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From data opacity to data literacy: co-producing welfare transparency through decile-based public information socialization at the village level

Rafli Miftakhul Roziqin*^{ORCID}, Salwa Fadiya, Abdi Luhung Maulana, Talita Benita Agus Putri, Zaskia Indah Pratiwi, Mutiara Lintang Kinasih, Azka Kurniawan Shodiq, Adinda Dwi Nur Solihati, Darrell Gibran, Nadia Septiya Salsabila, Tyas Fadillah, Tunggul Adi Purwonugroh^{ORCID}

Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Jl. Profesor DR. HR Boenyamin No.708, Dukuhbandong, Grendeng, Kec. Purwokerto Utara, Kabupaten Banyumas, Jawa Tengah 53122, Indonesia

*e-mail: raflimroziqin@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Transparency in social assistance governance remains a key challenge in improving targeting accuracy and public trust, particularly at the village level. This community service study examines the impact of decile-based public information socialization on community understanding of social assistance distribution and the Kartu Indonesia Sehat (KIS) program in Banjareja Village, Kebumen Regency. Using a pre-experimental one-group pre-test–post-test design, data were collected from 32 participants, including village officials and RT/RW representatives. Community understanding was measured using a structured questionnaire administered before and after the socialization activity. Owing to the non-normal data distribution, differences between the pre-test and post-test scores were analyzed using the Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks Test. The results indicate a statistically significant improvement in community understanding following the socialization activity ($p < 0.05$). The findings suggest that combining public information transparency with interactive discussions enhances policy literacy and supports participatory engagement in social assistance governance. The involvement of local actors reflects the practice of co-production, in which communities actively contribute to understanding and monitoring welfare policies. This study highlights the importance of participatory, data-informed socialization as a practical approach to strengthening transparency, accountability, and community engagement in social assistance programs at the village level.

Keywords: community service; co-production; decile-based data; public information transparency; social assistance

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RESEARCH & PUBLISHING



1. INTRODUCTION

Transparency in social assistance governance has become a critical issue in efforts to enhance the effectiveness, accountability, and fairness of welfare policies. Numerous studies indicate that limited access to public information and low levels of public understanding regarding eligibility criteria remain major contributors to social assistance targeting errors, including both inclusion and exclusion errors (Khasan et al., 2025; Siahaan et al., 2025). Insufficient transparency not only affects the accuracy of beneficiary targeting but also undermines public trust in government institutions and may generate social tensions at the local level, particularly in communities where social assistance plays a vital role in household welfare (Nunung et al., 2025). Despite the growing emphasis on transparency in welfare governance, previous studies have largely focused on administrative data management, digital platforms, and policy reforms at the institutional level, while relatively little attention has been paid to how communities understand and interpret welfare targeting information. This gap highlights the importance of examining transparency not only as information disclosure but also as a process that involves public comprehension and participation.

In Indonesia, the principle of public information transparency has been institutionalized through Law No. 14 of 2008 on Public Information Disclosure, which mandates public institutions to provide accessible and accurate information to citizens. The implementation of major social assistance programmes, such as the Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH), Bantuan Pangan Non-Tunai (BPNT), and Kartu Indonesia Sehat (KIS), relies heavily on the accuracy and legitimacy of beneficiary data derived from the Data Terpadu Kesejahteraan Sosial (DTKS). Despite continuous efforts to update and integrate this database, empirical evidence suggests that targeting inaccuracies remain a persistent challenge, particularly at the village level, where gaps in data interpretation, dissemination, and community understanding are frequently observed (Siregar et al., 2025; Zahara et al., 2024). These challenges indicate that improving transparency requires not only technical improvements in data systems but also strategies that strengthen public understanding of how welfare data are generated, classified, and used in policy implementation.

Recent public policy literature emphasizes that transparency should not be understood merely as the passive provision of information, but as a dynamic process that requires active public engagement and interaction. The concept of co-production highlights the importance of collaboration between government actors and communities in the delivery, monitoring, and evaluation of public services (Romero, 2025; Kang, 2023; Kim & Lee, 2017). In the context of social assistance, the involvement of local actors, such as village officials and RT/RW representatives, is particularly important, as they function as intermediaries who translate national policy frameworks into local practices and communicate policy decisions to community members (Kang, 2023; Wijaya et al., 2022).

