

The Impact of the Social Inclusion Program on Community Empowerment: a Case Study at Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Kabupaten Pidie

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Information

Submitted: 15-01-2026

Revised: 25-05-2026

Accepted: 02-06-2026

How to cite The Impact of the Social Inclusion Program on Community Empowerment: A Case Study at Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Kabupaten Pidie. (2026). *TADWIN: Jurnal Ilmu Perpustakaan Dan Informasi*, 7 (1), 82-90. <https://doi.org/10.19109/tadwin.v7i1.33986>

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.19109/tadwin.v7i1.33986>

First Publication Right:

Tadwin: Jurnal Ilmu Perpustakaan dan Informasi Program Studi Ilmu Perpustakaan, Fakultas Adab dan Humaniora UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the social inclusion program Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Kabupaten Pidie within the framework of the Head of the National Library Regulation Number 3 of 2023. The social inclusion program is seen as a strategy for transforming libraries into community empowerment centers through skills training, digital literacy, and local potential development. This study employed a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the social inclusion program. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with two librarians as program implementers and four library users representing different program activities. In addition, participatory observation and document analysis were conducted to obtain comprehensive information regarding the implementation process and participants' experiences. To support and strengthen the qualitative findings, closed-ended questionnaires were distributed to 30 community members participating in the program. The results of the study indicate that the program implementation has been effective and in accordance with national standards, with a significant impact on improving skills, self-confidence, and economic independence of the community. Regression tests show that the program contributed 41% to community empowerment. This finding is in line with the theory of social inclusion and empowerment which emphasizes active, participatory involvement, and is based on local needs. Thus, the library is not only a place of information, but also an agent of adaptive and sustainable social change.

Keywords: Social Inclusion, Library Transformation, Community Empowerment, National Library Regulation No. 3 of 2023, Pidie Regency

1. INTRODUCTION

Libraries today are no longer understood merely as storage places for collections; they have transformed into proactive public spaces that encourage community empowerment thru a social inclusion approach (Jones et al., 2022). The transformation of Social Inclusion-Based Libraries into a national strategy positions libraries as centers for lifelong learning thru the provision of information access, literacy enhancement, and skills training based on community needs (Junaidi, Muljono, & Syaikat, 2025). Although this program has been widely implemented in various regions of Indonesia, including at the district or city government level, the real issue still faced is the suboptimal utilization of libraries as centers for empowerment activities and the gap between program design and the real impact felt by the community (Mubofu & Mambo, 2021). Moreover, empirical studies specifically evaluating the effectiveness of social inclusion programs at the level of regional government libraries are still limited, thus not providing a comprehensive picture of the success of implementation and its contribution to the improvement of community welfare.

In the local context, Pidie Regency is one of the regions actively implementing social inclusion programs thru the Library and Archives Office with various activities such as skills training, digital literacy, and the development of locally-based economic potential. However, so far there has been no in-depth study that analyzes the alignment of the program's implementation with national standards and empirically measures its impact on community empowerment. Therefore, this research is important to fill that gap by comprehensively analyzing the effectiveness of the implementation of the social inclusion program in Pidie Regency and its contribution to the improvement of community capacity and independence.

The implementation of the social inclusion program at Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Kabupaten Pidie reflects a concrete effort to realize the mandate of the Regulation of the Head of the National Library of the Republic of Indonesia No. 3 of 2023 concerning National Standards for Regency/Municipal Public Libraries, particularly in the aspect of implementing social inclusion-based services. The regulation, specifically Article 18(b), stipulates that public libraries are required to provide services that promote community empowerment through a social inclusion-based approach, whereby libraries function as open spaces that are responsive to the information needs and skill development of the community (Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2023).

Based on initial observations and interviews conducted by the researcher with librarians and the community in Pidie Regency, it was found that from 2022 to 2024, Dispersip Pidie has carried out various social inclusion activities such as handicraft-making training, entrepreneurship training, and assistance in the independent replication of village libraries. The main objective of implementing the program is to build the community's capacity to be economically and socially independent. The implementation of this program shows quite active community participation and has an impact on improving skills and self-confidence in daily life.

