Implementation of Independent Curriculum Learning at Cimone State Elementary School Tangerang

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigates the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at SDN Cimone 1. It uses a qualitative descriptive approach, collecting data through observation, interviews, and documentation. The school's efforts face various challenges, including the readiness of teachers and principals to carry out the programme. The Merdeka Curriculum emphasises flexibility, independence, and character development, making learning more relevant, adaptable, and enjoyable for students. The study's findings indicate that implementing this curriculum depends on active teaching, available resources, and the diverse learning needs of students. Teachers need to be more creative and adaptable in managing project-based learning, while students respond positively as they feel freer to express their interests and talents. Challenges include limited facilities, uneven teacher readiness, and students adapting to new and innovative teaching methods. Strengthening teacher training, acquiring facilities, and fostering greater collaboration between schools and stakeholders are essential to ensure the curriculum's effective implementation and to produce a positive impact on the overall learning experience in elementary schools.

Keywords: teacher, independent curriculum, elementary school

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INTRODUCTION

Education has a very important role in shaping the character and skills of students that need to be instilled from an early age to anticipate future problems in order to become the successor of an increasingly complex nation. Some of the problems that arise, such as the decline of children's concern for the surrounding environment, lack of sense of responsibility, and low self-confidence, require special attention in the educational process. To face global challenges and the dynamics of the times, the Indonesian government introduced the Independent Curriculum as an innovation in the education system. This curriculum focuses on learning flexibility, provides freedom for teachers to manage the classroom, and encourages comprehensive student development, including affective, cognitive, and psychomotor aspects. The main goal of the Independent Curriculum is to overcome the limitations of traditional approaches that overemphasize academic results, by opening up space for students to explore their interests and potential optimally (Enjoyulaili et al., 2023).

Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Permendikbudristek) in(Rika Widianita, 2023) Number 12 of 2024 regulates the independent curriculum which aims to provide flexibility in the implementation of education and to encourage the development of students' character and skills. These regulations outline the general requirements, positions, duties and functions, organizational structure, working hours, positions, appointments, and dismissals related to curriculum development.

In the midst of the 21st century's increasingly competitive global competition in development *human capital*, the presence of the Independent Learning Curriculum is a strategic response that cannot be ignored.



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Putriani (2021) stated that to answer the challenges of the times, individuals must master three areas of fundamental competencies: thinking skills, acting skills, and life skills. Thinking skills refer to analytical skills, creative imagination, and the ability to formulate solutions to various problems. Meanwhile, digital and technological literacy, communication skills, and acting capacity are the main characteristics of action competencies. (Nurohmah et al., 2023). Or the sake of achieving independent curriculum learning in this elementary school, one of the efforts to improve the learning of this curriculum is by improving the curriculum to better meet the needs of students and educators so that students can focus on project-based learning in this independent curriculum which can affect students' critical thinking skills and student creativity. Through this learning process, it is hoped that it can serve students with their own circumstances individually (Barlian et al., 2023)

The fundamental changes brought by the Independent Curriculum compared to the previous curriculum also affect the learning patterns applied in the classroom. Teachers are required to be able to adapt learning strategies in accordance with this new paradigm. However, the implementation of the curriculum in the field still leaves a gap between ideal expectations and implementive reality. such as the low readiness of some teachers in adapting their pedagogical approach to the demands of the new curriculum, the lack of synchronization of learning instructions with the characteristics and needs of students, and the variability of daily schedules that cause inconsistencies in the learning implementation process. All of these factors contribute to the low effectiveness of the integration of the Independent Curriculum in educational practice at the grade level (Saskia et al., 2024).

