

Social inclusion library program in Balikpapan and Bontang, East Kalimantan

Moh Ilham A Hamudy^{1*}, M Saidi Rifki²

^{1,2} Secretariat General, Ministry of Home Affairs, Republic of Indonesia,
Jl. Medan Merdeka Utara No 7, Central Jakarta, Indonesia, 10110

)* Corresponding Author, Email: msaidirifki@kemendagri.go.id

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ABSTRACT

Background: The Social Inclusion-Based Library Transformation Program (TPBIS) or the National Library's social inclusion library program is expected to transform libraries into learning spaces and centers of community empowerment. However, the reality in the field does not fully align with this expectation. Many activities remain ceremonial, resulting in a suboptimal impact on the community. **Purpose:** This study aimed to analyze the implementation of the social inclusion library program in Balikpapan City and Bontang City, East Kalimantan, as well as to conduct a comparative analysis of the program's implementation in both regions. **Methods:** This study used a qualitative descriptive approach, including document analysis, observation, and interviews, to compare the implementation of social inclusion in libraries in Balikpapan and Bontang. **Results:** The study found differences in the implementation of social inclusion libraries in Balikpapan and Bontang. Balikpapan implemented fewer programs with limited innovation, while Bontang developed a more diverse set of activities through cross-sector collaboration. **Conclusion:** In conclusion, Balikpapan has implemented only a few programs, with limited innovation and minimal impact on community welfare, despite a relatively large budget. In contrast, Bontang, with a smaller budget, has developed a more diverse range of activities through cross-sector collaboration that supports literacy, skills training, and local MSMEs. **Implications:** The findings suggest that strengthening partnerships, reducing ceremonial activities, and developing impactful, community-oriented programs are key to improving libraries' effectiveness in promoting social inclusion. Theoretically, the study emphasizes the importance of collaboration and innovation over financial resources in implementing social inclusion libraries.

Keywords: Social Inclusion Library; Bontang; Collaboration; Literacy; Library Reading

INTRODUCTION

The Social Inclusion-Based Library Transformation (TPBIS) is one of the programs initiated by the National Library (Perpusnas). This program is regulated under the National Library

Regulation No. 3 of 2023 concerning the Social Inclusion-Based Library Transformation. The program is an effort to enhance the role and function of libraries through active community involvement. Its goal is for libraries to no

longer be positioned merely as places for reading, but also as lifelong learning spaces capable of promoting the improvement of people's quality of life and well-being.

The social inclusion-based library transformation initiated by the National Library (Perpusnas) is not a new concept; in several countries, public libraries have long been developed as open public spaces. Lo et al. (2019) and Chen and Ke (2017) refer to this as the social inclusion library. In this context, public libraries serve as spaces for social inclusion where people from diverse backgrounds, regardless of age, social class, or income level, can gather, interact, and build social networks, thereby strengthening social bonds (social capital).

The National Library Regulation also emphasizes that this program is implemented through collaboration among the National Library, provincial governments, district/city governments, and even village and sub-district administrations. The goal is to expand access to information, improve service quality, and strengthen literacy as a foundation for community empowerment. Program recipients are selected based on specific criteria, such as adequate infrastructure and facilities and a commitment to implementing the program sustainably.

Although the regulation emphasizes the importance of sustainability, in practice many TPBIS implementations across regions remain trapped in ceremonial approaches. Programs are often carried out merely to

meet annual activity targets, such as digital literacy training or short skill workshops, but without consistent mentoring mechanisms (Novianti et al., 2023). As a result, the program's impact on improving the community's quality of life is often temporary and unsustainable. Yet, according to Yap and Kamilova (2020), libraries should support sustainable development and community strengthening (Yap & Kamilova, 2020).

A similar condition is observed in the Department of Library and Archives of Balikpapan City and the Department of Library and Archiving of Bontang City, which are the focus of this study. Several TPBIS programs have indeed been implemented in these two regions; however, most have not yet shown measurable long-term benefits. In many cases, the activities have not reached a wide segment of the community.

Although the program's implementation has involved quite a number of community members, the target area coverage remains limited. Data from the National Library in 2025 show that in Balikpapan, which comprises 6 districts and 34 sub-districts, the program has reached only 11 sub-districts, with 7 of them starting in 2024. A similar situation is found in Bontang City, where, out of 15 sub-districts, program implementation has been realized in only 11 since its initial execution in 2022. Therefore, it can be said that the inclusion program has not yet fully succeeded in presenting libraries as living spaces that genuinely empower communities.

