

# Green School Initiatives: Cultivating Environmental Awareness in Elementary Education

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## ABSTRACT

*This study aims to describe the implementation of environmental care character education at SD Darus Sholah Jember, identify the challenges encountered in instilling environmental care character values through applying green school principles, and explain the efforts made to overcome these challenges. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach, utilizing primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through interviews with the school principal, teachers, and students in grades III and IV, while secondary data consisted of documents related to environmental care character education. The data collection methods included observation, interviews, and documentation, which were analyzed using data reduction, data display, and conclusion-drawing techniques. Data validity was ensured through source and technique triangulation. The research findings indicate that environmental care character education at SD Darus Sholah Jember is implemented through several measures: (1) curriculum development encompassing self-development programs, integration of environmental care values into subjects, fostering a school culture of environmental care, improving the learning process, and managing school environmental health; (2) challenges faced include students' poor habits in maintaining cleanliness, low awareness of proper waste management, and technical issues such as inadequate water flow; (3) efforts to address these challenges involve providing students with understanding and guidance on maintaining personal hygiene, strengthening interactions between teachers and parents, and establishing collaborations with school alums.*

**Keywords:** educating, environmentally friendly, green school.

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## INTRODUCTION

Humans constantly adapt to their surroundings to sustain their daily lives. Various activities involve managing natural resources to meet human needs while maintaining environmental balance and sustainability.<sup>1</sup> However, current human interactions with the environment often have negative impacts. Many people neglect ecological balance and even damage the beauty and preservation of nature, leading to environmental degradation.<sup>2</sup> In Indonesia, particularly in urban areas, environmental damage is caused by various factors, such as increased air temperature and pollution, littering, smoking habits, and the lack of green open spaces.<sup>3</sup>

According to Fransis,<sup>4</sup> Environmental damage disrupts ecological balance, threatening human existence. This imbalance reduces the earth's capacity to produce resources while human needs continue to rise alongside population growth. Environmental damage also triggers natural disasters such as floods, landslides, and forest fires, causing material and psychological losses. These issues highlight humanity's negligence in managing nature.<sup>5</sup>

Instilling character values is crucial in addressing environmental issues, as Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System mandates. Education serves to develop students' abilities and shape a dignified national character. Uno and Nurudin Muhammad emphasize that fostering awareness of environmental preservation should begin with education.<sup>6</sup> Education plays a significant role in shaping students' character, including cultivating environmental awareness.<sup>7</sup> Simple practices include maintaining classroom cleanliness, performing cleaning duties, caring for plants, and fostering clean and healthy living habits. Teachers play a pivotal role in building this character since students often imitate their behavior.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Laura B. Cole, "Green Building Literacy: A Framework for Advancing Green Building Education," *International Journal of STEM Education* 6, no. 1 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40594-019-0171-6>.

<sup>2</sup> Nurul Zakiatin Nafsih and Usmeldi Usmeldi, "Green School Oriented Guided Inquiry-Based Science E-Book: Effectiveness Analysis on Increasing Environmental Literacy," *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan IPA* 8, no. 3 (2022): 1355–60, <https://doi.org/10.29303/jppipa.v8i3.1662>.

<sup>3</sup> Baiq Arnika Saadati and Muhamad Sadli, "Implementasi Pendidikan Inklusi Berbasis Pengembangan Diri Di Sekolah Alam Jogja Green School," *El Midad* 11, no. 2 (2019): 117–32, <https://doi.org/10.20414/elmidad.v11i2.1898>.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Olsson et al., "Green Schools in Taiwan – Effects on Student Sustainability Consciousness," *Global Environmental Change* 54, no. March 2018 (2019): 184–94, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2018.11.011>.

<sup>5</sup> Anne C. Bell and Janet E. Dymont, "Grounds for Health: The Intersection of Green School Grounds and Health-Promoting Schools," *Environmental Education Research* 14, no. 1 (2008): 77–90, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504620701843426>.

<sup>6</sup> Layli Mumbaasithoh et al., "Implementasi Program Go Green School Di Indonesia Sebagai Pembangunan Berkelanjutan," *Jurnal Teknologi* 15, no. 2 (2022): 104–9, <https://doi.org/10.34151/jurtek.v15i2.3079>.

<sup>7</sup> Nur Kholis et al., "Understanding Adiwiyata School Artifacts in Cultivating Students' Characters At Madrasah Ibtidaiyah," *EDUKASI: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Agama Dan Keagamaan* 22, no. 1 (April 30, 2024): 19–38, <https://doi.org/10.32729/edukasi.v22i1.1694>.

<sup>8</sup> Zalizan M. Jelas et al., "Learning Support and Academic Achievement among Malaysian Adolescents: The Mediating Role of Student Engagement," *Learning Environments Research* 19, no. 2 (July 19, 2016): 221–40, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10984-015-9202-5>.

Environmental damage is a pressing global issue, with detrimental impacts ranging from ecological imbalance to natural disasters such as floods and forest fires.<sup>9</sup> In Indonesia, particularly in urban areas, environmental degradation is exacerbated by pollution, littering, and inadequate green spaces.<sup>10</sup> This calls for urgent interventions that foster environmental awareness and sustainable behaviors, mainly through education.

