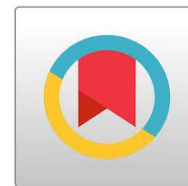# Effective Strategies of Volunteers in Overcoming Challenges to Build a Sustainable Community Based on Civic Engagement

Strategi Efektif Relawan dalam Mengatasi Tantangan untuk Membangun Komunitas Berkelanjutan Berbasis *Civic Engagement*

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

Keywords	ABSTRACT
Effective Volunteer Strategies; Sustainable Community; Civic Engagement;	This research examines effective strategies applied by volunteers in facing challenges to build sustainable communities based on civic engagement. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, this research explores the in-depth experiences of volunteers involved in handling waste issues in Malang City. Data were collected through field observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation, which were systematically analyzed using data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results show that close collaboration with various stakeholders, including the government and local organizations, is key to expanding support and increasing the impact of activities. Regular internal education enhances volunteer capacity, while public campaigns and advocacy drive community awareness and policy change. Community solidarity and emotional support between volunteers play an important role in maintaining collective motivation. Other strategies include flexible time management, task delegation, and utilizing creativity in managing limited resources. Self-management is also crucial in dealing with internal challenges such as social pressure and personal expectations. Volunteers who are able to manage their emotions and stay focused on the organization's vision show higher consistency in action. This research offers practical guidance for social organizations in improving the efficiency and impact of their activities, while contributing to the academic literature on volunteer dynamics in building sustainable communities. The findings underscore the importance of innovation, collaboration and civic engagement-based approaches as a foundation for addressing increasingly complex social and environmental challenges
Kata Kunci *Strategi Efektif Relawan; Komunitas Berkelanjutan; Keterlibatan Warga Negara*	**ABSTRAK** Penelitian ini mengkaji strategi efektif yang diterapkan oleh relawan dalam menghadapi tantangan untuk membangun komunitas berkelanjutan berbasis *civic engagement*. Dengan pendekatan fenomenologi kualitatif, penelitian ini menggali pengalaman mendalam relawan yang terlibat dalam penanganan isu sampah di Kota Malang. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi lapangan, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi, yang dianalisis secara sistematis menggunakan reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kolaborasi erat dengan berbagai pemangku kepentingan, termasuk pemerintah dan organisasi lokal, menjadi kunci untuk memperluas dukungan dan meningkatkan dampak kegiatan. Edukasi internal secara rutin meningkatkan kapasitas relawan, sementara kampanye publik dan advokasi mendorong kesadaran masyarakat dan perubahan kebijakan. Solidaritas komunitas dan dukungan emosional antarrelawan memainkan peran penting dalam menjaga motivasi kolektif. Strategi lainnya meliputi manajemen waktu yang fleksibel, delegasi tugas, serta pemanfaatan kreativitas dalam pengelolaan sumber daya yang terbatas. Manajemen diri juga menjadi faktor krusial dalam menghadapi tantangan internal seperti tekanan sosial dan ekspektasi pribadi. Relawan yang mampu

mengelola emosi dan tetap fokus pada visi organisasi menunjukkan konsistensi yang lebih tinggi dalam aksinya. Penelitian ini menawarkan panduan praktis untuk organisasi sosial dalam meningkatkan efisiensi dan dampak kegiatan mereka, sekaligus memberikan kontribusi pada literatur akademik tentang dinamika relawan dalam membangun komunitas berkelanjutan. Temuan ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya inovasi, kolaborasi, dan pendekatan berbasis *civic engagement* sebagai landasan untuk mengatasi tantangan sosial dan lingkungan yang semakin kompleks.

Introduction

This research focuses on the strategies used by volunteers in facing the challenges of building sustainable communities based on civic engagement. Civic engagement refers to the active participation of people in social activities, aiming to solve various social and environmental problems (Carney et al. 2023; Dang et al. 2022). Through this research, it is expected to gain in-depth insights into the strategic steps taken by volunteers in creating a sustainable impact in their communities. This understanding is relevant because sustainable communities require collaboration, innovation, and effective management (Basuki, 2023; Nurnaningsih dkk, 2023; Munir & Su'ada, 2024). Thus, this research highlights the importance of adaptive strategies that can overcome various constraints, such as limited human resources, time management, and other external challenges.

