

Kodifikasi : Jurnal Penelitian Islam, Vol. 19, No. 2, 2025  
DOI : 10.21154/kodifikasi.v19i2.11805  
p-ISSN : 1907-6371  
e-ISSN : 2527-9254



## YOUTH SOCIAL CAPITAL AS A CATALYST OF EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION: A CASE STUDY OF RUANG DESA LITERACY MOVEMENT

Chairudin Anwar\*, Arik Dwijayanto\*\*, Syamsul Wathoni\*\*\*

### Abstract

Latar belakang penelitian ini mengangkat kesenjangan pendidikan antara wilayah perkotaan dan pedesaan di Indonesia, terutama dalam akses, kualitas, dan infrastruktur. Sebagai respons, muncul inisiatif gerakan berbasis komunitas seperti Komunitas Literasi Ruang Desa di Desa Sampung, Ponorogo, yang digerakkan oleh pemuda setempat. Tujuan penelitian adalah menganalisis (1) peran pemuda dalam pengembangan pendidikan masyarakat, (2) dampak komunitas terhadap literasi dan pendidikan desa, serta (3) model keberlanjutan gerakan. Metodologi menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif studi kasus dengan teori modal sosial Robert Putnam (jaringan, norma, kepercayaan). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pemuda berhasil membangun modal sosial melalui Bonding capital (kohesi internal pemuda), Bridging capital (jaringan dengan pemerintah desa dan masyarakat), Linking capital (kemitraan dengan lembaga eksternal seperti Perpustakaan Nasional). Dampaknya meliputi peningkatan partisipasi pemuda dalam tata kelola desa, pendirian Taman Baca Masyarakat (TBM), dan peningkatan literasi warga. Model keberlanjutan bertumpu pada empat pilar yaitu pendanaan mandiri (iuran anggota, donasi), penguatan kapasitas-regenerasi, kemitraan strategis, dan pengelolaan pengetahuan melalui TBM. Rekomendasi mencakup perlunya dukungan kebijakan untuk replikasi model serupa di pedesaan lain dan peningkatan legitimasi komunitas melalui pengakuan formal.

**Kata Kunci:** Pemberdayaan Pemuda, Pendidikan Berbasis Komunitas, Modal Sosial

### Abstrak

### Artikel Info

**Received:** 05 Juli 2025  
**Revised:** 10 Agustus 2025  
**Accepted:** 13 Agustus 2025  
**Published:** 14 Agustus 2025

\* Institut Agama Islam Sunan Giri Ponorogo, email: anwarchairudinanwar@gmail.com

\*\* Institut Agama Islam Sunan Giri Ponorogo, email: arikdj99@gmail.com

\*\*\* Institut Agama Islam Sunan Giri Ponorogo, email: toniahmed@gmail.com

---

The background of this research highlights the educational gap between urban and rural areas in Indonesia, particularly in terms of access, quality, and infrastructure. In response, community-based movement initiatives such as Ruang Desa Literacy Community in Sampung Village, Ponorogo, driven by local youth. The research objectives were to analyze (1) the role of youth in developing community education, (2) the impact of the community on village literacy and education, and (3) the movement's sustainability model. The methodology used a qualitative case study approach with Robert Putnam's social capital theory (networks, norms, and trust). The results showed that the youth successfully built social capital through Bonding capital (internal youth cohesion), Bridging capital (networks with village government and communities), and Linking capital (partnerships with external institutions, such as the National Library). The impacts included increased youth participation in village governance, the establishment of Community Reading Gardens (TBM), and increased community literacy. The sustainability model rests on four pillars: self-funding (membership fees, donations), capacity building and regeneration, strategic partnerships, and knowledge management through TBM. Recommendations include the need for policy support to replicate similar models in other rural areas and to increase community legitimacy through formal recognition.

**Keywords:** Youth Empowerment, Community-Based Education, Social Capital

## INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental right of every Indonesian citizen, expressly guaranteed in Article 31 Paragraphs (1) and (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, and reinforced by Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. However, this constitutional guarantee has not been fully realized evenly across all levels of society and regions.<sup>1</sup> The reality on the ground shows a significant gap in access to education, especially between urban and rural areas. Data from the Central

---

<sup>1</sup> Riris Sihombing, "Pemerataan Pendidikan: Studi Kasus 34 Provinsi Di Indonesia," *PARAHYANGAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REVIEW* 1, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.26593/pedr.v1i2.6670>.

Statistics Agency confirms that the school participation rate (APS) at the secondary education level in rural areas is consistently lower than in urban areas.<sup>2</sup> A World Bank study also highlights that children in rural and remote areas are significantly less likely to attend high school than their urban counterparts, thereby creating an inequality of opportunity from an early age.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to disparities in access, disparities in the quality of education are also a crucial issue hindering equity. Rural areas often face significant challenges in accessing and maintaining the quality of basic educational infrastructure, including adequate classrooms, libraries,<sup>4</sup> laboratories, and sanitation facilities.<sup>5</sup> Another challenge is the disparity in teacher distribution and qualifications. A UNESCO report highlights that schools in remote and rural areas in Indonesia tend to suffer from teacher shortages and struggle to access professional development.<sup>6</sup> Limited access to modern learning resources, such as textbooks, digital libraries, and reliable internet connectivity, further widens the gap in learning quality between rural and urban areas. The accumulation of these challenges in infrastructure, teacher employment, and learning resources creates a less supportive learning environment in many rural areas, hindering the achievement of inclusive and quality education as mandated by the constitution and development goals.

The education gap in Indonesia, particularly between urban and rural areas, presents significant challenges in addressing educational issues.

---

<sup>2</sup> Sazia Husna, R Nunung Nurwati, and Meilanny Budiarti Santoso, "IDENTIFIKASI ANGKA PARTISIPASI SEKOLAH JENJANG SD DAN SMA DI INDONESIA TAHUN 2021," *Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat (JPPM)* 3, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.24198/jppm.v3i2.40088>.