However, despite the positive results of the social inclusion program, there has not yet been an academic study that deeply analyzes the conformity of the program's implementation with the guidelines set forth in the National Library Head Regulation No. 3 of 2023 (Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2023). This analysis is important to determine whether the implemented program has been running according to national standards, as well as to evaluate its impact on the actual empowerment of the community at the local level.

Theoretically, social inclusion according to Simarmata is a process that allows certain groups

to fully participate in social life, while still considering cultural diversity, equal access, and openness to change (Simarmata, 2018). In the context of libraries, this is realized thru various services and activities that enable the community to develop their potential without discrimination (Okechukwu, Charity, & Jacinta, 2024). Additionally, the theory of community empowerment according to Retno Rohmiyati emphasizes the importance of improving the quality of life of the community thru training, active participation, and support for local creativity as efforts to achieve independence (Retno, 2017).

Community empowerment is a development process aimed at improving the quality of life and independence of the community thru skills training, self-potential development, and active participation in problem-solving (Suminar, Sutarto, Siswanto, & Cahyani, 2025). Empowerment emphasizes the enhancement of individual and collective capacities so that they can control their own lives (Dushkova & Ivlieva, 2024). Considering the field conditions and the relevance of national policies, it is important to conduct a study on the implementation of the social inclusion program at Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Kabupaten Pidie. This study is expected to serve as a basis for strengthening a more adaptive and sustainable program, as well as making a tangible contribution to the development of libraries as agents of social change.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach to deeply understand the implementation of the social inclusion program at Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Kabupaten Pidie. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research focuses on the experiences, perceptions, and dynamics that occur in the implementation of the program from the perspective of the implementers and program participants. The primary data collection in this study was conducted thru in-depth interviews with two librarians as program implementers and four library users from each type of activity to obtain comprehensive information regarding the implementation of the social inclusion program and the experiences of the program participants (Patton, 2015). In addition, participatory observation was conducted to directly observe the implementation of activities, while document studies were used to review various documents related to the social inclusion program.

As supporting data, this research also utilizes the results of distributing closed questionnaires to 30 respondents from the program's participant community. The questionnaire data is used to complement and strengthen the findings from the interviews, particularly in illustrating the perception and overall level of program benefits. The use of various data sources simultaneously serves as a form of triangulation aimed at enhancing the credibility and validity of the research findings, as stated by Denzin (1978).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Social Inclusion Program at Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Kabupaten Pidie

The implementation of the social inclusion program at Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Kabupaten Pidie is a tangible manifestation of the transformation of library services oriented toward community empowerment and welfare improvement thru access to information and skills training. The research results show that Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Kabupaten Pidie has implemented various social inclusion programs in line with the policy direction of the National Library Head Regulation Number 3 of 2023, particularly thru the organization of skill training and community capacity development, and has had a significant impact on community empowerment in the area (Perpustakaan

Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2023).

Based on interviews and observations, there are several activities that have been carried out by Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Kabupaten Pidie, including skill training such as traditional cake making (Boh Rom-Rom cake), fabric decoration, bouquet making training, and information technology training such as SPP-TIK. These activities directly involve the community, especially housewives and village youth, in a practice-based learning process. The success of this program is reflected in the high enthusiasm of the participants, the improvement in skills, and the emergence of local economic initiatives from the training results.

The above findings provide information that the implementation of the social inclusion program at Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Kabupaten Pidie not only focuses on providing access to information but also aims at community capacity building thru activities that are applicative and based on local needs. The selection of training types, such as culinary skills, handicrafts, and information technology, reflects the library's efforts to tailor its services to the social conditions and economic potential of the local community. This indicates a shift in the role of libraries from information providers to community learning centers that contribute to the enhancement of skills and economic independence of the community.

This condition aligns with the concept of socially inclusive libraries, which position libraries as tools for community empowerment thru the use of information to improve quality of life (Prihatin et al., 2024). In this approach, the success of the library is not only measured by the number of collections or user visits but also by the extent to which the services provided can generate real benefits for the community. Therefore, various training programs organized by Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Kabupaten Pidie can be seen as a form of implementing the library's function in a more participatory, adaptive, and community-oriented manner.

