

Research Article**Schools and Communities: A Partnership to Enhance the Quality of Alternative Education in Indonesia***Herlina HERLINA¹  Suparno Eko WIDODO²  R. MADHAKOMALA³ **Abstract**

The partnership between school and community can have some benefits to reach students' achievement. The present research aimed at analyzing varieties of school and communities' partnerships in providing alternative schools at the senior high school level. A single case study research method was employed with two informants as the primary data source and sixteen informants as the secondary data source. The data were collected through open ended, in depth interviews, and direct observations. The result suggested that Master Learning Center collaborated with particular communities, is able to provide educational needs affecting students' achievement. This led to a general conclusion that schools-communities' partnerships are considered an effective type of cooperation to supply the needs of schooling. The partnerships either assisted marginal society with the education quality improvement.

Keywords: Alternative education, school-community partnerships, quality of education

1. INTRODUCTION

One crucial thing concerning successful schools is the presence of partnership between schools and communities in their surroundings. Such a partnership is claimed to grant support and resources to fulfill school staff, family, and learner needs that go beyond common availability facilitated by schools (Gross, Haines, Hill, Francis, Blue-Banning, Turnbull, 2015). This type of partnership, to May and Aslan (2016), is regarded pivotal in school management. They further acknowledge this partnership as the recent demand of education in this era. Additionally, complicated educational problems nowadays have catalyzed us into new regulations, educator policies, approaches, methods and designs. To that end, a partnership between communities (NPOs) and government is critical for the sake of successful encounter with socioeconomic problems which have remained daily barriers for communities (Pozil & Hacker, 2017).

The implementation is also the result of regional autonomy realization, in which every region has different resource capacity. Education is citizens' right to improve their quality of life. Qualified education is reckoned to be not only advantageous for people from higher economic level with their complete facilities, but should also be beneficial for those who come from remote and less developed areas, and/or kids affected by disasters and social calamity or children of the underprivileged. One of the efforts from government and community to overcome this issue is organizing alternative education

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which enables to provide educational services for children coming from those mentioned criteria. One of alternative education designs in formal education is open secondary school, expected to increase the gross enrollment rate and lower the dropout rate in Indonesia. Based on the preliminary research, the interview result with one informant in Master School revealed that the initiation of establishing the open school was due to thoughtfulness of the founder of children future who had finished their education at Open School for junior high school level or package A (National Elementary School Equivalency Examination) or package B (National Junior High School Equivalency Examination) in Master School and his willingness to support the government program 12-year Compulsory Education.

Master stands for Masjid Terminal. Master School was established in 2000 by Mr. RH who shows his concern over street children hanging around Depok the bus station. Today, Master School Indonesia managed by Foundation of *Bina Insan Mandiri* has established some levels of education ranging from Early Childhood Education, National Elementary School Equivalency Examination (Package A), National Junior High School Equivalency Examination (Package B) and National Senior High School Equivalency Examination (Package C) to higher education with Diploma 3 level.

Another uniqueness found is the learning process in Master School organized in 40 feet high cube container classes. The containers were donated by private companies or state owned organizations. Allured by the phenomenon and case mentioned above, the analysis of school-community partnerships to provide alternative education is performed. The researchers analyzed the result of preliminary using alternative education, as a general term of various educational programs which carried out differently from conventional education.

1.1. Literature Review

Partnerships are defined as a common relationship formed in community, this kind of relationship is formed by interaction among community members for the sake of need-fulfillment. Partnerships in education field have been found to promote students' learning, empower schools and patronize struggling neighborhoods as well (Valli, Stefanski, & Jacobson, 2016). The Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence, the basic theory of family-school-community partnerships in children education, acknowledges the basic principle that academic achievement of a child will be successfully accomplished by the partnership and support from his school, family and community (Epstein, 2018). Partnerships among school and community members, families, organizations, and business enterprises should be well-planned and earnestly organized either directly or indirectly in order to embolden social, emotional, physical and intellectual development of students (Sanders & Epstein, 2005). Students should be the main concern in developing such partnerships for they are the center of schooling. Partnerships between school and community cannot be simply noticed for students' success at school only, but should also be aspired to strengthen, guide and motivate them.

Partnerships in education shall, at least, involve three components, parents (family), school, and community. The objective, to Epstein (2009) is to promote school program and climate, provide service and family support, develop skills and leadership as parents, connect family and community at school, and assist teachers with their works. Moreover, school-community partnerships are considered to give influence to students' success and after school outcomes, positively influence and give advantages to the community in return as well (Gross et al., 2015).