This research not only identifies the barriers faced by volunteers but also explores concrete solutions implemented to overcome these obstacles. The solutions found are expected to drive broader changes and create real sustainability in the community. To this end, this research emphasizes the importance of a collaboration-based approach that integrates citizen and volunteer participation as the key to success (Mthembu and Chimbari 2024; Ucar Kocaoglu and Phillips 2024). Such approaches include utilizing innovative strategies and strengthening the management of limited resources (Syamsuddin & Fuady, 2020; Nurnaningsih dkk, 2023; Gusli dkk, 2024). The findings of this study are expected to provide academic and practical contributions to the development of sustainable civic engagement-based community programs.

Social solidarity plays an important role in building sustainable communities, particularly in the context of citizen engagement. Social solidarity reflects the moral bonds and interdependence between individuals in society (Kivisto 2020). In the context of volunteering, this solidarity can be a foundation for strengthening collaboration, building mutual trust, and creating an enabling environment for community development. By utilizing the principle of social solidarity, volunteers can overcome challenges such as resource limitations and external pressures through a collective approach that prioritizes togetherness and common goals. This shows that sustainability depends not only on technical strategies but also on the underlying social bonds.

Building sustainable communities faces significant challenges mainly due to limited resources, including funding, labor, and knowledge (Nafiah, 2024; Bahasoan, 2025; Hadi dkk, 2023). Research shows that the survival of local communities depends on effective

543

resource management, which includes economic, financial, and human resources, as well as knowledge transfer and sharing (Romanelli 2023; Trostianska 2024). In Malaysia, local authorities reported that insufficient funding critically hampers the sustainable development of cities and communities, emphasizing the need for increased financial resources and risk management strategies (Azudin et al. 2023). In addition, community empowerment through education and local wisdom is critical to promoting self-reliance and sustainable development, highlighting the importance of bottom-up approaches in addressing these challenges (Susanti et al. 2023). In addition, entrepreneurs face barriers such as financial constraints and inadequate infrastructure, which further complicate efforts towards sustainability and innovation (Agrawal et al. 2024). Thus, a multifaceted approach that integrates these elements is essential to overcome resource limitations in building sustainable communities.

Social pressure and external criticism significantly impact volunteering, requiring a strong commitment to sustain these efforts (Wijaya, 2022). Research shows that volunteers often navigate relational pressures and societal expectations, which can create tension in nonprofit organizations, especially those serving marginalized groups (Azmat et al. 2023). Despite facing negative societal views, volunteers show flexibility in prioritizing their time and responsibilities, which is critical to maintaining their engagement (Kappelides, Cuskelly, and Hoye 2019). The sustainability of volunteer programs is further challenged by fluctuating stakeholder support, highlighting the need for fortitude in pursuing overarching goals (Berg 2016). Furthermore, motivations for volunteering are complex, interweaving altruistic aspirations with economic needs, suggesting that volunteer resilience is critical in overcoming external criticism while remaining focused on their mission (Nichols et al. 2005; Topp et al. 2015).

Self-management, especially in regulating emotions and expectations, is critical to sustaining volunteer motivation, as evidenced by various studies. Volunteers' persistence is significantly influenced by their belief in their organization's mission, thus increasing the sustainability of their movement (Fernandes and Matos 2023). Research shows that volunteers who feel alignment with their organization's core values show higher engagement and loyalty, driven by self-determination needs such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Moreover, emotional factors play an important role in recruitment and retention, highlighting the need for organizations to foster a supportive environment that nurtures these psychological needs (Härtel and O'Connor 2015). Overall, the interaction of emotional

management and mission alignment is critical to sustaining volunteer motivation and commitment.

Previous studies have discussed the challenges and strategies in building sustainable communities with a focus on specific aspects, such as resource limitations, volunteer management, and the impact of social pressure on the effectiveness of community programs (Nafiah, 2024; Bahasoan, 2025; Hadi dkk, 2023; Azmat et al., 2023). Romanelli (2023) and Trostianska (2024) emphasize the importance of effective human and economic resource management to ensure community sustainability, while Azudin et al. (2023) in Malaysia highlighted the significant barriers posed by limited funding and the need for better risk management strategies. On the other hand, research by Susanti et al. (2023) shows that local wisdom-based education and empowerment play an important role in promoting community self-reliance. However, these studies tend to examine challenges from a partial perspective and do not explore integrative strategies that combine individual, collaborative and structural aspects. Therefore, this study takes a more holistic approach by integrating these elements to understand volunteers' adaptive strategies in facing complex challenges, thus making new contributions to the development of theory and practice in the field of civic engagement and sustainable community development (Carney et al., 2023; Dang et al., 2022; Munir & Su'ada, 2024).