In this context, transparency, data literacy, and co-production are closely interconnected concepts. Transparency initiatives that disclose welfare data and eligibility criteria provide the informational foundation for public oversight. However, the availability of information alone does not guarantee meaningful participation if citizens lack the ability to interpret and understand data. Data literacy therefore becomes a critical intermediary factor that enables communities to comprehend welfare classifications, question policy decisions, and constructively engage with government actors. When citizens possess a sufficient understanding of public data, transparency initiatives can evolve into co-production processes in which communities actively participate in monitoring, discussing, and improving the implementation of social assistance policies at the local level.

One of the emerging challenges in data-driven social assistance systems is limited public understanding of decile-based data, which are increasingly used to classify household welfare status and determine programme eligibility. Studies have shown that inadequate literacy regarding decile classifications often leads to misinterpretations of eligibility criteria, dissatisfaction with policy outcomes, and perceptions of unfairness within communities, especially in rural areas, where access to policy information is limited (Silfiyah et al., 2024; Starke et al., 2022; Wahyuni et al., 2025). These conditions indicate that efforts to improve transparency must be accompanied by participatory and context-

sensitive socialization strategies that are tailored to local social and institutional settings. However, empirical research examining how participatory socialization activities can improve public understanding of decile-based welfare data remains limited, particularly in the context of village-level governance.

Understanding the concept of deciles is essential in data-driven social assistance systems. A decile refers to the division of a population into ten equal-sized groups based on socioeconomic status or household asset ownership, where each group represents approximately 10% of the population, ranging from the poorest decile (D1) to the wealthiest decile (D10). Compared to quintiles, decile-based classification provides a more granular measurement of socioeconomic inequality, enabling policymakers and researchers to capture heterogeneity within broader welfare groups, particularly at the extreme ends of the distribution. Empirical evidence from cross-national studies demonstrates that the use of wealth deciles reveals larger and more precise disparities than quintiles and is more effective for targeting, monitoring inequality trends, and informing policy interventions when sample sizes permit (Wong et al., 2017). In the context of social assistance governance, decile-based data offer a more accurate foundation for determining eligibility; however, without adequate public literacy and transparency, such classifications may be misinterpreted at the community level, potentially leading to dissatisfaction, perceived unfairness, and weakened trust in welfare programs.

Socialization activities that combine public information transparency with interactive discussions on decile-based data and social assistance mechanisms offer a relevant approach for strengthening community understanding and engagement. By involving village officials and RT/RW representatives in participatory discussions, such initiatives move beyond one-way information delivery and create opportunities for shared understanding, clarification, and collective reflection on welfare policies at the local level. This approach is consistent with broader efforts to promote transparency, accountability, and collaborative governance in social policy implementation (Foli et al., 2025).

At the village level, a limited understanding of decile-based data and social assistance mechanisms was identified as a practical challenge faced by local actors, particularly village officials and RT/RW representatives, who play a key role in communicating policy information to residents. Preliminary observations in Banjareja Village indicated frequent questions, misunderstandings, and dissatisfaction related to social assistance eligibility, highlighting the need for community-based intervention rather than solely administrative or technical data updates. In this context, community service activities focusing on participatory public information socialization are considered a relevant and practical approach to strengthening transparency, improving shared understanding, and supporting collaborative welfare governance at the grassroots level (Bogam et al., 2023; Widiyanto et al., 2024).

This study contributes to the literature by examining how participatory public information socialization that integrates explanations of decile-based welfare data can improve community understanding of social assistance mechanisms. By focusing on village-level actors and employing a pretest and posttest approach, this study provides empirical evidence on how data literacy initiatives can support transparency and co-production in welfare governance.

