



Improvement of Quranic Reading Skills and Islamic Insight among Children and Adolescents in Tarai Bangun Village: a Participatory Action Research Approach

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Abstract

This paper discusses the implementation of the Thematic Community Service Learning (KKN-T) program in Tarai Bangun Village, Tambang Sub-district, Kampar Regency, with the background of selecting a theme focusing on the need for religious and Islamic education in the village. The chosen theme for the KKN-T program is "Improving Quranic Reading Skills and Islamic Understanding for Children and Adolescents in Tarai Bangun Village, Tambang Sub-district, Kampar Regency" because the village has an urgent need to enhance religious knowledge and Islamic life, especially among the younger generation. In implementing this program, the participants follow a well-structured method of planning and executing activities. The activities involve intensive Quranic teaching, dawn sermons (kultum subuh), sermons before tarawih prayers (kultum before tarawih), and the imparting of Islamic values to the local community. During the implementation, data is collected through observation, interviews, and Quranic reading skill assessments, allowing for the collection and analysis of scientific findings. The scientific findings indicate that the KKN-T activities have had a significant and positive impact on improving Quranic reading skills among the children of Tarai Bangun Village. The data shows a tangible increase in the understanding of religion and Islamic awareness among children and adolescents. Furthermore, the program has successfully nurtured a sense of care and affection for Islam among them. The conclusion drawn from this research is that KKN-T can serve as an effective model for promoting religious and Islamic education and enhancing Quranic reading skills for children and adolescents in similar villages.

Keywords: KKN-T; Quran Reading; Islamic Insights

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Introduction

The ability to read the Quran and understand Islam are two valuable assets that can bring significant benefits to individuals.¹ The ability to read the Quran and understand Islam can serve as the fundamental basis for shaping one's moral values. The Quran is the primary source of teachings in Islam,² containing guidelines for ethics and values that form the foundation for righteous actions. By comprehending and practicing the teachings of the Quran, individuals can develop strong characters and good morals. Furthermore, understanding Islam also aids in shaping one's Islamic identity.

Understanding Islam doesn't just influence an individual's behavior, but also helps shape their religious identity.³ With a deep understanding of Islamic teachings, one can feel closer to their beliefs and religious values. This assists them in feeling more confident and proud of their Islamic identity, consequently impacting how they interact with society and the world around them.

Furthermore, the ability to read the Quran and understand Islam plays a crucial role in integrating religious principles into daily life.⁴ Applying these principles in everyday life is an integral part of religious practice.⁵ It assists individuals in integrating religious values into their decisions, actions, and daily behaviors. Consequently, individuals can lead lives that align with their religious teachings, making religion their primary guide in navigating various situations in their lives.

Several related studies on this theme were found by the author, including a study titled 'Sorogan Method in Enhancing Quranic Reading Skills in Children,'⁶ which examines the use of the Sorogan method to improve Quranic reading abilities among children.⁷ The common ground between this study and previous research lies in their shared focus on enhancing Quranic reading skills in children. However, the difference lies in the research's focal point, where this study represents a broader overview concerning the efforts to enhance Quranic reading abilities among adolescent children in the Tarai village, coupled with research on elevating their Islamic insights.

Tarai Village is situated in the Tambang District, Kampar Regency, Riau Province. This village spans an area of approximately 21 square kilometers and is home to around 4,543 residents.⁸

In the field of education, Tarai village hosts several primary and secondary schools. The local government has also initiated a scholarship program for academically outstanding yet economically disadvantaged students.⁹ The local authorities are continually striving to enhance both access to and the quality of education in Tarai village. One approach involves constructing improved schools and elevating the standard of education provided to students.

The religious composition in Tarai village is quite diverse, although the majority of its inhabitants adhere to Islam.¹⁰ Several mosques within Tarai village serve as places of worship for Muslims, and the residents frequently engage actively in religious activities. They participate in religious

¹ Riyan Hidayatulloh, "Manajemen Program Bimbingan Mengaji Dalam Meningkatkan Kemampuan Membaca Al-Qur'an Peserta Didik Smk NUFA Citra Mandiri Depok Jawa Barat" (Institut PTIQ Jakarta, 2023).

