

Challenges and Impacts of Social Inclusion Libraries on Literacy in South Bengkulu

Tantangan dan Dampak Perpustakaan Inklusi Sosial terhadap Literasi di Bengkulu Selatan

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji tantangan dan dampak Program Transformasi Perpustakaan Berbasis Inklusi Sosial (TPBIS) terhadap pengembangan literasi di Bengkulu Selatan. Dengan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi lapangan, dan analisis dokumen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pelaksanaan TPBIS kerap tidak selaras dengan tujuan utama program, dilaksanakan tanpa perencanaan strategis, dan gagal menjangkau berbagai kelompok masyarakat. Kondisi ini berdampak pada rendahnya Indeks Pembangunan Literasi Masyarakat dan Tingkat Gemar Membaca. Tantangan utama mencakup lemahnya perencanaan, keterbatasan anggaran, dan kurangnya koordinasi lintas sektor. Oleh karena itu, dibutuhkan pemahaman yang lebih jelas mengenai tujuan TPBIS, analisis kebutuhan masyarakat yang komprehensif, dan penguatan kolaborasi kelembagaan untuk meningkatkan efektivitas dan akuntabilitas program. Dalam konteks ini, DPR RI melalui Komisi X berperan strategis untuk memastikan efektivitas kebijakan melalui fungsi pengawasan terhadap pelaksanaan TPBIS atau program serupa, terutama dalam menjamin akuntabilitas dan kesesuaian program dengan kebutuhan lokal. Selain itu, DPR RI juga diharapkan dapat mendorong peningkatan alokasi anggaran untuk memperkuat infrastruktur perpustakaan, pengembangan kapasitas sumber daya manusia, serta menjembatani sinergi antarkementerian dan lembaga guna mendukung pencapaian target literasi nasional yang inklusif dan berkelanjutan.

Kata kunci: inklusi sosial dalam perpustakaan; literasi; pelatihan masyarakat



Abstract: This study aims to analyze the challenges and impacts of the Social Inclusion-Based Library Transformation Program (TPBIS) on literacy development in South Bengkulu. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis. The findings reveal that TPBIS activities often lack alignment with the program's core objectives, are implemented without strategic planning, and fail to reach diverse community groups. These shortcomings have contributed to low scores in the Community Literacy Development Index and Reading Interest Level. Key challenges include inadequate planning, limited budget, and weak cross-sectoral coordination. Therefore, a clearer understanding of TPBIS objectives, a comprehensive analysis of community needs, and stronger institutional collaboration are necessary to improve program effectiveness and accountability. In this context, the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR RI), through Commission X, plays a strategic role in ensuring policy effectiveness by overseeing the implementation of TPBIS or similar programs, particularly in ensuring accountability and responsiveness to local needs. Furthermore, DPR RI is expected to encourage increased budget allocations for improving library infrastructure, developing human resource capacity, and fostering synergy among ministries and institutions to support inclusive and sustainable national literacy development.

Keywords: community training; literacy; social inclusion in the library

Introduction

This study explores the challenges and impacts of implementing the Social Inclusion-Based Library Transformation Program (TPBIS) on literacy development in South Bengkulu. Although the program is designed to promote social inclusion through library services, its implementation has faced several obstacles that hinder its overall effectiveness. One major issue is the occurrence of implementation anomalies—outcomes that diverge from the program's core objectives. These include activities that do not align with TPBIS's mission, such as training sessions that fail to strengthen library functions or contribute meaningfully to literacy improvement. As a result, the program's impact has been inconsistent and often falls short of its intended goals.

To address these issues, this study investigates how implementation gaps in TPBIS affect literacy outcomes in South Bengkulu. It also seeks to identify practical solutions and provide policy recommendations to ensure that the program effectively promotes literacy and empowers communities inclusively and sustainably. Through this analysis, the study aims to generate insights that can optimize TPBIS implementation and ensure the achievement of its objectives.

TPBIS is a national initiative introduced by the National Library of Indonesia, building upon the earlier PerpusSeru program, which was supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation from 2011 to 2018 (Priyanto & Cahyaningtyas, 2021, p. 4). Following the conclusion of PerpusSeru, the National Library, backed by the National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas) and the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR RI), launched TPBIS to enhance intellectual development, reduce poverty, and improve community welfare.