Table 1

Coverage of the Social Inclusion Library Program in Both Locations

No	Library Name	District	Village/Sub-district	Year
Balikpapan City Library				
1	Balikpapan City Library	-	-	2022
2	Manggar City Library	East Balikpapan	Manggar	2023
3	Margasari Sub-district Library	West Balikpapan	Marga Sari	2023
4	Gunung Sari Ulu Sub-district Library	Central Balikpapan	Gunungsari Ulu	2023
5	B24 Balikpapan Islamic Center Library	South Balikpapan	Gunungbahagia	2024
6	Sepinggan Baru Sub-district Library	South Balikpapan	Sepinggan Baru	2023
7	B24 Kopaja Balikpapan Shelter Library	South Balikpapan	Sungainangka	2024
8	B24 R.A. Kartini Library	South Balikpapan	Sungainangka	2024
9	B24 Damai Baru Sub-district Library	South Balikpapan	Damai Baru	2024
10	B24 Generasi Mandiri Educenter Community Learning Library	South Balikpapan	Damai Baru	2024
11	B24 Prapatan Sub-district Library	Balikpapan City	Prapatan	2024
12	B24 Pena Dan Buku Community Learning Library	Balikpapan City	Klandasan Ulu	2024
Bontang City Library				
1	Bontang City Library	-	-	2022
2	P24 Lentera Ilmu Library, Bontang Kuala Sub-district	North Bontang	Bontang Kuala	2024
3	Bontang Baru Sub-district Library	North Bontang	Bontang Baru	2023
4	B24 Bontang City Literacy Center Community Learning Library	North Bontang	Bontang Baru	2024
5	Lok Tuan Library	North Bontang	Lok Tuan	2023
6	B24 Cerdas Etam Library	North Bontang	Guntung	2024
7	P24 Pelita Ilmu Library, Gunung Elai Sub-district	North Bontang	Gunung Elai	2024
8	B24 Melati Community Learning Library	South Bontang	Tanjung Laut	2024
9	Berbas Pantai Sub-district Library	South Bontang	Berbas Pantai	2023
10	B24 Tanjung Laut Indah Library	South Bontang	Tanjung Laut Indah	2024
11	Belimbing Sub-district Library	West Bontang	Belimbing	2023
12	P24 Pojok Buku Library, Kanaan Sub- district	West Bontang	Kanaan	2024

Source: National Library (Perpusnas) 2025

Based on the table above, several sub-districts in Bontang and Balikpapan have not yet been categorized as performing well, even though both regions are considered districts/cities with adequate facilities and relatively large budget support compared to other areas.

In 2024, a total of 10,000 libraries were designated as partners in the social

inclusion-based library program and the Reading Materials Assistance program (Alditta & Purniawati, 2024). Library managers in the regions participating in the program are required to input data into the National Library's Management Information System (SIM). As a monitoring instrument, Key Performance Indicators (KPI) are established to measure the performance of libraries in

program implementation. Through SIM, each library manager can directly access and monitor their respective KPI scores.

The National Library launched the TPBIS Management Information System (SIM), using three performance indicators: green for high performance, yellow for moderate performance, and red for low performance. Specifically, the Regular TPBIS Partners monitored 600 village/sub-district libraries across Indonesia and found that only 6% (54 libraries) had KPIs marked green (Elsah, 2024).

Among the 6% of high-performing libraries, 10 were in the highest category: 7 from Kalimantan, 2 from Jambi, and 1 from South Sulawesi. Of these ten best libraries, three achieved perfect scores, all from Kalimantan: Citra Kartini Public Library in Sungai Jawi Sub-district, Pontianak City, West Kalimantan (100); Jendela Ilmu Library in Jambu Hilir Sub-district, Hulu Sungai Selatan Regency, South Kalimantan (100); and Jembatan Merah Village Library, Tanjung Jalung Barat Regency, South Kalimantan (100). There were 262 libraries, or 43.7%, marked yellow; 240 libraries, or 40%, marked red; and 7.3% of libraries with empty KPIs.

This condition indicates that the availability of resources does not automatically translate into achieving performance indicators for social inclusion-based libraries. In fact, these libraries have strong opportunities and potential to improve their KPI scores by optimizing their role in enhancing community welfare, improving service quality, and encouraging broader public utilization of library services.

The selection of these two regions is not without reason, as in East Kalimantan, both are among the areas with

outstanding literacy achievements. Data from the Community Literacy Development Index (IPLM) show that the three regions with the highest scores in East Kalimantan are Samarinda City (84.86), Balikpapan City (81.04), and Bontang City (75.83).

Specifically, Bontang City ranks at the top in both IPLM and Reading Enthusiasm Level (TGM), making it considered the city with the most superior literacy culture in East Kalimantan. Meanwhile, Balikpapan City, through the Regional Library and Archives Office (Dispusdakar), secured the seventh position nationally in the implementation of TPBIS 2023.