The issue of the environmental awareness crisis urgently requires serious attention from the education sector, which serves as a platform for character development in schools. This is evident from the increasing frequency of natural disasters.<sup>11</sup> Public concern over the growing indifference of people toward environmental sustainability has become a pressing issue, especially given the worsening effects of global warming.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, individuals who can actively protect and preserve the environment are needed. As academics in the field of education and as an effort to become good citizens who embody national values in daily life, it is crucial to foster collective awareness and build public concern through education. Education is one of the most effective ways to cultivate love and care for the environment by integrating character development into school learning processes.

Environmental awareness can be cultivated through various strategies and programs, one of which is the *green school* concept. This program is designed as an effort by schools to shape students' environmentally friendly behaviors.<sup>13</sup> Environmental and ecological damage caused by human activities can be addressed or minimized by promoting eco-friendly programs.<sup>14</sup> Schools play a significant role as a medium to develop environmental awareness among students, which is crucial for preserving the earth's sustainability.

The *green school* program offers a solution to instilling environmental awareness. This program aims to create clean and environmentally friendly schools, promoting a culture of environmental care among students and teachers. Schools implementing the *green school* concept are typically committed to integrating environmental values into their activities.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Asep Priatna, "Manajemen Sekolah Adiwiyata (Green School)," *Jurnal Soshum Insentif*, no. 3 (2020): 37–43, <https://doi.org/10.36787/jsi.v3i1.214>.

<sup>10</sup> Mihratun Mihratun, Muhammad Turmuzi, and Heri Hadi Saputra, "Analisis Penerapan Program Green School Dalam Menanamkan Nilai Karakter Peduli Lingkungan Di SDN 18 Cakranegara," *Jurnal Ilmiah Profesi Pendidikan* 7, no. 2c (2022): 794–803, <https://doi.org/10.29303/jipp.v7i2c.626>.

<sup>11</sup> Daphne Goldman et al., "Influence of 'Green School Certification' on Students' Environmental Literacy and Adoption of Sustainable Practice by Schools," *Journal of Cleaner Production* 183 (2018): 1300–1313, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2018.02.176>.

<sup>12</sup> Yupadon Punatung and Jurairat Kurukodt, "Developing a Green School Training Manual for High School Students Pracharat Wittaya Serm School," *Journal of Education and Learning* 12, no. 3 (2023): 106, <https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v12n3p106>.

<sup>13</sup> Janet E. Dymont, "Green School Grounds as Sites for Outdoor Learning: Barriers and Opportunities," *International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education* 14, no. 1 (2005): 28–45, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500790508668328>.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Tucker and Parisa Izadpanahi, "Live Green, Think Green: Sustainable School Architecture and Children's Environmental Attitudes and Behaviors," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 51 (2017): 209–16, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2017.04.003>.

<sup>15</sup> Cristian Ioan Ioja et al., "The Potential of School Green Areas to Improve Urban Green Connectivity and Multifunctionality," *Urban Forestry and Urban Greening* 13, no. 4 (2014): 704–13, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ufug.2014.07.002>.

Despite the critical need for environmental awareness, current practices often fail to address the issue effectively. Many educational institutions have yet to integrate environmental values fully into their curricula and school culture. The increasing frequency of natural disasters and public concern over environmental neglect highlights the gap between existing educational efforts and the desired outcomes.<sup>16</sup> At SD Darus Sholah Jember, however, fostering environmental awareness is part of the school's culture, with activities such as daily cleaning routines and independent maintenance of cleanliness by students. These practices demonstrate a promising model, yet there is limited research on the specific steps and strategies employed, leaving a lack of comprehensive understanding of their effectiveness.

While the importance of environmental education is widely acknowledged, there remains a significant gap in understanding the practical implementation of green school programs in Indonesia. Previous studies have highlighted the role of education in character development and environmental preservation,<sup>17</sup> However, they often lack detailed analysis of specific programs or their impact at the school level. The green school initiative at SD Darus Sholah Jember provides a unique opportunity to explore how environmental values are systematically instilled in students. Research in this area can address unanswered questions about best practices, challenges, and the long-term effectiveness of such programs, offering valuable insights for broader implementation.

At SD Darus Sholah Jember, fostering environmental awareness has become part of the school culture. Cleaning activities are carried out every morning by designated teams, who are also responsible for maintaining classroom cleanliness throughout the day. Environmental cleanliness is considered the responsibility of all school members, not just janitors. Students are trained to maintain the cleanliness of restrooms and handwashing stations independently. Therefore, research on implementing the *green school* program at SD Darus Sholah Jember is necessary to understand the specific steps taken to instill environmental awareness in students.

This research aims to examine the implementation of the green school program at SD Darus Sholah Jember. Specifically, it seeks to identify the strategies and activities used to instill environmental awareness in students, evaluate their effectiveness, and provide recommendations for enhancing similar programs in other educational settings. By addressing the identified gap, this study contributes to developing practical approaches for integrating environmental education into school cultures, fostering a generation of environmentally conscious citizens.