Launched in 2021, TPBIS was designed to deliver inclusive, literacy-based library services that empower local communities. The program aligns with the National Library's 2020–2024 policy priorities, which emphasize equitable access to quality reading materials, community empowerment, and the promotion of social equity (Hamida & Sein, 2023). TPBIS is governed by National Library Regulation No. 3/2023,

which defines libraries as agents of social transformation that must be inclusive, accessible, and responsive to local socio-economic conditions.

As of 2023, TPBIS had been implemented in more than 1,200 villages across 26 provinces. In 2024, the program expanded further with the addition of 450 new partner libraries (Dinas Komunikasi, Informatika, Statistik dan Persandian Provinsi Kalimantan Utara [DKISP], 2023). This expansion reflects a growing national commitment to improving public access to library services and fostering literacy development.

At the regional level, the Library and Archives Office of South Bengkulu is responsible for implementing TPBIS. Between 2017 and 2021, the office conducted various training programs, such as sessions on baby food preparation, cake decoration, and computer skills. However, many of these activities lacked alignment with the program's literacy objectives and were poorly planned or insufficiently justified. These one-of-a-kind activities, often perceived as mere budget spending, had limited outreach and failed to produce lasting community benefits.

TPBIS was expected to contribute to national literacy indicators, particularly the Community Literacy Development Index (IPLM) and the Reading Interest Index (TGM), as outlined in the Ministry of Home Affairs Regulation (Permendagri) No. 18/2020. Nevertheless, South Bengkulu continues to lag in these indicators. In 2023, Bengkulu Province recorded a TGM score of 64.54 (28th out of 36 provinces) and an IPLM score of 59.83. South Bengkulu ranked the lowest within the province, with an IPLM score of only 50.01, significantly behind other districts such as Kaur and Rejang Lebong. The region also performs poorly in the Human Development Index (HDI), further highlighting the limited impact of TPBIS on regional literacy outcomes (Perpustakaan Nasional, 2023; Setyono et al., 2023).

Given this context, it is essential to further examine the impact of TPBIS on enhancing literacy in South Bengkulu. This study assesses how effectively the program has improved literacy outcomes and provides insights into policy recommendations to optimize the role of libraries as agents of social transformation.

This research employed a descriptive qualitative method to gain an in-depth understanding of TPBIS implementation in the South Bengkulu Regency. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews with stakeholders involved in the management of the Library and Archives Office, including the head of the office, the secretary, heads of divisions, the head of sub-divisions, and more than five librarians. These interviews explored planning, implementation, and the challenges faced (Hamilton & Finley, 2019), particularly concerning TPBIS. Additional data were collected through field observations of library conditions and program activities. This was complemented by document analysis, including scholarly articles, mainstream media reports, and other relevant sources. These combined methods provided a comprehensive perspective on best practices and persistent challenges in the region's library system (Inayat et al., 2015). Accordingly, the descriptive qualitative approach was deemed suitable for capturing the effectiveness and limitations of TPBIS implementation in the South Bengkulu Regency.

In light of the findings, this paper advocates for a more active role of the DPR RI, particularly Commission X, in enhancing the effectiveness of TPBIS and similar initiatives. The DPR RI's legislative, oversight, and budgetary functions are essential to ensuring that TPBIS is implemented with clear objectives, sufficient funding, and measurable outcomes. Through regular oversight, evidence-based policy adjustments, and increased investment in library infrastructure and librarian capacity building, DPR RI can help maximize the program's contributions to literacy development, particu-

larly in underserved and remote areas. These strategic interventions are essential to ensure that TPBIS serves not merely as a formal initiative but as a transformative tool for inclusive and sustainable national literacy advancement.

Policy and Program Context

Library transformation programs based on social inclusion have been widely promoted to enhance literacy and improve the quality of life. However, empirical research on their impacts remains limited. Saban et al. (2022), for instance, examined the integration of social inclusion principles into library services and found that such efforts can drive positive change and significantly enhance service quality. Additionally, the implementation of inclusive practices was found to influence library visitation rates, suggesting increased user engagement and relevance to community needs.

Utami and Prasetyo (2019) emphasized the interconnection between socioeconomic development and literacy education as essential elements for improving the community's quality of life. As institutions dedicated to promoting literacy, libraries must develop inclusive and innovative programs that contribute to social welfare. In their study of the Sibolga City Library and Archives Office, Panggabean and Ali (2024) observed that social inclusion principles had not been fully implemented, as services remained inaccessible to certain demographic groups. Notably, the absence of a braille collection limited service accessibility for users with special needs.

