# COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE IN COMMUNICATION SKILLS DEVELOPMENT TRAINING PROGRAMS

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### Abstract

Effective communication skills are essential for personal development and community cohesion, yet many communities need access to tailored training programs. The Community Assistance aims to address this gap by enhancing the communication abilities of community members through a participatory and context-specific approach. The program was designed to improve public speaking, active listening, non-verbal communication, and written communication skills among participants. Utilizing a Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology, the program engaged community members in the needs assessment, design, implementation, and evaluation phases. This collaborative approach ensured the training was relevant and effective. The results demonstrated significant improvements in participants' communication skills, with notable increases in confidence and proficiency. Enhanced communication led to greater community engagement, improved employment prospects, and better educational outcomes. The training also strengthened social networks and fostered a sense of community cohesion. In conclusion, the program successfully empowered individuals and promoted sustainable community development. The findings underscore the importance of tailored communication skills training and provide a model for similar initiatives in other communities.

**Keywords**: Assistance, Communication Skills, Training Programs

#### Abstrak

Keterampilan komunikasi yang efektif sangat penting untuk pengembangan pribadi dan kohesi masyarakat, namun banyak masyarakat tidak memiliki akses terhadap program pelatihan yang disesuaikan. Kegiatan pendampingan masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk mengatasi kesenjangan ini dengan meningkatkan kemampuan komunikasi anggota masyarakat melalui pendekatan partisipatif dan spesifik konteks. Program ini dirancang untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara di depan umum, mendengarkan secara aktif, komunikasi non-verbal, dan komunikasi tertulis di antara para peserta. Dengan menggunakan metodologi Penelitian Tindakan Partisipatif (PAR), program ini melibatkan anggota masyarakat dalam tahap penilaian kebutuhan, perancangan, implementasi, dan evaluasi. Pendekatan kolaboratif ini memastikan pelatihan tersebut relevan dan efektif. Hasilnya menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan dalam keterampilan komunikasi peserta, dengan peningkatan yang signifikan dalam kepercayaan diri dan kemahiran. Peningkatan komunikasi menghasilkan keterlibatan masyarakat yang lebih besar, prospek pekerjaan yang lebih baik, dan hasil pendidikan yang lebih baik. Pelatihan ini juga memperkuat jaringan sosial dan menumbuhkan rasa kohesi masyarakat. Kesimpulannya, program ini berhasil memberdayakan individu dan mendorong pembangunan masyarakat berkelanjutan. Temuan ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya pelatihan keterampilan komunikasi yang disesuaikan dan memberikan model untuk inisiatif serupa di komunitas lain.

Kata Kunci: Pendampingan, Keterampilan Komunikasi, Program Pelatihan.

# INTRODUCTION

Effective communication is vital in both personal and professional spheres, playing a crucial role in individuals' and organizations' success. Despite its importance, many communities, especially in underprivileged or rural areas, lack adequate training resources to enhance their communication abilities (García-Peñalvo, 2016; Lascano Pérez & Altamirano Carvajal, 2023). This gap in access can

lead to many issues, including unemployment, poor interpersonal relationships, and limited community development.

Communication skills encompass a range of abilities, including speaking, listening, writing, and non-verbal communication. These skills are essential for effective interaction and understanding in various contexts, from business negotiations to social interactions (Aldiab et al., 2019; Irawan et al., 2023). However, many communities need more tailored training programs that address their specific needs and cultural context to develop these skills. Previous community assistance programs have often focused on other developmental aspects, such as technical skills, health, or education, while neglecting the critical area of communication (Rajadurai et al., 2018).

The primary issue is the need for more structured communication skills training programs in many communities. This deficiency hinders individuals' potential to fully participate in economic, social, and political activities, thereby limiting overall community progress (Asfahani et al., 2023; Malkisedek Taneo et al., 2019). Furthermore, existing programs are often generic and fail to consider different communities' unique characteristics and needs, leading to ineffective outcomes.

The interest in this community assistance project lies in its innovative approach to addressing the gap in communication skills training. Unlike previous programs that often adopt a one-size-fits-all model, this initiative will tailor its training modules to the specific needs of the target community. Doing so aims to provide more relevant and impactful training that can genuinely improve communication skills (Matli & Ngoepe, 2020; Nugrahhu et al., 2023).

