

Community participation in the Equality Education Program at PKBN Sultan Thaha Saipudin, Tebo Regency

by

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<p>Article History Submitted: 14 July 2025 Revised : 27 August 2025 Accepted: 2 September 2025</p> <p>Keywords: <i>Community Participation; Education Equality; Empowerment; Social Support</i></p>	<p>Abstract</p> <p><i>The equality education program is one of the important efforts to increase access to education for people who cannot participate in formal education. In Tebo Regency, especially in PKBM Sultan Thaha Saipudin, community participation plays a strategic role in the success of this program. However, community involvement in various aspects of implementation still needs to be increased so that the goal of equality education can be achieved optimally. This research aims to identify forms of community participation in equality education programs and government strategies in supporting their implementation. The method used in this study is a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation studies. Data were analyzed descriptively to illustrate the overall form of community participation and government support. The results of the study show that community participation in PKBM Sultan Thaha Saipudin is not only in the form of financial support, but also in the form of providing facilities and infrastructure, taking advantage of programs, and providing constructive ideas and suggestions. The Aburan Batang Tebo Village Government actively allocates a budget for skills training and business capital for the community that participates in the program. In addition, cooperation with the Education Office, the PMD Office, and the business and industry world provides significant technical training and support. Synergy between village governments, private partners, and communities is the key to increasing the active participation and success of equality education programs, which have a positive impact on improving the welfare of residents</i></p>
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Introduction

Education serves as a fundamental pillar for enhancing the quality of human resources and fostering sustainable social development. According to Law Number 20 of 2003, Article 3 on the National Education System, national

education aims to develop learners' potential to become individuals with dignified character and contribute to the advancement of civilization. This vision aligns with the national agenda of producing intelligent, creative, independent, and responsible citizens who actively participate in the democratic process and contribute to community welfare. In the context of regional development, education becomes a strategic tool for improving the Human Development Index (HDI) through the enhancement of knowledge, skills, and socio-economic participation (UNDP, 2022). Education plays a very crucial role in developing students' abilities, so that they can manage the available natural resources for the welfare of their families.

The problem of low Human Development Index (HDI) in a region is the government's responsibility to improve the quality of human resources. HDI is a Human Development Index measurement instrument initiated by UNDP that functions to assess human development achievements based on a number of key components in quality of life. HDI provides an overview of public access to development results, which includes aspects of income, health, education, and others.

The Human Development Index (HDI) data of Tebo Regency reached 71.99%. The Tebo Regency Government continues to make improvements to improve the Human Development Index by improving the quality of education in Tebo Regency. Based on the data found by researchers, the level of education of residents in Tebo Regency is relatively low. This is due to the high dropout rate in Tebo Regency. This was conveyed through a statement from the Head of the Tebo Education and Culture Office, who said that the number of students dropping out of school at the end of 2021 was recorded at 664 people. In detail, from elementary schools, as many as 237 students, junior high school 202 students, and high school 98 students, then vocational schools have 127 students. These figures highlight structural challenges in maintaining school attendance, economic constraints, and limited awareness regarding the long-term value of education. Consequently, improving community involvement in educational initiatives becomes a crucial pathway to addressing such inequalities.

Community participation represents one of the most decisive factors in the success of educational programs, particularly in promoting equality and inclusivity. Active involvement of local communities through awareness campaigns, volunteerism, parental engagement, and local leadership enhances the relevance, accessibility, and sustainability of educational programs. Zakaria & Nasution (2020), argue that genuine participation must transcend token involvement, evolving into shared decision-making and collective ownership over educational processes. In rural and semi-urban contexts, community engagement helps bridge the gap between policy initiatives and local realities (Sagala, 2022).

