

Strengthening Javanese Art at the *Sanggar Baladewa* Binjai, North Sumatra

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Abstract

The Javanese populace is dispersed throughout Indonesia, including North Sumatra. The development of Javanese culture and art in North Sumatra paralleled the increasing number of Javanese in that region. In North Sumatra, cultural and artistic studios (*sanggar*) have become one of the driving forces behind the development of Javanese culture and the arts. One of them is *Sanggar Baladewa* in Binjai City, where Javanese arts and culture are developed and displayed. However, the *sanggar* faces managerial and financial difficulties. Therefore, during this community service project, efforts have been made to strengthen the *Sanggar Baladewa* in North Sumatra and to promote Javanese culture. This activity consists of providing *sanggar* members with assistance in the form of a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) over the course of three months. In addition to assisting, the community service team has provided *sanggar* members with musical instruments and accessories for use in traditional music performance activities. The lecture method, question-and-answer sessions, and demonstrations are utilized in its implementation. This Community Service has produced results in the form of services to increase public awareness of Javanese culture in North Sumatra by providing *sanggar* members with training to increase their creativity, innovation, and skill in the cultural arts field.

Keywords: Javanese arts; *Sanggar Baladewa*; cultural strengthening

Abstrak

Masyarakat bersuku Jawa tersebar di seluruh wilayah di Indonesia, termasuk di Sumatera Utara. Kebudayaan dan kesenian Jawa yang dibawa ke Sumatera Utara juga berkembang sejalan dengan meningkatnya orang Jawa di Sumatera Utara. *Sanggar* budaya dan seni menjadi salah satu motor pengembang kebudayaan dan kesenian Jawa di Sumatera Utara. *Sanggar Baladewa* di Kota Binjai adalah salah satunya, yakni merupakan wadah tempat kesenian dan kebudayaan Jawa dikembangkan dan ditampilkan. Namun terdapat persoalan manajerial dan finansial yang dihadapi *sanggar*. Oleh karena itu, dalam kegiatan pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini telah dilakukan upaya penguatan *Sanggar Baladewa* untuk memperkuat kebudayaan Jawa yang ada di Sumatera Utara. Kegiatan ini berupa pendampingan dalam bentuk Focus Group Discussion (FGD) anggota *sanggar* yang dilakukan selama tiga bulan. Selain memberikan pendampingan, tim pengabdian kepada masyarakat telah memfasilitasi peralatan pendukung dalam kegiatan penampilan musik tradisional untuk anggota *sanggar*, berupa alat musik dan aksesoris. Dalam pelaksanaannya digunakan pendekatan metode ceramah, tanya jawab dan demonstrasi. Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat ini telah menghasilkan luaran berupa jasa menumbuhkan kepedulian masyarakat pada kebudayaan Jawa di Sumatera Utara dengan pendampingan pelatihan untuk meningkatkan kreativitas, inovasi, serta kemampuan anggota *sanggar* dalam bidang seni budaya.

Kata kunci: kesenian Jawa; *Sanggar Baladewa*; penguatan kebudayaan

1. INTRODUCTION

Sanggar Baladewa is an art and cultural studio in Binjai, North Sumatra that has activities in the field of traditional Javanese arts, including *wayang kulit*, *karawitan*, *jaran kepong*, *ketoprak dor*, and so on.

The presence of Javanese art and culture studios (*sanggar seni Jawa*) in North Sumatra is exceptional due to the region's historically Malay and Batak population. This demonstrates the long history of the Javanese diaspora in the North Sumatra region, specifically the migration of Javanese tribes that have occurred throughout Indonesia since the 18th century for economic and colonial reasons. (Wicaksono, 2021). Long ago, Javanese people inhabited the land of Deli, where they formed a community and introduced Javanese culture. A considerable amount of

Javanese culture was assimilated with local cultures such as Malay and Batak (Silalahi & Syafrizal, 2015). This distinguishes Javanese culture in the land of Deli (in this case, Binjai) from other cultures. This Javanese culture is distinguished by the form of the archipelago's cultural treasures and wealth, which must be continuously strengthened. With diverse efforts to strengthen Javanese culture and the arts, it is hoped that this will also strengthen the identity and national identity that is harmonious in its diversity.

As a venue for the performance of Javanese culture, *Sanggar Baladewa* undoubtedly contributes to the preservation and growth of Javanese culture and arts. Thus, through the *Sanggar Baladewa*, efforts were made to strengthen Javanese culture.