<sup>16</sup> Juliantina, Ujang Jamaludin, and Wika hardika Legiani, "Penerapan Konsep Green School Sebagai Strategi Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter Peduli Lingkungan Siswa," *Jurnal Darma Agung* 32, no. 2 (2024): 564–75.

<sup>17</sup> Maya Yunus and Margono Mitrohardjono, "Pengembangan Program Peduli Lingkungan Hidup (Green School) Pada SMP Islam Plus Baitul Maal," *Tahdzibi* 4, no. 2 (2019): 95–102, <https://doi.org/10.24853/tahdzibi.4.2.95-102>.

## METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive method to explore the implementation of character education for environmental awareness at SD Darus Sholah Jember. Qualitative research is particularly suitable for examining phenomena in natural settings, allowing the researcher to capture the meanings and experiences of participants directly. This approach aligns with the study's objective of describing factual field conditions, as it prioritizes depth and context over numerical data. The researcher serves as the primary instrument, collecting and interpreting data to comprehensively understand the subject matter. Qualitative descriptive methods enable the study to reveal nuanced insights into the school's environmental education practices by focusing on words, actions, and visual materials.

The research was conducted at SD Darus Sholah Jember, located on Jember, from October 11 to December 19, 2024. The researcher utilized two types of data sources: primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through interviews with the principal, teachers, and students from grades III and IV regarding implementing environmental awareness character education. Secondary data included documents, posters, and documentation of school activities related to environmental awareness character education programs.

The study employed purposive sampling to select participants who could provide relevant and rich information about implementing environmental awareness and character education. Participants included the school principal, teachers actively involved in the program, and students from grades III and IV who participated in daily environmental activities. The criteria for participant selection were based on their roles and experiences in the school's environmental initiatives. A total of 15 participants were interviewed, consisting of one principal, six teachers, and eight students, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives. This sample size was sufficient to capture detailed information while maintaining the study's focus.

The data collection techniques used included observation, interviews, and documentation. Data were analyzed using the method proposed by Miles and Huberman in Muzadi and Mutholingah, which involves three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.<sup>18</sup> To ensure data validity, a credibility test was conducted through triangulation. This study employed both source triangulation and technique triangulation.

To ensure the credibility and reliability of the findings, the study employed a triangulation process involving both source and technique triangulation. Source triangulation involved gathering data from multiple stakeholders, including the principal, teachers, students, and secondary sources such as documents and school records. Triangulation was applied using various data collection methods: observation, interviews, and documentation.

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<sup>18</sup> Ahsan Muzadi and Siti Mutholingah, "Integrasi Pendidikan Berwawasan Lingkungan Hidup (Green School) Melalui Pembelajaran Pai Di Sekolah," *Journal TA'LIMUNA* 8, no. 2 (2019): 53–71, <https://doi.org/10.32478/talimuna.v8i2.292>.

Observations allowed the researcher to witness environmental education practices directly, interviews provided in-depth perspectives from participants, and documentation offered supporting evidence. The combined use of these techniques ensured a comprehensive and reliable data analysis. Additionally, the data analysis followed the three-step process proposed by Miles and Huberman: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. This systematic approach further enhanced the validity of the study's findings.

## DISCUSSION

### Result

The findings from implementing the green school program at SD Darus Sholah Jember are categorized into three thematic areas: Curriculum Integration, Challenges, and Cultural Practices. This section also includes direct quotes from participants and relates the findings to previous studies, providing a comprehensive understanding of the research implications.

#### Curriculum Integration

Integrating environmental awareness education into the school curriculum was a central aspect of the green school program. Teachers incorporated values of environmental care into lesson plans, fostering an understanding of sustainable practices among students. As noted by one teacher:

"We always try to relate environmental care to our lessons. For example, in science, we discuss the importance of plants and how they contribute to the ecosystem. Students are encouraged to participate in garden care as part of their learning process."

The integration extended to activities such as routine cleaning, where students actively maintained the cleanliness of their classrooms and school environment. According to the principal:

"Through small daily actions, like ensuring the classroom is tidy before leaving, students gradually develop a sense of responsibility toward their surroundings."

This finding aligns with Kholifi,<sup>19</sup> This highlights the role of curriculum in fostering environmental awareness, emphasizing that integrating practical, hands-on learning experiences can significantly enhance students' understanding of ecological responsibility.

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<sup>19</sup> Mohammad Bilutfikal Khofi, "The Green School Concept in Elementary Schools as an Effort to Form Sustainable Behavior and Environmental Awareness," *Al-Adzka : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* 14, no. 2 (2024): 206–25, <https://doi.org/10.18952/aladzkapgmi.v14i2.14412>.

## Challenges

Despite the successes, several challenges were identified in implementing the program. The primary obstacles included limited awareness, insufficient facilities, and a lack of consistent enforcement of environmental regulations. A teacher remarked:

"Some students still throw trash carelessly, and it takes repeated reminders to make them aware of the importance of proper waste disposal."