Based on this background, this study aimed to examine the impact of decile-based public information socialization on community understanding related to social assistance distribution and the Kartu Indonesia Sehat (KIS) program in Banjareja Village, Kebumen Regency. Using a pretest and posttest design, this study seeks to provide empirical evidence on how participatory socialization contributes to improved public understanding and supports more transparent and accountable social assistance governance at the village level.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. Activity Design

This community service activity employed a pre-experimental design using a one-group pre-test–post-test approach. This design was selected to measure changes in community understanding before and after the implementation of decile-based public information socialization. This approach is considered appropriate for community service activities that aim to evaluate the immediate impact of an

educational intervention on a targeted group (Setyaedhi et al., 2023). The pre-test–post-test structure allows researchers to compare baseline levels of participant understanding with post-intervention outcomes, thereby providing a practical assessment of short-term knowledge improvement resulting from the socialization activity.

2.2. Data Collection Instrument

Community understanding was measured using a structured questionnaire consisting of five items related to public information transparency, accessibility of social assistance information, perceived fairness of distribution, understanding of decile-based data, and satisfaction with the Kartu Indonesia Sehat (KIS) program. The five indicators were selected to capture key dimensions of welfare transparency and community perceptions that are directly relevant to the implementation of social assistance policies at the village level.

Each item was assessed using a dichotomous response scale (0 = no, 1 = yes) to ensure simplicity and ease of comprehension by the participants. Responses were aggregated into a composite score ranging from 0 to 5, with higher scores indicating a higher level of understanding. The same questionnaire was administered in both the pretest and posttest. The limited number of items was intentionally designed to ensure that the instrument remained concise, easily understandable, and suitable for participants with diverse educational backgrounds, particularly in a village-level community setting.

The use of a binary response scale prioritized accessibility and clarity for community participants; however, it limited the granularity of measurement and should be interpreted as an indicative assessment of understanding. In this context, the questionnaire primarily aimed to capture basic improvements in policy comprehension following the socialization activity rather than to measure complex attitudinal variations.

Although the questionnaire employed a dichotomous response scale, this design was intentionally chosen to ensure clarity and accessibility for community participants with diverse educational backgrounds. The instrument aimed to capture basic improvements in policy understanding rather than nuanced attitudinal differences. Therefore, the instrument should be considered an exploratory measurement tool suitable for evaluating short-term learning outcomes in community-based educational interventions.

Additionally, the questionnaire items were reviewed for content relevance to ensure that each indicator reflected the key aspects of transparency, accessibility, fairness, and public understanding related to social assistance governance. However, formal psychometric validation was not conducted, which represents a methodological limitation that should be considered when interpreting the findings.

The same questionnaire was administered in both the pretest and posttest. Table 1 presents the list of questionnaire items.

Table 1. List of Pre-test and Post-test Questionnaire Items

No.	Indicator	Questionnaire Item
1	Public information transparency	I understand that information transparency is important in the distribution of social assistance and the Kartu Indonesia Sehat (KIS) program.
2	Accessibility of social assistance information	I believe that information regarding social assistance is easily accessible to all village residents.
3	Perceived fairness of social assistance distribution	I believe that social assistance distribution in this village has been conducted fairly and equitably.
4	Understanding of decile-based data	I understand what decile-based data are and how they affect the distribution of social assistance.
5	Satisfaction with the KIS programme	I am satisfied with the services provided by the Kartu Indonesia Sehat (KIS) programme in this village.

Response scale: True / False

2.3. Location and Participants

The community service activity was conducted in Banjareja Village, Kuwarasan District, Kebumen Regency, on Friday, January 23, 2026. The participants consisted of village officials and RT/RW representatives who are directly involved in or affected by social assistance programs. A total sampling technique was employed, resulting in 32 participants who participated in the entire socialization process and completed both the pretest and posttest questionnaires. These participants were selected because they function as local intermediaries who communicate policy information to community members and play an important role in the implementation and monitoring of social assistance programs at the village level.