The community service team that visited the *sanggar* and communicated directly with the *sanggar's* management identified numerous obstacles to the *sanggar's* operations. There are two significant aspects of the problem at hand, the first pertaining to management and the second to finance.



Figure 1. The team's first visit to *Sanggar Baladewa*
(Source: Personal documentation)

In terms of management, the *sanggar* has difficulty managing the membership structure and activities, which affects the decline in *sanggar* membership. The community, particularly the youth group, grew less interested in the *sanggar* because it lacked clarity regarding the daily schedule of activities. The *sanggar* lacks the financial resources necessary to provide the necessary facilities and equipment for performing arts, particularly traditional Javanese musical instruments. Therefore, it is necessary to assist in the form of useful services and goods to increase the *sanggar's* productivity, which will also help preserve Javanese culture. In terms of management, the *sanggar* has difficulty managing the membership structure and activities, which affects the decline in *sanggar* membership. The community, particularly the youth group, grew less interested in the *sanggar* because it lacked clarity regarding the daily schedule of activities. The *sanggar* lacks the financial resources necessary to provide the necessary facilities and equipment for performing arts, particularly traditional Javanese musical instruments. Therefore, it is necessary to assist in the form of useful services and goods to increase the *sanggar's* productivity, which will also help preserve Javanese culture.



Figure 2. Traditional *Sanggar Baladewa* musical instruments that are not in good condition
(Source: Personal documentation)

In this community service activity, the community service team intends to assist in developing various strategies for strengthening the Sanggar Baladewa to promote the typical Javanese culture of North Sumatra. Through the *Sanggar Baladewa*, it is hoped that people (especially teenagers) in the city of Binjai will maintain an interest in their people's local arts and culture and a passion for preserving our nation's culture.

2. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This community service team utilizes the FGD method for its activities. The management and every member of the *sanggar* participate in assistance through FGDs every three months. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the issue, the team will conduct individual interviews with management and team members before providing periodic assistance. This is intended to strengthen the members' commitment to developing the *sanggar*. This approach to mentoring uses lectures, question-and-answer, discussion, and demonstration as the primary mentorship guide.

FGD

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is also referred to as a technique and method for collecting qualitative data through group interviews. FGD may be defined as a method and technique for collecting qualitative data in which a group of people discuss a particular focus or topic under the guidance of a facilitator or moderator in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding. (Agustono et al., 2021, 2022; Indrizal, 2017, p. 75)

FGD is a technique and method for gathering data or information that was developed in marketing research. Historically, FGDs were used to determine the image of a product, what attracted potential buyers or consumers, product design, size options, color options, packaging design, what needed improvement, etc. Using FGD, it is possible to explore perceptions, opinions, attitudes, motivations, knowledge, problems, and expectations of change in relation to specific problems in a relatively short amount of time.

The use of FGDs expanded rapidly in the social sciences and medicine due to their subsequent development. In particular, the principles of FGDs are also commonly applied through group interviews and group discussions, which characterize the vast majority of techniques and tools in participatory rural situation assessment activities and goal-oriented project planning activities conducted in the context of fostering community empowerment.

The FGD implementation consists of preparation before the activity, opening and closing.

Preparation phase

In the preparation stage (1), the facilitator team (invitors) must arrive on time before the participants (invitations) arrive. The facilitation team should initiate informal communication with participants, which is useful for building trust and a community approach. (2) The facilitation team must prepare the room so the participants can participate optimally in the FGD. It is recommended that participants sit in a circle together with the facilitator who guides the discussion. The handicapped usually sit outside the circle but still around the circle. The facilitator must try to avoid outside interruptions and ensure that all participating participants sit in a circle.

1. Opening of FGD (Warming and Explanation)

Following are the steps that were taken to initiate the FGD: (1) The discussion guide should begin with introductory remarks and explanations of several topics, such as meeting objectives, procedures, and introductions. (2) In the opening remarks, expressed gratitude for the presence of the informant (participant). Emphasize the significance of their presence while explaining the FGD's overall significance. Describe the purpose and goals of the current FGD meeting. (3) Introduce yourself (facilitators' names) and their respective roles. Then, request that each participant introduce themselves. The guide must quickly recall the names of the participants in order to lead the discussion effectively. (4) Explain the meeting procedures,

including the use of a recording device, the confidentiality of the information, and that it will only be used for the purposes of this study; participants do not need to wait to be asked for their opinion; please speak one at a time so that it can be recorded, and any other rules necessary for the meeting to run smoothly. (5) Explain that the purpose of the meeting is not to listen to lectures and emphasize that the facilitator wants to learn from the attendees. Also,, emphasize that the opinions of all participants are precious and that all participants are expected to be able to voice their opinions. Due to this, the facilitator will ask a number of pre-prepared questions. (6) Begin the meeting by posing general questions unrelated to the problem or discussion topic. After completing this procedure, The discussion guide must master the questions and systematically present them, avoiding needing to constantly recite the question guide.

