



## Development of a GFCF diet pocketbook for social work vocational high school students

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### ABSTRACT

Students of the Social Work Vocational Program at SMK Bhakti Luhur face challenges in understanding and applying Gluten-Free Casein-Free (GFCF) diet interventions for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This lack of understanding affects their readiness as future social workers to provide dietary-based services for children with special needs. To address this issue, a community service activity was conducted through training and the development of a GFCF diet pocketbook tailored to the characteristics of vocational students. The pocketbook contains educational material on the principles of the GFCF diet, lists of recommended and prohibited foods, cooking tips, and practical guidelines for daily application. The activity adopted a project-based learning approach, starting with material delivery followed by hands-on practice in preparing GFCF menus. Evaluation was conducted using pre-test and post-test assessments on 125 students, showing a 43.6% increase in understanding. The Wilcoxon test indicated a significant improvement ( $Z = -7.560$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and the average N-Gain score was 0.301, classified as moderate. The pocketbook served not only as a training tool but also as a self-learning resource. This initiative is expected to enhance students' capacity to support community-based nutritional interventions for children with ASD.

**Keyword:** ASD, Diet, GFCF, Handbook, Social Work

### ABSTRAK

Peserta didik SMK Bhakti Luhur Progam Keahlian Pekerjaan Sosial menghadapi tantangan dalam memahami dan menerapkan intervensi diet Gluten-Free Casein-Free (GFCF) untuk anak-anak dengan Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Keterbatasan pemahaman ini menyebabkan kurangnya kesiapan mereka sebagai calon tenaga pendamping sosial dalam memberikan layanan berbasis diet kepada anak dengan kebutuhan khusus. Untuk menjawab permasalahan tersebut, dilakukan kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat melalui pelatihan dan pengembangan buku saku diet GFCF yang disesuaikan dengan karakteristik Peserta didik vokasi. Buku saku ini berisi materi edukatif tentang prinsip diet GFCF, daftar makanan, tips pengolahan, serta panduan penerapan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Kegiatan dilakukan dengan pendekatan berbasis proyek (project-based learning), diawali dengan pemberian materi dan dilanjutkan dengan praktik pengolahan menu GFCF. Evaluasi kegiatan dilakukan melalui pretest dan posttest terhadap 125 Peserta didik, yang menunjukkan peningkatan pemahaman sebesar 43,6%. Selain itu, hasil uji Wilcoxon menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan ( $Z = -7.560$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), dan rata-rata nilai N-Gain sebesar 0,301 yang termasuk dalam kategori sedang. Buku saku ini tidak hanya digunakan dalam sesi pelatihan, tetapi juga menjadi media belajar mandiri Peserta didik. Kegiatan ini diharapkan dapat meningkatkan kapasitas Peserta didik dalam mendukung intervensi gizi berbasis komunitas bagi anak-anak dengan ASD.

**Keyword:** ASD, Buku Saku, Diet, GFCF, Pekerjaan Sosial,



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## 1. Introduction

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex developmental disorder that causes issues in social interaction, communication, and repetitive and restricted behaviors [1]. According to data from the Ministry of Population and Family Development in 2024, the prevalence of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in Indonesia has significantly increased, with an estimated 2.4 million children affected. About 1 in 100 children are diagnosed with ASD, indicating a prevalence rate of around 1%. This situation underscores the urgent need to enhance diagnostic services, interventions, and support for children with ASD and their families [2].

The Social Work expertise program is one of the vocational programs offered at Bhakti Luhur Malang, aimed at producing competent Social Workers. A Social Worker is an individual who works within governmental or private institutions, possessing the competence and professional training in social work obtained through education, training, and/or practical experience in social work to perform tasks related to social service and problem-solving. The duties of a Social Worker include solving problems, empowering others, acting as a change agent, and analyzing social policies. Furthermore, Social Workers' competencies encompass knowledge, skills, and attitudes [3]. This is supported by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), which asserts that Social Workers must possess competencies in developing and applying knowledge, skills, and abilities to effectively practice public health [4]. Social Workers also provide appropriate care through assessment, care planning, and intervention [5].

One recommended intervention for children with ASD is a Gluten-Free Casein-Free (GFCF) diet [6]. However, implementing the GFCF diet often becomes challenging for both parents and children with ASD due to a lack of understanding and adequate guidance [7]. The main issues encountered include low compliance in consistently following the GFCF diet [8]. This is due to various factors, such as lack of knowledge about the GFCF diet, difficulties in identifying suitable food products, and limited social support [9]. As a result, children with ASD may not fully benefit from the GFCF diet intervention, which can affect their development and quality of life [10].

