

Enhancing Children's Competence in Religious Roles: The Development of Imams, Khatibs, and Preachers in Jorong Baduih, Tanah Datar

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Abstract. This article explores the implementation of a children's leadership development program in Jorong Baduih, Tanah Datar, aimed at fostering young religious leaders to serve as imams, khatibs, and preachers. The program addresses the declining involvement of youth in religious activities due to migration and the absence of structured mentorship, which threatens the continuity of local Islamic traditions. Using a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, the initiative involved community leaders, religious figures, and families in identifying needs, designing training modules, and evaluating progress. The program featured hands-on training sessions, simulations, and mentorship by local religious leaders to enhance the participants' competence and confidence. The results demonstrated significant improvements in the children's ability to lead prayers, deliver sermons, and engage in public speaking, fostering a sense of responsibility and pride. Despite challenges such as limited training duration and facilities, adaptive measures ensured the program's success and highlighted the importance of community collaboration. The initiative not only revitalized religious engagement among youth but also strengthened community bonds and intergenerational cooperation. The program's sustainability is expected to be achieved through continuous community involvement and the institutionalization of regular training. This model offers a replicable framework for other communities seeking to preserve religious leadership and nurture future generations, reinforcing the value of grassroots initiatives in sustaining local religious and social development.

Keywords: Community-Based Religious Education; Participatory Action Research (PAR); Islamic Cadre Training

1. Introduction

Jorong Baduih, a region in Nagari Simawang, Tanah Datar Regency, West Sumatra Province, faces significant challenges in sustaining religious and social activities. Despite its potential human resources, particularly among children and adolescents, the lack of capable individuals to fulfill religious roles such as imams, khatibs, and preachers is a major obstacle. This issue is exacerbated by the fact that many young people who previously contributed actively have migrated, while those who remain lack consistent guidance. As a result, many religious activities such as congregational prayers, Friday sermons, and religious lectures depend heavily on a handful of elderly adults (Salim, 2021).

Furthermore, children, who should be actively involved in religious development, often play a passive role. The lack of local mentors is a primary cause of this stagnation. Some children have shown interest and potential to become imams, khatibs, or preachers, but without structured guidance, these potentials cannot develop optimally. This situation leads to a lack of regeneration of local religious leaders, threatening the continuity of Islamic traditions and values in Jorong Baduih.

This issue is becoming increasingly urgent as there is a need to preserve religious values within a dynamic community. With the changing times, the younger generation is increasingly exposed to external cultural influences that may not support the strengthening of Islamic identity (Sulaiman et al., 2022). Therefore, cadre-based interventions are necessary to ensure the continuity of religious leadership in Jorong Baduih.

This initiative is critical given that the roles of imams, khatibs, and preachers are not only about performing worship but also about serving as moral and social leaders in the community. Studies have shown that religious education at an early age can shape stronger and more resilient character (Islah, 2022). By fostering children as future religious leaders, not only can Islamic traditions be preserved, but a more harmonious and moral society can also be created (Maidugu & Isah, 2024).

The local context of Jorong Baduih adds to the urgency of this need. With limited human resources in the religious sector, without sustainable cadre development, there is a risk of losing key roles in worship and religious outreach activities. Additionally, hands-on learning methods can strengthen children's understanding of religious duties while boosting their confidence in fulfilling these roles.

Various religious cadre development programs have been implemented in different areas, particularly through formal educational institutions such as madrasas or Islamic boarding schools, as carried out by Hidayat et al. (2024), Big et al. (2021), Latifah et al. (2015), Sari & Hawariah (2021), Sugestian et al. (2017), Din et al. (2023), Anwari (2020), Nisa (2009), Thena et al. (2024), Fadhillah et al. (2021), and Suryana & Maryamah, (2013). However, community-based approaches that directly engage children at the local level remain rare. Similar programs focusing on empowering children as imams, khatibs, or preachers are often temporary or limited to short-term training.

In the context of Jorong Baduih, no comprehensive efforts have been made to actively involve the community in this cadre development. Previous studies indicate that the success of cadre programs depends on direct community involvement, support from religious leaders, and learning methods tailored to local needs. This initiative introduces innovation through a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, which involves not only children but also community leaders in planning and implementing activities (Cornish et al., 2023).