The Suitability of Program Implementation at Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Kabupaten Pidie with the National Library Head Regulation Number 3 of 2023

From a regulatory perspective, the entire series of activities has followed the directives of the National Library Head Regulation No. 3 of 2023. Programs such as the socialization of the Social Inclusion-Based Library Transformation, master trainer briefings, regional facilitator training, stakeholder meetings, and peer learning meetings have been systematically organized. This shows that the structural aspects of the program have been implemented in accordance with the applicable national planning and policies. In addition, Dispersip Pidie is also active in monitoring and evaluating the activities that have been carried out, which is an important indicator in maintaining the sustainability of the program.

The alignment of program implementation with these regulations shows that the execution of the social inclusion program is not only oriented toward fulfilling administrative aspects but also toward achieving the main goal of transforming libraries based on social inclusion, which is to enhance community participation and capacity thru various beneficial activities. In other words, compliance with regulations becomes an important foundation in ensuring that the implemented programs can meet the needs of the community while also supporting broader social development goals.

Theoretically, these findings align with the concept of social inclusion proposed by Simarmata (2018), which explains that social inclusion is a process that enables every individual to fully participate in social life thru access to information, training, and various productive activities (Simarmata, 2018). In the context of libraries, the implementation of programs carried out by Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Kabupaten Pidie can also be understood thru the capability approach proposed by Amartya

Sen, where development is not only measured from an economic aspect but also from an individual's ability to develop potential, make choices, and lead a life they consider meaningful. Therefore, the various training and empowerment programs implemented not only reflect compliance with national policies but also demonstrate the library's genuine efforts to enhance the community's capabilities.

Effectiveness of the Social Inclusion Program Based on Supporting Data at Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Kabupaten Pidie

Based on interviews and observations, the social inclusion program implemented by the Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Kabupaten Pidie shows a fairly good level of effectiveness in supporting community empowerment. Various training activities organized not only enhance the participants' skills but also encourage the increased use of the library as a means of learning and community capacity development. These findings are evident from the participants' enthusiasm during the activities, the improvement in practical skills acquired, and the emergence of various economic initiatives developed after participating in the program.

The findings from the interviews and observations were reinforced by supporting data obtained thru the distribution of questionnaires to 30 program participants. The results of the questionnaire analysis show that the social inclusion program contributes 41% to community empowerment. The data is consistent with the results of interviews and observations that show an increase in skills, participation, and community independence after participating in the program organized by Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Kabupaten Pidie.

Although there are still other factors outside the program that also influence the level of community empowerment, these figures indicate that the social inclusion program plays a significant role in enhancing the capacity and independence of the community. These results indicate that libraries no longer function solely as providers of information, but also as facilitators of learning capable of generating social and economic impacts for the community.

In addition, the research findings also indicate the independent replication of programs by village library managers. Some village libraries have started organizing similar activities by utilizing the resources available in their respective environments. This phenomenon shows that the community has begun to view libraries as centers for learning and skill development that can be utilized sustainably. In the perspective of empowerment, this condition aligns with Zimmerman's (1995) view, which emphasizes that the success of empowerment programs can be seen from the increased participation of the community and the community's ability to manage and develop its resources independently (Zimmerman, 1995).

Challenges in the Implementation of the Social Inclusion Program at Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Kabupaten Pidie

The implementation of the Social Inclusion Program Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Kabupaten Pidie is not without challenges. Some of the challenges encountered include the limited availability of competent human resources, the lack of facilities in several villages, and limited financial support. Nevertheless, the success of the program in making a tangible impact on the quality of life of the community serves as an important asset for further development.

However, these various obstacles have the potential to affect the effectiveness and sustainability of the social inclusion program in the future. The limited human resources with competencies in community mentoring can hinder the optimal implementation and development of the

program. On the other hand, the lack of supporting facilities in several villages has the potential to create disparities in access to services and activities organized by the library. Budget limitations can also restrict the frequency of program implementation, the reach of participants, and the development of training types that meet the needs of the community. Therefore, sustained support from various parties is needed so that social inclusion programs can reach more people and have a broader impact.