A proposed solution is to develop a GFCF diet pocketbook as an intervention guide for vocational students enrolled in the Social Work program at SMK Bhakti Luhur. A pocketbook is a small-sized book containing text and illustrations that offer guidance or instructions, easy to carry anywhere. Pocketbooks can be used as a learning resource to facilitate students in understanding the subject matter [11].

The advantage of this program lies in developing an interactive and engaging pocketbook, tailored to the needs of vocational Social Work students. The selection of Social Work vocational high school students as the target of this activity was based on their strategic role as future social assistants who will work directly with vulnerable groups, including children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Through their vocational program, these students are trained in basic social intervention skills and child welfare services. Therefore, enhancing their capacity to understand and apply GFCF diet interventions is crucial to help them provide more comprehensive and responsive services for individuals with ASD in the future.

The novelty of this community service program is the integration of GFCF diet material with social work knowledge, enabling students to understand the significance of the GFCF diet intervention within the context of social work [12]. The developed GFCF diet pocketbook will feature attractive and interactive designs, including illustrations. Its content will cover explanations of the GFCF diet, a list of allowed and prohibited foods, cooking tips, and guidelines for implementing the GFCF diet in daily life. This pocketbook can be used as an independent learning medium or as a classroom learning companion.

The general objective of this community service program is to develop a GFCF diet pocketbook as an intervention guide for vocational Social Work students. The specific objectives are: (1) to produce a valid and feasible GFCF diet pocketbook for learning purposes, (2) to determine the effectiveness of the pocketbook in increasing students' understanding and compliance in applying the GFCF diet, and (3) to assess students' responses to the use of the GFCF diet pocketbook.

## 2. Methods

The community service program method employed in this study is Research & Development (R&D). The R&D method is utilized to produce specific products and to test the effectiveness of those products. The R&D design for this study is based on the ADDIE model, chosen for its focus on authentic tasks, complex

knowledge, and real-world problems. The ADDIE model consists of five stages: Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate as shown in Figure 1 [13].

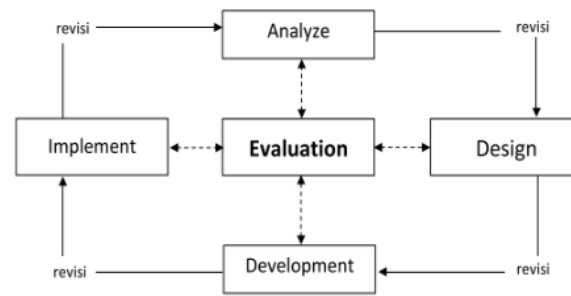


Figure 1. ADDIE model flowchart.

The stages of the ADDIE model in the Research and Development (R&D) process for developing the GFCF diet pocketbook were carried out systematically through five main phases. In the analysis stage, the development team first examined the needs and issues related to the GFCF diet among students in the Social Work program at SMK Bhakti Luhur Malang. This analysis involved identifying student characteristics, reviewing the learning environment, and assessing the available resources. Based on this analysis, the objectives for developing the GFCF diet pocketbook as an intervention guide were established. In the design phase, the team planned the concept for the pocketbook by determining its content, sample menus, and methods for preparing GFCF food. A content framework and visual layout for the pocketbook were also created. The process continued with the development stage, where the pocketbook was compiled according to the design specifications. This included writing the content, creating illustrations, and designing the visual elements. The pocketbook was then validated by subject matter experts and media specialists. Based on their feedback, revisions were made, and a small-scale trial was conducted to collect responses from students. During the implementation stage, the pocketbook was introduced at SMK Bhakti Luhur Malang. Teachers and students received training on how to use it, and GFCF diet practices were applied following the pocketbook's guidelines. This was carried out through a Student Leadership Project using demonstration and lecture methods, with pre-test and post-test assessments administered before and after the activities. Finally, in the evaluation stage, the development team collected data from student test results during implementation. This data was analyzed to determine the effectiveness and limitations of the pocketbook. The final product was then revised and refined based on the evaluation outcomes.

