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## **Green School Project (GSP): A Case Study in Sukma Bangsa Lhokseumawe School, Aceh-Indonesia**

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### **Abstract**

*The Green School Project (GSP) is a program that was initiated based on monitoring and mutual awareness of the success of experiences in overcoming the many environmental problems that occur in schools. The discomfort of the school community is because the conditions and atmosphere are spacious but look rather hot and dry, rubbish is scattered at almost all points in the school area, and the habit of eating unhealthy food in specific packages. However, several activities were conducted as effective solutions when all school residents consistently took concrete action through the*

*GSP program. This is a study case of 163 students of 200 SMP Sukma Bangsa Lhokseumawe students. The data was collected by observation, interview, and survey. This study intended to evaluate whether the GSP program has been effectively affected to improve our students' awareness, care, and love of the school's cleanliness and health. As a result, the good habits coordinated by the GSP Team of Sukma Bangsa Lhokseumawe School successfully built the character of students who cared more about the school environment. The green, clean, and healthy condition of the school today was considered as the significant contribution of all school management, teachers, and parents as role models to achieve the targets for behavior change of the students of Sukma Bangsa Lhokseumawe School who become more loving a green, clean and healthy school environment.*

**Keywords:** Green School Project (GSP), Student Character of Love, Green School, Clean and Healthy environment.

### **Abstrak**

*Green School Project (GSP) merupakan program yang digagas berdasarkan pemantauan dan kesadaran atas pengalaman sukses dalam mengatasi berbagai permasalahan lingkungan yang terjadi di sekolah. Hal ini bermula dari ketidaknyamanan warga sekolah karena kondisi dan suasana sekolah yang luas namun terlihat agak panas dan kering; sampah berserakan hampir di seluruh area sekolah, dan kebiasaan mengonsumsi makanan tidak sehat dalam kemasan tertentu. Namun beberapa kegiatan dilakukan sebagai solusi efektif ketika seluruh warga sekolah melakukan aksi nyata bersama secara konsisten melalui program GSP. Ini adalah studi kasus terhadap 163 siswa dari total 200 siswa di SMP Sukma Bangsa Lhokseumawe. Pengumpu-*

*lan data dilakukan dengan observasi, wawancara dan survei. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi apakah program GSP telah efektif dalam meningkatkan kesadaran, kepedulian dan kecintaan siswa terhadap kebersihan dan kesehatan sekolah. Hasilnya, kebiasaan baik yang diinisiasi dan dikampanyekan oleh Tim GSP Sekolah Sukma Bangsa Lhokseumawe berhasil membangun karakter siswa yang lebih peduli terhadap lingkungan sekolah. Kondisi sekolah yang hijau, bersih dan sehat saat ini dinilai merupakan kontribusi besar dari contoh teladan dari seluruh manajemen sekolah, guru dan orang tua sebagai "role model" guna mencapai target perubahan perilaku siswa Sekolah Sukma Bangsa Lhokseumawe menjadi lebih peduli akan lingkungan sekolah yang lebih hijau, bersih, dan sehat.*

**Kata Kunci:** Green School Project (GSP), Karakter Siswa, Sekolah Hijau, Lingkungan Bersih dan Sehat.

## **A. Introduction**

Looking and paying attention to the environment around where we live, especially in my hometown, Lhokseumawe-Aceh, from the past until now, it seems that the waste problem has never been solved. In many places, flooding still occurs during heavy rains because most of it is covered with garbage from the wider community. Tens or even hundreds of sacks of waste are seen lined up along the roads as if our town does not afford enough decent trash cans. Based on data from the Lhokseumawe Environment and Hygiene Office, our community produces 105 tons of waste daily, including plastic, bottles, and organic waste from traditional markets and household productions.

The government must be concerned and have effective strategies to handle and manage this situation. Janitors or street sweepers have worked so well to clean public places anytime.