In contrast to previous research focusing primarily on the role of inclusive libraries, the present study seeks to identify specific obstacles encountered in program implementation and assess their impact on improving community literacy. It addresses issues in planning, implementation, and evaluation, while also exploring the quality of library services and the link between literacy and community welfare in South Bengkulu.

Distinct from earlier studies, this research employs empirical analysis to evaluate the outcomes of the TPBIS implementation and its direct effects on key literacy indicators, such as IPLM and TGM. Moreover, this study investigates barriers to program success and provides actionable recommendations related to budgeting, human resources, and planning and evaluation strategies. It is expected to serve as a reference for similar research in other regions and provide insights for policymakers at both national and regional levels to improve TPBIS implementation and promote literacy and community welfare.

The TPBIS is a national priority initiative launched by the National Library of Indonesia to increase reading interest and enhance community welfare. According to Evener (2023), social inclusion-based libraries are institutions that empower individuals to realize their potential by acknowledging cultural diversity and adaptability to change, while also promoting economic opportunities, cultural preservation, and human rights. TPBIS promotes library services aimed at improving quality of life (Susanti, 2019, p. 227). As stated in National Library Regulation No. 3 of 2023 on Social Inclusion-Based Library Transformation, TPBIS seeks to improve community welfare, educate the younger generation, support child development by the 1945 Constitution, reduce social disparities, and foster collaboration to improve the quality of human resources.

The TPBIS is a continuation of the PerpusSeru program, which was initiated by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in partnership with the National Library and ran from 2011 to 2018 (Priyanto & Cahyaningtyas, 2021, p. 4). Following the program's

conclusion, the National Library, supported by the National Development Planning Agency and the House of Representatives, launched a similar initiative aimed at promoting intellectual development to reduce poverty and improve community welfare.

Launched in 2021, TPBIS aligns with the 2020–2024 strategic objectives of the National Library. Its primary goals include fostering a reading culture, enhancing literacy content, and transforming libraries to provide inclusive access and quality services. It envisions building a prosperous, knowledgeable, innovative, and creative society (Hamida & Sein, 2023, p. 156). As such, TPBIS supports national policy efforts to elevate public literacy and human development.

The program is further institutionalized through National Library Regulation No. 3 of 2023, which underscores the role of libraries as agents of social change. Libraries are mandated to provide inclusive and accessible services that address the socioeconomic needs of communities, particularly in marginalized and remote areas.

As of 2022, the National Library reported TPBIS implementation in 33 provincial libraries, 296 district and city libraries, and 1,696 village libraries. By February 2023, the program had been replicated in 1,205 villages and sub-districts across 26 provinces, supported by regional government budget (APBD) and other funding sources. In 2024, 450 additional village libraries joined the program as partner institutions (DKISP, 2023). The program expansion demonstrates a strong national commitment to broadening library access and enhancing literacy.

At the regional level, the South Bengkulu Library and Archives Office is responsible for implementing TPBIS policies and strategies. This includes providing training, resources, and technical assistance to ensure effective service delivery that contributes to improving quality of life.

Between 2017 and 2021, various TPBIS-related activities were conducted in South Bengkulu, such as training sessions in baby preparation, public speaking, food and cake decoration, computer skills, and product packaging. However, many of these initiatives lacked proper planning and justification. Several activities did not align with TPBIS's core objectives and appeared more as budget expenditure exercises rather than community-driven initiatives. Moreover, most of the training sessions were one-time events with limited participant reach and no continuity, reducing their long-term impact on community development.

The TPBIS is designed to support improvements in key national indicators, including the IPLM and TGM, which are featured in the appendix of Chapter V (Performance Indicators for Evaluation of Regional Government Implementation) of Permendagri No. 18/2020 on Regional Government Performance Reporting. Inconsistent or poorly defined implementation of the TPBIS may hinder progress toward these indicators and negatively affect broader efforts to enhance literacy and reading culture.

Despite ongoing implementation in South Bengkulu, the TPBIS has yet to significantly improve the region's literacy performance. In 2023, the National Library ranked Bengkulu Province 28th out of 36 provinces in the national TGM assessment, with a score of 64.54 (Setyono et al., 2023). The 2023 IPLM score for the province was 59.83, classified as "medium." Among Bengkulu's six regencies, South Bengkulu recorded the lowest IPLM score (50.01), while Kaur (70.03), Rejang Lebong (60.77), and North Bengkulu (60.72) recorded the highest. Meanwhile, Kepahiang (46.88) and Lebong (48.86) recorded the lowest Human Development Index (HDI) values (Perpustakaan Nasional, 2023).