The development of this pocketbook is validated and evaluated by subject matter expert and media expert. A small-scale feasibility test is also conducted with 10 students from the Social Work program at SMK Negeri 2 Malang due to their similar characteristics to the students at SMK Bhakti Luhur. This pre-implementation trial helps assess students' responses to the pocketbook. Primary data sources include questionnaires, observations, interviews, and secondary data from previous research studies.

The instruments for expert validation in media and content [14] and student feasibility assessment [15] are employed. The student test instrument includes 15 questions in a pre-test and post-test format. Data analysis is conducted using descriptive and inferential statistics, with the non-parametric Wilcoxon test [16]. N-Gain analysis or normalized gain is also used to evaluate the curriculum's or teaching method's effectiveness by assessing the increase in N-Gain scores, with reference to normalized gain criteria in Table 8 [17]. Data analysis is performed using SPSS 25.

### 3. Results and Discussion

During the analysis stage, a needs analysis was conducted to understand the knowledge gap among Social Work students at SMK Bhakti Luhur Malang regarding the GFCF diet for children with ASD. Observations and interviews were held with both teachers and students. The analysis revealed that most students had limited knowledge of the GFCF diet and required a practical guide. The learning environment at SMK Bhakti Luhur supports the use of pocketbooks as an accessible learning medium. Resource analysis showed the availability of facilities such as a disability laboratory, but specific GFCF diet guidelines were lacking. Therefore, the goal of developing this pocketbook is to facilitate understanding and application of the GFCF diet within the context of social work.

In the design stage, the concept for the pocketbook was developed to be portable and visually engaging, suited to the characteristics of vocational school students. The content includes an explanation of the GFCF diet, its benefits for children with ASD, a list of recommended and prohibited foods, as well as practical food preparation guidelines. The layout is designed for readability, with a large and clear font and supportive illustrations. After structuring the content, which includes an introduction, practical guidelines, and a summary, the design underwent validation by subject matter and media experts to ensure the content aligns with students' needs.

During the development stage, the GFCF diet pocketbook was created based on the needs analysis and design that had been formulated. After the content and design were completed, the pocketbook was then validated by a media expert to ensure its visual suitability and usability as a learning tool. The media validation results showed that the GFCF diet pocketbook met the appearance and content criteria suitable for vocational school students (Table 1). In terms of multimedia appearance, the validator rated the pocketbook size as appropriate for vocational school students (score: 5.0) and found the cover design appealing (score: 5.0). The font type and size were considered sufficiently clear (score: 4.0), and the layout of the pocketbook content was rated as suitable for an ASD intervention guide (score: 4.0).

Table 1. Media Expert Evaluate

Evaluation Aspect	Indicator	Scale (1-5)
Multimedia Display	Suitability of pocketbook size for vocational school students	5.0
	Attractiveness of pocketbook cover design	5.0
	Clarity and readability of font type and size for vocational school students	4.0
	Appropriateness of content layout for ASD intervention guide	4.0
Multimedia content	Ease of using the pocketbook as an ASD intervention guide	4.0
	Content suitability for motivating students to learn about the GFCF diet	4.0
	Clarity of GFCF food preparation instructions in the pocketbook	4.0
	Appropriateness of illustrations/examples for Social Work vocational school students	4.0
	Potential for repeated use of the pocketbook as an ASD intervention guide	4.0

Regarding the multimedia content aspect, the validator evaluated the pocketbook as easy to use as an ASD intervention guide (score: 4.0) and noted that its content could motivate students to learn about the GFCF diet (score: 4.0). The clarity of GFCF food preparation instructions also received a score of 4.0, as did the variety of illustrations and examples tailored to the characteristics of Social Work program students (score: 4.0). The validator additionally noted that the pocketbook is designed for repeated use as an ASD intervention guide (score: 4.0).

Along with the quantitative assessment, the validator recommended several improvements to enhance the pocketbook's quality. These suggestions included adding a foreword, maintaining consistency in the terminology related to autism, adding references on autism characteristics, and including information on meal frequency and portion sizes in the diet menu. The validator also recommended improvements in citation formatting and presenting long narratives in bullet points for easier comprehension. The results of validation showed that the pocketbook is "valid with notes," and the recommended adjustments will be incorporated into the final version of the pocketbook (Figure 2, Figure 3 and Figure 4).