Forming educational partnerships in democratic climate is inextricably intertwined with alignments to the unprivileged. On that ground, White & Wehlage (1995) proclaim political strategies to persuade parties or other organizations taking sides of the underprivileged concerns would be rather preferable than to establish partnerships with emphases on program and professionalism. To this degree, the existing resources automatically take the poor sides.

Positive social changes have become a reality, because citizens benefit from informal partnerships between nonprofit organizations (NPOs) and government agencies, by the presence of opportunities for health and social services, education, career and job counseling, and other cultural and economic prospects (Pozil & Hacker, 2017). Tony Blair, an ex-Prime Minister of Great Britain, in his speech, discloses partnerships as one of the 21st century country characters. To him, partnerships are a vehicle to deliver services and needs from government to people (Franklin, et al., 2004). This leads to partnership appearance in many organizations in the whole country. One of the most common with such relationships is educational institutions.

Some factors empowering school-community partnerships are leadership, commitment, school culture, collaboration and communication (Gross et al., 2015). Epstein (2010) tends to conclude 6 types of partnerships among schools-families-communities, they are: parenting, communication, volunteer activities, students’ instructional activities at home, decision making, and collaboration with community. Desimone, Wolford, & Hill (2016) identify three mechanisms to assist with the translation of general partnership goals into specific, clearly articulated actions: (a) establishing a clear vision and path for development, (b) providing mechanisms for regular communication, and (c) defining the scope of work.

2. METHOD

The present research employed case study method. This assists the researchers with conducting an investigation (revealing a case chosen by the researchers based on facts found in the research setting) and persevering holistic characteristics and meaningfulness of real events occurring at school-community partnerships to provide alternative education.

The research was conducted in Master Learning Center, located precisely beside Depok Bus Station, East Java, Indonesia. This research has been conducted for a year since 2018 up to 2019. It employed three techniques of data collection. The first was interviews; the researcher determined key informants who knew well the substance of research foci, they were: SR as the senior high school manager in Master School. As the secondary data source, snowball and purposive sampling technique were applied. They consisted of RH as the supervisor of Master School, MT as the chairman of the foundation, the principal of Open Secondary School, partners of Master Learning Center, and 14 tutors. The second technique implemented was direct observations, and the last was relevant document analysis.

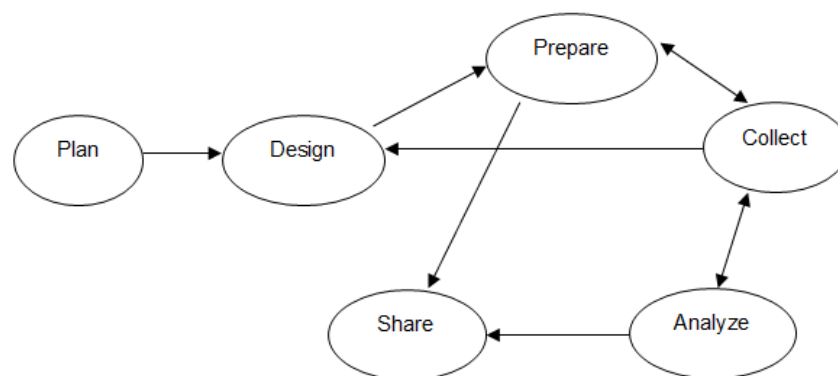


Figure 1. Case Study Research Sources: Yin (2009)

The research illustration with case study method figure above was carried out several times like a cycle. It started from planning by creating research outline as guidance in collecting, analyzing and interpreting data. The data were then presented in narration, pictures, figures and other relevant forms. The researcher, in detail, adopted what those mentioned in the following figure:

