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STRATEGIES OF THE MOTHERS AND CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP ORGANIZATION (LEMINA) TO PROMOTE CHILDREN'S LITERACY BY STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY IN MAKASSAR

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Abstract
Indonesia's reading performance in PISA 2025 stands at 365 points, with only 27 percent of students reaching minimum proficiency compared with the OECD average of 69 percent. This indicates that strengthening literacy cannot rely on schools alone and must begin in the family. This article analyses the strategy of Lembaga Mitra Ibu dan Anak (LEMINA), a non-governmental organisation in Makassar that works with low-income mothers and children, in fostering children's literacy by strengthening family roles. The study applies a descriptive qualitative approach with a single case-study design, drawing on the analysis of seven LEMINA programme documents (2023–2025) and a literature review; data were analysed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing). The documents map LEMINA's strategy onto three components: planning (a literacy needs survey and school partnership), implementation (the Nulis Bareng Sobat programme, the Adik Asuh scholarship, and a reading corner at the Makassar Children's Festival), and evaluation and monitoring, for which no documentation was found. Because no interviews or observations are analysed, the findings describe documented strategy and do not establish programme effectiveness.

Keywords: institutional strategy; children's literacy; family role

INTRODUCTION

Children's literacy is a crucial foundation for building a high-quality generation in the digital age. Literacy does not merely refer to the ability to read and write, but also encompasses the critical understanding, analysis, and use of information. In the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) evaluation, Indonesian students' reading literacy scores were recorded at 359 points, placing them at proficiency level 1a—indicating that most students have only mastered basic reading skills (OECD, 2023; Bilad et al., 2024). The 2025 PISA results released by the OECD in September 2026 showed an increase in reading scores to 365; however, this increase was not statistically significant, and only 27 percent of students reached

the minimum proficiency level, compared to the OECD average of 69 percent (OECD, 2026). The expansion of access to education—reflected in the rise of Indonesia's PISA coverage index from 0.46 in 2003 to 0.90 in 2025—has not been accompanied by a sufficient improvement in literacy quality.

These conditions draw attention to the child's immediate environment: the family. Limited language stimulation at home—particularly in low-income families—hinders children's language and literacy development (Knauer et al., 2020), while the quality of parent-child communication plays a crucial role in children's growth and development (Brodin & Renblad, 2020). Literacy-based parenting practices such as reading aloud and storytelling have been shown to support children's literacy development, and storytelling can increase interest in learning (Rahiem, 2021). Normatively, Article 48(1) of Law No. 43 of 2007 on Libraries stipulates that fostering a love of reading is carried out through families, educational institutions, and the community, thereby positioning the family as one of the main pillars (Republik Indonesia, 2007).

This national picture matters for Makassar because the barriers described above are concentrated among the families that LEMINA serves. Language stimulation at home is more limited in low-income households (Knauer et al., 2020), and family socioeconomic status shapes how far parents can support learning at home (Mas'ud et al., 2025), even though shared book reading and family literacy interventions are consistently linked to children's reading development (Bus et al., 1995; Sénéchal & Young, 2008). LEMINA's documents show that it works with this group: its stated target is mothers and children from low-income families in Makassar, and its February 2025 exploratory survey at Borong Public Elementary School in Manggala District recorded the number of Indonesia Pintar Programme recipients as an indicator of students' economic circumstances. The national literacy problem therefore becomes, at the local level, a question of whether low-income families in Makassar receive structured support to carry out literacy activities at home, a role that schools alone cannot fill. How a community organisation such as LEMINA organises that support has received little attention in the literature, and this is the gap the present study addresses.

The Mother and Child Partnership Institute (LEMINA) is a nonprofit nongovernmental organization (NGO) headquartered in the Rappocini District of Makassar City, which focuses on improving the quality of life for mothers and children from low-income families through interventions in the fields of health and education. In the area of literacy, LEMINA develops training for parents in storytelling and reading aloud, provides access to reading materials, and runs the "Writing Together with Friends" (NBS LEMINA) program and the "Little Brother/Sister Scholarship" (Basuh) program.

Previous research has generally focused on family literacy at the individual level. Abawaini (2022), for example, studied read-aloud practices among mothers who already possessed a high level of literacy initiative and awareness, without involving external institutions as facilitators. Other studies on literacy-advocacy mothers in Lombok (Ramdhani et al., 2023) and family education in strengthening basic literacy (Wuryani & Nugraha, 2021) also position mothers or families as the unit of analysis, rather than partner organizations. Studies on nonprofit organizational strategies also indicate that the implementation of such strategies in small-scale social organizations in developing countries remains under-researched (Laurett & Ferreira, 2018). It is this research gap that this study aims to address: how a community-based partner organization designs and implements strategies that build literacy capacity among

families who may not necessarily have their own initiatives, within an urban context outside the island of Java.