2.4. Form and Stages of Socialization

Socialization was conducted through a combination of material presentations and interactive discussions, focusing on the concept of public information transparency, understanding decile-based data in determining social assistance beneficiaries, the mechanism of social assistance distribution based on the Data Terpadu Kesejahteraan Sosial (DTKS), and the role of the community in monitoring and validating social assistance data. The materials were delivered in a simple manner using examples contextualized to village conditions to ensure that they were easily understood by participants. In addition, interactive discussions were facilitated to provide opportunities for active community participation as a form of co-production in promoting transparency in social policy (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Socialization and interactive discussion on decile-based public information transparency regarding social assistance distribution and the Kartu Indonesia Sehat (KIS) programme with village officials and RT/RW representatives in Banjareja Village

2.5. Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using JASP software following a structured analytical procedure. First, descriptive statistics were applied to summarize the characteristics of the pretest and posttest data, including minimum and maximum values, mean scores, and standard deviations. This step provided an initial overview of respondents' levels of understanding before and after the socialization activity.

Second, a normality test using the Shapiro–Wilk method was employed to assess whether the data met the assumption of normal distribution. The assessment of data distribution is an essential step in determining the most appropriate statistical technique for further analysis.

Finally, a paired-sample difference test was used to examine changes between the pretest and posttest scores. For paired data, a paired-sample t-test is appropriate when the assumption of normality is satisfied; in contrast, the Wilcoxon signed-ranks test serves as a nonparametric alternative when the normality assumption is not satisfied. All statistical analyses were conducted at a significance level of 0.05. This analytical procedure enables a systematic comparison of participant understanding before and after the intervention while ensuring that the selected statistical test aligns with the distributional characteristics of the dataset.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Variable	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Pre	32	01	05	3.687	1.446
Post	32	02	05	4.687	0.692

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the respondents' understanding, showing that the mean pre-test score was 3.687, with a standard deviation of 1.446, while the mean post-test score increased to 4.687, with a standard deviation of 0.692. An increase in the mean score indicates an improvement in the respondents' level of understanding following the socialization activity. Furthermore, the decrease in the standard deviation in the post-test suggests that the respondents' understanding became more evenly distributed after the intervention. This pattern indicates that the socialization activity not only increased overall understanding but also reduced disparities in participants' knowledge regarding social assistance transparency and decile-based welfare data. The results of the normality tests are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Result of Normality Test

Variable	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre	0.810	32	<0.001
Post	0.521	32	<0.001

Based on the results of the Shapiro–Wilk normality test presented in Table 3, the significance values for both the pre-test and post-test data were $p < 0.05$, indicating that the data were not normally distributed. This condition suggests that the normality assumption required for parametric testing was not met. Therefore, the difference between the pretest and posttest scores could not be analyzed using a paired-sample t-test, and the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was employed as an appropriate nonparametric alternative for paired data with a non-normal distribution. The results of the Wilcoxon test are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Result of Wilcoxon Test

Test Statistics	
	Pre-Post
Z	-3.574
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001

As reported in Table 4, the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test shows an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of $p < 0.05$, indicating a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores following the socialization activity. These findings suggest that decile-based information socialization significantly improved community understanding. The improvement in posttest scores indicates that increasing community data literacy through participatory information dissemination can strengthen public understanding of welfare targeting mechanisms. This finding aligns with previous studies, which highlight that transparency initiatives become more effective when citizens are equipped with the knowledge needed to interpret policy information and participate in monitoring public programs. In this context, the socialization process served as an entry point for community co-production, where village stakeholders were not only passive recipients of information but also active participants in understanding and monitoring the distribution of social assistance programs, such as Kartu Indonesia Sehat (KIS).

3.2. Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that decile-based public information socialization is associated with improved community understanding of social assistance mechanisms and eligibility criteria. This result reinforces the argument that information transparency should not be viewed merely as an administrative obligation of government, but rather as a strategic instrument for enhancing policy literacy and empowering communities in welfare governance (Siahaan et al., 2025). The increase in post-test scores, accompanied by a reduction in response variability, suggests that the socialization process not only raised overall levels of understanding but also contributed to a more even distribution of knowledge among participants. The statistical improvement observed in the post-test results also indicates that increasing community data literacy plays an important role in operationalizing transparency in social policy. Transparency initiatives are often limited to the publication of information; however, without sufficient public understanding, such information may not translate into meaningful participation. By improving participants' understanding of decile-based welfare classification, the socialization activity helped bridge the gap between information availability and community interpretation. This finding suggests that transparency becomes more effective when accompanied by efforts to strengthen citizens' capacity to interpret and utilize policy information in local governance contexts.