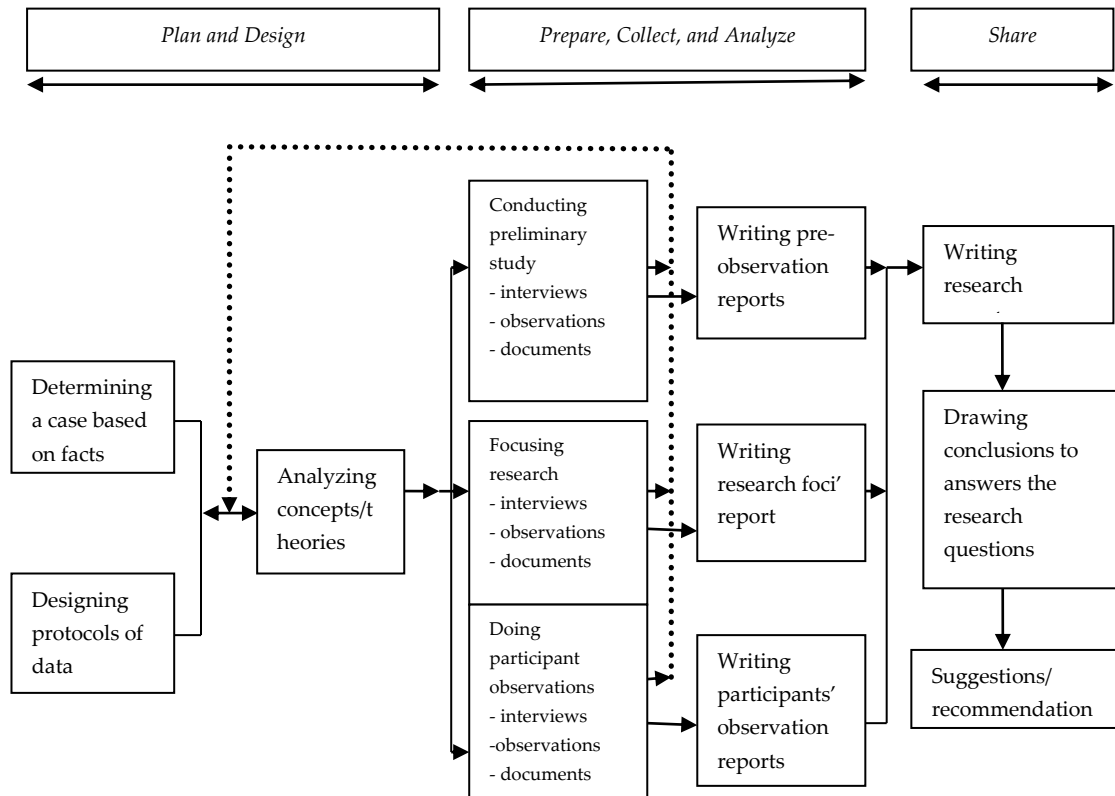


Figure 2. Case Study Method Sources: Yin (2009)

The present research applied the following procedure:

First, the researchers went for a grand tour by administering interviews, observations and document analysis. Afterwards, the data collected were analyzed by raw data presentation, reduction (sorting, simplifying, and abstracting the data based on the facts identified in the research setting, they were then categorized and coded to help the researchers draw the conclusions). The next stage to apply was presenting the data in narration, images, figures and other relevant forms. The data were then interpreted (comparing the concept and previous research findings then giving them meaning), and the grand tour report was jot down.

Second, the researcher sharpened the research foci by carrying out a mini tour observation using the data collection technique set in advance (interviews, observations and document analysis). The data gained were then analyzed by applying the technique suggested by Miles and Huberman, consisting of presenting raw data, data reduction, data interpretation, and writing a report on problem limitation.

Third, the researcher conducted participant observations by playing a role as a volunteer tutor in the research setting for several months. The similar technique of data collection and data analysis were applied in this step. The researcher then reported the participant observations.

Fourth, having finished the three steps, the researcher then combined the whole reports, drew conclusions by verifying the data validity and formulated conclusions as the answers to the research questions, then proposed recommendations.

3. FINDINGS

One of the partnerships form created by school and community is the partnership between Open School of 4 and Master Learning Center. Open School of 4 has three learning centers, Learning Center of 4, Master Learning Center and *Mentari Cendikia* Learning Center. Learning Center is a place

provided by the community at which learning activities take place. Learning Center may utilize schools, mosques, halls, factories, or rooms which can be functioned as learning place for the students.

Among those three, Master Learning Center is the most frequent place visited by people to conduct research due to the uniqueness mentioned in advance. Master Learning Center also collaborates with some students from Faculty of Economics and Islamic Business from state universities to accommodate education service for the students. Not only that, the management of Master Learning Center has another partnership with community to equip the students with life skills. Some of them are cooking class called as “cooking community”, beauty class shared by “private company”, social media workshop in collaboration with students from private universities and teachers for computer and English subject provided by private university lecturers.

As an alternative school, Master School led by Mr. RH works in a synergy with a number of community elements. Community consisting of both individuals and groups, either profitable or non-profitable organizations, works collaboratively with Master School providing qualified educational services for marginal people. The following data unveil the success of partnership program in sending the students to higher education.