The Independent Curriculum consistently calls for better access to technology and other educational resources. Schools with inadequate infrastructure, such as slow computers or unstable internet connections, may find it difficult to implement this curriculum. This can also lead to misunderstandings between schools with and without adequate facilities. The implementation of the Merdeka curriculum may require additional funds for the development of educational resources, teacher training, and the purchase of appropriate teaching materials.(Zakso, 2023)

Program Freedom of Learning emphasizing the design of an education system that is not rigid, but flexible and adaptive to the development of students' character. Instead of being limited by high and uniform achievement targets, this approach aims to build a fun and meaningful learning ecosystem. In the view of Rachmadi Widiharto, Director of Basic Education at the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, the spirit of Freedom of Learning Opening up a wider space for students to explore and hone their competencies, especially in the field of mathematics. Basically Freedom of Learning It can be interpreted as a form of autonomy in the implementation of education that gives flexibility to students and teachers to determine the direction and method of learning that best suits their contextual needs. (Monalisa & Irfan, 2023)

At SDN Cimone 1, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum cannot be separated from the involvement of various interrelated elements, such as teacher readiness, infrastructure support, and response to student learning needs. The essence of the Independent Learning Curriculum lies in the encouragement of mastering 21st century skills, which include critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. In this context, the quality of education is highly determined by the readiness of educators and the existence of relevant training in responding to new learning dynamics. The analysis of the implementation of this policy refers to the policy analysis approach and the relevant theoretical framework, with a pressure point on how the formulation and implementation of the curriculum can be an instrument to improve the quality of education (Tuerah & Tuerah, 2023)

Meanwhile, the findings from ((Rizki et al., 2023) In a study entitled Implementation of Learning in the Independent Learning Curriculum at Sumbersari 1 State Elementary School, Malang City, it showed that teachers at SDN Sumbersari 1 were able to adopt the Independent Curriculum quite optimally. This is reflected in several indicators, such as: (1) active involvement of teachers in learning activities that emphasize



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the importance of a deep understanding of the structure and objectives of the independent curriculum, including the role of the working group; (2) supervision of curriculum implementation through an effective one-sheet Learning Implementation Plan (RPP); and (3) the focus of teaching in grades I and IV on strengthening literacy and numeracy through semantic content-based teaching materials.

With this background, the focus of this study is directed at how the Independent Curriculum is applied in the primary education environment, especially at SDN Cimone. The main objectives of this study include: first, describing school strategies in responding to various obstacles in curriculum implementation; second, identify challenges that arise during the process of implementing learning based on the Independent Curriculum; third, examining the level of readiness of teachers and principals in responding to curriculum transformation; fourth, to examine the form of learning implementation according to the principles of the Independent Curriculum; and finally, mapping the various obstacles that accompany the curriculum implementation process at SDN Cimone

LITERATURE REVIEW Independent Curriculum

Freedom to learn as initiated in Independent Curriculum It is a reflection of efforts to free students from the shackles of a uniform and all-directional learning pattern. In the view of Ki Hadjar Dewantara in(Wijiatun, 2022, p. 52), the essence of education should provide ample space for each child to grow based on his or her natural interests and talents. When the learning process is directed too strictly by the teacher or the system, then children's critical thinking skills tend to be shackled by external thinking. Therefore, liberating education is education that stimulates children to discover knowledge on their own initiative.

In this frame of thought, the concept of independent learning is not only interpreted as freedom in learning, but also as a means to realize one's full potential. Ki Hadi Sukitno, a Taman Siswa figure and Ki Hadjar Dewantara's right-hand man, emphasized that learning is actually a process of knowing oneself. This idea, which places freedom of learning as the foundation of education, becomes an important pillar in nation building and strengthening Indonesia's cultural identity (Wijiatun, 2022, p. 54).

Along with that, the Independent Curriculum as described by (Mulyasa, 2023, p. 1), developed as a curriculum that is flexible, adaptive, and based on strengthening 21st century characters and skills. Since it was enforced in the 2022/2023 school year at the primary and secondary levels, this approach has been implemented through driving school programs in stages, including learning environments, sharing environments, and environments that are undergoing changes. The scope of its application is national, namely in all educational institutions under the jurisdiction of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).

The emphasis of the Independent Curriculum also lies in the diversity of teaching materials that allow teachers to not only teach the main subjects, but also adapt the learning content to the interests and needs of students. Additional materials such as practical skills, social sciences, technology, and scientific innovation are integral to fostering holistic student growth. The importance of this curriculum is also reflected in the project-based learning method which aims to build character and increase the spirit of learning through a real and meaningful context, in accordance with the Pancasila Student Profile. Thus, teachers are required to play an active role in choosing learning methods that are not only varied but also contextual to the needs of students and the characteristics of their learning styles.