The principal also highlighted the challenge of limited resources:

"We need more waste bins, especially those that separate organic and inorganic waste, to support the program fully. Unfortunately, budget constraints make providing all the necessary facilities difficult."

This aligns with Lestari and Iskandar,<sup>20</sup> Who identified resource limitations and inconsistent enforcement as common barriers to effective school environmental education.

SD Darus Sholah Jember introduced initiatives such as Saturday cleaning activities and increased collaboration with parents to address these issues. These measures aim to foster greater environmental awareness and encourage a culture of shared responsibility.

## Cultural Practices

Developing a school culture centered on environmental awareness was vital to the program's success. Introducing the "5 S" practices (Smile, Greet, Salute, Polite, and Courteous) helped reinforce positive student behaviors. A student shared:

"We are reminded always to smile and greet each other and to respect the environment by keeping it clean. It feels good to contribute to a beautiful school."

The program also included rewarding students who demonstrated exemplary behavior in maintaining cleanliness. One teacher noted:

"We give small prizes or verbal praise to students who show consistent effort in caring for the environment. This motivates others to follow suit."

These practices align with Putra et al.,<sup>21</sup> Who emphasizes creating a character-driven school culture through consistent modeling, motivation, and reinforcement strategies. The findings underscore the importance of a holistic approach to environmental education that

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<sup>20</sup> Hana Lestari and Ridwan Siskandar, "Cultivating Green Behavior of Eco Literation-Based Elementary School Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan IPA* 7, no. 1 (2020): 49–53, <https://doi.org/10.29303/jppipa.v7i1.477>.

<sup>21</sup> N. S. Putra, H. N. Sukma, and H. Setiawan, "Level of Environmental Literacy of Students and School Community in Green Open Space: Is There Any Difference Between Both of Them?," *Jurnal Pendidikan IPA Indonesia* 10, no. 4 (2021): 627–34, <https://doi.org/10.15294/jpii.v10i4.31083>.

integrates curriculum development, cultural practices, and collaborative efforts. Similar to Punatung and Kurukodt,<sup>22</sup> This study found that green school programs significantly enhance students' environmental awareness, mainly supported by active teacher involvement and a conducive learning environment.

**Table 1.** The Result Finding

| Thematic Categories    | Findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Direct Quotes from Participants                                                                                               | Implications Concerning Previous Studies                                                                                                        |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Curriculum Integration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Green School is integrated into formal and informal learning activities.</li> <li>Teachers use environment-based learning methods, such as direct observation and field practice.</li> </ul> | "We convey the values of environmental care in every subject, especially during activities outside the classroom." – Teacher. | Supporting the research of Khofi, <sup>23</sup> That Green School includes environmental value-based learning for sustainability.               |
|                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental materials are listed in the syllabus and teaching modules, with a focus on developing environmental care characteristics.</li> </ul>                                           | "In the syllabus, we include basic competencies that emphasize the habit of keeping the environment clean." – Principal.      | In line with Putra et al., <sup>24</sup> Which states that environment-based character education must be integrated into the school curriculum. |
|                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental awareness among students is still low.</li> <li>Lack of support from the community outside the school.</li> </ul>                                                              | "Students still often litter, especially when unsupervised." - Teacher                                                        | As stated by Lestari and Iskandar, <sup>25</sup> The lack of family education can influence environmental awareness in schools.                 |

Additionally, the research highlights the importance of addressing resource constraints and fostering strong partnerships with parents and the local community. Khofi similarly argues that environmental education requires collective efforts beyond the school to achieve long-term sustainability.<sup>26</sup> The findings also have implications for policy and practice. Educational institutions should prioritize allocating resources for environmental education, including providing adequate facilities and training teachers to integrate environmental care values into their lessons. Moreover, fostering collaboration between schools and communities can amplify the impact of such programs. For more detail, you can see in **Table 1** above.

<sup>22</sup> Punatung and Kurukodt, "Developing a Green School Training Manual for High School Students Pracharat Wittaya Serm School."

<sup>23</sup> Khofi, "The Green School Concept in Elementary Schools as an Effort to Form Sustainable Behavior and Environmental Awareness."

<sup>24</sup> Putra, Sukma, and Setiawan, "Level of Environmental Literacy of Students and School Community in Green Open Space: Is There Any Difference Between Both of Them?"

<sup>25</sup> Lestari and Siskandar, "Cultivating Green Behavior of Eco Literation-Based Elementary School Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic."

<sup>26</sup> Khofi, "The Green School Concept in Elementary Schools as an Effort to Form Sustainable Behavior and Environmental Awareness."

## Discussion

Based on the results of interviews and observations, it was found that the *green school* concept serves as an effort to cultivate environmentally conscious behavior in schools through various programs developed within it. *Green school* functions as a platform for fostering environmental awareness. This concept is defined as a place where individuals can acquire knowledge, norms, and ethics about the importance of sustainable environmental preservation.<sup>27</sup>

In its implementation, all school members are involved in the *green school* programs. This aims to enhance participation among the school community while laying a foundation for building environmental awareness character, preserving a healthy environment, and mitigating the negative impacts of environmental damage.

