





# Speed up Uneducated Children's Education in Central Java through Community Learning

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**Abstract.** The pervasive issue of out-of-school children in Indonesia, particularly in Central Java, demands comprehensive strategies. With an alarming 4.3 million children aged 7-18 out of school, this study examines constitutional amendments, the national strategy, and low school readiness rates in Central Java. Challenges identified include economic disparities, rural-urban gaps, and a lack of early childhood education infrastructure. The objective is to address these issues and facilitate inclusive education. The study recommends strengthening early childhood education infrastructure, targeted interventions, community awareness, policy evaluation, non-formal education, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring mechanisms. This holistic approach aims to minimize the number of out-of-school children. Further research is suggested to assess strategy effectiveness, understand the perspectives of out-of-school children, and evaluate constitutional policy impacts. This study provides foundational insights and policy directives for collaborative efforts to promote inclusive education in Central Java.

**Keywords:** Children out of school, Inclusive education, Policy strategies, School readiness, Community learning.

## 1 Introduction

The persistent issue of children out of school (OSC) [1], [2], [3] in Indonesia, particularly in Central Java, necessitates urgent measures to speed up the education of uneducated children through community learning initiatives. The estimated 4.3 million OSC children aged 7-18 contradicts the constitutional right to education for every citizen. The 2022 constitutional amendment reaffirms the government's commitment to a national teaching system and education budget. The OSC National Strategy [4] targets children who have never attended school, dropped out without completing a level, or failed to progress to a higher level. Prevention strategies are crucial, particularly for at-risk groups like children with disabilities and those from poor families. High school-aged children (16-18 years) constitute a significant portion of OSC, with a 24% dropout rate. Rural areas face higher OSC rates (30%) than urban areas (19%), and economic disparities impact attendance, with over 35% of the poorest 20% not attending versus

13% of the richest. The densely populated provinces of Java, including West Java, Central Java, East Java, and Banten, account for 55% of OSC in this age group, emphasizing the need to address disparities for educational goals. Low school readiness rates in Central Java result from factors like a scarcity of early childhood education (namely PAUD) schools, totaling only 53,577 [5]. Parents' unawareness of the importance of preschool education and the associated financial burden contribute to this issue. Minister of Home Affairs Regulation Number 59 of 2021 places the responsibility for improving school readiness figures on district and city governments, with the Ministry of Education aiding and advocacy.

A proposed package equality school program underscores efforts needed for continued education. Non-formal education [6], [7], [8], including package systems, courses, training, open schools, and educational assistance, is proposed to address OSC. Strategies regional government [9], [10] intervention, infrastructure development [11], social awareness campaigns [12], and family education [13]. This research complements previous studies by proposing the equality education program [14], which highlights the inclusivity of non-formal education through diverse approaches [15]. It involves regional government intervention for infrastructure accessibility [16], the implementation of social awareness campaigns, and the provision of family education support [17]. Rahmawati suggests steps like parental education, supervision, school outreach, and maximizing educational assistance. To speed up the education of uneducated children in Central Java through community learning, these strategies need to be integrated into a comprehensive plan, focusing on accessibility, awareness, and community involvement [18], [19] to ensure the success of educational initiatives and minimize the number of OSC. The study on OSC in Indonesia, particularly in Central Java, has identified several aspects that require further attention. While the issues of OSC, intervention strategies, and related factors have been outlined, there are gaps in the study that need exploration. These gaps include the effectiveness of intervention strategies, the direct perspective of OSC children, community participation in community learning initiatives, the impact of constitutional policy [9], [20], [21], [22] changes in 2022, holistic methods for measuring school readiness, more in-depth regional analyses, and the concrete implementation of constitutional changes. Further research addressing these specific aspects can provide deeper insights to support efforts in addressing the OSC problem in the region. The study aims to explore and understand the OSC issue in Indonesia, particularly in Central Java, identifying causes, analyzing intervention strategies, and providing concise policy recommendations for reducing OSC numbers and improving education access and quality in the region.

## 2 Methods

The research focused on four districts, namely Grobogan, Rembang, Brebes, and Purbalingga, identified as having a significant number of children not attending school. Secondary data is sourced from stakeholder publications, including Regional Development Planning Agency, Central Bureau of Statistics in Central Java Province. This applied research aims to provide input for the formulation of policies and programs to

address the issue of OSC in Central Java. Using a Mixed Methods [23], [24] approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods, quantitative data were collected through questionnaires, while qualitative data were obtained from interviews and focus group discussions. The data underwent processing and analysis stages, including data collection, reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis involved data reduction, emphasizing key points, and removing non-essential information to derive valid conclusions.

