Enhancing the Professional Capacity of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Developing KOSP through a PAR-Based Mentoring Program in North Lampung

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Article history	
Abstract	This community service activity aims to strengthen the professional capacity of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in developing the Operational Curriculum for Educational Units (KOSP) based on the Independent Curriculum in North Lampung Regency. This activity was motivated by teachers' limited ability to compile KOSP documents, Learning Objective Flows (ATP), and contextual teaching modules aligned with the principles of independent learning. The Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach was implemented as a participatory mentoring model, positioning PAI teachers as active partners throughout the problem identification, implementation, reflection, and evaluation processes. This program involved PAI teachers from 20 educational units and was implemented through structured activities, including socialization, interactive training, collaborative KOSP and ATP workshops, ongoing mentoring, and joint reflection. The results of the community service demonstrated improvements in teachers' curriculum development practices, as participants were able to produce school-based KOSP documents, design systematic ATP aligned with learning outcomes, and develop contextual and differentiated PAI teaching modules tailored to student characteristics and the local context. In addition, the mentoring process fostered increased self-confidence, collaboration, and reflective awareness. The uniqueness of this activity lies in the PAR-based mentoring design, which emphasizes active involvement, collaborative learning, and sustainability.
Keywords	Independent Curriculum; Islamic Religious Education Teachers; KOSP; Participatory Mentoring; Teacher Professional Development

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1.   INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) holds a strategic position in the national education system because it serves not only as a vehicle for the transmission of religious knowledge but also as a means of character formation, the internalization of moral values, and the strengthening of students' religious identity. In the context of modern education, PAI is expected to shape faithful individuals, have noble character, be moderate, tolerant, and able to live harmoniously in a pluralistic society (Fulan Puspita, 2015; Sapitri & Maryati, 2022; Susanto & Syahrudin, 2024). Therefore, the quality of Islamic Education learning is highly dependent on teachers' professional capacity, especially in designing curricula and learning that are contextual, adaptive, and relevant to students' needs and social environments.

In line with the dynamics of national education policy, the government, through the Freedom to Learn policy, provides greater autonomy to educational units and teachers in the development of learning. One important instrument in this policy is the Educational Unit Operational Curriculum (KOSP), which is independently developed by schools based on their vision, mission, student characteristics, regional potential, and the actual needs of the educational unit (Herdiyanti et al., 2025; Pratikno et al., 2022; Susanto & Kiftiyah, 2025). The KOSP is no longer understood as a mere administrative document, but rather as a strategic guideline that determines the direction of learning, including in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Therefore, PAI teachers are required to possess the skills of contextual analysis, formulating learning objectives, developing Learning Objective Flows (ATP), and developing creative and differentiated teaching modules.

However, implementing the Independent Curriculum in the field presents various challenges, particularly regarding the readiness of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers to develop and implement the KOSP. Various studies indicate that many PAI teachers still struggle to understand the philosophy of the Independent Curriculum, the KOSP structure, and the relationship between learning outcomes, ATP, and teaching modules (Anjeliani et al., 2024; Rasyidi et al., 2024; Utari et al., 2022). This condition affects Islamic Religious Education, which remains conventional and teacher-centered, and does not provide sufficient space for the development of students' critical, reflective, and contextual thinking skills.

This situation becomes even more complex when faced with the socio-cultural context of a region like North Lampung Regency, which has a multicultural character. The diversity of social, cultural, and religious backgrounds requires Islamic Religious Education teachers to design learning that is sensitive to differences and instills the

values of religious moderation (Cholik & Jannah, 2025; Susanto & Syahrudin, 2024). However, the reality on the ground shows that some Islamic Religious Education teachers still rely on curriculum documents copied from other schools or teaching modules downloaded from the internet without adequate adaptation. This demonstrates the limited professional capacity of teachers to develop a curriculum grounded in the local context and students' actual needs (Hoesny & Darmayanti, 2021).

Despite the policy shift toward the Independent Curriculum, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers continue to face structural challenges in curriculum development. The main gap underlying this community service activity lies in the limited availability of ongoing and practice-oriented mentoring for PAI teachers, particularly in developing the Education Unit Operational Curriculum (KOSP), Learning Objective Flow (ATP), and contextual teaching modules **(Erihadiana & Zakiyyah, 2022; Lestari et al., 2024).** Existing teacher capacity-building programs are predominantly one-way and short-term, focusing on socialization or seminars rather than sustained support. As a result, collaborative practices and professional reflection among PAI teachers remain weak, and curriculum development is often conducted individually or by adapting documents from other schools without adequate contextualization. This gap indicates that curriculum reform has not yet been supported by mentoring models that genuinely empower teachers as curriculum developers and reflective practitioners (Dimara, 2022; Rahayu et al., 2023).