This community service program aims to train children in Jorong Baduih to develop competence as imams, khatibs, and preachers. Furthermore, the program seeks to increase children's participation in local religious activities, ensuring effective regeneration of religious leaders. It also aims to create a community-based religious education model that can be applied in other areas facing similar challenges. Additionally, this initiative strengthens community engagement in supporting youth development through cross-sector collaboration involving religious leaders, educators, and families.

The uniqueness of this program lies in its community-based approach, which employs the PAR method to specifically identify local needs. This approach involves children, families, and community leaders in all stages of the program, from planning to evaluation. Moreover, the program focuses not only on theoretical learning but also on hands-on practice, such as simulations of leading prayers, sermon training, and delivering lectures. This aims to enhance both competence and confidence in children assuming religious roles.

The program also adopts an interdisciplinary approach, involving students from diverse backgrounds such as psychology, education, and communication. Thus, every aspect of cadre development, from mastering subject matter to developing communication skills, can be addressed holistically.

The long-term impact of this program is the sustainable regeneration of religious leaders in Jorong Baduih. Children trained as imams, khatibs, and preachers can inspire subsequent generations, creating a continuous cycle of development. The program also has the potential to be adapted in other communities with similar needs, contributing more broadly to community-based religious education.

Program sustainability is expected to be maintained through active community involvement, particularly from religious leaders and families, in supporting continuous cadre activities. Thus, the program not only provides short-term solutions but also establishes a foundation for long-term religious and social development in Jorong Baduih.

2. Methodology

The method used in this community engagement initiative is Participatory Action Research (PAR), aimed at identifying, designing, implementing, and evaluating the program in a participatory manner by involving all relevant stakeholders (Kindon et

al., 2007). The first step is identifying local needs through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) with community leaders, children, and families in Jorong Baduih. This activity aims to understand the challenges faced and determine priority areas for development, such as training for imams, khatibs, and preachers (Afifyanti, 2008).

Following this, the community engagement team designs a training program based on the needs identified. The program includes intensive training sessions for children with a practice-based approach. Children receive materials on the roles of imams, khatibs, and preachers, along with hands-on training through simulations. Each training session is designed to enhance children's theoretical understanding and practical skills, supported by customized modules tailored to local needs. The team also involves university students from various disciplines to provide cross-sector training, including mental resilience and communication development.

The final stage involves program evaluation, conducted collaboratively between the engagement team, participants, and the community. This evaluation measures the achievement of objectives, such as the improvement of children's competence in religious roles and their active participation in community activities. Reflections on program outcomes are used to develop recommendations for program sustainability and potential replication in other communities facing similar challenges.

Moreover, the evaluation process includes gathering feedback from participants and their families to assess the effectiveness of the training and identify areas for improvement. This iterative process ensures that the program remains relevant and adaptive to the evolving needs of the community. By engaging children, families, and community leaders at each stage, the program fosters a sense of ownership and collective responsibility, increasing the likelihood of long-term success.

In addition, continuous mentoring is integrated into the program to provide ongoing support for children who show significant progress and interest. This mentoring component pairs children with experienced local imams and preachers, allowing for continuous learning and practical exposure. By creating a sustainable mentoring network, the program aims to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application.

The collaborative nature of PAR also encourages active participation from the broader community, fostering a supportive environment that nurtures future religious leaders. This holistic approach not only enhances children's competence but also strengthens the social fabric of Jorong Baduih, promoting unity and shared responsibility for religious and social development.

The long-term impact of this program is the creation of sustainable religious leadership regeneration in Jorong Baduih. Children trained as imams, khatibs, and preachers can inspire future generations, creating a continuous cycle of training and development. This program also has the potential to be adapted in other communities with similar needs, contributing to broader community-based religious education.

