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The Role of the WALHI NGO in Increasing Public Knowledge and Awareness About Waste Management as a Form of Citizen Participation in Environmental Protection: A Case Study in Pondok Village, Kerinci Regency

Loide Sihaloho*, Rima Vien Permata Hartanto, Muh. Hendri Nuryadi
Pancasila and Civic Education, Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta, 57126, Indonesia

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* *Corresponding author:*

E-mail: loidesihaloho12345@gmail.com

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A B S T R A C T

In building a national civilization oriented toward developing civic values, strategic and systematic efforts are essential to instill knowledge and awareness of citizenship. One of these efforts is reflected in the role of the WALHI NGO in enhancing community awareness and participation in waste management as an expression of civic responsibility in the environmental sector. This study aims to analyze the role and challenges faced by WALHI Jambi in raising awareness and improving waste management in Pondok Village, Bukit Kerman District, Kerinci Regency. Using a qualitative method with a case study approach, the research explores WALHI Jambi's initiatives through interviews, observations, and document studies analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model. The findings reveal that WALHI Jambi has played a significant role in increasing environmental awareness through public campaigns, education programs, and the formation of environmentally conscious community groups that promote ecological values and behavior change. However, several challenges persist, including low environmental literacy, strong traditional practices, limited public engagement, and internal organizational barriers. Strengthening cooperation among NGOs, government, and local communities, along with culturally rooted strategies, is crucial to fostering sustainable environmental awareness and collective action.

1. Introduction

The environment is the foundation of human civilization an ecosystem that sustains life, culture, and economy. However, as human activity increases, environmental awareness tends to decline, leading to critical issues such as poor waste management. Waste has become a persistent problem not only in urban areas but also in rural communities across Indonesia. It reflects not merely a sanitation issue but also the level of civic consciousness among citizens in fulfilling their social and environmental responsibilities. In Pondok Village, Kerinci Regency, this challenge

is evident through the accumulation of household waste in public areas and rivers, which has caused water pollution and environmental degradation. This situation calls for comprehensive efforts to strengthen environmental awareness as part of civic responsibility.

In building a civilized nation oriented toward the development of citizen personality, strategic and systematic efforts are required to instill civic knowledge and responsibility among society (Murdiono et al., 2014). Civic education, as a socio-cultural dimension, extends beyond formal instruction; it is also manifested through community participation and environmental concern (Rahmat et al., 2009). One important aspect of civic character is the citizens' awareness and active participation in maintaining environmental cleanliness and sustainability. Waste management, therefore, becomes a concrete manifestation of civic responsibility in everyday life.

Pondok Village, located in Bukit Kerman District of Kerinci Regency, is blessed with rich natural beauty yet faces serious waste-related problems. Preliminary observations indicate that most residents still dispose of garbage into nearby rivers, assuming it to be the most practical and cost-free method. However, the rivers serve as vital water sources for daily needs such as bathing, washing, and agriculture. This behavior has resulted in visible pollution, foul odors, and deteriorating community health. According to data from the Environmental Agency of Kerinci Regency (2023), daily waste generation in the region reached approximately 374.485 tons between 2020 and 2023. During Ramadan 2024, the waste volume increased by 20% (Sri Wahyuni in RRI, 2024). These figures illustrate how the lack of adequate facilities and community awareness has worsened environmental conditions.

Studies have shown that successful waste management largely depends on public participation and environmental awareness (Nainggolan et al., 2023; Mahardika, 2020). Awareness is not only cognitive knowledge but also emotional understanding and moral responsibility toward environmental sustainability. Putranto (2023) emphasizes that individuals who recognize the long-term impact of waste mismanagement are more likely to adopt environmentally responsible behaviors. Therefore, raising awareness through community-based education and empowerment programs becomes an essential approach to addressing waste issues effectively.

One of the organizations actively involved in environmental advocacy in Indonesia is the Indonesian Forum for the Environment, known as WALHI (*Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia*). As the largest environmental non-governmental organization (NGO) in the country, WALHI promotes the right to a healthy and sustainable environment. Its work encompasses advocacy, public campaigns, and direct community engagement. Through participatory approaches, WALHI empowers citizens to take part in waste reduction, recycling, and sustainable environmental practices. This aligns with the *community civics* concept, where civic education emphasizes not only political participation but also environmental stewardship as an integral component of good citizenship (Rahmat et al., 2009).