Learning

According to Jaya (2019:15), *learning* It is a comprehensive effort aimed at meeting the learning needs of students. The quality of this process depends mainly on the motivation of the students; When the motivation is high, the support provided by the students increases so that instructional goals are easier to achieve. In practice, students not only interact with teachers as material presenters, but also utilize various other learning resources to achieve the desired results (Rosnaningsih & Muttaqien, 2022).



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Every teaching activity inevitably involves two-way communication between teachers and students in any educational environment. In order for the message to be conveyed effectively, the medium of conveying information must be presented. (Hidayat, 2019, p. 14) states that *learning* is the product of an interaction between an individual's development and his or her life experience. In a broader framework, the primary task of educators is to facilitate students, while enriching the interaction of students, teachers, and materials, until learning goals are achieved. A relaxed, serene, fun, and stress-free learning atmosphere, while highlighting the uniqueness of each student, provides space for independent learning, which aims to foster a creative and autonomous mindset. The figure of the teacher, through inspirational guidance, is believed to be able to guide students to make the right decisions (Imelda Pratiwi et al., 2023).

Jaya (2019:16) reminded that teaching attention is not only focused on the "what" given to students, but also "how" to facilitate them to learn. The orientation to "what to learn" is related to the study of *the curriculum* that describes the purpose and type of material that must be mastered. In contrast, the question of "how to teach students" focuses on strategies for achieving goals, including structuring activities and evaluating processes (Rosnaningsih & Muttaqien, 2022).

Based on this understanding, learning can be understood as the systematic design of educators to gradually develop students' interest, creativity, and knowledge in certain subjects. The quality of this process is greatly influenced by the motivation and creativity of students. With strong internal drive, students are able to sustain motivational dynamics so that the achievement of instructional goals is more real. Target adjustments can be carried out through the transformation of participants' attitudes and performance during the activity. Finally, careful instruction design, well-maintained facilities, and teacher innovation are the catalysts for the realization of expected learning outcomes.

Curriculum

The curriculum has a central role in all educational processes. The curriculum includes all types of educational activities. The curriculum includes all forms of educational activities that will help students achieve their learning goals. The curriculum "prescribes (or at least anticipates) the outcomes of teaching," According to Franklin Bobbit (in Suud Karim Alkarhumi) the curriculum can be interpreted in two ways: (1) as a variety of learning activities, both silent and active, related to the development of individual skills, or (2) as a series of learning activities that are carried out quietly and used in schools to empower and educate individuals. The curriculum is described as a "learner experience" in this section. In addition, "(The curriculum is) a series of things that children and adolescents must do and experience by developing the ability to do things well that make up the affairs of adult life; and to be in everything what adults are supposed to do" (Ginanjar, 2022).

According to Hidayat (2017), a curriculum is understood as a formal document that contains all information about educational programs that must be carried out by educational units, both schools and madrasas, in each school year. This document is designed as a written reference used by educators in organizing learning activities. The content includes the arrangement of subject matter and learning experiences that are designed in harmony with the optimal stages of student growth.

Meanwhile, according to Said Hamid Hasan (in Ginanjar, 2022), there are two flexible positions in understanding the curriculum. First, the curriculum can be positioned as an educational entity, which is the framework that underlies the student's educational process. In this context, the curriculum plays the role of the main guide that directs learning activities. Second, the curriculum is understood as a methodological tool to develop the teaching and learning process, especially when there is a paradigm shift in the management of learning in the classroom. In this position, the role of curriculum developers becomes essential.

From these two views, it can be concluded that the curriculum is not just a collection of technical documents, but a system of rules that includes educational objectives, teaching materials, and learning methods that are key instruments in ensuring the continuity of educational activities in a structured and directed manner.



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The curriculum also functions as a medium that encourages students' active involvement in learning content, daily activities, and evaluative procedures to measure learning processes and outcomes in a sustainable manner.