Based on these conditions, this community service activity was designed with the explicit purpose of strengthening the professional capacity of Islamic Religious Education teachers to develop KOSP, ATP, and teaching modules through participatory, sustainable mentoring. The activity aims to enhance teachers' technical skills, foster collaborative curriculum development practices, and cultivate reflective professional attitudes that support meaningful implementation of the Independent Curriculum in school contexts.

The distinctive contribution of this community service activity lies in applying Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a participatory mentoring and empowerment model rather than as a research method. PAR is used to position PAI teachers as active partners in identifying problems, designing solutions, implementing curriculum development practices, and conducting collective reflection and evaluation. Unlike conventional teacher training programs, this activity emphasizes hands-on curriculum production, peer collaboration, continuous mentoring, and reflective dialogue, thereby addressing both technical and cultural dimensions of teacher professionalism. The novelty of this program is further reflected in its focus on sustainability, as it seeks

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to build a collaborative, reflective work culture among PAI teachers that can continue beyond the program and be replicated in other regions facing similar challenges in implementing the Independent Curriculum.

2. METHODS

This community service activity employed a Participatory Action Research (PAR)–based mentoring model, applied as a participatory approach to teacher empowerment and professional development, rather than as a research design or methodology. In the context of community service, PAR emphasizes active partner involvement, collaborative problem-solving, and collective reflection to strengthen professional practice (Chevalier & Buckles, 2019, p. 56). Through this approach, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers were positioned as active partners in identifying needs, implementing curriculum mentoring, and evaluating outcomes related to the development of the Independent Curriculum–based Education Unit Operational Curriculum (*Kurikulum Operasional Satuan Pendidikan*/KOSP).

The activity partners consisted of PAI teachers from 20 educational units in North Lampung Regency who were directly involved in curriculum development at their respective schools. Their involvement was continuous and collaborative throughout all mentoring stages, reflecting the principles of teacher empowerment and professional learning communities (DuFour & Eaker, 1998).

The community service activity was implemented through four integrated mentoring stages. First, the problem identification stage focused on mapping teachers' initial understanding and practices in developing KOSP, ATP, and teaching modules. This stage aimed to build shared awareness of existing challenges through participatory dialogue and reflection (Huda, 2023). Second, the action planning stage involved designing mentoring strategies through interactive training sessions, workshops, and collaborative discussions. The output of this stage was a structured and context-based mentoring plan tailored to teachers' needs (CHAHDI, 2023). Third, the implementation stage emphasized hands-on collaborative practice, in which teachers were guided to draft and refine school-based KOSP documents, develop systematic ATPs, and design contextual and differentiated PAI teaching modules. This practice-oriented mentoring reflects effective teacher professional development models that prioritize learning by doing (Purba et al., 2023). Fourth, the reflection and evaluation stage was carried out through joint discussions and mentoring forums to review the mentoring process, identify changes in teachers' competencies and professional attitudes, and formulate follow-up plans for sustainability. Reflective

evaluation is essential in strengthening professional awareness and continuous improvement among teachers (Goodman & Cocca, 2014).

Documentation techniques, including mentoring records, discussion notes, and curriculum products (KOSP drafts, ATP, and teaching modules), were used to support reflective and evaluative assessment of the activity. Evaluation focused on partner participation, quality of curriculum outputs, and changes in collaborative and reflective practices, in line with the objectives of community service and teacher capacity-building programs (Junaidi et al., 2023).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Findings

This community service activity was carried out to empower Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in North Lampung Regency to improve their professional capacity, particularly in developing the Educational Unit Operational Curriculum (KOSP) based on the Independent Curriculum. This activity was designed not merely as theoretical training, but as a participatory learning process that positions PAI teachers as the primary subjects at every stage. This approach was chosen because strengthening teacher competency will be more effective when carried out through direct involvement, real-world practice, and ongoing reflection on teachers' experiences in the field (Chevalier & Buckles, 2019; Setyawan et al., 2025).

The activity began with initial socialization and dialogue to explore the real-world conditions under which Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers implement the Independent Curriculum. At this stage, PAI teachers openly shared various obstacles they faced, such as limited understanding of the KOSP structure, difficulties in developing Learning Objective Flows (ATP), and limited experience in developing contextual and differentiated teaching modules. These field findings align with various studies showing that the transition to the Independent Curriculum remains a challenge for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, particularly in areas lacking intensive curriculum support (Anjeliani et al., 2024; Utari et al., 2022). This initial dialogue lays an important foundation for designing activities that truly meet partners' needs.