This research is unique in integrating a civic engagement-based approach as a foundation for analyzing volunteer challenges and strategies. Unlike previous studies that focus more on specific constraints such as funding or social pressure, this research offers a more holistic perspective by linking individual, collaborative, and structural strategies to create sustainable impact. In addition, this research emphasizes innovations in task delegation and resource management, which have not been widely discussed in previous literature.

This research is important because it provides new insights into how volunteers can overcome challenges in building sustainable communities. By identifying effective strategies, the results of this study are expected to serve as a practical guide for social and community organizations to improve the efficiency and impact of their activities. Furthermore, this research also contributes to the academic literature by expanding the understanding of volunteer dynamics in the context of civic engagement.

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study research type, which aims to understand the in-depth experience of volunteer communities in dealing with waste issues. The research stages began with preparation, including determining the research location in Malang City, which was chosen due to the existence of volunteer communities active in waste management issues. In addition, relevant participants were identified based on their active involvement in community activities. The types of data used include primary data, such as the results of in-depth interviews and field observations, and secondary data, such as community documents or archives.

Data collection was conducted through three main methods: field observation to directly observe volunteers' activities in dealing with waste issues, in-depth interviews to explore their perspectives, motivations, and personal experiences, and documentation in the form of records and archives related to community activities. Data analysis was conducted systematically through three stages: data reduction to filter out important and relevant information, data presentation in the form of narratives or tables to facilitate interpretation, and conclusion drawing by identifying patterns or themes that emerged from the data collected. Data validity was ensured through triangulation techniques, comparing information from various sources and data collection methods to increase the validity and reliability of the research.

Result and Discussion

To overcome various challenges, volunteers implemented strategies that focused on collaboration and self-management. Collaboration with government, organizations, and communities is key to expanding support and strengthening the impact of activities. Strong commitment and prioritization of activities help volunteers maintain focus and efficiency in carrying out tasks. Self-management and consistency are important factors to maintain motivation and sustainability, along with flexible time management to adapt to changing situations.

In addition to collaboration, education and capacity building continue to be carried out so that volunteers are ready to face new challenges. Solidarity and community support are important cornerstones that foster a spirit of togetherness. Through public campaigns and advocacy, volunteers strive to raise public awareness and encourage behavior change. Creativity in finding solutions, delegation of tasks, and efficient management of resources ensure that every activity carried out provides maximum results.

Collaboration and Social Advocacy

From the research results, it was found that collaboration and networking became one of the main strategies used by the volunteers to build a sustainable community. One of the biggest challenges faced by volunteers is the lack of human resources (HR), which is then overcome through social networking with other student groups. For example, Ferdi revealed that:

"The strategy or solution that we then offer is that while networking with friends of the association or friends of organizations or student groups we also massively invite them to participate in activities in Trash Hero.." (Ferdi)

This statement is also supported by the activity documentation in figure 1, Trash hero Tumapel's collaboration with a student activity group. This photo shows a group of students engaged in an outdoor activity, seemingly focused on collaborative work with the environment. Some of the students are sitting in groups on the grass while wearing casual clothes, gloves and masks, suggesting that they may be doing activities such as sorting waste or composting.

Figure 1. Trash Hero Tumapel collaborates with HIMAHI.

Source: Trash Hero Tumapel Documentation

Apart from networking, internal coordination is also a significant challenge. Bastian highlighted that one of the obstacles that often arises is the difficulty in adjusting the time between volunteers and related parties. As he said the following:

" We often have to hold regular meetings to determine the right time and place to hold activities." (Bastian)

In addition, Fadli added that differences in views between volunteers can be overcome through regular weekly discussions, where they share ideas and map out plans. As he says below:

"One of the ways we address this is by holding regular discussions and meetings every week. During these meetings we share ideas for plan mapping and develop new ideas that can be implemented in the future." (Fadli)

From these statements, it is clear that external collaboration through networking as well as internal discussion and coordination are key steps taken by the volunteers to overcome the challenges in achieving a sustainable city. Collaboration and social networking are key strategies in creating a sustainable community. Based on the findings, volunteers utilized networking with student associations and other organizations to overcome human resource shortages, increase participation, and expand their social impact. This networking is consistent with the literature that collaboration allows organizations to share resources, broaden horizons, and address collective problems (Camarinha-Matos 2009; Hawkins et al. 2018). In this context, the social network became a driving mechanism to improve the organization's adaptive capacity to dynamic conditions through administrative capacity building, stakeholder support, and cross-sector coordination. Trash Hero also addresses coordination challenges with regular meetings, which is relevant to the "collaborative governance" strategy for managing complex policy challenges. This integration of collaborative practices and internal management demonstrates the relevance of institutional collective action theory in supporting sustainability initiatives at local and regional levels.