Non-formal education is one of the solutions to increase the Human Development Index and the Gross Participation Rate. Non-formal education is an educational path carried out for people who need an educational service whose function is to add, replace, and complement formal education, which aims to support lifelong education (Law No. 20 of 2003, Article 26, Paragraph 1). The implementation of non-formal education can be carried out through non-formal institutions, both managed by the private sector and the government, such as Community Learning Activity Centers (CLAC), Child Care Centers (TPA), Community Reading Gardens (TBM), Learning Activity Studios (SKB), Course and Training Institutions (LKP), Smart Houses, and Ta'lim Councils. Hiryanto & Setiana (2023) stated that non-formal education can be used as an alternative to overcome children's low cognitive competence and social sensitivity. Internal and external factors influence the success of education, in which community support and participation play a very important role. Non-formal education has a goal in developing the potential of learning citizens to have knowledge, skills, attitudes, and personalities.

In Tebo Regency, the Equality Education Program facilitated by PKBM Sultan Thaha Saifuddin demonstrates a collaborative effort between government agencies, educational institutions, and local communities. The local government provides structural support such as socialization programs, training for tutors, and financial incentives, while community members contribute ideas, resources, and mobilization efforts. In addition, to improve the quality and competence of

organizers and tutors, competency training for PKBM organizers and tutors is also carried out. The local government has also provided incentives for SKB and PKBM tutors in Tebo Regency.

The Village Government is currently also paying attention to the existence of PKBM Sultan Thaha Saipudin in Aburan Batang Tebo Village and its surroundings. The participation of the Village Head is in the form of providing ideas/advice and suggestions when meetings are held at PKBM and village deliberations. The Village Head and the local government synergize to help PKBM Sultan Thaha Saipudin provide awareness to community members to actively participate in supporting the Equal Education Program in Aburan Batang Tebo Village. Tohani (2023) argues that PKBM should build cooperation or partnerships with various parties, community leaders, and others to ensure the optimal achievement of institutional programs and goals. The success of the program is highly dependent on the quality and ability of the institution to run the program and establish collaboration with external parties.

Despite various initiatives, limited empirical research has examined the depth, forms, and impacts of community participation within equality education programs in Tebo Regency. Previous studies have primarily focused on program management or learning outcomes in non-formal education, leaving a gap in understanding how local stakeholders engage and influence educational equity. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the forms, roles, and significance of community participation in the Equality Education Program at PKBM Sultan Thaha Saifuddin, Tebo Regency, and to explore how such participation contributes to improving educational access and social inclusion.

Method

This study uses a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach. This approach was chosen to explore and understand in depth the phenomenon of community participation in the equality education program at PKBM Sultan Thaha Saipuddin. The research is conducted in a natural setting so that the data obtained is authentic and describes the actual conditions.

The research was carried out at PKBM Sultan Thaha Saipuddin, Aburan Village, Central Tebo District, Tebo Regency. The research implementation period lasted for 3 months, from May to July 2024. The subjects of the study are the people involved in the equality education program at PKBM, including students, PKBM managers, and local community leaders. Humans as research subjects function as the main instruments in data collection.

Data Collection techniques are collected through several techniques, namely: Participatory observation, where the researcher directly observes community activities and involvement in equality education programs; In-depth interviews, conducted in a semi-structured manner with key informants representing various relevant parties, to dig into their views, experiences, and motivations; and document analysis, including program documents, activity reports, and other appropriate supporting data

The collected data is analyzed qualitatively through the stages of data reduction by filtering and selecting data that is relevant to the focus of the research, presenting data that organizes the data systematically to facilitate understanding, and drawing conclusions or verifying by comparing and testing the consistency of the data obtained. To maintain the validity of the data, the researcher used triangulation techniques of data sources and data collection methods, as well as re-checking (member checks) of informants to ensure the accuracy of data interpretation.

Result and Discussion

Community participation is one of the important factors in the success of equality education programs, especially in rural environments. PKBM Sultan Thaha Saipuddin Aburan Batang Tebo Village, as a non-formal education unit that organizes Package A equivalent to elementary school, Package B equivalent to junior high school, and Package C equivalent to high school, plays a role in providing access to education for residents who have not completed formal education. Considering that the majority of people in this village make a living as rubber and oil palm farmers, the existence of equality education is urgently

needed to equip them with relevant knowledge and skills to improve their quality of life and independence.