Implications of Research Findings

Overall, the research results indicate that the implementation of the social inclusion program at Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Kabupaten Pidie has been successful and has had a positive impact on community empowerment. The program implemented not only aligns with the direction of the National Library Head Regulation Number 3 of 2023 but also meets the real needs of the community thru various skill training and capacity development activities. These findings indicate that libraries have transformed from mere providers of information into centers of learning and community empowerment.

Its success in enhancing skills, strengthening social networks, and opening economic opportunities affirms that libraries can play a role as relevant agents of social change in the modern era. This success is further strengthened by the synergy among stakeholders, ranging from local government, the community, to village library managers, where the active involvement of all parties becomes a key factor in creating program sustainability and making the library a dynamic collaborative space. In addition, the locally needs-based approach that is adaptive to the social and cultural context of the Pidie community also enhances the acceptance and relevance of the program within the community. In this context, the social inclusion program is no longer merely a means of providing information services, but has evolved into a strategic instrument in strengthening the social and economic resilience of the community thru sustainable non-formal education.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of the social inclusion program in Pidie Regency can be categorized as quite high, which is not only reflected in a quantitative contribution of 41% toward community empowerment but also in the social and economic behavioral changes of the program participants. This shows that the interventions carried out have gone beyond mere activity outputs and have started to produce tangible outcomes, such as increased individual capacity and the emergence of skill-based economic activities.

The success of this initiative is closely linked to the alignment between the program design and the local community's needs, resulting in contextual and applicable materials. This condition aligns with the concept of community-based library services, which emphasizes the importance of a user-needs-based approach in enhancing service effectiveness (Aabø & Audunson, 2020), and is further supported by Williment's (2021) findings in (Barbakoff, A., 2021), which state that active community participation in program planning significantly contributes to the success of empowerment. Thus, the effectiveness of the program is not only determined by the existence of the program itself but also by the quality of community involvement at every stage of its implementation.

However, the effectiveness has not yet been fully optimal and is still faced with several structural constraints that could potentially hinder the sustainability of the program. The limitations of competent human resources, disparities in facilities between regions, and inadequate budget support are the main factors affecting the quality of implementation in the field. In the perspective of sustainable community development, the long-term success of an empowerment program highly depends on the sustainability of institutional capacity and adequate system support (Carlsen & Bruggemann, 2020).

Furthermore, research by Vårheim (2014) shows that the success of social inclusion programs

in Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Kabupaten Pidie is greatly influenced by the institution's ability to build social capital thru strong collaborative networks (Vårheim, 2014). When this aspect has not developed evenly, the impact of the program tends to be partial and uneven across the entire community. Therefore, although the social inclusion program in Pidie Regency has shown a good level of effectiveness, strengthening institutional aspects, resource distribution, and multi-party collaboration are strategic steps needed to ensure more sustainable and inclusive success in the future.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research and discussion results, it can be concluded that the implementation of the social inclusion program at Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Kabupaten Pidie has been effective and in accordance with the National Library Head Regulation Number 3 of 2023. Programs such as skills training, literacy talk shows, information technology training, and independent replication activities of village libraries demonstrate a strong commitment from the institution to make the library a center for community empowerment. The impact of this program is reflected in the improvement of individual skills, community participation in library activities, and the emergence of new economic initiatives among the village community. The success of the implementation of this activity is also strengthened by the synergy among stakeholders and the high enthusiasm of the community in participating in the program.

In addition to positively impacting the transformation of library services, this social inclusion program also makes a tangible contribution to the enhancement of community empowerment, particularly in the aspects of self-potential development, literacy improvement, and the establishment of economic independence. These findings are supported by the results of a survey conducted with 30 program participants, which show that the social inclusion program contributes 41% to community empowerment. The supporting data reinforces the results of interviews and observations that show libraries can be strategic agents of social change. By adopting a participatory approach and being based on local needs, libraries no longer function merely as storage places for books, but also as vibrant, responsive, and relevant learning spaces that address the social challenges faced by the community today. This conclusion also emphasizes the importance of sustainability and the development of social inclusion programs within the framework of literacy-based development at the regional level.

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