b) How can the modeling and designing storytelling about gender empowerment carried out through children's story material help, students understand gender equality and gender empowerment? This community service program is aimed to help solve the problem of the partner group above, more precisely to, a) prepare planning and selection of story reading material with gender empowerment as supporting material for learning at Kranggan Lembur Mandiri Kindergarten in Jatirangga Village, b) conducting design and mentoring programs through materials teach children's stories so that they can help students understand gender equality and empowerment, c) provide learning assistance based on understanding and gender equality can help teachers improve student understanding of gender equality and empowerment. There were ten children's stories selected for reading and displaying gender equality and positive attitudes, as well as for making children's story reading videos as independent learning materials, as well as 46 titles of children's books donated to schools as enrichment for reading material in schools.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several previous studies have examined literary texts, especially regarding gender bias (Susanti, 2015), and the introduction of moral values and characters in children's literature in elementary schools (Azkia, 2017). Not many studies have examined the use of children's stories as a medium of exposure to the concept of gender equality. Exposing the concept of gender through children's stories can help teachers to introduce the construction of gender roles that have been internalized socially and culturally. Girls are identified with the attributes of femininity and boys are with attributes of masculinity, which affect gender roles in a broader context. Tyson (2006, p. 85) explains that there are traditional gender role constructions regarding men, namely rational, strong, protective, and assertive, while women are constructed as emotional (irrational), weak, and obedient. This construction opens gaps for inequality and hierarchy, and women's stereotypes as objects and inferior. To address this condition, the exposure of stories with gender equality for young children as an introduction to the concept of equality is applicable, so that boys and girls have the same opportunity in many aspects of life, to make them no longer experience incidents caused by gender inequality.

Gender issues raised in literary works are related to how women are marginalized and experience social and cultural oppression. Kazmierczak (2010) adds that the concept of gender roles assumes that women and men adapt according to gender social roles and feminine and masculine ideologies that are imposed on them by society.

This gender ideology is socialized and disseminated to the communities so that people are aware of the cultural norms set for men and women. The characteristics of these cultural constructs may not always be adaptive - such as dominant traits in men, or weak traits in women - but successful in shaping gender role models culturally (Prentice & Carranza, 2002; Rudman & Glick, 2008 in Kazmierczak, 2010).

Gender discourse is often raised in literary works because it is a social reality that needs to be articulated. Children's stories as children's literature also contain many issues of equality, besides moral values and character education. Children's literature contains moral or educational values that are beneficial to children (Sarumpaet, 2010). Anafiah (2015) also wrote that children's literature is believed to have a major contribution to the development of children's personalities in the process of advancing to maturity as humans who have a clear identity. The child's personality and identity are formed by the environment both consciously and unconsciously so that exposure to the concept of gender equality and positive attitudes through children's stories can be done to introduce an understanding of the concept of gender.

### 3. METHOD

This community service activity was held from August to September 2020 at Kranggan Lembur Mandiri Kindergarten, Jl. Lembur VI, Jatirangga Sub-District, Jatisampur, Bekasi, through several stages, namely a) preparing a simple learning plan regarding gender-based children's stories, b) providing 46 titles of children's storybooks about gender as children's resources to improve their literacy and reading interest, as well as increasing children's understanding of women's emancipation and gender equality, c) modeling stage and teacher assistance in reading children's stories about gender equality to students, and d) the stage of producing storytelling videos based on the books about gender equality as a digital product of activities for students and teachers, to enable children easily access stories through videos. Learning activities at the Kindergarten Kranggan Lembur school were adjusted to Covid 19 protocols so there were only two days of learning (Tuesday and Thursday) for Grade A, from 07.30 to 09.30, and three days for Grade B (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) from 07.30 to by 09.30, by taking into account complete health procedures, because the school is in the green zone. Planning activities, providing reading material, and providing storytelling videos, as well as story reading assistance were carried out from August to September 2020, which was conducted only in Grade B. Implementation of activities as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1.

Implementation of activities at Kindergarten  
Kranggan Lembur Mandiri, Jatirangga, Bekasi

#### 4. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

This community service activity is carried out in several stages, namely planning the reading and exposure material, providing material, reading and presenting gender concepts, and creating storytelling videos about gender equality.

