

Research Article

The Role of the Al Kautsar Gunungkidul Legal Aid Institute in the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency

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ABSTRACT

Juvenile delinquency is a social problem that requires a comprehensive approach from legal, educational, and social aspects. Legal Aid Institutions (LBH) have a strategic role in providing legal protection, education, and assistance for children who are at risk or facing the law. This study aims to analyze the role of LBH Al Kautsar in the prevention of child delinquency through a qualitative approach with case studies. Data was collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The results of the study show that LBH Al Kautsar plays a role in legal education for the community, assistance for children who are facing the law, and mediation as an alternative to resolving cases outside the judicial channels. LBH also collaborates with schools, law enforcement, and social organizations to create a conducive environment for children. With a legal protection-based approach and cross-sectoral collaboration, LBH not only helps children facing legal problems but also plays a role in building public awareness to prevent child delinquency. This research contributes to understanding the role of LBH in the prevention of child delinquency and becomes the basis for the development of more effective and sustainable child protection policies.

Keywords: Legal Aid Institutions; Child Delinquency Prevention; Legal Education; Mentoring, Child Protection

1. INTRODUCTION

Juvenile delinquency is a social phenomenon that is increasingly attracting attention and requires special attention from various individuals. Delinquency not only impacts the individuals it affects, but also impacts groups, societies, and the state (Franjić, 2019; Farhadian, 2016). Children's behaviors are very diverse, ranging from minor acts such as doing schoolwork, fighting, and violating social norms to criminal acts such as drugs, theft, and physical and sexual abuse. Various factors can affect a child's behavior, such as an unbalanced social environment, lack of attention from others, negative associations, and lack of access to legal information and education. Economic factors are also one of the main causes of children's apathy towards the environment (Taylor et al., 2013). Many children from families are unable to cope with economic hardship, so they are more likely to engage in criminal activities as a means of reducing their cost of living. In addition, unconducive social environments, such as areas with low levels of recreation and educational facilities, can also have an impact on the emergence of deviant behavior in children (Fariña et al., 2008; Kondrashkin & Khlomov, 2012). To understand this phenomenon, effective and comprehensive prevention efforts are needed.

One of the institutions that plays an important role in the welfare of children is the Legal Aid Institute (LBH) Al Kautsar Gunungkidul. LBH Al Kautsar focuses on legal education for underprivileged members of society, such as children in conflict with the law. LBH not only provides legal education in the form of classroom mentoring, but also provides legal education, policy advocacy, and rehabilitation programs for children who have been victims of violence. LBH Al Kautsar has a strategic approach to increase legal awareness among children and adults through socialization and education. Children who have a good understanding of the law will be better able to understand the implications of every action they take and be more careful in making decisions. In addition, LBH is also involved in advocacy work to ensure that existing regulations can better protect children and prevent violence against children. However, in its operations, LBH Al Kautsar faces various challenges, such as declining human resources and funds, low public awareness of the importance of obeying the law, and lack of government cooperation in terms of regulation and law enforcement. Therefore, cooperation between LBH, the government, schools, and the community and groups is needed in creating a more effective and comprehensive child protection system. With a more active role from LBH Al Kautsar in the prevention of child delinquency, it is hoped that the number of juvenile delinquency can be reduced and children can grow and develop in a healthier and conducive environment. This effort is also in line with the principle of child protection which emphasizes the rights of children to education, a safe environment, and the opportunity to develop into responsible and productive individuals in society.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study method to analyze the role of the Al Kautsar Gunungkidul Legal Aid Institute (LBH) in the prevention of juvenile delinquency. This method was selected because it enables the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of LBH's role across various dimensions, including advocacy, legal education, and assistance for children who come into contact with the law. The research adopts a qualitative descriptive design (Tetnowski, 2015), which aims to describe and analyze the phenomenon of LBH's involvement in preventing juvenile delinquency, based on the experiences and perspectives of various stakeholders. The study was conducted at LBH Al Kautsar Gunungkidul, an institution actively engaged in providing legal aid services to underprivileged communities, particularly children involved in legal cases. The research subjects consisted of several key groups: (1) LBH Al Kautsar management and advocates, to gather information about their programs, challenges, and strategies for preventing child delinquency; (2) children who have faced legal proceedings, to understand their experiences and the impact of legal assistance provided by LBH; (3) parents and members of the surrounding community, to explore how LBH's role influences the children's social environment; and (4) government and law enforcement officials, such as those from the Social Services and the Police, to obtain perspectives on inter-institutional cooperation in addressing juvenile delinquency.