Previous studies also highlight the strategic role of WALHI in promoting environmental awareness. Asraf (2023) found that WALHI's advocacy in Banda Aceh, including campaigns to reduce plastic use and community education, significantly increased public concern about waste issues. Similarly, Armadi (2021) demonstrated that community-based waste management in Denpasar was successful due to local participation and decentralized systems. However, Hamdan et al. (2018) revealed that in many regions, government programs are still hampered by limited resources, weak coordination, and lack of public involvement. In the context of Pondok Village, such challenges persist, reflecting a gap between civic values (das sollen) and the actual community behavior (das sein). This indicates the need for an active role from civil society organizations like WALHI to bridge that gap.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on connecting civic awareness with environmental action at the village level, where civic education principles are applied to encourage responsible waste management. WALHI's approach, which combines environmental education with empowerment and collaboration, provides a unique model for sustainable community engagement. By promoting local participation, the organization not only raises awareness but also strengthens collective responsibility and environmental citizenship among villagers. Therefore, the objective of this study is to analyze the role of the WALHI Jambi NGO in increasing the awareness of Pondok Village residents to manage waste as a form of civic engagement in the environmental sector, as well as to identify the challenges faced by the organization in implementing its programs. This research is expected to contribute theoretically to the understanding of the relationship between civic education and environmental awareness, while practically offering recommendations for sustainable, community-based waste management strategies that can be applied in other rural areas of Indonesia.

2. Methodology

Research Instrument

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the role of the WALHI Jambi NGO in enhancing community awareness of waste management in Pondok Village, Bukit Kerman District, Kerinci Regency. The qualitative approach allows the researcher to examine and interpret social phenomena naturally within their real-life context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). A case study was chosen to provide a detailed and holistic understanding of WALHI's efforts and their influence on community behavior, enabling an in-depth exploration of specific social and environmental dynamics (Gunawan, 2017). Through this design, the study aims to describe and analyze the relationship between WALHI's environmental programs and the awareness and participation of local residents.

The main instrument in this study is the researcher, who functions as a human instrument responsible for planning, collecting, interpreting, and analyzing data. As the key instrument, the researcher directly interacted with participants, observed

activities, and interpreted meanings from the collected information. To support the research process, additional instruments were used, including a semi-structured interview guide to facilitate dialogue with participants, observation sheets to document field activities, and document analysis guidelines to examine relevant materials. These instruments ensured the accuracy, consistency, and credibility of the data obtained during the study.

Data Collection

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and document study. Interviews were conducted with the Director of WALHI Jambi, campaign managers, staff members, and residents of Pondok Village using a semi-structured format that encouraged open discussion. The goal was to explore WALHI's role and challenges in promoting community awareness of waste management. All interviews were conducted face-to-face, recorded with consent, and transcribed for analysis. Observations took place from August 2024 to June 2025 at the WALHI Jambi Office and Pondok Village. The researcher observed environmental campaigns, community training, participation, and behavioral changes to assess the effectiveness of WALHI's programs. Observation results were systematically recorded using prepared sheets. Document study was also conducted to support the primary data. The researcher reviewed official WALHI reports, internal records, and relevant secondary sources such as articles and online publications. Data validity was ensured through source and method triangulation, comparing information from various informants and techniques to strengthen the credibility and reliability of the findings.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study followed the interactive model by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which includes four interconnected stages: data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing with verification. The process was carried out continuously from the beginning of data collection to the final interpretation to ensure that findings remained grounded in the data. In the data condensation stage, information gathered from interviews, observations, and documents was selected, simplified, and organized to highlight the most relevant aspects of WALHI's role in promoting community awareness of waste management. The data display stage involved presenting the processed information in descriptive narrative form to reveal key themes and relationships while maintaining participant confidentiality through coded identifiers. The final stage, conclusion drawing and verification, focused on interpreting the data and confirming the accuracy and consistency of findings through repeated checks and cross-validation with multiple sources. This analytical process provided a clear understanding of how WALHI Jambi contributes to community environmental awareness and civic participation, offering valuable insights for future environmental education and policy development.

3. Results and Discussion

Results

The Indonesian Forum for the Environment (Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia/WALHI) of Jambi is a non-governmental organization (NGO) that brings together nature lovers, civil society groups, and individuals concerned with environmental sustainability and human rights. Established on August 18, 1998, in Jambi City, WALHI Jambi was founded out of concern over environmental degradation and inequality in natural resource management caused by unbalanced regional development (Arafat, 2022). Since its inception, WALHI Jambi has emphasized the importance of human resource development as a foundation for national progress (Alikodra & Syaukani, 2024). Its core activities focus on advocacy, campaigns, research, community empowerment, and the development of strategic alliances. WALHI Jambi's vision is to realize a fair and democratic social, economic, and political order that guarantees people's rights to a healthy and sustainable environment. Its missions include developing community resilience, restoring state responsibility in upholding sovereignty, and promoting fair and sustainable resource management. The organizational structure consists of two main bodies: the Regional Council, serving as the legislative body, and the Executive Office, led by the Executive Director, which oversees four main divisions—finance, advocacy, campaigns and research, and administration and program management.