The findings of this study confirm that collaboration strategies and social networks play a central role in overcoming resource limitations as well as coordination challenges among Trash Hero volunteers. Collaborative practices involving other student organizations not only expand the reach of social impact, but also reflect the relevance of institutional collective action theory in creating community-based solutions to sustainability issues. In addition, regular discussions by volunteers serve as a deliberative mechanism to integrate diverse views, which strengthens the effectiveness of collective decision-making. The main implication of these findings is the need to strengthen networking capacity and coordination across sectors to support community sustainability. This is in line with the concept of "collaborative governance," which underscores the importance of building synergies across actors in managing complex challenges. However, challenges in timing and coordination also suggest that successful collaborative strategies require more systematic frameworks to reduce friction in implementation, such as the adoption of collaboration management technologies to optimize operational efficiency.

Public Campaign and Advocacy

Public campaigns and advocacy are the main strategies used by volunteers to overcome challenges in increasing participation and voicing environmental issues. One of the strategies taken by Ahmad Labib and his team is to publish press releases after each activity is completed. As he said below:

" In addition, after each activity is completed, we also publish a press release to campaign for the activities we have carried out in the hope of increasing participation in the future." (Ahmad Labib)

This is supported by an Instagram post from the Envigreen Society, as seen in Figure 2. The image depicts a group of people gathered for an environmental clean-up event in Malang, organized by a group called the "Environmental Green Society." At the top of the image, the text reads, "Be Part of the Solution! Working Together #ForASustainableMalang," encouraging the public to contribute to environmental sustainability. Participants in the event hold a banner with the messages "Malang Clean Up" and "Caring Earth, Save Our Home, Preserve Our Precious Nature." The surrounding trees suggest that the event took place in an open area or green space. In the post's description, it is mentioned that Malang faces significant environmental challenges, such as plastic waste and microplastic pollution in the Brantas River, a major water source. The "Environmental Green Society" invites the public to join as new members to contribute to sustainable solutions. The call to action includes the hashtags: #ChangeTheFuture and #ForASustainableMalang.
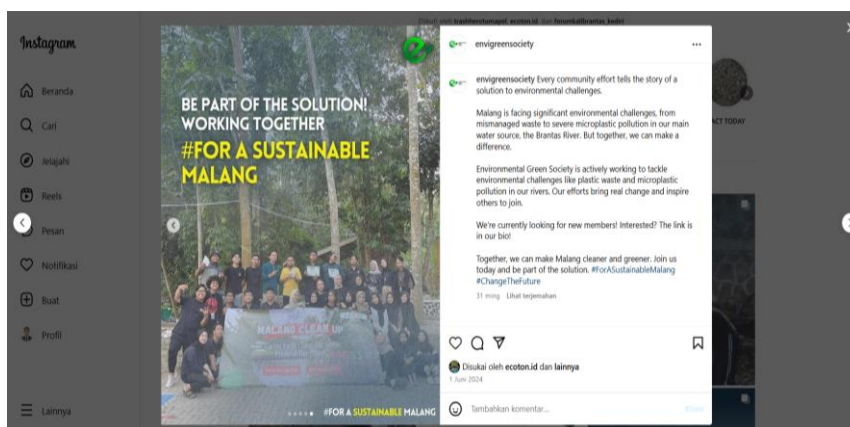

Figure 2. Instagram Post Highlighting a Volunteer Collaboration Activity
Source: https://www.instagram.com/envigreensociety/

In addition to public campaigns, the volunteers are also committed to advocating against greenwashing practices carried out by certain companies and government entities. Chandra highlights that the solutions offered by these parties are often superficial and fail to

address environmental issues comprehensively, particularly in the context of single-use plastic management. As he stated: "This creates the impression that the problem has been resolved, while in reality, it has not."