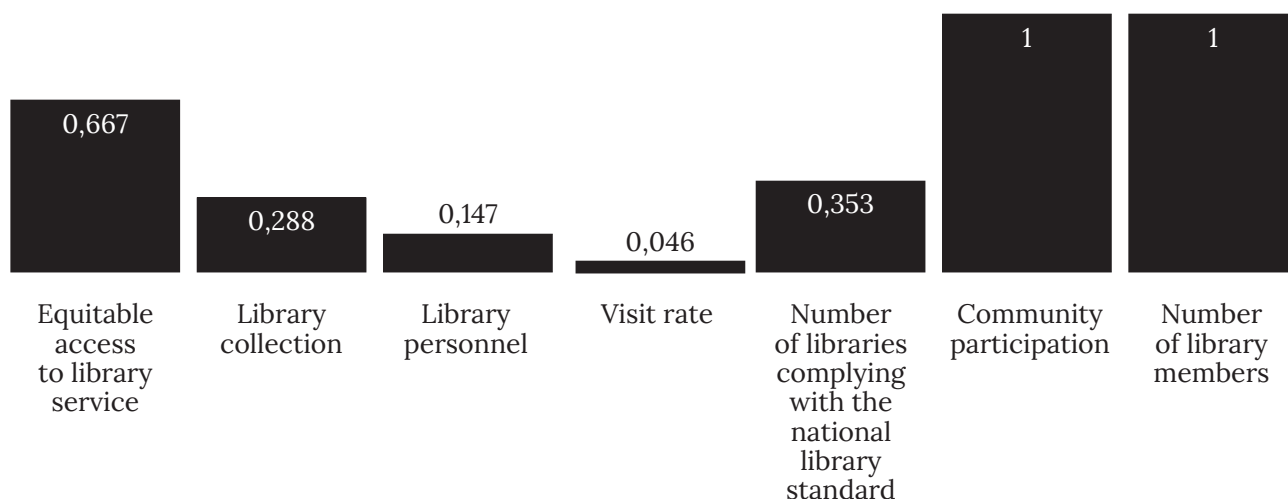


Figure 1. South Bengkulu Literacy Development Index, 2023

Source: National Library (2024).

Program Implementation and Key Issues in South Bengkulu

The TPBIS is an initiative launched by the National Library of Indonesia and has received substantial support from the DPR RI. In 2024, Commission X of the DPR RI approved a budget of IDR 721.68 billion for the National Library for the 2025 Fiscal Year. This approval reflects the DPR's strong commitment to enhancing Indonesia's literacy culture. In addition, the DPR RI allocated an extra IDR 375.07 billion to reinforce efforts in improving literacy and strengthening the internal services of the National Library (Lily, 2024). This additional budget is intended to expand access to reading materials by promoting innovations such as mobile libraries and digital reading corners.

The DPR RI has shown particular support for TPBIS, which seeks to position libraries as centers of knowledge and community learning. This program is expected to foster innovation, creativity, and skill development through community training initiatives (Dahuri, 2021). However, implementation challenges persist, particularly in ensuring library services are accessible to all societal segments, including remote and underserved regions such as South Bengkulu. Therefore, the DPR RI must continue encouraging the National Library and local governments to enhance both the quality and accessibility of library services in these areas.

Looking ahead, the DPR RI is expected to maintain oversight of the literacy programs it funds and to ensure efficient budget utilization to cultivate a robust reading and literacy culture across Indonesia. Effective monitoring and evaluation are critical to ensuring that all communities, including those in South Bengkulu, benefit from the program's objectives.

Despite these efforts, many regional Library and Archives Offices appear to misinterpret the TPBIS concept. Instead of embracing it as a strategy for community empowerment, some implement it merely as a budget-driven training program, disregarding its core mission. In several districts, TPBIS initiatives fail to incorporate local social and cultural factors, thereby reducing their effectiveness in improving literacy (Ellis & Rowe, 2020). As a result, such activities often deviate from the primary goal of promoting social inclusion and community welfare, leading to a misalignment with local needs and diminished impact. For TPBIS to yield meaningful results, libraries must tailor their programs to the specific socio-cultural conditions of the communi-

ties they serve (Kulikauskienė, 2019). Without a need-based approach, the program’s potential for community empowerment remains limited.

