



OPTIMIZING CHILD-FRIENDLY SCHOOLS: MAPPING INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS BASED ON MULTI-PARTY COLLABORATION

MENGOPTIMALKAN SEKOLAH RAMAH ANAK: MEMETAKAN SOLUSI INOVATIF BERDASARKAN KOLABORASI MULTIPARTY

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Abstract

This study aims to map innovative solutions based on multi-stakeholder collaboration to optimize the implementation of the Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) Policy in Labuhanbatu Regency, which in practice still faces various obstacles. Through a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques such as literature review, in-depth interviews, observations, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in three elementary schools, this study identifies the root causes of the problems. The main findings reveal that the obstacles to the implementation of the CFS are multidimensional, including a substantial lack of understanding of the CFS among educators and parents, limited financial and human resources, resistance to changes in school culture, and weak coordination and active participation from all stakeholders, including children. The value and contribution of this study lies in the proposition of a systemic solution that fills the gap in existing literacy, which goes beyond problem identification. This study recommends a series of integrated innovative solutions, such as the use of digital platforms for outreach and complaints, continuous capacity building of educators, strengthening child participation through official forums, and most importantly, the establishment of a multi-stakeholder collaboration forum and the integration of the CFS policy into regional planning and budgeting (RPJMD/APBD). Key recommendations emphasize the establishment of a multi-stakeholder collaboration forum involving schools, local governments, communities, and the business world, as well as the establishment of an independent monitoring team to ensure accountability.

Keywords : Child-Friendly Schools, Multi-Party Collaboration, Policy Implementation, Labuhanbatu Regency, Innovative Solutions.

Abstrak

Studi ini bertujuan untuk memetakan solusi inovatif berbasis kolaborasi multi-pemangku kepentingan untuk mengoptimalkan implementasi Kebijakan Sekolah Ramah Anak (PJK) di Kabupaten



Labuhanbatu, yang dalam praktiknya masih menghadapi berbagai kendala. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data seperti tinjauan pustaka, wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan Diskusi Kelompok Fokus (FGD) di tiga sekolah dasar, studi ini mengidentifikasi akar permasalahan. Temuan utama menunjukkan bahwa kendala implementasi PJK bersifat multidimensional, termasuk kurangnya pemahaman yang substansial tentang PJK di kalangan pendidik dan orang tua, keterbatasan sumber daya keuangan dan manusia, resistensi terhadap perubahan budaya sekolah, dan lemahnya koordinasi serta partisipasi aktif dari semua pemangku kepentingan, termasuk anak-anak. Nilai dan kontribusi studi ini terletak pada usulan solusi sistemik yang mengisi kesenjangan dalam literasi yang ada, yang melampaui identifikasi masalah. Studi ini merekomendasikan serangkaian solusi inovatif terintegrasi, seperti penggunaan platform digital untuk penjangkauan dan pengaduan, peningkatan kapasitas pendidik secara berkelanjutan, penguatan partisipasi anak melalui forum resmi, dan yang terpenting, pembentukan forum kolaborasi multi-pemangku kepentingan dan integrasi kebijakan CFS ke dalam perencanaan dan penganggaran daerah (RPJMD/APBD). Rekomendasi utama menekankan pembentukan forum kolaborasi multi-pemangku kepentingan yang melibatkan sekolah, pemerintah daerah, masyarakat, dan dunia bisnis, serta pembentukan tim pemantauan independen untuk memastikan akuntabilitas.