² Asep Rudi Nurjaman, *Pendidikan Agama Islam* (Bumi Aksara, 2020).

³ Lori Peek, "Becoming Muslim: The Development of a Religious Identity," *Sociology of Religion: A Quarterly Review* 66, no. 3 (2005): 215–42, <https://doi.org/10.2307/4153097>.

⁴ Ziauddin Sardar, *Reading the Qur'an: The Contemporary Relevance of the Sacred Text of Islam*, *Choice Reviews Online*, vol. 49 (Oxford University Press, 2012), <https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.49-3817>.

⁵ D R W Ningtyas, M A Sholikhudin, and ..., "The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Forming the Religious Character of Students at SMKN I Purwosari," *Jurnal Pendidikan ...* 1, no. 1 (2023): 1–5, <https://jurnal.seaninstitute.or.id/index.php/jupei/article/view/167%0Ahttps://jurnal.seaninstitute.or.id/index.php/jupei/article/download/167/124>.

⁶ Iys Nur Handayani and Suisanto Suisanto, "Metode Sorogan Dalam Meningkatkan Kemampuan Membaca Alquran Pada Anak," *Golden Age: Jurnal Ilmiah Tumbuh Kembang Anak Usia Dini* 3, no. 2 (2019): 103–14, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jga.2018.32-04>.

⁷ Nur Handayani and Suisanto.

⁸ BPS KAB. Kampar, "Kecamatan Tambang Dalam Angka" (Kampar: BPS Kab. Kampar, 2022).

⁹ Pengamatan dan wawancara dengan aparat desa Tarai

¹⁰ Kampar, "Kecamatan Tambang Dalam Angka."

gatherings at mosques, attend study circles ('pengajian'), and organize religious events, such as commemorations of significant Islamic occasions.

In terms of religious education, there are several religious educational institutions in Tarai village, such as Madrasah Diniyah (Islamic primary school) and Pondok Pesantren (Islamic boarding school). Here, students have the opportunity to study Islamic teachings and understand the religious values embraced by the community in Tarai village. Religious activities hold a significant presence in the daily lives of the villagers in Tarai. One prime example is the regular congregation for prayers at the mosque for each prayer time. Moreover, the villagers frequently organize regular study sessions to learn from the Quran and Hadith, as well as commemorate significant Islamic festivities such as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha.

According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Riau Province in 2021, the population of Tarai Village reached approximately 4,543 individuals, with the majority adhering to Islam. As a predominantly Muslim village, practicing Islamic teachings stands as one of the fundamental needs for the residents of Tarai Village. The Quran, the holy book of Islam, serves as the primary source of Islamic teachings. Therefore, the residents of Tarai Village must understand and read the Quran proficiently.

Unfortunately, many children and teenagers in Tarai Village struggle to read the Quran fluently and correctly. This is evident in the limited number of children and teenagers participating in religious study sessions or Quranic learning activities within the village. A significant portion of these youngsters lack interest in learning to read the Quran or fail to recognize its significance. The insufficient provision of adequate learning and training for these youngsters is apparent. There is a lack of adequate facilities for Quranic learning within Tarai Village, including a shortage of teachers capable of effectively imparting Quranic reading skills.

Hence, this community service program is designed to provide proper and effective training and education for children and teenagers in Tarai Village, aiming to enable them to read the Quran accurately and fluently. This program seeks to enhance Quranic literacy in Tarai Village, allowing children and teenagers to comprehend and read the Quran proficiently.

This community service program yields several significant benefits for the children and teenagers of Tarai Village. Firstly, it focuses on enhancing their proficiency in accurately and fluently reading the Quran. This improvement not only aids in their literacy but also deepens their connection with Islamic teachings. Secondly, the program works toward fostering a greater understanding of the importance of Quranic reading among the youth in Tarai Village. It seeks to instill a sense of reverence and appreciation for the Quranic teachings within this demographic. Lastly, by setting a positive example and actively engaging the children and teenagers in Quranic studies, the program aims to motivate them to become more involved and enthusiastic learners of the Quran, encouraging their active participation and continued dedication to religious education.