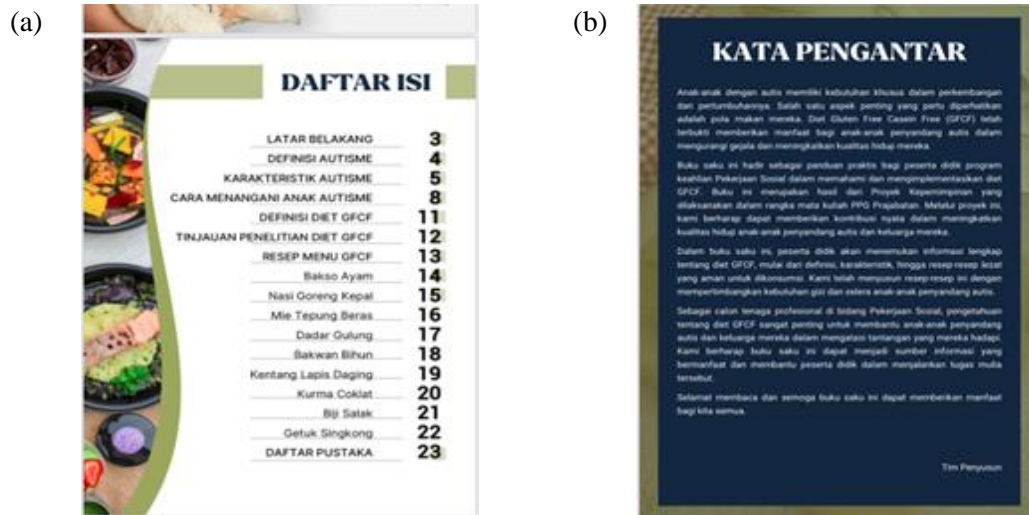


Figure 2. (a) before revising the pocketbook; (b) after revising the pocketbook.



Figure 3. (a) before revising the pocketbook; (b) after revising the pocketbook.



Figure 4. (a) before revising the pocketbook; (b) after revising the pocketbook.

The validation of the GFCF diet pocketbook content indicates that the materials developed are relevant and aligned with the learning objectives for ASD intervention for Social Work vocational school students (Table 2). The content relevance aspect received a favorable score, with a learning objective alignment score of 4.0 and clarity of illustrations within the ASD intervention context scoring 5.0. However, the depth of the GFCF diet content only scored 3.0, suggesting a need for additional information to enhance comprehensiveness. In terms of accuracy, the language used is easy to understand (score: 5.0), and the content is deemed suitable for

the students' characteristics and difficulty level (score: 4.0).

In the learning aspect, the content is considered to effectively encourage student engagement and involvement in learning about the GFCF diet (score: 5.0) and facilitates self-directed learning (score: 4.0). However, the feedback and evaluation sections require improvement, with a score of 3.0. The validator recommended reducing the use of sugar and chocolate as base ingredients in the menus to lower the sweetness of the dishes. Overall, the pocketbook was declared valid with notes, suggesting enhancements in content depth and healthier menu compositions.

After media and content validation, a small-scale trial was conducted to evaluate student responses to the GFCF diet pocketbook. This trial took place at SMKN 2 Malang's Social Work Program, which shares similar characteristics with SMK Bhakti Luhur's program, and involved 10 students. The results indicated that students responded positively to various aspects of the pocketbook (Table 3). The cover design was rated as attractive (score: 4.0), and the text was found to be easy to read (score: 4.0). The language used was also considered communicative, facilitating understanding, with a score of 4.0. The pocketbook, which includes supporting images, received appreciation (score: 4.0), and its attractive presentation helped students comprehend the material (score: 3.9).

**Table 2.** Subject Expert Evaluation

Evaluation Aspect	Indicator	Scale (1-5)
Relevance	Alignment of content with the purpose of developing the pocketbook as an ASD intervention guide	4.0
	Breadth and depth of content related to the GFCF diet and its preparation	3.0
	Clarity of examples and illustrations presented in the context of ASD intervention	5.0
	Use of language that is easy for Social Work vocational students to understand	5.0
Accuracy	Suitability of content with the characteristics of Social Work vocational students	4.0
	Steps for delivering content that meets ASD intervention needs	4.0
	Content difficulty level appropriate to the abilities of Social Work vocational students	4.0
Learning	Content encourages student engagement and involvement in learning about the GFCF diet	5.0
	Content facilitates students' self-understanding of ASD intervention	4.0
	Content enables students to learn independently according to ASD intervention needs	4.0
	Content provides feedback and evaluation to monitor ASD intervention progress	3.0