Strategy is understood as the careful planning of activities to achieve specific objectives, based on an analysis of internal and external factors and followed by controlled implementation (Sedarmayanti, 2018). In nonprofit settings, strategic planning links mission to action and to the monitoring of results (Bryson, 2018). Because the primary goal of a social organization is the fulfillment of a social mission rather than profit, its strategy must take into account limited resources, dependence on donors and volunteers, and accountability to diverse stakeholders (Courtney, 2013; Jager, 2010). Research on nonprofit strategy points to strategic leadership, social innovation, and inter-organizational networks as key themes (Laurett & Ferreira, 2018), and evidence from a government social agency in Indonesia likewise shows that strategy depends on both internal capacity and external partnerships (Rohman et al., 2016). This study follows Lane and Wallis (as cited in Walker et al., 2010), who identify three elements of strategic management: mission and objectives, supporting resources and legitimacy, and operational aspects. These elements are operationalized here as planning, implementation, and evaluation and monitoring.

The family is the first and primary educational environment for children. In Ki Hadjar Dewantara's "Three Centers of Education", the family comes before school and society as the place where children first learn values, language, and daily habits (Khairati et al., 2024). Parental involvement, however, is not automatic. According to Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997), it depends on parents' belief in their role as educators, on invitations from external sources such as the school and the child, and on life circumstances such as time, energy, knowledge, and skills. These circumstances are closely tied to socioeconomic background: in Indonesia, families with higher socioeconomic status are more involved in home-based educational activities, and parents' educational level is strongly associated with that involvement (Mas'ud et al., 2025). Literacy support at home is therefore most likely to be constrained in low-income families, which makes structured external support necessary.

Family literacy refers to the habits and home environment that support literacy interactions, including the availability of reading materials and family resources (Dolezal-Sams et al., 2009). Early literacy is commonly described in five stages: the magical, self-concept, bridging reading, take-off reader, and independent reader stages. Across these stages the parents' role shifts from companion and role model to provider of access to reading materials (Cochrane et al., 1984). The quality of support also matters: reading interventions in Indonesian primary schools are effective when they are interactive, contextually relevant, and engaging (Gildore et al., 2025). These concepts provide the basis for examining whether LEMINA's support for low-income families in Makassar fits the needs of children and parents.

Based on this description, this article aims to analyze LEMINA's strategies for strengthening the role of families in fostering children's literacy in Makassar City through a document analysis. The novelty of this article lies in the use of a community partner organization as the unit of analysis and in reading its documented strategy against strategic-management concepts and national policy on family-based reading promotion (Law No. 43 of 2007).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using a single-case study design, with LEMINA as the case (Yin, 2018). The qualitative approach was chosen because the purpose

of the study is to gain an in-depth understanding of how an NGO implements its strategies and interacts with families within the social context of Makassar City. The case is bounded by the organization, which is headquartered on Jalan Rappocini Raya, Rappocini District, Makassar City, and by the period covered by its documents (2023–2025). The method is document analysis, understood as the systematic review and interpretation of documents to elicit meaning and empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009).

Two kinds of secondary data were used. The first is LEMINA's own documents, which were provided by the organization's management and retrieved from its archive. All documents available to the authors were screened against four inclusion criteria: (1) the document was produced by LEMINA or jointly with a partner; (2) it describes a programme, activity, target group, partnership, or monitoring and evaluation arrangement; (3) it can be dated to 2023–2025; and (4) its origin can be identified and verified. Promotional material that gave no programme information, and documents whose date or origin could not be established, were excluded confirm exclusion criteria and the number of documents excluded. Seven documents met these criteria (Table 1). Documents D2, D3, and D4 concern literacy directly and form the primary evidence for the strategy analysis; D1, D5, D6, and D7 describe the organization and its other programmes and are used as contextual evidence for the organizational profile only. The second kind of data is relevant scientific literature and legislation, which was used to interpret the documents and not as evidence of what LEMINA does.