The benefits of community service programs for education in higher education institutions include several crucial aspects. Firstly, these programs are instrumental in institutional development and enhancing educational quality. Secondly, they enable students to identify and provide solutions to various societal issues, forming the basis for analyzing and addressing community phenomena. Thirdly, they serve as a training ground for future graduates, preparing them to actively engage within communities and apply their knowledge. Lastly, these programs contribute to the advancement of science and technology (IPTEK), fostering an environment where innovation and technological development thrive.¹¹

This program lasted for 15 days and involved 4 students from STAI As-Sunnah and 1 supervising lecturer. The implementation of this program aims to create a positive impact and bring about changes in improving Quranic literacy in Tarai Village. Additionally, this initiative seeks to serve as a model for other villages facing similar challenges in Quranic literacy.

¹¹ Idris H M Noor, "Penelitian Dan Pengabdian Masyarakat Pada Perguruan Tinggi," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan* 16, no. 3 (2010): 285–97.

Throughout its execution, the community service program will engage in various activities, including Quranic reading sessions, effective Quran teaching workshops, motivational and self-development activities, as well as providing adequate learning materials and resources. Moreover, it will involve parents and the local community to offer greater support and motivation for children and teenagers to learn to read the Quran.

The aim of this Community Service activity conducted by the author and the team is to enhance Quranic literacy in Tarai Village and generate positive impacts on the religious and social development of the entire community. The method employed in executing this community service program is the Participatory Action Research (PAR) Approach, which aims at learning to address practical community issues and needs, as well as producing knowledge.¹² This approach promotes active community involvement in designing, implementing, and evaluating community service programs, focusing on learning, problem-solving, and the development of beneficial knowledge for the community.

Result and Discussion

The Quran is a sacred book for Muslims, serving as the primary guidance in their daily lives. Understanding the meanings and messages embedded within the Quran necessitates proficient and accurate Quranic reading skills alongside adequate Islamic insights. Improving Quranic reading abilities and Islamic knowledge is of utmost importance for every Muslim to enhance the quality of worship and deepen their understanding of the Islamic faith.¹³

To improve Quranic reading abilities, one must study Tajweed accurately.¹⁴ Tajweed is the knowledge that teaches the correct and proper way of reciting the Quran, ensuring there are no errors while reading.¹⁵ Learning Tajweed can be done by studying Tajweed books or through private lessons from a skilled Quranic recitation teacher. Additionally, utilizing technology by downloading Quran reading applications equipped with Tajweed features can also be beneficial.

In addition to the ability to read the Quran, having adequate Islamic insights is also highly important. A strong understanding of Islam helps individuals grasp its teachings more profoundly and comprehensively. There are several ways to enhance Islamic insights:

Firstly, delving into Islamic literature such as Hadith books, Quranic exegesis (Tafsir), and other Islamic texts. Secondly, engaging in Islamic studies, whether conducted online or offline. Thirdly, having discussions with individuals possessing extensive knowledge of Islam. Fourthly, increasing engagement in religious practices like prayers, fasting, and giving alms (zakat). Lastly, fostering good relationships with the surrounding community members who hold a deep understanding of Islam.

By enhancing Quranic reading skills and Islamic insights, an individual will find it easier to comprehend the messages within the Quran and practice Islamic teachings more effectively. In daily life, one can approach problem-solving in alignment with Islamic teachings, thereby strengthening their faith and devotion to Allah SWT.

The Community Service activity conducted by students from the As-Sunnah Islamic School of Higher Education, Deli Serdang, placed in Tarai Village, Tambang District, Kampar Regency,

¹² Agus Afandi, "Participatory Action Research (PAR) Metodologi Alternatif Riset Dan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat Transformatif," in *Workshop Pengabdian Berbasis Riset Di LP2M UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang*, 2020.

¹³ Indasari Indasari, Surni Kadir, and Normawati Normawati, "Peranan Majelis Taklim Baabul Jannah Dalam Meningkatkan Pemahaman Agama Pada Masyarakat Desa Doulan Kecamatan Bokat Kabupaten Buol," *Iqra: Jurnal Ilmu Kependidikan Dan Keislaman* 15, no. 1 (2020): 1–10.

¹⁴ Mazidatul Faizah, Siska Binti Qoirot, and Mohamad Nasirudin, "Peningkatan Kemampuan Membaca Al Quran Santri TPQ Al Mustaqim Dengan Bimbingan Fashohatul Lisan," *Jumat Keagamaan: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat* 1, no. 1 (2020): 38–41.