This condition is interesting to examine comparatively, considering that Balikpapan and Bontang are the two regions with the highest literacy achievements in East Kalimantan. Yet, they have different socio-economic characteristics and TPBIS implementation strategies. This comparative study is expected to show how local contexts influence the effectiveness of social inclusion-based library services.

Although research on social inclusion-based library transformation (TPBIS) in Indonesia has been widely conducted, the focus has generally been limited to case studies of a single library or a specific region. For example, the study by Ruhukail and Koerniawati (2021) highlighted librarians' perceptions of TPBIS at the Maluku Provincial Library and Archives Office, finding obstacles in aspects of connectivity, content, and human resources. Meanwhile, Sabriyanti et al. (2023) explored social inclusion-based services in Asahan Regency, showing service development that enhanced individual capabilities, such as

computer training, mobile library services, and literacy socialization. Yanto et al. (2023) emphasized the role of specialized libraries in empowering agricultural communities through literacy and technology, while the psychology study by Connolly and Seva (2021) highlighted social inclusion as a mediator in individual well-being.

However, studies that directly compare TPBIS implementation across multiple districts/cities have never been conducted. There has been no research assessing differences in strategy, facilities, human resources, and program impact between regions with high literacy levels, such as Balikpapan and Bontang in East Kalimantan. This represents an important research gap, given that the two cities have distinct socio-economic characteristics and TPBIS implementation approaches, even though both demonstrate high literacy achievement. Therefore, a comparative study is relevant to understand how local contexts influence the effectiveness and sustainability of TPBIS.

For this reason, this study seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) How is TPBIS implemented in Balikpapan City and Bontang City? and (2) What similarities and differences exist in the implementation of TPBIS between the two cities? The findings are expected to contribute to the literature on social inclusion-based libraries and provide insights for developing more effective and sustainable library services.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in this study was qualitative with a descriptive approach, aimed at providing an in-depth depiction of the implementation of the

Social Inclusion-Based Library Transformation (TPBIS) in Balikpapan City and Bontang City (Larsen, 2023). Data were collected through several techniques: (1) documentation studies, including regulations, program reports, policy documents, and official publications from both regions; (2) in-depth interviews with various key informants such as heads of library departments, librarians, Bappeda officials, and other relevant stakeholders; and (3) literature review of scientific journals, books, media reports, and other relevant sources. To strengthen data validity, information obtained from interviews was cross-checked with documentary evidence and secondary data. The collected data were analyzed using the qualitative analysis model of Miles et al (2019), consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Findings were categorized into major themes related to program implementation, facilities, and program impacts, and subsequently compared between Balikpapan and Bontang to identify similarities and differences in TPBIS implementation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to Ren et al. (2022), an inclusive library is one that provides the widest possible access to all groups, including vulnerable and marginalized communities, through collections, services, and programs that reflect society's diverse needs. Libraries do not merely provide books but also serve as safe spaces that ensure everyone, regardless of background, can access information and knowledge equally (Ren et al., 2022). This inclusivity is supported by policies, technology, and library staff who possess

the understanding and skills to serve users from various conditions and life experiences.

According to Okechukwu et al. (2024), inclusive libraries are understood as open and welcoming public spaces where every individual feels accepted, valued, and given full opportunities to learn and develop. Their services and programs reflect the cultural, social, and economic diversity of the community while supporting sustainable development and community strengthening (Islam et al., 2024; Szelei et al., 2024). This concept aligns with the National Library's idea through the Social Inclusion-Based Library Transformation program, which has been rolled out across regions. However, in practice, the program often stops at ceremonial activities without sustainability, and thus has not yet fully established libraries as living spaces that genuinely empower communities.

The effectiveness or success of social inclusion-based library programs in a region can essentially be assessed from three main aspects, established based on key indicators from the National Library. These indicators are the library's role in improving community welfare (Tanjung & Harahap, 2023), the quality of services provided (Haryanto et al., 2024), and the level of public utilization of services (Ekwueme et al., 2022). A library is considered successful if it functions as an inclusive space that not only provides reading materials but also helps the community develop skills, create business opportunities, and appreciate socio-cultural diversity.

On the other hand, service quality is reflected in collection quality, user satisfaction, and innovations implemented

to meet community needs. Meanwhile, success is also evident in the accessibility of library services, their utilization, and the extent of active community participation in various programs. In other words, an effective inclusion library program is one where the library truly serves as both a learning center and a hub for community empowerment at the local level. Based on these indicators, libraries in both regions, such as Balikpapan and Bontang, are still limited in terms of community participation in activities. However, this objective has not yet been fully realized.

A staff member at the Balikpapan Library Office stated that in 2024, the social inclusion library program in Balikpapan had reached 34,648 people and conducted 776 activities. This data is compiled in the National Library's SIM to monitor the performance of regional libraries implementing social inclusion programs. However, upon closer examination, this claim seems implausible. Logically, there are only 365 days in a year, which would mean more than two activities per day – something difficult to imagine being executed with limited resources.