Program sustainability is expected to be maintained through active community involvement, especially from religious leaders and families, who support continuous cadre training activities. Thus, this program not only provides short-term solutions but also establishes a foundation for long-term religious and social development in Jorong Baduih.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Achievements of the Children's Cadre Program

The children's cadre program conducted in Jorong Baduih successfully engaged a significant number of participants, comprising both boys and girls. The program involved 15 boys who focused on training as imams, khatibs, and preachers, and 20 girls who were trained in public speaking for religious lectures and other community-based religious activities. The participants were selected based on recommendations from community leaders and the personal interest of the children in contributing to religious activities in their community. The relatively high level of participation reflects the community's enthusiasm and recognition of the importance of regenerating religious leaders in their area.

The competencies developed among the children were evident in their ability to understand and practice religious roles. Boys were trained to lead prayers as imams, deliver Friday sermons (*khutbah*), and provide religious lectures. Meanwhile, the girls focused on public speaking skills, such as hosting religious events and delivering lectures to audiences. After several training sessions, participants demonstrated significant improvements, both in mastering content and in building confidence to perform in public. For instance, one male participant, who initially hesitated to lead prayers, successfully led congregational prayers fluently, including reciting long supplications with proper intonation and articulation.

The training activities were designed practically to ensure that children not only understood theoretical concepts but could also apply them directly. One such activity was the simulation of Friday sermons, where each participant was tasked with preparing and delivering a sermon in front of their peers. In these sessions, they received guidance and feedback from trainers, including corrections on intonation, mastery of content, and body language. Additionally, the training included recitation practice to ensure participants could read the Qur'an with proper tajwid, as the role of an imam is closely linked to Qur'anic recitation skills.

For the female participants, public speaking training involved simulations of hosting religious events, such as Quran recitations, Islamic study gatherings, and commemorations of Islamic holidays. One of the more engaging activities was a religious lecture simulation competition, where each participant was given a specific topic to present within five minutes. The results were impressive, with many participants able to deliver lectures fluently, using appropriate language and conveying clear messages, showcasing significant development in their communication abilities.

The success of this program was also attributed to the support from the community, particularly the families of participants and local religious leaders. Parents provided moral support by ensuring their children's attendance at each training session. Local religious figures, such as mosque imams and ustaz, contributed as mentors during some of the training sessions, serving as direct role models for the children regarding religious leadership.

Despite the program's success, several challenges were noted for future improvements. One notable challenge was the limited duration of the training, which lasted only six weeks. Some participants expressed the need for more time to fully grasp the material, especially in areas involving memorization of prayers and tajwid. Another challenge was the limited facilities available, such as inadequate training space when the number of participants increased. However, the children's enthusiasm and strong community support helped overcome most of these obstacles, allowing the program to proceed smoothly.

Moving forward, it is recommended that the program duration be extended to allow for more comprehensive training. Additional training sessions focusing on specific skills, such as advanced Qur'anic recitation or leadership development, could further enhance the program's impact. Moreover, efforts to improve facilities, such as securing larger training spaces or utilizing local mosques for practice sessions, should be prioritized to accommodate more participants effectively.

Another key recommendation is the establishment of follow-up mentorship programs. By pairing participants with local religious leaders for continuous guidance and support, the sustainability of the program can be ensured. These mentorships can provide children with ongoing opportunities to refine their skills, engage in practical experiences, and gradually assume leadership roles within their communities.

The long-term impact of this program is promising. Children trained as imams, khatibs, and preachers are expected to inspire future generations, creating a cycle of continuous development and religious leadership. The program's model can also be adapted and implemented in other communities facing similar challenges, contributing to the broader goal of strengthening religious education and leadership at the grassroots level.

Furthermore, the integration of interdisciplinary approaches involving psychology, education, and communication has added value to the program. University students from various academic backgrounds were involved in delivering workshops, providing diverse perspectives, and equipping participants with holistic skills. This interdisciplinary collaboration ensured that the children's training was not limited to religious knowledge but also included critical soft skills essential for effective leadership and public engagement.

In conclusion, the children's cadre program in Jorong Baduiah has laid a solid foundation for regenerating religious leaders within the community. The combination of practical training, community involvement, and continuous mentorship has proven

effective in fostering confidence and competence among the participants. While challenges remain, the overall success of the program highlights the importance of grassroots initiatives in nurturing future leaders and preserving religious traditions in local communities.