¹⁵ Ahmad Khairi et al., "PKM Pelatihan Dan Pembelajaran Tata Cara Membaca Al-Quran Dengan Ilmu Tajwid Dengan Media Mobile Android Di TPQ AT-Tarbiyah Probolinggo," *GUYUB: Journal of Community Engagement* 2, no. 3 (2021): 789–804.

involves 4 students and 1 Field Supervisor Lecturer. The following are the details of the participants in this Community Service Program (KKN-T):

NO	Name	Description
1.	Suhendri	Field Supervisor Lecturer
2.	Syazwan Afandi	Group Leader
3	Surya Sagala	Member
4	Wirayudha Hawari	Member
5	Rizky Kurniawan Daulay	Member

Table 1. Details of KKN-T Participants in Tarai Village, Tambang Subdistrict, Kampar.

Before students embark on fieldwork for the Thematic Community Service Learning (KKN-T) program, several stages need to be completed.¹⁶ One crucial stage is planning and conceptualizing activities. This stage aims to ensure that the KKN-T activities run smoothly and are directed towards the intended objectives.

On March 20, 2023, a compelling and insightful discussion unfolded among the KKN-T group and their field supervisor lecturer. This engaging conversation took place as they meticulously crafted the theme for their upcoming endeavor in Tarai Bangun Village, Tambang Subdistrict, Kampar Regency. Their deliberations stemmed from a thorough observation of Tarai village's current state, identifying a pressing need for improved Quranic reading abilities among the village's youth. Consequently, they coined a poignant and purposeful theme: "Enhancing Quranic Reading Skills and Islamic Insights for Children and Adolescents in Tarai Bangun Village, Tambang Subdistrict, Kampar Regency."

Two days later, on March 22, 2023, the KKN-T participants commenced their journey towards Tarai Bangun Village. The arduous yet anticipation-filled travel spanned approximately 16 hours, commencing in Deli Serdang and predominantly occurring during the night. Throughout this lengthy passage, the participants fostered a spirited camaraderie, engaging in captivating tales, thought-provoking discussions, devout Quranic recitations, and heartfelt moments of spiritual reflection.

Upon their arrival on March 23, 2023, at the tranquil enclave of Tarai Bangun Village, the KKN-T team warmly introduced themselves to the village's esteemed officials and the revered administrators of the local mosque. This initial engagement not only established the groundwork for their activities but also allowed them a privileged glimpse into the communal fabric and the prevailing challenges encountered by the local populace. It was a pivotal moment, marking the beginning of a profound and purposeful journey toward fostering enhanced Quranic literacy and a deeper understanding of Islamic principles among the village's children and teenagers.

On March 24, 2023, the first meeting was held to discuss the KKN-T programs that would be implemented for 15 days in the village of Tarai Bangun. During this meeting,¹⁷ participants engaged in discussions to identify the existing issues in the village of Tarai and formulate appropriate solutions to address these problems. One of the chosen activities was the Subuh sermon and a sermon before the Tarawih prayers in mosques around the village of Tarai aimed at enhancing the Quran reading abilities and Islamic knowledge of the children and adolescents in Tarai Bangun.

On March 25, 2023, the KKN-T activities commenced with the main agenda of the Subuh sermon and a sermon before the Tarawih prayers. This event took place in the mosque that had become

¹⁶ Siti Hajar Loilatu, M Rusdi, and Musyowir Musyowir, "Penerapan Sistem Informasi Manajemen Pendidikan Dalam Proses Pembelajaran," *Jurnal Basicedu* 4, no. 4 (2020): 1408–22.

¹⁷ Musyawarah dilakukan oleh mahasiswa KKN-T, tokoh agama dan pengurus badan kenaziran masjid Desa Tarai.

the center of activities during the KKN-T program. The sermon and brief studies were conducted by the KKN-T participants with assistance from mosque officials and the local community.