The research site is located in Pondok Village, Bukit Kerman District, Kerinci Regency. Geographically, the village lies in the downstream area of the regency and covers a total area of 10.03 hectares. It also hosts the final waste disposal site (TPA) managed by the local sanitation department. The village borders Pulau Sangkar Village to the east, Gunung Raya District to the south, the Kerinci Seblat National Park (TNKS) forest to the north, and Muak Village to the west (Yulanda & Frinaldi, 2023). Based on 2025 data, Pondok Village has a total population of 1,168 people, consisting of 604 males and 564 females, with a density of 51 people per square kilometer and 380 households. In terms of education, most residents have not completed formal schooling, with 467 people uneducated and only 53 holding a bachelor's degree. This data highlights a significant educational gap, which may influence the community's environmental awareness and participation in social and environmental initiatives promoted by organizations such as WALHI Jambi.

The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format to allow respondents to express their views openly and in depth. Each interview session lasted approximately 30–45 minutes and was carried out either at the WALHI Jambi office or at the homes of Pondok Village residents to create a comfortable and contextually relevant atmosphere.

Table 1. List of Interview Questions

No.	Interview Question	Respondent
1	What are the main roles of WALHI Jambi in assisting the community with waste management?	Director of WALHI Jambi
2	What strategies has WALHI implemented to increase public awareness of waste management?	Campaign Manager
3	What challenges are most frequently encountered in implementing waste management programs in Pondok Village?	WALHI Staff
4	How does WALHI involve the local community in education and socialization activities?	WALHI Staff
5	What behavioral or awareness changes have been observed among residents after WALHI's activities?	Village Residents
6	How does the community respond to WALHI's environmental programs?	Community Leaders
7	What suggestions can be made to enhance community participation in waste management?	Residents and Traditional Leaders

The Role of WALHI NGO in Raising Community Awareness on Waste Management in Pondok Village

Waste management in Indonesia, especially in Jambi Province, is a persistent environmental challenge that requires collaboration among multiple stakeholders, including civil society. The Indonesian Forum for the Environment (Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia, WALHI) Jambi has taken an active role in promoting awareness and encouraging behavioral change toward sustainable waste management in Pondok Village. Through public campaigns and social education, WALHI aims to build environmental responsibility and foster collective action. Interviews revealed that WALHI employs several strategies, including public discussions, clean-up activities, community-based education, and the use of technology. As one staff member explained, "We staff look at the waste data to find out which areas have the highest waste volume, then we check what regulations or policies have been issued by the local government in that place; next, we list that area as a priority for socialization." (Interview, August 19, 2024). This process is followed by participatory meetings with local residents. "For example, in Kerinci, which has been experiencing floods for several years, what we do first is gather the director, manager, and staff, and invite one or two residents from Pondok Village to come. We discuss what actions will be taken and why it happened." (Interview, August 19, 2024).

Direct field education forms the core of WALHI's approach, promoting cooperation between activists and citizens. "For waste management, we first invited two community members, discussed ways to handle waste in Pondok Village, and then went to the field to conduct waste education." (Interview, August 19, 2024). WALHI's campaigns highlight waste reduction, supervision, and collaboration with authorities: "Socialization about waste reduction, environmental supervision and law enforcement, collaboration with the government and stakeholders, and expanding the community to raise public awareness." (Interview, August 19, 2024). These initiatives are adapted to local issues such as flooding and waste separation. A resident noted, "About waste, it should not be thrown carelessly and should be

separated so that our soil is not contaminated; we also talk about rain because our area often floods." (Interview, October 20, 2024).

Traditional leaders expressed support, recognizing that WALHI's message aligns with local wisdom: "WALHI Jambi's approach is good and well-intentioned because they want to make people aware not to litter and to care more about the environment. This aligns with our traditional values, such as protecting nature, living cleanly, and mutual cooperation in village clean-up activities." (Interview, June 10, 2025). Nevertheless, some staff admitted that the effectiveness is still limited: "Our activities are still at the socialization stage; this stage has not yet maximized public awareness." (Interview, August 19, 2024).

The spirit of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) is one of WALHI's key methods. "The activities we do are socialization and education about how to manage waste, and afterward, we invite the community to join in collective clean-up." (Interview, August 19, 2024). This method emphasizes community participation from the household level. "We involve the community starting from their own homes, sorting waste, starting with kitchen waste that can be used for organic fertilizer, such as onion skins and rotten vegetables." (Interview, August 19, 2024). WALHI believes personal initiative is the foundation of environmental responsibility: "Participation actually starts from oneself; once an individual knows how to sort, then it can be applied in the family environment." (Interview, August 19, 2024). A village elder advised WALHI to strengthen local engagement: "If WALHI wants to be more accepted and successful, they need to be more present among us. People here need a continuous approach in a language we understand. Involve local leaders and religious figures, use traditional values like *gotong royong*, and invite people to work together or plant trees — that will be more effective." (Interview, June 10, 2025). WALHI has also made use of facilities and digital media to reach broader audiences. "It makes it easier to deliver waste education, for example, using drone photography, videos, and images." (Interview, August 19, 2024).

