

ECO-KITCHEN: EDUCATION ON PROCESSING KITCHEN ORGANIC WASTE INTO QUALITY COMPOST IN KARANGRAHARJA VILLAGE

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ABSTRACT

This community service program is aimed to educate and empower residents to manage household organic waste sustainably through a simple composting method using discarded plastic gallons. Household organic waste remains a major environmental concern due to improper waste segregation and disposal practices. The program was implemented in RT 05/RW 01, Karangraharja Village, North Cikarang, Bekasi Regency, through educational sessions, practical demonstrations, and community participation. The program applied Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) and Participatory Action Research (PAR) approaches to involve residents in the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes. The activities focused on waste segregation, the 3R principles (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle), composting techniques, and the reuse of plastic gallons as composting media. The results showed improved participants' understanding of organic waste segregation and composting practices, as well as their ability to apply the demonstrated method. The program also encouraged residents to adopt simple and sustainable waste management practices in their daily lives.

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INTRODUCTION

Household waste management remains one of Indonesia's most pressing environmental challenges. According to the Sistem Informasi Pengelolaan Sampah Nasional (SIPSN) of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, the country generated approximately 27.7 million metric tons of recorded waste in 2024, with food and kitchen scraps consistently accounting for around 39–40 percent of the total composition (Ministry of Environment and Forestry, 2024). Household activities alone are estimated to contribute more than half of national waste generation, underscoring how decisions made in individual kitchens accumulate into a large-scale environmental burden.

Organic kitchen waste, food scraps, vegetable residues, and fruit peels make up a large share of daily household waste, yet most households still dispose of organic and inorganic waste together (Lawson & Walker, 2020). Where formal waste collection is limited, this mixed waste is frequently burned in open fires or left to decompose in ways that attract pests, produce unpleasant odors, and release greenhouse gases, adding further strain to already overburdened landfills.

This organic waste, however, can be converted into valuable compost through a simple biological decomposition process, reducing waste volume while improving soil fertility and lowering dependence on chemical fertilizers (Lawson & Walker, 2020). Recent community-based initiatives elsewhere in Indonesia have shown that simple composting training can meaningfully change household behavior; a program in Kampung Kebon Cau, for instance, reported an adoption rate exceeding 80 percent and a 55 percent reduction in organic waste volume among participating households after training and mentoring (Sudarmaji et al., 2025). Similarly, a composting initiative in Kajartengguli Village found that structured socialization and hands-on training increased residents' waste management knowledge while creating a small additional income stream from selling finished compost (Marodiyah et al., 2023).

Discarded plastic gallon containers can likewise be repurposed into composting bins through upcycling, converting a source of plastic pollution into a low-cost, reusable tool for organic waste treatment (Afla et al., 2023). This mirrors a broader shift in waste research toward upcycling, where discarded materials are redirected into higher-value uses rather than being downgraded or discarded outright, supporting circular economy models built around reducing, reusing, and recycling existing resources (Balu et al., 2022).

These national challenges are also visible at the neighborhood level in RT 05/RW 01, Karang Raharja Village, North Cikarang, Bekasi Regency. Based on initial baseline observations involving 30 households in this area, 70% (21 households) still disposed of organic and inorganic waste together and routinely burned it. Another 13% (4 households) mixed their waste without burning, while 10% (3 households) separated inorganic materials but did not compost organic waste. Prior to the program, only 7% (2 households) actively practiced household waste separation and home composting.

WASTE SEPARATION DATA

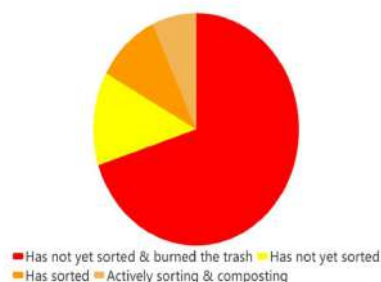


Figure 1. Waste Separation Data
(Source: Author's Own)

The choice to build the intervention around discarded gallon containers rather than purpose-made composting bins was deliberate (Krasny & Delia, 2015). Most households in the target area already accumulate empty gallon containers from routine drinking-water consumption, meaning the primary raw material for the intervention was already present in every home at no additional cost (Russell, 2023). This design lowers the barrier to adoption considerably: residents do not need to purchase equipment, travel to obtain it, or wait for it to be distributed, all of which are common points of failure in composting programs that rely on donated or subsidized hardware. In this sense, the gallon composter functions simultaneously as an environmental education tool and as a proof of concept for how ordinary household waste can double as a solution to another household problem. Specifically, the objectives of this project were to: 1) Increase public awareness of proper household waste management, 2) Educate residents on composting organic kitchen waste, 3) Promote the reuse of discarded gallon containers through upcycling, 4) Encourage the implementation of sustainable waste management practices based on the 3R principles.