Kata Kunci : Sekolah Ramah Anak, Kolaborasi Multipihak, Implementasi Kebijakan, Kabupaten Labuhanbatu, Solusi Inovatif.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a key element in national development because it plays a role in producing a generation that is qualified, has character, and is able to compete. Education is not only limited to the process of transferring knowledge, but also includes the development of potential, moral formation, and protection of children's basic rights. In this context, the idea of Child-Friendly Schools (SRA) emerged as a strategic step to create a learning environment that is safe, inclusive, and supports children's overall growth. The SRA policy is firmly grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), an international legal instrument that has been ratified by many countries, including Indonesia in 1996 through Presidential Decree Number 36 of 1990. The UNCRC affirms children's fundamental rights, such as the right to education, protection from discrimination and violence, and involvement in processes that affect their lives. These principles were later adopted in national regulations, such as Regulation of the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Number 11 of 2011 concerning the Child-Friendly Regency/City (KLA) Policy and Regulation of the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Number 8 of 2014 concerning the SRA policy, which serves as the basis for the implementation of the SRA nationally. PPPA Ministerial Regulation Number 8 of 2014 explains six main components that must be fulfilled so that an educational unit can be categorized as SRA, namely: (1) clear policy documents; (2) educators and education personnel who understand children's rights; (3) child-friendly and violence-free learning; (4) safe and supportive infrastructure; (5) active participation of students in various school processes; and (6) support from parents, alumni, the community, and the business world for the SRA program.

The definition of SRA has also been affirmed by several institutions. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KPPPA) outlines that SRA is an educational unit that is safe, clean, healthy, and environmentally friendly, and capable of guaranteeing the fulfillment and protection of children's rights from various forms of violence and discrimination. SRA also encourages children's involvement in policy formulation, learning, supervision, and complaint mechanisms. Similarly, the Ministry of Education and Culture (2016) emphasized that SRA is not the construction of new schools, but rather the restructuring of schools to become learning spaces that fulfill children's rights and protect them (Ministerial Regulation No. 8 of 2014 concerning Child-Friendly School Policy, 2014).



Although the SRA policy and conceptual framework are clear, its implementation in the field still faces challenges. Previous studies have shown that limited public understanding of SRA, limited human and financial resources, resistance to change in schools, and lack of coordination among stakeholders are significant obstacles. This indicates that SRA implementation is still suboptimal and requires innovative efforts to overcome these obstacles.

Labuhanbatu Regency is one of the regions in North Sumatra that is committed to implementing the Child Protection Policy. This commitment is outlined in Regional Regulation Number 5 of 2015 concerning the Implementation of Child Protection. Article 43 paragraph (2) letter (d) explains that the fulfillment of children's rights includes education, recreation, and cultural activities that support the implementation of Child Protection [13]. Based on data from DP3A and the Labuhanbatu Education Office, there are 11 schools that have declared themselves as child-friendly schools through Education Office Decree No. 420/ 806.SD.1 /2019 and Ministry of Religious Affairs Decree No. 103 of 2019. However, initial observations found that the implementation of Child Protection in Labuhanbatu has not been running optimally. There are still schools that do not have an SRA policy document, and violations of SRA principles have been found such as discrimination, less educational discipline, and cases of bullying. Lack of parental understanding and support, as well as limited infrastructure due to a minimal budget, also become obstacles in realizing truly child-friendly schools. This study aims to identify implementation barriers and map innovative solutions to optimize the implementation of the Child-Friendly School (CFS) Policy in Labuhanbatu Regency.

Previous studies have made significant contributions to portraying the reality of SRA implementation. Some studies focus on describing the implementation and positive impacts of this policy. For example, research by Amrullah (2022) at Muhammadiyah Taman Elementary School in Sidoarjo showed that the implementation of SRA successfully created a more conducive environment for the fulfillment of children's rights through optimization of facilities and infrastructure (Amrullah et al., 2022). Similarly, Zaenal & Rahaju (2024) in their research at the elementary education level found that SRA was effective in shaping students' character by instilling values of respect for children's rights and positive discipline (Zaenal & Rahaju, 2024). These findings strengthen the argument that SRA is a relevant and potential policy for development.