2. Closing of FGD

The following considerations are considered during the final phase of the FGD. (1) As the FGD meeting drew close, the participants were informed that the discussion of the problem and/or topic would soon conclude. If the guide already contains general conclusions deemed to be of sufficient strength, communicate the most important points briefly. Therefore, re-ask each participant if there are any additional thoughts or remarks they wish to share or add. It is possible to delve further into pertinent remarks. (2) After the meeting, thank the attendees for their participation and reiterate that their input was extremely valuable. After the FGD concludes, the team of facilitators must immediately assemble to complete field notes on the FGD's results and methodology.

Lecture method

The lecture method explains fundamental knowledge about traditional Javanese arts and the fundamental concepts of combining Javanese traditional arts with those of other North Sumatran tribes. This method also emphasizes efforts to motivate participants and increase their comprehension. (Pujiono et al., 2020, 2021, 2022).

Discussion and Q & A Method

Discussion and question-and-answer sessions are conducted because the participants must demonstrate their ability to comprehend explanations of traditional arts. This method enables participants to acquire as much information as possible regarding the traditional arts of Java and other ethnic groups in North Sumatra, such as the Malay and Batak. (Adha et al., 2021; Pujiono et al., 2018).

Demonstration Method

The demonstration method is a technique for teaching that involves showing participants a particular procedure, circumstance, or object under study—either in real life or through imitation—along with an explanation. The demonstration method is a way to deliver lessons by having teachers or other learning resources who are specialists in the subject of discussion exhibit a process, scenario, or object being studied to students, either in its genuine form or in a fake form. According to a different viewpoint, the demonstration method of teaching entails a teacher or a group of teachers demonstrating a procedure. From some of the viewpoints as mentioned above, it is clear that the demonstration technique is a means to deliver learning that involves verbally explaining and directly exhibiting the learning process. (Agustono et al., 2022).

The demonstration technique has psychological advantages in that participants' attention can be more concentrated and directed, their learning is more concentrated on the subject matter, and their experiences and perceptions of learning results are more deeply ingrained in the mentoring participants.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Through various tactics used with the team, this Community Service activity (PKM) has increased the spirit of action, creativity, and invention among members of the *Sanggar Baladewa* in Binjai. The steps taken to achieve the desired outcomes are broken down into various phases, including socialization, mentoring, and help. The stages of community service projects that have been completed are described here.

3.1 Socialization

On April 19, 2022, the team met with the managers of *Sanggar Baladewa* Binjai. In this outreach effort, the lecture and FGD techniques were utilized to fully comprehend the problems faced by Partners, allowing the Team to devise solutions that they could then share with Service Partners, specifically the *Sanggar Baladewa*.

The team had the opportunity to view the *sanggar's* facilities and inventory, which included musical instruments and costumes. The team identified a need for assistance with Javanese gongs, a traditional musical instrument, because the *sanggar's* gongs appeared worn out and unusable.



Figure 3. Socialization and FGD with Partners of *Sanggar Baladewa* Binjai.

3.2 Periodic Mentoring

A studio (*sanggar*) is a location or facility where a community, group, or society conducts activities. *Sanggar* is synonymous with community-based learning activities, such as developing traditional arts (Pujiwiyana, 2010, p. 21). The *sanggar* is another form of non-formal education organized for people who require educational services that serve as substitutes, additions, and supplements to formal education to support lifelong learning.

The *sanggar*, as a non-formal education, must serve as a place to generate and grow the community's will in the context of creating a learning community, to provide motivation and community development so that individuals are willing and able to become educators in implementing the principle of mutual learning, to provide information services for educational activities outside of school, and to provide examples of various programs. This is the basis for the *sanggar* development concept that the Service Team communicated to the *Sanggar Baladewa* Binjai partners.

The *Sanggar Baladewa* Binjai is a place for artistic performances, particularly dance. This *sanggar's* primary activity is dance practice. Other artistic activities include musical practice, *wayang* orang, *dalang* mbanyol, and dancing. All activities in this *sanggar* are managed centrally.