**Table 3.** Recapitulation of Student Responses to the Pocketbook

No	Statements	Mean
1	The cover design of the pocketbook is attractive	4.0
2	The text in the pocketbook is easy to read	4.0
3	The language used in the pocketbook is communicative, making it easy for students to understand	4.0
4	The pocketbook is supplemented with images that support the material	4.0
5	The content of the pocketbook is presented attractively, helping students understand the material	3.9
6	The pocketbook can motivate students to learn	3.8
7	Students agree that the pocketbook should be used for learning intervention	4.0
8	Learning intervention, especially for children with ASD, becomes easier	4.0
9	The supporting information in the pocketbook helps expand students' knowledge	4.0
10	The cover design of the pocketbook is attractive	4.0
11	The text in the pocketbook is easy to read	3.9



In terms of learning motivation, the pocketbook was found to be reasonably effective in motivating students to learn (score: 3.8), and most students agreed on its use for intervention learning (score: 4.0). The book was also deemed helpful for learning interventions for ASD children (score: 4.0) and was seen as expanding students' knowledge through the supporting information provided (score: 4.0). Overall, the pocketbook was well received by students and was considered a relevant and useful medium for understanding the GFCF diet in the context of social work.

During the implementation stage, the GFCF diet pocketbook was tested with Social Work program students at SMK Bhakti Luhur Malang. The goal of this stage was to assess the effectiveness of the pocketbook in enhancing students' understanding and knowledge of the GFCF diet as an intervention for children with ASD. Throughout the implementation, students received brief training on using the pocketbook and participated in learning activities involving practical food preparation according to the GFCF diet guidelines. Assessment was carried out through a pretest before the intervention and a posttest afterward to measure changes in student understanding (Figure 5).

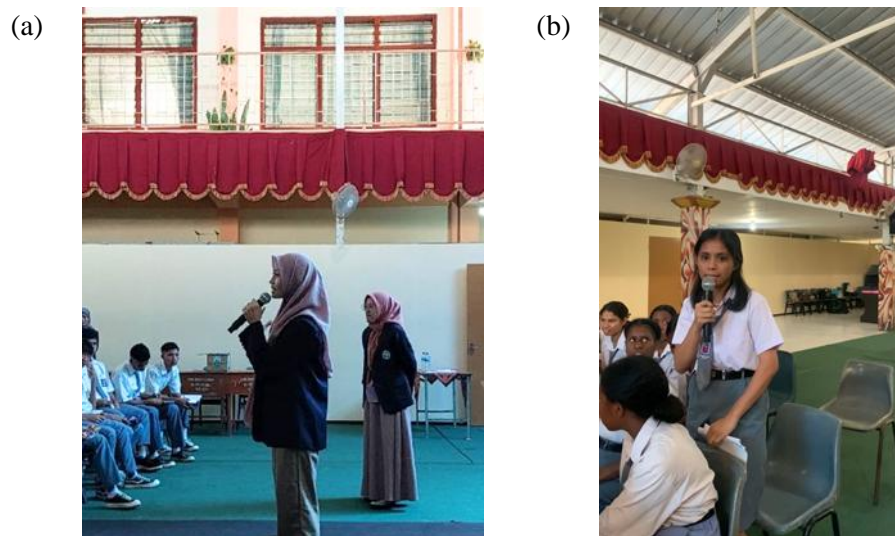


Figure 5. (a) Presentation of Gluten-Free Casein-Free (GFCF) Material; (b) Question and Answer Session with Participants.

The descriptive analysis results from 125 students indicated an increase in the average score from the pretest to the posttest (Table 4). The average pretest score was 44.95 with a standard deviation of 19.339, which rose to 64.56 in the posttest, with a standard deviation of 19.029. This increase suggests that the GFCF diet pocketbook had a positive impact on students' understanding of the GFCF diet. The difference between the pretest and posttest scores shows an improvement in student comprehension after using the pocketbook as a learning tool. These results support the notion that the pocketbook can be an effective aid in learning about the GFCF diet intervention for children with ASD, helping students to study and apply this dietary concept in greater depth.

**Table 4.** Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest	125	0	90	44.95	19.339
Posttest	125	10	100	64.56	19.029
Valid N (listwise)	125				

To test the effectiveness of the GFCF diet pocketbook in improving students' understanding, a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was conducted on the pretest and post test results (Table 5). Based on the analysis, 94 students showed an increase in their scores (positive ranks) with an average rank of 57.37, while 14 students experienced a decrease in their scores (negative ranks) with an average rank of 35.25. A total of 17 students had the same scores on both the pretest and posttest.

