



The Role of Volunteers in Improving Children's Psychosocial Wellbeing at Harapan Mulia Orphanage Purwokerto

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Info Article

| **Submitted:** 10 March 2025 | **Revised:** 17 March 2025 | **Accepted:** 23 March 2025

How to cite: Latifah Wulansari, *"The Role of Volunteers in Improving Children's Psychosocial Wellbeing at Harapan Mulia Orphanage Purwokerto"*, *Sinesia : Journal of Community Service*, Vol. 2, No. 1, May, 2025, P. 22-32.

ABSTRACT

The psychosocial well-being of children in orphanages is an important issue that requires attention, especially for those who face various social and emotional difficulties. The purpose of this activity is to find out how volunteers contribute to improving the psychosocial well-being of children at Harapan Mulia Orphanage Purwokerto. A total of 38 volunteers were involved in direct interaction with 15 children aged 4 to 16 years using a community education approach. The activities included emotional support, profession and aspiration class learning, creation class, group discussion, and educational games. The results showed how the volunteers were able to boost the children's self-esteem, reduce their loneliness, and inspire them to reach their full potential. The children were more inspired to achieve their goals and felt more cared for. It can be concluded that volunteers have an important role in providing emotional and social development of children in orphanages and supporting their psychosocial well-being.

Keyword: *psychosocial well-being, children, volunteers, and orphanages.*

Introduction

Psychosocial concepts are changes in a person's life, both psychological and social, caused by social influences that interact with a person's physical and psychological development (Soraya, 2012, in Arvianty et al., 2014). Complete psychosocial development is very important as children at this stage will have a positive personality, as well as traits such as trust in themselves and others, independence, initiative, the ability to bond closely with others, and ego perfection. Children who have inadequate psychosocial development, on the other hand, will exhibit negative traits including low self-esteem, separating themselves from others, feeling worthless, humiliated, self-doubt, and constant guilt (Potter & Perry, 2005, in Yuniartiningsih, 2012). While still in the developmental stage, children lack the maturity and cognitive capacity to handle the stresses of adulthood. Orphans suffering from the disease are often more prone to psychological problems when interacting with others and themselves. This requires strong psychological resilience and effective emotional control. Orphans struggle, like other young people, to build their moral character (Ibda et al., 2021).



Orphanages are social welfare institutions for children that not only provide daily shelter, food and drink for children, but also have an important role as a substitute for the role of the family that has been lost (Qamarina, 2017). Orphanages provide many of the basic needs of children such as food and shelter, but many also experience psychosocial problems such as low self-confidence, difficulties in social interaction and other emotional problems. Orphanages have not been able to fulfill their role as a proper place for children's growth and development. In addition to the psychological support that children receive from their environment, such as a lack of love, affection, attention, security and comfort. In addition, the physical limitations of the orphanage building, such as its poor condition, force the children to live in a small and crowded space (Ibda, 2023). Children in foster care have experienced poor health and well-being experiences, such as abuse and neglect, and are at high risk of physical, mental and developmental health problems (Sardjan & Firman, 2022). The solution that can be implemented from these problems is the role of volunteers in providing emotional and social support to children at Panti Harapan Mulia Purwokerto.

Psychosocial wellbeing is positive interactions and positive social understanding that impact mental and emotional change (Berk, 2007). Psychosocial problems are psychological problems that arise from personal experiences with social situations. These problems may hinder social interactions, make it difficult to build relationships with others, cause excessive worry, or result from a fear of social rejection in the neighborhood (Kohariah, 2019). Yayasan Penelitian dan Pengabdian Masyarakat (YPPM) Sinesia with around 38 volunteers held a *Sehari Mengabdikan* #15 to Harapan Mulia Orphanage. This activity involved around 15 children from Harapan Mulia Orphanage with the age of 4 - 16 years old. The volunteers helped children who had no support or motivation. They act as a companion, mentor, or even as a substitute for parents who may not be available to the children at the orphanage. The children at Harapan Mulia Orphanage are expected to feel the presence of the volunteers as caring and supportive. As a result, their psychosocial well-being will improve.

Although many orphanages rely on volunteers, there has not been much research that explicitly looks at how volunteers influence children's psychosocial well-being, which makes this an interesting topic to explore. By investigating how volunteers can improve the psychosocial well-being of children at Harapan Mulia Orphanage, this activity seeks to close this gap. In addition, it will help orphanage managers and other social organizations understand the value of volunteer participation in child support initiatives.