Official data from the Balikpapan City Library Office showed that only 15 TPBIS activities were implemented throughout 2024. This figure was verified through activity reports, budget realization documents, and interviews with library officials. The finding was further supported by the fact that the total TPBIS budget allocation over the past two years amounted to only IDR 157,377,200, which appeared insufficient to support the hundreds of activities recorded in the system.

Table 2
TPBIS Program Activities in Balikpapan City 2024

No	Activity Name	Budget
1	Read Aloud Workshop for Parents	Rp 2.400.000
2	Calligraphy Class	Rp 4.800.000
3	Online Arabic Class	Rp 4.800.000
4	Graphic Design Class	Rp 2.400.000
5	Coloring Class	Rp 2.400.000
6	Storytelling Class	Rp 4.800.00
7	Canva Class	Rp 4.800.000
8	English Literacy Class	Rp 4.800.000
9	Math Literacy Class	Rp 2.400.000
10	Excel Literacy Class	Rp 2.400.000
11	MS Word Literacy Class	Rp 2.400.000
12	Bouquet Making Skills	Rp 22.977.200
13	Honorarium for Managers of 4 Sub-district Libraries	Rp 96.000.000
TPBIS		
Total		Rp 157.377.200

Source: Balikpapan City Library and Archives Office 2024

Moreover, data recorded in the National Library's management information system do not fully correspond with field conditions. Although Balikpapan had 12 sub-districts designated as program targets, only 7 sub-districts were confirmed to have hosted TPBIS activities in 2024. Interviews with library staff also indicated that limited funding remained a major constraint, restricting the number and scope of activities that could be implemented. This discrepancy suggests the need for stronger data verification and reporting mechanisms within the TPBIS monitoring system to ensure consistency between administrative records and actual program implementation.

From the participants' perspective, the program currently reaches mostly community members living near the city or sub-district libraries. Similarly, the utilization of collections remains limited. Many activities do not refer to the available library collections. For instance, a Canva class may be held, but the library does not have books on the subject. Yet the goal of

the training is to help the community improve their livelihoods.

Based on the facts above, the indicator for improving community welfare through the social inclusion library program in Balikpapan has not been achieved, as the activities carried out remain very limited. One of the main goals of a social inclusion-based library is to serve as a means of community empowerment through skills training, business development, and support for vulnerable groups (Pylypenko et al., 2024).

The facts show that the contribution to improving community welfare has not been significant. This also confirms that public libraries have not yet functioned as institutions that contribute to the development of social capital, the improvement of quality of life, the reduction of inequality, and the provision of access to education, information, social inclusion, civic participation, and culture (del Barrio-Tellado & Reyes-Gutierrez, 2025). At another level, the social impact of inclusive libraries should extend to marginalized groups, so success cannot be measured merely by the number of

activities but by the extent to which libraries function as spaces for socio-economic empowerment across all layers of the community.

In terms of service quality, the inclusion program's achievements in Balikpapan remain far from effective. The limited variety of programs, insufficient collections, and low service innovation mean that the library has not fully addressed community needs. According to the community-centered library service theory emphasized by IFLA, the success of library services depends heavily on regularly assessing local needs and ensuring that programs remain relevant to users' socio-cultural contexts. Without locally based innovation, services tend to stagnate, focusing solely on administrative achievements rather than on user satisfaction or tangible utilization by the community (Tammaro, 2024).

In contrast to Balikpapan, the Social Inclusion Library Program in Bontang City runs quite actively despite very limited available budgets. To ensure the program continues, Bontang relies heavily on private-sector partnerships to drive its activities. Collaboration also extends to government agencies, companies, and community groups. They also have clear objectives: to make the library an inclusive learning center that not only fosters reading interest but also empowers the community through various training sessions and skill-building activities.

Data from the Bontang City Library and Archives Office showed that in 2024, the social inclusion budget was only IDR 22 million for seven activities. Each activity received an allocation of approximately IDR 3 million, such as Canva flyer-making training, culinary training at the Correctional Institution, makeup training,

parenting training, and content creation and writing workshops for junior high school students—all carried out with very limited funds. Even for activities conducted with community groups, such as mentoring young writers, literacy roadshows, and book reviews, the budget was only IDR 15 million for three activities.

However, these financial constraints received strong support from stakeholders. The Library Office maintained communication with *Bappelitbang* to ensure that social inclusion activities remained part of budget planning. Support also came from the Education Office for school libraries and the Regional Secretariat. They encouraged sub-district libraries to be active in the TPBIS program. This cross-sector collaboration became an important factor in the program's success. *Bappelitbang* played a major role in supporting the budgeting of social inclusion activities, while the Education Office helped prepare funds for school libraries. The Regional Government Administration also encouraged sub-district involvement as primary beneficiaries of the TPBIS program.