The research findings reveal that public campaigns and advocacy are the primary strategies effectively employed by volunteers to address challenges in increasing community participation and raising awareness of environmental issues. The publication of press releases following each activity serves as a strategic step to broaden the campaign's reach and attract greater public engagement in the future (Dayanti & Kuswanti, 2024; Anggraeni & Pramusinto, 2024). Moreover, advocacy against greenwashing practices by certain companies and government entities has become a key focus, given that many proposed solutions are superficial and fail to address environmental issues comprehensively, particularly in the management of single-use plastics. The volunteers' commitment to combating such practices demonstrates an effort to foster critical public awareness of environmental issues that are often oversimplified or obscured by corporate and governmental narratives.

These findings highlight the strategic role of public campaigns and advocacy in driving social change and enhancing environmental awareness. Press release publications by volunteers serve not only as a means of documentation but also as an effective communication tool to amplify the campaign's impact and strengthen community engagement. This strategy underscores the importance of a strategic communication approach in expanding community-based advocacy efforts. On the other hand, advocacy against greenwashing practices reflects the critical capacity of volunteers to identify and expose superficial solutions often presented by corporations or governments. This aligns with the theory of critical environmental literacy, which emphasizes the need for communities to not only understand environmental issues technically but also evaluate the motives behind certain policies or practices. The implications of these findings suggest the importance of strengthening volunteer capacity in communication and advocacy strategies, as well as the need for institutional support to sustain public campaign-based social movements. In the future, adopting more advanced communication technologies could enhance the efficiency of advocacy efforts and expand the campaign's impact on a larger scale.

Commitment and Activity Prioritization

Commitment and prioritization are key strategies adopted by volunteers in addressing challenges during their involvement in Trash Hero activities. One of the challenges they face is balancing personal responsibilities with their commitment to Trash Hero initiatives. Wikan, one of the volunteers, emphasized that while volunteers strive to prioritize Trash Hero activities, the final decision ultimately rests on the individual's freedom. As he stated:

> *"I also try to prioritize Trash Hero activities for myself. However, if someone chooses not to, we do not force their individual choice." (Wikan)*

In addition to facing internal challenges related to time management and prioritization, the volunteers also have to deal with external pressures, often from those who underestimate their contributions. Wikan mentioned that, although they cannot control others' opinions, they remain focused on doing positive things, which they hope will eventually change these negative perceptions. As he stated:

> *"We cannot control what people think about us, but what matters is that we keep doing good things. Hopefully, this can eventually change their perspective from underestimating us to seeing us in a positive light." (Wikan)*

This aligns with Alaika's perspective, who also emphasizes the importance of consistency in addressing social challenges. She believes that the key to dealing with societal pressure and criticism is to remain steadfast in the belief that their activities will have a positive impact on the environment and society in the future. As she stated:

> *" The key is consistency staying steadfast in what we believe in because that is what will make a difference and create a positive impact on the environment and society in the future." (Alaika)*

From these statements, it can be concluded that commitment, flexibility in prioritization, and steadfastness are crucial factors that help Trash Hero volunteers overcome internal and external challenges in achieving their goals.

The research findings reveal that strong commitment, flexibility in priority management, and consistency are key elements enabling Trash Hero volunteers to overcome various internal and external challenges in achieving their goals. Internal challenges, such as the conflict between personal demands and commitment to social activities, are addressed by granting individuals the freedom to set their own priorities (Nursanti dkk, 2024; Budiarto dkk, 2018).. On the other hand, external challenges, such as negative public perceptions, are tackled through consistency and a belief that positive actions can gradually shift public

attitudes. These findings align with perspectives suggesting that structured volunteer commitment guided by a strategic framework supports the sustainability of initiatives with a positive impact on local communities (Maryam dkk, 2024; Hidayat, 2021). Furthermore, the importance of goal-oriented collaboration is identified as a factor that sustains voluntary activities amidst social challenges (Triatmanto dkk, 2024; Yaumidin, 2016; Sukaharsono & Andayani, 2021). Strategies emphasizing priority management, steadfastness, and a focus on long-term impact form the foundation for volunteers' success in carrying out their mission.