The campaign reached most of the village's residents. "Almost all residents of the village participated." (Interview, August 19, 2024). The organization also succeeded in forming an environmental care community to sustain awareness. "The success example is the formation of one community because, through it and its local members, it is easier to raise awareness among residents to manage waste." (Interview, August 19, 2024). Although public awareness has increased, behavioral change remains gradual. "The program has not been fully successful; only about 30% of residents manage waste properly." (Interview, August 16, 2024). Still, some villagers show improvement. "Before, I only collected garbage in rice sacks and threw it into the river. Now I understand how to separate waste, and I feel responsible to keep the environment clean." (Interview, October 20, 2024). Others found the program informative: "I joined the waste management socialization by WALHI Jambi; it was very useful for us at home." (Interview, June 10, 2025). However, implementation challenges persist. Some residents admitted difficulties: "I already understand, but I haven't made separate bins yet; I still put all the garbage in one fertilizer sack." (Interview, October 20, 2024). Others noted a lack of follow-up: "I heard WALHI came before, but there was no continuation afterward."

(Interview, June 10, 2025). These statements reflect that the program's sustainability and intensity remain insufficient to drive long-term behavioral change.

Despite these limitations, WALHI's initiatives have begun to cultivate civic consciousness. "WALHI's program has encouraged some residents to realize that caring for the environment is not only the government's duty but also our responsibility as citizens." (Interview, June 10, 2025). This awareness is evident in changing habits among some participants: "Some residents have started to care more, especially those directly involved in the activities. They no longer litter and encourage their neighbors to do the same an early sign of good citizenship awareness." (Interview, June 10, 2025). In conclusion, WALHI Jambi has contributed significantly to raising public awareness of waste management in Pondok Village through education, collaboration, and community empowerment. While its impact is still developing, the program has laid the groundwork for environmental responsibility and civic participation. With continuous engagement and support from local actors, WALHI's movement holds strong potential to foster a more environmentally conscious and responsible society in Jambi Province.

Challenges Faced by WALHI NGO in Raising Community Awareness on Waste Management in Pondok Village

WALHI Jambi faces significant challenges in its efforts to raise public awareness about environmental management, particularly in waste management within Pondok Village, Bukit Kerman District, Kerinci Regency. One of the main issues is the lack of environmental literacy among the community. As one informant stated, "What I see is that our community still lacks literacy, especially environmental literacy, and they keep their old habits. Even in other provinces where waste separation facilities are already provided, people still mix all the waste together in one place because they don't separate it from home. This happens because our community doesn't yet understand how to sort waste." (Interview, June 10, 2025). Many residents still do not grasp the basic concept of waste sorting, and old practices such as burning or throwing waste into rivers remain common despite WALHI's socialization efforts. Another informant confirmed this by saying, "The problem is not just about knowing or not knowing, but that the culture of throwing garbage anywhere has taken root. A more consistent approach is needed to change that habit." (Interview, June 10, 2025).

Cultural habits are among the strongest barriers to change. As one participant mentioned, "There are also challenges from the old culture that is still strong, such as burning garbage or throwing it in the river. So even though socialization has been done, behavioral change cannot happen immediately." (Interview, June 10, 2025). Another villager added, "Old habits are hard to change, especially for the elderly." (Interview, June 10, 2025). Similar sentiments were shared by others: "I know it's wrong, but almost everyone here throws garbage carelessly, so I just follow along." (Interview, June 10, 2025). Some residents have tried to adopt new practices but found it difficult to influence others: "I've started to separate waste at home, but many of my neighbors still throw it anywhere because they think it's normal. It's

hard to change." (Interview, June 10, 2025). Another added, "We're used to throwing waste behind the garden or burning it. Even though we know there are other ways now, it's still hard to change old habits." (Interview, June 10, 2025). These conditions are reflected in the field, where waste piles can still be found near public areas and roadsides, as shown in Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3.