The next stage is training to strengthen conceptual understanding of the Independent Curriculum and the KOSP. The training is conducted interactively, linking the material to Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning practices currently implemented by teachers in the classroom. PAI teachers are encouraged to understand that the KOSP is not merely an administrative document but a strategic one that determines the direction and quality of learning in schools. Through discussions and

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case studies, teachers begin to recognize the importance of analyzing the educational unit's context, student characteristics, and local values in developing the KOSP. This process encourages a shift in teachers' perspectives from mere policy implementers to curriculum developers in their respective schools (Junaidi et al., 2023; Pratikno et al., 2022).

The activity then continued with a collaborative workshop on developing KOSP, ATP, and teaching modules. At this stage, Islamic Religious Education teachers worked in groups to develop curriculum documents based on their respective school contexts. The implementation team acted as facilitators, assisting with the discussion process, providing feedback, and helping teachers overcome any technical difficulties that arose. This workshop became a highly effective collaborative learning space, as teachers learned not only from the facilitators but also from their colleagues' experiences and best practices. This collaborative pattern has been proven to improve teachers' understanding and skills in curriculum development significantly (Erihadiana & Zakiyyah, 2022; Lestari et al., 2024).

Ongoing mentoring is an essential part of this community service activity. After the workshop, Islamic Religious Education teachers continued to be mentored in the process of refining the KOSP (Course Operational Standards), ATP (Application for Teachers), and teaching modules. This mentoring was conducted through focus group discussions and direct consultations, giving teachers the space to ask questions, reflect on their work, and make gradual improvements. This collaborative reflection process encouraged teachers to be more critical and to be more aware of the quality of the curriculum documents they developed. This mentoring approach was considered more effective than one-way training because it provided teachers with the opportunity to learn from real-world experiences (Fadilah & Laili, 2023; Firoza et al., 2025; Hoesny & Darmayanti, 2021).

Participant engagement throughout the series of activities was high. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers were not only participants but also actively engaged in discussions, group work, and collaborative reflection. This engagement fostered a culture of collaboration and mutual learning among teachers, which had previously been underdeveloped. Teachers began to become accustomed to sharing ideas, constructively critiquing curriculum documents, and accepting input from colleagues. This aligns with the view that teacher professional learning communities are key to continuously improving the quality of learning (Saerozi et al., 2024; Sampurna & Jannah, 2025).

In terms of results, the condition of Islamic Religious Education teachers before the activity demonstrated a limited understanding of the Independent Curriculum and the KOSP, as well as low self-confidence in developing curriculum documents independently. The KOSP used in the school was largely adapted from other schools, without in-depth contextual analysis. After the community service activities were implemented, significant changes occurred. Islamic Religious Education teachers were able to develop a more contextually relevant KOSP, systematically develop ATP, and design teaching modules appropriate to student characteristics and the principles of differentiated learning. In addition to improved technical skills, changes in professional attitudes were also clearly visible, marked by increased teacher confidence, independence, and reflective awareness in developing the curriculum (Mardiana et al., 2020; Supriyanti et al., 2025).

As part of the accountability process, the entire series of community service activities was systematically documented through photographs of activities, mentoring notes, discussion minutes, and curriculum products developed by participating teachers. The tangible outputs of this activity included school-based draft KOSP documents produced by all participating educational units, collaboratively developed Learning Objective Flows (ATP), and contextual and differentiated PAI teaching modules adapted to student characteristics and local contexts. Each school succeeded in producing and revising its own KOSP draft through the mentoring process. In addition to these outputs, descriptive changes in teacher practice were observed, as PAI teachers increasingly demonstrated independence in curriculum development, greater confidence in aligning learning outcomes with ATP and teaching modules, and more active engagement in collaborative discussion and peer feedback. Teachers also demonstrated greater reflective awareness by reviewing and improving curriculum documents in line with contextual relevance and Independent Curriculum principles. This documentation not only serves as evidence of program implementation but also as material for joint reflection and evaluation, and—when required by the journal—may be presented to illustrate the participatory mentoring process carried out directly in the field. Overall, these concrete outputs and practice-based changes indicate that the community service activity meaningfully strengthened the professional capacity of Islamic Religious Education teachers through a participatory, collaborative, and sustainable approach.

3.2. Discussions

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The findings of this community service activity indicate that participatory mentoring based on the PAR approach is effective not merely because teachers are trained, but because they are actively involved as co-actors in curriculum development processes. In the context of community service, PAR functions as an empowerment-oriented mentoring model that enables teachers to engage in critical reflection, collaborative problem-solving, and contextual decision-making, rather than passively receiving information. This explains why changes were observed not only in technical outputs, such as KOSP, ATP, and teaching modules, but also in teachers' professional mindsets and work culture. Such outcomes support the argument that teacher competency development is more sustainable when teachers are positioned as active subjects in professional learning (Chevalier & Buckles, 2019; Hoesny & Darmayanti, 2021).