3.2. The Impact of the Child Cadre Program on the Local Community

The child cadre program implemented in Jorong Baduih has had a profound impact on the local community, both socially and religiously. One of the most noticeable changes is the increased participation of the younger generation in religious activities at the mosque and within the surrounding environment. Before the program was initiated, activities such as congregational prayers, Friday sermons, and children's Quranic studies were often attended by only a handful of individuals. However, after the program was launched, the number of children participating in these activities increased significantly. Children who were previously hesitant to take part have now enthusiastically assumed roles in various religious events.

This surge in involvement highlights the program's success in fostering confidence and skills among the youth, allowing them to engage actively in religious practices. Not only has this contributed to preserving religious traditions, but it has also instilled a sense of responsibility in the younger generation to continue playing active roles in their community.

The level of community participation in supporting the program was also remarkably high. Parents, religious leaders, and local community leaders actively contributed by motivating the children and providing essential facilities for training. A tangible form of support was the provision of training spaces at the local mosque, which was used for simulations and educational activities. In addition, the community offered moral support by attending and showing appreciation during children's sermon simulations or religious speeches. This communal involvement demonstrates that the cadre program not only affects the children but also strengthens the social bonds within the community.

Positive feedback regarding the program has been expressed by community leaders and participants alike. One local religious leader, Mr. Aminuddin, stated that the program greatly aids in preparing the next generation to preserve religious traditions in Jorong Baduih. He emphasized that involving children from an early age is crucial to ensuring the continuity of religious roles in the community. Similar testimonials were given by participants, who reported increased confidence after attending the training. One participant mentioned that the training not only enhanced their religious understanding but also improved their public speaking skills, which are valuable for daily life.

Another significant positive impact is the increase in solidarity and cooperation among community members. The program served as an opportunity for parents, religious figures, and children to gather and work collectively towards a shared goal. In addition to reinforcing spiritual aspects, the program also contributed to enhancing

social solidarity, which is a vital asset for building a stronger and more cohesive community.

The long-term effects of the program are also evident in the shift in community perspectives regarding the importance of nurturing the younger generation. Initially, many parents believed that their children were too young to participate in religious activities. However, following the program, they became more open to encouraging their children's involvement. This change is reflected in the increased independent participation of children in religious activities even after the program concluded. For instance, several male participants began regularly leading prayers at home, while female participants actively led communal prayers within their neighborhoods.

Moreover, the program yielded indirect benefits by raising awareness of the importance of religious education. Many parents became more motivated to invest in their children's religious education through both formal and informal means. In response, some community members initiated Quran study groups in their homes to continue the educational momentum established during the program.

By engaging all sectors of the community, the cadre program provided not only short-term solutions but also laid the foundation for the sustainable development of religious education in Jorong Baduih. As a result, the program has become a model that inspires other communities to adopt similar approaches to empower their youth.

The ripple effects of the program extend beyond the immediate community. The success story of Jorong Baduih has encouraged neighboring communities to explore the possibility of implementing similar initiatives. This replication of the program in other areas highlights the scalability and adaptability of the approach, further amplifying the positive impact on a larger scale.

Additionally, the program's success has sparked discussions about integrating similar initiatives into formal educational curricula. Collaborations between local schools and religious institutions are being explored to provide children with consistent opportunities to develop their religious knowledge and leadership skills. This integration could ensure that the benefits of the program are sustained and expanded, reaching a broader segment of the youth population.

The cadre program has also fostered a sense of pride and identity among the youth. By actively participating in religious activities, children develop a stronger connection to their cultural and spiritual heritage. This sense of belonging not only enhances their personal growth but also contributes to the overall well-being of the community.

Furthermore, the program has helped address some of the challenges faced by the community, such as the lack of young religious leaders and the diminishing interest in religious activities among the youth. By providing structured training and mentorship, the program has effectively bridged the generational gap and ensured the continuity of religious traditions.

In conclusion, the child cadre program in Jorong Baduih stands as a testament to the transformative power of community-driven initiatives. Through collaboration, dedication, and shared goals, the program has revitalized religious participation, strengthened social bonds, and nurtured the next generation of community leaders. Its success underscores the importance of investing in youth development as a means of ensuring the long-term prosperity and cohesion of communities.

