

# The Important of Civic Engagement in the Indonesian Nasional Curriculum: Literature Review

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**Abstract.** This study aims to examine the importance of civic engagement in the Indonesian national curriculum through a literature review approach. Civic engagement is a key element in building students' national identity, character, and social competence. Integrating civic engagement into the curriculum is essential for preparing young generations to become active, critical, and responsible citizens, both nationally and globally. The literature review method used in this study involves identifying, analyzing, and synthesizing scientific articles, research reports, and policy documents from national and international sources published between 2015 and 2025. The findings reveal that although civic engagement has been partially incorporated into the curriculum, it remains largely confined to specific subjects and extracurricular activities without cross-disciplinary integration. Several challenges hinder the optimal implementation of civic engagement, including insufficient teacher training, an overemphasis on cognitive assessments, infrastructure disparities, lack of clear policy guidelines, and limited community involvement. Addressing these issues requires systematic efforts such as enhancing active learning methods, balancing cognitive and experiential assessments, providing equitable infrastructure, and fostering stronger collaboration between schools and communities. This study underscores the urgent need for comprehensive and structured integration of civic engagement across the curriculum to develop a generation capable of upholding democratic values and contributing positively to a diverse, interconnected world.

**Keywords:** civic engagement; national curriculum; character education; global citizenship; Indonesia

## INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia continues to experience various transformations to adapt to global challenges and national needs. One aspect that is starting to receive attention is the importance of building civic engagement among students as part of efforts to strengthen national identity and democracy (Usmi & Samsuri, 2022). Civic engagement or citizen involvement in social and political life is an important element in forming an active, critical and responsible society (Power et al., 2021). In this context, the national curriculum has a strategic role to integrate citizenship values systematically and in a structured manner in the education process (Luthfi et al., 2020).

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of civic education in building students' character. For example, research conducted by Umi Qulsum shows that applied civic education can increase students' participation in social activities (Qulsum, 2022). Furthermore, research by Usmi et al. highlighted that implementing a project-based learning approach in Pancasila and Citizenship Education significantly enhances students' learning experiences and fosters greater awareness of social and political issues. subject

was able to increase students' social and political awareness (Usmi & Samsuri, 2022). However, these studies have not explicitly linked civic engagement as a competency that is integrated across subjects in the national curriculum.

Globally, civic engagement has become a focus in various education systems. Countries such as Finland, Australia, and Canada have integrated practice-based civic education into their curricula to encourage students to actively participate in society. Civic education in developed countries places more emphasis on hands-on experiences, such as public debates and social projects, than purely theoretical approaches (Cappello & Siino, 2023). This comparison shows a gap in the Indonesian approach which still tends to be oriented towards cognitive mastery rather than participatory practice.

Furthermore, other studies show that even though character education has become part of the national curriculum, aspects of civic engagement are still often considered as a small part of certain subjects, such as PPKn, without broader integration into the overall curriculum (Hanum et al., 2024). This creates a gap that civic engagement has not become a cross-disciplinary competency that forms students' social awareness holistically.

Other research conducted by Lestari et al. found that extracurricular activities for example, internal student organizations like OSIS and scouts made a positive contribution to the development of civic engagement. However, this involvement is still sporadic and has not received systematic reinforcement in the design of the national curriculum (Lestari & Ain, 2022). This shows the need to formulate a more structured pedagogical approach to consistently foster civic engagement.

In addition, the development of digital society and the challenges of globalization require the development of civic engagement that is adaptive to the information era. A study by Bustamin et al. showed that the use of digital media in civic education can expand the reach of student involvement, but this approach has not been adopted massively in the Indonesian national curriculum (Bustamin et al., 2023). Lack of technology integration in civic engagement development is another gap that needs to be addressed.

Although there have been various educational reform efforts through the implementation although reforms in the 2013 Curriculum and the Independent Curriculum have been made, the prioritization of civic engagement is still not fully optimal. The Independent Curriculum places more emphasis on character development and general competencies such as creativity and critical thinking, but civic engagement as an indicator of the success of civic education is still less explicitly defined and integrated (Shofia Rohmah et al., 2023).

With increasingly complex social and political changes, the need to develop civic engagement in the curriculum is becoming increasingly urgent. Without systematic efforts, Indonesia is potentially facing challenges in forming a young generation that has critical awareness, participatory attitudes, and commitment to democratic values (Oktavia Rahayu et al., 2023). Unfortunately, literature that specifically examines civic engagement's function in the Indonesian national curriculum is still relatively limited.