This report documents the design, implementation, and outcomes of the Eco-Kitchen program in detail: it first situates the intervention within the broader literature on household waste management, composting, upcycling, and community-based development approaches; it then describes the methodology used to plan and deliver the activity; it reports the observed results and discusses them in relation to comparable programs elsewhere in Indonesia; and it closes with conclusions and concrete recommendations for future iterations of similar community service activities (Al-Kautsari et al., 2025).

METHODS

Activity Design

The program adopted a combination of ABCD and PAR. Rather than relying on external resources, it utilized locally available assets, household organic waste, and discarded gallon containers, with community members directly involved throughout planning, implementation, observation, and evaluation. This design choice was intended to keep the intervention affordable and repeatable, so that residents could continue composting independently using materials they already had on hand (Harrison et al., 2024).

Consistent with the PAR approach, the committee treated residents as active partners rather than an audience (Harrison et al., 2024). Field observations conducted before the event were used to shape the content of the educational session itself; for example, confirming that most households already possessed unused gallon containers meant the demonstration could focus entirely on the composting process rather than on sourcing materials. This responsiveness to what the community already had, rather than what an external program assumed it needed, is the core practical expression of the ABCD philosophy within this activity.

Activity Target and Location

The program targeted approximately 30 households, primarily homemakers and household heads responsible for managing domestic waste. Activities were conducted at the courtyard of Al Muhajirin Prayer Room, RT 05/RW 01, Karang Raharja Village, North Cikarang, Bekasi Regency, West Java.

Table 1 summarizes the demographic profile of the target participants, and Table 2 summarizes the logistical considerations that shaped the planning process.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Eco-Kitchen Participants

Aspect	Description
Gender	Primarily female (homemakers), with some male household heads
Household Role	Individuals directly responsible for managing daily domestic waste
Number of Households	Approximately 30 households
Location	RT 05/RW 01, Karang Raharja Village, North Cikarang, Bekasi Regency, West Java
Prior Waste Habits	Organic and inorganic waste generally disposed of together, with limited prior composting experience

*(Source: Author's own)***Table 2. Context and Setting (Logistical Considerations) in Karang Raharja Village**

Aspect	Description
Facilities	Courtyard of Al Muhajirin Prayer Room, providing open space for the demonstration and discussion session
Accessibility	Easily accessible on foot and by motorcycle through the neighborhood's internal roads
Community Support	Active support from the RT (neighborhood leader) in coordinating attendance and venue use
Special Needs	Greater household-level awareness of waste segregation, composting technique, and reuse of plastic containers

*(Source: Author's own)***Activity Procedures**

The program began with the planning stage, during which the team conducted field observations to identify the needs and conditions of the community. The team also coordinated with the neighborhood leader (RT), prepared the educational materials, and assigned responsibilities to each committee member to ensure that the activities could be carried out effectively.

The preparation stage involved preparing all logistical requirements for the program, including educational media, composting equipment, modified gallon composters, soil, dried leaves, and organic kitchen waste. The team also arranged the activity venue and checked all materials to ensure that they were available and ready for use before the program was conducted.

The implementation stage was designed as a sequence of six activities delivered in one session: (1) an opening session attended by the organising committee, the project manager, and the Head of RT to introduce the objectives of the program; (2) an educational presentation on household organic waste management, covering the characteristics of biodegradable waste, the importance of waste segregation, the advantages of composting, and suitable and unsuitable composting materials, followed by a question and answer session; (3) a hands-on demonstration of composting using recycled plastic gallon containers, covering container cleaning, ventilation holes, the layering of organic kitchen waste and other materials, and maintenance through moisture monitoring and regular mixing; (4) a hands-on composting practice by volunteer participants under the guidance of the facilitators; (5) an interactive vegetable guessing game to reinforce learning, with prizes for correct answers; and (6) a closing ceremony.

