

# Strategy of the Subang Regency Education and Culture Office in Improving Access and Quality of Basic Education in Remote Areas

Diah Andani<sup>1</sup>, Rakhmayudhi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Universitas Subang, Indonesia

Email: [diahandani@unsub.ac.id](mailto:diahandani@unsub.ac.id)

## Abstract

This study aims to analyze the strategies implemented by the Department of Education and Culture of Subang Regency in improving access to and the quality of basic education in remote areas. The research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach, utilizing data collection techniques such as interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings reveal that the Department of Education and Culture of Subang Regency has implemented various strategies to enhance access to and the quality of basic education in remote regions, focusing on strengthening infrastructure, improving teacher quality, utilizing technology, and providing educational assistance. Despite ongoing challenges such as limited budgets, low community participation, and a shortage of qualified educators, the strategies implemented have begun to show positive impacts, particularly in increasing school participation and raising community awareness of the importance of education. A collaborative and adaptive approach to local conditions has proven to be a key factor in the success of efforts to improve the quality of education in areas that have long been underserved by formal education services.

**Keywords:** *Education Strategy, Education Quality, Remote Areas, Access to Education, Subang Regency.*

## A. INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental right of every citizen, as guaranteed by the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, particularly Article 31, which emphasizes that every citizen has the right to receive an education. In the context of national development, education plays a crucial role as a means of enlightening the nation and improving the quality of human resources (Sudarsana, 2015). Etymologically, the term “education” originates from the verb “to educate,” which means to nurture and teach moral values, knowledge, and intellectual abilities. Education is not merely a process of knowledge transfer, but also a process of character and personality formation (Nadziroh et al., 2018).

The process of education can take place formally in schools, as well as informally and non-formally through guidance from others such as teachers and parents, or independently through self-directed learning (Taufiqurokhman et al., 2023; Achmad & Sidiq, 2025). Every individual, regardless of background whether educational, economic, or geographical has the right to receive proper education. Therefore, the government has the responsibility to create an inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education system so that every citizen can develop optimally and contribute to national progress (Hakim, 2016).

To this day, equitable access to education in Indonesia remains a significant challenge that has yet to be fully resolved. Although various policies have been

introduced to support equality in education access, many regions especially remote areas continue to face obstacles in terms of accessibility and quality of education (Kasim, 2022). The disparity between urban and rural areas is still evident, both in academic achievement, learning facilities, and teacher competence. This directly affects the low Human Development Index (HDI) and limits the opportunities for young people in those areas to grow and develop optimally (Burhan et al., 2025).

Improving the quality of education in remote areas is not an easy task, as it involves complex, interrelated aspects that must be comprehensively considered. Geographic barriers, inadequate infrastructure, lack of learning facilities, shortage of qualified educators, and low community participation are major challenges in improving education quality (Safrida et al., 2021). In addition, centralized policies often fail to address the specific needs of remote areas. Therefore, adaptive and locally-based strategies, along with cross-sectoral support, are needed so that efforts to improve education quality are not merely theoretical, but truly felt by communities in remote regions (Sugiharto, 2013).

Both central and regional governments have a fundamental responsibility to ensure the fulfillment of the right to education for all citizens, including those living in remote areas. As a public service, education is a basic need that is non-negotiable and must be provided fairly and equally (Prabowo et al., 2022). Hence, the government must show real and proactive commitment through policies focused on equalizing education access, improving the quality of learning, and providing adequate infrastructure in marginalized areas. Without strong government commitment, educational inequality will persist and further widen economic disparities between regions (Kalenge, 2015).

In addition to physical development, the government must also strive to enhance human resource capacity through teacher training, provision of technology-based learning facilities, and community empowerment to encourage active involvement in supporting education (Sukma & Jayadi, 2023). Regular evaluation and monitoring of educational programs in remote areas are necessary to ensure that implemented policies align with local needs. Such commitment not only reflects support for marginalized groups but also constitutes a long-term investment in building high-quality and competitive human resources (Mahardhani, 2021).

