

Improving Bilingual Literacy through Local Story Writing Workshop in Weekarou High School of West Sumba

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Received	Accepted	Publish
10-March-2026	13-March-2026	15-March-2026

Abstract- Education is one of the most crucial factors in building a nation. Literacy can be said as one of the main pillars to support the nation's education. As a country having a predicate of a low literacy level, Indonesia needs to improve its level by pushing students' reading interest and competency. Unfortunately, the lack of reading materials, especially literary works like short stories, worsened the condition of Indonesian students' literacy. Indonesia as a heterogeneous country with hundreds or even thousands should be able to provide the demands of reading materials using its own rich local cultures and traditions. This Community Service Program is a joint program between Faculty of Language and Art of Satya Wacana Christian University and Weekarou Christian Private High School of West Sumba to write local stories in bilingual, local language and Indonesia language. By involving students and teachers at the school in storybook writing training, students and teachers will not only improve their writing skills, but also deepen their understanding of local culture and local or regional languages. Students can document folk tales that are still oral stories into written form in their local or regional languages, while teachers play an active role in assisting the compilation of folk tales and the translation process, from regional languages to Indonesian.

Keywords: bilingual; literacy; local culture; short-stories; writing

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the factors that determines the progress of a nation can be seen from the level of education of its citizens. Therefore, it is obvious that education is one of the main pillars in building a nation. The development of education that occurs in a country has its own challenges. In Indonesia, a significant challenge in the field of education is related to the low level of literacy of Indonesian students, especially students who receive their education in schools located in remote areas in Indonesia, such as West Sumba. According to a survey conducted by PISA [1] in 2022, Indonesia was ranked 68th out of 81 countries involved with a score of 371 for the lowest reading literacy compared to the scores for the other two types of literacy, namely science (398) and mathematics (379). This shows that in terms of reading literacy, Indonesian students have low reading abilities in various contexts.

The Indonesian government through the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum has started a national literacy movement called "Gerakan Literasi Sekolah"- School Literacy Initiative (GLS). In addition to teachers who play an active role in efforts to develop reading literacy in schools, schools also need to take an initiative in their efforts to support literacy activities in schools. Various initiatives have been carried out by several schools in Indonesia in their efforts to support this School Literacy Initiative, where one of the efforts made is through storybook writing training (Aryani & Heru, 2023). For example, [2] e-book-based illustrated children's storybook writing training in East Aceh which succeeded in producing storybooks with local content and improving teachers' writing skills. Likewise, [3] in Sabu Raijua, similar training has also been carried out in order to improve children's literacy through the creation of illustrated storybooks. Beside that, a Community Service Program about Digital Literacy Development: Creating Digital Comic Folktales had also been done in

Majene Regency. This shows the needs of developing reading materials for Indonesia learners.

Weekarou Christian Private High School is one of the educational institutions in the capital of West Sumba Regency, namely in Waikabubak, which has great potential to be a pioneer in developing bilingual literacy. By involving students and teachers at the school in storybook writing training, students and teachers will not only improve their writing skills, but also deepen their understanding of local culture and regional languages. Students can document folk tales that are still oral stories into written form in their local or regional languages, while teachers play an active role in assisting the compilation of folk tales and the translation process, from regional languages to Indonesian. The benefits of this activity are not only documenting local stories from oral to written, but also introducing these regional stories to the wider community who will find it easier to understand stories that have been translated into the national language, that is Indonesia language. In addition to providing benefits to partners, this Community Service activity also provides benefits to Satya Wacana Christian University, especially the Faculty of Languages and Arts, because it provides a forum for students of the English Language Education Study Program and the English Literature Study Program to apply their knowledge through translating folk tales produced by students and teachers of Weekarou Christian Private High School into English. Thus, through this activity, a folk tale book will be produced in three languages, those are local or regional, Indonesian, and English languages. This certainly opens up opportunities for regional works to be better known, both nationally and internationally.

2. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

The implementations of the methods are adjusted due to 2 core problems related to the literary issues in Weekarou Christian Private High School, namely 1) the lack of availability of reading materials containing local culture, both in regional, Indonesian, or English languages; and 2) the lack of involvement of students and teachers in the production of reading materials in the form of stories which are rich in local cultural elements.

From here, the systematic implementation of the solution is offered by the Community Service Program as follows: The implementing team consisting of the Chairperson and one member of the Community Service Program (PkM) will arrive in Waikabubak City one day before the offline training session and coordinate with Weekarou Christian Private High School. In this coordination, the topics of discussion will include the location of the activity, participants who will take part in the activity, the schedule, and technical matters related to the implementation of the 2-day offline training session.

After the coordination, the plan is designed. This training will be held consisting of 6 offline training sessions, each lasting 2 hours, in Waikabubak City, West Sumba, with a target of approximately 50 students and 10 teachers of Weekarou Christian Private High School. This training will not only equip participants with practical knowledge that can be directly applied in classrooms where teachers teach, but also serve as a place to directly practice writing folklore books, especially in improving reading literacy. The funding of the whole program will be a joint funding supported by Satya Wacana Christian University and Weekarou Christian Private High School.

The systematic evaluation of program implementation and program sustainability in the field after the activity is completed is as follows. A questionnaire distributed to participants at the end of the training session. This questionnaire aims to determine the achievement of training objectives. The questionnaire consists of question items about the topic and subtopic of the training, the speakers, the technical implementation of the training, and suggestions/advice for the next training program. Exploration of further training to other schools in Waikabubak, West Sumba. The further training referred to here is a more specific training program to answer the needs of each school regarding the development of a culture of reading and writing literacy, especially in English.