Table 1. Documents analyzed in this study

Code	Document	Source	Date	Role in analysis
D1	LEMINA organizational profile and activity records	LEMINA archive	January 2024	Contextual
D2	Exploratory survey on literacy collaboration, Borong Public Elementary School, Manggala District	LEMINA archive	February 2025	Primary
D3	Documentation of the Makassar Children's Festival (Rotterdam Fort), organized with the Makassar City Government	LEMINA archive	July 2023	Primary
D4	Programme documents of Nulis Bareng Sobat (NBS LEMINA) and Adik Asuh Scholarship (Basuh)	LEMINA archive	July 2023	Primary
D5	Documentation of teacher training at Islamic boarding schools and madrasahs, Bulukumba Regency	LEMINA archive	January 2024	Contextual
D6	Documentation of the programme to re-enroll out-of-school children (family-centred approach)	LEMINA archive	September 2024	Contextual
D7	Documentation of the water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programme with UNICEF Indonesia, Gowa and Maros Regencies	LEMINA archive	February 2024	Contextual

Data were analyzed with the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). In data condensation, each document was read in full, and passages relating to planning, implementation, or monitoring and evaluation were extracted into a matrix together with the document code and date. The passages were coded deductively using three a priori categories derived from the strategic-management elements of Lane and Wallis (as cited in Walker et al., 2010): planning, implementation (divided into literacy programmes and public events), and evaluation and monitoring. Codes that emerged from the documents themselves, such as volunteer involvement and partnership, were added inductively; confirm whether this was done. State who coded the documents and whether a second person reviewed the coding. In data display, the coded material was arranged in Table 2, where documentary evidence and the authors' interpretation are recorded in separate columns so that readers can distinguish what the documents state from what the authors infer. In conclusion drawing, interpretations were limited to what the documents support: where a document was silent on a point, the point is reported as not documented rather than as absent.

This article is based on secondary data. Primary field data, consisting of in-depth interviews with LEMINA administrators and parents and observations of activities, have been planned as a follow-up phase and have not yet been analyzed in this article. The reported findings should therefore be interpreted as a documentary and conceptual analysis. Credibility was supported by cross-checking documents that describe the same activity and by relating the findings to the literature (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Research ethics were upheld by using documents provided with the organization's permission and, during the fieldwork phase, by obtaining research permission and informant consent and maintaining the confidentiality of informants' identities

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

LEMINA's Profile as a Partner Organization

The Mother and Child Partnership Organization (LEMINA) is a nonprofit community-based organization founded in 2010 and headquartered in the Rappocini District of Makassar City (D1). The organization grew out of a community of volunteers who worked to improve the quality of life for mothers and children from low-income backgrounds, particularly in the areas of health and education (D1). In the authors' interpretation, these origins are consistent with the nature of social organizations in general, which are based on a social mission rather than on profit (Courtney, 2013).

The value of self-reliance has been the foundation of LEMINA's activities since its inception. In the field of literacy, this value is realized through early exposure, beginning with the introduction of reading materials and the provision of engaging, child-friendly learning spaces (D1). This approach can be read as reflecting the nature of a social organization that relies on volunteers and the support of stakeholders to carry out its programs; consequently, strategies must be adapted to the limitations of available resources (Jager, 2010).

After more than a decade of operation, LEMINA has grown to become a partner for various stakeholders at the local, national, and international levels. In the health sector, the organization implements water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programs in collaboration with UNICEF Indonesia and local governments at several community health centers in Gowa and Maros Regencies (D7). In the field of education, LEMINA runs youth empowerment programs, including training for teachers at Islamic boarding schools and madrasahs in Bulukumba

Regency in January 2024 (D5), as well as a program to re-enroll out-of-school children through a family-centered approach, which was launched in September 2024 (D6). This diversity of programs and partners suggests the role of inter-organizational networking, which Laurett and Ferreira (2018) identified as one of the key themes in nonprofit organizational strategy.

In the field of literacy, LEMINA has developed the "Nulis Bareng Sobat" (NBS LEMINA) Program and the "Adik Asuh" Scholarship Program (Basuh) (D4). In February 2025, the organization conducted a survey at Borong Public Elementary School in Manggala District, Makassar, to explore potential collaboration on literacy programs by collecting data on the number of students, the number of Indonesia Pintar Program recipients, as well as students' literacy activities and reading comprehension skills (D2). Additionally, in July 2023, LEMINA, in collaboration with the Makassar City Government, organized the Makassar Children's Festival at Rotterdam Fort, which included a reading corner, as part of the celebration of National Children's Day and to fulfill children's basic rights (D3), a responsibility that Law No. 23 of 2002 on Child Protection assigns jointly to the state, government, community, family, and parents (Republik Indonesia, 2002).