<sup>3</sup> Yuda Maya Septiana, Solfema Solfema, and Dasa Lili Putri, "Upaya Dalam Pemerataan Pendidikan Di Daerah Terpencil," *Jurnal Kajian Dan Penelitian Umum* 2, no. 6 (2024): 162–69, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.47861/jkpu-nalanda.v2i6.1446>.

<sup>4</sup> Anwar Hidayat, "KESENJANGAN SOSIAL TERHADAP PENDIDIKAN SEBAGAI PENGARUH ERA GLOBALISASI," *Justisi Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 2, no. 1 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.36805/jjih.v2i1.400>.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Barrett et al., *The Impact of School Infrastructure on Learning: A Synthesis of the Evidence*, *The Impact of School Infrastructure on Learning: A Synthesis of the Evidence*, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-1378-8>.

<sup>6</sup> Ida Wahyu Wijayati, Fritz Hotman Syahmahita Damanik, and Carlos Lazaro Prawirosastro, "Kesenjangan Akses Pendidikan Di Daerah Terpencil: Analisis Kebijakan Dan Alternatif Solusi," *Journal Scientific of Mandalika* 6, no. 3 (2025): 671–77.

Access to quality education tends to be better in urban areas than in rural areas, where infrastructure, facilities, and human resources are often inadequate. Research shows that limited educational infrastructure in rural areas, whether in the form of inadequate schools or potentially lower-quality teaching, negatively impacts children's ability to receive a decent education.<sup>7</sup> Surveys indicate that children living in rural areas are more likely to be out of school than their urban counterparts, creating significant disparities in learning opportunities and the development of their potential.<sup>8</sup> For example, in the context of West Kalimantan, a study exploring the implementation of educational supervision found that supporting conditions in urban areas are significantly better, impacting the effectiveness of learning in schools.<sup>9</sup> These differences in the availability and quality of educational facilities widen the gap, often leaving rural communities marginalized from access to adequate education.<sup>10</sup>

The factors causing the education gap between urban and rural areas in Indonesia are complex and interconnected, including economic conditions, access to technology, and prevailing cultural norms. In many areas, parents in rural areas typically have lower levels of education, which contributes to their limited knowledge about the importance of education and how to ensure their children have access to a good education.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the implementation of educational technology, such as distance learning, faces significant obstacles due to the lack of digital infrastructure in rural areas, such as unstable internet access and limited

---

<sup>7</sup> Mohamad Fahmi and Demy Marizka, "Analisis Karakteristik Anak Tidak Bersekolah Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Pembangunan Indonesia* 14, no. 2 (2014): 188–200, <https://doi.org/10.21002/jepi.v14i2.559>.

<sup>8</sup> Fahmi and Marizka.

<sup>9</sup> Siswanto Siswanto et al., "Studi Komparatif Implementasi Supervisi Pendidikan Di Sekolah Dasar Pada Wilayah Perkotaan Dan Perdesaan," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Indonesia (Jppi)* 4, no. 4 (2024): 1746–55, <https://doi.org/10.53299/jppi.v4i4.768>.

<sup>10</sup> Aris Sarjito, "Dampak Digitalisasi Administrasi Perdesaan Di Negara Berkembang," *Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Administrasi* 13, no. 2 (2023): 106–24, <https://doi.org/10.33592/jiia.v13i2.3814>.

<sup>11</sup> Dara H Dharana, Rezqita A Arbani, and Ichsan F Rachman, "Membangun Kualitas Hidup Melalui Literasi (Analisis Kasus Masyarakat Sunda)," *Jurnal Kesehatan Masyarakat Indonesia (JKMI)* 1, no. 3 (2024): 79–86, <https://doi.org/10.62017/jkmi.v1i3.1257>.

access to technological devices.<sup>12</sup> Public policies that have not fully reached remote areas also hamper efforts to equalize access to education across Indonesia. The involvement of all stakeholders, including the government, communities, and educational institutions, is key to designing long-term strategies that can overcome these challenges and create an environment conducive to equitable learning.<sup>13</sup> Collaborative efforts to build infrastructure, provide teacher training, and raise public awareness of the importance of education are essential to effectively reduce this gap.<sup>14</sup>

In this context, the active role of the community is crucial in complementing and strengthening the existing formal education system. A study conducted by Adiyanti states that community participation is a crucial element in education<sup>15</sup>. Community-based educational movements can improve the quality of education.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, community involvement is crucial for educational governance and curriculum development. Communities play a crucial role in educational success and resource utilization.<sup>17</sup> Afifah also conducted a study describing community participation in education at Community Learning Activity Centers (PKBM). Although community participation is not yet optimal, she recommends

---

<sup>12</sup> Asep Koswara, "Digitalisasi Ekonomi Di Pedesaan: Mengkaji Kesenjangan Infrastruktur Digital Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Al Azhar Indonesia Seri Ilmu Sosial* 5, no. 3 (2024): 180, <https://doi.org/10.36722/jaiss.v5i3.3407>.

<sup>13</sup> Fery Wijayanto, Ai Hidayatunnajah, and Amilia Lestari, "Pengembangan Inovasi Sekolah Alam: Upaya Meningkatkan Literasi Anak Di Pedesaan," *Jurnal Pembelajaran Pemberdayaan Masyarakat (Jp2m)* 5, no. 1 (2024): 106–18, <https://doi.org/10.33474/jp2m.v5i1.21447>.

<sup>14</sup> Wijayanto, Hidayatunnajah, and Lestari; M A Rusandi et al., "Pendampingan Bimbingan Belajar Untuk Meningkatkan Kualitas Pendidikan Siswa SD Di Kelurahan Bagan Keladi, Dumai, Provinsi Riau," *Journal of Community Engagement Research for Sustainability* 3, no. 3 (2023): 157–63, <https://doi.org/10.31258/cers.3.3.157-163>.