These findings are consistent with public information transparency theory, which emphasizes that access to clear, relevant, and comprehensible information can reduce information asymmetry between government institutions and citizens. Reducing such asymmetry is crucial for strengthening public trust and improving the effectiveness of social policy implementation (Khasan et al., 2025; Nunung et al., 2025). In the context of community service activities, this study indicates that data-driven educational interventions may serve as an effective mechanism for addressing gaps in policy understanding at the local level. In this regard, improving community data literacy can enable citizens to better interpret public information and participate more actively in governance processes, particularly in monitoring the fairness and accuracy of social assistance distribution.

Furthermore, the active involvement of village officials and RT/RW representatives reflects the practical application of co-production in social assistance governance. Rather than positioning communities as passive recipients of information, the socialization process enabled local actors to engage in shared learning, clarification, and reflection regarding the implementation of social assistance programs. Previous studies have shown that such collaborative approaches enhance policy legitimacy, foster shared responsibility, and strengthen social accountability mechanisms (Wijaya et al., 2022). In this sense, socialization functions as a collaborative space where transparency, data literacy, and community participation mutually reinforce one another, creating conditions for co-production in welfare governance.

Within the Indonesian policy context, the findings of this study are closely aligned with the implementation of Law No. 14 of 2008 on Public Information Disclosure and the use of Data Terpadu Kesejahteraan Sosial (DTKS) as the basis for determining beneficiaries of social assistance programs, such as the Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH), Bantuan Pangan Non-Tunai (BPNT), and Kartu Indonesia Sehat (KIS). Although these policies are designed to ensure fairness and targeting accuracy, implementation challenges persist at the village level, particularly due to limited public understanding of decile-based data and beneficiary classification mechanisms (Zahara et al., 2024).

The socialization activity examined in this study complements national policy efforts by strengthening community-level understanding and engagement. Improved literacy regarding decile-based data may enable communities to better interpret eligibility criteria and potentially support a more active role in monitoring and validating beneficiary data. This is particularly important given that the success of social assistance programs depends not only on formal policy design but also on how policies are interpreted, accepted, and implemented within local social contexts.

Based on these findings, several policy implications can be drawn. First, village governments should institutionalize regular socialization activities on decile-based data and social assistance mechanisms, particularly before and after assistance distribution cycles. Second, transparency of DTKS-

related information should be systematically integrated into participatory village forums, such as village deliberation meetings, to enhance public participation and accountability. Third, capacity-building initiatives for village officials and neighborhood-level actors (RT/RW) are necessary to ensure that public information is communicated in a clear, accessible, and context-sensitive manner. Implementing these measures may contribute to more transparent, accountable, and well-targeted social assistance governance, while also providing practical guidance for policymakers and local administrators seeking to strengthen community engagement in welfare programs.

4. CONCLUSION

This community service study provides empirical support for the potential effectiveness of decile-based public information socialization in improving community understanding of social assistance distribution and the Kartu Indonesia Sehat (KIS) program in Banjareja Village. The findings show a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores, indicating that participatory socialization activities effectively enhance public understanding of transparency principles, eligibility criteria, and the role of decile-based data in social assistance governance. These results reinforce the importance of combining information transparency with interactive and participatory approaches at the local level.

The study also highlights the relevance of involving village officials and RT/RW representatives as key local actors in the socialization process. Their participation facilitates a shared understanding and supports the practice of co-production in welfare governance, where communities are not merely recipients of information but active contributors to transparency and accountability. In this regard, socialization functions not only as an educational tool but also as a mechanism to strengthen collaborative governance and public trust in social assistance programs. Beyond its practical contributions, this study also highlights the importance of integrating transparency initiatives with community data literacy and participatory governance approaches to strengthen the effectiveness of welfare policy implementation.