However, the biggest problem we can see with the naked eye is the low awareness of the population/community to dispose of waste in its proper place. The majority throws garbage in many areas. On the other hand, the mayor of Lhokseumawe City, Mr. Dr. Imran, M.Si, M.A, Cd recently released letter Number 180/13/SE/2022 about the policy to pay more attention to the clean and healthy environment, especially by conducting “*Gotong Royong* or Friday Clean Day” in every week and by reducing the use of plastic in all Education Units, public/private institutions, and other government agencies. These actions are considered solutions to the classic problem that never ends. Therefore, the mayor’s breakthrough and innovation through the Clean Lhokseumawe Community Movement Program should be welcomed by all people in the Lhokseumawe area, which consists of 181.1 km<sup>2</sup> with a population of around 210,177 people (data as of 2022 source: [aceh.antaranews.com](http://aceh.antaranews.com)). Not all people here are aware and understand that the change in the magnitude and frequency of extreme weather is also caused and influenced by their bad habits and activities toward the environment.

With all its characters, today’s society is the result/output of the schools in the past. Lack of integration is related to the importance of environmental studies; it might be one of the factors. Today, many people do not care about how to dispose of their rubbish correctly, are confused about where to throw their trash, and feel less guilty if they have to throw it wherever they stop. Is there anyone who can correct this bad habit? Is there still time to educate every adult in all corners of villages and cities who are instilling this bad habit? How can this situation be fixed? Maybe the government should learn from other countries to reset all the systems for garbage disposal in this town. On the other side, the individual concrete action to touch people’s awareness, as Mr. Pj. Mayor did, was such an excellent leading by example. Some time ago, he went straight down to clean the ditches and pick up rubbish from all over the field during the 77th Republic of Indonesia Independence Day festival. He acted to show an excellent model to society so they would feel embarrassed and be moved

to follow his way. Thus, what we observed was most people didn't even care. They just ignored him and kept walking away.

Related to the above problems, Anderson (2012) mentioned that "the continued changing climate will have widespread effects on human life and ecosystems. These hazards increase disaster vulnerability, resulting in widespread human, material, economic, and environmental losses". However, he also described two possible ways to reduce the effect of continued climate change: mitigation and adaptation. One of the statements in his article that interests me so much as I reflect on my condition here is, "There is a clear education agenda in climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, which require learning new knowledge and skills and changing behaviors to reduce vulnerabilities; manage the risks of climate change; change consumption and production patterns; and build adaptive capacity and resilient societies."

In addition, Anderson (2012) also conveyed that the education sector should offer a currently untapped opportunity to fight climate change. He said, "Since the causes of climate change are at least partly linked to human actions, these actions need to be identified and changed. This involves learning to change consumption patterns, such as using renewable forms of energy and designing greener technologies. Thus, mitigation requires education geared toward changing lifestyles, economies, and social structures based on excessive GHG production. Education can show people that, as conscious consumers and responsible citizens, they have a critical role in redefining their lifestyles to address the sustainability issues humanity faces. In addition to education's integral role in individual behavior change for mitigation, learning centers, and schools have a role to play in becoming carbon neutral, energy efficient and reducing their ecological footprint".

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## **B. The Role of School in Solving the Environmental Problems**

All children must learn about environmental and societal issues at school. The role of education in responding to this issue is that schools are a place to shape the character of human children from an early age, after family at home and in the community in society. As Ki Hajar Dewantara affirmed, education itself can be called an effort to guide all the natural or essential strengths in children as individuals and as members of society. In addition, his views on learning were seen in the Three Centers of Education concept, which states that students learn not only at school but also in their families and from what they observe in the community. So, one of the critical roles of school is to prepare students to become part of society. The school also reflects the community's life around the school. Based on observation and monitoring, what happened in society also happened at many schools. Thus, according to Ki Hadjar Dewantara, the essence of education is to instill cultural values in children to shape them into complete humans, mentally and spiritually.

Children's characters who love the environment can be formed by continuously instilling school culture. Why through school culture? Maslowsky 2001 (quoted in Jaana, 2022) said that school culture is the understanding and values that move school members to carry out a movement they believe in.