Participation of the community is a very important aspect. The facilities and infrastructure. The results of observations in the field showed that the study rooms in the village office hall and the MI building were actively used by the participants, with adequate facilities even though they were simple. This confirms that participation in the provision of facilities and infrastructure is very real and supports the running of equality education programs. The result shows that the community takes a role in maintaining participation in. It is hoped that this program will be able to help improve abilities and open up new opportunities for the community. Observations in the field also showed the enthusiasm of residents to participate in classes and activities organized by PKBM, indicating active participation in the use of educational programs.

The community has also been starting with the Package A, B and C program activities. PKBM manager Sultan Thaha Saipuddin invited the Village Head, Kadus, RT Head, and community members to hold a meeting at the beginning of the year, led by the Head of Aburan Village, Batang Tebo. In the meeting, the Village Head and PKBM manager Sultan Thaha Saipuddin received a lot of input in the form of ideas and suggestions from the meeting participants, in this case, the community.

From the results of the observation of the program evaluation meeting, the community's participation in providing ideas and suggestions is directly seen through open dialogue with the manager, which is used to improve the quality of the program. Their ideas and suggestions are recorded and used as a consideration for future improvement of activities. The community agreed to support this program, and it was a decision of a meeting led by the Head of Aburan Batang Tebo Village.

In the implementation of the equality education program organized by PKBM Sultan Thaha Saipudin, after the researcher looked directly at the research location, the level of community participation was not maximized. This was evidenced by the attendance of students at each meeting not optimal as expected.

PKBM managers and their tutors have tried to encourage their students to always participate in this program continuously, and so far, the implementation of the equality education program is free of charge, in the hope that its students will not be burdened with the costs incurred. Local governments and village governments have policies and authorities to actively encourage their community members to participate in equality education programs in their villages. The Regional Government has carried out socialization of equality education, BOP PKBM, tutor incentives, and tutor training. Meanwhile, the Aburan Batang Tebo Village Government has never assisted in the development and empowerment of PKBM Sultan Thaha Saipudin from the existing Village Fund Allocation every year on the grounds that village funds are insufficient because they are widely used for village infrastructure development.

Figure 1. PKBM Meeting



Implementation of the program can run smoothly and effectively. In addition, the community also plays an active role in taking advantage of the program through socialization to residents, so that more people take part in equality education. Community leaders seek to disseminate information and encourage active participation for the long-term benefit of outgoing residents. Participation is also reflected in the form of ideas and suggestions provided by the community to improve the quality and relevance of programs according to their needs. Thus, community participation is not only material, but also in the form of contributing ideas that play a very important role in the success of equality education in the

village. The form of community participation in Aburan Batang Tebo Village above is in accordance with the opinion of Normina (2016) that community participation can be realized in the form of financial participation, material participation, academic participation, cultural participation, and evaluative participation (control) in The implementation of the equality education program at PKBM Sultan Thaha Saipudin in Tebo Regency still faces challenges in terms of community participation that has not been maximized. Although this program is free of charge and PKBM managers have tried to motivate students, the attendance of participants is not fully optimal. The local government has provided support through socialization, BOP PKBM, incentives, and tutor training, but the role of the village government, especially in operational fund assistance, is still limited due to the limited budget that is more widely used for infrastructure development.

However, the Aburan Batang Tebo Village Government actively allocates funds for skills training and business capital for residents who participate in the program. Collaboration with the District Education Office, PMD Office, as well as the business and industry world, also provides important support in the form of training and technical assistance. Synergy between the village government, private partners, and the community is the key to the success of this program, which is able to increase the motivation of residents to participate actively and provide real benefits in improving the welfare of local communities.

Conclusion

Community participation in the equality education program at PKBM Sultan Thaha Saipudin Tebo Regency can be seen through the participation in the provision of facilities and infrastructure, taking advantage of the program, and contributing ideas and suggestions. To support this, the Aburan Batang Tebo Village Government allocates a budget for skills training and business capital for the community. In addition, the village government also collaborates with the Education Office, the PMD Office, as well as the business and industry to provide the necessary training and technical support.

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