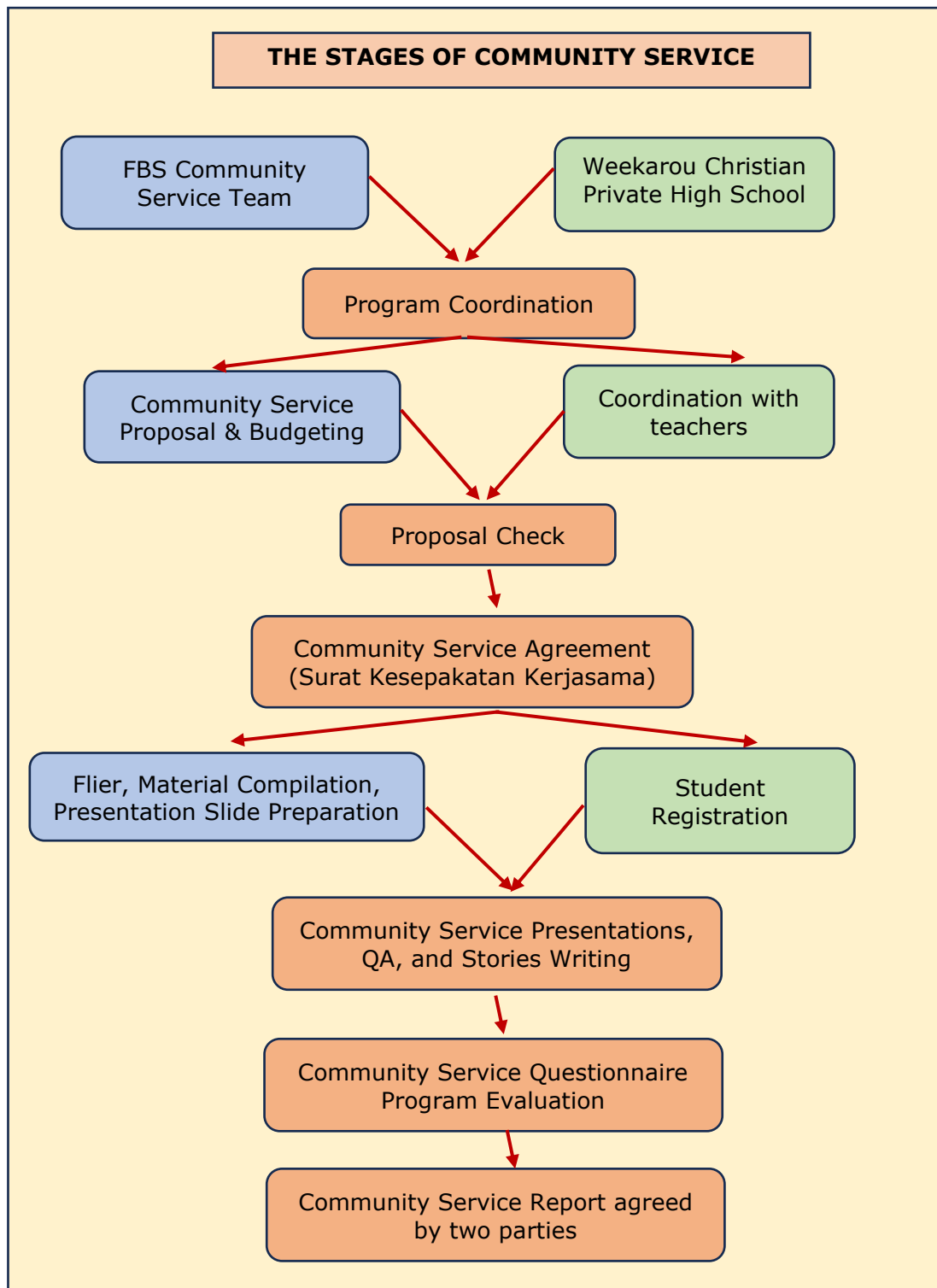


Figure 1: Community Service Stages

The roles and duties of the members of the lecturer team are as follows. The head of the Community Service Program (PkM) is responsible for communicating with Weekarou Christian Private High School, preparing proposals, implementing Community Service Program, speakers/facilitators for sessions 1, 2, and 3, and preparing and writing Community Service Program Activity Reports, and the first author in the Community Service Program paper to be published in the journal. The first implementing member of the Community Service Program program is responsible for compiling proposals, implementing Community Service Program, speakers/facilitators for sessions 4, 5, and 6, program evaluation, and

compiling LPJ and writing Community Service Program Activity Reports, and writing members of the Community Service Program paper that will be published in the journal. In addition to that, the role and task of students involved in this activity is to translate regional stories that have been written by teachers in Indonesian into English. The potential for credit recognition for students according to the assignment details is as follows. Each student involved in this program will Translate Indonesian folk tales into English; this role and task can be equivalent to recognition of one (1) credit unit. In addition to the roles/tasks mentioned in point (a), together with the lecturer, register a story book consisting of 3 (three) languages to obtain legal patent; this role and task can be equivalent to recognition of two (2) credit units.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Lack of availability of reading materials containing local culture, both in local, Indonesian, or English languages

Based on the results of initial observations and discussions with students at Weekarou Christian Private High School and also with the school, several main problems were found that were the background to the need to implement Community Service activities in the form of story book writing training attended by students and teachers of Weekarou Christian Private High School:

- a. Low availability of relevant and bilingual reading materials
Schools in remote areas such as West Sumba still face limited access to varied reading materials, especially those that are local and use more than one language. The story books available are generally only in Indonesian, while the need for reading materials in regional languages and English is very high to support cultural preservation and learning in the global era.
- b. Lack of student involvement in producing literacy works
Students have tended to be passive consumers of reading books, where they are not involved in creative processes such as writing stories. This has an impact on the weak critical thinking, creative, and narrative writing skills of students. One thing that needs to be realized is that story writing training can provide a space for expression while also training the language skills of school students.
- c. Lack of strengthening literacy based on local context and regional culture
Folk stories and local cultural values of Sumba have not been widely raised in teaching materials or student reading. This condition has reduced students' knowledge and pride in their own cultural heritage. Bilingual literacy that raises local stories can be a strategic means to strengthen identity and a sense of belonging to regional culture.
- d. Lack of bilingual story books as a means of inclusive learning
Learning Indonesian and regional languages tends to take place separately. In addition, the facts in the field show that junior high and high school students in Waikabubak are not even fluent in speaking and reading using Indonesian. In addition, there are not many story books available that integrate these two languages in one learning medium. In fact, bilingual story books can help students understand the relationship between languages, expand vocabulary, and improve cross-language literacy.
- e. Limited literacy training for educators and students
Teachers and students who carry out the teaching and learning process in schools in remote areas often do not have the opportunity to take part in creative project-based literacy training such as writing story books. Their lack of participation and the absence of training have an impact on the lack of innovation in learning and low student motivation in writing and ultimately in reading as well.

The above problems are priority problems that need to be addressed collaboratively, namely by the school by collaborating with partners from other educational institutions such as the English Language Education Study Program and the English Literature Study Program, Satya Wacana Christian University, Salatiga. This trilingual storybook writing training is

expected to not only be a practical solution to the low implementation of literacy activities in schools, but also become a strategic approach to empower students of Weekarou Christian Private High School in creating written works that represent local identity and support more meaningful language learning in schools.

3.2. Involvement of Students and Teachers in the Production of Reading Materials

To answer the problem related to the lack of involvement of students and teachers in the production of reading materials in the form of stories which are rich in local cultural elements, this Community Service activity is designed to provide solutions based on training and production of written works, with a participatory and contextual approach. The solutions offered include fulfilling literacy aspects, preserving local culture, and strengthening the capacity of students and teachers in schools which are implemented in the form of organizing Bilingual Story Book Writing Training (Indonesian and regional languages). The intensive training was conducted as a two-day writing workshop on the 16th and 17th of December 2025. There were a total of 6 offline and online sessions delivered, each lasting 2 hours, at Weekarou Christian Private High School, Waikabubak, West Sumba with a target of 35 students and 8 teachers of Weekarou Christian Private High School. This training equipped participants with practical knowledge and basic skills in writing narrative stories that can be directly carried out in these sessions. The aspects that are provided include aspects of creating story ideas, developing characters, and writing narratives in two languages (regional languages and Indonesian).

First session, Introduction, consisted of examples of folk tales and analysis of their parts. In this session, students were given one folk tale to read together. After that, it was continued with an analysis of the story construction namely how the story is told. Students were invited to analyze the story by observing the plot, characters and characterization, conflict, symbols, and moral messages. The second session, Finding ideas for writing folk tales and determining the characters and characterization. Accompanied by a teacher, students who were grouped into groups of five students, began discussing to find ideas for folk tales that they would write. After agreeing on the story they would write, the students accompanied by the accompanying teacher began to determine the characters and characterization for the story. The third session, Determining the conflict and writing the beginning of the story. In this session each group began to compose and write the story, starting with writing the setting, introducing the characters and the initial conflict. Each accompanying teacher continued to accompany the group which they had accompanied from the beginning. This session was intended to train the development of students' story creativity. The accompanying teachers became facilitators for writing stories. In the fourth session, Writing the next part of the story up to the peak of the conflict (climax), students continued writing their chosen folktales in local languages mentored by the accompanying teachers. The fifth session, Writing the resolution and ending of the story. In this session, students in their groups completed the ending of the story and completed the entire series of stories. They could also write a moral value that readers can learn from the story. In the last session or sixth session, Reviewing the entire contents of the story. In this session, accompanied by the accompanying teacher, each group reviewed the local story that they had written by paying attention to the coherence of the story, so that a richer and more complete folk/local story is produced.