This collaboration was then formalized through cooperation agreements. Over the past two years, the Bontang City Library and Archives Office has recorded 20 TPBIS programs implemented and 73 signed cooperation agreements. These included 6 private and state-owned companies, 5 SMEs, 21 government agencies, 8 literacy communities, 4 universities, and 29 schools. It is not surprising that the private sector played a dominant role, considering that Bontang is a major industrial city with petrochemical and LNG sectors supported by large companies such as PT Pupuk

Kaltim. Nevertheless, efforts were also made to encourage collaboration in other sectors, including SMEs, education, and

literacy communities, so that the benefits of the social inclusion program could be felt more broadly in the community.

Table 3

Cooperation Agreements of the Bontang City Library and Archives Office

Type of Institution	Institution	Quantity	Type of Institution	Institution	Quantity
Private & State-Owned Companies	1. PT. Kaltim Nitrate Indonesia	6	Literacy Community	1. Forum Penulis Bontang	8
	2. Bank Indonesia			2. ATPUSI Kota Bontang	
	3. PT. Pupuk Kaltim			3. Duta Baca	
	4. PT. Indominco Mandiri			4. Bunda PAUD	
	5. PT. Kaltim Methanol Industri			5. Tim Penggerak PKK	
	6. PT. WOOLU Aksara Maya			6. TBM Pusat Literasi Kota Bontang	
				7. Kampung Dongeng Bontang	
				8. Gerakan Permayarakatan Minat Baca (GPMB)	
Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)	1. Batik Mutiara Kalimantan	5	Higher Education Institution	1. STIT Syam Bontang	4
	2. Batik Beras Basah			2. STITEK Bontang	
	3. Batik Kuntul Perak			3. STTIB	
	4. Batik Daon Jajar			4. Program Studi S2 Magister Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia MPBSI FKIP Universitas Mulawarman	
	5. Pondok Batik Etam				
Government Agencies	5. Polres Kota Bontang	21	School	1. Sekolah SD, SMP, SMA Negeri	29
	6. Sentra Wyata Guna Bandung			2. Sekolah SD, SMP, SMA Swasta	
	7. Inspektorat Daerah Kota Bontang				
	8. BNN Kota Bontang				
	9. Kejaksaan Negeri Bontang				
	10. Lembaga Permayarakatan Kelas IIA Bontang				
	*Dinas, Badan, Kelurahan, dan Kecamatan				

Source: Bontang City Library and Archives Office, 2025

One tangible result of this collaboration is the establishment of the Bontang Creative Hub (BCH), created in partnership with PT Kaltim Nitrate Indonesia. BCH serves as a creative space focusing on digital literacy, arts, design,

and culinary skills. Through this facility, the community gains access to various trainings, ranging from coffee brewing and digital marketing to writing workshops for school students (fokuskaltim.com, 2025).

The sustainability of programs like BCH heavily depends on synergy between the government, private sector, and the community. Support from PT Kaltim Nitrate Indonesia is evident in both funding and facilities. The Library Office also opens opportunities for collaboration with other companies, including PT Pupuk Kaltim, PT Indominco Mandiri, and several local enterprises. From the government side, the program is integrated into long-term planning to secure sustainable budget allocations.

Social aspects are also prioritized. For example, the Library Office collaborates with the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) to organize "Parenting Talks," an educational program for parents on the importance of family roles in preventing drug abuse. Libraries are expected to function as community education centers, not merely reading spaces. To increase community participation in remote areas, the Library Office operates Layar Puspita, a mobile library that brings books and new inspiration to the islands. This service allows communities to experience the direct benefits of the inclusion program. Throughout 2024, a total of 30 literacy activities were successfully held.

Regular monitoring is also conducted to measure the direct impact on the community. Training participants are asked about how the activities have affected their skills and business opportunities. The increasing number of participants each year serves as evidence that the program is increasingly accepted and its benefits are being felt. The activities offered are diverse. In addition to coffee brewing, there are trainings in digital marketing, mobile photography, and writing. For instance, digital marketing

training has proven helpful for local SMEs in promoting their products, while writing and digital literacy training in schools equips young people to use technology productively.

Community enthusiasm is particularly evident in hard-to-reach areas. The Library Office claims that many participants have, after completing the training, started small businesses, demonstrating that the program truly delivers tangible impact. The expectation is that the community will become more aware of the importance of literacy and skills in the digital era. Libraries are no longer viewed merely as repositories of books but as centers of creativity, learning, and personal development, closely connected to everyday life.