Figure 1. Village Waste Collection Point

Figure 2. Waste Along the Roadside

Figure 3. Kerinci Regency Landfill in Pondok Village

In addition, community participation in maintaining cleanliness and environmental health remains low. “The biggest challenge is the low participation of residents. Many people are not aware of the importance of managing waste properly, and littering has become a normal habit. Moreover, WALHI cannot conduct regular mentoring because of their limited resources.” (Interview, June 10, 2025). The lack of continuous mentoring has made the program less sustainable, and residents often lose motivation after the initial sessions. WALHI’s approach has also not fully adapted to local customs and traditional values. As one traditional leader expressed, “From my perspective as a customary leader, the challenge faced by WALHI Jambi is in how they approach the community. People here still strongly hold on to local customs. So when outsiders come with a different way or language, it’s often hard to accept. It has to be done slowly, with respect for our customs and traditions. Many also don’t fully understand why protecting the environment matters. They think throwing waste in the river is normal because it’s been done that way for generations. It takes time and a heartfelt approach to change that.” (Interview, June 10, 2025). The same informant further emphasized trust and consistency: “Sometimes people are hesitant because they’ve been promised help before but never received it. If WALHI could come more often, join in our traditional events, or involve community leaders in their programs, people would be more open. We, as traditional people, will support those who respect us, but if they only come once or twice, people won’t feel close enough to trust or get involved.” (Interview, June 10, 2025).

Another major obstacle involves women and workers who prioritize household duties and income-generating activities over environmental programs. As one WALHI field officer noted, “The challenge is that many women still feel environmental issues aren’t their responsibility; they focus more on household and farming activities. Because WALHI’s program was short, many didn’t fully understand its goals or benefits, and often the schedule clashed with their daily routines.” (Interview, June 10, 2025). Economic hardship also limits engagement: “Some residents actually want to join, but they focus on earning daily income. Waste management is not seen as an urgent need.” (Interview, June 10, 2025). Other participants said the same: “We’re busy working.” (Interview, June 10, 2025), “Our economy is tight; it’s better to work for money.” (Interview, June 10, 2025), and “I know waste management is important, but all my energy goes to work.” (Interview, June 10, 2025). Another added, “I work from morning to night, so I have no time to handle waste.” (Interview, June 10, 2025). These realities show that while awareness exists, economic priorities and limited time make sustained participation difficult.

Low awareness also leads to passive attitudes. “Until now, not many residents are truly involved in protecting the environment. When there was WALHI’s socialization, people came, but afterward they went back to old habits. Most still think cleanliness is only the responsibility of the sanitation officers.” (Interview, June 10, 2025). Others expressed the same view: “Let the village officials handle it.” (Interview, June 10, 2025), and “That’s not our duty.” (Interview, June 10, 2025). Another limitation is the lack of continuity in WALHI’s socialization activities. “WALHI Jambi’s role in Pondok Village has been good in giving initial

understanding to the community about waste management, but they only came twice, and only a few people really applied what they learned. The main challenge is not just knowledge but old habits that are hard to change." (Interview, June 10, 2025). Another informant added, "Their contribution is a good start, but because it only happened twice, the impact is limited. People are more aware now but still not active." (Interview, June 10, 2025). Others noted, "Lack of follow-up after the first activity became a big obstacle. Residents were enthusiastic at first, but without continued support, their spirit declined." (Interview, June 10, 2025). WALHI's limited capacity to conduct regular outreach reduces program effectiveness. "Residents have started to become aware, but they need regular mentoring." (Interview, June 10, 2025). Another added, "I fully support it, but the socialization isn't wide enough." (Interview, June 10, 2025).

The lack of clear local regulations and law enforcement also hinders WALHI's impact. "The problem is in the regulations the government rules exist only as records on the district's website, so not everyone knows the penalties for littering. If people are expected to provide their own sorting bins, it won't work because they'll consider it too expensive." (Interview, August 19, 2025). Another added, "WALHI has taken action, but the village government hasn't fully supported it. There should be local policies to strengthen the program so it doesn't look like a short-term project." (Interview, June 10, 2025). A villager emphasized, "What I really hope for is that the government enforces real penalties for people who litter." (Interview, October 20, 2024).

Furthermore, weak collaboration between WALHI, local government, and other civil organizations limits program outreach. "If the village government and WALHI visited residents together more often, it would be more effective. Right now, the cooperation isn't strong enough." (Interview, June 10, 2025). Another added, "Activities like this need stronger collaboration between the village and outside organizations." (Interview, June 10, 2025).

Finally, as another villager stated, "WALHI's approach is good but not emotionally engaging enough. There should be stronger collaboration with community figures or women's groups like PKK so that the message about waste management truly reaches people." (Interview, June 10, 2025). Others also noted the need for practical solutions: "People like WALHI's idea of household-based waste management, but many are still confused about sorting organic and inorganic waste because there's no continued technical guidance." (Interview, June 10, 2025). In conclusion, the challenges faced by WALHI Jambi in Pondok Village stem from cultural habits, limited time and economic capacity among residents, weak institutional collaboration, and lack of consistent mentoring and regulation. Overcoming these barriers requires continuous engagement, culturally sensitive communication, strong partnerships with local leaders, and real policy support. Only through sustained participation and empowerment can environmental awareness and responsibility become part of everyday life for the people of Pondok Village.

