

Ngobrol Pintar: A Community Service Program on Financial Literacy and Investment Awareness

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Abstract. Financial literacy is a crucial competence in strengthening family financial planning and investment awareness. This community service program, Ngobrol Pintar (NGOPI), was initiated by Universitas Terbuka Medan in collaboration with Dharma Wanita Persatuan to address the need for accessible financial education in society. The program was implemented through an interactive seminar with 117 participants consisting of parents and children. The dialogue-based approach focused on gold investment as a practical entry point for understanding financial literacy. The seminar achieved active engagement from participants and increased awareness of financial management within the family context. Participants reported improved understanding of saving and investing practices, particularly related to gold as a long-term investment instrument. The findings indicate that financial literacy training through dialogue can effectively empower communities. Beyond a one-time session, the NGOPI initiative promotes sustainability by developing community-based financial literacy hubs, producing digital learning resources, and establishing partnerships with financial institutions and regulatory bodies. This approach positions financial literacy as an ongoing dialogue to build a culture of investment awareness and foster long-term financial resilience.

Keywords: Financial Literacy; Investment Awareness; Community Service; Ngobrol Pintar (NGOPI); Family Financial Planning

1. Introduction

Financial literacy has become a global concern in the context of community empowerment (Garg & Singh, 2018; Hermansson & Jonsson, 2021; Lone & Bhat, 2024). Numerous studies highlight that a lack of financial literacy contributes to poor financial decision-making, vulnerability to fraud, and limited investment participation, especially in developing countries. Swiecka et al. (2020) emphasized that financial literacy is a critical life skill that influences long-term financial well-being. In Indonesia, the urgency is even more pronounced, as the country faces low levels of financial literacy compared to financial inclusion rates, creating a significant gap that must be addressed through systematic education programs (Danila et al., 2019; Dewi et al., 2020; Murhadi et al.,

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2023).

The importance of financial literacy is not only relevant to individuals but also to families, where financial decisions affect intergenerational welfare. Previous research indicates that early exposure to financial education plays a decisive role in shaping children's attitudes and behaviors toward money management (Ali et al., 2022). Parents, as primary role models, are expected to transfer financial knowledge and practices to their children. However, many families still lack the knowledge and skills necessary to guide children in saving, investing, and financial planning. This reality strengthens the need for community-based initiatives that combine parental involvement and practical learning approaches.

In Indonesia, the Financial Services Authority (OJK) reported that in 2022 the financial literacy index reached only 49.68%, while the financial inclusion index was 85.10% (Astutik & Soerodjo, 2023; Hutabarat et al., 2023; Jaswadi et al., 2024). This indicates that although access to financial services is increasingly available, the public's understanding of how to use these services wisely remains limited. One area where literacy is particularly low is in investment awareness. Many people are hesitant to invest due to limited knowledge, fear of risk, and exposure to misleading information. Therefore, educational interventions focusing on safe and accessible investment options, such as gold, are essential for strengthening community resilience.

Gold investment has become an attractive option for Indonesian households because of its accessibility, relative stability, and cultural familiarity. Studies show that gold is widely perceived as a safe haven asset, making it an effective entry point for educating communities about broader investment concepts. By using gold as a contextual example, financial literacy programs can simplify abstract investment concepts and connect them to everyday financial practices. Thus, initiatives that combine cultural relevance and practical examples are more likely to resonate with participants and produce lasting behavioral change.

Responding to these needs, Universitas Terbuka (UT) Medan, in collaboration with Dharma Wanita Persatuan (DWP), designed a community service program under the framework of the Academic and Education Seminar Series, entitled Ngobrol Pintar: Financial Literacy for Children and Parents. The program, popularly known as NGOPI EMAS, specifically focused on raising investment awareness through gold investment discussions. By targeting both parents and children, the initiative aimed to create a dialogical learning process that promotes intergenerational knowledge transfer in financial literacy.

The activity was designed as an interactive seminar involving 117 participants from diverse backgrounds, including lecturers, staff, students, and members of Dharma Wanita Persatuan. The involvement of Bank Syariah Indonesia (BSI) as a partner enriched the program with practical insights into sharia-based financial practices, ensuring that the knowledge shared was not only relevant but also aligned with ethical and religious values. Such collaboration highlights the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement in advancing financial education initiatives.

The primary objective of this community service program was to strengthen financial literacy and promote investment awareness through dialogue-based methods. Specifically, the program sought to (1) increase parents' and children's understanding of financial planning and investment, (2) encourage community participation in sustainable literacy activities, and (3) establish the foundation for community-based financial literacy hubs. By



doing so, the initiative aspires to contribute to long-term community empowerment and resilience in facing the challenges of the digital and dynamic economic era.

