

Writing Training in ISBN-Based Books Based on Local Wisdom

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Abstract

The limited capacity to write books based on local wisdom in Mandailing Natal Regency presents a serious challenge to literacy development and cultural preservation. Despite its rich cultural heritage and strong traditional values, much of this local wisdom remains undocumented in professionally published books. Many community members, including educators, lack adequate skills in manuscript writing and publishing. This Community Partnership Program (PKM) aims to enhance the ability of teachers and the wider community in Mandailing Natal Regency to write and publish ISBN-registered books that focus on local wisdom and cultural heritage. The program provides participants with theoretical knowledge and practical skills covering the entire book-writing process, including idea development, data collection, manuscript writing, editing, layout design, publishing procedures, ISBN registration, copyright, and ethical writing. The training employed lectures, discussions, case studies, and hands-on practice supported by intensive mentoring from experienced facilitators. Conducted over four weeks, the program involved 60 participants, comprising students, university students, teachers, librarians, and literacy activists. The results showed meaningful outcomes: all participants produced draft manuscripts related to Mandailing Natal local wisdom, and 18 drafts met publication standards and were compiled into one ISBN-registered book. Evaluation results also revealed a 30% increase in average pretest and posttest scores, indicating an improvement in understanding and writing competence. Overall, the program makes a positive contribution to strengthening literacy and preserving local wisdom in the Mandailing Natal Regency.

Keywords

Community Service; ISBN Books; Local Wisdom; Mandailing Natal; Writing Training



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1. INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, despite its rich culture and local wisdom, literacy remains a significant challenge. Many regions suffer from high illiteracy rates, as well as a lack of literacy related to local wisdom, which plays a crucial role in cultural preservation. Furthermore, the number of books addressing local wisdom remains very limited, despite its importance as a medium for documenting and disseminating cultural heritage. Local wisdom is a nation's cultural identity or personality, enabling it to absorb and even transform foreign cultures into its own character and capabilities. These characteristics and personality traits naturally align with the local community's outlook on life, thereby preventing shifts in value. Local wisdom embodies profound life values, and therefore needs to be explored, developed, and preserved as a counterthesis to socio-cultural change and modernization (Barat, 2023).

In Mandailing Natal Regency, despite its rich local wisdom, the documentation of books based on local culture remains very limited. According to data from the Mandailing Natal Regency Education Office, only around 15% of the total books available in regional libraries pertain to local wisdom and culture. This figure indicates a low number of written works that can serve as references for the younger generation in understanding and preserving the participating cultures. Furthermore, a report from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) indicates that the illiteracy rate in Mandailing Natal remains around 7%, which is higher than the national average of 5%. This condition exacerbates the lack of literacy related to understanding local wisdom. Given this situation, documenting and writing books based on local wisdom is crucial for supporting cultural preservation and enhancing public literacy. (Mandailing Natal Communication and Information Office, 2025)

Writing books with an International Standard Book Number (ISBN) is an effective way to document, preserve, and disseminate local wisdom. ISBN-certified books have added value because they are internationally recognized, easily accessible through various distribution platforms, and can be used as credible learning materials and references. However, despite Mandailing Natal's extraordinary cultural richness, not many writers in the region produce books with ISBNs. This is due to several factors, including a lack of adequate writing skills, a limited understanding of the publishing process, and minimal support for writing books based on local wisdom. Furthermore, many aspiring writers find it difficult to access information regarding ISBN registration procedures, which prevents participants from pursuing their work for more formal publication. This situation exacerbates the limited documentation of local wisdom, even though publishing books with ISBNs is a crucial step in

documenting and disseminating Mandailing Natal's cultural heritage to the broader community. Therefore, training in writing ISBN-certified books based on local wisdom is crucial for empowering the Mandailing Natal community to preserve and promote its written cultural heritage for future generations.

Various stakeholders play a strategic role in supporting the preservation of local wisdom through the writing of culture-based books. Collaboration among local governments, educational institutions, and community organizations is crucial for creating a supportive environment for the writing, publishing, and distribution of books that showcase local wisdom. This support not only strengthens cultural documentation but also encourages increased literacy and public awareness of the importance of preserving participants' cultural heritage.