Discussion

The Role of WALHI Jambi in Increasing Community Awareness to Manage Waste as a Form of Citizen Engagement in the Environmental Sector

In the study of sociology, the concept of role refers to a set of rights, obligations, expectations, and norms attached to a particular social position or status. Every individual or institution occupying a certain position is expected to act according to social expectations. Soerjono Soekanto explains that role represents the dynamic aspect of social status, meaning that one's position determines the actions and responsibilities they are expected to fulfill (Hamdy et al., 2024). From a social-psychological perspective, role is understood as an internalized behavioral pattern shaped through interaction and communication within a community (Yudha et al., 2025). Based on these definitions, WALHI Jambi functions as a civil society organization that carries both moral and social responsibilities to educate and empower communities on environmental issues, particularly waste management. The organization's role goes beyond formal institutional duties because it embodies the public's expectations toward WALHI as a social actor defending ecological interests and promoting civic participation. In this context, WALHI Jambi becomes a bridge between environmental awareness and citizen responsibility, highlighting how civil society can play a central role in addressing local environmental challenges through participatory and educational approaches.

The role of an institution strongly influences both individual and collective behavior (S. A. A. K. Putri et al., 2024). When WALHI Jambi conducts awareness campaigns on waste management, it not only provides information but also shapes the community's mindset and daily practices. Research findings show that around thirty percent of residents began sorting their household waste after WALHI's intervention, indicating that the organization's efforts have successfully inspired behavioral change at the grassroots level. In addition, the community clean-up programs initiated by WALHI have fostered social solidarity and collective consciousness, aligning with social psychology theories emphasizing that group participation can significantly influence behavioral transformation (Mustaghfiroh and Listyaningsih, 2022). However, there are still visible gaps between social expectations and real outcomes. Many residents expect WALHI to act as both an advocate and a facilitator, yet they often perceive the programs as temporary and lacking continuity. This situation underscores the importance of long-term mentoring, cultural adaptation, and consistent engagement to ensure that environmental awareness becomes part of the community's everyday life rather than a short-lived initiative.

Bruce J. Biddle's role theory provides a useful analytical lens for understanding WALHI Jambi's functions in waste management. Biddle argues that human behavior is shaped by social positions and the expectations that come with them (Yamada and Setyowati, 2023). Each role contains a set of expectations that translate into actual behaviors within social interactions (Lonteng, 2022). In this context, WALHI's position as an environmental organization represents a social actor that is expected to educate, advocate, and empower communities toward

sustainable living practices. WALHI fulfills this role through various means such as public discussions, awareness campaigns, community clean-ups, the use of visual and digital media, and the formation of environmental communities. Nevertheless, WALHI faces challenges in balancing public expectations with persistent traditional habits, limited resources, and insufficient long-term support. The organization often experiences tension between its ideal role as an environmental educator and the practical constraints of time, funding, and community readiness. Therefore, the effectiveness of WALHI's role depends largely on its ability to align its initiatives with local cultural values and establish enduring partnerships with community leaders and local government institutions.

WALHI Jambi's most visible and impactful initiative lies in its public campaign programs. The organization focuses not only on raising environmental awareness but also on developing critical consciousness about the relationship between waste and ecological well-being. These campaigns carry both educational and political dimensions because they aim to educate citizens to manage waste responsibly while encouraging local policymakers to prioritize environmental issues in development planning (Yunandar et al., 2025). WALHI employs several methods in its outreach, including face-to-face discussions that promote dialogue and collaboration, community clean-up activities that embody the traditional value of gotong royong or mutual cooperation, and the creative use of digital media such as videos and drone photography to illustrate environmental degradation and stimulate empathy. While these strategies have successfully raised awareness, many citizens still perceive waste management as the responsibility of the government rather than a personal or collective duty (Satya et al., 2025). This reflects a broader civic challenge where knowledge does not always translate into action, revealing the need for deeper value-based education and sustained local engagement.

Another significant initiative by WALHI Jambi is the formation of community-based environmental groups designed to act as local agents of change and as extensions of WALHI in remote or hard-to-reach areas. These groups, often led by local youth, have proven more effective in integrating environmental education with local cultural wisdom that emphasizes cleanliness, cooperation, and respect for nature. However, despite their promising potential, the number of such groups remains limited, and their long-term impact is constrained by the lack of continuous mentoring and institutional support. The main challenges faced include persistent traditional practices such as burning or dumping waste into rivers, limited community participation due to economic priorities, and minimal continuity in program implementation. Furthermore, the participation of women, who play a vital role in household waste management, remains low due to time constraints and the perception that environmental management is a male-dominated or external affair (Nizar et al., 2025). Addressing these barriers requires a participatory model that empowers all social groups, reinforces local leadership, and promotes inclusivity in environmental action.