3.3 Focus on Mentoring Materials

Since the establishment of *Sanggar Baladewa* Binjai until now, management needs to manage all the activities carried out and to develop this *sanggar*. According to R. Terry (Amirullah dan Haris 2004:7), management is a typical process consisting of planning, organizing, mobilizing, and controlling actions carried out to determine and achieve predetermined goals through human resources and resources. -other sources. *Sanggar Baladewa* Binjai is directed to use the following management functions:

a. Planning

Planning is the first step in the management process, which entails identifying the objectives to be attained during a future period and the actions necessary to reach those objectives. Planning is also the elaboration and embodiment of the wishes of leaders and organization members. The planning at *Sanggar Baladewa* Binjai includes the registration of new members, the learning curriculum, music and dance learning activities, the evaluation of learning, the training schedule, and the budget.

The first strategy involves the registration of new members; in order to join *Sanggar Baladewa* Binjai, everyone must register. Registration requires completing a form that can be obtained from the *sanggar*, submitting a 3x4 photograph, and paying the registration fee. After satisfying all requirements, members will receive a membership card and a uniform T-shirt.

Each *sanggar* has a curriculum that will be distributed to its members. Each *sanggar's* music and dance instructional materials are distinct and tailored to its curriculum. In *Sanggar Baladewa* Binjai, not only traditional dances but also creative dances are performed. This is designed to allow children to express the art of dance freely.

b. Marketing

Marketing or marketing management is frequently used as the spearhead for companies or organizations to obtain financial benefits. There are two phases to the *sanggar's* marketing procedure. The first step is product planning, while the second is advertising creation. The first phase, referred to as product planning, will determine which artistic endeavors will be created for the *sanggar*. The determination of these activities is based on their efficiency and effectiveness in achieving the objectives of the *sanggar* activities. In this *sanggar*, more than one type of Javanese art is developed, and a variety of artistic activities are carried out. Generally, the more art forms that are created, the greater the number of enthusiasts who wish to participate.

1. The types of art activities carried out by the *Sanggar Baladewa* Binjai include the following:
2. dance practice
3. Javanese traditional musical instrument practice
4. MC practice
5. *Wayang Orang* and *Karawitan* practice

At the *sanggar*, there are numerous facilities and infrastructure, such as an empty room for practice, a set of Javanese *gamelan* (pelog/slendro), a tape, player, sound system, cassette, VCD, dance props, and a bulletin board. These facilities and infrastructure are intended to facilitate the advancement of the *sanggar*. Children will be more imaginative and enthusiastic about participating in dance lessons if they have access to complete facilities.

The second aspect of marketing is advertising development. The publication is introducing a *sanggar* so that it is widely recognized. In this activity, the *sanggar* administrator makes the *sanggar* accessible to the public. The purpose of the publication is to raise awareness of the *Sanggar Baladewa* Binjai to affect the *sanggar's* income positively. Publications may be text (in newspapers, magazines, and catalogs), images, audio-visuals, or electronic publications such as websites, e-books, and social media videos. This *sanggar* does not employ all forms of print media. Therefore, the service team instructs *sanggar* members and the administration to utilize these various media.

c. Finance

Financial needs are regulated by the financial sector (finance). The objective of this field is to identify and allocate funding sources. Similarly, this *sanggar* requires funds for all of its operations to run smoothly. The recommended source of *sanggar* funds is the registration fee for new members and the monthly membership fee.

Renting out dance costumes and wayang orang costumes is another source of revenue. Various dance costumes are available for rent, including those for classical and creative dances and puppet costumes with accessories. In this *sanggar*, not only members and students can rent

costumes. Costume rental is available to the general public, so anyone can rent a costume. This also facilitates the performance of members outside the *sanggar*.

In order to rent a costume from the *sanggar*, you must pay 50 percent of the costume rental fee in advance and provide an ID card or driver's license as collateral (KTP or SIM). If you rent a costume for longer than one day and one night, you will be subject to a fine of IDR 10,000.00 per set. The costume must be returned with all of its accessories at the start of the rental period. These funds will be used to purchase *sanggar* inventory. The *sanggar* inventory consists of dance properties, dance costumes, *sanggar* infrastructure, and *sanggar* facilities.

d. Organizing

The purpose of organizing is to ensure that an organization's human resources are able to be utilized optimally. This is reflected in the organizational structure of the *Sanggar Baladewa*, which includes a job description containing the responsibilities and authorities of each organization member.