On the basis of these documents, the authors interpret LEMINA as having the characteristics of a community-based partner organization: it is rooted in a volunteer community, operates through a network of partnerships with schools and the government, and targets families and mothers as its primary audience. These characteristics make LEMINA a relevant case for study, particularly since research on the implementation of strategies in small-scale social organizations in developing countries remains limited (Laurett & Ferreira, 2018). This profile also serves as the basis for analyzing how LEMINA's strategies are designed and implemented to foster children's literacy by strengthening the role of families in Makassar.

LEMINA's Strategy According to the Components of Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation

The strategy of a social institution can be understood through three components: the establishment of its mission and objectives; the management of supporting resources and legitimacy; and the operational aspects that ensure the objectives are achieved (Lane & Wallis, as cited in Walker et al., 2010). In this article, these three elements are operationalized into the components of planning, implementation, and evaluation and monitoring. Table 2 maps LEMINA's documented activities into these components; document codes refer to Table 1. The evidence column records only what the documents state, with source code and date, while the interpretation column records the authors' own reading of that evidence. The mapping is based on documents and not on confirmed interviews, and therefore needs to be tested during the field research phase.

Table 2. Mapping of LEMINA's literacy strategies: documentary evidence and researcher's interpretation

Components	Documented Evidence (source code, date)	Researcher's Interpretation
Planning	Exploratory survey on literacy collaboration at Borong Public Elementary School, Manggala District, Makassar City (D2, February 2025): number of students, number of Indonesia Pintar Program recipients, school literacy activities, and reading comprehension skills.	Suggests planning based on preliminary data and a prospective school partnership; the inclusion of Indonesia Pintar recipients may indicate a focus on children from economically disadvantaged families.

Components	Documented Evidence (source code, date)	Researcher's Interpretation
Implementation: literacy program	Nulis Bareng Sobat (NBS LEMINA) Program and Adik Asuh Scholarship (Basuh) Program; provision of reading materials for children (D4, July 2023).	Appears to combine access support (reading materials, scholarships) with writing activities; volunteers (Sobat LEMINA) appear to be at the forefront of implementation.
Implementation: Public Events	Makassar Children's Festival, held with the Makassar City Government at Rotterdam Fort, featuring a reading corner as part of efforts to fulfill children's basic rights (D3, July 2023).	Indicates an effort to extend reach and raise public awareness through collaboration with local government; reach and awareness outcomes are not documented.
Evaluation and Monitoring	No document on child-literacy assessment tools or on indicators of literacy-programme success was found among the documents reviewed (D1–D7).	A documentation gap, not evidence that no evaluation takes place; evaluation may occur informally. Performance indicators and monitoring mechanisms could be documented.

First, regarding the planning component, the survey at Borong Public Elementary School (D2, February 2025) indicates that LEMINA assessed the conditions of a prospective partner school before establishing collaboration. The survey collected data on the number of students, the number of recipients of the Indonesia Pintar Program, literacy activities already underway at the school, and students' reading comprehension skills (D2). In the authors' interpretation, this step aligns with the strategic principle that prioritizes the analysis of internal and external factors as the basis for setting objectives (Sedarmayanti, 2018). Collecting such baseline data can give an organization a foundation for setting realistic activities and targets and for avoiding programs that do not match the needs of partner schools; the documents, however, do not show how the survey results were used.

The inclusion of the number of Indonesia Pintar Program recipients among the survey data points (D2) may indicate that the program is directed at children from economically disadvantaged families; the documents do not state this explicitly. If so, the choice would align with the findings of Mas'ud et al. (2025) that socioeconomic status influences parental involvement in home-based education, meaning that families with limited resources are in greater need of external support, and LEMINA's targeting would be conceptually relevant. This relevance, however, can only be confirmed empirically once data on the conditions of the target families have been collected through field research.

Second, in terms of implementation, the documents describe literacy programs that combine support for access with activities that engage children (D4). The provision of reading materials and the Adik Asuh Scholarship Program (Basuh) are aimed at expanding access, while the Nulis Bareng Sobat Program (NBS LEMINA) encourages children to engage directly in writing activities. The availability of reading materials is part of the environment and resources that support literacy interactions (Dolezal-Sams et al., 2009). The diversity of these program formats can be related to the findings of a systematic review that effective literacy strategies can be grouped into material-, technology-, instruction-, and culture-based approaches, with pedagogical qualities that reinforce one another (Gildore et al., 2025); the documents do not, however, show how interactive or contextually relevant the activities are in practice. Volunteers

who are part of Sobat LEMINA appear to be at the forefront of implementation, which would align with the nature of social organizations that rely on volunteers (Jager, 2010).