##### 4.1 Reading Plans and Story Exposure

Before carrying out modeling activities and assisting children's story reading, the researchers and the teacher discussed simple lesson plans about the stories. The storytelling activity was conducted after the core learning process at 09.30, which takes 45 minutes. There are ten children's stories about gender equality published by the Asia Foundation and the Litara Foundation. The lesson plan was previously discussed with the teacher to equalize perceptions about the objectives, types of activities and material development to be practiced. The storytelling activity was conducted with an assistance of a classroom teacher.

Because the learning process at the PAUD level does not emphasize content material, and this activity was aimed at enriching students, activities are directed at storytelling to introduce gender concepts and positive attitudes, character education, vocabularies, colors, pictures, and local cultural literacy. The activity was divided into three series of activities, namely;

a) pre-reading

the researchers as companions gave initial questions to see the background knowledge of students about related stories.

b) whilst reading

The researcher reads related stories by emphasizing the introduction of the concept of gender equality and positive attitudes, colors, image forms, vocabulary, and cultural literacy contained in the stories

c) post-reading

After listening to the story, students were asked to give their opinion by answering questions about related topics.

##### 4.2 Provision of Books on Gender Equality and Character Education as School Reading Materials

After preparing a lesson plan regarding reading children's stories about gender equality, thus community service also provided 46 books published by Litara Foundation and Asia Foundation for the school's reading center, especially for material enrichment. These books were also used as materials in producing storytelling e-videos as independent learning materials for students to use at



home because they can only read the books at school. Submission of books on gender equality as students learning resources as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2.  
Submission of books on gender equality as students learning resources



### 4.3 Exposure of Gender Equality through Story Reading

The next activity is the reading of ten children's stories entitled *Aku Kartini* (Sawitri, 2019), *Ira Tidak Takut* (Tuasuun, 2019), *Ibu Guru Hebat* (Pujastuti, 2019), *Ketika Gilang Ingin Seperti Kak Sita* (Wijaya, 2015), *Jadi Apa Ya* (Adani, 2019), *Lompat! Lompat! Lompat!* (Wulanita, 2019), *Kakak Ompong* (Lubis, 2019), *Srinti* (Dewayani, 2014), *Kenapa Kak Risa Menangis* (Ernes, 2019) and *Duma Juga Bisa* (Inong, 2019). Each story is read and taught for 45 minutes after learning hours on different days, through three phases of pre, while and post-reading activities. For each story, students have a different understanding, because they have never had story reading activities before. After reading the story, the students looked enthusiastic by actively answering the questions and seeing the pictures and colors in the books. Furthermore, they were also exposed to character education in more books published by Litara Foundation. Exposure of gender equality through reading children's stories as shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3.

Exposure of gender equality through reading children's stories

Activities are carried out based on the learning design that has been made. This activity is carried out specifically for Kindergarten B students who already have basic calistung skills, making it possible to discuss stories. Modeling activities are carried out in 5 sessions and will be continued with 5 sessions of teacher practice, with adjustments to the conditions of Covid-19. Each session will consist of 45 minutes of story reading and development.

The results of teaching activities and displaying ten illustrated children's stories show students' enthusiastic responses. Students were told and exposed to ten stories with an emphasis on understanding the concept of gender equality and positive attitudes in the stories. Through the storytelling of *Aku Kartini* (Satriati, 2019), students were introduced to the concept of the importance of education for boys and girls. Students also knew and understood the value of optimism and unyielding in this story, in addition to knowing the attitude of sisterhood and mutual support amongst women. Furthermore, students also recognized and understood active and creative attitudes in *Lompat! Lompat! Lompat!* (Wulanita, 2019) and *Duma Juga Bisa* (Inong, 2019), braveness in *Ira Tidak Takut* (Tuasuun, 2019), and brotherhood and empathy for the suffering of others in *Kakak Ompong* (Lubis, 2019) and *Srinti* (Dewayani, 2014). The storytelling also taught students about equal opportunities in creativity and plays for boys and girls in *Ketika Gilang Ingin Seperti Kak Sita* (Wijaya, 2015), the value of gender equality that girls must be able to solve problems, not emotional, and never give up in *Ibu Guru Hebat* (Pujiastuti, 2019), and *Kenapa kak Risa Menangis* (Ernes, 2019). In the reading of other stories, the students were also exposed to themes that girls must have dreams in *Jadi Apa Ya* (Adani, 2019). An introduction to the concept of gender equality and the positive attitudes implied in the stories can be seen in the following table 1.