This activity examines how volunteers can improve the psychosocial well-being of children at Harapan Mulia Orphanage Purwokerto. This activity aims to

provide a clear picture of the contribution of volunteers and the problems that arise during their implementation. For the managers of orphanages and other social organizations, this activity can also provide benefits.

Research Methods

This activity of Sehari Mengabdi #15 Purwokerto Chapter can examine the role of volunteers in improving the psychosocial well-being of children at Harapan Mulia Orphanage Purwokerto. This is done by using community education methods. Volunteers help children in this situation by providing emotional and social support through various activities intended to improve their well-being. In this approach, children and volunteers are in direct contact with each other; the volunteers act as teachers as well as friends and supporters.

The activities of Sehari Mengabdi #15 Purwokerto Chapter are generally carried out in several stages including :

1. Preparation

At this stage, an activity plan is created that includes the background, objectives, and implementation strategy. At this stage, a list of things that volunteers need to do is made. This includes the types of things they need to do, such as the creation of chants, profession and aspiration classes, educational games, and group discussions. The time and resources needed to support the smooth running of the activities will also be determined.

2. Team formation and profession division

At this stage, coordination is done to determine how each volunteer will be responsible during the activity. Each volunteer will be responsible for accompanying one or two children to make the interaction more personal and intimate. This is expected to increase the level of communication and knowledge transfer between children and volunteers.

3. Implementation

This stage involves carrying out tasks according to the prepared plan. Volunteers attend a variety of planned activities, including explaining about different professions, educational games, and discussions about children's experiences. Volunteers work together to create a safe and supportive atmosphere during implementation so that children feel comfortable sharing and interacting with others.

4. Evaluation

After the activity was completed, the evaluation stage was carried out to determine the effectiveness of the program. The volunteers and the committee of Sehari Mengabdi #15 Purwokerto Chapter held a brief discussion to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the activity. The evaluation findings will be used to improve and enhance future activities.

Theoretical Overview

1. Definition of Orphanage

An orphanage is a place that cares for orphans, orphans, or even abandoned children until they become independent, responsible, devout, and able to contribute to their own community, nation, and country. In orphanages, children who are often abandoned by their families and society are cared for and educated as individuals (Abidin, 2018).

Furthermore, according to Article 1 Paragraph 13 of the Regulation of the Minister of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 21 of 2013 concerning Child Care, "Child Social Welfare Institution abbreviated as LKSA is a social welfare institution that organizes the care and protection of children by the government, local government, or the community both inside and outside the Social Institution."

2. Function of the Orphanage

Orphanages function as a means of guidance and alleviation for orphans, orphans, and abandoned children. (Tiara Fany Chintia Silitonga et al., 2023). The following are some of the functions of orphanages :

- 1) Orphanages function as child welfare service centers with the aim of providing recovery, protection, development, and prevention, as described below :
 - (1) The function of child recovery and alleviation is to help foster children regain and develop their social skills. Various special abilities, methods and resources are used in this function to achieve physical improvement, social adjustment, psychological counseling, career and personal guidance, job training and placement.
 - (2) The protection function, where children are protected from delay and harm. Families are also subjected to this function, which aims to strengthen their capacity to meet each other's needs and protect them from potential destruction.
 - (3) The development function is primarily concerned with the efficiency of the foster child's position, his or her duties towards the foster child and others, and the satisfaction derived from the activities they undertake.
 - (4) The prevention function focuses on intervening in the social environment of foster children with the dual purpose of fostering the development of appropriate behavior patterns in the social environment and preventing the development of deviant behavior patterns among foster children.
 - (5) The prevention function focuses on intervening in the social environment of foster children with the dual purpose of fostering the development of appropriate behavior patterns in the social environment and preventing the development of deviant behavior patterns among foster children.
- 2) As a source of data and information and consultation for children's social welfare.
- 3) As a skills development strategy (support function). An orphanage is an organization that acts as a community and family for adolescent children,

fostering their personality and development. Thus, it can be said that the function of orphanages is to assist the social welfare of children by providing services, expertise, knowledge, and counseling.