In 2024, the South Bengkulu Library and Archives Office implemented six TPBIS activities and had one activity in the planning stage. These included training in baby food preparation, food decoration, cake baking, public speaking, and makeup application. However, a significant issue observed was the misalignment between program content and the actual needs of the community. For example, training on baby food preparation or makeup application may not adequately address the pressing socio-economic challenges in the region. This discrepancy suggests that the activities were not grounded in comprehensive needs assessments, resulting in programs that failed to address the most relevant local issues.

Table 1. TPBIS Activities of the South Bengkulu Regency Library and Archives Office (Based on Interviews and Documentary Data)

Year	Activities
2017	- Compost making training - Kunang-kunang application training (3 sessions) - Salted fish packaging training
2018	- Computer training (3 sessions) - Sewing training (3 sessions)
2022	- Makeup training
2023	- Hairstyling training
2024	- Animal feed processing training - Food decoration training - Local food cooking training - Baby food preparation training - Public speaking training - Makeup training

Source: Office of Library and Archives, South Bengkulu Regency (2024).

Inadequate Planning, Targeting, and Collaboration

Most activity programs implemented in South Bengkulu were not included in the previous year’s budget implementation document of the Library and Archives Office, indicating insufficient planning. This issue is not unique to South Bengkulu; similar trends have been observed in other regional libraries implementing the TPBIS program. Studies by Salsabilla and Prasetyawan (2022, p. 378) and Pratiwi (2021) revealed that many training activities are initiated not based on regional potential or community needs, but rather on the unilateral decisions of the office head. As a result, such training programs often fail to align with local conditions and priorities.

Several programs implemented in the current fiscal year were reportedly based on ad hoc ideas from the head of service rather than strategic planning. Moreover, these programs often lack a clearly defined framework outlining their objectives and expected outcomes. The budget implementation document also fails to provide specific details about the activities conducted. For example, multiple activities were grouped under a single budget line item labeled “resource person honorarium,” without further clarification. This issue was confirmed by several staff members responsible for TPBIS implementation.

Furthermore, the Library and Archives Office lacked clear targeting in its outreach. Ideally, the office should have set explicit objectives to cover the 11 sub-districts, 16

urban villages, and 142 villages in South Bengkulu Regency, ensuring equitable distribution and measurable outreach over time. However, the selection of participants was not based on specific criteria. Instead, participants self-registered after seeing program announcements on social media, which meant most attendees were those living near the library.

Each activity typically involved 20 to 30 participants. However, based on decisions made by the leadership, this number often exceeded the planned quota without adequate preparation. Participants were often wives of village or sub-district heads acting as literacy ambassadors or local cadres from the surrounding area.

Another concern was the misalignment between training content and the region's economic potential. South Bengkulu, where a large portion of the population relies on fisheries, possesses considerable marine and inland fishery resources. For example, Pasar Manna recorded 1,206.65 tons in marine fisheries production and 180 tons in inland fisheries (Putri, 2019, p. 18). Nonetheless, training did not capitalize on this potential. Rather than focusing on enhancing fishery-based skills, the programs offered generalized content. Training on fish processing, preservation, packaging, and marketing would have been more impactful in supporting local livelihoods.

Tailoring social inclusion programs to the local context is essential to their effectiveness (Möller, 2020). Although some staff members proposed contextually relevant training initiatives, these suggestions were often dismissed due to budgetary limitations, particularly the costs of hiring trainers from outside the region.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in program outcomes. Unfortunately, the head of the service reportedly dismissed subordinate input, weakening internal coordination and stifling innovation. Staff indicated that coordination was often slow and top-down, with limited room for collaborative decision-making. Prioritizing personal agendas over institutional collaboration hampers program effectiveness. Effective coordination is essential for achieving program goals and promoting community welfare (Harland et al., 2017).

Participatory selection was also suboptimal. Ideally, beneficiaries of social inclusion training should be individuals who lack knowledge or access to economic opportunities (Bolzonella et al., 2024; Butler & Lobley, 2016). For example, cake-making training would be more beneficial for aspiring entrepreneurs lacking skills in production, packaging, and marketing, rather than for individuals already running similar businesses (Chomsatu, 2023). The mismatch between participant profiles and program objectives undermines the intended outcomes of the social inclusion initiative.

Indriani (2022) reported a program effectiveness score of 4.09 out of 5 for TPBIS. Nonetheless, without accurate participant targeting, the program risks falling short of its mission to improve community welfare and build individual capacity.

Cross-sector collaboration was also notably absent. Training programs were developed without formal coordination with other agencies, resulting in overlap with the mandates of other departments. While some resource persons were invited from other agencies, these were individual rather than institutional engagements. Ideally, inter-agency collaboration should be institutionalized through memoranda of understanding (MoUs) to ensure sustainability and mutual benefits (Putri et al., 2023, p. 30).