The Wilcoxon test results showed a Z value of -7.560 with a p-value of 0.000, which is smaller than the

significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This indicates a significant improvement in students' understanding after using the pocketbook (Table 6). Therefore, the GFCF diet pocketbook has proven to be effective in increasing students' knowledge regarding the diet for children with ASD.

**Table 5.** Wilcoxon Test Analysis

Ranks		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Posttest - Pretest	Negative Ranks	14 <sup>a</sup>	35.25	493.50
	Positive Ranks	94 <sup>b</sup>	57.37	5392.50
	Ties	17 <sup>c</sup>		
	Total	125		
a. Posttest < Pretest				
b. Posttest > Pretest				
c. Posttest = Pretest				

**Table 6.** Wilcoxon Signification Test

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>	
Z	Posttest - Pretest -7.560 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test	
b. Based on negative ranks.	

The N-Gain test showed an increase in students' understanding after using the GFCF diet pocketbook (Table 7), with an average score of 0.3010, which falls within the "medium" category (Sukarelawa et al., 2024). This value lies in the range of  $0.30 \leq g < 0.70$ , indicating that the pocketbook was effective in significantly enhancing students' understanding. With a maximum value of 1.00 and a standard deviation of 0.39795, these results suggest that most students experienced consistent improvements in comprehension following the intervention.

Overall, the N-Gain test results indicate that the GFCF diet pocketbook had a positive impact on helping students understand the diet concepts for children with ASD. The improvement in comprehension achieved demonstrates that this medium is an effective learning tool, making a tangible contribution to supporting students' learning processes (Table 8).

**Table 7.** N-Gain Test

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
NGain	125	-1.33	1.00	.3010	.39795
Valid N (listwise)	125				

**Table 8.** Criteria for Gain & Normalized Gain

N-Gain Value	Interpretation
$0.70 \leq g < 1.00$	High
$0.30 \leq g < 0.70$	Medium
$0.00 \leq g < 0.30$	Low
$g = 0.00$	No improvement
$-1.00 \leq g < 0.00$	Decrease

During the evaluation stage, the development team collected and analyzed student learning data from the pretest and posttest conducted during the implementation phase. The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of the GFCF diet pocketbook in improving students' understanding and to identify areas requiring further improvement.

Based on the evaluation results, the development team then made revisions to the pocketbook to refine the final product. These revisions aimed to enhance the pocketbook's effectiveness, making it more suitable for the students' needs and sustainable as a guide in learning about the GFCF diet. At the end of the activity, the



community service program team provided the GFCF Diet Pocketbook to SMK Bhakti Luhur students as a guide for interventions for children with ASD (Figure 7 and Figure 8).



Figure 7. Symbolic handover of the pocketbook to the vice principal of student affairs at SMK Bhakti Luhur.



Figure 8. Handover of the pocketbook to the students & group photo.

#### 4. Conclusions

This community service program indicates that the GFCF diet pocketbook developed for Social Work program students at SMK Bhakti Luhur Malang effectively enhances their understanding of the diet as an intervention for children with ASD. The pocketbook was created using the ADDIE model stages, resulting in a learning medium that is valid, engaging, and well-suited to the students' needs, as confirmed by expert validation and positive student feedback.

The pocketbook's implementation showed a significant increase in posttest scores compared to pretest scores, supported by the results of the Wilcoxon and N-Gain tests. Final revisions based on the evaluation ensure that the pocketbook can be used continuously as a learning guide, aiding students in learning the GFCF diet within the social work context. As such, the GFCF diet pocketbook is anticipated to be a beneficial resource for ASD intervention learning and to support future social workers in delivering improved services to children with ASD.

To follow up on this activity, several steps will be taken to ensure the pocketbook's ongoing effectiveness and relevance. First, the pocketbook will be integrated into the Social Work curriculum at SMK Bhakti Luhur Malang as a regular teaching resource. Continuous monitoring and evaluation will be conducted through feedback from students and instructors to identify opportunities for improvement. Additionally, training sessions for educators will be organized to enhance their ability to effectively utilize the pocketbook in teaching. The content may also be updated and adapted to suit other educational contexts or related fields as needed.

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