Subang Regency, with its geography encompassing mountainous areas, hills, and remote regions, faces complex challenges in providing basic education services, especially in isolated locations. Areas such as Citamekar Village in Sagalaherang Subdistrict, Banggalamulya Village in Kalijati Subdistrict, and Palasari Hamlet are examples of regions still experiencing shortages in educational infrastructure and limited accessibility. Additionally, Cibalandong Village in Cibogo Subdistrict faces obstacles in internet network access, further limiting children's opportunities to participate in digital-based learning. These conditions pose serious challenges to equitable education, as children in remote areas tend to lag in learning materials, teaching quality, and educational participation. Therefore, specific strategies are

needed from the Department of Education and Culture to ensure that all school-aged children receive equal educational rights.

Research on access to and quality of education in remote areas has been widely conducted in response to educational disparities in Indonesia. One such study was carried out by Putera & Rhussary (2018), who stated that although educational assistance programs like Indonesia Pintar are effective in increasing school participation, infrastructure challenges and the availability of teachers remain major obstacles in improving overall education quality in 3T regions (frontier, outermost, and underdeveloped areas). Meanwhile, a study by Rosmana et al. (2021) found that collaboration between education offices and local communities is vital to the success of education programs. Their research showed that participatory approaches and local wisdom are key strategies for successful educational equity, including the recruitment of local honorary teachers and the use of distance learning technology.

Another study by Nasution (2014) highlighted how regional leadership and education budgeting policies influence the success of efforts to improve education quality. Harahap concluded that strategies tailored to geographical conditions and strengthened program evaluation and monitoring are key factors in the successful implementation of education policies in remote areas. Meanwhile, Margiyanti & Mulia (2023) showed that the success of educational programs is greatly influenced by how well local governments can adapt national policies to local geographic, social, and cultural conditions.

Unlike previous studies, this research specifically focuses on the strategies implemented by the Department of Education and Culture of Subang Regency in improving access to and quality of basic education in remote areas. This study aims to fill the research gap by deeply exploring local policy practices that can be replicated by other regions with similar geographical and demographic conditions.

This research provides both theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, it contributes to the study of public administration and education management, particularly regarding local government strategies in improving access to and quality of education in remote areas. The findings of this research are expected to enrich the development of educational policy theory and the role of local institutions in delivering basic public services. Practically, this research offers a real picture of the initiatives and strategies carried out by the Department of Education and Culture of Subang Regency in addressing the geographical and demographic challenges of providing basic education. These findings can serve as a reference for other local governments with similar conditions in formulating appropriate policies to ensure the right to education is fulfilled fairly and equitably for all children in the nation.

## **B. METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies implemented by the Department of Education and Culture of Subang Regency to improve access to and the quality of basic education in remote areas. The qualitative approach was chosen because it

allows the researcher to explore phenomena in a holistic and contextual manner, in accordance with the realities occurring in the field (Sugiyono, 2013). The descriptive method is used to provide a systematic depiction of policies, challenges, and strategies implemented by the relevant stakeholders. This research emphasizes the understanding of meanings and perceptions of informants regarding education policies and how the strategies are executed in specific local contexts.

Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews with various parties directly involved in the education process, such as officials from the Department of Education and Culture of Subang Regency, school principals, teachers, and community leaders in the remote areas targeted by the study. These interviews are semi-structured to allow flexibility in exploring broader and deeper information. In addition, field observations are conducted to directly observe the condition of educational infrastructure, teaching and learning activities, and the obstacles faced. Document studies are also carried out on various official documents, such as program reports, student participation data, and regional education policies. The data collected is analyzed using the interactive analysis model, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification, as proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994).

## C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Strategies for Improving the Quality of Education in Remote Areas of Subang Regency

Efforts to enhance the quality of education in remote areas of Subang Regency can be implemented through several approaches, including infrastructure improvement, teacher quality enhancement, scholarship provision, technology utilization, curriculum adaptation, and optimization of local resources.