Past community development programs have rarely emphasized communication skills or integrated them into a holistic development strategy. This oversight presents a significant gap that this project aims to fill (Aldiab et al., 2019; Eko & Putranto, 2019; Javed et al., 2018; Musa et al., 2024; Warren & Aloia, 2019; Yu, 2022). By focusing on communication, this initiative not only addresses a critical skill area but also complements other developmental efforts by enhancing the effectiveness of community members in various engagements. Previous Community Assistance Research in Communication Skills Development Training Programs is A notable study conducted in rural India focused on empowering women through communication skills training. The program aimed to improve women's abilities to express themselves and engage in community activities. By enhancing their communication skills, participants could advocate more effectively for their rights, participate in local governance, and improve their entrepreneurial ventures. This study highlighted the significant impact of targeted communication skills training on marginalized groups, leading to increased confidence and socioeconomic development. In urban Ghana, a project targeted at young people sought to develop their communication skills to prepare them for the job market better. The training included workshops on public speaking, resume writing, and interview techniques (Jamin et al., 2024; Mufidah & Roifah, 2020). The results demonstrated that participants who completed the program had a higher success rate in job applications and interviews compared to those who did not participate. This research underscores the importance of equipping youth with essential communication skills to enhance their employability and career prospects.

The primary objective of this project is to design and implement a communication skills development training program tailored to the specific needs of the target community. This program will encompass various aspects of communication, including verbal, non-verbal, written, and listening skills, ensuring a comprehensive enhancement of participants' abilities.

The anticipated benefits of this project are multifaceted. Firstly, participants are expected to improve their communication skills significantly, leading to better job prospects and interpersonal relationships. Secondly, the community will benefit from a more engaged and capable populace, fostering greater community cohesion and development. Finally, the success of this tailored training program could serve as a model for other communities, encouraging the adoption of similar initiatives elsewhere.

So, this community assistance project aims to bridge a critical gap in communication skills training, offering a novel and tailored approach that addresses the unique needs of the target community. By doing so, it aspires to foster individual growth and broader community development, ultimately contributing to a more skilled and connected society.

#### **METHOD**

The service method used is the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, which in this article involves a collaborative approach that actively involves community members in the research and

training process for a total of 70 training participants. This method emphasizes joint learning and empowers participants to contribute to the development and implementation of training programs in Karawang Regency in August 2023. Here is a detailed description of how the PAR method can be applied (Chevalier & Buckles, 2019):

- Stage 1: Community Engagement and Needs Assessment: The first stage involves engaging with the community to build trust and understand their specific communication needs. Researchers and facilitators hold meetings, focus groups, and interviews with community members, leaders, and stakeholders to gather insights into their communication challenges and aspirations. This participatory needs assessment ensures the training program is tailored to the community's unique context and priorities.
- Stage 2: Collaborative Program Design: Community members and researchers collaboratively design the communication skills training program in this stage. Workshops and planning sessions are conducted where participants share their ideas and co-create the curriculum. This collaborative design process ensures that the program addresses real-world scenarios and relevant topics, making it more effective and engaging for the participants.
- **Stage 3: Implementation and Continuous Feedback**: During the implementation phase, the training sessions are conducted by both researchers and community facilitators. The program includes interactive activities, role-playing, and practical exercises to enhance various aspects of communication, such as public speaking, active listening, and non-verbal communication. Throughout this phase, continuous feedback is collected from participants through surveys, discussion sessions, and reflection activities. This feedback loop allows for real-time adjustments and improvements to the training program.
- **Stage 4: Reflection and Evaluation**: After the training sessions, a comprehensive evaluation is conducted to assess the program's impact. Participants and researchers engage in reflective discussions to evaluate the outcomes and identify areas for further improvement. This stage involves analyzing pre-and post-training assessments, participant feedback, and observational data to measure the effectiveness of the training. The findings are then shared with the community, fostering a sense of ownership and encouraging sustained development.
- Stage 5: Sustaining and Scaling the Program: The final stage focuses on sustaining the benefits of the training program and exploring opportunities for scaling it to other communities. This includes training community members to become facilitators, creating resource materials, and establishing support networks. By empowering the community to take ownership of the program, the PAR method ensures its long-term sustainability and potential for broader impact.

Through the PAR method, Community Assistance not only enhances participants' communication skills but also fosters a collaborative and empowering environment that strengthens community bonds and promotes continuous learning and development.

# RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the article yielded significant and multifaceted results, reflecting the program's effectiveness in enhancing participants' communication skills and contributing to broader community development. One of the primary findings was a marked improvement in the participants' communication abilities. Pre- and post-training assessments showed a significant increase in proficiency across various communication dimensions, including public speaking, active listening, non-verbal communication, and written communication. Participants reported feeling more confident in articulating their thoughts and engaging in meaningful conversations. This improvement was particularly evident in community meetings and social interactions, where participants demonstrated enhanced clarity and assertiveness.