The observation stage was designed as a follow-up visit after the program to monitor the compost produced in the recycled gallon containers, examining moisture levels, odour, texture, and signs of decomposition, and to give participants feedback and recommendations. The evaluation stage assessed the program against predefined success indicators through direct observation, participant interaction, hands-on practice, and follow-up observation. Participants' understanding was assessed through their responses during the question-and-answer session, their involvement in the demonstration, and their

ability to perform the composting procedures independently during the practical session. Table 3 presents the success indicators and their targets, and Table 4 summarizes the stages of the activity. The actual implementation, its documentation, and the achievement of each indicator are reported in the Results of the Activity section.

Table 3. Success Indicators of the Eco-Kitchen Program

Success Indicator	Target
Participants attending the education session	32 households
Participants joining composting practice	10 volunteer mothers
Participants' understanding of composting	Participants understand the basic composting process
Composting containers successfully prepared	Participants are able to prepare composting containers
Independent application at home	Participants are able to apply composting techniques independently
Follow up observation	1 follow-up observation

(Source: Author's Own)

Table 4. Summary of the Eco-Kitchen Activity Procedure

Stage	Focus	Key Activities
Planning	Understanding community needs	Field observation, RT coordination, needs identification, task assignment
Preparation	Readiness of materials	Sourcing gallon containers, soil, dried leaves, and educational media
Implementation	Direct community engagement	Opening ceremony, education session, composting demonstration, Q&A
Evaluation	Sustainability of the practice	Observation and discussion on residents' willingness to continue composting

(Source: Author's own)

RESULTS OF THE ACTIVITY

The Eco-Kitchen program successfully introduced practical household waste management to local residents through direct participation and experiential learning. Throughout the activity, participants showed strong enthusiasm during the educational session and actively engaged in the composting demonstration.

Implementation of the Activity

During the implementation stage, the educational program was carried out according to the planned schedule of activities. The event began with an opening session attended by the organising committee, the project manager, and the Head of RT. During the session, participants were introduced to the objectives of the program and informed about the importance of managing household organic waste sustainably. The session also aimed to increase environmental awareness and encourage residents to adopt more responsible waste disposal practices.



Figure 2. Opening Ceremony
(Source: Author's Documentation)

After the opening session, an educational presentation was conducted to enhance participants' knowledge of household organic waste management and its impact on the environment. The presentation covered the definition and characteristics of biodegradable waste, the importance of separating organic and inorganic waste, and the advantages of composting as a sustainable waste management practice. In addition, participants were introduced to suitable organic materials that can be composted, as well as materials that should be excluded to achieve an efficient and successful composting process. At the end of the presentation, a question and answer session was held, allowing participants to ask questions, clarify their understanding, and engage in discussions regarding composting techniques and household organic waste management.



Figure 3. Educational Presentation & Question and Answer Session
(Source: Author's Documentation)

The program proceeded with a hands-on demonstration of the composting process using recycled plastic gallon containers as composting media. During the demonstration, the facilitators explained each step of preparing the composting container, including cleaning the used gallon container and creating several ventilation holes to ensure adequate air circulation and support the aerobic decomposition process. Participants were then shown how to arrange layers of organic kitchen waste and other composting materials inside the container, along with proper maintenance techniques such as monitoring moisture levels and mixing the compost regularly to accelerate decomposition and produce high-quality compost.



Figure 4. Demonstration Process
(Source: Author's Documentation)

Following the demonstration, a hands-on composting practice was conducted with the active participation of ten volunteer mothers from the local community. Under the guidance of the facilitators, the participants worked together to prepare the composting media using recycled gallon containers. They practiced each step of the composting process, including placing dry organic materials as the base layer, adding household kitchen waste, mixing the materials in the appropriate proportion, and applying a compost activator to accelerate decomposition. The facilitators also demonstrated the correct way to close the container while maintaining proper ventilation to support aerobic composting. Throughout the activity, participants were encouraged to ask questions and perform each step independently with assistance from the project team. This practical session allowed participants to gain first-hand experience and increased their confidence in applying household composting techniques at home using simple, low-cost, and environmentally friendly materials (Aji et al., 2024).



Figure 5. Composting Practice Session
(Source: Author's Documentation)

To reinforce the knowledge gained during the educational and practical sessions, the program continued with an interactive vegetable guessing game involving all participants. The game was designed to create an enjoyable learning environment while encouraging participants to recall and apply the information they had learned about organic kitchen waste and composting. Participants enthusiastically guessed the names of various vegetables commonly used in households and identified whether they were suitable for composting. The activity promoted active participation, strengthened participants' understanding of compostable organic materials, and fostered a lively atmosphere throughout the event. At the end of the game, prizes were distributed to participants who answered the questions correctly as a form of appreciation for their enthusiasm and active involvement in the program.