<sup>15</sup> Tri Astuti, "PARTISIPASI MASYARAKAT DALAM MEMBANGUN PENDIDIKAN NONFORMAL DI DUSUN SAMAN II, BANGUNHARJO, SEWON, BANTUL," *Diklus: Jurnal Pendidikan Luar Sekolah* 1, no. 2 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.21831/diklus.v1i2.23862>.

<sup>16</sup> Syakila Fatkhia Rizki et al., "Gerakan Peduli Pendidikan Berbasis Komunitas (Studi Kasus Pada Komunitas Peduli Bergerak)," *Community Development: Jurnal Pengembangan Masyarakat Islam* 7, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.21043/cdjpmi.v7i1.21439>.

<sup>17</sup> Normina Normina, "PARTISIPASI MASYARAKAT DALAM PENDIDIKAN," *ITTihad* 14, no. 26 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.18592/ittihad.v14i26.874>.

improving understanding of community participation in educational development.<sup>18</sup>

One interesting phenomenon is the emergence of a community-based education movement initiated by village youth. This is the Ruang Desa literacy community established in Sampung Village, Ponorogo. This community represents a community movement, where village youth take on the role of agents of change in improving literacy and the quality of education in their community. This phenomenon is interesting to study because it demonstrates the community's potential to address its educational challenges. The urgency of this research lies in several important aspects. First, this research can provide an overview of the potential and capacity of village youth to contribute to educational development, which has often been overlooked in the formulation of national education policy. Second, this study can identify innovative models for developing community-based education that may be adapted or replicated in other regions with similar characteristics. Third, in the context of educational decentralization, this research can provide valuable input on how to strengthen community participation in education delivery at the local level.

Although several previous studies have examined community-based education led by youth, several research gaps remain underexplored. Rofiki, Muslim, and Diana's studies focused more on the management and institutional aspects of community-based education, but did not specifically examine the role of youth as key drivers of change.<sup>19</sup> Seftiani's paper examines the role of youth, but their empowerment is through the

---

<sup>18</sup> Maulina Nur Afifah, Dayat Hidayat, and Safuri Musa, "Partisipasi Masyarakat Dalam Penyelenggaraan Program Pendidikan Masyarakat Di Pusat Kegiatan Belajar Masyarakat Tim Suara Masyarakat Dawuan Cikampek," *Jurnal Eksistensi Pendidikan Luar Sekolah: E-Plus* 8, no. 1 (2023): 1–5.

<sup>19</sup> Moh. Rofiki, Naufal Mubarak, and Muhammad Angga, "Manajemen Pendidikan Berbasis Community Engagement Dalam Peningkatan Mutu Sekolah," *ALFIHRIS : Jurnal Inspirasi Pendidikan* 2, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.59246/alfihris.v2i1.667>; A. Q. Muslim and I. G. S. Suci, "Peran Manajemen Pendidikan Nonformal Berbasis Masyarakat Sebagai Upaya Peningkatan Sumber Daya Manusia Di Indonesia," *Pratama Widya: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 5, no. 2 (2020); Nirva Diana, "Manajemen Pendidikan Berbasis Budaya Lokal Lampung (Analisis Eksploratif Mencari Basis Filosofis)," *Analisis : Jurnal Studi Keislaman* XXII, no. 1 (2019).

involvement of third parties, not by local village youth.<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, Rahman's research, which examines youth involvement in village development, focuses more on economic and political aspects, while their role in educational development has not received adequate attention.<sup>21</sup> Another significant gap is the limited number of studies that use in-depth qualitative approaches to understand the social dynamics, motivations, and values underlying community-based education movements. Most previous research uses quantitative approaches or policy analysis, which fail to capture the complexity of experiences, challenges, and adaptation strategies employed by grassroots education movement actors.

This research seeks to fill this gap by conducting an in-depth case study of the Village Spatial Literacy Community, with a particular focus on the role of village youth as key drivers. Through a qualitative approach, this research will explore the complex social dynamics, motivations, strategies, challenges, and impacts of this community-based education movement. The results are expected to contribute to the development of community-based education theory and practice, as well as provide input for the formulation of more inclusive and responsive education policies to local contexts.

The Village Spatial Literacy Community was chosen as a case study in this study because it possesses several unique characteristics relevant to the research objectives. First, this community was initiated and managed by village youth, most of whom are indigenous people with diverse educational backgrounds and have been under-involved in village development. Second, despite operating with limited resources, this community has demonstrated significant achievements in increasing reading and literacy interest among the village community. Third, this community's operational model combines local wisdom with contemporary educational approaches, creating a creative model that is adaptive to the village context.

This research employs a qualitative approach to uncover facts on the ground regarding the role and contribution of village youth in developing

---

<sup>20</sup> Tika Seftiani, Ajeng Jean Rica, and Suryani Eka Agustina, "Partisipasi Pemuda Dalam Pengembangan Komunitas Senyum Anak Nusantara Melalui Kegiatan Pengabdian Masyarakat," *Empowerment* 5, no. 03 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.25134/empowerment.v5i03.5274>.

<sup>21</sup> Abdur Rahman et al., "Peran Dan Esensi Karang Taruna Dalam Pengembangan Masyarakat Di Desa Jangur," *Profetik: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat* 2, no. 2 (2024): 23–35.

community education through the Ruang Desa Literacy Community. Second, the impact of this community's presence on education and literacy development, and third, the sustainability model of Ruang Desa community-based education. This research also employs a theoretical perspective based on Robert Putnam's social capital theory. The application of this theory enables a comprehensive examination of various dimensions of the community-based education movement, encompassing relational aspects, social networks, collective learning processes, and the emancipatory and transformative aspects of this educational movement.