Moreover, the misalignment between the objectives of the Library and Archives Service and other local government agencies (*organisasi perangkat daerah*/OPD) impeded collaboration. For instance, the Office of Trade and Cooperatives primarily targets existing entrepreneurs, while the Library and Archives Service aims to reach underserved communities. Bridging this gap would require a collaborative mecha-

nism, whereby the library office facilitates broader access to OPD training (Adhi, 2018). Such collaboration would enhance social inclusion efforts' effectiveness by leveraging multiple agencies' expertise and programs (Bunger et al., 2024; Jamasy et al., 2023).

From a social inclusion perspective, this lack of collaboration limits the ability of libraries to serve as community empowerment hubs. Ideally, TPBIS should integrate the efforts of various sectors, such as trade, education, and entrepreneurship, to deliver relevant and sustainable interventions (Haryanto et al., 2024, p. 765). By addressing diverse community needs through coordinated efforts, libraries can significantly enhance community welfare.

Budget and Infrastructure Quality

One of the main obstacles to implementing the TPBIS is the limited budget allocated to the program. Budget constraints significantly hinder the development of libraries as effective centers of social inclusion (Bouaamri, 2024). Moreover, libraries in regions such as South Bengkulu are hampered by inadequate infrastructure, including the absence of air conditioning, automation systems, and facilities to support user comfort, which have not been prioritized in development planning.

In 2023, the South Bengkulu Library received a capital budget of IDR 10 billion from the central government through the National Library for support in building construction. However, this budget was not optimally utilized for critical infrastructure needs such as bookshelves, chairs, and other supporting equipment. The South Bengkulu Library and Archives Office continues to express strong expectations for additional infrastructure support from both central and regional governments.

These budgetary limitations became even more evident when reviewing the 2023 and 2024 library budgets. In 2023, the South Bengkulu Library and Archives Office managed IDR 13.9 billion; however, the amount sharply decreased to IDR 4.1 billion in 2024. Based on the 2024 Budget Implementation Document, the library development program only received 6.04 percent of the total budget (approximately IDR 248 million), while the ancient manuscript preservation program was allocated IDR 52.3 million. The TPIBS program itself was budgeted at IDR 10.7 million in 2023, which increased to IDR 53 million in 2024—yet this rise did not translate into improved program outcomes.

Table 2. Library Budget

Programs/Activities	2023	2024
Building construction	IDR 10 billion	-
Library management	IDR 13.9 billion	IDR 4.1 billion
Library development	IDR 248 million	IDR 248.8 million
Preservation of ancient manuscript collections	IDR 52.3 million	IDR 52.3 million
Social inclusion-based library program	IDR 10.7 million	IDR 400.53 million

Source: South Bengkulu Regency Library and Archive Office, processed (2024).

Given the minimal budget, the library must focus on fundamental improvements in basic services, particularly infrastructure development, and enhancement of librarian competencies (Corrall, 2016). Without adequate facilities and skilled personnel, efforts to improve literacy through social inclusion initiatives are unlikely to succeed. The combination of a minimal budget and ineffective program design inevitably diminishes the program's impact.

To address these constraints, the Library and Archives Office should explore innovative budget strategies beyond reliance on central and regional allocation. This is especially critical given South Bengkulu's limited fiscal capacity. According to the South Bengkulu Regional Development Planning Agency (Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah/Bappeda), in 2023, the region's own-source revenue amounted to only IDR 40 billion, with the remaining IDR 875 billion sourced from central government transfers. These fiscal limitations make it difficult to finance all library initiatives.

Potential situations include inter-agency coordination and cross-sector collaboration (Hardin et al., 2020; Pittz & Intindola, 2021). However, the absence of initiative to pursue such collaborative efforts reflects a narrow problem-solving perspective. This also raises concerns regarding the role of the National Library, which mandates TPBIS implementation in financially limited regions without adequately considering local readiness in terms of infrastructure and human resources. As the TPBIS initiator, the National Library is expected to play a more active role in ensuring program feasibility and support.

Bappeda plays a pivotal role in ensuring that regional programs, including TPBIS, align with community needs and are budgeted efficiently. However, the current implementation suggests that Bappeda has not performed this role optimally. A comprehensive needs assessment and strategic selection of programs are required to ensure that each initiative is well-justified and provides tangible community benefits (Tablartin et al., 2023).