3.3. Analysis of Success and Challenges of the Program

3.3.1. Exploring Success Factors: Synergy Between Participants and Practical Methods

The success of the children's leadership program in Jorong Baduih can be attributed to several key factors that worked synergistically throughout the implementation process. One of the most significant contributors was the active involvement of participants in every phase of the program. The children demonstrated a high level of enthusiasm to learn and take on roles as imams, khatibs, and preachers. Their motivation stemmed not only from personal interest but also from the friendly and participatory approach adopted by the trainers. This nurturing environment allowed participants to feel more engaged, fostering a sense of belonging and responsibility towards the community's religious life.

A critical aspect of the program's success was the practical, hands-on learning approach. Practical simulations, such as leading congregational prayers or delivering Friday sermons, enabled participants to not only grasp theoretical knowledge but also gain invaluable real-life experience in performing religious duties. This immersive method bridged the gap between theory and practice, empowering the children to develop confidence and competence. By the end of the program, many participants reported feeling more capable and less intimidated by the thought of performing these religious roles in front of their peers and the community.

Another essential component of the program's success was the involvement of local religious leaders, who acted as mentors throughout the training process. Their presence provided direct role models for the children, reinforcing moral and ethical values while offering practical insights into the nuances of religious leadership. These mentors' guidance helped instill discipline, respect, and a deeper understanding of the responsibilities involved in leading religious activities.

Parental and community support also played a crucial role in driving the program forward. Parents actively encouraged their children to participate and regularly attended the sessions to observe and support their progress. The local community, including mosque officials, contributed by offering facilities for training sessions, such as mosque halls for simulations and study areas. This collective effort created a nurturing ecosystem that amplified the program's impact, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose within the community.

3.3.2. Addressing Challenges: Limited Time and Facilities

Despite the program's remarkable success, several challenges emerged during its implementation. One of the primary obstacles was the limited duration of the program.

Spanning only six weeks, the timeframe was deemed insufficient to fully develop the children's potential. Certain participants expressed the need for more time to master complex material, particularly related to Quranic recitation (tajweed) and the memorization of essential prayers and supplications.

Additionally, facility constraints posed logistical challenges. The training space was frequently shared with other mosque activities, limiting the availability of dedicated training sessions. This occasionally disrupted the learning process, forcing the program coordinators to adjust schedules and compress session times. Furthermore, the scarcity of teaching aids, such as whiteboards and audio equipment for sermon practice, created additional hurdles. Although these limitations did not significantly hinder the program's overall success, they underscored areas for improvement in future iterations.

3.3.3. Solutions and Strategies to Overcome Challenges

To mitigate these challenges, several adaptive solutions were implemented during the program. To address the limited timeframe, the organizing team extended the duration of each training session. For instance, practical simulations initially planned for one hour were extended to two hours, allowing participants more opportunities to practice and refine their skills. The team also provided supplementary learning materials for self-study outside formal training hours. These materials covered topics such as supplications, tajweed, and public speaking techniques, enabling participants to continue learning at their own pace.

In response to facility constraints, the program coordinators collaborated with mosque administrators to streamline the use of available spaces. A rotational schedule was devised, ensuring that the program had priority access to mosque facilities during off-peak hours. To compensate for the lack of teaching aids, trainers brought additional materials, such as portable whiteboards and projectors, from external sources. Simple technological solutions, such as recording sermon practice sessions using smartphones, were also introduced. These recordings allowed participants to review their performance, identify areas for improvement, and build confidence.

Moreover, the program leveraged community involvement to bolster resources. Parents and community members donated learning materials and volunteered their time to assist with logistical aspects. This collective approach not only addressed immediate resource limitations but also fostered a stronger sense of ownership and commitment among community members.

3.3.4. Long-Term Impact and Sustainability

The long-term impact of the children's leadership program in Jorong Baduikh extends beyond the immediate success observed during the training period. By equipping children with essential religious leadership skills, the program has sown the seeds for sustainable community development. The participants, now more confident and capable, have begun to assume active roles in local religious activities, contributing to the preservation and continuation of cultural and spiritual traditions.