These findings indicate that commitment, flexibility in priority management, and consistency play a crucial role in sustaining Trash Hero's social activities despite facing internal and external challenges. The strategy of granting individuals the freedom to set their own priorities not only reflects an inclusive approach but also enhances volunteers' sense of responsibility for their contributions. This approach aligns with the relevance of human resource management theories in the context of volunteer-based organizations, where flexibility helps mitigate conflicts between personal needs and social commitments. Meanwhile, consistency in addressing external criticism and maintaining confidence in the positive impact of their activities underscores the importance of social literacy and psychological resilience in supporting environmental movements. The implications of these findings suggest the need to strengthen volunteer capacity-building programs that focus not only on technical skills but also on fostering emotional resilience and communication strategies to manage external pressures. With an integrated strategic approach, initiatives like Trash Hero have the potential to continue evolving as a model for long-term impactful social movements.

Self-Management and Organizational Effectiveness

The research findings reveal that self-management, particularly in managing emotions and expectations, is a key strategy for volunteers to maintain consistency and perseverance in their voluntary activities. Ence emphasizes the importance of the ability to handle personal challenges, especially when motivation fluctuates. He stated:

> *"Managing emotions and expectations is crucial... my personal challenge is figuring out how to keep myself on the right track, get back on track when needed, and keep moving forward despite the ups and downs in motivation." (Ence)*

In addition to self-management, the respondent also faces challenges from their family. Dwiky mentioned that in dealing with criticism and doubts from his family, he strives to stay focused by reminding himself of the original purpose of joining Trash Hero. As he stated:

> *"My way of overcoming this is by reminding myself of the original purpose of joining this movement. When my goals are clear and strong, any obstacles, including criticism or doubts from my family, will not have much of an impact." (Dwiky)*

The research findings reveal that self-management through the regulation of emotions, expectations, and a focus on initial goals is a critical strategy employed by Trash Hero volunteers to address various challenges. Their consistency is supported by internal strength derived from their belief in the mission and objectives they uphold, enabling them to remain committed despite external pressures and personal obstacles. Previous studies have shown that self-management, particularly in managing emotions and expectations, is a key factor in maintaining consistency and perseverance in volunteer activities (Seymour & Haklay, 2017). The ability to overcome personal challenges, such as fluctuating motivation or doubts from others, serves as an essential foundation for volunteers to remain focused on the long-term impact of their activities. A clear vision and belief in their initial purpose not only motivate but also enhance the resilience of volunteers in navigating social dynamics and challenges. Thus, this strategy underscores the importance of internal strength in sustaining volunteer activities.

These findings affirm that self-management, including the regulation of emotions, expectations, and reaffirmation of personal vision, is a vital element in supporting the consistency of Trash Hero volunteers. The ability to remain focused on their initial goals despite external pressures, such as family criticism or personal challenges, reflects the relevance of self-determination theory, which emphasizes the importance of internal regulation for maintaining long-term motivation. This strategy demonstrates that success in volunteer activities relies not only on external support but also on internal strength, enabling individuals to persevere amidst social and emotional dynamics. The practical implications of these findings highlight the need to develop training programs for volunteers that not only enhance technical skills but also build emotional and mental resilience. By supporting effective self-management, organizations like Trash Hero can strengthen volunteers' endurance and ensure the sustainability of their social mission. This strategy also provides insights into the importance of a clear vision as a guiding principle in navigating the complexities of social and personal challenges.

Time Management and Flexibility

Time management and flexibility are key challenges faced by volunteers in balancing academic commitments with their activities at Trash Hero. One strategy used to address this is direct communication with the activity coordinators. Sahira, one of the volunteers, emphasized the importance of coordination to ensure that Trash Hero's schedule can be adjusted to align with her academic timetable. As she stated:

> " I usually communicate with the coordinator at Trash Hero to ask whether the activities can be scheduled a bit earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon so they don't conflict with my schedule." (Sahira)

In addition to adjusting the schedule, Sahira also found another solution to remain actively involved in Trash Hero activities despite conflicts with her academic schedule. By choosing volunteer activities that fit her free time, Sahira can continue contributing without compromising her academic commitments. As she stated: *" That way, I can still contribute while adjusting to my academic schedule." (Sahira)*

The research findings indicate that adaptability and flexibility in time management are crucial steps taken by volunteers to maintain consistency in social activities while balancing academic responsibilities and volunteer commitments. This flexibility enables them to remain actively engaged in fostering sustainable communities without compromising other essential aspects of their lives. Studies highlight that time management and flexibility are primary challenges, with schedule adjustments and effective communication with activity coordinators serving as key strategies to ensure active participation despite time constraints. This aligns with Zhao & Egger's (2020) perspective, which emphasizes the importance of flexibility and communication in maintaining a balance between academic responsibilities and social engagement. By selecting activities that align with their available time, volunteers can continue contributing significantly without sacrificing their academic commitments, thereby achieving positive impacts while maintaining life balance. This strategy underscores the importance of flexibility as a fundamental component in sustaining participation in volunteer activities.