Based on the facts of the social inclusion program in Bontang, it appears that the community welfare indicator still requires attention. Ideally, social inclusion efforts through libraries should explicitly provide tangible economic contributions for marginalized groups, such as local microenterprises, as demonstrated by research in Karanganyar, where libraries acting as entrepreneurship incubators made a real contribution to business creation and job opportunities (Haryanto et al., 2024).

In terms of service quality, collaboration has indeed enriched the variety of activities and program innovation; however, the evaluation of collection quality, user satisfaction, and content relevance still needs strengthening. The theory of the library as a socially inclusive organization emphasizes the importance of equal access for all community groups and community participation in service design, so that libraries truly become centers of learning

and culture (inclusive, relevant, community-engaged) (Kulikauskienė, 2019).

Although the number of activities and participants has increased, service utilization by hard-to-reach or marginalized groups has not yet been formally measured. In a pilot study in rural communities in Thailand, evaluation combined quantitative and qualitative methods, including interviews with users and community leaders, to assess the real impact on community development (Ahmed, 2010). A similar approach needs to be applied in Bontang to measure the extent to which TPBIS impacts are felt, particularly among vulnerable community segments.

The concept of social inclusion-based library transformation implemented by the Balikpapan and Bontang City Library Offices has not fully aligned with the theoretical or intended concept. Libraries have not yet genuinely transformed into inclusive spaces, where available reading collections are not only read but also applied in real community activities.

Based on interview results, TPBIS implementation in the field resembles ordinary training programs, similar to those conducted by other government offices, such as SME training. This gives the impression that the program's substance from the National Library has not reached the essence of true transformation, as the socialization provided is more oriented toward sectoral activities rather than utilizing reading materials as sources of inspiration and social practice.

As a result, libraries have not yet fully played their role as centers of literacy-based social transformation. While the activities carried out have increased visits,

their impact on improving literacy quality and community empowerment remains limited. Many activity instructors do not use library collections as references, so the connection between reading materials and community activities is weak. Moreover, the absence of a clear concept from the central to the regional levels often causes the implementation of library social inclusion programs to be trapped in trends and short-term practical needs (Haryanti, 2019; Stilwell, 2016).

Regarding community involvement, the public has indeed shown a positive response to library activities; however, in practice, the Library Offices in both regions have not been able to link literacy with the enhancement of community skills. As a result, the idea of social inclusion, which should position libraries as literacy-based learning centers, has not been implemented in line with the theoretical framework.

Moreover, although there is positive feedback from the community toward training programs, genuine community engagement has not yet occurred. Effective community involvement requires a strong connection between service providers (libraries/offices) and service users (the community), so that programs are truly relevant, sustainable, and oriented toward improving the quality of life (Sung et al., 2011).

Currently, there are two main reasons for this. First, much of the training material comes from sources outside the library collection, so literacy does not serve as the primary basis for strengthening community capacity. Second, high interest in digital resources, entrepreneurship, or daily skills training has not yet been fully integrated into the library's existing collections and literacy services.

From a policy perspective, there is a noticeable gap between the National Library's directives and the realities on the ground. Instructions from the National Library are considered too sectoral and not fully aligned with local needs, forcing regions to improvise. Thus, local authorities exercise program flexibility to better suit community requirements.

For example, this approach has been implemented by the Balikpapan City Library Office. To promote inclusive literacy, several supporting activities have also been carried out. These include the construction and rehabilitation of elementary and secondary school libraries. In 2024, construction took place at SDN 015 Balteng, SDN 010 Baltim, and SDN 020 Balbar. Meanwhile, several schools, such as SDN 015 Balkot, SDN 005 Balbar, SDN 012 Balteng, SDN 010 Baltim, SMPN 1, and SMPN 2 Balikpapan, also received improvements.

In addition to infrastructure, the procurement of textbooks and non-text materials is prioritized to enrich student reading collections. Measures include assigning library managers to 100 elementary school libraries and enhancing librarians' competencies to ensure more effective services. This policy is gradually incorporated into local budget components, including through the School Operational Assistance Fund, to ensure the sustainability of the inclusive literacy program.

The Balikpapan City Library and Archives Office also allocated a special budget to support staff managing sub-district libraries. In 2024, there were four sub-district libraries, each managed by two staff members. For this purpose, a total of IDR 96 million was allocated for the eight library managers. The four sub-district

libraries included Gunung Sari Ulu, Margasari, Sepinggan Baru, and Manggar.

Based on these facts, from the perspective of the Social Equity Framework (Ruijter et al., 2023). Balikpapan shows a positive step by providing equitable access through the construction of elementary and middle school libraries and the procurement of textbooks. However, the definition of inclusion used is still very narrow, limited to physical access and the availability of general collections. There is no mechanism for community participation in planning and evaluation, even though literature emphasizes that community-based strategies are key to program relevance and sustainability (Ceptureanu et al., 2018).