An observable shift in community attitudes towards youth involvement in religious affairs has also emerged (Nisa, 2009). Initially, some parents were hesitant, believing their children were too young to undertake significant religious responsibilities. However, as the program progressed, parents witnessed firsthand the positive transformation in their children, leading to a broader acceptance of youth participation in religious life. This change in perception has encouraged greater parental involvement in supporting their children's spiritual education.

The program's influence has also inspired other communities to consider implementing similar initiatives. Leaders from neighboring areas have expressed interest in replicating the program's model, recognizing its potential to foster religious leadership and strengthen community bonds. This ripple effect underscores the program's scalability and adaptability to different cultural and social contexts.

3.4. Recommendations for the Sustainability of the Program

Ensuring the sustainability of the children's leadership development program in Jorong Baduih requires a well-structured and strategic approach that engages various stakeholders continuously. The long-term success of this initiative hinges on collaboration, community involvement, and the establishment of mechanisms that allow the program to thrive independently. By fostering local ownership and creating a system of ongoing mentorship and evaluation, the program can continue to benefit the community for years to come.

3.4.1. Forming a Local Support Team

A critical first step in sustaining the program is the formation of a local support team comprising community leaders, religious figures, and representatives of parents. This team can act as a coordinating body to oversee the continuation of activities, ensuring the program's longevity even after the external volunteer team concludes their initial mission. The involvement of respected figures in the community helps reinforce the program's importance and legitimacy, making it easier to garner widespread support.

The local support team can facilitate communication between different groups, organize regular meetings, and ensure the smooth operation of training sessions. Additionally, the team can identify emerging leaders among the youth and encourage them to take on mentorship roles for newer participants, thereby creating a cycle of continuous development and knowledge transfer.

3.4.2. Institutionalizing Regular Training Sessions

To maintain the momentum generated by the initial phase of the program, training sessions should be institutionalized as regular events. This can be achieved by establishing religious study groups or madrasah programs at the local mosque or community learning center. Holding sessions on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, with guidance from local religious leaders, ensures that the skills acquired during the initial program continue to be refined and developed.

By scheduling consistent sessions, children who have participated in the program can enhance their abilities further, while new participants can gradually integrate into the program. Structured lesson plans that cover essential topics such as tajwid (correct Quranic recitation), public speaking, and leadership skills can serve as the foundation for these ongoing sessions. A standardized curriculum allows for the seamless transfer of knowledge, ensuring that all participants progress uniformly.

3.4.3. Parental Involvement and Support

The role of parents in sustaining the program cannot be overstated. Encouraging parental involvement through regular meetings between parents and program facilitators creates a support network that extends beyond the formal training sessions. By keeping parents informed about their children's progress and providing them with resources to assist in their development, the program fosters a sense of shared responsibility.

Parents can contribute by ensuring their children attend all training sessions and encouraging them to apply their skills at home, such as leading prayers or delivering small religious talks within the family. Additionally, parents can provide basic resources such as religious books, audio recordings, or other materials that reinforce the training content.

Regular parent-facilitator meetings can also serve as feedback channels, allowing for adjustments and improvements to the program based on the observations and experiences of both parents and children. This iterative process of feedback and adaptation ensures the program remains responsive to the community's evolving needs.

3.4.4. Financial Sustainability through Local Fundraising

Financial constraints often pose significant challenges to the sustainability of community programs. To mitigate this, the Jorong Baduih community can explore various local fundraising initiatives. Organizing charity events, conducting routine infak (voluntary donations), or leveraging community festivals can generate funds to cover the program's operational costs. These funds can be used to purchase necessary training materials, upgrade facilities, and provide stipends for trainers and mentors.

Another avenue for financial support is forming partnerships with religious organizations or philanthropic institutions that share a similar vision. By presenting the program as a model for youth religious development, the community may secure long-term sponsorships or grants. Highlighting the program's impact through testimonials, progress reports, and documented success stories can strengthen the case for external funding.

3.4.5. Leveraging Technology for Training and Outreach

Integrating technology into the program can significantly enhance its appeal and effectiveness. Simple tools such as smartphones, video recording devices, and social media platforms can be employed to record and disseminate training sessions. By documenting children's progress and sharing it with the community, the program gains visibility and inspires other communities to replicate similar initiatives.