Considering the description, it may be concluded that there is a research gap in terms of integrating civic engagement into the Indonesian national curriculum comprehensively. Most studies still focus on general character development or optional extracurricular activities. Therefore, an in-depth literature review is needed to explore the importance of civic engagement and

how the national curriculum can be designed to accommodate these needs more strategically.

This research focuses on examining the importance of civic engagement in the Indonesian national curriculum through a literature review approach. This study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the design of educational policies aimed at becoming more responsive to the needs of forming active and responsible citizens, as well as providing practical advice on the implementation of civic education based on cross-disciplinary civic engagement.

## METHODS

This study uses a methodological framework based on literature review the main method to examine the importance of civic engagement in the Indonesian national curriculum. Literature review is a research method that aims to identify, analyze, and synthesize various scientific sources that are relevant to a particular area of study, with the purpose of build a comprehensive theoretical understanding and find existing research gaps.

### Types of Literature Review

The model of literature review used is an holistic literature review. These types of reviews allow researchers to combine theories, empirical research results, and educational policies from various sources, both national and international, so that they can provide a comprehensive picture of the development of the concept of civic engagement in the world of education. This method was employed since it allows for identify research trends, inconsistencies in findings, and areas that require further research.

### Literature Search Strategy

The literature search process was carried out systematically using several electronic databases, including: Google Scholar; Scopus; DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals); Eric. Keywords used in searches include: Civic Engagement; Education Curriculum; Character Education; Project-Based Learning in Civic Education; Curriculum Reform; Civic Literacy in Schools; Indonesian Civic Education. Combination of keywords using Boolean operators (AND, OR) to expand or narrow relevant search results.

### Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To maintain the relevance and quality of the literature reviewed, this study sets the following inclusion and exclusion criteria:

#### Inclusion:

- Journal articles, scientific books, research reports, and policy documents.
- Publications within the last 10 years (2015–2025) to ensure data recency.
- Focus on the theme of civic engagement in education, national curriculum, and character education.
- Articles in Indonesian and English.

#### Exclusion:

- Articles that are not relevant to the theme of civic engagement.
- Studies with unclear methodology or without peer review.
- Secondary sources such as opinion articles or non-academic blogs.

### Data Analysis Procedure

Data collected from relevant literature were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The stages include:

- a) Read literature in depth to understand the content, objectives, and main findings of each study.
- b) Grouping literature based on key themes such as the concept of civic engagement, best practices for implementation in the curriculum, challenges, and innovations.
- c) Analyzing research gaps (research gap) by comparing theory, practice in various countries, and implementation conditions in Indonesia.
- d) Synthesizing findings to formulate theoretical and practical implications in the development of the Indonesian national curriculum.

#### Validity and Reliability

To increase validity, only literature from reputable and peer-reviewed sources was used. Inter-researcher validation (peer debriefing) was also conducted by discussing with colleagues in the field of education to test the interpretation of findings and enrich the analysis. In addition, source triangulation was conducted by comparing data from international journals, national policies, and local research results.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Civic engagement is a fundamental aspect in the development concerning the moral formation of the younger generation. In this context of Indonesia, civic engagement is an inseparable part of efforts to build citizens with a national identity, democratic, and responsible (Salim et al., 2022). Civic education integrated into the national curriculum aims to instill national and democratic values in

students as early as possible (Indriyani et al., 2023). By incorporating civic engagement into the curriculum, students are formed not only as knowledgeable individuals, but also as active social actors in social and state life (Maulana & Milanti, 2023).

Civic engagement in education contributes significantly to strengthening national identity amidst the increasingly complex challenges of globalization. The Indonesian national curriculum, especially through the Pancasila and Citizenship Education subject, is designed to instill basic national values such as Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, and the Republic of Indonesia. However, the implementation of civic engagement does not stop at theory, but must be realized in real social practice through contextual, collaborative, and project-based learning activities (Munasib et al., 2023).