Conceptually, the effectiveness of this mentoring model lies in its ability to bridge curriculum theory and teachers' lived experiences. Through participatory dialogue and guided reflection, teachers gradually reconstructed their understanding of the Independent Curriculum and KOSP, shifting from an administrative orientation to a more strategic and pedagogical perspective. This aligns with Tyler's curriculum theory, which emphasizes that meaningful curriculum design requires teachers' deep conceptual and contextual understanding (Tyler, 2013, p. 121). In this program, curriculum concepts were not delivered abstractly but were negotiated and applied through real school contexts, making them more relevant and actionable.

From the perspective of teacher professionalism, the mentoring process strengthened teachers' pedagogical competence, particularly in lesson planning and curriculum alignment. This finding resonates with Shulman's view that the ability to design learning is central to teacher professionalism (Shulman, 1987). More importantly, the reflective dimension embedded in the mentoring process encouraged teachers to evaluate their own practices critically. This reflects Schön's concept of teachers as reflective practitioners, in which professional growth emerges through continuous reflection on action rather than through one-time training interventions (Schon, 1983).

Another important implication of this activity is the emergence of a collaborative professional culture among Islamic Religious Education teachers. Unlike conventional training programs that emphasize individual attendance and certification, this participatory mentoring model fostered collective discussion, peer feedback, and shared responsibility for curriculum quality. This supports the theory of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), which highlights collaboration as a key

mechanism for sustained improvement in teaching practice (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). In the context of community service, such collaboration also strengthens social competence and mutual support among teachers, contributing to long-term professional resilience.

Compared to conventional teacher training programs—which are often short-term, one-directional, and content-focused—this community service model differs in several fundamental ways. First, it emphasizes process over transmission, prioritizing mentoring, practice, and reflection rather than lectures. Second, it integrates collective reflection and peer learning, rather than isolating teachers as individual participants. Third, it explicitly aims for sustainability, encouraging teachers to continue collaborative curriculum development beyond the program. These distinctions explain why participatory mentoring has a deeper impact on professional attitudes and practices than traditional socialization-based programs (Saerozi et al., 2024).

Despite its positive outcomes, this activity also has several limitations that need to be acknowledged. Teachers' limited time due to heavy teaching and administrative workloads constrained full participation in all mentoring sessions, a challenge that is commonly reported in teacher professional development initiatives (Dudung, 2018). Additionally, variations in teachers' initial competencies required facilitators to apply adaptive mentoring strategies, which may not always be feasible in larger-scale programs. Another limitation was the persistence of administratively oriented work habits among some teachers at the early stages, suggesting that changing professional culture requires longer-term, continuous support. These limitations suggest that future community service programs should consider more flexible mentoring schedules and stronger institutional support to enhance effectiveness.

Overall, this discussion demonstrates that PAR-based participatory mentoring is particularly well-suited for community service activities aimed at teacher empowerment, as it integrates theory, practice, reflection, and collaboration within authentic educational contexts. The model offers a viable alternative to conventional training approaches and provides a conceptual and practical framework for strengthening Islamic Religious Education teacher professionalism in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. With appropriate adaptation, this mentoring model has strong potential to be replicated in other regions facing similar challenges.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the implementation and outcomes of this community service activity in North Lampung Regency, it can be concluded that PAR-based participatory

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mentoring effectively strengthened the professional capacity of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers from 20 educational units in developing the Independent Curriculum–based Education Unit Operational Curriculum (KOSP). The activity resulted in tangible outputs, including school-based draft KOSP documents produced by all participating schools, systematically structured Learning Objective Flows (ATP), and contextual and differentiated PAI teaching modules that reflect student characteristics and local school contexts. These outputs indicate that teachers were able to move beyond document adaptation practices and independently develop curriculum components relevant to their educational environments.

In addition to technical outputs, the mentoring process contributed to contextual changes in teacher practice and professional attitudes. PAI teachers in North Lampung demonstrated increased confidence in acting as curriculum developers, greater openness to collaborative work, and stronger reflective awareness in evaluating and improving curriculum documents. These changes suggest that teacher competency development in this context is more effective when implemented through participatory, practice-oriented, and reflective mentoring, rather than through one-way training or short-term socialization activities.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that schools and local education stakeholders institutionalize ongoing PAR-based mentoring models by integrating regular curriculum discussion forums and peer-review sessions into existing teacher working groups (MGMP). Local education offices are encouraged to support the formation of school-based or inter-school professional learning communities focused on continuous KOSP, ATP, and the refinement of teaching modules. Future community service programs should also adopt flexible mentoring schedules and sustained facilitation to ensure long-term impact and scalability. Through these operational strategies, the participatory mentoring model implemented in North Lampung can be sustained and adapted to other regions facing similar challenges in implementing the Independent Curriculum.

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