3. Psychosocial Development Theory

The psychosocial development of human personality is described in several levels by Erikson's theory of development (Tharir & Ed, 2018). According to Erikson's psychosocial theory, there are eight stages of development :

1) Trust vs Mistrust

This stage takes place in infants between 0 and 1 or 1½ years of age building trust during the oral stage without suppressing distrust. Sleeping, eating and defecating are examples of oral urges that are fulfilled and contribute to the development of trust. The child's personality is influenced by this stage, which encourages trust and a sense of security.

2) Autonomy vs Feelings of Shame and Indecision

The second stage is the anus - muscle stage, also known as toddlerhood, is an important stage in child development that lasts from 18 months to 3 - 4 years of age and emphasizes independence while decreasing emotions of guilt and uncertainty. Good parenting and careful attention to the child's environment can foster independence. Erikson's theory states that infants learn to control their bodies, which leads to new experiences and attitudes towards self-control and acceptance of control from others. This period is crucial to the child's overall development.

3) Initiative vs Error Stage

The genital - locomotor stage, sometimes referred to as the play stage, lasts from three to six years of age and emphasizes the child's initiative and learning from external difficulties. Encouraging children to actualize their ideas is one way parents can help them. However, obstacles during this phase can result in negative characteristics such as shyness and self-blame, which can hinder the child's development. Therefore, it is very important for parents to encourage their children's development.

4) Craft vs Inferiority

The fourth stage, the latent stage, which takes place in elementary school and lasts from 6 to 12 years old, requires children to learn to work hard and avoid inferiority complexes.

5) Identity vs Identity Chaos

The tendency of identity and identity confusion to develop individual traits is characteristic of adolescence, which begins at puberty and ends between the ages of 18 and 20. This strong desire is often perceived as delinquent. However, loyalty and tolerance to the peer group, which shares responsibility and is often submissive, compensates.

6) Intimacy vs Isolation

Early adulthood is a time when people lose their group affiliations and start dating selectively as they develop close relationships with like-minded people who are around 20 - 30 years old. The desire for intimate relationships with specific people characterizes this stage.

7) Generativity vs Stagnation

Between the ages of 30 and 60, middle adulthood is characterized by generativity-stagnation tendencies. This stage is characterized by simple mastery but rapid development of knowledge and skills. People must strike a balance between generativity and stagnation to accomplish tasks. Being generous means extending love into the future and considering the next generation. In contrast to stagnation, which is self-adoration without regard for others, this strategy shows a caring attitude. This phase is important for developing oneself.

8) Integrity vs Despair

People between the ages of 60 and 65 are considered to be in Erikson's senile stage, which is characterized by despair and ego integrity. People in this stage maintain their integrity while feeling hopeless due to the decline in their abilities caused by aging. Although they want to succeed, advancing age often inhibits their drive, resulting in despair.

Results and discussion

The Sehari Mengabdi #15 Purwokerto Chapter activity held on Saturday, February 1, 2025 at Harapan Mulia Orphanage aims to enhance and explore the dreams and aspirations of children, especially from Al-Amin Orphanage and Harapan Mulia Orphanage, with an age range of 7 to 16 years. This activity is focused on children in orphanages as they often face significant psychosocial challenges, such as lack of attention and emotional support, which can affect their mental development. Through interactions with volunteers, the children are expected to feel cared for, inspired and gain confidence, which will help them explore their potential and aspirations.

The volunteers have planned a number of exciting activities for the children at Harapan Mulia Orphanage to enhance the activities of Sehari Mengabdi #15 Purwokerto Chapter. To help the children strive and reinforce the reasons behind their choice of goals, the activities began with the pinning of goal nametags. This will make the children feel more secure and motivated to study to realize their dreams. To give the children a deeper understanding of the professions they are interested in, a Professions and Goals Class was also held. Volunteers explained various professions, their advantages, and the steps needed to achieve them. There was also a discussion session and a question and answer session. Afterwards, the volunteers and children worked together on creative activities to foster the joy of envisioning and achieving goals. The event concluded with entertaining educational games that enhanced the volunteers' relationship with the children while encouraging their psychosocial growth in an engaging and entertaining way. The volunteers were instrumental in providing emotional support and motivation through these activities, which enhanced the psychosocial well-being of the orphanage children.