Data were collected using several qualitative methods. In-depth interviews were conducted with LBH administrators, children receiving legal aid, and other related stakeholders to uncover insights into the effectiveness of LBH's child delinquency prevention programs. Participatory observation was also employed by directly observing legal counseling sessions, case assistance activities, and interactions between LBH, the community, and children. Additionally, a documentation study was carried out by analyzing legal documents, reports on LBH activities, government policies related to child protection, and statistical data on child delinquency cases in Gunungkidul (Clarke, 1999).

The data obtained were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The first step was data reduction, in which the data were sorted and organized into categories such as types of services provided by LBH, program impact, and encountered challenges. The next step was data presentation, where the findings were compiled into descriptive narratives and tables to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn to formulate key findings regarding LBH Al Kautsar's role in preventing juvenile delinquency, along with policy implications that may be implemented (Clarke, 1999; Jacelon & O'Dell, 2005). To ensure the validity of the data, this study applied both source triangulation—by comparing information from different sources—and method triangulation—by combining interviews, observations, and document analysis. Furthermore, a member checking process was conducted, in which interview results were confirmed with respondents to verify the accuracy of the information obtained (Bashir & Marudhar, 2018).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

LBH Al Kautsar's Contribution to the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency

Based on the results of observations and interviews, LBH Al Kautsar has a very important role in preventing child delinquency through legal advocacy, legal education, and psychosocial assistance for erotic children.

Legal Counseling and Education to Reduce Child Delinquency

LBH Al Kautsar routinely organizes legal education in schools and community groups to increase children's and adults' understanding of the legal risks associated with juvenile delinquency. A junior high school teacher who had participated in this counseling said:

"After participating in counseling from LBH, many students better understand that actions such as fighting or stealing can lead to legal proceedings. This awareness makes them more careful."

One of the students who participated in the counseling also shared his experience:

"I used to think that fights between friends were normal. But after the counseling, I realized that it could have bad consequences for my future."

The results of the observation showed that learning was carried out by interactive methods such as case simulations and group discussions to make it easier for children to understand the material.

Legal advocacy to children involved in legal cases

LBH Al Kautsar is active in providing legal advice to children who are interested in legal issues, both as victims and perpetrators. The forms of advocacy provided include assistance during examinations at the police, assistance during the trial process, and free legal education for children from underprivileged families are also provided. One of LBH's advocates, Mr. S, explained the importance of their role in protecting children's rights in the legal process:

"Children who are confronted by the law often do not understand their rights. We accompany them to be treated according to the law and not to experience human rights violations."

In addition, the role of LBH is also recognized by law enforcement officials. A police investigator working with LBH Al Kautsar said:

"The role of LBH is very helpful for us in handling cases involving children. With assistance, the legal process becomes fairer and more transparent."

Based on the results of observations, LBH Al Kautsar actively assists children in various cases, such as petty theft and teenage fights. This kind of education not only ensures that children and their families are protected by the law, but also helps them and their friends understand the law better.

Collaboration with Schools and Communities

Collaboration between LBH Al Kautsar, schools, and the community is a strategic tool in developing children's behavior. According to the direction of the Chairman of LBH Al Kautsar, this collaboration includes training for teachers to recognize the early signs of child delinquency and its handling strategies

"We often coordinate with schools to provide training for teachers and educators so that they can recognize the early signs of child delinquency. Thus, intervention can be carried out earlier."