The program also fostered greater community engagement and participation. The training facilitated more effective and inclusive dialogues within the community by equipping individuals with better communication skills. Participants were more willing to voice their opinions, share ideas, and participate in community decision-making. This heightened engagement led to a more collaborative and cohesive community environment where diverse perspectives were acknowledged and valued.

Regarding socioeconomic benefits, the training program had a notable impact on employment and educational opportunities. Many participants reported improved performance in job interviews and career advancement due to their enhanced communication skills. Additionally, educators participating in the program could better communicate with students and colleagues, improving teaching

effectiveness and student outcomes. The program thus contributed to individual career growth and overall educational quality in the community.

Another key finding was strengthening social networks and relationships within the community. The training sessions not only improved participants' communication skills but also fostered a sense of camaraderie and mutual support. Participants built stronger relationships with each other, creating a more supportive and interconnected community. This enhanced social cohesion was particularly beneficial in addressing communal challenges and fostering a more resilient and adaptive community.

The participatory approach of the program ensured that the skills and knowledge gained were sustainable. By involving community members in the design and implementation of the training, the program created a foundation for ongoing development. Participants expressed a commitment to continuing their learning and applying their new skills in various aspects of community life. Furthermore, the program inspired some participants to become facilitators, extending the benefits of the training to a wider audience.

So, the article produced significant positive outcomes, demonstrating the transformative power of tailored communication skills training. The findings highlight the program's role in enhancing individual capabilities, fostering community engagement, and contributing to sustainable development. The success of this initiative provides a model for similar programs in other communities, underscoring the importance of communication skills in personal and communal growth.



Figure 1. Community Assistance in Communication Skills Development

Table 1. The Result Community Assistance

Outcome Area	Indicator	Pre- Training (Baseline)	Post- Training (Outcome)	Improvement (%)
Communication Skills	Proficiency in public speaking (average score out of 10)	4.5	7.8	73%
	Proficiency in active listening (average score out of 10)	5.0	8.2	64%
	Proficiency in non-verbal communication score out of 10)	4.8	8.0	67%
	Proficiency in written communication (average score out of 10)	5.2	7.9	52%
Community Engagement	Participation in community meetings (percentage of participants engaged)	45%	78%	73%
Employment and Education	Success in job interviews (percentage of successful participants)	30%	65%	117%

	Teacher communication effectiveness (average score out of 10)	5.5	8.3	51%
Social Networks and Relationships	Strength of social networks (average score out of 10)	5.0	8.1	62%
	Sense of community cohesion (average score out of 10)	5.3	8.2	55%
Sustainability and Community Development	Number of new facilitators trained	0	15	-
	Commitment to ongoing learning (percentage of participants)	40%	85%	113%

This table overviews the improvements observed across various areas due to the communication skills development training program. The indicators demonstrate significant progress in communication proficiency, community engagement, employment and education outcomes, social networks, and the program's sustainability.



Figure 2. Implementation of Community Assistance in Developing Communication Skills

The most notable outcome of the training program was the substantial improvement in participants' communication skills. The average proficiency scores for public speaking, active listening, non-verbal, and written communication significantly increased (Gupta, 2018). These improvements indicate that the tailored training approach effectively addressed the specific communication needs of the participants. The enhanced communication abilities boosted individuals' confidence and equipped them with essential skills for various aspects of their lives (Sari et al., 2020; Waham et al., 2023). This finding aligns with previous studies emphasizing the transformative power of targeted communication training in diverse contexts.

Another critical outcome was the marked increase in community engagement. The percentage of participants actively involved in community meetings rose from 45% to 78%, demonstrating the program's success in fostering a more participatory and inclusive community environment (Agdal et al., 2019; Hasanah, 2021). This increased engagement can be attributed to the improved communication skills, which enabled participants to articulate their ideas more clearly and confidently. Enhanced engagement is crucial for community development, ensuring diverse voices are heard and considered in decision-making processes (Nabilah Mokhtar et al., 2023; Serrano et al., 2019). This outcome suggests that communication training can play a vital role in empowering communities and enhancing democratic practices at the local level.

The program also had significant socioeconomic benefits, particularly in employment and education. The success rate in job interviews more than doubled, highlighting the practical value of communication skills in improving employability (Alén et al., 2017; Lyman et al., 2023). Participants reported feeling better prepared for interviews and more capable of presenting themselves effectively

to potential employers. Similarly, improving teachers' communication effectiveness suggests that the training positively impacted educational outcomes. Better communication in the classroom can lead to more engaging and effective teaching, ultimately benefiting students' learning experiences (Akinwamide & Oguntade, 2023; Sangsawang, 2015). These findings underscore the importance of communication skills for personal development and broader socioeconomic advancement.

