

## **STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTING THE INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM IN ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN WEST ACEH REGENCY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The service aims to help school principals and teachers implement the independent curriculum in elementary school (ES) and junior high school (JHS) educational institutions in West Aceh Regency. The method used in this community service consists of 4 stages, namely; 1) preparatory phase; 2) implementation; 3) evaluation and monitoring; and 4) follow-up. The results of this service show an increase in knowledge and understanding regarding implementing the curriculum Merdeka. The impact resulting from this service is that teachers become more capable of implementing the curriculum Merdeka in the institutions they work in, and school principals can guide teachers who do not participate in this service to implement the curriculum Merdeka in the learning process.

**Keywords:** Strategy, Implementation of Curriculum Merdeka, Educational Institutions

### **INTRODUCTION**

Education is a conscious effort to humanize humans (Komariah & Kurniady, 2022). Based on this statement, education has a very noble and great goal in creating a complete human being. Another opinion also shows that there has never been a developed country, but its people are illiterate, but a developed country because its people are intelligent, intelligent people because of the quality education process, the quality education process cannot be separated from the right curriculum (Rasyid et al., 2022). Because of the enormous role of education in creating complete human beings and bringing a country to progress, the founding fathers of the Republic of Indonesia have stipulated in the body of the constitution of the Republic of Indonesia in the 1945 Constitution Articles 1-5 concerning how the state ensures that all children of the nation receive education without anyone being left behind and at the same time with its financing. To achieve what has been stated in the 1945 Constitution, a strategy is needed in its implementation.

Strategy is a process of careful planning carried out by adults to determine the best direction or way to achieve goals effectively and efficiently in education (Cokins, 2017; Jin & Hidayati, 2022; White, 2004). Strategy is needed to avoid waste, misuse of interests in carrying out an ongoing process (Gaffar, 2021; Sa'ud, 2018). Based on the opinions of the experts above, strategy is something that is very essential for its presence in carrying out a process in education, implementing the kurikulum merdeka in particular.

The kurikulum merdeka is the latest curriculum in the world of education, the kurikulum merdeka was initiated during the leadership of the Minister of Education Mas Nadim in 2021. The curriculum is a series of experiences that are then analyzed and then used as guidelines in

organizing education (Oemar Hamalik, 2017; Rasyid et al., 2021). The kurikulum merdeka is where teachers as the spearhead in the classroom provide the best teaching with the best abilities for each competency possessed by students (Riyadi & Budiman, 2023). The meaning is that if in the past students followed the teacher program, but in this kurikulum merdeka the teacher follows the students, meaning that a teacher must be able to find the competencies possessed by each student and develop the potential that exists in students. This is not an easy task but a task that is full of challenges, therefore educational institutions are needed.

Educational institutions are formal places or places where the learning process is carried out with a structured curriculum (Hidayat et al., 2023; Maulana, 2022). Not only that, educational institutions also have an education system that has clear standards in accordance with statutory provisions. Therefore, formal educational institutions better guarantee the occurrence of an effective and efficient learning process, so that the goals of education can be achieved productively.

Based on the study that has been presented above, it turns out that researchers have found or problems in the implementation of the kurikulum merdeka, especially in West Aceh district, researchers found that there are still schools that have not implemented the kurikulum merdeka, this was found because there are still principals and teachers who do not understand what the independent curriculum is, and the West Aceh area is indeed relatively far from the province, causing access to it to be very difficult, especially schools in remote, underdeveloped, and deepest areas.

Referring to the above problems, the researcher and team as lecturers and students are determined to visit West Aceh district from Banda Aceh, which is approximately 244 km of travel, with the aim of carrying out community service regarding the implementation of the independent curriculum, so that it is hoped that after this community service is carried out, understanding can be increased, and the kurikulum merdeka can be implemented.

## **METHOD**

The method used in this community service is carried out in 4 phases, namely; Preparation phase 1; in this phase, an initial survey is conducted; specific needs are identified; coordination with the local education office; formation of a team consisting of lecturers, teachers, educational practitioners, and students; determination of roles and responsibilities; preparation of training materials; and development of modules that include theory, application, and case studies.