How can school culture be implemented? Leah Shafer (2018), in her post on the Harvard Graduate School of Education page, explained that there are 6 ways to build a culture at school, including: 1) Be a mirror. A leader is a role model for the organization he leads. Whatever a leader does, his words, behavior, and thoughts greatly influence the culture he creates. In education, a school principal becomes a role model for his teachers; teachers become role models for their students. If there is a dream that the school culture can run as expected, then from the start, the leadership, staff, and all adult school residents will set an excellent example for students who are learning to see, observe, and do. 2) Commitment and confidence of every school member;

3) Guidance/Training on School Culture, where this activity is an effort to direct behavior (behavior change), understand the teachers, students and all other school members (knowledge change) regarding what to do and how to do it, and 4) Spread the Vision Unite the Mission, where if you want a learning environment to be more positive because the learning environment is green, clean and free of plastic waste, then all school members must realize that this is a shared responsibility, vision and mission that must be achieved together as well. 5) Appreciation. Teachers and students will be increasingly inspired to carry out the school's cultural commitments and values if school leaders value and appreciate all forms of their good intentions. Celebrating mutual success is highly recommended to foster motivation to continue consistently moving to maintain a good school environment. 6) Reorganize relationships and information. Culture spreads because of relationships/connections. Accelerate the spread of the practice of school culture with as positive a message as possible so that other people, other schools, and other agencies will be moved to do so.

Apart from that, this research was also triggered by the author's curiosity to prove whether implementing the GSP program has successfully built the students' character of loving a green, clean, and healthy environment in our school. Besides, I would like to know what obstacles and challenges the students face during this program. Are the school policies and rules implemented to ensure that all related programs and activities can run according to plans and targets?

### **C. Green School Project (GSP) Program to Build Student Character of Loving Environment**

Zhao, D., He, B., & Meng, F. (2015), in the article "The Green School Project: A Means of Speeding up Sustainable Development?" critically reviewed that climate change and energy problems were significant challenges facing the human race. To solve these problems, administrators and policymakers worl-

dwide need to propagate the agreements, laws, standards, and regulations. People's sustainable awareness of energy-related issues has dramatically improved in implementing the policies. Still, they also proclaimed that the low-carbon concept was far from popular. In addition, the article mentioned that schools are unique places to spread awareness of the idea. The green school project, which aimed at providing a better research environment and cultivating the concept of sustainable development to promote sustainable development trends greatly, had been launched in some areas of China. The article introduced the idea, requirement, and rating system of green schools, which aimed to cultivate more educated people with sustainable consciousness and improve their awareness of sustainable development.

Related to that article, what has been conducted in China should also be implemented in our country, Aceh, Indonesia. Sukma Bangsa Lhokseumawe School, as a private school under the auspices of the Sukma Foundation, is highly committed to implementing an environmental management system. Therefore, it is considered very necessary to form a Green School Project (GSP) organizational structure so that team members can concentrate on implementing green schools, educating the school community about the concept, and improving their consciousness and awareness by reducing plastic waste in the school environment, for one of the examples. The Green School Project (GSP) is one of the flagship programs of the Sukma Bangsa Lhokseumawe School, which aims to create a green, clean, and healthy school environment. With this program, schools have sustainable achievement targets towards healthy schools, environmentally friendly schools, and pure cultures. This school culture not only echoes at all times but also teaches students how to apply all the values in this culture in their daily lives, both inside the school environment and outside the school, when they are in society.

The guidelines and foundations follow the policy for establishing the GSP program and team. First, Law Number 32 of 2009 concerning Environmental Protection and Management (State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia of 2009 Number 140, Sup-



plement to State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia Number 5059). Second, the Regulation of the Minister of Environment of the Republic of Indonesia Number 13 Year 2012 concerning Guidelines for Implementing 3R through Waste Banks. Third, the Regulation of the Minister of Environment of the Republic of Indonesia Number 05 in 2013 concerning Guidelines for Implementing the Adiwiyata Program. Fourth, the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 64 of 2015 concerning Non-Smoking Areas in School Environments. Fifth, Lhokseumawe Mayor Circular Number 180/13/SE/2022 concerning reducing the use of plastic in the Lhokseumawe City area. The last one, Media Group Decree Number: 001/SK/DC-MG/IV/2019, concerns establishing a Waste Bank Organizational Structure and implementing an Environmental Management System (Based on ISO 14001:2015) for all Companies in the Media Groups.