## DISCUSSION

### **The Role and Contribution of the Ruang Desa Community in Building Society in Sampung Village**

The initiative to establish Ruang Desa by youth can be richly analyzed through the lens of Robert Putnam's social capital theory, specifically the concepts of networks, norms, and trust that facilitate cooperation and coordination for the common good.<sup>22</sup> This group of initiating youth, although diverse in educational backgrounds, has naturally formed a social network (bonding social capital) based on their close age (20-23 years old) and status as village youth. This cohesive network serves as the initial foundation for their collective action. However, what is more interesting is how the Ruang Desa initiative has strong potential to become a catalyst for building bridging social capital and linking social capital at the village level.

The diversity of educational backgrounds within the initiating group itself reflects the potential for bridging capital, connecting individuals with varying levels of formal knowledge. Different motivations for their founding—for example, a community leader or a student brings critical awareness from campus activism about educational access, while other youth are driven by a desire to advance a stagnant village and the minimal role of youth—represent diverse yet complementary sources of value. These differing motivations, if well-managed through dialogue within the group, can enrich Ruang Desa's approach and establish more inclusive norms of reciprocity. Ruang Desa's primary focus, namely improving educational

---

<sup>22</sup> Robert D Putnam, "Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community: New York: Simon Und Schuster, 2001. ISBN," *Policy Analysis* 20 (2000).



access and advancing the village, explicitly aims to extend beyond the small group of initiators. It aims to build a broader network (bridging capital) with all youth and the village community, combating the fragmentation and apathy cited by respondents (such as the lack of awareness of youth contributions). Ruang Desa has the potential to become a neutral space where broader trust between residents, particularly among the younger generation, can be fostered through shared activities.

Furthermore, the community leader's initiative, which brought the concept from the campus, demonstrates the seeds of linking social capital. He attempts to connect resources, knowledge, and perhaps networks from institutions outside the village (campus) with local needs. Although the intensity of this relationship with external institutions remains unexplained, his approach demonstrates an understanding of the importance of connecting the local community with broader resources and development structures. The critical awareness he brings also represents a form of collective knowledge that is a component of social capital. The initiator's age (early adulthood) aligns with Putnam's theory of the importance of early involvement in building civic habits and long-term social capital for the community. In other words, Ruang Desa is not just a physical project, but a strategic effort to revitalize social networks, establish new norms of cooperation, and foster trust among young people to collectively advance the village and overcome the stagnation they have identified.

The role of youth is also evident in their contributions to building this learning space. The use of the village head's house as a command post and library represents a concrete form of strong social capital bonding among the core group. This willingness to share personal assets reflects the high level of trust and reciprocity that has been built between them, serving as the operational basis for the initiative. However, the home's function as a public space has also begun to act as bridging capital, attracting other youth and residents to access the facility (the reading park), thus addressing previously feared fragmentation.

Furthermore, the coordinated contribution of ideas through the organization demonstrates the institutionalization of social capital. The process of indexing ideas and coordination by the leader creates collective norms and standard procedures, transforming personal-relationship-based social capital into a more structured and sustainable one. This addresses the

challenge of village stagnation by creating a permanent mechanism for innovation. Third, the development of external networks with similar communities in and around Ponorogo is a concrete manifestation of the previously predicted bridging and linking of social capital. This activity expands Ruang Desa's sphere of influence and resources beyond the village's boundaries, connecting it with broader networks and external structures. This realizes the potential initiated by Ruang Desa's leader (bringing the campus idea), while simultaneously combating village isolation by establishing new flows of knowledge and support. These multi-level contributions—facilities, ideas, and networks—not only strengthen the initial stock of social capital but also actively broaden and deepen it for long-term collective action to advance the village.

Ruang Desa exists with a noble mission to act as a vital link between village communities and access to education, positioning itself as a facilitator. Its goal is to maintain village existence through literacy and education, targeting groups underserved by formal education. In carrying out its mission, youth play a central role as driving actors and bridges of social capital, by social capital theory, which emphasizes networks, trust, and norms to achieve shared goals.

Ruang Desa's mission reflects the development of three dimensions of social capital. First, structural capital is seen in efforts to build sustainable relationships to strengthen the social dimension of the community. Youth, through Ruang Desa, create networks and organizational structures (study groups) that connect various community elements and external educational resources. Second, relational capital is built through trust and solidarity. The mission of serving and assisting children, youth, and parents who cannot access education through collaborative study groups creates social bonds and mutual trust between youth facilitators and students, as well as between residents. Third, cognitive capital is strengthened by a commitment to preserving and respecting local wisdom as a way of life. This creates shared values, norms, and understandings that serve as the foundation of educational activities, making them relevant and accepted.

Youth, as the driving force behind Ruang Desa, act as agents mobilizing social capital.<sup>23</sup> They not only transfer knowledge but also facilitate "bridging capital" by connecting isolated village communities with the broader world of knowledge and information. Simultaneously, they strengthen "bonding capital" within the community through study groups and appreciation of local wisdom, enhancing social cohesion. Thus, Ruang Desa, animated by the energy and idealism of youth, becomes a practical embodiment of how social capital—in the form of networks, trust, and shared values—is leveraged to bridge educational gaps and sustainably empower village communities.