#### a. Infrastructure and Facilities Improvement

One of the main strategies implemented by the Subang Regency Department of Education and Culture to improve access to and the quality of basic education in remote areas is through the development and renovation of educational infrastructure and facilities. Many elementary schools in areas such as Citamekar, Banggalamulya, and Cibalandong previously faced inadequate facilities, including damaged classrooms, poor sanitation, and limited access to clean water. These conditions not only hindered the teaching and learning process but also affected the comfort and safety of students.

The Education Department has gradually intervened through school rehabilitation programs, construction of new classrooms, and provision of basic facilities such as proper toilets and handwashing stations. A school principal in Citamekar stated, *"We are very grateful for the classroom rehabilitation program from the department. Previously, our classroom roofs would leak and the walls were cracked. Now it is much safer and more comfortable for the children."* This shows that improving school infrastructure can enhance student learning motivation and teacher enthusiasm.

Furthermore, providing internet access and digital devices has become a key focus, especially given the increased demand for digital learning post-COVID-19. In areas such as Cibalandong, where network signals are limited, the Education Department collaborates with communication service providers to expand network coverage. Assistance in the form of educational devices, projectors, and internet connectivity is also being distributed to prioritized remote schools. A teacher in Kalijati sub-district shared, *"We used to have no access to digital learning materials, let alone teach online. Now we have Wi-Fi from a government program. Although it's not yet stable, at least we can start introducing technology-based learning to the children."*

These efforts show that the local government is not only focusing on physical infrastructure but also on the digitalization of education. This is essential to address modern challenges and to provide equal learning opportunities for children in remote areas. Infrastructure and facility improvement strategies are foundational for creating an inclusive, safe, and supportive learning environment that fosters optimal student development.

#### b. Teacher Quality Enhancement

The geography of Subang Regency—which includes mountainous regions in the south, hilly areas in the center, and lowlands in the north—poses challenges in the distribution of teaching staff, particularly in remote villages such as Cibalandong (Cibogo Subdistrict) and Citamekar (Sagalaherang Subdistrict). In response, the Department of Education and Culture has worked to improve teacher quality through training and professional development programs that reach all areas, including those with poor or unstable road access. The training programs focus on teaching skills, implementation of the *Merdeka Curriculum*, and the use of information technology for distance and hybrid learning.

A teacher at SDN Palasari, a school located in the hills, said, *"We used to travel difficult roads and sometimes walk to attend training. But now, training is available in nearby areas, and we also receive digital learning modules for self-study."* This reflects that despite geographical challenges, teacher competency development continues through flexible approaches, such as community-based training and the provision of digital modules. These programs help teachers in remote areas gain confidence in classroom management and the application of more effective teaching strategies.

Besides training, improving teacher welfare is also a key component, especially for those teaching in remote areas without access to public transport or reliable communication. Some schools in the southern region of Subang require more than two hours of travel from the city center, with damaged roads often making it difficult for teachers to attend regularly. To address this, the Department of Education provides special regional allowances and transportation support as a form of recognition for their dedication. A department staff member stated, *"We understand that teaching in mountainous areas like Cisalak or Sagalaherang isn't easy. That's why we strive to provide additional incentives so teachers remain committed and motivated."*

With a combination of capacity-building and welfare support, it is hoped that teachers in Subang—whether in lowlands or mountainous areas—will have equal

competence and spirit to deliver quality education to all children. This strategy proves that educational quality can be improved even under geographically challenging conditions, as long as it is supported by targeted policies and effective implementation.

c. Improving Access to Education

In an effort to expand access to basic education in Subang Regency, the Department of Education and Culture has taken strategic measures by providing scholarships and educational assistance targeting students from underprivileged families. This aid includes school supplies, learning necessities, and educational incentives for high-achieving students who face economic hardship. The aim is to ease the burden on parents and encourage students to remain in school through at least the nine-year compulsory education program. An official in the education services division stated: *“Many families cannot afford basic school needs, so we allocate support in the form of scholarships and school supplies for children in those areas.”* This program is implemented through collaboration between schools, village education committees, and the education office to ensure accurate distribution and avoid overlap with national assistance programs such as the Indonesia Smart Program (PIP).