There is also concern that Bappeda has not fully grasped the primary objectives of TPBIS or key performance indicators for regional library services, as stipulated in Permendagri No. 18/2020. This lack of understanding, especially regarding TGM and IPLM, has resulted in minimal contributions to library program planning, which compromises the efficiency and effectiveness of budget use. As the central regional planning body, Bappeda should ensure all funded activities align with regional development priorities and contribute to the government's broader vision and mission.

While Bappeda recognized notable achievements, such as the MURI record for the "Bengkulu Selatan Membaca" program involving 131,000 participants, it also identified misaligned training activities conducted by the Library and Archives Office. For instance, training on composing, which should fall under the domain of trade or agricultural services, and vocational programs such as cooking or makeup training, were justified under the broad umbrella of social inclusion but lacked clear alignment with core library functions.

Such misalignment reflects a lack of understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and risks the misallocation of resources, thereby diminishing program effectiveness. Budgetary planning should prioritize initiatives that directly enhance library services and contribute to literacy development. However, weak coordination between Bappeda and the Library and Archives Office has hindered program integration and coherence. A shared understanding of institutional roles and mandates would greatly enhance the impact and sustainability of TPBIS programs.

Strengthening basic library services is essential to promoting literacy. Investment in infrastructure and librarian capacity building is vital to enabling libraries to function as inclusive knowledge hubs (Lopatina & Grushevskaya, 2023). Additionally, training and community programs must be guided by strategic, evidence-based planning to ensure they are responsive to local needs and transcend symbolic or ceremonial efforts.

Program Impact and Evaluation

One of the major challenges in implementing the TPBIS program is the lack of a comprehensive and systematic evaluation framework. The frequent changes in training activities from year to year, without program continuity or clearly defined evaluation mechanisms, have significantly reduced their effectiveness. Despite the various training sessions conducted, there has been no observable improvement in participants' skills or economic well-being. Evaluations have largely been anecdotal, lacking measurable data or validated indicators of success. Moreover, the discontinuation of activities and their limited coverage have undermined sustainability and broader community impact.

The program's reach remains limited due to the small number of participants, which prevents it from having a widespread community benefit. A key issue is the absence of in-depth assessments to determine whether the trainings genuinely enhance participants' literacy or quality of life. In South Bengkulu, program evaluations by the Library and Archives Office have been minimal. The TPBIS program has yet to demonstrate significant contributions to improving literacy or the Human Development Index (HDI). As of 2023, South Bengkulu's HDI stood at 71.9, considerably lower than Bengkulu City's 81.45, indicating the limited impact of library programs.

For example, no formal evaluation or feedback mechanism was employed following the makeup training session. Other training programs similarly lacked proper evaluation tools, making it difficult to assess their effectiveness. The TPBIS program has also failed to improve the TGM, a key indicator of social inclusion program success. Metrics such as reading frequency and duration, the number of books read, internet usage and library visits remain unmeasured.

In addition, key indicators of the IPLM have not shown improvement. These include:

- Equitable distribution of library services (UPLM1)
- Adequacy of library collections (UPLM2)
- Staffing adequacy (UPLM3)
- Public visitation rate (UPLM4)
- Compliance with national library standards (UPLM5)
- Public participation in socialization activities (UPLM6)
- Number of registered library members (UPLM7)

According to 2023 data from the National Library, the daily public visitation rate was just 0.3526, equating to only 0.09 percent of the population, falling significantly short of the ideal target. Approximately 44,748 additional daily visits would be required to meet this standard.

This exceptionally low visitation rate underscores a fundamental issue in the library's ability to attract and engage the public. The root of this problem lies in the lack of relevance between library services and community needs, especially regarding facilities, programs, and content. While the TPBIS program aspires to transform libraries into hubs of social inclusion, greater attention must be given to tailoring services to local socioeconomic conditions.

Cross-sectoral collaboration is crucial to ensure that library programs are not sporadic but strategically aligned with regional priorities. For example, skill-based training initiatives should reflect the economic potential of the area, enabling libraries to serve as practical learning environments (Tripathi, 2021). Promoting library services

through social media and partnerships with local institutions, such as the education department, could also enhance public awareness and participation.

To increase visitation and participation, libraries must upgrade their infrastructure, integrate technology-based services, and invest in librarian capacity development. A more proactive approach is needed to foster community engagement, focusing on accessibility, innovation, and responsiveness to community needs.