1. Chairperson: Responsible for all *sanggar* activities, plans activities to be carried out, organizes and divides tasks/responsibilities for each position under it, controls and requests progress reports on *sanggar* activities, leads and coordinates all organizational meetings, determines and makes decisions based on deliberation and consensus in every meeting, giving warnings to the sections and members if they do not carry out their duties properly, looking for solutions and resolving when problems occur, providing suggestions and criticisms on the budget plan prepared by the treasurer, providing motivation and inspiration to the sections
2. Secretary: Make progress reports of the *sanggar* regularly, make reports on the results of *sanggar* activities, set the meeting schedule, set the agenda for discussion in each meeting, make minutes and record meeting results and make letters related to the *sanggar*
3. Treasurer: Responsible for the financial management of the *sanggar*, record all income and expenses with entry/exit dates, sources, and uses, as well as the number of funds, make financial reports regularly, make financial reports in each activity, make a budget for each activity, ask for approval chairman before spending money, together with the chairman looking for a way out in terms of finding *sanggar* funds.
4. Trainers: Coordinate the implementation of dance training activities, train dance *sanggar* members, teach discipline, confidence, courtesy, and responsibility to *sanggar* members, motivate members to practice diligently, evaluate dance learning outcomes, and provide dance learning evaluation reports to the *sanggar* leaders.

e. Motivating

The leader of the *sanggar* constantly inspires the members. Because he is also a dance instructor, he encourages club members who are learning to dance. The words used to motivate members are not overly conventional so that members do not feel uncomfortable but still respect the teacher. Here, the sense of community is particularly evident.

The provided motivation will inspire the members' mental impetus to practice dancing actively. Members with motivation will be characterized by their interest, enthusiasm, and sincerity in the training process, as well as their active question-asking. In the meantime, a lack of motivation will cause members to struggle with learning, lack concentration when receiving dance material, and lack self-confidence.

f. Controlling

The purpose of control is to regulate implementation to determine the causes of deviations and take corrective action as required. The purpose of activity control is to guarantee or ensure the achievement of the plan's specified objectives. The continuous assessment and evaluation of the *Sanggar Baladewa* organization's management are intended to serve as a benchmark for future improvement.

3.4 Outdoor Show and Handover of Help

The team met with the sanggar's management and members on July 7, 2022, following a two-month mentoring process. At this meeting, partners were scheduled to present their most recent artistic creations, which were executed with the aid of the community service team.

Prior to the performance, the service team led by Dra. Heristina Dewi, M.Pd. provided direction and motivation to all *sanggar* members so that they would remain enthusiastic about activities in Sanggar *Baladewa*. The team, experts in the arts of music and dance, also provided examples of things deemed crucial to the continued development of Javanese artistic creations, such as training techniques and becoming accustomed to using traditional musical instruments.



Figure 4. The team provides direction and motivation to members of the *Sanggar Baladewa* Binjai

After the team's periodic assistance, the *ricik-ricik gendingan* appears in the sanggar's creations. *Ricik-ricik* is a type of music performance in the Banyumas tradition that is popular both within and beyond the Banyumas, Central Java, residency. Rarely are typical Javanese performances such as *gendingan ricik-ricik* performed in Sumatra; consequently, this performance demonstrates the evolution of *sanggars* that have contributed to the growth of Javanese art in North Sumatra. This appearance has also been captured on video, which can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/Jeo3YQALmxE>.



Figure 5. *Gending Ricik-Ricik's* performance from the *Sanggar Baladewa*

In addition, on this particular occasion, the service team transferred musical instruments and dance accessories to partners. This assistance is anticipated to increase the sanggar's productivity and inventiveness when making an appearance.



Figure 6. Handing over of musical instruments and dance accessories

4. CONCLUSION

This Community Service Activity primarily responds to a situation and problem analysis of partners. Several conclusions were reached based on the focus discussion activities' results.

1. At the *Sanggar Baladewa* Binjai, strengthening activities for Javanese arts, particularly music and dance, are implemented with periodic assistance, discussions, and evaluations.
2. The *sanggar Baladewa* Binjai serves as a forum for the community, particularly the young people who are talented or interested in the arts, particularly traditional Javanese music and dance. As a provision for the future, provide members with direction on fostering a sense of self-assurance, appreciation for traditional culture, and creativity through creating a work of art.
3. Through discussions and meetings, the Community Service Team has persuaded *sanggar* members to continue their productive activities. The service team has provided partners with various moral and material support, including musical instruments and dance costume accessories.

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