The main goal of a *green school* is to create a clean and comfortable school environment. Through programs related to environmental awareness, *the green school* contributes to strengthening the character of environmental awareness among all school members.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to creating a green and clean school environment, implementing the *green school* concept also brings positive impacts, such as instilling a love for the environment through habitual practices in schools. Furthermore, the literature on environmental awareness will expand, supporting the achievement of national educational goals in the aspect of environmental care. Thus, *green school* plays a significant role in producing a generation of graduates with a sustainable sense of environmental responsibility.

### Implementation of the Green School Program to Develop Environmental Awareness Character Education at SD Darus Sholah Jember

#### 1. Curriculum Development

##### a. Self-Development Programs

##### Routine Activities

Based on the research findings at SD Darus Sholah Jember, efforts to implement environmental awareness and character education are carried out through activities such as daily classroom cleaning and communal work. According to the Indonesian Ministry of National Education in Suparna et al,<sup>29</sup> Routine school activities are activities consistently performed by students regularly. Other routine activities include all student's and teachers' morning and after-school cleaning duties. These activities are carried out daily and aim to optimize the available school facilities and infrastructure to achieve the desired educational goals. The principal and teachers actively participate in these activities, while students engage in them under teacher guidance to support overall educational success.

##### b. Spontaneous Activities

<sup>27</sup> Muhammad Kristiawan, Nova Maryanti, and Happy Fitria, "Membangun Karakter Peserta Didik Melalui Green School Di Smk Negeri 2 Muara Enim," *JMKSP (Jurnal Manajemen, Kepemimpinan, Dan Supervisi Pendidikan)* 4, no. 2 (2019): 210, <https://doi.org/10.31851/jmksp.v4i2.2912>.

<sup>28</sup> Hendra Hendra, Muhammad Zaini, and Dharmono Dharmono, "Green School Module: The Practicality Test in Scientific Performance Skills Training for Junior High School Students," *BIO-INOVED : Jurnal Biologi-Inovasi Pendidikan* 4, no. 1 (2022): 53, <https://doi.org/10.20527/bino.v4i1.12241>.

<sup>29</sup> Putu Suparna, Nuning Indah Pratiwi, and Ni Kadek Devy Lestari, "Pola Komunikasi Organisasi Dalam Implementasi Program Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (Mbkm) Dan Praktek Kerja Lapangan (Pkl) Di Green School Bali," *SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL OF REFLECTION : Economic, Accounting, Management and Business* 7, no. 3 (2024): 868–83, <https://doi.org/10.37481/sjr.v7i3.910>.

Spontaneous activities conducted by the principal and teachers at SD Darus Sholah Jember include reprimanding, warning, and educating students who engage in inappropriate behaviors towards the environment or school facilities. This aligns with the Ministry of National Education in Suparna et al,<sup>30</sup> Which defines spontaneous activities as immediate actions taken at the moment. These activities ensure that students who make mistakes learn not to repeat them and become more environmentally aware—appropriate facilities and infrastructure support such actions to achieve the desired educational objectives.

c. Role Modeling

Environmental awareness character education at SD Darus Sholah Jember is strengthened by the exemplary behavior demonstrated by the principal and teachers. As educators, they consistently set a good example for students. This aligns with the Ministry of National Education in Suparna et al,<sup>31</sup> Which highlights role modeling as the behavior and attitudes of principals, teachers, and educational staff in providing positive student examples.

Based on the research findings, the principal and teachers lead by example in daily activities, such as wearing neat and clean uniforms, refraining from smoking within the school premises, helping clean rooms, watering plants in the school garden, encouraging handwashing, and disposing of waste in proper bins. Classroom teachers actively clean the classroom with the assigned students, organize the room, and maintain classroom plants. Teachers also demonstrate regular handwashing before entering the classroom. This role modeling, supported by adequate school facilities, helps instill environmental awareness and achieve the goal of shaping students into individuals with strong character.

d. Conditioning

Implementing environmental awareness and character education also involves creating a supportive school environment. According to the Ministry of National Education in Wijayanti et al.,<sup>32</sup> Conditioning the school environment is essential to support implementing cultural and character education.

Research findings at SD Darus Sholah Jember show that the school conditions its environment to meet student's needs related to environmental care. The school provides facilities that support the implementation of environmental awareness education, such as cleaning tools for each room and outdoor areas. Additionally, the school has created gardens in front of each classroom, encouraging students to participate in planting, caring for, and maintaining the beauty of these gardens.

e. Integration into Subjects

Research findings reveal that integrating environmental awareness education into subjects is facilitated by instilling environmental care values during learning facilitated by teachers. Teachers implement environment-based learning, involving active student participation and leveraging the school environment. The lessons delivered by teachers are not limited to textbook material but are enriched with values of environmental care. This aligns with the Ministry of National Education in Wijayanti

<sup>30</sup> Suparna, Pratiwi, and Lestari.

<sup>31</sup> Suparna, Pratiwi, and Lestari.