Another gap is evident in the aspect of inclusive book collections, which have not yet become a priority. According to modern inclusion theory, collection diversity is crucial to ensure that every community group can find representation in the library. Regarding human resources, Balikpapan's commitment to recruiting 100 elementary-level librarians and enhancing their competencies is commendable. However, without an explicit policy strategy and a clear inclusion evaluation framework, the large number of staff risks being underutilized or misdirected.

Furthermore, the integration of adaptive technology is almost absent from the social inclusion program. There is no indication of inclusive digitalization or efforts to bridge the digital divide. Yet the success of inclusive libraries depends heavily on the use of technology that is adaptive and accessible to all community segments.

In terms of collaboration, the local government has made minimal efforts to

coordinate with other local offices, resulting in some activities often overlapping. Only a few regions have successfully collaborated with the private sector, such as the Library and Archives Office of Bontang City. This pattern aligns with Tett's (Tett, 2005) findings, which emphasize that formal partnerships with clearly defined roles are a crucial factor in the effectiveness of social inclusion programs in libraries.

A concrete example of successful collaboration is the establishment of the Bontang Creative Hub (BCH), which provides a learning space based on technology and creativity. The presence of BCH demonstrates that multi-stakeholder support can expand the library's role as a community empowerment center. This aligns with Isiaka et al. (2024), who emphasize the importance of technology-driven library transformation for improving community well-being.

From the impact perspective, the social inclusion program in Bontang claims to have boosted the Reading Interest Rate (TGM) and the Community Literacy Development Index (IPLM). Bontang's IPLM currently stands at 8,205 (high category), while the TGM is 7,140. Although high TGM and IPLM scores indicate positive achievements, they do not automatically translate into improved living standards for the community. Ideally, social inclusion programs run by libraries should not only increase reading interest but also enhance skills that can support people's economic well-being.

According to BPS data (2024), Bontang City recorded the highest open unemployment rate in East Kalimantan at 7.06 percent (6,631 people), despite a slight decline from 2023. This finding indicates that achievements in literacy development,

as reflected in TGM and IPLM indicators, have not yet been fully translated into broader socio-economic outcomes, particularly employment. Therefore, stronger alignment between TPBIS programs and local economic needs is required to ensure that literacy gains contribute more directly to community welfare.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of TPBIS should not be measured solely by the number of activities, but by the extent to which the library truly enhances citizens' capabilities. In other words, the library should provide access to relevant information, expand skills that can increase income, and ensure that services are genuinely inclusive (physical access, collection formats, and community participation). This approach aligns with the capability approach and the IFLA/UNESCO position on the role of libraries in building inclusive knowledge societies (Robeyns & Byskov, 2025; unesco.org, 2023).

Based on the findings, the effectiveness of the Social Inclusion-Based Library Transformation (TPBIS) implementation in the two regions shows significant differences influenced by several factors, including budget capacity, program innovation, and the level of cross-sector collaboration.

Balikpapan City has demonstrated commitment through building library facilities, adding collections, and recruiting librarians. However, the program's focus remains primarily on physical aspects and the quantity of activities, such as the number of events and visits, without ensuring that books and services are genuinely utilized for social or economic activities. As a result, inclusive services for all groups, including vulnerable

populations, have not been fully achieved, and community participation in program planning remains limited. Additionally, the availability of more diverse collections—such as large-print books, multilingual reading materials, or audio formats—remains limited (Burgstahler, 2018).

Meanwhile, Bontang City shows a more progressive approach despite limited funding. Through partnerships with government agencies, private sectors, communities, and educational institutions, library services are more innovative and able to provide access to technology that supports community empowerment. However, although literacy levels are high, this has not directly improved residents' welfare because the available training still

consists of general skills or small-scale programs; thus, it is not connected to sustainable employment or business pathways. This highlights that libraries focusing on workforce development need to design programs targeting tangible economic outcomes, such as income improvement or job placement (COSLA & IMLS, 2022).

In conclusion, TPBIS in Balikpapan emphasizes quantity and facilities. However, key performance indicators have not been fully optimized, whereas Bontang demonstrates higher effectiveness through cross-sector partnerships and collaboration, despite limited funding. The comparison between the two regions is presented in the following table.