The strategy is also expressed through public activities. The Makassar Children's Festival, held in collaboration with the Makassar City Government at Rotterdam Fort in July 2023, featured a reading corner as part of efforts to fulfill children's basic rights (D3). The documents show that the activity took place, but they do not record how many people it reached or whether it changed public awareness of literacy and child protection, so any effect on reach or awareness remains an assumption to be tested. The collaboration with the local government illustrates the role of inter-organizational networks, which Laurett and Ferreira (2018) identified as one of the key themes in nonprofit organizational strategy, and such collaborations can serve as a source of legitimacy for an organization in the eyes of the public and its partners (Courtney, 2013).

Third, regarding the evaluation and monitoring component, none of the documents reviewed (D1–D7) include instruments for measuring changes in children's literacy or in the behavior of children and their families. This finding concerns documentation only. It does not mean that LEMINA does not evaluate its programs: evaluation may take place informally or in documents that were not available to the authors, and whether and how evaluation is carried out can only be established through interviews and further document collection. However, for organizations that rely on donors and partners and face accountability demands from various stakeholders (Jager, 2010), documented evaluations are important for demonstrating achievements and supporting program replication. Laurett and Ferreira (2018) also note that research on the implementation of strategies in small-scale social organizations in developing countries remains limited; thus, documenting LEMINA's experiences has the potential to contribute to knowledge in this field.

Overall, the mapping shows that the available documents describe LEMINA's exploratory planning and its implementation through diverse programs and partnership networks in more detail than they describe evaluation and monitoring, for which no documentation was found. This difference reflects what is documented and should not be read as a judgment on how successful or effective the programs are. No claim about program outcomes, or about impact on children's literacy or on the role of the family, can be made from these documents. Field research, including interviews with staff and volunteers as well as parents whose children are involved in the program, is needed to confirm this mapping, identify supporting and hindering factors, and assess impact. As Abawaini (2022) emphasized in a study on read-aloud, family literacy research has so far focused primarily on individual mothers; research at the institutional level such as this complements those studies

CONCLUSION

This study analyzed the strategy of the Mother and Child Partnership Institute (LEMINA) in fostering children's literacy by strengthening the role of families in Makassar, using document analysis and a literature review. The documents map the strategy onto three components. In planning, LEMINA surveyed Borong Public Elementary School before collaborating with it (D2). In implementation, it combines support for access (reading materials and the Adik Asuh Scholarship) with writing activities (Nulis Bareng Sobat) and public events such as the Makassar Children's Festival, supported by volunteers and partnerships with schools and local government. For evaluation and monitoring, the documents reviewed contain no instruments

for measuring changes in children's literacy or family behavior; this is a documentation gap and not proof that evaluation is absent.

This study has limitations. It relies on seven documents provided by LEMINA, which may not cover all of its activities. No interviews or field observations are analyzed, so the study cannot show how the strategy is carried out in practice, how families experience it, or whether it improves children's literacy. The mapping in Table 2 reflects the authors' interpretation of the documents, and findings from a single case cannot be generalized to other organizations. Field research that triangulates interviews, observations, and further documents is needed to address these limitations.

SUGGESTION

For LEMINA, it is recommended to develop indicators of literacy program outcomes—such as interest in reading, reading frequency, and children's basic reading and writing skills—along with simple monitoring tools that volunteers can implement on a regular basis. The organization is also advised to document the evaluation process and results—including evaluations that have thus far been conducted informally—so that they can be used to demonstrate accountability to partners and donors and serve as a basis for program replication. Additionally, LEMINA can strengthen its support for parents, particularly mothers, to ensure that literacy activities at home are consistent and not solely dependent on the organization's activities.

For local governments and policymakers, partnerships with community organizations such as LEMINA can be expanded and linked to family-based literacy programs and initiatives to foster a love of reading. Support can take the form of facilitating access to reading materials, collaborating with schools and libraries, and involving these organizations in public activities that promote children's literacy.

For future researchers, it is recommended to conduct field research involving in-depth interviews with program administrators, volunteers, and parents; observation of literacy activities; and the collection of additional documents, using triangulation techniques to validate the strategy mapping presented in this article. Further research could also explore the factors that support and hinder these strategies, measure their impact on children's literacy and the role of families, and compare LEMINA's strategies with those of similar partner organizations in other regions so that the findings can be generalized more broadly

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