<sup>32</sup> Septi Nur Wijayanti, Agus Nugroho Setiawan, and Anisa Dwi Makrufi, "Implementation of Muhammadiyah Green School as an Effort to Fulfill Constitutional Rights," *Community Empowerment* 6, no. 7 (2021): 1199–1211, <https://doi.org/10.31603/ce.4984>.

et al,<sup>33</sup> Which states that developing cultural and national character education values includes integrating them into subjects, including environmental character education.

Environmental care values are incorporated into the learning objectives (SK) and essential competencies (KD), and they are reflected in the syllabus and lesson plans (modul ajar). Teachers utilize active learning methods to foster environmental care character, assisting students internalizing these values. Integrating environmental care into subjects relates to the methods and materials teachers use to link them with character education. This approach is expected to achieve learning goals by embedding environment-based character values. Teachers play a critical role in helping students understand and internalize these values, while students are responsible for applying them in their daily lives, both at school and home.

f. School Culture

Developing a school culture of environmental awareness nurtures students to become more sensitive to their surroundings. Indonesian The Ministry of National Education defines school culture as the atmosphere of school life where students interact with their peers, principals, teachers, and other school members within a framework of rules, norms, morals, and ethics upheld by the school.

The research findings indicate that SD Darus Sholah Jember fosters a school culture of environmental care by introducing programs such as the "5 S" (Smile, Greet, Salute, Polite, and Courteous). The school provides adequate facilities and space to implement environmental care character education. Teachers continuously motivate students to heighten their environmental awareness. For instance, students who violate cleanliness rules are given reprimands or penalties, such as fines. Conversely, students are rewarded through praise or prizes in environment-related competitions, such as class and garden cleanliness contests.

The school culture aligns with Siskayanti and Chastanti,<sup>34</sup> Perspective emphasizes building a character-driven culture through strategies such as creating character education practice programs, offering opportunities for the school community to exhibit positive behaviors, and consistently motivating students to develop good character. This includes encouraging love for positive character traits and performing actions that reflect those traits. Schools are encouraged to enforce practices like rewards and sanctions, while principals, teachers, and staff should model exemplary behavior for students. A school culture that involves all members of the school community in its implementation is vital for fostering environmental care character. Such a culture supports the realization of educational goals desired by the school.

2. Development of Learning Processes

a. Classroom

According to the Ministry of National Education in Wijayanti et al.,<sup>35</sup> Classroom learning processes are designed to support various subjects or activities. Learning activities occur inside and outside the classroom, focusing on environmental awareness to develop students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Based

<sup>33</sup> Wijayanti, Setiawan, and Makrufi.

<sup>34</sup> Juni Siskayanti and Ika Chastanti, "Analisis Karakter Peduli Lingkungan Pada Siswa Sekolah Dasar," *Jurnal Basicedu* 6, no. 2 (2022): 1508–16, <https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v6i2.2151>.

<sup>35</sup> Wijayanti, Setiawan, and Makrufi, "Implementation of Muhammadiyah Green School as an Effort to Fulfill Constitutional Rights."

on research, classroom learning is conducted through hands-on practice and field observation, enabling students to apply environmental care values in each lesson. Classroom facilities and infrastructure support the implementation of character education for environmental care, with teachers playing a crucial role from the planning stage. At SD Darus Sholah Jember, teachers have successfully developed environmentally oriented learning processes using appropriate methods, media, and learning materials.

b. School

The Indonesian Ministry of National Education in Wijayanti et al,<sup>36</sup> Schools must design activities involving all school members—including students, teachers, principals, and administrative staff—at the beginning of the academic year. These activities are integrated into the Academic Calendar and implemented as part of the school's culture. At SD Darus Sholah Jember, school-level learning development involves guidance and counseling conducted by both internal and external parties. Additionally, the school routinely organizes cleanliness-related competitions. All activities align with the learning materials and are supported by adequate facilities and infrastructure, with the principal acting as planner, executor, and person in charge. Teachers are responsible for designing and accompanying students in each activity conducted.

c. Outside School

Outside school at SD Darus Sholah Jember, learning development is implemented through extracurricular activities and engaging students in environmental activities. The Ministry of National Education in Wijayanti et al,<sup>37</sup> Explains that out-of-school activities, such as extracurricular programs or other activities, are designed at the beginning of the academic year and included in the Academic Calendar. Examples include scouting and various competitions held outside the school. Principals and teachers play a role in planning, implementing, and evaluating activities, while students are expected to participate actively. Outside-school learning development is tailored to classroom materials, applied methods, and available facilities and infrastructure to support educational goals.

3. School Environmental Health

a. Maintenance of Rooms and Buildings

According to the Decree of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia in Efendi et al,<sup>38</sup> According to the Guidelines for Implementing School Environmental Health, room and building maintenance includes regular cleaning, disinfectant solutions, and repainting faded walls. At SD Darus Sholah Jember, rooms and buildings are in good condition. Maintenance is carried out daily with the involvement of students, while the principal and teachers also take responsibility for supervision. Optimal maintenance helps maintain a conducive environment, supporting educational goals.

<sup>36</sup> Wijayanti, Setiawan, and Makrufi.

<sup>37</sup> Wijayanti, Setiawan, and Makrufi.

