

## Children's Reading Park as a Means of Learning Information in the Village of Situ Pete Sukadamai Tanah Sareal Bogor

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### ABSTRACT

Education plays a crucial role in developing high-quality and sustainable communities, with reading as a fundamental foundation in the educational process. Reading skills provide access to knowledge and foster deep understanding, critical thinking, and personal development. In Kampung Situpete Sukadamai Tanah Sareal Bogor, the primary challenges include low children's reading interest, limited access to books, and a lack of awareness about the importance of reading. To address these challenges, this community service project aims to establish a Children's Reading Garden (TBA) in Kampung Situpete. This initiative is designed to enhance children's reading interest, improve the reading culture, and support education by providing quality books and supporting programs such as reading clubs, book performances, and creativity classes. Community involvement, including parents and local leaders, is encouraged through workshops and volunteer participation. The method employed is Participatory Action Research (PAR), which focuses on empowering the community and involving them in the change process. The project, running from June to August 2024, includes ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure the effectiveness of the TBA. The initiative is expected to significantly contribute to advancing education and strengthening the reading culture within the Kampung Situpete community.

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### INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the key elements in the development of a quality and sustainable society. In this context, reading plays a central role as the main foundation of the educational process. The ability to read not only functions as a tool to access knowledge but also as a gateway to deeper understanding, critical thinking, and better personal development. Reading books is a window to knowledge. To gain new knowledge, a child usually obtains it from reading books [1]. Interest in reading in early childhood has a very important role in forming the basis of their education and intellectual development. Interest in reading is a high tendency to read [2,3]. Children with a strong interest in reading tend to enjoy reading books, have better understanding, and have better critical thinking skills. Meanwhile, low interest in reading can harm individuals and the nation [4]. Enjoying reading is one of the activities to obtain information [5]. A person's desire to read can increase due to needs and a supportive surrounding environment [6].

However, in many communities, especially in disadvantaged social environments such as Situpete Village, located in Sukadama sub-district, Tanah Sareal, Bogor, the reading culture has not received the attention it deserves. The social environment surrounding individuals, especially children, plays a major role in shaping their reading behavior. A positive and strong reading culture is highly dependent on factors such as the availability of quality books, the active role of parents in educating children, and easy access to literacy resources. However, in Situpete Village, these challenges are still significant obstacles.

Situpete Village is one of the communities located in Sukadama sub-district, Tanah Sareal, Bogor. Despite having diverse potential and resources, including educational potential that has not been fully explored, the reading culture in this village is still in the development stage. Some of the main challenges faced by children and adolescents in this village in terms of reading are:

1. **Limited Access to Books:** Many children in this village do not have adequate access to high-quality books. Public libraries may be too far away or non-existent.
2. **Low Interest in Reading:** Interest in reading among children is often low due to the lack of interesting books and a supportive environment.
3. **Lack of Understanding of the Importance of Reading:** Parents and the community in this village are not yet fully aware of the importance of reading in the development of their children.

This community service aims to establish a Children's Reading Garden (TBA) in Situpete Village, Sukadama Subdistrict, Tanah Sareal, Bogor. This effort was made with the belief that TBA would be a significant step in addressing the challenges of reading culture in this community. The establishment of TBA in Situpete Village will bring significant benefits, including:

1. Increasing interest in reading by providing easy access to high-quality books, TBA will encourage reading interest among children and adolescents. They will have the opportunity to explore various types of books that suit their interests.
2. Changing the reading culture with the role of TBA in changing the reading culture in the social environment of Situpete Village. Children will grow up in an environment that encourages reading as a fun and valuable activity.
3. Better education with increased interest in reading will help improve children's education and knowledge. They will be better prepared to face educational challenges in the future.
4. Increasing parental understanding by involving parents and communities in TBA activities, which aim to support their children's education.