In addition, talking to others is essential to increase understanding of parenting styles that support children's growth and development constructively. The results of the observation showed that after being given training and discussion, there was an increase in the level of awareness of parents and other adults in responding to children's behavior. Teachers are starting to be more responsive to changes in students' behavior, while parents understand the importance of open communication with children. Mrs. SR, one of the participants in the discussion, stated,

"We usually only pay attention to children when they cry, without understanding the reasons behind their actions. After attending these sessions, I have a better understanding of how a more patient and communicative approach can help children become more obedient to others."

With a more integrative approach, it is hoped that the child behavior monitoring system will become more effective and can be applied in various environments. This system will not only improve the relationship between parents and children, but also strengthen cooperation between schools and families in supporting children's emotional and social development.

Challenges Faced by LBH Al Kautsar in Preventing Child Delinquency

Although it has made a significant contribution to the prevention of child delinquency, LBH Al Kautsar also mentioned several challenges in the implementation of the program.

Lack of Resources and Funding

As a non-profit organization, LBH Al Kautsar faces significant challenges in the areas of limited human resources and funding. Most of the legal services offered are free of charge, so operational sustainability is essential for collaboration and teamwork across various organizations. An LBH advocate revealed:

"Most of the services we provide are free, so funding is always a challenge for us. We often rely on donations and cooperation with other parties."

In addition, limited labor is also an obstacle in the implementation of the program. The Chairman of LBH conveyed.

"We have many useful programs, but the limited manpower makes the implementation not optimal."

This condition shows that although LBH Al Kautsar has a high commitment to providing legal services, limited resources and funding are still the main obstacles in achieving effectiveness and wider reach.

Lack of Legal Awareness in the Community

The general public's understanding of the importance of legal education for children is an obstacle in efforts to overcome violence against children. There are still many people who view children's behavior as normal, without realizing that without proper handling, this behavior can lead to more serious legal problems. Someone from the general public said:

"Parents often think that child delinquency is common, even though if left unchecked, it can have bad consequences. Legal awareness in the community still needs to be improved."

A similar experience was also felt by one of the parents:

"I didn't know that petty misdemeanors could end up in legal proceedings. It wasn't until my son had a problem that I realized the importance of understanding the law."

This lack of awareness shows the need for more massive legal education so that the public, especially parents, can understand their rights and obligations in guiding children, as well as prevent them from falling into unlawful acts.

3.2 Discussion

The Role of LBH Al Kautsar in the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency

Regarding efforts to prevent minors, LBH Al Kautsar has a very significant role. One of the social issues that requires a holistic approach, both from a legal, educational, and societal perspective, is delinquency. LBH Al Kautsar is dedicated to providing education and legal assistance to children who have experienced criminal acts under the law, as well as collaborating with many organizations to provide a conducive environment for children's development. With various programs designed to increase awareness and knowledge, LBH Al Kautsar seeks to create synergy between parents, schools, and communities in supporting children to avoid deviant behavior (Aries et al., 2019).

Law of Counseling for Children and Society

Legal counseling to children and the community is the main preventive effort carried out by LBH Al Kautsar. The purpose of this counseling is to increase legal awareness in the community and provide insight into the rights and obligations of children in society. Legal education is effective in reducing children's involvement during the deviant process (Yusupov, 2018; Liu, 2006). Through this counseling, children are taught to understand the legal implications of their actions as well as how to behave according to social norms. The program also includes training for parents and teachers, so that they can play an active role in supporting the positive development of children and preventing potential legal problems in the future. In addition, the general public is also provided with information about the importance of parental guidance and support for children so that they are not tempted to engage in deviant behavior.