<sup>38</sup> Nofriza Efendi, Refli Surya Barkara, and Yanti Fitria, "Implementasi Karakter Peduli Lingkungan Di Sekolah Dasar Lolong Belanti Padang (Implementation of Character Cares About The Environment in Elementary School Lolong Belanti Padang)," *Jurnal Komunikasi Pendidikan* 4, no. 2 (2020): 1–10.

## b. Ventilation and Lighting

The ventilation and lighting at SD Darus Sholah Jember comply with the Decree of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia (2006) standards. Each classroom has windows and fans to ensure proper air circulation. Adequate lighting is provided, supplemented by additional lamps. Proper ventilation and lighting enhance classroom learning activities, optimizing outcomes when supported by effective teaching methods and teacher guidance. Students are encouraged to utilize these facilities to improve their learning results.

## c. Sanitation Facilities

Sanitation facilities at SD Darus Sholah Jember meet the standards outlined in the Guidelines for implementing School Environmental Health. These include managing toilets, wastewater disposal, and trash facilities. Toilets are connected to septic tanks, wastewater is managed through PVC pipes, and drainage systems handle waste from handwashing stations in front of classrooms. These facilities support a clean and conducive learning environment. The school community is responsible for maintaining these facilities to ensure a hygienic environment that enhances learning.

## d. School Canteen

SD Darus Sholah Jember has two semi-permanent canteens managed by students' parents. Vendors have agreed to sell only clean, healthy, and safe food per the Guidelines for implementing School Environmental Health. The principal and teachers monitor the cleanliness of the canteen. Students can report any food concerns to the school staff. A clean canteen contributes to a healthy environment for the students.

## e. Free of Mosquito Larvae

The school environment is mosquito larvae-free, adhering to the 2006 health guidelines. Prevention programs involve students in waste disposal and cleaning water storage areas. A mosquito-free school environment reflects the successful implementation of environmental care values, creating a conducive setting for learning. The school is free from mosquito larvae based on the research conducted at SD Darus Sholah Jember. The school accustoms students to dispose of garbage and does not store objects that can become mosquito nests at school. The school involves students in preventing the growth of mosquitoes by inviting students to clean the bathtub. The condition of the school, which is free from mosquito larvae, is one of the characteristics of the cultivation of environmental care that has been successfully implemented in this school so that the school conditions are conducive to supporting the learning process. School is conducive to supporting the learning process. The parties who play a role in maintaining the cleanliness of the environment to be free from mosquito larvae are the principal, teachers, and all students who participate in maintaining cleanliness and supervising.

## f. Smoke-free

The 2006 Decree of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of Smoke-Free School Environmental Health explains the prohibition. It appeals not to smoke in the school environment. The regulation on the prohibition of smoking is already listed in the school rules. The school conducts socialization about the dangers of smoking in learning activities and school ceremonies. Appeals and prohibitions on smoking are also posted in the classrooms and hallways. The smoke-free condition of the school environment

positively impacts students, so the air in the school environment is clean and healthy. Smoke-free conditions can also be a role model for students to be more concerned about the environment and personal health. Principals and teachers play a role in establishing smoke-free school conditions by setting an example. Students play a role by obeying the rules that have been implemented. This condition is also supported by posters and written rules on the classroom walls.

- g. School hygiene and sanitation promotion: The school invites and urges students.

Not only through posters but also through ceremonial activities. School hygiene and sanitation promotion is by the Indonesian Minister of School Environmental Health. The school provides facilities that support the promotion of school hygiene and sanitation. The school promotes hygiene by putting up posters of prohibitions, invitations, and words of wisdom. Schools must also promote school hygiene and sanitation in organizing school environmental health.

School environmental health is a concrete action that reflects an attitude of caring for the environment. Hygiene promotion by schools helps maintain and preserve the school environment so that students feel more comfortable learning at school.

School. Posters of prohibitions and invitations support hygiene promotion to maintain cleanliness. The principal, teachers, and students have a role to play in heeding these posters to be applied in daily life. Conducive and comfortable conditions for students will undoubtedly support the achievement of educational goals expected by the school.

### **Challenges in Instilling Environmental Care Character Values through the Implementation of Green School at SD Darus Sholah Jember**

Implementing environmental care character values in elementary schools faces various challenges involving teachers, students, and the broader school community. According to Efendi et al,<sup>39</sup> several obstacles in fostering environmental care character education in elementary schools include the following:

1. Low Awareness Among Students and School Community Members

Research at SD Darus Sholah Jember reveals that a significant challenge is the lack of student awareness in participating in environmental care activities, such as disposing of trash in designated areas. This lack of awareness often stems from inadequate parental education in cultivating environmental care values, which ideally begin within the family environment.

2. Limited Support from Various Community Layers Due to Lack of Environmental Understanding

Findings at SD Darus Sholah Jember indicate that insufficient collaboration between teachers and the local community poses a significant barrier. Building strong relationships between educators and community members is crucial for implementing environmental care character education effectively. This is particularly important as many residents are parents of the students, who serve as the child's first teachers in developing values before formal schooling.