2. Methods

The financial literacy program was designed to address diverse segments of the community. The primary target groups included young individuals and university students at the initial phase of financial decision-making, early-career professionals requiring guidance in income management and investment, small and medium enterprise (SME) owners seeking financial awareness for business sustainability, and community members interested in personal finance and investment security (Elshaer & Sobaih, 2023; Mishra, 2018; Riyazahmed, 2021). By focusing on these groups, the program ensured relevance and inclusivity, covering both family-level and broader community financial education needs.

The learning materials were prepared in an organized and accessible format to accommodate participants with varying levels of financial knowledge. These materials included a guide on fundamental financial literacy and investment principles, infographics on risk-return dynamics, diversification strategies, and fraud awareness, presentation slides on savings, debt management, and investment types, and worksheets for budgeting and investment simulations. In addition, digital resources such as short videos and podcasts were developed to provide continuous learning opportunities beyond the seminar session.



Figure 1 Flyer of Gold Coffee Activity between UT Medan and DWP UT Medan

The implementation of the program had several objectives: (1) increasing parents' understanding of the importance of financial literacy for children, (2) providing basic education on money management and saving habits, (3) fostering awareness of the



importance of financial planning in families, and (4) strengthening collaboration between educational institutions and banking partners in community financial education. These objectives were pursued through interactive and dialogue-based methods to encourage active participation and knowledge exchange.

The activity was conducted online through Zoom on Monday, June 9, 2025, from 09.00 WIB until completion. The session was moderated by Suci Utari, S.T., M.Eng, and documented by Zulfaliana Sari, S.A.B. A total of 117 participants joined the event, consisting of Dharma Wanita members, lecturers and staff of Universitas Terbuka Medan, students and parents, and general invitees. The online format allowed for broader participation while maintaining interactivity through live discussions and a question-and-answer session.

The program presented two expert speakers. Muhammad Ichsan, Area Micro Pawning Manager of Bank Syariah Indonesia Medan Raya, delivered a session on gold investment trends, safe investment practices, and family financial strategies. Meanwhile, Yusita Marini, S.E., M.Si, a lecturer in Public Financial Accounting at Universitas Terbuka Medan, focused on the role of financial literacy for children and parents in shaping financial mindsets from an early age. The seminar agenda included welcoming remarks, thematic presentations, interactive discussions, certificate distribution, and virtual documentation. This structure ensured that the objectives of financial literacy training were achieved in a systematic and engaging manner (Sulistiyaningsih & Shultan, 2021).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Strengthening Investment Awareness through Gold Literacy

The first key result of the program was a significant increase in participants' awareness regarding gold as a safe, credible, and Shariah-compliant investment option. The session led by Muhammad Ichsan from Bank Syariah Indonesia provided participants with practical knowledge about gold's role as a long-term asset that protects household wealth. This was particularly relevant for women, who often serve as primary financial managers within families, making gold literacy a vital component of community empowerment.

Participants were introduced to various investment options, including deposits, real estate, insurance, securities, and gold. Each option was explained in terms of potential returns, risks, and management requirements. Among these, gold investment was emphasized as a practical entry point, given its accessibility, relatively low risk, and cultural familiarity in Indonesia. This allowed participants to see gold not only as jewelry but also as a financial instrument with long-term benefits.

A central theme in the discussion was the importance of preparing for retirement. Data presented indicated that nearly 48% of Indonesian formal workers face difficulties in preparing for retirement, and only 5.3% have structured retirement plans. These figures highlight the urgent need for financial literacy programs that encourage disciplined planning and long-term saving strategies. Gold was positioned as one viable option to support retirement preparedness, offering stability compared to more volatile assets such as stocks.

The program also raised participants' awareness of potential risks, such as price manipulation when purchasing gold from unregulated sellers, and the danger of fraud in digital gold transactions. By stressing the importance of buying through credible institutions like Bank Syariah Indonesia, the seminar highlighted trust, security, and



compliance with national Sharia standards. This knowledge equips participants to make safer investment decisions while protecting their assets.

The seminar successfully strengthened participants' investment awareness by combining practical guidance, religious values, and cultural familiarity with gold. This outcome demonstrates how contextualized financial literacy programs can empower communities to adopt sustainable investment habits. Furthermore, it underscores the role of partnerships between universities, women's organizations, and financial institutions in fostering a culture of financial resilience at the household level.