## **METHOD**

Community service was carried out in the period June-August 2024 using the participatory action research (PAR) method. Community service with the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach is oriented towards community empowerment. Because empowerment must always meet the needs and solve problems that exist in the community. In addition, PAR is also oriented towards the development and mobilization of knowledge in the community so that the community can become actors of change, not objects of service. In this PAR paradigm, the community is the main agent of socio-religious change, so lecturers/students implementing the service are other parties who facilitate the change process [7].

Activities carried out include literature analysis to gain a better understanding of the role of TBA in reading culture, community surveys to assess community needs and interests, interviews with stakeholders to understand their expectations and views regarding TBA, and field data collection to detail the implementation steps are as follows:

1. **Identifying the Right Location**

The first step in the work procedure for establishing a Children's Reading Park (TBA) is to identify the right location in Situpete Village. The location must be easily accessible to children and parents and safe to use. Choose a strategic and child-friendly place such as a public park or unused field.

2. **Book Collection**

Collect a collection of high-quality books that are appropriate for various ages and interests of children. There are several ways to collect books using donations from the community and collaboration with libraries.

3. **Designing an Attractive Children's Reading Park**

TBA must be designed to be attractive to children and trigger their interest in reading. Some steps that can be taken in designing TBA are art murals, the use of comfortable furniture, attractive book organizers, and fresh air circulation.

#### 4. Development of Supporting Programs

TBA is not only a place to access books, but also an active reading activity center. The development of supporting programs can help increase children's interest in reading. Some programs that can be implemented are:

- 4.1 Children's Reading Club: Hold regular reading clubs at the TBA, where children can gather, read together, and discuss the books they have read. The club can be led by volunteers who are knowledgeable about children's literacy.
- 4.2 Book Shows: Invite local authors or experienced readers to read their favorite books to children. This can stimulate interest in reading and provide role models in reading.
- 4.3 Creativity Classes: Hold creativity classes at the TBA, where children can develop their writing, drawing, or story-making skills. This will provide an opportunity for them to express themselves through literacy.

#### 5. Community Engagement

Community engagement, including parents and local leaders, is critical to the success of TBA and to fostering a culture of reading in the community. Some steps of community engagement include:

- 5.1 Parent Education Workshops: Conduct workshops aimed at increasing parents' understanding of the importance of reading and how they can support their children's education.
- 5.2 Community Volunteers: Encourage community volunteers to help manage TBA and its programs. They can assist in the daily maintenance and supervision of TBA.
- 5.3 Collaboration with Schools: Collaborate with local schools to integrate TBA into the educational curriculum and support reading activities in schools.

#### 6. Monitoring and Evaluation

A good monitoring and evaluation system are key to ensuring the success of the Children's Reading Garden. This includes:

- 6.1 Activity Monitoring: Monitoring the programs implemented in the TBA to ensure that they are in line with the objectives of establishing the TBA.
- 6.2 Participation Evaluation: Evaluating the level of participation of children and parents in TBA activities and identifying areas that need improvement.
- 6.3 Impact Evaluation: Assessing the impact of the TBA on children's reading interests, academic achievement, and reading culture in the social environment of Situpete Village as a whole.

## RESULTS

Using an existing site to set up a TBA in Situpete Village offers various practical benefits, one of the main benefits being cost efficiency. By utilizing existing space, we can reduce the construction and renovation costs typically required to construct a new facility. The necessary adjustments tend to be cheaper and quicker to make than building from scratch.

Additionally, places that are familiar to the public, such as public parks and community venues, are often more accessible to residents. Familiarity with this location can make it easier for families and children to visit TBA regularly. These places also often have good access and are integrated into people's daily lives. The open spaces offered by public parks and empty fields provide an ideal setting for outdoor activities. Children can read under the shade of trees, play, and interact with the surrounding environment, which supports more dynamic and enjoyable literacy activities.