Table 1. Students of Master Learning Center Accepted in State Universities in 2018

Name	Admission Channel	University	Major
AF	State University National Entrance Exam	State University in Jakarta	Educational Management
AK	Religion State University National Entrance Exam	Religion State University in Jakarta	Islamic Education Study Program
MUK	Religion State University National Entrance Exam	Religion State University in Jakarta	Sharia Economics
ANN	State University Joint Entrance Exam	State University in Jakarta	Culinary Art Vocational Education
JFA	State University Joint Entrance Exam	State University in Depok	Javanese Literature
RNR	State University Joint Entrance Exam	State University in Jakarta	Sociology Education
RMJ	State University Joint Entrance Exam	State University in Jakarta	Arabic Education

4.1. Partnership Types

One of partnership activities between Master Learning Center and the community around it is academic tutoring course service. Master Learning Center as a part of open schools affiliated to Open School of 4, also works together with some universities to organize the learning process. Based on the interview result, one informant argued, “*Here we have intensive tutoring course from State University, the Faculty of Economics and Business. We were taught for one year by the students.*” (interview translated version). This reveals one of the interesting partnerships managed by Master Learning Center and faculty of state university to provide intensive academic guiding for the students for one year. Two kinds of guiding are noticed: 1) regular tutoring course run in the evening in Master Learning Center and 2) intensive tutoring course held daily in the library of state university. AN, another informant strengthened the findings.

“*Yes, there are some steps to pass state university intensive tutoring course. Here we have 2 kinds of academic tutoring course. One is organized after school in Master, the intensive one is held every day in state university library. To join the intensive course, we need to pass 4 steps. Our first step at class, we are observed, and then we have academic tests, and the last is interview.*” (interview translated version)

The interviews uncover four steps of intensive tutoring course selection, which are: a) registration; b) observation; c) written test; and d) interview. This further means that not all students in Master Learning Center can join the intensive tutoring course in the faculty of state university. The selection was intended not only to select the students whose excellent academic competence, but also to determine those whose high motivation to continue study to higher education.

Collaborations among tutors are either from state or private universities, also completed by people individually, for instance, Mr. SB, an ex NGO employee.



Figure 3. Collaborations of volunteer tutor with Master tutor
Sources: Document Research

The picture above depicted Mr. SB and Mrs. ST collaboration to teach English in 2nd grade of *Mandiri Putri* class. They had the session in Master prayer room (mushola) with few facilities. Mr. SB voluntarily taught three times in a week. Master Learning Center's management offered him a pre-requisite to teach at least for one semester. The management imposed on this regulation as an effort to decrease volunteer tutor turnover rate.

In another occasion, the researcher was also present in computer class taught by RZ, an alumnus of Master Learning Center. Alumni, as a part of communities, contribute their knowledge for the students in Master. As an alumnus, RZ personally felt responsible towards the learning process in Master the place where he studied. Having graduated from one state university, RZ made his time for teaching computer skills to his juniors. This fact is in line with what mentioned by White & Harris (2001) that partnerships might also be established as the presence of feel of belongings for the process and result of unlimited benefit so that it is depicted as the starting point of collaboration.



Figure 4. A computer class taught by RZ, an alumnus of Master Learning Center
Sources: Document Research

Community consists of people who are interested and possess willingness to share benefits for education quality, not only for the matter that their kids are going to schools. This is in agreement with Epstein (2010), that those who give contribution to education are both people surrounding the schools or students' home, and people who influence learning and students' development. Principally, communities are not decoded by the social and economic status; remarking them by their strength and skills to patronize students, families and schools are more preferable.

In this context, community refers to not only people reside around the school. Moreover, they may not have school-age kids but show interest in schooling, or people in one region with kinship (Henderson, Mapp, Buttram, 2002). This further infers that community is not geographically limited to school environment, but more appertaining to social interaction occurring in the community or with people in the surroundings. The following table shows some collaboration between Master Learning Center and some relevant communities.