To realize the GSP programs, team members are selected/recommended by the school principal based on the teachers' qualifications, potential, talents, and experiences. The selected teachers are asked for their opinion and approval first, then approved by the Director, and the teachers in a team can work according to their respective duties and responsibilities. Next, preparation of the Green School Project (GSP) Work Program. At this stage, the team will initiate a meeting to prepare some annual programs and present them to all of the school community at the beginning of the school year. Based on reflection and evaluation, it is not enough to share the presentation once a year, a schedule of activities and mechanisms for certain activities on certain days; then further information will be provided at specific times according to the needs and requests of the GSP team, reaffirmed by each homeroom teacher so that information, policies, and activities that will take place will genuinely be conveyed to every child.

The school management is responsible for ensuring that every GSP program the GSP team has designed can run as well as expected. One-time regular meetings are held to discuss

progress, problems/obstacles, and solutions that will be taken for improvements next month. Communication in the group was also very intense; everyone reported every documentation during and after the activity. After 3 months, 6 months, and at the end of each year, the program coordinator or team leader makes a written reflection report regarding this sustainability program to the school management for further reading, study, and follow-up on several necessary matters.

Green School Project (GSP), based on the targets to be achieved, is integrated into 3 big projects. First, the Green Environment Program. Planting for about a thousand trees, for example. This activity is carried out annually during the Student Orientation Period or SILA event at the beginning of the year and on Earth Day every April 22nd. Apart from adding greenery to the school area, this also teaches children how important it is to show care, empathy, and support for creatures other than humans and animals. They actively participated and contributed to this event by donating a tree or flower for the school—next, Gardening Club & Hydroponic Houses. The school environment, which covers an area of 7 hectares, is well utilized for developing students' skills/capacities in gardening and entrepreneurship. Especially in junior high school, we have 30 students who are members of the Gardening Class. Together with the GSP team teachers, they hoe, plant, and water until finally they can harvest fresh vegetables such as spinach, which then can be sold to the school canteen, to the teachers at school, and to be cooked by their parents at home. Moreover, in this GSP activity, all students are encouraged to plant as many flowers as possible to make their class gardens look greener and more beautiful. The result indicated that involving the students in such activities had improved their awareness and love of plants and green environment.

In line with this, Janet E. Dymont & Anne C. Bell (2008) , written in the article 'Our garden is color blind, inclusive and warm': reflections on green school grounds and social inclusion, revealed that in the interest of enhancing children's environments, communities around the world were greening school grounds,

replacing asphalt and manicured grass with a diversity of design elements such as trees, shrubs, gardens, water features, artwork, and gathering areas. They researched the relationship between school ground greening and social inclusion in a Canadian public school board where approximately 20% of more than 500 schools had begun greening. The research used A mixed methods approach in which 149 questionnaires were completed by administrators, teachers, and parents associated with 45 school ground greening initiatives. Then, 21 follow-up interviews were conducted with five school administrators, teachers, and parents across various socio-economic statuses. The study revealed that green school grounds are more inclusive of people who may feel isolated based on gender, class, race, and ability, suggesting that these spaces promote social inclusion in an expansive sense. So, there is no doubt that the green school program is essential and beneficial for the school community, especially for the students who will feel its direct benefits and effects.

The second is the Clean Environment Program. It was implemented by involving students in making composters from dry leaves. The school environment is spacious and has many trees, so the production of dry fallen leaves is unlimited, very plentiful, and never runs out. Therefore, with this project, the GSP team facilitated the students in collecting the leaves and then processing them into organic fertilizer that has been useful for all plants in the school area. Besides, routine activities such as TASA (*Tau Ada Sampah Ambil*), Clean Friday (*Jumat Bersih*), and *Operasi Semut* are other good habits to cultivate the student character of love and care about school cleanliness. The entire school community participates in this cleaning agenda.

Third is the Healthy Environment Program. It was carried out by the implementation of Healthy Canteen at the school. What we mean by a healthy canteen here is a canteen that provides types of food and drinks that do not contain excessive artificial sweeteners, preservatives, and colorings, which hurt the development of students' brains and bodies. To detect this, the school has collaborated with the Public Health Office of Kota Lhokseumawe

to examine the health tests on all types of food and drinks in the school canteen. The officers also educate the school community by presenting the criteria for a healthy canteen.