Implementation phase 2: in this phase, socialization is carried out to school principals and teachers; conveying activity plans; organizing training for elementary and middle school teachers on the concept and strategy for implementing the independent curriculum; holding workshops; providing assistance; providing materials; and assisting schools in procuring books and references.

Evaluation and monitoring phase 3; in this phase, routine visits to schools are carried out; feedback is collected; data is analyzed during monitoring; and reports on the results of implementation are prepared, and the last phase;

Follow-up phase 4; in this final phase, the final report is prepared; the results of the program are disseminated through seminars, publications, and social media; the ongoing support is provided; and the discussion forum is held.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this community service show that first, the preparation shows that the initial survey in the context of understanding the current conditions of elementary and middle schools in West Aceh Regency shows that most teachers have difficulty understanding the concept of the independent curriculum, and there are still relatively many schools that have not used the independent curriculum.

Second, the implementation carried out by holding training for elementary and junior high school teachers on the concept and strategy of implementing the independent curriculum, this activity was carried out in the form of a workshop. The workshop that was carried out can be seen in the picture below;



Figure 1. Presenter of material in the form of a workshop

Figure 1 above shows that the training activities in the workshop are being given. In the picture above there are 6 speakers, namely lecturers, consisting of 2 professors and 4 Doctors. The workshop materials are given in parallel by experts in education.



Figure 2. Enthusiasm of teacher and principal participants

Figure 2 above shows participants consisting of school principals and teachers at elementary and middle school levels, attended by 52 participants, and the figure above also shows the seriousness of the participants in participating in the activities held.

Third, this evaluation and monitoring show that through community service activities in the form of workshops that have been carried out, evaluation and monitoring were carried out, based on the results of this evaluation and monitoring, it was found that there was an increase in the understanding of school principals and teachers regarding the independent curriculum, and teachers have also started to implement the kurikulum merdeka in learning.

Fourth, the follow-up stage, this stage is the final stage where every success of this service will be published in a service journal, so that it can be a reference for education practitioners, teachers, principals at the elementary and junior high school levels in particular, and for policy makers at the district, provincial and national levels.

Based on the results above, it can be discussed that the curriculum is the heart of the implementation of education. The curriculum is a written plan that contains ideas and concepts formulated by curriculum developers, the written plan then becomes a curriculum document that forms a curriculum system consisting of components that are interrelated and influence each other, such as, components of objectives that are the direction of education, components of learning experiences, components of goal achievement strategies, and evaluation components (Damayanti et al., 2023; Nurwanto & Cusack, 2017).

According to (Ningrum, 2022) the kurikulum merdeka prioritizes creative and fun attitudes by fostering based on the interests and talents possessed by students. This is different from the 2013 Curriculum which is aimed at developing skills not only in the cognitive field, but also in the affective and psychomotor aspects which must be developed comprehensively. However, (Riyadi & Budiman, 2023; Robbins, 2007) stated that the 2013 curriculum



emphasizes more on competency with competency thinking based on attitudes, skills, and knowledge.

(Makarim, 2022) stated that the kurikulum merdeka will be implemented in secondary school education units starting in 2022. Implementation will begin in schools that have studied the concept of the kurikulum merdeka and have stated that they are ready to implement the kurikulum merdeka.

Based on the results and discussion above, after the implementation of this community service, it had a great impact on the teachers and principals who attended this workshop. The impact that can be seen is the enjoyable learning process, students become more active in the classroom when the learning process is carried out. Another impact is the collaboration between teachers and teachers, teachers and principals, principals and supervisors.

## CONCLUSION

Implementation, such as resource constraints and paradigm shift in learning, however, this program offers many opportunities for further improvement and development. Continuous evaluation and commitment from all parties involved are needed to overcome these challenges and strengthen the sustainability of this program in the future. Overall, the Community Service Program of the Independent Program related to the kurikulum merdeka in Elementary and Junior High Schools in West Aceh Regency has had a significant positive impact in improving the quality of education, enriching students' learning experiences, and strengthening the bond between schools and the community. By continuing to develop and strengthen the implementation of this program, it is hoped that a vision of more inclusive, innovative, and quality education can be realized for future generations.

## SUGGESTIONS

Through the dedication that has been carried out, it can become a reference for the implementation of the independent curriculum, thus providing assistance for understanding and implementing the independent curriculum.

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