METHOD

This research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach that is commonly used to examine and reflect comprehensively on the dynamics of social life, human interaction, and collective behavior. When compared to quantitative approaches that rely on numbers and statistical analysis, this method instead focuses on non-numerical data. In-depth interviews, documentation, and direct observation are the main sources of data that support the integrity of the analysis. According to (Sofwatillah et al., 2024), this approach pays attention not only to what happens, but also how and why a phenomenon takes place, thus allowing the emergence of rich and multidimensional contextual meanings in social studies.

The data collection took place at SDN Cimone 1 which is located in Karawaci District, precisely in Cimone Village, Tangerang City. In this school, *the Merdeka curriculum* has just been implemented gradually, and classes I and V are the main focus of observation because they have only started their implementation this school year. The researcher approached the principal, teachers of grades V and I, and students as informants to dig up the data. The focus of observation is directed at how *the Merdeka curriculum* is applied in learning practice and how the active role of teachers in transforming curriculum policies into concrete learning experiences in the classroom.

Information collection is carried out through three main techniques: *observation*, *interview*, and documentation studies. According to Gorden, *interview* is the process of exchanging opinions between two individuals that aims to dig into certain information in depth. Meanwhile, Creswell emphasized that the process *observation* should be run directly by researchers, not delegates, to ensure data accuracy in real-world contexts. Documents also play an important role; As Sugiyono explained, documents are historical traces recorded in the form of writings, visuals, and monumental artifacts that represent past events (Sidiq, Choiri, 2019).

The main goal of the qualitative method is not just to produce empirical data, but to formulate findings that can be the basis for new thinking, hypotheses, and even policies. Therefore, the usefulness of the information produced is a benchmark for research quality. The analysis process in this approach is interactive and iterative: the researcher collects, processes, draws temporary conclusions, and verifies the findings until no more new information emerges from the analyzed data. (Scott, 2022) emphasizing that this cycle must be carried out thoroughly so that research achievements are truly comprehensive.

In the entire process of this research, the data does not always have to be quantitative or numerical. The strength of this method lies precisely in its ability to explore reality in depth and contextually. From the field, the combination of interviews with principals and teachers, observations in the classroom, and the review of internal school documents became a strong foundation to evaluate the extent to which *the Merdeka curriculum* has been implemented substantially at SDN Cimone 1.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To get a comprehensive representation related to the implementation of *the Independent Curriculum* at SDN Cimone 1, the data triangulation approach is the main strategy applied by the researcher. The three main methods used include *observation*, *interview*, and document analysis, each with its own distinctive contribution to the depth and breadth of the data collected. Through direct observation of the dynamics of learning in the classroom, interviews with various parties involved, and the review of institutional documents, the researcher seeks to unravel the reality of curriculum implementation not only from a technical but also contextual perspective, including the stages of planning, implementation, evaluation, student involvement, and supporting factors from the learning environment.



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The analysis of the collected data is carried out systematically with reference to a series of key indicators that have been formulated beforehand. Thus, the presentation of research results not only contains a narrative description, but also reflects a logical and methodologically accountable analytical structure. The following table summarizes the main indicators along with a description of the data from the collection of information through the three techniques.

Table 1.	Findings	of Research	Results
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Yes	Indicator	Data description
1.	Learning planning	Based on the results of observations, interviews and document studies, learning planning is carried out by compiling teaching modules that adapt the material to the
		needs, interests, and talents of students. Teachers design project-based learning that emphasizes 21st century character and skill development. The planning document has referred to the principles of the Independent Curriculum and the Pancasila student profile. Teachers also reflect and adjust the learning plan based on the results of the evaluation and the needs of the students who are very diverse.
2.	Implementation of learning	Based on the results of observations, interviews and document studies, during the implementation, the teacher plays an active role as a facilitator, encouraging students to be involved in discussions, working groups, and creative projects. Learning takes place interactively, the classroom atmosphere becomes more lively, and students seem enthusiastic about participating in activities. Teachers provide space for students to express themselves, ask questions, and try new things. Students can also be more confident and dare to express their opinions. However, the implementation is sometimes stopped due to limited facilities in some classes.
3.	Learning assessment	Based on the results of observations, interviews and study of assessment documents are carried out holistically, not only assessing cognitive aspects, but also affective and psychomotor aspects. Teachers use various instruments such as portfolios, project assessments, observations, and student self-reflection. The results of the assessment are used to provide constructive feedback and help students develop to their respective potentials. The study documentation shows the existence of assessment records that are integrated with project activities and student character development.
4.	Student engagement	Based on the results of observations, interviews and document studies Students are very active in the learning process, free to express their interests and talents, and are involved in discussions, working groups, and various projects. Students feel happier, easier to understand the material, and more motivated because learning suits their needs and interests. Students also show improvements in communication, collaboration, and confidence skills.
5.	Learning environment support	Based on the results of interviews, observations and document studies, the learning environment is supported by collaboration between schools, teachers, and related parties. Schools are trying to provide supporting facilities, although there are still limitations in facilities and infrastructure in some classes. regular teacher training and