Regarding implementing clean and healthy life behavior, studied by Suryani et al. (2020) in elementary school 1 in East Kuripan, West Nusa Tenggara Province (58 students), it is significantly affected by knowledge and attitude. Thus, teachers were expected to enhance and encourage the knowledge and attitudes of students with clean and healthy living behavior or *Perilaku Hidup Bersih dan Sehat (PHBS)* in the school environment so they can understand and know the benefits for themselves and their environment.

In Sukma Bangsa Lhokseumawe Junior High School, clean and healthy living behavior was promoted by the GSP Team program and written in some school policies or rules, such as the above explanation and previous discussion. Other unique treatments include bringing a water bottle and lunch box daily to the school. It is compulsory for all school communities as a form of campaign to reduce plastic waste at school. All children must bring their tumbler or drinking bottle/lunch box that can be washed and refilled often. To strengthen monitoring and discipline, schools occasionally conduct planned raids. Children detected not bringing their drinking bottles or bottles of mineral water to the school premises or buying or delivering food using Styrofoam will be recorded as a violation. Once or twice, the child concerned will be called and reminded, then informed by his parents, so that he does not repeat behavior that does not follow school rules and policies. In the beginning, it wasn't easy to implement these rules. But lately, they are accustomed to following them, and then they seem to become habits.

On the other hand, to campaign for healthy living behavior in this school environment to provide more understanding/insight among students regarding this, various contests or competitions were held, such as the Twibbon Photo Contest with Tumblr, the Best Caption Writing Competition on Instagram, and

the Short Video Story Challenge with the theme Processing Waste with the 3R (Reuse, Reduce, Recycle) concepts. All competitions aimed to promote sharing ideas and photos on social media such as Instagram as a campaign about love and care for a green, clean, healthy school environment to the broader community.

Another strategy in the GSP program was a class project called Eco Bricks. They are plastic bottles packaged with plastic waste to a specific density. They serve as reusable building blocks. They can produce various items, including furniture, garden walls, and other structures. On the occasion of National Waste Awareness Day on February 22<sup>nd</sup> last year, the school's GSP Team carried out a movement to make mass Eco bricks in the school field area. They demonstrated the initial stages of choosing suitable bottles and plastic waste, the technique of arranging them into a round shape, and the final finishing process to make the Eco bricks into small round sofas (stools) that can be used as guest seating in the school lobby area and in the library.

Based on the discussion above, the results of the process of implementing the Green School Project (GSP) program at Sukma Bangsa Lhokseumawe School can be said to have succeeded in changing the behavior and character of students and the entire school community to be more caring, appreciative, and loving of the school environment. Based on the results of monitoring by the school management and GSP team and the opinions of most teachers and guests who came to the school, the school environment was significantly changing. It looked barren and hot before, but then it seemed more incredible, greener, and beautiful, with many trees and flowers.

Moreover, the most crucial part is that the student's awareness and actions of not littering have increased. From the stage of forming the character of students who love a green, clean, and healthy school environment, this is also clearly illustrated by the results of the environmental survey, which was distributed a few months ago and filled in by 162 students from 200 SMP Sukma Bangsa Lhokseumawe students. The survey was about Littering.

Previously, 46.3% of children admitted to being among those who threw rubbish inappropriately in the school area. However, the data on 14 September 2022 indicated that 97% of children revealed that they no longer littered. When we questioned why they changed their habits, most told us it was because of the importance of caring for the school environment. Some said they felt happy and more comfortable when they noticed the school was clean and rubbish-free.

Regarding a healthy school environment, it was also identified that all Sukma Bangsa Lhokseumawe School students had been accustomed to bringing their drinking bottles and food containers and eating food without unhealthy instant sachet sauce and other unhealthy food or drinks. Instead, most choose to get their healthy food from home. This was triggered because the students' parents also truly understand these school programs and highly support their implementation.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Based on the discussion above, the following conclusion we can present is that the Green School Project (GSP) Program has been implemented very effectively by the school GSP team; the implementation process is directly monitored by the school management so that this program can form good habits, where habits then ultimately become values and principles that entrench and shape the character of Sukma Bangsa Lhokseumawe Junior High School students who love a green, clean and healthy school environment. For further completed research, our students' behavior change is expected to be more consistent from year to year until the characteristics of loving and caring about green, clean, and healthy environment can be genuinely internalized in their daily lives. Further research will be needed to prove this expectation and hope.

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