Table 4
Results of Comparative Analysis in the Two Regions

Indicators	Balikpapan	Bontang	Comparative Analysis
Community Welfare	Programs remain limited, focusing primarily on providing basic facilities (space, infrastructure). No significant impact on improving the community's economy.	Through the Bontang Creative Hub, there are training programs in digital skills, culinary arts, arts, and online marketing; some participants have started small businesses.	Bontang is more effective: there are already economic outcomes, although quantitative impact data is still limited.
Service Quality	Minimal innovation; services tend to be routine with limited budget. No periodic assessment of local needs.	Innovative and collaborative (73 partnerships in 2 years). Activity variety includes parenting, digital literacy, mobile libraries, etc.	Bontang excels: services are adaptive and collaboration-based, while Balikpapan is still stuck in an administrative pattern.
Community Utilization	Low participation rate; there is no monitoring data regarding the involvement of marginalized groups.	30 literacy activities were successfully held in 2024, reaching schools, MSMEs, communities, and remote areas.	Bontang has higher participation: broad engagement, although impact evaluation on marginalized groups is not yet systematic.

To strengthen the effectiveness of social inclusion in Balikpapan and Bontang, several strategic improvement steps can be undertaken. First, at the policy level, a clear inclusion policy framework needs to be developed. This can begin with

drafting Regional Regulations on Inclusive Libraries, developing measurable inclusion service standards, and establishing a cross-sector evaluation team to ensure consistent implementation. This step aligns with IFLA/UNESCO

recommendations emphasizing the importance of formal policies as the foundation for the sustainability of inclusive library services.

Second, a community-based approach strategy is key. Social inclusion programs should begin with participatory needs assessments to align with the community's real needs, especially those of marginalized groups. In addition, an advisory committee involving representatives of vulnerable communities (such as persons with disabilities, women, the elderly, the poor, or indigenous communities) should be established. Its function is to provide input, guidance, and critique to ensure that library programs meet the community's actual needs. With this committee, libraries do not design programs solely from their own perspective but also incorporate community voices. This approach aligns with best practices in European public libraries, which emphasize community-led libraries to maintain social relevance (Detlor et al., 2022).

Third, infrastructure improvements should be directed toward implementing universal design standards. Every library construction or renovation must ensure accessibility for all. Allocating a dedicated budget for technology and applying the concept of sensory-friendly spaces will help create inclusive environments. International studies indicate that the success of inclusive libraries is highly influenced by the presence of accessible-friendly infrastructure (Schulze & Berget, 2024).

Fourth, human resource transformation becomes a crucial factor. Librarians need to be equipped with training modules on cultural competence and guided toward inclusive certification

programs for librarians. To strengthen capacity, internship schemes can be developed in model inclusive libraries at national and international levels. This step is important because literature shows that librarians' competence in understanding cultural diversity and disability needs directly impacts the quality of inclusive services (Okechukwu et al., 2024).

Fifth, diversification of collections and services must also become a priority. Libraries in Balikpapan and Bontang can develop multisensory and multiformat collections (such as braille books, audiobooks, and interactive visual materials), establish partnerships with publishers to ensure the availability of accessible books, and develop digitization programs with accessibility standards. Inclusive libraries are considered successful when they can provide a variety of collection formats tailored to users' needs.

By integrating these five aspects, Balikpapan, which has traditionally focused on physical infrastructure, can shift its emphasis toward more participatory services. At the same time, Bontang, which excels in collaboration, can ensure that partnerships truly generate tangible socio-economic impact. Ultimately, this strategy not only addresses literacy needs but also builds an inclusive learning ecosystem that supports community well-being in both regions.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion shows that the implementation of social inclusion-based library transformation in the Balikpapan and Bontang City Library Offices has not yet fully aligned with the ideal concept of libraries as inclusive spaces and centers of literacy-based social transformation.

However, it has succeeded in increasing visitor numbers. In terms of implementing social inclusion programs, libraries have not been optimal in improving literacy quality and community empowerment, as activities tend to focus more on participation quantity than on substantive impact. Furthermore, in terms of program comparison, there are significant variations in effectiveness influenced by budget capacity, program innovation, and the level of cross-sector collaboration in each region. Therefore, one of the recommendations is that Balikpapan needs to optimize its physical development by ensuring the application of appropriate standards and integrating library service needs into the education sector budget, so that physical development aligns with improvements in service quality and public access. Meanwhile, Bontang, despite having established 73 partnerships, needs to strengthen its socio-economic impact by forming a cross-sector partnership coordination unit, expanding skills training programs oriented toward workforce absorption, and implementing participatory monitoring to ensure that activities are more targeted and contribute to reducing unemployment and improving community welfare. The limitations of this study include its scope, which covers only two regions and therefore does not represent national conditions; the lack of longitudinal data to measure long-term impacts; and constraints in quantitatively measuring the relationship between library programs and community welfare indicators. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the research locus, employ mixed methods with more comprehensive impact measurements, and develop outcome-based evaluation models to assess the

contribution of libraries to socio-economic development.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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DATA AVAILABILITY

The data used in this study are included in the manuscript and are available as needed for research purposes.

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