### **Opening Access, Building Trust: The Impact of the Ruang Desa Community Program on Social and Educational Development in Sampung Village**

The presence of the Ruang Desa Community in Sampung Village has had a transformative impact, particularly in building social capital and mobilizing youth participation. This impact analysis will be systematically outlined using Robert Putnam's social capital theory, which emphasizes three main pillars: Networks, Norms, and Trust.<sup>24</sup> Before the arrival of Ruang Desa, Sampung Village faced challenges related to youth participation and social cohesion. Youth were often marginalized in the village empowerment process. Development activities were dominated by village officials, reflecting a low level of collective awareness. A widening trust gap existed between religious leaders, the wider community, and the younger generation. The stigma that youth were "not ready" and "lacking competence" created psychological and structural barriers that diminished their role. Under these conditions, social capital—the networks, norms, and trust that facilitate collaboration—was severely weakened. The presence of Ruang Desa then acted as a crucial catalyst. This community not only provided a space for youth to express themselves but also actively branded their competencies and built bridges of trust with various village

---

<sup>23</sup> Abdullah Suparman, "POTENSI DAN KEKUATAN MODAL SOSIAL DALAM SUATU KOMUNITAS," *Socius: Jurnal Sosiologi* XXI, no. Volume 12 Number 1, January 2013 (2013).

<sup>24</sup> Robert D Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 1 (1995), <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1995.0002>.

stakeholders. The goal is clear: to build the capacity of youth so that they can participate fully in advancing the village.

Putnam emphasized that trust is the primary foundation of social capital.<sup>25</sup> Ruang Desa successfully catalyzed the growth of trust, particularly between the village government and youth, which had previously been minimal. Ruang Desa achieved a transformation in legitimacy with the issuance of the Ruang Desa Decree by the village institution, which, if understood, is not merely an administrative formality. It is concrete evidence of a significant paradigm shift. The decree is a symbol of official recognition (institutionalized trust) that transforms previously formal, rigid, and limited relationships into more flexible and mutually beneficial ones.

The Village Head's entrusting of youth activities to Ruang Desa demonstrates a fundamental transformation from a top-down, hierarchical relationship to a collaborative, participatory one. This aligns with Putnam's theory that trust is not something that emerges instantly, but rather the result of repeated and institutionalized interactions.<sup>26</sup> Ruang Desa becomes a platform for these meaningful interactions, gradually eroding negative stigma and demonstrating the youth's capabilities, thereby gaining the trust not only of the village government but also of religious leaders and the wider community.

Due to the above, community networks are expanding, forming bridging capital and collective efficiency. Putnam distinguishes two types of networks within social capital: bonding capital (homogeneous ties within similar groups) and bridging capital (heterogeneous networks connecting different groups).<sup>27</sup> Ruang Desa serves as a powerful catalyst for bridging the capital gap. Ruang Desa effectively bridges previously alienated youth groups with the village government and other communities in Sampung Village. It facilitates the exchange of information, resources, and perspectives that were previously hindered.

Furthermore, based on data findings, it was shown that Ruang Desa changed communication patterns. Previously formal and infrequent,

---

<sup>25</sup> Putnam, "Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community: New York: Simon Und Schuster, 2001. ISBN."

<sup>26</sup> F. Fukuyama, "Social Capital, Civil Society and Development," *Third World Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (2001), <https://doi.org/10.1080/713701144>.

<sup>27</sup> Fukuyama.

communication became intensive and meaningful. Routine activities such as collaborative learning and training not only strengthened internal bonding capital among youth (building solidarity and group identity) but, more importantly, opened access to external networks (bridging capital). A concrete example is the involvement of Ruang Desa youth delegates in cross-community activities. This denser and more connected network, as Putnam emphasized, significantly increased the efficiency of collective action. Coordination became easier, resources could be mobilized more effectively, and shared goals were more easily achieved because communication barriers and mistrust were reduced.

According to Putnam, the third pillar of social capital is norms, particularly the norm of reciprocity and shared values. Ruang Desa plays a central role in fostering and strengthening these positive norms.<sup>28</sup> The active participation of youth in Ruang Desa activities reflects the growth of these norms. Initially, passive youth become motivated to contribute to social roles (for example, by participating in the management of Islamic schools) because they believe their contributions will be valued and "rewarded" in the future, whether through recognition, trust, or opportunities. Ruang Desa creates a fertile environment of reciprocity. Youth involvement is rewarded with increased community trust, as demonstrated by the appointment of the community leader as the madrasah coordinator. This is a tangible manifestation of civic engagement that strengthens the cycle of social capital: participation fosters trust, which in turn encourages further participation.

The initiative of the Ruang Desa leader and members to build awareness of education, particularly literacy, reflects the formation of cognitive social capital – shared values and understandings that are essential for effective community development. The collective belief that "literacy is the gateway to empowerment" becomes a unifying norm and a mobilizing norm. This value not only motivates young people to educate themselves but also fosters a strong commitment to empowering the wider community, demonstrating the altruistic norm within their social capital. The Ruang Desa community's ability to identify collective needs – such as limited access to books – and then take concrete initiatives (establishing a Community

---

<sup>28</sup> Putnam, "Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community: New York: Simon Und Schuster, 2001. ISBN."

Reading Garden) is a manifestation of the norm of shared responsibility. They not only see problems but also feel a collective responsibility to find solutions.

The establishment of Community Reading Gardens (TBM) by Ruang Desa is a smart strategy to expand linking capital. Expanding linking capital, according to Putnam, refers to networks connecting individuals or groups with figures or institutions that possess formal power and resources (such as the government or donor agencies). TBMs function as brokers that facilitate access to external resources (books, knowledge, networks with the general public, potential government/institutional support). A deeper look at TBMs goes beyond simply providing literacy facilities; they become a vital and inclusive public resource.

They facilitate academic and social interactions across generations (children, adolescents, adults) and backgrounds. This embodies Putnam's principle that social capital accumulates optimally through inclusive public spaces. Routine interactions in spaces like TBMs build trust, strengthen shared norms, and expand networks—all three components of social capital fostered here.