These findings highlight the importance of flexibility and time management as key elements in sustaining Trash Hero volunteers' engagement amidst academic pressures. Volunteers' ability to adjust schedules through effective communication with activity coordinators demonstrates the relevance of an adaptive approach in community-based organizations. This approach aligns with the work-life balance theory, which emphasizes the integration of various responsibilities without compromising productivity in any area. Strategies such as adjusting activity schedules and selecting tasks that align with individual

availability reflect a pragmatic approach that ensures sustained participation in volunteer activities. The implications of these findings suggest the need for volunteer organizations to develop more flexible coordination mechanisms, such as dynamic scheduling or the use of time-based technology to facilitate volunteer involvement. By doing so, organizations can support volunteers in remaining actively engaged despite time constraints, while also ensuring the long-term sustainability of their social missions.

Capacity Building and Community Solidarity

The research findings reveal that education and capacity building are key strategies employed by volunteers to address challenges in enhancing participation and the effectiveness of the movement. One major challenge faced by the volunteers is low participation due to knowledge gaps among members. Ahmad Labib emphasized that the solution they implemented to address this issue was organizing internal education sessions. As he stated:

> *" To address this issue, we try to reduce knowledge gaps among members through education. We organize internal education sessions at Envigreen to ensure that every member's understanding of environmental issues is more evenly distributed." (Ahmad Labib)*

In addition to enhancing internal knowledge, the volunteers also consistently engage in education and advocacy efforts to raise public awareness and influence government policies. Chandra explained that to address the challenges of influencing government policies, particularly regarding single-use plastic reduction regulations, they continuously conduct research and advocacy. As he stated:

> *" To address this, we will continue conducting research, education, and advocacy so that the mayoral regulations can be more comprehensive and cover a wider range of single-use plastics." (Chandra)*

The research findings indicate that internal education and capacity building are key strategies adopted by volunteers to address challenges in participation and movement effectiveness, particularly in reducing knowledge gaps among members. Internal education sessions play a significant role in creating a more uniform understanding among members, directly supporting the team's effectiveness in implementing programs (Ismayati, 2024; Syaepudin, 2024). Additionally, external education and advocacy efforts are strategic measures to raise public awareness and strengthen support for government policy changes (Maritza & Taufiqurokhman, 2024; Dewi dkk, 2024). Ongoing research and intensive advocacy demonstrate that a data-driven approach can strengthen arguments for promoting

more comprehensive policies, such as single-use plastic reduction regulations, which are expected to include a wider range of plastics to enhance ecological impact (Findiastuti dkk, 2022; Pasaribu & Widjaja, 2022). This strategy reflects a holistic approach that integrates internal and external development to support the movement's objectives.

These findings demonstrate that internal and external education, as well as data-driven advocacy, are crucial components in enhancing the effectiveness of the Trash Hero movement and strengthening community solidarity. Internal capacity building through educational sessions not only addresses knowledge gaps among members but also reinforces team cohesion, which is essential for executing programs more effectively. This strategy aligns with the capacity-building approach, which emphasizes the importance of investing in human resources to sustain social movements. On the other hand, advocacy efforts supported by ongoing research highlight the importance of evidence-based approaches in influencing government policies. This approach underscores the relevance of collective action theory, where synergy between internal strengthening and external strategies is required to achieve significant social change. The implications of these findings suggest the need for organizations to adopt a holistic approach that not only focuses on internal capacity development but also on strategic and sustainable advocacy to support broader policy changes with long-term ecological impacts.