The community, kids, and teenagers of Tarai Bangun village attended the Subuh sermon activity with great enthusiasm. They learned how to read the Quran correctly and gained a better understanding of Islamic teachings. The purpose of the sermon is to promote goodness, as mentioned in Surah Ali-Imran verse 110, which translates to "You (the Muslim community) are the best community brought forth for humanity, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong and believing in Allah."¹⁸ The sermon also serves as an opportune moment to introduce Islamic values to the children and teenagers of Tarai Bangun village.

The KKN-T participants chose this theme because they recognized the importance of fostering care and love for Islam among the children and teenagers in the Tarai Bangun village. Additionally, the ability to read the Quran was significant to them as the Quran serves as the primary source of Islamic teachings.

Throughout the KKN-T program, the participants organized various activities aimed at enhancing the Quran reading abilities and Islamic awareness of the children and teenagers in Tarai Bangun village. Some of these activities include:

1. Quranic Instruction

The KKN-T participants provided intensive Quranic instruction to the children and teenagers of Tarai Bangun village. They introduced proper Quranic recitation methods and provided an understanding of the meanings of Quranic verses.

In this KKN-T program, the participants will focus on deepening their understanding of Quranic recitation. They will concentrate on two crucial aspects: the introduction to Arabic letters (*hijaiyyah*) and improving articulation and basic Tajweed pronunciation.



Figure 1. Quran Reading Learning Activities for Children

Introduction to Arabic letters (*hijaiyyah*) is the initial step in understanding Quranic recitation. In this program, participants will systematically learn the Arabic letters, starting from the most basic to more complex ones. This will assist participants in comprehending the form, names, and functions of each Arabic letter.

Additionally, participants will also receive training in improving the articulation of the Arabic letters (*makharijul huruf*). *Makharijul huruf* refers to the correct pronunciation method when reading the Arabic letters. In this program, participants will be taught how to articulate the Arabic letters correctly and rectify common errors in pronouncing specific letters.

¹⁸ Siti Hawa, Syarifah Syarifah, and Muhamad Muhamad, "Pembinaan Akhlak Peserta Didik Melalui Kegiatan Kultur (Kuliah Tujuh Menit) Di SD Negeri 17 Pangkalpinang," *Sustainable Jurnal Kajian Mutu Pendidikan* 4, no. 2 (2021): 75–90.

Moreover, basic Tajweed will also be a primary focus in this program. Tajweed is the science that studies the proper way of reading the Quran while observing its rules. Participants will learn basic Tajweed principles, including rules related to elongation, shortening, and clarity in pronunciation. Throughout the entire program, participants will undergo intensive training to deepen their understanding of Quranic recitation. It is hoped that by participating in this program, they will be able to read the Quran fluently and correctly, thereby enhancing their faith and strengthening their character as devout Muslims.



Figure 2. Distribution of Certificates for Quran Reading Activities for Children

2. Islamic Studies

In addition to focusing on Quranic learning, the KKN-T participants also conducted Islamic studies aimed at deepening the understanding of Islamic teachings. These studies were attended by children and teenagers from the Tarai Bangun village. The activity was organized as a form of community service and an effort to assist the local community in better understanding Islam.

During these studies, KKN-T participants presented various topics about Islam, including creed (aqidah), jurisprudence (fiqh), and morals (akhlak). They engaged in discussions with participants regarding religious issues faced by the local community and provided solutions by Islamic teachings.

Moreover, the KKN-T participants hosted Q&A sessions where participants could inquire about any religious confusion they had. They were also allowed to practice Islamic teachings in their daily lives. This was intended to help them gain a deeper understanding of Islam and handle religious issues wisely.

Furthermore, the Islamic studies activities aimed to prevent misconceptions about Islam within the Tarai Bangun village community. This was crucial as misconceptions about Islam often led to conflicts among different societal groups. In this regard, the KKN-T participants aimed to provide an accurate understanding of Islam, hoping that it would promote peaceful and harmonious living within the village, eliminating divisions among community groups.

Through these Islamic studies activities, the KKN-T participants also aimed to cultivate a sense of love for Islam within the local community. It was hoped that through these activities, the people of Tarai Bangun village would develop a greater love for Islam and become more enthusiastic about practicing its teachings.

It is hoped that the Islamic studies activities conducted will greatly benefit the Tarai Bangun village community. The goal is for these activities to help deepen the understanding of Islamic teachings among the villagers and enable them to handle religious issues more effectively, thus fostering a more peaceful and harmonious coexistence among community members.