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infrastructure improvement efforts. The principal emphasized the importance of cooperation and support from all parties so that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum runs optimally and has an overall positive impact on students and schools.

Discussion

Learning Planning at SDN Cimone 1 Tangerang City

Planning is a very crucial element before carrying out an activity Without planning, an activity will not run well because careful preparation will help maintain focus in achieving goals. This also applies to the learning process in the classroom, where it is very important for teachers to develop a learning plan so that the teaching process can run effectively and achieve the goals that have been determined. In the Independent Curriculum, planning is not only about compiling teaching modules, but also adapting materials, methods, and activities to students' interests, talents, and characters. teachers have developed a flexible and adaptive project-based learning plan, and refer to the Pancasila student profile. The method used also uses PJBL (Project Based Learning) to help students to be active and can collaborate with peers. The results of the interviews showed that the teacher carried out a project to make student learning videos divided into small groups and chose interesting learning topics and then practiced in front of the class in groups. Then the teacher also reflects and adjusts the plan periodically, adjusting to the results of the evaluation and the needs of the students who are very diverse.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that learning planning in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at SDN Cimone 1 is carried out systematically and adaptively. Teachers have developed project-based learning plans that adapt the material to the needs, interests, and talents of students, and refer to the principles of ignorance, independence, and character development according to the Pancasila student profile.

Implementation of Learning at SDN Cimone 1 Tangerang City

The implementation of learning is the implementation of a learning plan in the classroom, where the teacher plays the role of facilitator and motivator. In its implementation, teachers encourage students to be active in discussions, group work, and creative projects. The classroom atmosphere at SDN Cimone 1 became more lively, interactive, and collaborative. Students appear confident, enthusiastic, and free to express their interests and talents. The principal revealed that the implementation of the independent curriculum learning has been implemented in all classes from grades 1-6 in stages. Students also find it easier to understand the material and prefer to study in groups with peers by creating projects because the methods used vary and are tailored to their needs. The document supports this with an innovative record of learning implementation, although implementation is sometimes hampered by limited facilities.

Based on this explanation, it can be concluded that the implementation of learning at SDN Cimone 1 Tangerang City has been carried out interactively and participatively in accordance with the spirit of the curriculum that emphasizes independence and the development of character and skills in the 21st century as a whole, the implementation of independent curriculum learning has brought positive changes to student involvement and the quality of the learning process.

Learning Assessment at SDN Cimone 1 Tangerang City

Assessment is a way of various methods and the use of different tools to get information about how much learning outcomes from students or competency achievements are possessed by students. In the world of education, assessment is very important to understand the abilities of the students. The assessment is carried out holistically, covering cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects (Suryanto, 2018). Teachers use various instruments such as portfolios, project assessments, observations, and student self-reflection. Teachers can



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also assess through summative and formative assessments. These assessments not only highlight the final results but also assess and process the student's development and character during learning. Thus, students get constructive feedback and can continue to develop their potential optimally.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the learning assessment at SDN Cimone has been carried out thoroughly and oriented towards the development of students as a whole. Assessments do not only focus on cognitive aspects or academic achievement alone, but also include affective (attitude, character) and psychomotor (skills) aspects. Teachers use various assessment instruments such as portfolios, project assessments, observations, and student self-reflection to get a more complete picture of student development.