However, despite this positive picture, most studies consistently uncover various obstacles that hinder the optimal implementation of SRA. A study by Rangkuti & Maksum (2019) highlighted the root of the problem, namely the still low public understanding and awareness of the essence of SRA, which leads to partial and formalistic implementation (Rangkuti & Maksum, 2019). Limited resources, both financial and human, are also classic obstacles revealed in various studies, such as those by Putri (2019) and Riyanto et al. (Putri & Akmal, 2019) (Riyanto et al., 2022), who found that a lack of budget and trained educators hinders the provision of facilities and the implementation of a child-friendly curriculum. Aspects of resistance to change and leadership dynamics were also identified as obstacles, as found by Salam et al. (2023) and Simanjorang et al. (2025), where changes in principals and lack of teacher participation in training affected program consistency (Salam et al., 2023) (Simanjorang et al., 2025). Furthermore, Aprison, et al. (2022) and Retnasari et al. (2024) underlined the challenges in realizing active participation of children and weak coordination between stakeholders as crucial factors that still need to be improved (Aprison et al., 2022) (Retnasari & Suprastio, 2024).

Although numerous studies have well-documented these barriers, an analysis of the existing literature shows that there are few that specifically and in-depth examine and propose innovative, collaboration-based solutions to address these multidimensional barriers. Most studies tend to focus on identifying problems or providing general and segmented solution recommendations, such as teacher training or budget increases, without designing a collaborative framework that synergistically involves all stakeholders. Some studies, such as those by Tefa et al. (2023) and Violeta (2024), have addressed the partnership aspect, but their scope remains limited, for example, to partnerships with the business sector or the role of specific communities, and they have not yet developed a comprehensive and structured collaboration model (Tefa et al., 2023) (Mustika et al., 2024). In other



words, there is a gap between the highly detailed problem mapping and the proposition of systemic solutions that can address the root causes in an integrated manner.

Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap by specifically exploring and mapping innovative, collaborative solutions to address various barriers to implementing Child-Friendly School policies. This research starts from the premise that partial, stand-alone solutions will not be sufficient to realize the ideal SRA. An approach is needed that integrates the roles and resources of schools, local governments (the Education Office and DP3A), parents, the community, the business world, and the children themselves within a mutually reinforcing, supportive ecosystem.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. Data collection techniques included a literature review of policy documents, SRA implementation reports, and a number of relevant studies. In-depth interviews were also conducted with principals, teachers, parents, and students at schools that have implemented the SRA program. Three elementary schools were selected as samples: SDN 11 Rantau Utara, SDN 04 Rantau Selatan, and MIN 4 Labuhanbatu Sigambal, all located in urban areas.

Data collection was also supplemented by direct observation to assess the condition of facilities and infrastructure, learning patterns, and stakeholder participation within the school environment. Furthermore, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics of SRA implementation. All data collected was then analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns, key issues, and interrelationships between variables in the implementation of the SRA policy.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Barriers to Policy Implementation

Although the Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) policy has been integrated into the national education system and reinforced by various regulations, its implementation at the school level, particularly in Labuhanbatu Regency, still faces a number of complex obstacles. These obstacles include lack of understanding, limited resources, resistance to change, weak coordination, and low stakeholder participation. One fundamental issue that often leads to problems is a lack of adequate understanding of the essence of CFS. This lack of understanding results in partial and non-holistic program implementation. CFS is not simply about providing a safe physical environment; it also demands changes in school culture, interaction patterns, and learning approaches. When teachers do not understand that CFS requires participatory and non-repressive teaching methods, they tend to revert to less appropriate traditional practices. Similarly, parents who do not understand children's rights tend to provide less support or supervision for CFS implementation in schools. (Mustika et al., 2024). In Labuhanbatu, violations of SRA principles are still found, such as discrimination, inadequate discipline, and bullying between students and teachers. This situation indicates that outreach efforts have not addressed the substance of the issue and have not sufficiently changed mindsets.

The next obstacle relates to limited resources, both in terms of funding and the availability of trained personnel. Implementing SRA requires investment in providing safe and child-friendly infrastructure, such as adequate toilets, play areas, health facilities, and counseling rooms. However, many schools, including those in Labuhanbatu, still lack the budget to meet these standards. In addition to these limited facilities and infrastructure, the number of educators competent in child-friendly approaches is also limited. Uneven training and a lack of motivation to develop skills in this area further exacerbate the situation. Without prepared and competent educators, SRA implementation cannot run optimally.