Table 2. Master Learning Center Collaborates with Some Communities in 2013-2019

Program and Activity	Partner	Partnership Type
Infrastructure supply (container)	State-owned Enterprise	Non academic
Infrastructure supply (container)	State-owned Enterprise	Non academic
Infrastructure supply (container)	Private Enterprise	Non academic
Salon, fashion design, reflexology, and make up training	Private Enterprise	Academic
Operational donation	State-owned Enterprise	Non academic
Cooking class	'CD' Community	Academic
Operational donation	World Funding Foundation	Non academic
Community Service (national examination enrichment)	Private University	Academic
FEB UI-Master Intensive and regular tutoring course	State University	Academic
Drug counseling	State University	Academic
Communication Fair	Private University	Academic
Women Health Counseling	State University	Academic
History Recognition Movement	State University	Academic
Hydrogen Zero Emission Mobility & Education for Asian Games	State University	Academic
Sound Internet Counseling	Private University	Academic
Counseling of teenager reproductive health	Private University	Academic
Drug and health counseling	Private University	Academic
Infrastructure renovation	Private enterprise	Non academic
Infrastructure supply (solar cells)	State University- State-owned Enterprise	Non academic
Urban farming counseling	Private University- Community	Academic

The above table points out that Master Learning Center are either collaborated with the communities for academic or non-academic matters, case in point, infrastructure and operational finance. The communities provide resources of necessity to support learning activities at the school. Some of those resources need funds for the maintenance and some other do not. Schools as the party

that make use of the resources are required to be able to identify and optimally use them for educational concern.

4.2. Partnership Challenges

In knitting the partnership with the communities, Master Learning Center receives facility but at the same time challenges come. One of the challenges is tailoring all partnership types to Master's seven values. One of the volunteer tutors asserted, *"We have seven values as the basic of conducting any activity in Master. Those also become the standard we apply when some partners come to contribute."* The seven values are: 1) belief; 2) togetherness; 3) care; 4) hygiene and environmental sustainability; 5) obedience; 6) harmony; and 7) independence.

NN further professed that goal miscommunication and implementation are some of the challenges they encounter in the partnerships. Master expects that the partnerships woven refer to Master's vision and mission so that the program implemented stays in the same corridor. Another challenge arisen from internal factor, that Mr. RH as the Master founder, applies an informal partnership type. He claimed,

"There is no fixed procedure, it is free. Feel free. Just do what you wish, even selling drugs is okay if you want, as long as nobody knows it. People come here with their good will. Why should we disallow them or mistrust them bringing something bad. Any wrong doing will be their own business. Most bureaucrats make everything complicated at the beginning, suspect somebody with something. That's troublesome. They accuse people first, what student are you, communist, Muhammadiyah or Syiah, so upsetting. People are doubted from the beginning."

Further, he declared,

"Documents are not important for me. I am not a celebrity, what advantage can you take from me? What you need, deed are hidden. For people, with this Ambassador, with this Minister, is important. For me, what is that for? For rice wrapper. I do not pin them (pointing at certificates pinned on his wall's room). I just pile them up."

His explanation symbolizes how he takes no heed of bureaucracy. Meanwhile, this case becomes a crucial issue in another educational institution. Applying informal partnerships directs Master to have no standard procedure of knitting partnerships with community. This is a contradictory fact compared to other educational institutions employing standard procedure or facilitating a partnership MoU as a proof that their institutions have once collaborated with particular community.

One of Master's partners, HN, admitted this condition, *"Oo, at first, I don't know, ma'am. From DD or NF, no MoU to sign."* Even when the researcher asked for MoU documents with some institutions, only old documents were handed. In the contrary, the MoU partnership documents with state and private universities were not found.

In short, partnership challenges collaboratively can be solved by performing positive and open leadership to all community elements so that people may come to collaborate freely with Master Learning Center. In this point, Master Learning Center indicates their informal partnerships, intertwined by a non-binding agreement and not officially molded it into cooperation agreement documents. They preferred cooperative realization, togetherness, and respect one to another, for instance, inviting each other to seminars, workshops, and partnership institutional visits. This informal partnership realization may change or be stopped due to leader commutation or policy changes of the related parties.

4.3. Partnerships Strategies

Partnerships strategies performed by Master with community are as follows:

- a- Involving volunteer tutors. They have 14 tutors recently, coming from community who care about education for the marginal and most of them are alumni of Master Learning Center. From 12 of them filling the questionnaires for demographic data, it is identified that 41,7% of them are the alumni, and 58,3% are not.

Table 2. Demographic of Volunteering Tutors in Master Learning Center

Items		N	%
Gender	Male	8	66,7
	Female	6	33,3
Status of alumni	Alumni	5	41,7
	Non alumni	7	58,3
Educational Background	Senior High School	3	25
	Diploma	2	16,7
	Bachelor	6	50
	Master	1	8,3

They are the educational volunteers whose hearts are moved to contribute their knowledge to their surroundings. Without being paid by the foundation or school, they keep dedicating themselves to teach in Master Learning Center whose students come from the unprivileged. Master Learning Center for senior high school level does not collect tuition fee at all except for diploma photo.

