



Learning from the Folk School Festival: Creating Public Participation Through Community Activities

Maya Mustika Kartika sari¹, Syafa Amalia Tsani¹, Rr. Nanik Setyowati¹, Sarmini Sarmini¹, Warsono Warsono¹, Iman Pasu Hardianto Marganda Purba¹, Rahmanu Wijaya¹

¹Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, 60231, Indonesia
mayamustika@unesa.ac.id

Abstract. Inequality of access to education is one part of the public problem. This happens because the mechanism of the education system still refers to the merit system. This study explores how community-led initiatives address educational access challenges in Surabaya. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. The data sources used are primary data and secondary data. Data collection through observation and in-depth interviews. Structuration theory is used as an analytical tool for this study. The subject of the study is the *Turun Tangan* community. The results of this study indicate that through the People's School Olympiad activity, the Turun Tangan community has provided a means or forum for the general public to be involved and participate in providing alternatives to educational services in the community. This shows that public participation can emerge and be built if a group of initiators in the community actively design and implement community activities. The issue of education rights is a strategic issue in creating public participation. This participation can be mobilized through community activities.

Keywords: Community, Public Participation, Education Sector

1 Introduction

Education is a basic right that must be received by all Indonesian citizens as stated in the 1945 Constitution. However, social problems related to the economy are one of the reasons citizens do not get an education. For example, the difference between urban and rural communities concerns facilities. Especially for citizens with low socio-economic status, they will get different facilities [1]. The fulfillment of the right to education has become a problem handled by the relevant government. The fulfillment of the right to education is categorized into two things. First, the education office handles children from middle-class families who can be said to be able to go to school but still need financial assistance from related parties. The second is for children with exceptional handling, such as street children, who are handled by the social service.

Quoting from iNews Surabaya.id, in Surabaya, there are still 3,000 prospective students who have not received their rights, namely getting a proper education because of financial or lack of school problems [2]. With many children who have not received an education, it has triggered other social problems such as street children, thieves, and poverty because they do not have the knowledge and skills from formal or non-formal education to get decent jobs. This happens because of the cost of education. Education

costs are the most important part that can support acquiring quality education. With high education costs, the facilities obtained will also be better, unlike the lower middle class, which only gets minimal facilities [3].

Education is a basic right that must be received by all Indonesian citizens as stated in the 1945 Constitution. However, social problems related to the economy are one of the reasons citizens do not get an education. For example, the difference between urban and rural communities concerns facilities. Especially for citizens with low socio-economic status, they will get different facilities [4]. The fulfillment of the right to education is categorized into two things. First, for children from middle-class families who can be said to be able to go to school but still need financial assistance from related parties, the handling is carried out by the education office. The second is for children with exceptional handling, such as street children, who are handled by the social service.

One of the communities that cares about the problem is the Turun Tangan Surabaya Community, which operates in 5 fields: education, environment, culture, health, and social society. The Turun Tangan Community was formed in 2013 and has spread to 93 districts/cities with thousands of members [5]. The Turun Tangan Community focuses on education but is not close to other fields. The educational problems handled by the Turun Tangan Surabaya Community are related to the right to education. The target of the Turun Tangan Surabaya Community is children who are less fortunate in getting the right to education and are sheltered by several social communities across Surabaya.

2 Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to analyze the activities of the Turun Tangan community in addressing the challenges of ensuring the right to education in Surabaya. The research focuses on three main aspects: (1) the activities of the Turun Tangan community in tackling issues related to the fulfillment of the right to education in Surabaya, (2) the strategies implemented by the community to promote public participation in their activities, and (3) the processes undertaken to encourage voluntary involvement in education-related initiatives. To gain comprehensive insights, the study utilizes focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, methods deemed highly effective for eliciting detailed and nuanced information. A total of 20 participants took part in the focus group discussions, and among them, seven individuals were further interviewed in depth to obtain a richer understanding of their experiences and perspectives.

3 Discussion

3.1 The Urgency of Community Participation in Solving Public Problems

According to Made Pidarta [6], participation is the participation of individuals or several people in an activity. This involvement can be in the form of mental, emotional, and energy involvement, as well as participation in using their abilities to support and carry out an activity on their initiative to achieve a goal. According to Sulistiyorini in

Maishan [7], participation is identical to the emotional and thought participation of someone who wants to participate in an activity or group with a goal and also takes responsibility for their participation. According to Davis's opinion, as a scientist explained [8] in participation, this involvement is not only participating in providing their services to help physically but their participation is accompanied by initiative from themselves and a sense of responsibility to assist a group.

Cohen and Uphoff [9] stated four types of participation. The first is decision-making (participation in decision-making), which is community participation that involves the community in making decisions and organizational policies. The community expresses opinions about a program that will be implemented. This stage is an opportunity for the community to be part of making agreements related to a policy that concerns common interests. So, at this stage, the community becomes the main priority in forming a program; second, Implementation (participation in implementation) is the stage where the community can participate in operational activities according to the program set. The actual form at this stage is divided into three parts: participation in the form of contributions of ideas, materials, and actions as project members. Third, Benefit taking (participation in benefit) is the stage of enjoying the results. A program can be successful if all parties, especially those participating, can feel its benefits. The form of community participation in this stage is an increase in several things, namely equal distribution of welfare, income, business, adequate facilities, education, and so on that can support the standard of living of the community and their rights are fulfilled, the fourth is Evaluation (participation in evaluation) is the stage of community participation to maximize the results of a program. This stage is carried out by community participation in monitoring and assessing activities and their results. Are the targets correct? Are improvements and further development needed? The community has the opportunity to provide criticism and suggestions.

3.2 Efforts to Encourage Community Participation to Get Involved in Community Activities

The Turun Tangan Surabaya community carries out several activities by inviting the community to participate such as the 'People's School Olympiad'. Also, they should follow their guidelines, namely, "Not just a donation but taking action." In addition to assisting in the form of funds and goods to help the activities run, the community can also directly participate in helping the activities run through participation in terms of energy and thoughts. In line with the statement from Effendy as the general coordinator who stated that, "... inviting people to volunteer, participate in activities, not only giving money but also ideas and innovations that are made real in the field like what ...". (interview on June 22, 2024). Because society is a system, they will influence each other, and there will be a reciprocal process in it. Individuals in the system will be interconnected and cannot live alone; they need each other. So, they must have a sense of helping each other maintain harmony in the system.

Several indicators determine why individuals can join a community. There are similarities in concern, interests, and the same goals to achieve change. However, not all people can participate voluntarily based on their wishes. Therefore, the Turun Tangan Surabaya Community encourages people to participate voluntarily. For this, integration is needed between community members and the participating community. Efforts made include: (1) Initiating activities to solve educational problems (People's

School Olympiad), which are carried out to encourage people to get involved in these activities. (2) Publishing activities through social media and then approaching people interested in recruiting volunteers. The approach taken by the Turun Tangan Surabaya Community is so that people can continue to participate in strengthening togetherness and solidarity from both members and the participating community. (3) organizing and implementing activities that have been initiated into actual activities and can integrate all elements of the community, government, and volunteers from the public.

4 Conclusion

The Turun Tangan Surabaya Community also has a role in encouraging community participation and involvement in activities. The Turun Tangan Surabaya Community, in carrying out several of these activities, invites the community to participate, as was done in the Folk School Festival. The stages carried out to encourage this participation are by creating social activities that lead to overcoming the problem of fulfilling the right to education in the city of Surabaya, publishing these activities on social media to invite or encourage the community to know about these activities, creating content invitations so that the community can be interested in participating and can also be used to see public responses.

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