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<sup>39</sup> Efendi, Barkara, and Fitria.

### 3. Inadequate Enforcement of Environmental Care Regulations at School

Although SD Darus Sholah Jember has incorporated environmental care values into its mission and vision statements, enforcing these regulations must be more rigorous to ensure they translate into meaningful actions among students and staff.

### 4. Insufficient Facilities

Research highlights that the limited availability of facilities impedes the implementation of environmental care practices. For example, insufficient waste bins are categorized by waste types, and the learning environment is not yet entirely conducive to fostering these values.

### 5. Lack of Motivation-Building Initiatives, Such as Rewards for Environmentally Conscious Students

The school has tried to motivate students to maintain a clean environment through various activities, including recognizing and rewarding environmentally conscious behavior. Teachers actively encourage students through verbal praise, motivation, or tangible rewards like school supplies for actions such as voluntarily picking up trash and cleaning the school environment. These efforts aim to foster and sustain students' environmental awareness and care.

## Efforts to Address Challenges in Instilling Environmental Care Character Values Through the Implementation of Green School at SD Darus Sholah Jember

In response to the challenges mentioned above, several measures have been undertaken to effectively instill environmental care character values. According to Daryanto,<sup>40</sup> Environmental care is one of the character traits that schools must cultivate. It encompasses attitudes and actions to prevent environmental damage and promote efforts to restore previously damaged environments. This research's findings have identified effective solutions tailored to the existing conditions. According to the principal and teachers, the following efforts have been implemented to address the challenges faced in fostering environmental care character values at SD Darus Sholah Jember:

### 1. Providing Comprehensive Education on Personal Hygiene and Environmental Care

Research at SD Darus Sholah Jember highlights that teachers educate students to maintain personal and environmental hygiene by fostering habits like washing hands before and after meals. Teachers incorporate environmental education every Saturday through videos illustrating environmental pollution's consequences, such as littering's impact.

### 2. Guiding Students to Maintain Cleanliness by Properly Disposing of Waste

The study reveals that teachers have played a pivotal role in shaping students' environmental care character by participating actively in environmental initiatives. Teachers exemplify proper waste management practices and involve themselves in regular cleaning activities every Saturday. This aligns with the teacher's professional responsibilities as outlined in Law No. 14, Article 1 of 2005, which emphasizes the educator's role in teaching, guiding, and directing students. Teachers guide students to consistently dispose of waste in appropriate bins, reinforcing habits that promote environmental awareness.

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<sup>40</sup> Mohamad Samsul Maarif, Tity Kusrina, and Basukiyatno Basukiyatno, "Implementasi Kemampuan Manajerial Kepala Sekolah Dalam Menciptakan Sekolah Hijau (Green School) Di Tingkat SD," *Journal of Education Research* 5, no. 3 (2024): 3708–22, <https://doi.org/10.37985/jer.v5i3.1467>.

### 3. Enhancing Collaboration Between Parents and Teachers in Educating Students About Environmental Care

Character education fundamentally instills habits that help students discern right from wrong, internalize positive values, and practice them consistently.<sup>41</sup> At SD Darus Sholah Jember, policies like cleanliness programs, communal cleaning activities, and daily classroom duties involve students, teachers, and parents. These collaborative efforts nurture students' love for their environment and teach teamwork. Students accustomed to being served at home are encouraged to develop independence through these activities.

Teachers and students participate in these initiatives to strengthen relationships, fostering closeness and mutual respect. Parents are also involved in school and extracurricular activities, such as scouting, to model and reinforce positive behavior. Communal cleaning efforts promote environmental stewardship and result in a cleaner, better-maintained school environment.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight the comprehensive efforts of SD Darus Sholah Jember in promoting environmental care character education through curriculum development, including self-development programs, integrating environmental values in subjects, fostering an environmental care culture, enhancing learning quality, and managing school environmental health. Despite these efforts, significant challenges persist, such as students' neglect of personal hygiene, limited waste management awareness, hostile home environment influences, weak parental-teacher collaboration, and technical issues like inadequate water flow. To address these challenges, the school has implemented additional educational programs, including hygiene practices, waste management education, and strengthened interactions between parents and teachers, with alumni support complementing these initiatives. Educators should focus on continuous training to integrate environmental education effectively into teaching practices and employ interactive methods such as project-based learning to deepen students' awareness and habits. Policymakers are encouraged to develop policies that ensure schools have adequate infrastructure, such as proper water systems and waste management facilities while fostering partnerships between schools and community organizations. Researchers should explore the long-term impact of environmental education programs and investigate innovative approaches to overcome cultural and technical barriers in similar contexts. This study contributes to advancing environmental education in developing countries by demonstrating the importance of integrating character education into the curriculum, addressing challenges collaboratively, and leveraging community support to cultivate a culture of environmental care.

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<sup>41</sup> Efendi, Barkara, and Fitria, "Implementasi Karakter Peduli Lingkungan Di Sekolah Dasar Lolong Belanti Padang (Implementation of Character Cares About The Environment in Elementary School Lolong Belanti Padang)."

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