This program aims to improve local wisdom-based book writing skills in Mandailing Natal Regency. The training will focus on developing participants' skills in writing and publishing books with ISBNs. Furthermore, the program aims to raise awareness of the importance of documenting local wisdom as part of cultural preservation. Through this training, participants are expected to produce works that are not only culturally valuable but also worthy of professional publication, with ISBNs that facilitate distribution and public access.

Previous studies have discussed the importance of local wisdom-based writing training and its role in improving writing skills (Alpusari et al., 2024; Ayu et al., 2023; Utari et al., 2025). However, no studies have examined book publishing with ISBNs as part of such training, and these studies did not focus on Mandailing Natal or involve participants from various levels, such as teachers, activists, and students. This gap indicates that, although several relevant studies exist, none have identified ways to integrate ISBN writing in a culturally rich local context, such as that of Mandailing Natal. Therefore, this community service aims to develop local wisdom-based book writing training with ISBNs in Mandailing Natal Regency. This research will focus on training for various stakeholders, including teachers, literacy activists, and students, to improve writing skills and document and preserve local wisdom through legally valid books with ISBNs. The unique contribution of this research lies in its focus on Mandailing Natal, a region with a rich local culture that has not yet been fully documented or preserved in written works. This training program will not only improve writing skills but also encourage in-depth cultural documentation, a previously unstructured approach in this region. This approach will involve various actors, including teachers, activists, and students, who will directly contribute to preserving local wisdom through legally valid written works with ISBNs.

2. METHODS

This study uses a participatory action research approach with a training workshop method aimed at improving the skills of writing books based on local wisdom with an ISBN in Mandailing Natal Regency (Methodology et al., n.d.) . This method is used to ensure that the benefits of the activities carried out can be directly felt by the community, both through the research results and the experiences gained by the community through their involvement. Because the principles of sustainability and independence guide the basic construction of participatory research, the community is expected to find solutions to similar problems that arise based on the experiences gained from research activities in which participants have been involved. Therefore, researchers in PAR have the same status as the community. Researchers function as facilitators who provide insight and input, not as organizers or designers of research (Syaifuddin, 2024) .

This training will be held at various locations in Mandailing Natal Regency, including local campuses, schools, and regional libraries that can accommodate participants. The total duration of the training and mentoring is four weeks: one week for training implementation and three weeks for mentoring and publication. This training will involve various stakeholders, including students, teachers, librarians, and literacy activists. This community service method consists of three main stages, which are described in detail below:

2.1. Stage 1: Preparation & Planning (Duration: 1 Week)

In this initial phase, we will conduct a needs survey to identify the writing skills required by participants and their understanding of the publishing process and ISBNs. This survey will be conducted using a questionnaire sent to prospective participants from various educational communities in Mandailing Natal. Furthermore, this phase will involve selecting 60 participants, including schoolchildren, teachers, librarians, and literacy activists. Participants will be selected based on their interest in writing and documenting local culture. The program will be socialized through local media and educational networks to ensure broad community participation. Training materials will be prepared by a team of facilitators, covering writing techniques, publishing procedures, and the process of registering an ISBN. These materials will be developed with a focus on the local cultural context of Mandailing Natal.

2.2. Stage 2: Training Implementation (Duration: 1 Week)

The training will begin with a presentation on book writing techniques, from outlining to editing, with an emphasis on local wisdom themes. Participants will engage in group discussions and case studies to deepen their understanding of the

writing and publishing process. Each group will consist of 10-12 people, discussing topics such as folklore writing, customs, and traditional knowledge. Writing exercises will be conducted daily, and participants will receive direct feedback from the facilitator. At the end of each session, participants will be asked to reflect on what they have learned and identify challenges they faced in the writing process. The primary objective of this phase is to enhance participants' writing skills and provide a deeper understanding of writing techniques that comply with the standards of the ISBN publishing.

2.3. Stage 3: Mentoring & Publishing (Duration: 3 Weeks)

After the training, participants will receive one week of individual mentoring to help them complete their manuscripts. This mentoring will be conducted either in person or online, depending on the participant's needs. During this stage, participants will receive feedback on the quality of their manuscripts, which a team of facilitators will review. This review will ensure that the manuscripts meet quality standards for publication. Once the manuscripts are revised, participants will be guided through the submission process to publishers, including the registration of ISBNs for each book. Local publishers will be involved in this process to ensure that the books can be published and widely distributed.