The role of the accompanying teacher is very important in this process, so that the unity and harmony of the contents of the story are more perfect. Thus, at the end of this training, 8 folktales in local languages were produced which were the result of cooperation between students and teachers. Next, the teachers translated the folk tales that had been written by the students in regional languages into Indonesian. The lecturer and the student attended the training offline as facilitators of the training assisted this process. After the completion of the entire translation process, the Team reviewed the final results, and in the end 8 (eight) regional stories were re-written by the teachers into the Indonesian version. Next, the Team (students accompanied by lecturers) will translate the Indonesian regional stories into English. In the end, the output of this activity is a regional story book presented in 3 (three) languages, namely regional languages, Indonesian, and English.

The Satya Wacana Christian University Community Service Team summarized the presentations from the six sessions above in the form of teaching modules to be used by teachers participating in the workshop in implementing the activity of writing folklore books as an implementation of the School Literacy Movement in their classrooms. The team will also disseminate the results of this activity in international conference forums so that the good practices we have carried out can be known and, hopefully, adapted by more people both from within and outside Indonesia.

3.3. The Short Stories Produced

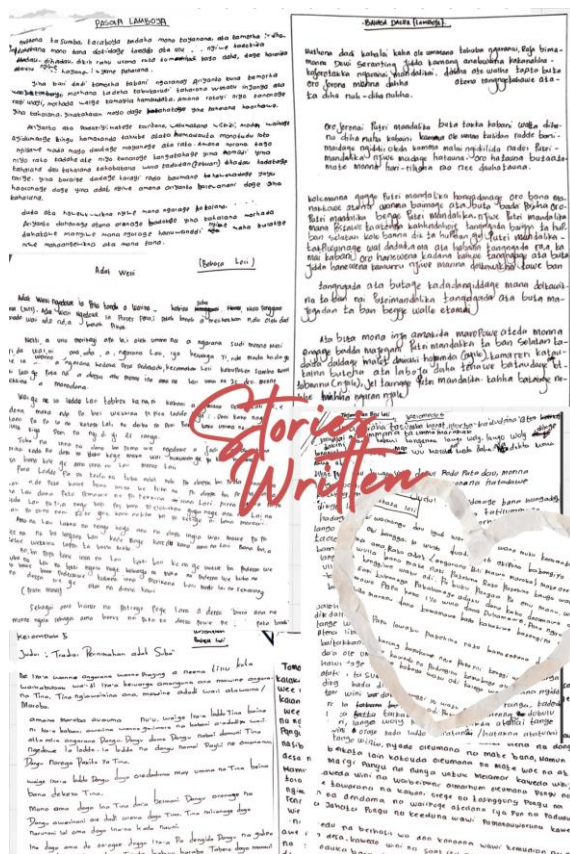


Figure 2. Stories Written in Local Language

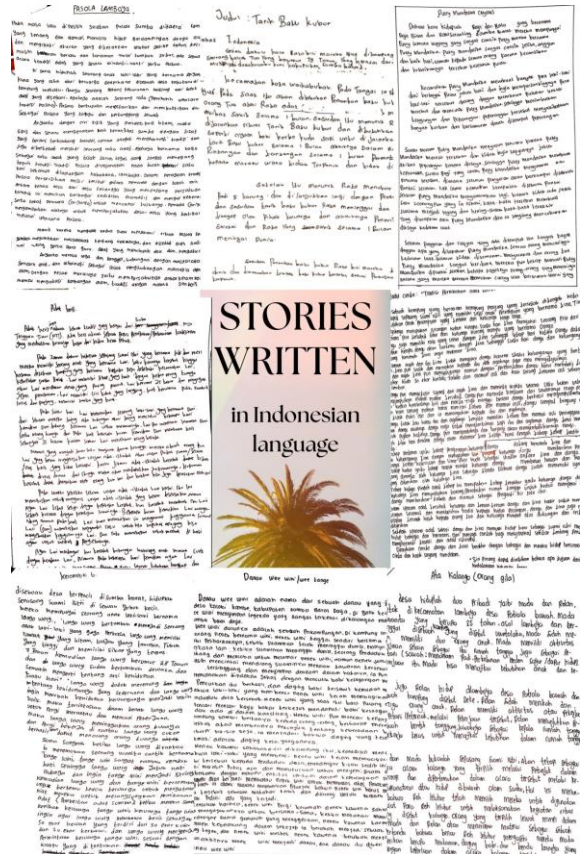


Figure 3. Stories Written in Indonesian Language

Figure 2 showed Sumbanese short stories produced by students of Weekarou Christian Private High School, who had joined these programs and been supervised by mentors from FBS, UKSW. The short stories were written in their local Sumbanese language. In figure 3, the students' short stories were rewritten in Indonesian language. This time, students collaborated with teachers from Weekarou Christian Private High School. The process did not only focus on translating from Sumbanese language to Indonesian language, but also to make sure that the plots of the stories remained the same, and the word choices were relevant.

3.4. Documentation of The Community Service Program

The first part of the documentation is the flier (Figure 4). The FBS community service made a flier of the event, informing the theme of the Community Service Program, the members of the teams (3 lecturers as presenters and mentors and 2 students as facilitators), the day and date of the program, and the targeted audience (students of Weekarou Christian Private High School).



Figure 4. Community Service Flier



Figure 5. Opening Ceremony

Figure 5 showed the Opening Ceremony of the Community Service Programs. On the first day, the program was opened by a welcoming speech from Weekarou Christian Private High School, the followed by Introducing Team Members of the FBS Community Service Program. The Opening Ceremony was concluded by the handover of a token of appreciation and gratitude from FBS Community Service Team, represented by Ibu Antonina Anggraini Setiamunadi, M. Pd. to Weekarou Christian Private High School, accepted by the Principle, Ibu Dra. Ester Magi Diala.