Legal Assistance for Children in Conflict with the Law

In addition to mentoring, LBH Al Kautsar also provides legal assistance to children involved in legal cases. The principle used in this assistance is restorative justice, which aims to find the best solution for the child without having to resort to formal justice. This approach is more effective in providing legal protection for children and reducing the negative impact of the criminal system (Nooreyzdan & Mehta, 2016) (Milojevich et al., 2016). In practice, LBH Al Kautsar acts as a mediator between children, family members, and other parties involved. The main purpose of this mentoring is to ensure that children have a healthy life in accordance with the principles of child protection and encourage them to overcome their problems without experiencing negative social stigma.

Cooperation between the community and schools

The role of LBH Al Kautsar in preventing child delinquency also includes cooperation with schools, social institutions, and law enforcement officials (Greenwood, 2008). The goal of this cooperation is to create a more integrated and effective prevention system. According to research by Setiawan et al. (2021), cooperation as a sector team in the process of evaluating children's behavior can increase the effectiveness of interventions and ensure early detection of children at risk of engaging in deviant behavior. As part of this work, LBH Al Kautsar often provides training to teachers and students on how to analyze the early signs of infant delinquency and how to deal with it with the right approach. In addition, LBH also conducts discussions with parents to improve their understanding of parenting styles that support children's development positively.

Challenges discussed by LBH Al Kautsar in the Prevention of Child Delinquency

Despite having an important role in the development of children's behavior, LBH Al Kautsar faces various challenges that can interfere with the effectiveness of the program. These challenges include limited resources, low public awareness, and obstacles in the implementation of the law. One of the main things that makes LBH Al Kautsar known is its workforce and limited resources. LBH relies heavily on grants and donations to run its programs. However, limited funds often limit the scope of counseling as well as the number of cases that can be handled, many LBH in Indonesia experience similar obstacles, which is reflected in the effectiveness of their legal services (Sundari, 2014). To overcome this challenge, LBH Al Kautsar

seeks to establish partnerships with various parties, including governments and non-governmental organizations, to expand the reach of the program and increase public awareness about the importance of preventing child delinquency (Gerbeev, 1992; Farrington & Hawkins, 2019). Limited labor is also an obstacle in providing optimal legal protection. As a result, some children who need legal protection are unable to benefit from the understanding of mentoring.

Low Public Awareness

In addition to limited resources, public awareness of the importance of legal education for children is also quite high. Many people only realize the need for legal help after their child experiences legal problems (DeAngelis et al., 2015; Rani, 2016). This lack of understanding is often undermined by the social stigma against children who have previously been imprisoned in delinquency (Luther, 2016; Guillermo, 2011) Society continues to view them as "bad boys" without considering the environmental factors that influence their actions. This makes rehabilitation and social reintegration more difficult. To increase this awareness, LBH Al Kautsar conducts various educational and socialization activities in communities, with the hope of encouraging parents and the community to be more proactive in understanding children's rights and the importance of legal protection from an early age.

4. CONCLUSION

LBH Al Kautsar has a very important role in efforts to prevent juvenile delinquency, not only from a legal aspect, but also in a social and educational context. As an organization focused on the protection and enforcement of the law, LBH Al Kautsar works to educate the public about children's rights and encourage them to obey the law so that they can carry out appropriate activities and in line with the principles of restorative justice. In addition, LBH Al Kautsar actively promotes legal education among the general public, schools, and families to raise awareness of the need to create an environment conducive to children's development. This is done through various education, advocacy, and mediation programs in legal issues that befall children. With a more humane approach, LBH Al Kautsar seeks to protect children from environmental factors that are harmful and can affect their lives. In addition, LBH Al Kautsar collaborates with various institutions, both government, schools, law enforcement agencies, and social institutions, to develop more effective prevention strategies. This collaboration aims to build an ecosystem that improves children's safety and reduces risk factors that can prevent them from engaging in risky behavior. For various strategic considerations, LBH Al Kautsar not only plays a role as a legal authority, but also as an agent of change in the preparation of a more comprehensive child protection system. Through education, advocacy, mentoring, and rehabilitation, LBH Al Kautsar contributes to creating a safer, safer, and supportive environment for children so that they can grow and develop into better individuals in the future.

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