3. Social Service

In addition to activities related to religion, the KKN-T participants also conducted social service endeavors aimed at assisting the local community. They cleaned the mosque surroundings, participated in communal work (*gotong royong*), and provided assistance to those in need.

The KKN-T program held in the Tarai Bangun village spanned for 15 days. Throughout this period, the KKN-T participants significantly improved the Quranic reading abilities and Islamic awareness of the children and teenagers in Tarai Bangun village. They also succeeded in fostering good relationships with the local community and increasing awareness about environmental concerns.

Through the activities undertaken, the KKN-T participants made a significant contribution to the Tarai Bangun village. They helped address existing issues within the local community and provided appropriate solutions. Moreover, they successfully introduced Islamic values to the children and teenagers of the village.

In addition to the Quranic teaching program for the children of Tarai village, the KKN-T participants also organized a 3-day intensive religious program (*pesantren kilat*). The objective was to deepen the understanding of Islam among the children and teenagers of Tarai village. To ensure the success of this program, the KKN-T participants began with discussions with village leaders and conducted outreach efforts within the community. Additionally, they sent invitations to 9 residential areas around Tarai village, hoping to encourage children and teenagers to participate in this program.

During the implementation of the *pesantren kilat* program, the KKN-T participants collaborated with several religious teachers in Tarai village. They provided teachings on the fundamentals of Islamic teachings and instructed on prayer methods and dhikr (remembrance of Allah). Furthermore, the children and teenagers were allowed to memorize several short chapters (surahs) from the Quran.

The *pesantren kilat* program received a positive response from the community, evidenced by the high number of participants. Around 50 children and teenagers from Tarai village participated in this program.

Through the *pesantren kilat* activities, the KKN-T participants aimed to make a positive contribution to the Tarai village community. By enhancing the understanding of Islam among children and teenagers, they hoped to foster diversity, and mutual respect, and reduce potential conflicts in the future. Additionally, by organizing positive activities like this, they aimed to encourage continued love and deeper engagement with Islam within the community.

During the KKN-T activities in Tarai village, participants experienced firsthand the importance of effective communication in building good cooperation with the village community and mosque administrators. Unfortunately, difficulties in establishing good communication were one of the main challenges faced by the participants. This was due to language and cultural differences between the participants and the local community.

However, the challenges weren't limited to communication barriers. The participants also encountered deeper challenges concerning religious differences. These differences were sensitive and could potentially trigger conflicts that were difficult to resolve if not handled wisely. The KKN-T participants had to understand and respect these differences and take appropriate actions to avoid conflicts and obstacles in achieving common goals.

Nevertheless, the KKN-T participants didn't give up in the face of these challenges. They endeavored to find the best solutions and took concrete steps to overcome these obstacles. One approach involved organizing meetings and discussions with the village community and mosque administrators to discuss differing perspectives and seek mutual understanding. Through these efforts, the KKN-T participants successfully navigated the challenges and achieved success in the KKN-T activities in Tarai village.

Conclusion

The participants of the Thematic Community Service Learning (KKN-T) program plan and conceptualize activities well before engaging in fieldwork. In this KKN-T program, they aimed to enhance Quranic reading abilities and Islamic knowledge among children and teenagers in Tarai Bangun Village, Tambang District, Kampar Regency. They conducted discussions and selected the Subuh sermon and pre-Tarawih sermon as one of the means to achieve these objectives. Throughout the KKN-T program, they engaged in intensive Quranic teaching and provided an understanding of the meanings of Quranic verses to the local community. This initiative was enthusiastically embraced by the residents, children, and teenagers of Tarai Bangun Village. The KKN-T program provided participants with an opportunity to get closer to the local community, understand their needs and challenges, and offer benefits to them.

Moreover, the program carried out by the KKN-T participants in Tarai Bangun Village yielded positive and significant outcomes, seen in the increased enthusiasm among children and their Quranic reading abilities. However, the participants encountered several obstacles during the program, such as ineffective communication with the mosque administrators, who were central to the activities, and differences in religious perspectives. Nonetheless, these challenges were effectively overcome, and suitable solutions were found.

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