- a. Visiting partners directly. As mentioned by one informant, RH, *“We need to come to visit first, if the students have problems with law, we make the school there. In such a jail. If our country supports this activity, no need for Master to do this.”* The strategy applied is collaborating with the penitentiary to deliver learning service outside Master Learning Center’s area itself. If the jailed kids do not accept sufficient education, they will have no provision to face the competitive world after being released from the jail. They will feel lonely, have no ability for self-actualization in civilization life, feel stupid and left-behind so that isolation and no more acceptance from society are fiercely possible to happen. Those reasons have Master broaden their scope of collaboration to juvenile jails.
- b. Communicating partnership activities in social media and online mass media. Instagram and line are state university Master and Master School Indonesia’s social media platform delivering information of the students’ acceptance in state universities via state university national entrance exam and state university joint entrance exam @masterfebui. All activities are posted in the social media and some media had once covered the news to broadcast the information as a form of Master’s responsibility to public.
- c. Improving collaboration with other educational institutions to empower human resources, especially volunteer tutors. MT as the key informant corroborated this, *“To improve the quality, we here need to empower the human resources. This is why in every meeting or non-formal discussion, we emphasize on the understanding of Master’s 7 values. We organize character study for our students. We also carry out curriculum, technology information trainings. Quantitatively, we try to cover the needs of tutors by having cooperation with other educational institutions. By augmenting freelance partnership, of course. We also try to upgrade the volunteer quality as a must for our pro-active actions. For example, when we had a cooperation with world funding foundation to enhance ICT skills. This room and the computers are their donation.”*
- d. Arranging internship programs for Master students. Proving this, MT expressed, *“Yes, we have a plan for internship programs. Such as in a company or workshop. Although we are not from vocational schools, but they also need volunteering. This will train them to enter a workplace. Not all pupils*

here are academically bright. We direct the good ones to join tutoring in state university and prepare for university entrance exams. But for those whose less potential are also prepared.”

4. DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

The demonstration of collaboration between Master Learning Center and wider community is a pivotal factor of fabricating forceful partnerships. Collaboration here refers to an act of working together on a new program by giving suggestions or new ideas accompanied by energy contribution during the instructional process. The assurance of reciprocal benefits for community partners are also granted by the collaboration. The collaboration among Master learning center and wider communities face miscommunication and implementation to achieve the school's goals. This is due to one main principle, that partnerships between school and communities enable more secure school environment, strengthen parenting skills, promote community service, foster academic skills, and reach another beneficial goal for students Sanders & Epstein (2005).

Meanwhile, communication among partners plays decisive roles as well in collaboration. The communication needed should be performed openly and carried through all partners as it basically involves all partners to listen to each other (Gross et al., 2015). By social and mass media, Master Learning Center regularly shares their partnership activities to community. That is either considered as responsibility or an insight for other volunteers willing to work together with Master Learning Center to accommodate alternative education for the marginal society. Collaboration between schools and community allows a synergy to overcome problems by sharing responsibilities, funding, teachers and educators and places to collaborate (Epstein, 2010). On that ground, imparting Master Learning Center's programs, such as educational partnership, to people is highly possible. Master Learning Center also offers components of community a chance to participate in partnership programs, by all means, contribution adjustment to school goals and student needs are notable. This is due to the essence of partnerships as a relationship between school and community members, families, organizations, and business enterprises, which ought to be planned and implemented earnestly, directly or indirectly, to enable social, emotional, physical and intellectual promotion of the students (Epstein, 2009).

Open Secondary School of 4 Depok and Master Learning Center are a type of partnership between a state school and community in providing alternative education. The partnership both assists with the completion of 12-year Compulsory Education and enables access for the marginal to have qualified education until university level. Besides knitting partnerships with the state school, Master Learning Center collaborates with wider community, either individuals or groups in academic or non-academic fields. However, Master Learning Center encounters obstacles; miscommunication of school goals with the partners and informal partnerships are problematic so that there is no standard guidance of partnerships applied. This leads to less trust of public to the partnerships knitted. However, by the execution of some partnership strategies, such as recruiting volunteer tutors whose care about education, visiting partners directly, communicating with community via social and mass media, constructing wider collaboration either for the tutors or the students, Master Learning Center attempts to create partnerships which expected to meet the marginal student academic needs. This leads to a conclusion that collaboration is an effective school and community partnership type to provide alternative education.

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