Figure 1. Activities of Sehari Mengabdi #15 Purwokerto Chapter

According to Tubing, Nugroho, and Tehuteru (2008) (in Melina et al., 2012), As a manifestation of his social responsibility, a volunteer is someone who sincerely, based on a sense of moral obligation, gives everything he has such as thoughts, energy, time, property, etc. to society without expecting anything in return, such as money, salary, authority, interest, or profession. to society without expecting anything in return, such as money, salary, authority, interest, or profession. Volunteers are inspired when given the opportunity to grow and provide new perspectives and abilities. Since volunteers want to develop their skills and abilities through social activism, a volunteer organizer is needed. This drive is called utilitarian motivation which is selfish, extrinsic and self-interested. For example, a person may volunteer because they want to gain information, skills and experience from their volunteer work (Putra Pangestu, 2016). Actions intended to build capacity and provide guidance to volunteers regarding actions intended to help volunteers feel valued and survive, such as providing them with certificates of inclusion and other signs of recognition, are usually included in volunteer mentoring (Rosita, 2015).

Volunteers play an important role in the activities at Harapan Mulia Orphanage Purwokerto, especially in providing practical daily support and guidance to children in a psychosocial context. When the orphanage's human resources are limited, the presence of volunteers is a practical option. Technical and non-technical volunteer responsibilities include assisting with learning activities, providing skills development, planning creation activities, and meeting the basic needs of the children. Volunteers are more than servants; they are friends who help children reach their full potential and overcome obstacles.

Volunteers at Harapan Mulia Orphanage in Purwokerto, use various techniques to build relationships with the children, such as greeting them, getting to know them, sharing stories, and having discussions to learn new things. To get to know the children, especially those who are initially withdrawn, personal strategies such as “pretending to be close” and saying hello first are used. To get close to the children faster, the volunteers try to start conversations by asking questions and then move on to other topics.

Improving the psychosocial well-being of children in orphanages requires volunteers to be able to interact with them in both academic and non-academic settings. Children who engage in positive constructive and encouraging interactions feel calmer, safer and cared for. By improving social skills, self-esteem and motivation to learn, this can help children realize their full potential (Azhizhah, 2019).

Many factors indicate how well the volunteers have improved the psychosocial well-being of the children at Harapan Mulia Orphanage Purwokerto. Children's self-confidence and learning drive are enhanced by volunteers through constructive and supportive interactions. Children's focus and enthusiasm in learning can be enhanced through activities organized by volunteers such as creation classes and educational games. Volunteers also contribute to instilling positive values such as fairness, compassion and caring for others through motivational activities and experience stories. Volunteers therefore contribute to creating a safe, comfortable and supportive atmosphere for children's development in addition to having a beneficial impact on their cognitive and emotional development.

Closure

Children at Harapan Mulia Purwokerto Orphanage, who often lack emotional care and attention, have psychosocial wellbeing difficulties identified through this activity. Through activities that aim to boost self-confidence, inspire, and assist children in exploring their potential and ambitions, volunteers play an important role in providing emotional support and motivation through Sehari Mengabdi #15 Chapter Purwokerto activities. However, the use of other resources such as Profession and Aspiration Classes and Creation Classes can enhance the purpose of this activity, provide children with a thorough understanding of different types of professions, and encourage them to enjoy the activity with joy and goal achievement. As a result, this activity greatly improved the psychosocial well-being of the children in the orphanage.

Advice

The organizing committee should work more closely with Harapan Mulia Orphanage to plan the children's activities so that future activities can be more effective. This includes ensuring that no children have other activities or school schedules that clash on the same day. The purpose of this coordination is to ensure that every child in the orphanage can participate in all activities. In addition, to

reduce boredom and increase children's engagement, learning activities should be made more interesting and dynamic by utilizing technology as an additional tool.

Acknowledgments

To Yayasan Penelitian dan Pengabdian Masyarakat Sinesia (YPPM), a big thank you for the extraordinary assistance provided in organizing this activity. The entire organizing committee of One Day of Service #15 Chapter Purwokerto thanks you for your commitment and perseverance in realizing this event. Finally, a big thank you to the board of Harapan Mulia Orphanage Purwokerto for their cooperation and trust. Finally, a big thank you to the volunteers who have dedicated their time and energy to this activity for their sincere commitment to the welfare of the orphanage children.

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