Figure 6. Fun Games & Prize Distribution
(Source: Author's Documentation)

The program concluded with a closing ceremony in which the project team expressed their sincere appreciation to all community members for their attendance, enthusiasm, and active participation throughout the social project. Special thanks were extended to the Head of RT and the residents for their support and cooperation, which contributed significantly to the successful implementation of the program. The participants were encouraged to continue applying the composting techniques they had learned and to share their knowledge with family members and neighbours to promote sustainable household organic waste management within the community (Nadia et al., 2024). The closing session officially marked the end of the Eco-Kitchen social project, with the hope that the initiative would inspire long term environmental awareness and positive waste management practices.



Figure 7. Closing Ceremony
(Source: Author's Documentation)

The observation stage was conducted nine days after the program, on 23 July 2026, to monitor the progress of the compost produced by the participants. The project team visited the community to assess the condition of the compost in the recycled gallon containers and evaluate whether the composting process was progressing as expected. Several aspects were examined during the observation, including moisture levels, odour, texture, and signs of decomposition. Based on the observations, participants were provided with constructive feedback, practical suggestions, and recommendations to improve the composting process, such as maintaining an appropriate balance of organic materials, ensuring adequate moisture, and maintaining proper aeration (Nadia et al., 2024). This follow-up activity also provided an opportunity to address participants' concerns, reinforce the knowledge gained during the training, and encourage the continued practice of household composting as a sustainable waste management habit.



Figure 8. Follow Up Observation
(Source: Author's Documentation)

Achievement of Success Indicators

The evaluation stage assessed the achievement of the program's success indicators through direct observation, participant interaction, hands-on practice, and follow-up observation. The program initially targeted approximately 30 households, and a total of 32 households participated in the educational activity, exceeding the initial target. Ten volunteer mothers actively participated in the hands-on composting practice and successfully followed the demonstrated procedures for preparing and using recycled gallon containers as composting media. Participants' understanding was assessed through their responses during the question-and-answer session, their active involvement in the demonstration, and their ability to independently perform the composting procedures during the practical session. The effectiveness of the practical component was further indicated by participants' initiative to continue and expand the practice at home by independently preparing additional composting containers. A follow-up observation was conducted nine days after the program, on 23 July 2026, to monitor the composting process and provide feedback on moisture, aeration, odour, texture, and decomposition. Based on these findings, the immediate program indicators related to participation, practical understanding, composting practice, and initial independent application were achieved. However, the long-term sustainability of these practices requires further monitoring over an extended period (Nasruddin et al., 2025). Table 5 compares the achievement of each success indicator with the targets defined in Table 3.

Table 5. Achievement of Eco-Kitchen Program Success Indicators

Success Indicator	Target	Achievement
Participants attending the education session	32 households	32 households (100%)
Participants joining composting practice	10 volunteer mothers	10 volunteer mothers (100%)
Participants' understanding of composting	Participants understand the basic composting process	Achieved through Q&A, demonstration, and hands-on practice
Composting containers successfully prepared	Participants are able to prepare composting containers	Successfully achieved
Independent application at home	Participants are able to apply composting techniques independently	Achieved; participating mothers continued the practice and made additional composting containers at home
Follow up observation	1 follow-up observation	1 observation conducted (100%)

*(Source: Author's Own)***Participant Responses and Discussion**

Many participants stated that they previously disposed of all household waste without separating organic and inorganic materials. After attending the training, they gained a better understanding of the environmental impacts of improper waste management and recognized the potential value of converting organic waste into compost.

The practical demonstration became the highlight of the program because residents could directly observe each composting step, from waste segregation to preparing the gallon composter. Using discarded gallon containers also illustrated that reusable household materials can be transformed into useful environmental tools at minimal cost. This pattern is consistent with similar programs elsewhere in Indonesia: both the Kajartengguli and Kebon Cau initiatives found that residents responded most strongly to hands-on demonstration rather than lecture-only formats, and that visible, low-cost tools made the practice feel achievable rather than burdensome (Marodiyah et al., 2023; Sudarmaji et al., 2025).