Despite these contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study employed a pre-experimental design without a control group, which limits the ability to attribute observed changes solely to the intervention. Second, the sample size was relatively small and restricted to a single village, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. Third, the measurement focused on short-term changes in understanding and did not capture longer-term behavioral or institutional impacts, such as changes in data validation practices or reductions in targeting errors over time.

Based on these limitations, future community service and research activities are recommended to adopt comparative or quasi-experimental designs, involve multiple villages or regions, and incorporate longitudinal measurements to assess sustained impacts. Further initiatives may also integrate qualitative approaches, such as in-depth interviews or focus group discussions, to explore how improved understanding translates into concrete actions in social assistance governance. Strengthening digital literacy and incorporating technology-based transparency tools could also be explored to complement face-to-face socialization efforts.

Overall, this study underscores the potential of participatory, data-informed socialization as a practical strategy to support transparent, accountable, and collaborative social assistance governance at the village level. By strengthening community understanding and engagement, such approaches may contribute to reducing potential targeting errors and supporting the effectiveness of welfare policies in Indonesia.

Ethical Approval

This community service activity did not require formal ethical approval as it involved non-invasive procedures and focused on educational and socialization activities. The activity was conducted in

accordance with ethical principles, ensuring respect, confidentiality, and voluntary participation of all participants.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement in the community service activity. Participants were informed about the purpose of the activity and their voluntary participation.

Authors' Contributions

All authors contributed to the planning, implementation, data collection, analysis, and preparation of the manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

Disclosure Statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Notes on Contributors

Rafli Miftakhul Roziqin

<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-4274-3665>

Rafli Miftakhul Roziqin is an undergraduate student in Development Economics at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Indonesia. He served as the master of ceremonies (MC) and coordinated the overall flow of the community service activity. His academic interests include public policy, social welfare, agricultural economics, environmental economics, and rural development, with active involvement in community service activities.

Salwa Fadiya

Salwa Fadiya is an undergraduate student in Agrotechnology at the Faculty of Agriculture, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Indonesia. She assisted with participant registration, questionnaire distribution, and logistical coordination.

Abdi Luhung Maulana

Abdi Luhung Maulana is an undergraduate student in Physical Education at the Faculty of Health Sciences, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Indonesia. He served as a liaison officer, facilitating audience interaction and questionnaire completion.

Talita Benita Agus Putri

Talita Benita Agus Putri is an undergraduate student in Physical Education at the Faculty of Health Sciences, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Indonesia. She contributed as a liaison officer, assisting audience questions and questionnaire administration.

Zaskia Indah Pratiwi

Zaskia Indah Pratiwi is an undergraduate student in Management at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Indonesia. She supported event coordination and questionnaire facilitation.

Mutiara Lintang Kinasih

Mutiara Lintang Kinasih is an undergraduate student in Agrotechnology at the Faculty of Agriculture, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Indonesia. She assisted with logistical support and questionnaire facilitation.

Azka Kurniawan Shodiq

Azka Kurniawan Shodiq is an undergraduate student in Agrotechnology at the Faculty of Agriculture, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Indonesia. He contributed to logistical coordination and participant assistance.

Adinda Dwi Nur Solihati

Adinda Dwi Nur Solihati is an undergraduate student in Development Economics at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Indonesia. She managed attendance, questionnaire distribution, and certificate preparation.

Darrell Gibran

Darrell Gibran is an undergraduate student in Informatics Engineering at the Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Indonesia. He contributed to opening remarks and technical operations during the activity.

Nadia Septiya Salsabila

Nadia Septiya Salsabila is an undergraduate student in department of Indonesian Literature, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Purwokerto, Indonesia.

Tyas Fadillah

Tyas Fadillah is an undergraduate student in Chemistry at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Indonesia. She handled photo and video documentation during the activity.

Tunggul Adi Purwonugroho

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4752-7315>

Tunggul Adi Purwonugroho is a lecturer at the Faculty of Health Sciences, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Indonesia. He serves as a supervising lecturer for the Community Service Programme (Kuliah Kerja Nyata) and provides academic guidance in the implementation of community-based activities.

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