Based on the analysis above, it is clear that Ruang Desa has become the epicenter of social capital accumulation in Sampung Village through Putnam's three mechanisms simultaneously, expanding youth networks vertically (with the village government) and horizontally (with the community and between communities), strengthening bonding and bridging capital, and developing linking capital through TBM. Then, creating and strengthening a reciprocal culture through active participation, and instilling shared values of literacy and empowerment as unifying and driving norms. In addition, it also fosters vertical trust (between village government and youth) through institutional recognition (SK) and horizontal trust (between residents and between groups) through intensive interaction and evidence of real contributions.

The transformative impact of this social capital accumulation is visible in two key areas: the increased role of youth in village governance. The trust established allows youth to take a significant role in managing village assets, such as the Islamic school (madrasah diniyah). This represents a leap from a marginalized position to becoming a managing partner. Furthermore, this step marks a significant educational breakthrough, as the establishment of a

community reading garden represents a direct educational innovation born of collective awareness and established networks. It addresses a pressing need while also providing an inclusive learning space.

These findings prove Putnam's thesis that social capital is not merely a by-product of community development, but rather a key driver of sustainable social change. Ruang Desa successfully converted accumulated social capital (in the form of networks, norms, and trust) into functional capital—resources actively utilized to achieve collective goals (madrasah management, TBM establishment, and development participation). This conversion occurred through participatory design and the strengthening of community institutions. Thus, the Ruang Desa case in Sampung reinforces Putnam's core argument: investing in inclusive and empowering civic spaces is a strategic key to building social capital and fostering community empowerment. Ruang Desa has become a living proof of how opening access and building trust can transform the social and educational landscape of a village.

### **Pillars of Community Sustainability: Funding, Capacity-Regeneration, Partnerships, and Knowledge**

The existence of communities that are already operating and impacting the community must be maintained. This relates to the sustainability of the community's ideal concepts, ideas, and values. Therefore, in the context of community sustainability, Ruang Desa recognizes the urgency of cadre development and the creation of a viable community ecosystem. This also includes how to operationalize community sustainability both internally and externally. The existence of community sustainability must be a shared responsibility, not only for community members but also for those who benefit from the community's existence, to participate in its development and decision-making.

To support the existence of a community, several pillars of sustainability have been identified, including the community funding model, capacity building, member regeneration, partnership models, and knowledge management within the community. These pillars mutually support one another to achieve success. These pillars will be explained in the paragraphs below.

Ruang Desa demonstrates a sound funding strategy by leveraging various layers of social capital. Their primary funding source comes from membership dues. This practice is a concrete manifestation of the norms of reciprocity and trust among members. They voluntarily contribute because they believe in the community's shared goals and expect shared benefits from its sustainability. This can foster internal cohesion and a sense of collective responsibility. Furthermore, the community actively reaches out to external networks to diversify its funding sources. They receive funding from local government agencies, which requires trust from the local government in the performance and goals of the village community.

Furthermore, they proactively seek external networks, including donor agencies. Participation in funding grant competitions, such as the Literacy School, although not winning, demonstrates efforts to bridge access to new resources. Donations of books and facilities from the wider community are also a result of bridging. Public trust is built because the village community has a tangible form, namely the Community Reading Garden, which provides benefits.

Funding activities, whether through contributions, donations, or grants, rely heavily on trust and confidence. Members trust management to use their contributions appropriately. Donors trust that their contributions are used for literacy purposes. Village institutions and potential donors need to trust the community's capacity and integrity. The National Library Identification Number (NLP) from the National Library of Indonesia (Perpusnas RI) provides formal legitimacy, which significantly strengthens this external trust. The strategy of "trying to become a financially independent community" reflects efforts to build financial sustainability based on a combination of bonding (membership) and bridging (external networking) social capital.

Furthermore, member capacity development and a management regeneration system are at the heart of strengthening social bonds and ensuring the community's existence. Training can strengthen social capital. For example, organizational management training has the strategic goal of aligning members' perceptions, vision, and mission with those of the organization. This is a direct investment in building shared norms and a collective understanding of the community's rules. When members share a shared understanding of organizational management, coordination is



facilitated, trust between members increases, and potential conflicts are minimized. This strengthens internal cohesion (bonding).

In addition to strengthening the organizational context, Ruang Desa also strengthens human resources to create a capable cadre ecosystem. Ruang Desa routinely holds its flagship program, namely Ngangsu Kaweruh (seeking knowledge), which is held once a month, and writing training sessions are held at specific times. These two programs have a dual function: first, as a vehicle for knowledge exchange (knowledge sharing) internally and with the surrounding community. Second, by presenting external speakers, this program also creates a light bridge with experts in various fields, enriching the members' insights. Writing trainings not only increase individual capacity but also strengthens the collective voice of the community through publications, which in turn can build external trust and reputation (bridging).

Some programs are also related to funding sustainability. A new economic program initiated by the community provides a space for expression while simultaneously fostering community economic independence. Training in creating merchandise responds to opportunities in tourism villages. This demonstrates good adaptability and forward-thinking. More importantly, it directly builds members' economic capacity. When members experience tangible economic benefits from the community (jobs, new skills), their bond and commitment to the community strengthen. The success of this venture can also boost collective self-confidence and external reputation.

Regarding the organizational regeneration system, Ruang Desa has its mechanism regulated in the Articles of Association (AD) and Bylaws (ART). These regulations govern the roles, functions, and mechanisms of the organization, which are crucial instruments for its operation. This creates explicit norms and transparent procedures. The deliberation mechanism for consensus in the election of the chairman, which prioritizes quality and capacity, reflects the principles of participatory democracy and builds trust in the system. A clear structure and an inclusive regeneration process based on deliberation minimize succession conflicts, maintain internal stability, and ensure the smooth transfer of knowledge and leadership. This provides a strong foundation for bonding social capital, essential for organizational sustainability.