Existing community venues provide basic facilities that support TBA operations, such as toilets and seating, which increase visitor comfort. By utilizing these facilities, we can optimize the use of space and ensure that the TBA can function properly without the need for large investments in new infrastructure. Overall, searching for and utilizing existing locations for TBA in Situpete Village is a wise and efficient approach. This not only saves money and time but also utilizes existing resources to create a friendly and beneficial literacy space for children and families in the village. By choosing the right location, we can ensure that TBA will become a successful reading center and have a positive impact on the community. It can be seen in Figure 1 the location of the Situ Pete Village TBA.



**Picture 1. Location of TBA Kampung Situpete construction**

Gathering a collection of quality books that are suitable for children is an important step in establishing a Children's Reading Garden (TBA) in Situpete Village. This process involves various ways to ensure that the books at TBA can meet the needs and interests of children of various ages. We apply the book collection method through donations from the community, which is the main step in obtaining a varied and high-quality book collection. To start the process of collecting books, we launched a book donation campaign throughout Situpete Village. This campaign aims to invite the local community to actively participate in providing the books that TBA needs.

The book collection began by spreading information about the book donation campaign through various communication channels. Social media became the main tool to reach many people quickly, where we posted announcements about the types of books needed and how to donate them. In addition, banners and posters were installed in strategic places such as village halls, schools, and community centers to attract more people.

Selected several book collection locations that were easily accessible to villagers. These locations included village halls, schools, and community centers. In these places, we prepared identified collection boxes with information about the types of books sought. These locations were chosen with the consideration that residents would feel comfortable and easy to donate books. The book collection locations were chosen at the home of the youth leader of Situ Pete Village and the campus of STIE Dewantara.

After the books were collected, a screening process was carried out to ensure that the books were in good condition and readable. Books that did not meet quality standards would be separated from the main collection. Eligible books were then grouped by age category, such as books for preschoolers, elementary school children, and teenagers.



**Picture 2. Book donation collection process**

In designing the TBA Kampung Situpete, must be designed to be attractive to children and trigger their interest in reading. Some steps that can be taken in designing the TBA are:

1. Art Mural: Decorate the walls of the TBA with art murals that create a cheerful atmosphere and stimulate children's imagination. Art murals are not only a form of fine art that contains certain messages but also a fairly effective medium for conveying messages visually to children and the community in Kampung Situpete to encourage children to love reading. The creation of art murals involves local community resources, especially youth organizations. This is a form of transferring knowledge and skills to the community in Kampung Situpete, Sukadamai, Tanah Sereal Bogor.

2. Comfortable furniture: Provide comfortable furniture such as chairs, tables, and carpets so that children can sit comfortably while reading, in the form of furniture in the form of cars and children's toys and

lighting that makes them feel at home reading longer. The arrangement of the layout of furniture and carpets is made in such a way that children are comfortable and easy to read the various books and literature provided.



**Picture 3. The process of designing TBA Kampung Situ Pete**

Amidst the glitz of technology and digital entertainment, the Children's Reading Place (TBA) is committed to being an oasis for children who want to explore the world of literacy. However, TBA does not only function as a place to store books but also as a dynamic activity center to foster a love of reading. To achieve this goal, several supporting programs have been developed, each designed to engage and motivate children in the world of reading.

The Children's Reading Club is one of the main initiatives in this development. This club serves as a regular gathering place where children can read together and discuss the books they have read. Imagine the cheerful atmosphere where children gather in the TBA room, surrounded by colorful bookshelves. This is where they can share their excitement about the latest book they have read, discuss their favorite characters, or even design their endings. This club not only provides an opportunity to share stories but also to build discussion and analysis skills. Guided by volunteers who are knowledgeable about children's literacy, these discussions become educational and fun experiences, enriching their understanding of reading and improving their critical thinking skills.

Then, there is the Book Show, an event that brings in local authors or experienced readers to read books to children. Imagine the excitement when your favorite author or a talented reader appears in front of the children, bringing them into the world of the story with their voice and expressions alive. It is a magical moment where children not only hear the story but also feel the magic of the narrative through direct experience. The show gives children the opportunity to see how authors bring characters and plots to life, while also providing role models that encourage them to love and explore literature more. It also allows them to ask questions directly to the author, opening a new window in their understanding and appreciation of the creative process. Next, the Creativity Class offers a new dimension to the reading experience. Here, children become not only readers but also creators. They are invited to develop their writing skills, draw, or create their own stories. Imagine a room at TBA filled with paper, colored pencils, and notebooks, where children are free to let their imaginations flow. In this class, they learn how to transform ideas from the books they read into their works of art.