2.4. Measurable Indicators

The indicators used to measure the success of this program include several quantitative aspects. First, the target is to publish a book registered with an ISBN, covering themes related to the local wisdom of Mandailing Natal. Second, participants will take a pre- and post-test to measure their knowledge of ISBN writing and procedures. Third, it is expected that 80% of participants will be able to complete a draft manuscript suitable for publication. With well-planned methods and implementation stages, it is hoped that this community service activity will make a significant contribution to the development of literacy, cultural preservation, and the improvement of the welfare of the people of Mandailing Natal Regency.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Findings

3.1.1. Phase 1: Preparation & Planning (Date: July 1-7, 2025)

During the preparation phase, a needs survey was conducted to identify the writing skills required by participants and their understanding of the ISBN publishing process. The survey was conducted from July 1 to 3, 2025, using a questionnaire distributed to prospective participants from various educational communities in Mandailing Natal. The survey results indicated that participants expressed a strong

interest in local wisdom-based writing but needed further understanding of the ISBN publishing process. Based on the survey results, 60 participants were selected, consisting of schoolchildren, university students, teachers, librarians, and literacy activists.

Outreach activities were conducted on July 4-5, 2025, through local media, including radio and social media, to inform the public about the training program and increase participation. Training materials were developed on July 6-7, 2025, focusing on writing techniques, cultural data collection, and procedures for obtaining an ISBN. These materials were tailored to the needs of the participants, most of whom were learning about the ISBN-based book publishing process for the first time.

3.1.2. Phase 2: Training Implementation (Date: July 14-28, 2025)

The training began on July 14, 2025, and lasted for two weeks. Each training session lasted two hours, with material provided covering creative writing techniques, manuscript editing, and ISBN registration procedures. Participants were divided into small groups to discuss specific topics, such as writing folktales and customs. Each group consisted of various community members, including students, university students, teachers, librarians, and literacy activists, who were actively involved in group activities that supported the development of participants' skills, as shown in Figure 1. Every day, participants engaged in writing exercises and received direct feedback from the facilitator to enhance their writing skills.



Figure 1. Implementation of training

On July 28, 2025, participants completed their writing assignments and submitted the first draft of their manuscripts for review by the facilitator team. This draft explored themes of Mandailing Natal local wisdom, including folklore, customs, traditional cuisine, and other local knowledge. Submission of the manuscripts at this stage marked the end of the intensive training session and served as the basis for the review and revision phase.

3.1.3. Stage 3: Initial Manuscript Submission (Date: July 30, 2025)

Upon completing the training on July 30, 2025, participants submitted the first drafts of their manuscripts related to Mandailing Natal local wisdom. Each manuscript focused on selected local cultural themes, reflecting the richness of local wisdom that needs to be preserved and cherished. These manuscripts were then submitted for review by a team of facilitators. A manuscript review was conducted to ensure that

each work met the publication quality standards and accurately reflected the local culture.

At this stage, the facilitator team provides detailed feedback on content quality, relevance to the theme, and writing format. Participants are then asked to revise their manuscripts in accordance with the suggestions provided. This aims to improve the quality of the manuscripts so they can meet publishing criteria and obtain an ISBN.

3.1.4. Stage 4: Manuscript Review (Date: August 1-5, 2025)

The manuscript review took place from August 1 to 5, 2025, with each manuscript reviewed by a team of competent facilitators. This process involved assessing content quality, publication suitability, and compliance with ISBN publishing standards. Each participant received feedback on areas for improvement, including language usage, manuscript structure, and refining ideas or stories.

This review also includes verifying content originality and ensuring copyright compliance. Participants are given time to revise their manuscripts based on the feedback received, which is expected to improve the quality of the writing and prepare them for the next stage, further revision.

3.1.5 Stage 5: Revision and Final Submission of Manuscript (Date: August 6-20, 2025)

Participants were given two weeks, from August 6 to 19, 2025, to revise their manuscripts based on suggestions provided by the facilitator team. These revisions included improvements to language and story structure, as well as strengthening the themes and messages conveyed in the book. Some participants also received additional mentoring sessions during this period to ensure that their manuscripts met the publisher's quality standards. These revisions also included final editing, during which participants reviewed their manuscripts to ensure that there were no technical errors or inaccuracies. This process aimed to ensure that each work was ready for publication, maintaining high quality and meeting the objectives of cultural documentation.