### 3 Result and discussion

The study's findings highlight the critical issue of OSC in Central Java, emphasizing the urgent need for community learning initiatives. Key takeaways emphasize comprehensive strategies involving policy formulation, prevention efforts, and non-formal education programs. Challenges identified include economic disparities [25], rural-urban gaps [22], and a deficiency in early childhood education infrastructure [26], [27]. The study underscores the pivotal role of regional government intervention, the importance of developing educational infrastructure, and community involvement in resolving OSC issues. While promising, the suggested strategies require further research to assess their effectiveness. Understanding the direct perspectives of OSC children and monitoring recent constitutional changes are crucial aspects. The proposed comprehensive plan not only focuses on enhancing educational accessibility but also underscores the importance of raising community awareness and active engagement from all stakeholders. Collaboration between the government, schools, and the community is deemed key to success in expediting the education of OSC in Central Java. Therefore, it is hoped that the implementation of these strategies will reduce the number of OSC and enhance the overall quality of education [28], [29] in the region.

The study's findings underscore the complexity and urgency of addressing the issue of OSC in Central Java. The results highlight the pressing need to adopt community learning initiatives as a swift solution to overcome limited educational access [7]. The identification of economic disparities and the rural-urban gap indicates that effective solutions must consider local contexts. The role of regional governments is crucial in policy formulation [9], [20] and infrastructure interventions to provide sustainable solutions. The study emphasizes the need for ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of proposed strategies and underscores the importance of empirical evidence in planning. The comprehensive plan, emphasizing community involvement and increasing public awareness, is seen as a positive step that can be implemented through close collaboration [30], [31] between the government, schools, and the community. Direct understanding from the perspective of OSC children is stated as a critical factor for tailoring educational programs. Furthermore, attention to the implementation of constitutional changes is an essential element to ensure positive impacts on the education system. In conclusion, these findings provide a solid foundation for designing and implementing more effective OSC handling strategies in Central Java, with a focus on ongoing evaluation and active community engagement.

The study reveals several key findings concerning the issue of OSC in Central Java. It is estimated that approximately 4.3 million children aged 7-18 are not attending school, which contradicts the constitution affirming the right of every citizen to education. The 2022 constitutional amendment reaffirms the government's commitment to the national education system and adequate budget allocation [32]. The OSC National Strategy document focuses on three OSC groups, emphasizing the need for prevention strategies, especially for at-risk groups like children with disabilities and those from poor families. The study highlights geographical and economic disparities in OSC numbers, with rural areas and poor families facing higher risks. Limitations in PAUD pose a significant challenge. Regulation No. 59 of 2021 places the responsibility for improving school readiness on regional governments, with central government support. Factors contributing to school dropout include parents' social and economic conditions, while proposed solutions involve non-formal education and regional government intervention strategies. The study aims to provide policy guidance and priority actions to address the OSC issue in Central Java, focusing on accessibility, awareness, and community engagement.

## 4 Conclusion

This study concludes that addressing the OSC issue in Central Java requires a commitment to equitable education access, evident in the 2022 constitutional amendment. The OSC National Strategy emphasizes intensive prevention, especially for at-risk groups. Geographical and economic disparities, along with limitations in early childhood education infrastructure, contribute to the OSC problem. Regional governments, guided by Regulation No. 59 of 2021, play a key role in improving school readiness with central government support. Identified factors causing school dropout, such as parents' social and economic conditions, call for solutions like non-formal education and regional government interventions. The proposed comprehensive plan, involving community engagement and heightened awareness, is a positive step in addressing OSC issues. In conclusion, this study offers a foundation and policy guidance for more inclusive education in Central Java, necessitating collaboration among stakeholders.

The recommendations from this study encompass strategic steps to address the issue of OSC in Central Java: Firstly, there is a crucial need to strengthen PAUD infrastructure. This involves collaborative efforts between local and central governments to enhance school readiness and reduce the number of OSC. Secondly, targeted interventions and financial support should be provided, especially for high-risk groups such as children with disabilities and those from low-income families. This ensures their continued participation in the educational system. Furthermore, raising public awareness about the significance of preschool education and the role of parents in supporting their children's education is essential. Continuous evaluation and periodic policy updates are also recommended to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of educational policies amid evolving social and economic dynamics. Enhancing non-formal education and community learning programs serves as a viable alternative to reach OSC and guarantee more

inclusive education access. Active engagement with stakeholders, including educational institutions, community organizations, and relevant parties, is crucial for crafting holistic and sustainable solutions. Lastly, continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be implemented to measure the impact of policies and programs, facilitating necessary adjustments over time.

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