Table 1 Comparison of Investment Options Presented in the Seminar

Investment Type	Potential Return	Risk Level	Management Effort	Cultural Familiarity	Notes on Sharia Compliance
Deposits	Low	Very Low	Minimal	High	Compliant if placed in Sharia banks
Real Estate	Moderate	Low–Moderate	Requires capital & maintenance	Moderate	Requires legal & financing clarity
Insurance	Moderate	Moderate	Ongoing premium payments	Low	Must comply with Sharia principles
Securities (Stocks)	High	High	Requires active monitoring	Low	Volatility risk; needs knowledge
Gold	Moderate–High	Low	Easy to manage	Very High	Recognized as halal by National Sharia Council

Table 1 presents a comparison of five investment options introduced during the seminar namely deposits, real estate, insurance, stocks, and gold. Deposits offer very low risk with limited returns, making them suitable for individuals who prioritize security, while real estate provides moderate returns but requires significant capital and maintenance. Insurance was highlighted as both a protection tool and an investment option, though it demands regular premium payments. Stocks promise high potential returns but are highly volatile and require careful monitoring as well as sufficient knowledge. Among all the options, gold stands out as the most culturally familiar, easy to manage, low-risk instrument that has been officially recognized as halal by the National Sharia Council, making it an ideal entry point for families to start safe and long-term investments.

3.2. Enhancing Family Financial Planning Skills

The second major finding of the program was the significant improvement in participants' understanding of household financial management, particularly in budgeting and saving practices. In her session, Yusita Marini emphasized that financial planning at the family level is the foundation of broader economic stability. Without a structured



approach, families often struggle to distinguish between needs and wants, leading to overspending and limited savings. By framing financial literacy as a practical, daily activity, participants began to see the importance of aligning income allocation with both present and future goals.

One of the practical tools introduced was the 40-30-20-10 model, which divides household income into four categories: 40% for essential needs, 30% for discretionary spending, 20% for savings, and 10% for charitable giving. This model helped participants to visualize how their monthly income could be distributed more effectively. Several participants acknowledged that they had never considered allocating income for charity as part of financial planning, highlighting the value of integrating social and spiritual dimensions into household budgeting.

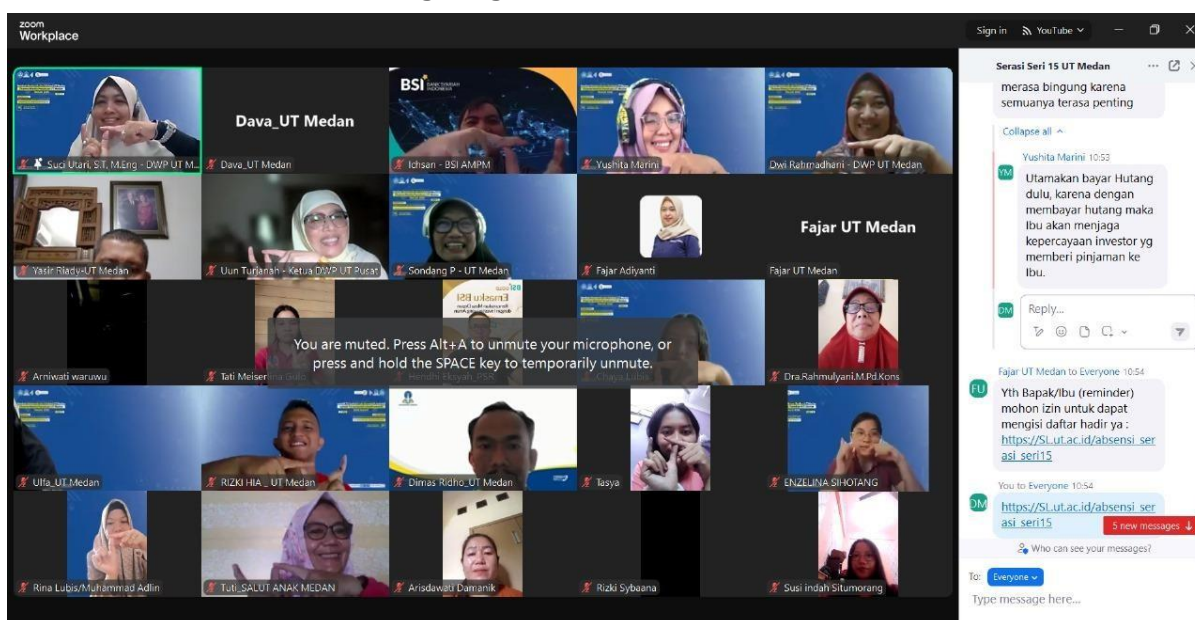


Figure 1 Activity Documentation during the Zoom Session

Figure 2 shows the documentation of the NGOPI financial literacy training conducted via Zoom, where participants actively engaged in discussions and Q&A with the speakers. The screenshot captures the virtual interaction that became a central medium for delivering knowledge, particularly on household budgeting and savings strategies. This figure illustrates how digital platforms can effectively support community service activities, enabling participants to learn structured financial planning practices while maintaining accessibility and inclusivity for families in diverse locations.

The session also encouraged participants to differentiate between fixed and variable expenses. Fixed costs, such as rent, utilities, and health insurance, were identified as non-negotiable obligations that require consistent attention. Variable costs, such as food, transportation, and leisure activities, were discussed as areas where families can exercise greater control and discipline. This distinction allowed participants to recognize areas for potential savings and to develop strategies for reducing unnecessary spending without compromising quality of life.