### The Role and Purpose of Civic Engagement in the Curriculum

#### Strengthening National Identity

Strengthening national identity is one of the main objectives of civic engagement integration in the Indonesian education curriculum. A strong national identity serves as a social glue for the multicultural and multiethnic Indonesian nation. Civic education is an important instrument in building this identity by instilling an understanding of national history, Pancasila values, and an attitude of respect for cultural diversity (Anggriawan et al., 2024). Effective education in building national identity must be able to foster students' awareness of the essential role of sustaining solidarity in a diverse society. Understanding national values through civic education can strengthen the sense of love for the homeland and national pride (Fortuna & Khadir, 2022).

In the context of Indonesia's plurality, strengthening national identity through civic education is becoming increasingly important. A multicultural nation encompassing various ethnicities, faiths, races, and cultural backgrounds like Indonesia is very vulnerable to potential social conflict and national disintegration. Civic education must be designed to foster collective awareness of the importance of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika as a unifying principle (Luthfi et al., 2020). Civic engagement that prioritizes recognition of the rights of every group in society is the foundation for creating a harmonious and peaceful life.

Strengthening national identity is not only taught through memorization of concepts, but must

be realized through real and meaningful learning experiences. Social project-based learning that raises the theme of Indonesian cultural diversity can increase a sense of belonging to the nation. When students are directly involved in activities such as cultural festivals, local tradition preservation projects, or tolerance campaigns, they not only understand the concept of nationality theoretically but also internalize these values in everyday life (Bare & Sari, 2021).

In addition, education based on civic engagement needs to include global citizenship values while maintaining national identity. Strengthening national identity must be in line with the development of global awareness to form world citizens who adhere to local values (Santoso et al., 2023). Therefore, the civic education curriculum needs to design learning that balances national pride and openness to global diversity. This is important to prepare the younger generation to face the challenges of the globalization era without losing their cultural roots.

The importance of strengthening national identity through civic engagement shows that students' active involvement in culture-based social activities can increase national pride and strengthen social solidarity (Anggriawan et al., 2024). Thus, the combination of civic engagement in the Indonesian national curriculum is fundamental to build a generation of young people who are more than just academically not only intellectually skilled but also ethically principled, loves its homeland, and is able to live harmoniously in a diverse society (Karliani et al., 2019). Civic education designed with this approach is expected to produce citizens with a strong national identity and who are adaptive to global dynamics.

### **Formation of Character and Morals**

Character and moral formation are key components in civic engagement-based education. Civic engagement in education not only teaches cognitive aspects about the state and democracy, but also serves as a means of forming individuals with morals and character. Values such as integrity, responsibility, justice, tolerance, love of the homeland, along with the dedication to national defense need to be systematically instilled through various learning activities. Effective character education must be based on universal virtue values that are not only taught theoretically but also practiced in students' daily lives (Puri, 2021).

Civic engagement-focused education provides students with hands-on experience in dealing with real-world situations that require decision-making

based on moral values. Real-world experiences provided to students, such as involvement in social projects, public issue debate activities, or community service programs, are able to internalize character values more effectively than conventional learning methods (Kerski, 2015). Through this experience, students learn to understand the importance of being responsible, respecting differences, and appreciating the rights and obligations of citizens.

Integration of civic engagement in character building also supports the development of soft skills that are very much needed in community life. that learners who participate actively in social engagements show improvements in empathy, collaboration skills, and peaceful conflict resolution skills (de Roock, R. S., & Baildon, 2019). These skills contribute directly to the development of a more just, tolerant and democratic society.

Furthermore, civic engagement-based education emphasizes the importance of building a strong moral identity in students. Practice-based character education provides opportunities for students to develop self-regulation, namely the ability to control themselves and act according to internal moral principles (Chang, D., You, J., & Chang, 2023). In other words, civic education that focuses on real experiences not only produces students who are knowledgeable about democracy, but also forms individuals with integrity and who are able to act ethically.

The application of civic engagement in character and moral formation has also received attention in local research. Studies conducted in several high schools in Indonesia showed that the integration of civic values in school activities, such as community-based social projects and environmental campaigns, significantly increased attitudes of discipline, social responsibility, and love for the homeland among students (Rizky et al., 2024). This finding emphasizes that effective civic engagement in education is one that is able to connect theory with real practices in students' lives.

### **Global Citizenship Preparation**

In the era of globalization marked by increasingly intensive cross-country connectivity, civic engagement education plays a strategic role in preparing the younger generation to become active and responsible world citizens. Globalization brings social, political, and economic changes that demand rapid adaptation from individuals and nations. Therefore, civic education needs to expand the scope of its material not only on national issues,

but also on global issues such as human rights, global democracy, international governance, cultural diversity, and interdependence between nations (Munasib et al., 2023). With this approach, education not only forms nationalist citizens, but also forms global citizens who are aware of international dynamics.