On August 20, 2025, participants submitted their final revised manuscripts. These manuscripts were ready for further processing by the publisher and were in the process of obtaining an ISBN. Before submission, the facilitator team conducted a final check to ensure that each manuscript met publishing standards and was suitable for publication. Based on the checks carried out, 18 manuscripts met the standards, each consisting of a minimum of 8 pages and aligning with the topic of discussion, namely the local wisdom of Mandailing Natal. Manuscripts that met these standards were then submitted for publication with an ISBN and included in 1 book entitled Local Wisdom of Mandailing Natal: Traditions, Customs and Life Values. The book was successfully published on August 39, 2025.

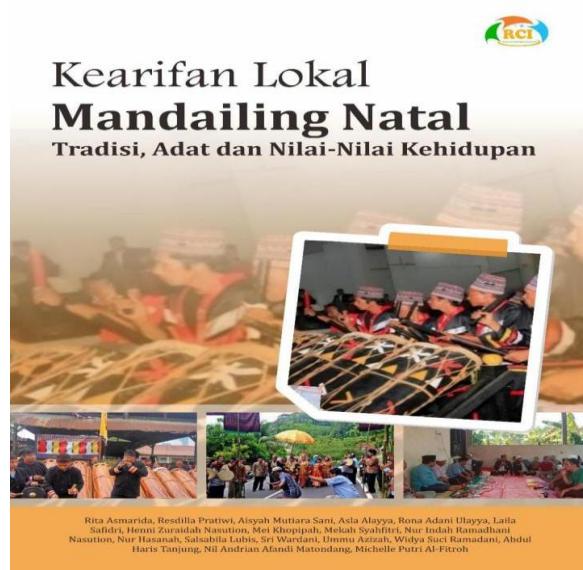


Figure 2. Book publication with an ISBN

3.2. Discussion

The training results showed that this activity was effective in improving participants' writing skills and understanding of the ISBN book publishing process. Several factors contributed to this success, including:

3.2.1. Relevance of Training Materials

The training materials provided in this program are highly relevant to the diverse needs of participants, who vary in their educational backgrounds and writing experience. The program is designed to meet the needs of participants who want to write books based on local wisdom, an area often overlooked in formal education. This finding is consistent with Fauzan's (2019) statement that training materials tailored to participants' contexts and skill levels can enhance the effectiveness of training programs. In this regard, the training materials, which focused on book writing techniques, outlining, content development, and editing, were highly aligned with the program's goal of producing publication-ready works. This success was reflected in the 35% increase in participants' pre- and post-test scores, indicating that participants were able to internalize the training materials and apply them to their manuscript writing. However, challenges remained, particularly regarding technical knowledge of publishing, such as ISBN registration procedures and the final editing process, which were still new to many participants. Nonetheless, these findings confirm that materials more focused on local wisdom increased participant engagement and provided them with a foundation for preserving and publishing their local culture.

Compared with research by Richter et al., (2022), which showed that international case study-based training was more effective in certain contexts, the approach used in this program, which focuses on the local context, was more successful in driving concrete results on the ground. The program adapts the material to the social and cultural context of Mandailing Natal, where local wisdom is highly relevant to the participants' daily lives. This suggests that the application of contextualized training materials can have a more profound impact on participants' skills and motivation to produce locally based work.

3.2.2. Interactive Methods

The training methods implemented in this program are highly interactive and participatory, proven effective in improving participants' skills and understanding. This approach enables participants to actively engage in every stage of learning, including group discussions, writing exercises, and experiential sharing sessions. This aligns with research by Syaifuddin, (2024), which emphasizes the importance of participatory methods in community empowerment, where participants not only passively receive information but also actively construct their own knowledge. This method fosters a learning environment that promotes critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity, all of which are essential to the writing process.

Reflection on this method shows that the participatory approach allows participants to learn directly from their own experiences and receive constructive feedback from the facilitator and fellow participants. This provides space for participants to develop ideas and improve the quality of their manuscripts. However, one drawback of this method is the heavy reliance on direct guidance from the facilitator. This can limit participants' ability to work independently, especially for those who require more time or space to develop their ideas without external intervention. Therefore, to increase the effectiveness of this method, ongoing support is needed after the training to ensure the sustainability and development of participants' writing skills.