The training program also contributed to stronger social networks and relationships within the community. The average scores for the strength of social networks and the sense of community cohesion increased significantly (Bright et al., 2021; Nolan & Molla, 2017). This indicates that participants were able to build more meaningful connections with others, fostering a supportive and interconnected community. Strong social networks are essential for resilience and collective action, enabling communities to address challenges more effectively (Amri et al., 2024; Desrianita, 2018). The enhancement of social cohesion further highlights the role of communication skills in promoting unity and cooperation among community members.

The sustainability of the program is another critical aspect of the discussion. The training improved individual skills and empowered participants to become facilitators, extending the program's benefits to a wider audience (Boley et al., 2017; Shin, 2018). The commitment to ongoing learning, as evidenced by the high percentage of participants expressing a desire to continue their development, indicates the program's lasting impact. This sustainability ensures the initial gains are maintained and built upon over time (Asfahani et al., 2022; Chambers & Conway, 1992; Nugroho et al., 2023). The success of this approach provides a model for similar initiatives in other communities, demonstrating the potential for scalability and broader impact.

The results of this program have several important implications. Firstly, they highlight the value of tailored communication skills training in addressing specific community needs and contexts. Future programs should consider adopting a participatory approach to ensure relevance and effectiveness. Secondly, the findings underscore the interconnected nature of communication skills and broader community development. Enhancing communication abilities can increase engagement, better employment prospects, stronger social networks, and sustained development.

The comprehensive analysis of Community Assistance reveals several layers of impact and implications that extend beyond the immediate results. This program's success can be attributed to its tailored approach, which addressed the unique communication needs of the community while fostering a participatory and inclusive environment (Rifat et al., 2023; Torkayesh & Torkayesh, 2021); (Kose, 2020). The significant improvements in communication skills among participants highlight the effectiveness of a customized training approach. The program's ability to adapt its curriculum to the specific needs of the community members ensured that the content was relevant and practical. This relevancy was crucial in keeping participants engaged and motivated throughout the training (Ardiyanti et al., 2021; Rizki & Wahdah, 2022). Furthermore, using interactive methods, such as roleplaying and practical exercises, allowed participants to practice and internalize new skills in a supportive setting.

The increase in community engagement and participation underscores the program's role in empowering individuals. By enhancing their communication abilities, participants felt more confident and capable of contributing to community discussions and decision-making processes (Darimi, 2017; Mantikei & Manurung, 2020); (Sulaeman et al., 2020). This empowerment is critical in fostering a more inclusive and democratic community environment. The program also demonstrated that improved communication skills can lead to a more cohesive and resilient community, as individuals are better equipped to collaborate and support one another (Belagra & Draoui, 2018; Faisal & Kisman, 2020).

The notable improvements in employment outcomes and educational effectiveness point to the broader socioeconomic impact of the training program. Enhanced communication skills are directly linked to increased employability and job success, as evidenced by participants' higher success rates in job interviews (Eyob Kenta, 2019; Wahyuniar et al., 2024). In the educational context, improved teacher communication resulted in more effective classroom interactions, benefiting educators and students (Damayanti et al., 2024; Tormey, 2019; Wachira, 2020). These findings suggest that communication skills development is a valuable investment with far-reaching benefits for individuals and the community.

The program's sustainability is demonstrated by training new facilitators from within the community and the participants' commitment to ongoing learning. This approach ensures that the

program's benefits are maintained and expanded over time. The ability to replicate this model in other communities further highlights its scalability and potential for widespread impact. By empowering local facilitators, the program can adapt to different contexts while maintaining its core principles of relevance and inclusivity.

## **CONCLUSION**

Community Assistance has proven a highly effective initiative, demonstrating substantial improvements in participants' communication skills, community engagement, and socioeconomic outcomes. By adopting a tailored and participatory approach, the program successfully addressed the community's specific needs, leading to increased confidence and proficiency in various aspects of communication. The empowerment of individuals through enhanced communication abilities facilitated personal growth and fostered a more inclusive and cohesive community environment.

Furthermore, the program's emphasis on sustainability and capacity-building ensures its benefits extend beyond the initial training period. The development of new facilitators and the commitment to ongoing learning within the community highlight the potential for long-term impact and scalability. This initiative is a valuable model for other communities seeking to enhance communication skills and achieve sustainable development. Overall, the program underscores the critical role of effective communication in driving personal and communal progress, offering a blueprint for future community development efforts.

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