Figure 6. Material Delivery Sessions



Figure 7. Note Taking by Audience



Figure 8. Q&A session

After the Opening Ceremony, the programs proceeded as schedule. As it can be seen in Figure 6, the team from FBS Community Service delivered presentations on the definition of short stories, the elements of short stories, and the short stories writing techniques. Beside the slides presentation, the presenters also showed different kinds of local short stories as examples. In figure 7, the participants (students) has note taking of what was explained by the mentors. The session was continued with Q&A session, in which students took part actively

in the discussion of previous materials. The students enthusiastically shared their experienced, asked questions, and had fruitful discussions.



Figure 9. Writing Production Session



Figure 10. Writing Production Session Continued

The last two photos from the above documentary showed the creative production process; the short story writings. In Figure 9, students were grouped in smaller groups (5-7 students), and with the members of the groups, they discussed the theme and outline of the stories. Supervised by FBS mentors and the high school teachers, the students started to write their local short stories in their local Sumbanese language (Figure 10). The mentors would do around to check if students needed help during the writing process, and the teachers from the school assisted students to write the stories in their local language.

4. CONCLUSION

Literacy is crucial to support the nation's education. It means increasing the literacy level can bring advantage for Indonesia as a country related to higher potential of human resources. In order to do so, the interest in literature is important, and one of the ways to increase the level of reading interest is by reading something close to the students; culture. Indonesia with its diverse culture should be able to provide the demands of reading materials using its own rich local cultures and traditions. Through this Community Service Program, the Faculty of Language and Art of Satya Wacana Christian University holds a joint service program with Weekarou Christian Private High School of West Sumba to write local stories in local language, Indonesia, and English languages. The benefits of this activity are not only documenting local stories from oral to written, but also introducing these regional stories to the wider community who will find it easier to understand stories that have been translated into the national language, that is Indonesia language. After the completion of the entire Community Service Program, a compilation of Sumba-Nese stories book is ready in 3 (three) languages, namely regional languages, Indonesian, and English.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Direktorat Riset dan Pengabdian Masyarakat Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana dengan Nomor Kontrak 186/SPK-PkMK/RIK/08/2025

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