Civic engagement education designed with a global perspective teaches students to understand their rights and responsibilities as part of a global community. Global citizenship education should include cross-cultural understanding, intercultural communication competency, and empathy for world issues such as poverty, climate change, and social injustice (Rizky et al., 2024). In this context, civic education in Indonesia has begun to adopt a global framework of thinking to prepare students to become individuals who are able to contribute to solving global issues without ignoring local values that are the identity of the nation.

Studies state that global citizenship education is important to equip students with critical, collaborative, and reflective thinking skills on global issues (Widiatmaka & Kurniawan, 2023). Students are encouraged to not only understand global phenomena, but also develop solutions based on ethical values and principles of social justice. Thus, student involvement in international social projects, student exchange programs, and cross-cultural discussions become effective means of strengthening global-minded civic engagement.

Furthermore, civic engagement education with a global approach must also emphasize the importance of maintaining national identity amidst openness to other cultures. Global education must go hand in hand with national character education so that students do not lose their cultural roots (Alif Okta Nabila, 2022). By building a strong national identity, students will be able to interact constructively in the global arena without experiencing identity disorientation. This is important to ensure that their contributions in the international world continue to reflect the foundational virtues of the Indonesian nation.

In Indonesia, the implementation of civic education based on global citizenship has begun to be strengthened in the Independent Curriculum with the integration of the Pancasila Student Profile which includes dimensions of critical reasoning, global pluralism and collaborative solidarity. Studies show that global project-based education programs in secondary schools improve students' global literacy while strengthening their sense of pride in local culture (Yusliani, 2022). With this approach, civic engagement not only produces

citizens who contribute nationally, but are also globally active while maintaining national identity.

### **Increasing Social Participation**

One of the main goals of concerning education for citizenship is to increase students' social participation through activities that develop social and leadership skills. Social participation involves students in school organizations such as student councils, community service-based extracurricular activities, and public discussion forums that discuss social and political issues. Involvement in such social activities builds social capital, namely social networks and norms that strengthen the cohesion of a democratic society (Alif Okta Nabila, 2022). Civic education designed to encourage active participation provides opportunities for students to enhance their awareness of social responsibility, the ability to work together, and communication skills with various levels of society.

Furthermore, other studies have shown that students involved in civic engagement activities show significant improvements in critical thinking skills and community-based problem solving abilities (Almulla & Al-Rahmi, 2023). Through direct experience in solving social problems, students not only learn theory, but also apply democratic principles in real life. For example, student involvement in community service projects or social campaigns allows them to interact with the community, understand different perspectives, and find collaborative solutions to the problems they face. This is important for forming citizens who are able to think reflectively and act collectively in a democratic society.

Local studies in Indonesia also support the importance of social participation in strengthening civic engagement. Schools found that students who were active in social activities showed higher attitudes of social concern and solidarity compared to students who were not active (Hanum et al., 2024). Activities such as environmental service, social fundraising, and advocacy of educational issues have been proven to increase students' sense of empathy and social responsibility. Thus, civic education that is oriented towards social participation is crucial in building a young generation that not only understands the concept of democracy, but is also skilled in actively participating in society.

### **Civic Engagement Implementation Strategy**

#### **Integration in the Curriculum**

The implementation of civic engagement is

carried out through the integration of citizenship education from primary education onward, encompassing all academic stages to college. Each level has a curriculum that is relevant to the level of cognitive and social development of students. The government through the Merdeka Curriculum provides flexible space for schools to develop social projects that are relevant to the profile of Pancasila Students (Qulsum, 2022).

### Active Learning

Approaches to active learning including case-based learning, group discussions, simulations, and critical reflection are highly recommended in civic education. These approaches encourage students to engage directly, develop analytical skills, and build respectful relationships between students and teachers (Ozüdoğru & Çakır, 2020). Studies show that active involvement in learning increases understanding of citizenship concepts and readiness to act (Partsch et al., 2022).

### Extracurricular Activities and Cultural Programs

In addition to classroom learning, extracurricular activities such as OSIS, scouts, arts and culture programs, and community service activities are important vehicles for developing civic engagement. These programs provide space for students to practice leadership, cooperation, and social initiatives (Lestari & Ain, 2022). Local cultural preservation activities also strengthen national identity while building awareness of diversity.