Next, the Creativity Class offers a new dimension to the reading experience. Here, children become not only readers but also creators. They are invited to develop their writing, drawing, or creating their own stories. Imagine a room in TBA filled with paper, colored pencils, and notebooks, where children are free to channel their imagination. In this class, they learn how to transform ideas from the books they read into their own works of art. This activity not only expands the way they interact with reading but also builds their confidence in expressing themselves through literacy.

Community engagement is a crucial element in optimizing the role of Children's Reading Places (TBA) as effective literacy centers. TBA aims not only to provide access to books but also to build a deep and sustainable reading culture in the community. To achieve this goal, TBA implements a number of strategic steps involving various parties in the community, including parents, local figures, and educational institutions. Below are the results and discussions of the three main steps implemented in community engagement.

The Parent Education Workshop was designed to increase parents' understanding of their important role in supporting children's literacy development. Through this workshop, parents were provided with knowledge about effective strategies to build reading habits at home, as well as how they can choose books that are appropriate and interesting for their children. In its implementation, this workshop was conducted with an interactive approach that combined theory and practice. Participants were invited to discuss and practice reading techniques that can attract children's attention, such as the use of varied intonation and questioning techniques that stimulate critical thinking. The results of this program showed that the parents involved experienced improvements in their skills in supporting children's reading activities. Post-workshop

assessments showed that there was a significant increase in parents' involvement in reading activities with their children. This contributed to the formation of a home environment that was more conducive to children's literacy development.

Involving community volunteers in the management of the TBA is an effective strategy to strengthen support for literacy programs. Volunteers play a vital role in various aspects of the TBA's operations, from daily maintenance to support in literacy programs such as reading clubs and creativity classes. Volunteers, who come from a variety of backgrounds, contribute their time and skills to ensure the TBA functions optimally. They help organize events, provide direct assistance to children, and participate in educational activities. Evaluations of volunteer involvement show that their presence not only lightens the operational burden but also improves the quality of services provided to children. In addition, volunteer involvement increases the sense of ownership and community involvement in the TBA, creating a more inclusive and empowering atmosphere.

Collaboration with local schools is a strategic step to integrate TBA into the formal education context. This collaboration includes various activities such as school visits to TBA, organizing shared reading sessions, and introducing new books relevant to the school curriculum. Through this collaboration, TBA has succeeded in expanding its reach and impact into the educational environment. The school visit program allows students to directly engage with literacy resources provided by TBA, while shared reading sessions enrich the literacy experience in the classroom. The program evaluation shows that this collaboration strengthens the relationship between TBA and schools, and increases students' motivation and interest in reading. This integration also helps in facilitating wider access to quality reading materials and supports learning outside the formal curriculum.

The monitoring and evaluation system implemented in TBA ensures that literacy programs are running according to the expected goals. Monitoring activities ensure that programs remain relevant and well-organized. Participation evaluations provide insight into the level of engagement and areas for improvement, while impact evaluations demonstrate the positive influence of TBA on children's reading interests and reading culture in the community. By identifying strengths and areas for improvement, this system allows TBA to continuously adapt and develop, ensuring that each literacy initiative provides maximum benefits to children and the community.

## CONCLUSION

The process of creating and managing the TBA in Situpete Village reflects an integrated and evidence-based approach to building a literacy center. Steps including site selection, book collection, space design, program development, community engagement, and monitoring and evaluation all contribute to the establishment of an effective TBA. With proper implementation and support from various parties, the TBA has the potential to become a successful literacy center, supporting the development of children's reading interests, and strengthening the reading culture in the community as a whole.

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