Resistance to change is also a challenge that cannot be ignored. Many schools still maintain a conventional approach oriented toward teacher authority, thus providing little space for child participation. In Labuhanbatu, schools were still found to have not completed the SRA policy



document, indicating resistance or a lack of commitment to meeting administrative standards. Furthermore, changes in school leadership also affect program consistency, as each principal has different priorities.

Another significant weakness is the lack of coordination between stakeholders. Implementing the SRA is not solely the responsibility of schools but also requires support from local governments, communities, parents, and NGOs. However, in practice, there is still a lack of communication between these parties. Although Labuhanbatu Regency Regulation No. 5 of 2015 provides a legal framework, coordination between the Education Office, the DP3A (Regional Education Development Agency), and schools is considered suboptimal, resulting in inadequate program integration. The lack of an effective coordination forum often results in various programs operating independently.

The next obstacle identified relates to the low level of involvement of parents, teachers, and students in the implementation of the SRA. Their participation is a crucial element. In Labuhanbatu, parents still lack an understanding of the function and purpose of the SRA, resulting in inadequate support. Busy schedules, low literacy regarding children's rights, and minimal outreach are contributing factors. Furthermore, student involvement in the decision-making process at school remains limited. When children's voices are not accommodated, the SRA's goal of empowering children as subjects of education becomes difficult to achieve. (Zaenal & Rahaju, 2024).

2. Solutions for Optimizing Policy Implementation

To overcome the various obstacles in implementing the Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) policy in Labuhanbatu Regency, solutions are needed that address the root causes, ranging from improving educator capacity, utilizing technology, strengthening collaboration, and promoting active child participation. Some solutions that can be implemented to optimize the implementation of CFS include the following:

a Capacity Building for Educators and Education Personnel.

One crucial component in the success of SRA is the quality of human resources, particularly teachers and education personnel. A lack of understanding of children's rights and child-friendly learning approaches is a significant obstacle. Therefore, ongoing training must be a top priority. Furthermore, the curriculum used in schools needs to be developed adaptively and inclusively by integrating children's rights values into all subjects. For example, in language lessons, students can be invited to analyze texts containing child protection issues, while in social studies, they can learn the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The curriculum must also be open to children's special needs and encourage creativity and critical thinking, making the learning environment more enjoyable and minimizing the potential for violations of children's rights.

b Leveraging Digital Platforms for Efficiency and Accessibility.

Utilizing technology is an effective way to overcome various obstacles in implementing SRA. Schools can develop an integrated digital platform that serves as an information center for policies, training materials, implementation guidelines, and best practices across various schools. This platform also serves as a communication channel between schools, parents, relevant agencies, and the community, enabling a rapid and transparent exchange of information. For example, parents can access the progress of SRA activities at school, express their concerns, or report potential violations through a mobile app. Furthermore, online educational media is needed that provides information about SRA and children's rights in an easy-to-understand format. Content can be presented through interactive articles, infographics, or educational videos. Digital campaigns through social media can also raise public awareness of the importance of SRA and encourage public involvement in supporting the program.

c Increasing Children's Participation.

Children's participation is central to the implementation of SRA. To address the lack of children's involvement in decision-making, schools need to provide participatory platforms, such as student councils or children's forums, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Through these platforms, children can express their concerns regarding school policies, activity planning, and



evaluation of SRA implementation. In addition, schools need to provide diverse, interest-based extracurricular activities, as well as creative projects that allow children to express their potential. A school environment that fosters self-expression will reduce the risk of bullying and discrimination, creating a safer learning environment that supports children's growth and development.

d Strengthening Multi-Party Collaboration.

The implementation of SRA cannot be solely the responsibility of schools, as its success is greatly influenced by collaboration between various parties. The business sector can play a role through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs by providing support for the provision of child-friendly facilities, teacher training, or funding school activities. This collaboration must be based on a shared understanding of goals and benefits.