Despite these challenges, WALHI Jambi's programs have generated measurable progress in three main dimensions: initial awareness, behavioral change, and value transmission. The campaigns successfully enhanced residents' understanding of

waste problems, encouraged practical steps such as waste sorting, and inspired intergenerational education where parents teach children how to dispose of waste properly. This process signifies the beginning of a deeper cultural transformation that extends beyond short-term awareness. It reflects the gradual internalization of environmental values into daily life, an essential step toward sustainable behavioral change. Nevertheless, this transformation remains at an early stage and requires systematic reinforcement through regular community engagement, monitoring, and collaboration with local institutions to ensure that environmental awareness evolves into collective responsibility.

From a Civic Education perspective, the experience of WALHI Jambi exemplifies the integration of civic values such as participation, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship into practical community life. Civic education emphasizes that the right to a clean and healthy environment cannot be separated from the duty to maintain and protect it (Alya Hasna Sabita et al., 2025; Furi Amelia Andini, 2024). The involvement of citizens in clean-up actions and environmental education reflects the exercise of civic participation in addressing shared problems. Similarly, the practice of gotong royong illustrates participatory democracy, where citizens collectively take responsibility for community well-being (Sari et al., 2025). Embedding civic education principles into environmental programs ensures that awareness is not limited to the cognitive level of knowing but extends to the affective level of caring and the behavioral level of acting. Through this lens, WALHI Jambi's environmental initiatives can be seen as a practical form of civic education in action, nurturing responsible citizenship through environmental engagement.

In conclusion, WALHI Jambi has played a significant role in raising community awareness and encouraging participation in waste management as an expression of environmental citizenship. Its multidimensional strategies, combining education, advocacy, participation, and value-based community empowerment, have laid the foundation for ecological consciousness in Pondok Village. However, to ensure long-term impact, WALHI needs to strengthen program continuity, expand partnerships with traditional and governmental institutions, and deepen local capacity building. Sustainable change in environmental behavior requires not only awareness but also social commitment, shared responsibility, and consistent reinforcement through education and policy integration. The success of WALHI Jambi therefore lies in its ability to transform environmental awareness into a culture of civic engagement that unites ecological preservation with social participation and community resilience.

Challenges Faced by WALHI Jambi in Raising Community Awareness on Waste Management

One of the most fundamental challenges faced by WALHI Jambi in raising community awareness regarding waste management in Pondok Village is the low level of environmental literacy and the persistence of traditional habits. Most residents still lack an understanding of proper waste separation, as they continue to mix organic and inorganic waste despite the availability of facilities (Tri Widiyanti,

2024). Interviews revealed that even when separate bins are provided, people often dispose of all types of waste together, indicating a significant knowledge and practice gap. While WALHI's outreach programs have improved basic awareness, they have not yet translated into behavioral change. Many residents acknowledge the importance of waste separation but fail to practice it due to habit, convenience, or lack of infrastructure. In addition, the culture of burning waste or dumping it into rivers remains deeply ingrained and is seen as a normal activity rather than an environmental offense (Massuhartono et al., 2024). This tradition, passed down through generations, reflects the community's resistance to behavioral change, especially among the older population who are accustomed to old methods (Made et al., 2025). Changing these habits requires not only awareness but also collective commitment, community reinforcement, and culturally rooted approaches involving local leaders and traditional values. WALHI needs long-term mentoring and culturally adapted strategies such as engaging religious and traditional figures, providing visible practical benefits like composting, and encouraging collective behavioral transformation through community-based environmental groups.

Another major challenge is the low level of community participation and concern toward waste management programs. Despite WALHI's consistent public campaigns and clean-up activities, community involvement remains symbolic rather than active. According to Arnstein's (1969) Ladder of Citizen Participation, participation often stays at the tokenism level, where residents attend activities without contributing to decision-making or real action (Nurhadi, 2022). Similarly, Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior suggests that participation is influenced by attitude, social norms, and perceived behavioral control. Many residents do not see direct benefits, feel unsupported by their environment, or lack the tools to act (Adityawan & Reyhan, 2024). Furthermore, the community often shifts responsibility for cleanliness to the government or sanitation workers, showing dependency rather than ownership. This dependency culture reinforces the knowledge and action gap described by Hardin's (1968) tragedy of the commons, where individuals prioritize short-term convenience over collective well-being. Participation is further constrained by limited involvement of women and workers, as domestic duties and economic pressures leave little time for community activities (Tiominar & Afiff, 2021). Drawing from Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943), communities with limited economic resources tend to prioritize basic needs like food and income over environmental cleanliness. Therefore, integrating economic incentives such as turning organic waste into compost or recycling plastics into handicrafts could motivate greater participation and shift waste management from a burden into an opportunity.