Solidarity and Community Support

Moreover, solidarity and community support emerge as key strategies for overcoming the various challenges faced by Trash Hero volunteers. One of the primary challenges is the limitation of time, energy, and human resources. To maintain morale and ensure strong solidarity among volunteers, Basil explained that they create informal moments such as gathering together or having a casual coffee break. As he stated:

> *" However, we try to overcome this by creating informal moments, such as gathering or having 'ngops' (coffee breaks), which can greatly help in maintaining morale and solidarity among us." (Basil)*

In addition, support from fellow community members also plays an important role in maintaining good habits, such as waste sorting, even when feelings of laziness or fatigue arise. Nina explained that the main motivation to remain consistent in sorting waste comes from the encouragement and support provided by friends in the community who share the same vision and mission. As she stated:

" But because I am already part of Illiterles and have supportive friends, they help remind me to go back to sorting waste." (Nina)

These statements conclude that solidarity, fostered through shared moments and mutual support among volunteers, plays a crucial role in addressing challenges related to time, energy, and motivation. A solid community provides its members with the strength to remain committed to their goals, creating a supportive environment that sustains enthusiasm and good habits beneficial for the environment. Solidarity in volunteer activities lies at the heart of forming cohesive societies, as highlighted by various studies on the role of volunteering in promoting social solidarity. Solidarity not only strengthens relationships among community members but also serves as a response to modern societal challenges. For example, collective actions during the pandemic, such as the #WeAreTogether campaign in Russia, demonstrated how volunteer efforts significantly united individuals from diverse backgrounds to achieve common goals, such as supporting vulnerable groups by providing basic needs to the elderly and underprivileged communities (Noskova, 2020). This concept underscores the importance of togetherness and mutual care, articulated in various social theories as vital elements in building a stable civil society (Serova & Shamatonova, 2021). Moreover, such initiatives reaffirm the role of communities in providing moral and emotional support to their members, a role that is not only relevant in times of crisis but also essential in fostering long-term sustainability of solidarity.

Resource Management and Efficiency

Resource management and efficiency are critical factors in addressing the challenges faced by Trash Hero, particularly regarding funding. Bastian emphasized that Trash Hero exercises great caution in managing funds to ensure that activities requiring equipment and transportation can proceed smoothly. As he stated: "We have to manage funds carefully for every activity we organize."

From this statement, it is evident that Trash Hero focuses on efficient fund management as a strategy to address resource limitations. Through careful planning, they ensure that, despite limited resources, their activities continue to run effectively and deliver maximum impact (Karim, 2023; Agustin dkk, 2024; Yusuf & Sodik, 2023). This efficiency in fund utilization helps sustain Trash Hero's programs without compromising the quality or reach of their activities. This approach aligns with the principles of effective resource management, enabling organizations to optimize the use of limited resources while still achieving their objectives (Cahyadi dkk, 2023; Fernanda & Sukmana, 2024).

These findings highlight that efficient resource management is a strategic element in ensuring the sustainability of Trash Hero's activities, even amidst funding constraints. Careful planning and meticulous fund management enable the organization to maximize the impact of each activity without compromising the quality or effectiveness of its programs. This approach reflects the application of the resource-based view principle, where optimizing available resources becomes key to addressing operational challenges. This strategy also aligns with organizational efficiency theory, which emphasizes the importance of precise resource allocation to achieve goals with maximum results. The implications of these findings suggest that community-based organizations need to strengthen systems of accountability and transparency in resource management. This not only supports the sustainability of activities but also enhances stakeholder trust in the organization's mission. Thus, efficient resource management can serve as a best practice model for similar organizations operating under budget constraints.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that effective strategies employed by volunteers to overcome challenges in building sustainable communities based on civic engagement include close collaboration with various stakeholders, flexible time management, and internal education to enhance member capacity. Volunteers leverage social solidarity and community support to maintain collective motivation, as well as public campaigns and advocacy to raise public awareness of environmental issues. Good self-management, including emotion and expectation regulation, has proven to be a key factor in maintaining the consistency of volunteer actions. Through innovation-based approaches and task delegation, volunteers can optimize limited resources to achieve significant outcomes. This study contributes to the development of knowledge by providing practical guidelines for organizations and communities to improve the efficiency and impact of civic engagement-based activities, while also paving the way for future research on volunteer innovations in addressing increasingly complex social and environmental challenges. As a recommendation for future research, it is crucial to further explore the role of social solidarity in strengthening relationships among community members and volunteers, as well as its impact on the sustainability of civic engagement programs. Future studies could map how social solidarity can be used to build trust, enhance social cohesion, and create stronger support networks at both local and global levels. By understanding the dynamics of solidarity, civic engagement-based approaches can be optimized to deliver broader and more sustainable impacts.

Acknowledgments

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