Student involvement at SDN Cimone 1 Tangerang City

The involvement of students in the learning process in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum is very high. Students show active participation in various learning activities, such as group discussions, teamwork, and the implementation of learning-based projects. They seemed enthusiastic about participating in activities, daring to express their opinions, and being able to work together with classmates effectively. Students also revealed that they found the learning process to be more enjoyable and easy to understand. In addition, they admitted that they were more motivated because the material taught was tailored to their respective interests and talents. Student project portfolios and reports that reflect active involvement in each stage of learning activities. This shows that the approach applied in the Independent Curriculum has succeeded in encouraging students to be more involved, responsible, and develop optimally in the learning process.

Based on the above, it is concluded that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum has succeeded in increasing student involvement in the learning process. Students show active participation through a variety of activities, feel more motivated, and find learning to be more enjoyable and easy to understand. Concrete evidence from students' portfolios and project reports also shows that this approach encourages students to be responsible and develop optimally in learning.

Learning environment support at SDN Cimone 1

Support for the learning environment at SDN Cimone 1 has begun to build well through close collaboration between the school, teachers, and various other related parties. The school is committed to providing facilities that support the learning process, although there are still some limitations in facilities and infrastructure in some classes that need to be considered. To improve the quality of education, efforts to improve teacher competence through training and professional development continue to be carried out on an ongoing basis. The principal will reflect on the teacher to express his opinion during the learning process. This is so that teachers can implement teaching methods that are more effective and in accordance with the needs of students. A conducive and collaborative learning environment is very important in supporting the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum, because it can create an atmosphere that supports positive interaction between students and teachers.

The conclusion of the explanation is that SDN Cimone 1 has begun to build a supportive learning environment through collaboration between schools, teachers, and related parties. Despite limitations in facilities and infrastructure in some classrooms, the school is committed to providing facilities that support learning. Efforts to improve teacher competence through training and professional development are also continuing. A conducive and collaborative learning environment is essential for the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum, although challenges related to facilities and human resource readiness still need to be addressed in an ongoing manner.

Although there are many advantages and disadvantages in the implementation of the program to implement the independent curriculum, there are also certain benefits that can be obtained from this program. First, the Independent Learning Program allows each student to learn according to their respective interests



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and abilities. It is believed that by emphasizing students' motivation and talents, they will be more engaged and motivated during the learning process. In addition, this curriculum allows students to develop their independence, creativity, and innovation. In the learning process, students receive guidance on how to learn and explore the subject matter(Indri, n.d.)

Experiencing the state of a positive learning environment can benefit students in a variety of ways. This will reflect the emergence of a sense of joy in children, which can then serve as an important component in fostering a love for learning and increasing learning efficiency. A child who learns in an attractive environment They are more motivated to learn all the available materials and are able to manage their study time in a more relaxed way. They can easily become bored or discouraged when they are faced with challenging material and can generate creative ideas. The educational process that is done in an engaging way also allows students to learn a wider and high-quality material.

The emphasis of the learning system on the development of students' character means that the type of analysis carried out is not limited to academic subjects but also considers how the characteristics of each student differ from each other. It is hoped that the new education system associated with this curriculum will help develop students who have a way of life that can be applied to community life (Fatirul, 2022).

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum must be guided by the right strategy based on learning from previous curriculum implementations in Indonesia and other countries. Implementation strategies should emphasize systemic complexity and focus on the skills and character of the learner. The Independent Curriculum must also be easy to understand and implement, flexible, harmonious, work together, and emphasize learning outcomes and returns.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

This research shows that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at SDN Cimone 1 has a positive impact on the learning process in elementary schools. The Merdeka Curriculum provides flexibility for teachers in managing the classroom and encourages the development of students as a whole, both from cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Through project-based learning and an emphasis on developing 21st-century character and skills, students become more active, creative, and able to collaborate. The school's efforts in overcoming curriculum implementation problems include strengthening teacher training, providing supporting facilities, and increasing collaboration between schools and related parties. However, there are still several challenges, such as limited infrastructure, uneven teacher readiness, and student adaptation to new learning methods. Teachers and school principals are required to continue to improve their competence and readiness in facing this curriculum change.

Subsequent research suggestions should not only capture the implementation process, but also evaluate the long-term impact of the Independent Curriculum on character development, 21st century skills, and achievement

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