**Table 1.** The Impact of Civic Engagement on Students

Aspect	Impact on Students	Source
National Identity	Increase the sense of unity, pride and responsibility as citizens	(Rizky et al., 2024) (Luthfi et al., 2020)
Character & Morals	Forming a democratic, tolerant and patriotic attitude	(Santoso et al., 2023)
Social Skills	Enhance participation, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills	(Fortuna & Khadir, 2022) (Munasib et al., 2023)
Global Readiness	Equipping students to face global issues without losing local values	( et al., 2024)

### Challenges in Implementing Civic Engagement

Although the vital importance of active citizenship in building character traits and social competence of students has been recognized, its implementation in the Indonesian national curriculum still faces various issues. Among the foremost challenges is the readiness of educators. Many teachers are not fully trained in implementing active learning methods needed to build student engagement effectively. Most Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) teachers still use the traditional lecture-based approach, which provides little space for students to develop critical and participatory thinking skills (Bustamin et al., 2023).

In addition to teacher factors, another challenge is the excessive focus on cognitive aspects in learning evaluation. Assessments in PPKn subjects in many schools are still oriented towards memorizing concepts and normative values, thus ignoring the development of social skills such as collaboration, communication, and leadership. This causes students to lack real experience in applying civic values in everyday life. A curriculum that is too cognitive actually weakens the main goal of civic engagement, namely building social competence and civic skills (Shofia Rohmah et al., 2023).

Limited school resources are also a significant obstacle. Many schools, especially in remote areas, do not have supporting facilities such as social laboratories, community spaces, or adequate access to technology to implement project-based civic engagement programs. This condition limits students' opportunities to learn through direct experiences that are relevant to community life. The disparity in educational infrastructure between urban and rural areas is a significant determinant of the reduced success of implementing civic engagement-based learning (Anggraeni Dewi et al., 2023).

Lack of specific policy support is also a serious challenge. Although the Independent Curriculum has provided more space for schools to develop project-based learning, there is no regulation that explicitly directs schools to focus on strengthening civic engagement. Without clear policy guidance, schools tend to ignore aspects of civic education that are based on experience and social engagement (Usmi & Samsuri, 2022). In other words, a clearer and more operational regulatory framework is urgently needed to encourage the systematic implementation of civic engagement in schools.

The final challenge is the lack of community

involvement in supporting school civic engagement programs. In fact, local community involvement can enrich students' learning experiences and build their sense of social responsibility. Collaboration between schools, parents, and local communities has a significant impact on the success of experiential civic education programs (Rizky et al., 2024). Without active involvement from various stakeholders, efforts to build civic engagement in the school environment will be less than optimal. Therefore, strong synergy is needed between schools, government, and society to ensure that civic engagement can truly become an integral part of national education.

## CONCLUSION

This literature review demonstrates that civic engagement has a significant influence on shaping students' national identity, character, and social competence within the Indonesian national curriculum. Civic engagement not only instills knowledge about citizenship but also provides students with real-life experiences that foster democratic attitudes, critical thinking skills, and engagement in community responsibility. The integration of civic engagement into the curriculum helps students become active, critical, and responsible citizens, capable of contributing both nationally and globally while maintaining a strong sense of national identity. However, the review also reveals several significant challenges in implementing civic engagement within the curriculum. These include the lack of teacher readiness to adopt active learning methods, the tendency to focus on cognitive assessment rather than social skills development, disparities in educational infrastructure, limited policy support, and insufficient community involvement. These challenges highlight the need for systematic and strategic efforts to enhance the integration of civic engagement into all aspects of education. To address these challenges, several strategies are essential: strengthening teacher training in active, participatory methods; balancing cognitive and experiential assessment; improving infrastructure to support project-based learning; providing clearer policy frameworks that emphasize civic engagement; and fostering collaboration between schools and local communities. By implementing these strategies, Indonesia can cultivate a generation that is not only academically capable but also socially engaged, morally grounded, and globally competent.

Thus, the Indonesian national curriculum must position civic engagement as a core, cross-disciplinary competency rather than an isolated component. A comprehensive and structured integration of civic engagement will ensure that education serves its ultimate purpose: preparing young people to become responsible citizens who can uphold democratic values and positively contribute to a diverse, interconnected world.

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