In addition to external challenges, WALHI Jambi faces internal limitations that hinder the continuity and effectiveness of its programs. The organization operates with limited human resources and logistical support compared to the scale of environmental issues in Jambi. According to institutional theory, organizational capacity strongly depends on internal resources (Panjaitan, 2022). Insufficient personnel, expertise, operational vehicles, and funding restrict the organization's ability to sustain long-term community engagement. Moreover, WALHI's public outreach efforts are often temporary and not continuous. Rogers' (2003) diffusion

of innovation theory emphasizes that behavioral change requires consistent and repetitive communication (Mulyati et al., 2023). Without sustained follow-up, initial enthusiasm from communities fades, resulting in weak collective awareness. The lack of ongoing technical assistance also exacerbates this problem. Communities often need direct guidance on waste sorting, composting, or recycling techniques, but WALHI's capacity to provide continuous mentoring is limited by financial and human constraints. As UNDP's (2009) capacity-building framework suggests, sustainable behavioral change requires long-term technical guidance and empowerment (Setyorini, 2022). Hence, strengthening institutional capacity and fostering collaboration with government and academia are crucial for WALHI's success.

Social, cultural, and economic factors also play a vital role in shaping community responses to waste management programs. The people of Pondok Village maintain strong adherence to local customs and traditions. While some values such as cleanliness and cooperation align with environmental goals, entrenched habits like burning or dumping waste are viewed as part of daily life. Behavioral change models highlight that individuals progress through stages of awareness before adopting consistent new practices. Most residents are still in the early awareness phase, making cultural and personal approaches involving local leaders and religious figures essential (Yaumil & Thaifur, 2024). Economic limitations further complicate participation, as most villagers are farmers, laborers, or small traders who prioritize income generation over environmental programs. Following Maslow's and rational choice theories, actions are often guided by immediate economic benefit; thus, linking waste management with economic incentives could enhance motivation. Another issue is the weak sense of ecological citizenship, as many residents believe waste management is solely the government's responsibility. This collective action problem reduces personal accountability. Promoting ecological citizenship education through schools, religious forums, and community discussions can help citizens understand environmental protection as both a moral and civic duty.

Finally, weak government support and inconsistent local regulations further constrain WALHI Jambi's efforts. Although regulations on cleanliness exist, enforcement is often weak and administrative in nature, leading to a lack of deterrence for violators. According to Soerjono Soekanto's law enforcement theory, ineffective regulation results from weaknesses in legal structure, substance, and culture. The absence of consistent socialization and sanctions makes environmental rules lose legitimacy. Economic constraints also discourage compliance, as waste management is often perceived as costly. Another barrier is the lack of coordination between WALHI, local government, and community leaders. Effective governance requires collaboration among civil society, the state, and local institutions, but WALHI often works independently without sustained governmental support. This reduces program continuity and local ownership. Stronger collaboration with community figures such as religious leaders or women's groups can make programs feel more culturally relevant. Furthermore, policy integration through co-management frameworks can enhance citizen participation and ensure that environmental management becomes a shared responsibility. Consistent

regulations, incentives, and technical assistance must be established to bridge the gap between policy and practice, ensuring that environmental awareness and community participation grow together as part of a sustainable civic movement.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that WALHI Jambi plays a significant role in fostering environmental awareness and civic responsibility among the people of Pondok Village through various educational, social, and advocacy-based initiatives. As a civil society organization, WALHI Jambi functions not only as a facilitator of environmental programs but also as a catalyst that bridges the gap between knowledge and community action. By integrating local wisdom, public campaigns, and participatory approaches, WALHI has contributed to developing a foundational awareness of sustainable waste management practices. However, the research also reveals that the process of changing public behavior remains challenging due to limited environmental literacy, ingrained cultural habits, and institutional constraints. Strengthening partnerships between WALHI, local governments, and communities is essential to ensure continuity and scalability of environmental programs.

In relation to civic education, the study highlights that waste management can serve as a practical platform for implementing civic values such as cooperation, social responsibility, and collective participation. Future research could focus on evaluating the long-term behavioral impact of such programs and exploring more innovative, culture-based approaches that promote sustainable community engagement. Overall, this study affirms that collaboration among non-governmental organizations, local authorities, and citizens is vital in building an enduring culture of environmental consciousness.

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