Beyond technical budgeting, the seminar underscored the importance of cultivating financial discipline and long-term thinking. Yusita Marini reminded participants that saving should not only serve short-term goals, such as emergency funds, but also long-



term objectives like children's education, retirement, and investment opportunities. The act of separating savings for different goals, even within the same investment vehicle such as gold, was presented as a practical way to ensure that financial priorities remain clear and achievable.

The discussion stressed the role of parents in transferring financial literacy to their children. By introducing simple practices such as setting aside pocket money for savings or involving children in small household budgeting decisions families can instill money management habits from an early age. This intergenerational approach ensures that financial literacy becomes part of family culture, reducing the risk of repeating cycles of poor financial management and building resilience for the future.

3.3. Promoting Sustainable Financial Literacy Practices

The third outcome of the program emphasized that financial literacy must be embedded as a sustainable practice within communities rather than treated as a one-off intervention. This perspective aligns with the OECD (2020), which argues that effective financial education requires "a lifelong learning approach" to ensure individuals can adapt to evolving financial systems and risks. In the training, participants demonstrated enthusiasm through active discussions on investment risks, digital gold platforms, and retirement preparedness, showing readiness for continuous engagement.

The facilitators underscored that sustainability in financial literacy demands collaboration among multiple stakeholders, including families, schools, and financial institutions. According to Lusardi and Mitchell (2014), financial literacy levels worldwide remain low, and institutional support plays a critical role in equipping individuals with the skills to make informed financial decisions. By encouraging community-based initiatives, the program reflects global best practices in building resilience against economic vulnerability.

One innovative idea introduced was the establishment of community-based financial literacy hubs, where local groups can regularly meet to share knowledge, monitor financial goals, and provide peer support. Such community learning models are supported by Huston (2010), who highlight that peer-to-peer education enhances the long-term retention of financial skills. For participants, this approach means creating safe spaces to discuss financial challenges while receiving guidance from trained facilitators.

In addition, the integration of digital learning platforms was suggested as a strategy to expand access and continuity of financial education. Studies by Kaiser and Menkhoff (2017) show that digital financial education tools can significantly improve knowledge retention and behavior change, particularly in low- and middle-income contexts. For the participants of this program, the adoption of mobile applications and online learning modules offers flexibility and ensures that financial literacy remains accessible beyond formal training sessions.

The program highlighted that sustainable financial literacy is not only about knowledge transfer but also about cultivating habits and cultural practices that reinforce responsible money management. Huston (2010) emphasizes that financial literacy should be seen as both knowledge and behavior, requiring consistent reinforcement to shape long-term outcomes. In this sense, embedding financial literacy into everyday family practices such as budgeting discussions, savings routines, and intergenerational education ensures that the community can maintain resilience and adapt to financial challenges in the future.



4. Conclusions

The Financial Literacy Training through Dialogue (NGOPI – Ngobrol Pintar) successfully created an engaging platform for participants to enhance their understanding of personal finance and investment. The Q&A session revealed strong curiosity and practical concerns, ranging from the cost of beginner investments, risks of digital gold, and stock mutual funds, to more personal issues such as debt repayment priorities, installment systems, and inheritance of gold investments. These questions reflected both the participants' genuine financial needs and the relevance of the topics discussed, showing that financial literacy is not merely theoretical but deeply connected to everyday decisions.

The findings of this community service program highlight three key outcomes: strengthening awareness of gold as a safe and Shariah-compliant investment, improving family financial planning skills, and promoting sustainable financial literacy practices. Participants not only gained knowledge about investment options but also learned structured budgeting strategies, the importance of disciplined savings, and the role of financial education across generations. Moreover, the introduction of digital learning resources and community-based financial literacy hubs further encouraged the idea that financial literacy must be maintained as a continuous and collaborative effort.

This program demonstrated that informal, dialogue-driven approaches such as NGOPI can effectively bridge the gap between financial knowledge and practice. By fostering a relaxed yet meaningful learning atmosphere, the initiative empowered participants especially women, young professionals, and small business owners to make more informed decisions, prepare for long-term stability, and avoid fraudulent schemes. Going forward, continuous collaboration between educational institutions, financial institutions, and communities will be crucial to ensure that financial literacy evolves into a sustainable practice that supports resilience and economic well-being.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

Acknowledgments

The program concluded with Dharma Wanita UT Medan expressing gratitude to all parties who supported the event, especially Bank BSI as the main collaboration partner. This initiative is expected to provide meaningful benefits and become an inspiration for future educational activities. Documentation in the form of photos and videos has been archived for reporting purposes and shared via the Instagram account @dwp_utmedan. Attendance confirmation could be completed through the link provided in the Zoom chat, where the presentation materials were also available for download.

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