3. Recommendations for Innovative Collaboration-Based Solutions

To ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the Child-Friendly Schools (SRA) policy implementation in Labuhanbatu Regency, innovative, collaborative solutions that are comprehensive and integrated are needed. These solutions should not only address the technical aspects of implementation but also encompass regulatory strengthening, funding support, and increased stakeholder engagement. Some recommended solutions to consider include the following:

a Ongoing Socialization and Training.

Lack of understanding of the SRA is a major obstacle to its implementation. Therefore, local governments, through the Education Office and the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office (DP3A), need to increase the capacity of policy stakeholders by intensively and continuously strengthening outreach and training activities. These activities should include school principals, educators, education personnel, parents, students, school committees, community leaders, local organizations, and the business world. Material should be delivered interactively, using easy-to-understand language, and showcasing examples of good practices from schools that have successfully implemented the SRA. Utilizing mass media, social media, and community activities will broaden the reach of information. Literacy programs for parents about children's rights and their role in supporting the SRA also need to be strengthened, for example through regular seminars or workshops.

b Integration of SRA into Regional Development Plans (RPJMD/RKPD).

Budget constraints often hinder the provision of child-friendly infrastructure and human resource training. Therefore, local governments need to allocate a dedicated budget for child-friendly infrastructure development within the regional budget (APBD). Therefore, SRA policies need to be integrated into regional development planning documents, such as the RPJMD (Regional Medium-Term Development Plan) and RKPD (Regional Work Plan), to secure political support, funding, and clear program priorities. These funds can be directed toward facility renovations, the provision of child-safe equipment, and capacity-building training for education personnel. Furthermore, transparent and publicly accountable fund management mechanisms need to be implemented. Local governments can also facilitate schools' access to alternative funding sources, such as CSR funds, donor grants, or collaborations with non-governmental organizations.

c Establishment of a Multi-Party Collaboration Forum and Independent Monitoring Team.

To address the lack of coordination between stakeholders, a formal and sustainable collaborative forum needs to be established. This forum will serve as a space for coordination, discussion, evaluation, and strategy formulation for the SRA at the district level. Forum members should include representatives from various sectors, such as education, health, child protection, community organizations, and local leaders. The forum can be used to design joint strategies, share experiences, resolve issues, and monitor the implementation of the SRA. Through regular meetings and participatory decision-making mechanisms, coordination between stakeholders can be more effective. Alumni and community members can also contribute through mentoring, experience sharing, and moral and material support. Although Labuhanbatu Regency already has Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2015, regular evaluations are needed to ensure that the regulation remains relevant and able to address the challenges of SRA implementation. Additional regulations can be developed



to clarify the minimum SRA standards that schools must meet, the reporting mechanism, and the periodic evaluation system. Furthermore, an independent monitoring team involving government, academic, and civil society representatives should be formed to ensure that the SRA implementation is carried out according to established principles. This team can conduct regular audits, provide feedback for improvements, and identify school needs based on field findings.

4. CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) policy in Labuhanbatu Regency has a strong legal basis and policy support, but its implementation at the school level remains suboptimal. Various obstacles have emerged, ranging from a lack of understanding of the principles of CFS among educators, parents, and the community, to limited financial resources and trained personnel, to resistance to changes in school culture. Furthermore, coordination between stakeholders has been ineffective, compounded by the lack of active participation of children in school decision-making.

Research findings indicate that efforts to optimize SRA require a more innovative and collaborative approach. Improving teacher capacity through ongoing training, utilizing technology to expand access to information and streamline communication, and strengthening partnerships between schools, local governments, communities, and the business world are crucial steps that can accelerate implementation. Children's participation must also be strengthened by providing spaces and mechanisms that enable them to play an active role in the educational process.

For the program's sustainability, integrated policy recommendations are needed, ranging from intensive outreach, dedicated budget allocation, strengthened regulations and oversight, to the establishment of collaborative forums between stakeholders. Integrating the SRA into regional development planning is crucial to ensure the program remains a priority and receives adequate support. With these steps, the SRA implementation in Labuhanbatu Regency is expected to be more effective and have a significant impact on creating a safe, inclusive educational environment that protects children's rights.

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