As a young community, Ruang Desa is acutely aware of the urgency of building social capital bridges. They are focused on building networks, and the results are now beginning to show. Participation in funding competitions (literacy school grants) is a proactive way to reach out to external funding agencies. Networking with the National Library of Indonesia (TBM) community and participating in the National Library of Indonesia (TBM) meeting are strategic steps to learn, exchange experiences, and gain recognition from more established communities. Membership in the East Java Library Forum also serves as an effort to expand regional networks. The most significant recognition comes from the National Library of Indonesia (Perpusnas RI), which has granted a Library Identification Number to the Ruang Desa Community Reading Garden. This is not merely administrative legitimacy, but a formal acknowledgment of the existence and standards of the TBM. This trust from the highest state institution in the library sector is invaluable and opens up potential access to resources, information, and broader networks in the future. All of these partnership activities are investments in bridging social capital, vital for the community's growth, learning, and long-term sustainability.

The final pillar related to community sustainability is knowledge management. Through the Community Reading Garden (Taman Baca Masyarakat), the teacher's room (ruang guru) makes the institution the epicenter of social capital. More than just a physical facility, the community reading garden is a manifestation of social capital. The reading garden's function as a space for education, literacy, the exchange of ideas, and creativity makes it a hub of activity that facilitates intensive social interaction. It is in this space that networks between members and with the surrounding community are strengthened. The process of learning together, discussing, and creating builds norms of mutual learning and intellectual trust. The reading garden serves as a space for incubating social capital.

Furthermore, members' participation in other community activities and then discussing them back in Ruang Desa is a highly effective mechanism for knowledge dissemination. This discussion process is the heart of knowledge exchange. This allows knowledge, insights, ideas, and concepts from outside to flow in, be internalized, and distributed to members who have not had the opportunity, enriching the community's collective intellectual capital. The

Community Reading Garden (TBM) catalyzes strengthening both bonding and bridging as a channel for external knowledge inflow.

This analysis reveals that Ruang Desa intuitively and strategically builds its sustainability pillars by strengthening and leveraging social capital. Self-funding is built on a foundation of trust and networks, both internal and external, through village funds and donor outreach. Institutionalized capacity building and regeneration strengthen internal cohesion, create explicit shared norms, build trust in the leadership system, and enhance member resilience and commitment. Actively forged partnerships are a key investment in networks, expanding access to knowledge resources, legitimacy, and new opportunities essential for organizational growth. Knowledge management through community reading gardens serves as an epicenter, facilitating the exchange of ideas and knowledge sharing, a vital mechanism for enriching collective intellectual capital and strengthening internal and external ties.

These four pillars do not operate in isolation from one another. Economic capacity development (e.g., merchandise) can become a source of independent funding. Partnerships with the national TBM network provide access to knowledge and funding opportunities. Legitimacy from the National Library (a result of bridging) strengthens internal and external trust. TBMs become a tangible platform for all activities that strengthen social capital. This combination of substantial bonding social capital (from committed members, a clear organizational system, and shared norms) and continuously expanding bridging social capital (through networks, partnerships, and legitimacy) is key for Ruang Desa to survive as a young community and develop towards independence and long-term existence.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Ruang Desa Literacy Community has successfully catalyzed educational and social transformation in Sampung Village through the utilization of social capital. The role of youth as the main driver is evident in building networks (bridging and linking capital) that bridge the gap in access to education, including collaboration with village governments and national institutions. Creating educational and social impacts, such as establishing TBM as an inclusive space, increasing literacy, and strengthening community trust and participation. Guaranteeing the

existence of the community through four pillars: (1) Trust-based funding (contributions, donations, grants), (2) Regeneration of institutionalized management, (3) Strategic partnerships (national TBM network), (3) Knowledge management via TBM as the epicenter of learning. These findings support Putnam's thesis that social capital is the driving force of change in society. Replication of this model in other rural areas is recommended by adapting to the local context and supporting affirmative policies.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abdullah Suparman. "POTENSI DAN KEKUATAN MODAL SOSIAL DALAM SUATU KOMUNITAS." *Socius: Jurnal Sosiologi* XXI, no. Volume 12 Number 1, January 2013 (2013).
- Afifah, Maulina Nur, Dayat Hidayat, and Safuri Musa. "Partisipasi Masyarakat Dalam Penyelenggaraan Program Pendidikan Masyarakat Di Pusat Kegiatan Belajar Masyarakat Tim Suara Masyarakat Dawuan Cikampek." *Jurnal Eksistensi Pendidikan Luar Sekolah: E-Plus* 8, no. 1 (2023): 1-5.
- Astuti, Tri. "PARTISIPASI MASYARAKAT DALAM MEMBANGUN PENDIDIKAN NONFORMAL DI DUSUN SAMAN II, BANGUNHARJO, SEWON, BANTUL." *Diklus: Jurnal Pendidikan Luar Sekolah* 1, no. 2 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.21831/diklus.v1i2.23862>.
- Barrett, Peter, Alberto Treves, Tigran Shmis, Diego Ambasz, and Maria Ustinova. *The Impact of School Infrastructure on Learning: A Synthesis of the Evidence. The Impact of School Infrastructure on Learning: A Synthesis of the Evidence*, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-1378-8>.
- Dharana, Dara H, Rezqita A Arbani, and Ichsan F Rachman. "Membangun Kualitas Hidup Melalui Literasi (Analisis Kasus Masyarakat Sunda)." *Jurnal Kesehatan Masyarakat Indonesia (JKMI)* 1, no. 3 (2024): 79-86. <https://doi.org/10.62017/jkmi.v1i3.1257>.
- Diana, Nirva. "Manajemen Pendidikan Berbasis Budaya Lokal Lampung (Analisis Eksploratif Mencari Basis Filosofis)." *Analisis : Jurnal Studi Keislaman* XXII, no. 1 (2019).
- Fahmi, Mohamad, and Demy Marizka. "Analisis Karakteristik Anak Tidak Bersekolah Di Indonesia." *Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Pembangunan Indonesia* 14, no. 2 (2014): 188-200. <https://doi.org/10.21002/jepi.v14i2.559>.
- Fukuyama, F. "Social Capital, Civil Society and Development." *Third World Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (2001). <https://doi.org/10.1080/713701144>.
- Hidayat, Anwar. "KESENJANGAN SOSIAL TERHADAP PENDIDIKAN SEBAGAI PENGARUH ERA GLOBALISASI." *Justisi Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 2, no. 1 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.36805/jjih.v2i1.400>.
- Husna, Sazia, R Nunung Nurwati, and Meilanny Budiarti Santoso. "IDENTIFIKASI ANGKA PARTISIPASI SEKOLAH JENJANG SD DAN SMA DI INDONESIA TAHUN 2021." *Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat (JPPM)* 3, no. 2 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.24198/jppm.v3i2.40088>.
- Koswara, Asep. "Digitalisasi Ekonomi Di Pedesaan: Mengkaji Kesenjangan Infrastruktur Digital Di Indonesia." *Jurnal Al Azhar Indonesia Seri Ilmu Sosial* 5, no. 3 (2024): 180. <https://doi.org/10.36722/jaiss.v5i3.3407>.
- Moh. Rofiki, Naufal Mubarak, and Muhammad Angga. "Manajemen