Participants can also use technology to self-evaluate by recording their sermons or public speaking exercises and reviewing them with mentors. This approach not only reinforces learning but also builds confidence in public speaking and leadership. Additionally, online platforms can facilitate peer-to-peer learning, allowing participants to exchange ideas and experiences beyond formal training hours.

Virtual resources, such as instructional videos on Quranic recitation, khutbah delivery, and Islamic ethics, can supplement in-person sessions. These resources provide children with the flexibility to learn at their own pace, further embedding the knowledge acquired during formal sessions.

3.4.6. Community Engagement and Social Bonding

Sustaining the program also requires fostering a strong sense of community and shared purpose. Events such as community prayers, youth-led religious talks, and religious celebrations can provide platforms for children to practice their skills while reinforcing social cohesion. By actively involving children in these community activities, the program nurtures a sense of responsibility and pride in contributing to the local religious and social fabric.

Moreover, initiatives that involve collaborative efforts between children and adults, such as organizing religious festivals or social outreach programs, can strengthen intergenerational bonds. This collaboration creates an environment where children feel valued and supported, increasing their motivation to remain engaged in the program.

3.4.6. Regular Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

To ensure the program's long-term relevance and effectiveness, establishing a mechanism for regular evaluation is essential. The local support team can develop simple yet effective evaluation tools, such as participant surveys, skill assessments, and feedback sessions. By systematically collecting and analyzing this data, the program can identify areas of improvement and adapt accordingly.

Evaluations should focus on both the participants' personal development and the program's overall impact on the community. Metrics such as the number of active participants, the frequency of youth-led religious events, and parental satisfaction can provide valuable insights into the program's success. Additionally, celebrating milestones and recognizing children's achievements through awards or public acknowledgments can motivate continued participation.

3.4.7. Long-Term Vision and Expansion

While the immediate focus is on sustaining the program within Jorong Baduih, the long-term vision should include expanding the initiative to neighboring communities. By sharing best practices and collaborating with other villages, Jorong Baduih can position itself as a regional hub for youth religious leadership development. This expansion not only amplifies the program's impact but also fosters a broader network of young religious leaders committed to preserving and advancing their faith.

By implementing these strategies, the children's leadership development program in Jorong Baduih has the potential to become a sustainable and replicable model that empowers the next generation of religious leaders. The collaboration between local stakeholders, continuous learning, and the integration of modern tools ensures that the program not only addresses immediate needs but also lays the groundwork for lasting positive change.

4. Conclusion

The children's leadership development program in Jorong Baduih has demonstrated remarkable success in fostering the next generation of religious leaders through a community-based and participatory approach. By addressing the critical need for young imams, khatibs, and preachers, the initiative has revitalized religious engagement among children and reinforced the importance of sustaining Islamic traditions within the community. The combination of hands-on training, mentorship by local religious leaders, and active parental involvement has created an environment conducive to long-term spiritual growth and leadership. This holistic strategy not only benefits the participants but also strengthens community ties, fostering a collective sense of responsibility for the preservation of religious values.

The program's achievements, however, were not without challenges. Limited training durations and inadequate facilities highlighted the need for more sustained and well-equipped initiatives. Nevertheless, adaptive measures, including extended training sessions, self-study resources, and community-driven solutions, mitigated these challenges effectively. The program's success underscores the importance of local resource mobilization, community collaboration, and the involvement of multiple stakeholders in ensuring the continuity of religious education. Furthermore, the positive shift in parental attitudes towards youth participation in religious activities indicates the broader societal impact and transformative potential of such grassroots initiatives.

Moving forward, the sustainability and scalability of this program hold significant promise. By institutionalizing regular training, forming local support teams, and leveraging technology, the community can ensure that the momentum generated continues to inspire future generations. Additionally, the program's model can serve as a blueprint for other communities facing similar challenges, thereby amplifying its reach and impact. Ultimately, the Jorong Baduih experience highlights the power of collective action and the enduring value of nurturing young leaders to safeguard and promote religious and social harmony in local communities.

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