The TPBIS program has also failed to integrate library collections into its training activities. Many sessions were conducted without reference to available resources, limiting the learning experience and follow-up engagement. Participants rarely returned after a single visit, indicating that the program lacked mechanisms to cultivate sustained reading habits or enhance literacy levels.

These outcomes highlight the ineffectiveness of social inclusion programs that lack long-term strategies and rigorous evaluation. From a literacy and community development perspective, the TPBIS program in South Bengkulu has not fulfilled its intended objectives. The absence of measurable outcomes, continuity, and adequate reach has rendered it largely ceremonial.

Conversely, successful models of social inclusion in libraries exist, such as the *Perpustakaan Desa Gampingan Gemar Membaca* (Rachman et al., 2019) and the *Kampung Literasi 26 Ilir* in Palembang (Radarnesia, 2024). These programs demonstrate how libraries can serve as drivers of community empowerment by facilitating skill-building in waste management, hydroponics, digital marketing, and vocational training. These initiatives directly enhance livelihoods and showcase the broader role libraries can play in community development.

To replicate such success, the South Bengkulu Library and Archives Office must shift toward strengthening its village library network and implementing sustainable, locally relevant programs. Rather than offering sporadic training, libraries should establish continuous initiatives that foster long-term participation and deliver measurable improvement in literacy and well-being.

Furthermore, the underutilization of library collections in training sessions weakens the institution's role as a center for literature and learning. For the TPBIS and similar programs to succeed, libraries must prioritize program impact evaluations, optimize existing resources, and fortify their foundational services. Achieving genuine social inclusion requires sustained, community-centered efforts with a focus on skill development and tangible improvements in quality of life.

Conclusion

Regional government institutions, including the Library and Archives Office of the South Bengkulu Regency, often misinterpret the TPBIS concept. Rather than viewing it as a community empowerment through improved access to information and knowledge, some implementers perceive it merely as a budget-driven training initiative. As a result, the program's focus has strayed from its core objectives of promoting social inclusion and enhancing community welfare. This misalignment has led to activities that are not responsive to local needs and have failed to generate meaningful impacts.

The TPBIS program in South Bengkulu faces numerous challenges that have hindered its effectiveness. Training initiatives have been poorly planned and frequently reflect the preferences of agency leaders rather than being informed by community needs or regional potential. Budget constraints further exacerbate these challenges, while the lack of support and coordination from other relevant agencies has resulted in overlapping responsibilities and reduced implementation effectiveness. Conse-

quently, the program has not significantly improved key performance indicators, such as the TGM and the IPLM. Despite being designated as a priority, fundamental issues persist, such as inadequate infrastructure and insufficient librarian competencies, with librarians often functioning more as event organizers than as facilitators of meaningful learning.

A major concern is the absence of comprehensive needs assessments, resulting in programs that are poorly aligned with community realities. The sporadic and geographically limited implementation of TPBIS, coupled with inadequate inter-agency coordination, further limits its ability to achieve its social inclusion goals.

To overcome these issues, the South Bengkulu Library and Archives Office must deepen its understanding of the essence of TPBIS, particularly its role in advancing social inclusion and community empowerment. Staff training is essential to ensure that personnel are equipped to design, preceded by thorough needs assessments based on socio-economic and cultural data to ensure that the programs developed are relevant and impactful.

Moreover, TPBIS planning should be integrated into broader regional development strategies and supported by systemic impact evaluations using measurable indicators. Coordination with other government offices—such as the education, cooperative, and trade departments—is vital to strengthen program design and resource allocation.

The National Library of Indonesia should play a more active role in assisting regional libraries, including South Bengkulu, by providing technical support, regular monitoring, and comprehensive evaluations. Involving local communities and leaders in both planning and implementation will improve program relevance and sustainability. Without systemic planning and community engagement, TPBIS risks failing to fulfill its objectives and will have a limited impact on literacy development. Social inclusion and literacy advancement must progress in tandem, with libraries serving as dynamic learning hubs that empower communities through access to knowledge and skills.

Finally, the DPR RI is encouraged to adopt a more proactive role in overseeing the implementation of TPBIS across regions, particularly in underserved areas like South Bengkulu. This includes advocating for increased budget allocations for library infrastructure, such as the provision of digital facilities and mobile libraries that can reach remote communities. Capacity-building for human resources must also be strengthened to ensure that librarians and library managers possess the necessary competencies to optimize library services. These efforts will help ensure that literacy programs are inclusive, equitable, and sustainable, fostering a robust reading culture across all segments of society.

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