In addition, students are also given an introduction to understanding positive attitudes and other character education contained in the story, as shown in the following table 2.

The tables above show the values contained in stories introduced to students, to increase their understanding of gender equality, positive attitudes, and character education, as in the following books. Books of character education and positive attitudes provided for the school learning resources as shown in Figure 4.

#### **4.4 Storytelling Videos**

In addition to modeling and assisting the practice of reading stories by teachers, this community service activity also created children's storytelling videos for students that they can have at home as independent learning materials. The ten stories were transformed into videos and distributed to students as autonomous learning materials. Videos of children's storytelling as shown in Figure 5.

Table 1.  
Attitudes and Aspects of Gender Equality

No.	Story Titles	Attitudes and Aspects of Gender Equality
1.	<i>Aku Kartini</i>	Emancipation, the importance of education for girls, sisterhood, and mutual support
2.	<i>Duma Juga Bisa</i>	Be active, tough, resilient, nimble, and independent
3.	<i>Ira Tidak Takut</i>	Be brave
4.	<i>Kenapa Kak Risa Menangis</i>	Have leadership, can identify and solve problems, be innovative and independent
5.	<i>Kakak Ompong</i>	Active, Initiative
6.	<i>Ibu Guru Hebat</i>	Educated, unyielding, not emotional
7.	<i>Lompat! Lompat! Lompat!</i>	Enjoys sports, active and competitive
8.	<i>Ketika Gilang Ingin Seperti Kak Sita</i>	Equal opportunities in creativity, arts, and plays for boys and girls
9.	<i>Jadi Apa Ya</i>	Having ideas, the importance of education
10.	<i>Srinti</i>	Sisterhood, problem solver

Table 2.  
Positive Attitudes and Character Building

No.	Story Titles	Positive attitudes and character building
1.	<i>Aku Kartini</i>	Optimism, diligent, consistent
2.	<i>Duma Juga Bisa</i>	diligent
3.	<i>Ira Tidak Takut</i>	Dare to try something new
4.	<i>Kenapa Kak Risa Menangis</i>	Diligent, careful, not afraid of animals
5.	<i>Kakak Ompong</i>	Helpful, empathetic
6.	<i>Ibu Guru Hebat</i>	Helpful
7.	<i>Lompat! Lompat! Lompat!</i>	Love to exercise
8.	<i>Ketika Gilang Ingin Seperti KakSita</i>	Love arts (dancing, drawing)
9.	<i>Jadi Apa Ya</i>	Have dreams and positive wishes
10.	<i>Srinti</i>	Helpful, able to reconcile after a disaster, able to face and solve problems



**Figure 4.**  
**Books of character education and positive attitudes**  
**provided for the schoollearning resources**



Figure 5.  
Videos of children's storytelling



#### 4.5 Monitoring Results

After implementing modeling and mentoring activities and the use of children's storybooks, monitoring and evaluation activities were carried out to examine students' understanding of the concepts of gender equality and women's empowerment in the stories. From the results of the questions and answers held in class and discussions with the teacher, it was found that students could understand the concept of gender equality that girls have the same opportunities and rights as boys, for example in getting an education, in activities and playing, and have tasks and roles that can complement each other. Evaluation and teachers response as shown in Figure 6.



**Figure 6.**  
**Evaluation and teachers response**



## 5. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that children can understand the concept of gender equality, positive attitudes, and positive character development through story reading. They can understand that girls can also show an active, competitive, brave, not whiny attitude, can overcome problems, have a leadership attitude, like to help, show empathy, support each other with friends, like to play sports and make art, can express themselves, tough, and spry as are boys. The students also really liked reading stories and were enthusiastic about answering the teacher's questions. It is expected that by reading them stories, providing books, and creating e-videos distributed to students, they can increase their interest in storybooks, especially stories with gender equality and positive attitudes. The use of pictorial books also improves students' cognition regarding colors, shapes, vocabulary, and cultural literacy, so it can be concluded that the use of stories as a medium of exposure and learning greatly helps the learning process.

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