- Pendidikan Berbasis Community Engagement Dalam Peningkatan Mutu Sekolah." *ALFIHRIS: Jurnal Inspirasi Pendidikan* 2, no. 1 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.59246/alfihris.v2i1.667>.
- Muslim, A. Q., and I. G. S. Suci. "Peran Manajemen Pendidikan Nonformal Berbasis Masyarakat Sebagai Upaya Peningkatan Sumber Daya Manusia Di Indonesia." *Pratama Widya: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 5, no. 2 (2020).
- Normina, Normina. "PARTISIPASI MASYARAKAT DALAM PENDIDIKAN." *ITTIHAD* 14, no. 26 (2016). <https://doi.org/10.18592/ittihad.v14i26.874>.
- Putnam, Robert D. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." *Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 1 (1995). <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1995.0002>.
- — —. "Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community: New York: Simon Und Schuster, 2001. ISBN." *Policy Analysis* 20 (2000).
- Rahman, Abdur, Silvidina Islamia, M. Taufiqurrahman, Siti Wahyuni, Eny Suciati, and Nabila Kamaliah. "Peran Dan Esensi Karang Taruna Dalam Pengembangan Masyarakat Di Desa Jangur." *Profetik: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat* 2, no. 2 (2024): 23–35.
- Rizki, Syakila Fatkhia, Chomisah Nugraheni, Hidayatul Fatichah, and Nur Anggraeni. "Gerakan Peduli Pendidikan Berbasis Komunitas (Studi Kasus Pada Komunitas Peduli Bergerak)." *Community Development: Jurnal Pengembangan Masyarakat Islam* 7, no. 1 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.21043/cdjpmi.v7i1.21439>.
- Rusandi, M A, Adrianus Theo, Azlina R Sijabat, Christian Sitindaon, Esra H Tindaon, Maya Tesalonika, Michelle Devina, et al. "Pendampingan Bimbingan Belajar Untuk Meningkatkan Kualitas Pendidikan Siswa SD Di Kelurahan Bagan Keladi, Dumai, Provinsi Riau." *Journal of Community Engagement Research for Sustainability* 3, no. 3 (2023): 157–63. <https://doi.org/10.31258/cers.3.3.157-163>.
- Sarjito, Aris. "Dampak Digitalisasi Administrasi Perdesaan Di Negara Berkembang." *Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Administrasi* 13, no. 2 (2023): 106–24. <https://doi.org/10.33592/jiia.v13i2.3814>.
- Seftiani, Tika, Ajeng Jean Rica, and Suryani Eka Agustina. "Partisipasi Pemuda Dalam Pengembangan Komunitas Senyum Anak Nusantara Melalui Kegiatan Pengabdian Masyarakat." *Empowerment* 5, no. 03 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.25134/empowerment.v5i03.5274>.
- Septiana, Yuda Maya, Solfema Solfema, and Dasa Lili Putri. "Upaya Dalam Pemerataan Pendidikan Di Daerah Terpencil." *Jurnal Kajian Dan Penelitian Umum* 2, no. 6 (2024): 162–69. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.47861/jkpu-nalanda.v2i6.1446>.

- Sihombing, Riris. "Pemerataan Pendidikan: Studi Kasus 34 Provinsi Di Indonesia." *PARAHYANGAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REVIEW* 1, no. 2 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.26593/pedr.v1i2.6670>.
- Siswanto, Siswanto, Marinu Waruwu, Halida Halida, and Eny Enawaty. "Studi Komparatif Implementasi Supervisi Pendidikan Di Sekolah Dasar Pada Wilayah Perkotaan Dan Perdesaan." *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Indonesia (Jppi)* 4, no. 4 (2024): 1746–55. <https://doi.org/10.53299/jppi.v4i4.768>.
- Wijayanto, Fery, Ai Hidayatunnajah, and Amilia Lestari. "Pengembangan Inovasi Sekolah Alam: Upaya Meningkatkan Literasi Anak Di Pedesaan." *Jurnal Pembelajaran Pemberdayaan Masyarakat (Jp2m)* 5, no. 1 (2024): 106–18. <https://doi.org/10.33474/jp2m.v5i1.21447>.
- Wijayati, Ida Wahyu, Fritz Hotman Syahmahita Damanik, and Carlos Lazaro Prawirosastro. "Kesenjangan Akses Pendidikan Di Daerah Terpencil: Analisis Kebijakan Dan Alternatif Solusi." *Journal Scientific of Mandalika* 6, no. 3 (2025): 671–77.