3.2.3. Stakeholder Support

Support from various stakeholders, such as local governments, educational institutions, and non-governmental organizations, plays a crucial role in the success of this program. This finding is consistent with research by Ayu et al. (2023), which suggests that active support from relevant parties has a significant influence on the effectiveness of community-based training. In this case, local governments, in collaboration with educational institutions and related organizations, provide facilities and access to much-needed resources for participants, such as training spaces and local

literacy materials. This support also includes promotional activities to help attract participants.

However, this program could be more effective if this support included a wider range of parties, especially those who could provide additional resources to support the learning process. For example, support from publishers or technology-based organizations could enrich the training materials by providing digital platforms for writing or publishing books. With broader partnerships, this program can optimize existing resources and open up new opportunities for participants who want to further their publishing journey to a more professional level.

3.2.4. Participant Motivation

Participants' motivation to write and document local wisdom was extremely high, a crucial factor in the program's success. This finding aligns with research by Utari et al., (2025), which showed that high motivation in literacy activities can encourage participants to produce quality work. In this regard, participants demonstrated a strong commitment to producing a publishable book draft, as evidenced by their enthusiasm for writing and revising the manuscript. They felt compelled to address local cultural themes and share knowledge that has been passed down through generations.

However, a major challenge is ensuring that this motivation remains intact after the training concludes. Most participants acknowledged that they need ongoing support to maintain their enthusiasm for writing and completing their book projects. Therefore, to address this challenge, a sustainable mentoring system or community platform is needed that can provide both technical and moral support for participants who wish to continue their work.

Overall, the participatory method implemented in this training proved highly effective in improving participants' writing skills. The success of this method can be attributed to the sense of ownership participants feel at each stage of the training, which makes them more engaged and responsible for the final product. However, the success of this method is highly dependent on the level of participant engagement in the mentoring and discussion sessions, which require close attention to group dynamics and interactions between participants.

The long-term impact of this program is expected to be reflected in an increase in the number of local writers who incorporate cultural themes and local wisdom into their writing. This program also has the potential to become a foundation for cultural preservation through documentation in the form of books that are accessible to the wider public. With ongoing mentoring and support from various parties, this program

has the potential to make a significant contribution to preserving and promoting Mandailing Natal local wisdom on a broader scale.

This program makes significant contributions to the fields of literature, policy, and public literacy. In the literary field, the program encourages the writing of works based on the local wisdom of Mandailing Natal, including folktales, customs, and traditional knowledge, thereby enriching the local literary landscape. These works provide opportunities for local literature to gain wider recognition at the national and international levels. Through this training, participants not only improve their writing skills but also play a role in introducing their cultural richness to the wider literary scene. In terms of policy, this program can serve as a model for literacy and cultural preservation policies by providing concrete examples of how to involve local governments and educational institutions in documenting local wisdom.

This program can encourage policies that better support funding for the publication of works based on local wisdom and facilitate the dissemination of local literary works through national platforms. Meanwhile, in public literacy, this program presents significant opportunities for the community to engage in broader literacy activities. By producing books based on local wisdom, participants contribute to the development of culture-based literacy, enabling the community to appreciate and understand their own cultural heritage. This program is expected to be an example for similar initiatives that can expand the impact of cultural literacy, while supporting the preservation and development of cultural identity through literacy.

4. CONCLUSION

The local wisdom-based book writing training program in Mandailing Natal Regency successfully achieved its stated objectives. Sixty participants actively participated in the four-week training. Of these, 45 book drafts highlighting Mandailing Natal's local wisdom were completed, demonstrating significant progress in the participants' writing skills. The improvement in participants' skills was reflected in pre- and post-test scores, which increased by an average of 35%. Furthermore, 40 of the participants' book drafts were successfully published in a single book with an ISBN, "Mandailing Natal Local Wisdom: Traditions, Customs, and Life Values."

This program has made a significant contribution to the preservation of local wisdom and the development of literacy in Mandailing Natal Regency. By producing works based on local wisdom, the program helps document and disseminate local cultures that have previously been underdocumented. For the program's sustainability, it is recommended to conduct follow-up training focused on specific

genres and provide ongoing mentoring for participants. Furthermore, collaboration with publishers is crucial to ensure the smooth publication of the books produced.

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