Compared with the larger-scale composting programs reviewed in the literature, Eco-Kitchen's household-level, low-cost design suggests it could be sustained without requiring specialized composting equipment or continued institutional support—provided residents keep applying what they learned (Lunag & Elauria, 2024). This also points to the program's principal limitation: because evaluation relied on short-term observation and discussion rather than a longer follow-up period, it is not yet possible to confirm how many households continued composting weeks or months after the event, which is precisely the kind of outcome that follow-up monitoring, as recommended below, would need to capture.

Participation patterns during the session also offered useful insight into how the program landed with different residents. Homemakers, who manage the bulk of daily kitchen waste, engaged most actively during the hands-on segment, asking practical questions about odor control, container placement, and how long the composting process typically takes—concerns that speak directly to whether the practice is livable within a small household courtyard rather than purely theoretical interest in environmental issues. Household heads and other adult residents were more engaged during the discussion of the 3R principles and their broader environmental rationale, suggesting that a single session covering both the practical technique and its underlying reasoning served both groups better than either component would have on its own.

The demonstration also surfaced a few common misconceptions worth noting for future iterations of the program: several participants initially assumed that any food waste, including oily or heavily processed items, could go directly into the composter, and others were unsure whether the gallon container needed to be fully sealed. Addressing these questions directly during the Q&A session appeared to resolve most of the confusion, but it also suggests that a short printed reference sheet—summarizing what to compost, what to avoid, and the basic layering sequence—could usefully complement future verbal demonstrations, reducing the risk that details are forgotten once residents return home.

Table 6 places Eco-Kitchen alongside the two comparable programs discussed earlier, highlighting differences in scale, equipment, and evaluation approach that help explain both its strengths and its current limitations.

Table 6. Comparison of Eco-Kitchen with Comparable Community-Based Composting Programs in Indonesia

Program	Location	Composting Method	Evaluation Approach
Eco-Kitchen (this report)	Karang Raharja Village, Bekasi	Upcycled gallon containers	Single-session observation and discussion
Kajartengguli composting program	Kajartengguli Village	Standard composting bins with PKK training	Post-training knowledge assessment
Kebon Cau composting program	Kampung Kebon Cau	Simple composting technology with mentoring	Adoption rate and waste-volume tracking after follow-up

(Source: Author's own, based on Marodiyah et al., 2023; Sudarmaji et al., 2025)

This comparison suggests that Eco-Kitchen's principal advantage lies in accessibility—no household needs to acquire new equipment—while its principal gap relative to the Kebon Cau program is the absence of a structured follow-up mechanism to confirm sustained adoption. This gap is directly addressed in the recommendations below.

CONCLUSION

The evaluation findings indicate that the Eco-Kitchen program provided participants with practical learning and direct experience in household organic waste management. Throughout the implementation, participants demonstrated active engagement during the educational presentation, question-and-answer session, and hands-on composting practice. Ten volunteer mothers participated directly in preparing the composting media using recycled gallon containers and practiced the composting procedures under the guidance of the project team. The participants were able to follow the demonstrated steps, including preparing the container, arranging organic materials, maintaining appropriate moisture, and ensuring adequate aeration. The follow-up observation conducted nine days after the program, on 23 July 2026, provided an opportunity for the project team to assess the condition and progress of the composting process. The observation focused on moisture levels, odour, texture, and visible signs of decomposition. Based on the observation, the team provided participants with practical feedback and recommendations regarding the balance of organic materials, moisture maintenance, and aeration. The evaluation also showed that participants were willing to discuss difficulties and ask questions related to composting, indicating their engagement with the practical aspects of the program. Overall, these findings suggest that the program successfully facilitated practical understanding of

household composting and encouraged participants to apply the demonstrated techniques using simple and readily available recycled gallon containers (Manea et al., 2024).

Future community service programs should include longer monitoring periods and follow-up mentoring to evaluate the sustainability of household composting practices, similar to the post-implementation mentoring used in comparable programs to help sustain higher adoption rates over time (Sudarmaji et al., 2025). Concretely, three follow-up actions could strengthen the program's long-term impact. First, a brief revisit to the same households four to six weeks after the initial session would help establish whether the composting habit has actually taken hold, rather than relying solely on residents' stated intentions at the close of the event. Second, providing a simple, low-cost reference sheet or poster covering the layering sequence and common troubleshooting questions would reduce the risk of details being forgotten once residents return to their daily routines. Third, identifying one or two enthusiastic residents from this cohort as informal local mentors could help sustain momentum between formal program visits, extending the reach of the ABCD and PAR approach beyond the single event captured in this report.

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