Meanwhile, regarding physical access to schools, the Education Department acknowledges that providing school transportation equally across regions is difficult to realize. Therefore, alternatives are implemented, such as strengthening community roles and cross-sector collaboration, including empowering parents and local leaders to form study groups or rotate duties escorting children to school. Additionally, schools offer flexible schedules for students who have trouble arriving on time and provide extra tutoring for students who are frequently late or fall behind.

In some cases, schools have also innovated by using module-based learning media that can be studied independently at home for students who cannot attend every day. A teacher at one of the elementary schools in Subang explained: *“We understand that some parents can’t always accompany their children, so we create independent study materials that can be taken home and then submitted when the children return to school.”*

This approach has proven effective in maintaining continuity in learning despite inconsistent student attendance. With these alternative approaches, the Education and Culture Office of Subang Regency demonstrates its commitment to providing fair and adaptive educational access, not only relying on physical infrastructure but also through strategic and participatory methods involving all community elements.

d. Utilization of Technology

To address the challenges of education in the digital era, the Education and Culture Office of Subang Regency has begun promoting the use of information technology to support the teaching and learning process, while tailoring its approach to local conditions. The use of technology is not intended to replace face-to-face learning, but rather to serve as a tool to broaden access to learning and enhance the quality of educational materials.

The main strategy is to provide and utilize digital learning content, such as instructional videos, digital modules, and lightweight educational applications that can be accessed both online and offline. In several elementary schools, teachers have started using simple instructional videos they created themselves, stored on flash drives and played on school laptops or projectors—especially for subjects like Indonesian Language, Science, and Mathematics. This is done because limited internet connectivity remains a barrier in many villages, particularly in hilly or remote areas far from urban centers. A teacher at a public elementary school in Serangpanjang subdistrict said: *“We create short instructional videos and share them via WhatsApp groups with parents. Not all children have internet access, but through their parents’ phones, they can still watch or listen to the material.”*

Additionally, to strengthen access to learning resources, schools are supported by the department through the distribution of self-learning modules and thematic books adapted to the latest curriculum. The department also collaborates with private parties and local education communities to provide training programs for teachers on how to use simple technology, so they can create interactive materials even without a stable internet connection.

#### e. Curriculum Adjustment

Efforts to improve the quality of basic education in remote areas cannot rely solely on improving infrastructure or providing teachers. One crucial strategy undertaken by the Education and Culture Office of Subang Regency is adjusting the curriculum to be more relevant to the needs and conditions of the local community. The curriculum applied in schools in remote areas must accommodate limited resources while also exploring local potential as a foundation for character and skills education.

To this end, the Education Department encourages schools to integrate local content into their learning activities. This local content can include the introduction of regional culture, traditional arts, agriculture, or local wisdom practiced in each area. For instance, in Tanjungsiang subdistrict, which is known for its agricultural products, schools have incorporated farming or crop processing activities into thematic learning. This not only makes learning more contextual but also fosters a love for the local environment and improves students' life skills.

Additionally, teaching schedules and materials are adjusted to be more flexible for students with limited access or learning time—such as by reducing theoretical burdens and emphasizing practical approaches. In certain situations, teachers are also allowed to simplify learning goals without compromising the essence of basic competencies. These steps reflect a shift away from rigid curriculum implementation toward an adaptive tool that connects school life with students' real-life experiences. This adjustment not only enhances the relevance of education but also provides space for preserving local culture, which is an important part of the identity of remote areas in Subang Regency.

f. Optimization of Local Resources

Optimizing local resources is a key strategy pursued by the Education and Culture Office of Subang Regency to improve the quality of basic education, particularly in remote areas with limited facilities and budget support. Here, local resources are understood not only as natural or economic potential, but also include human resources and local wisdom in the school environment.

Practically, the utilization of local resources is done by involving the local community as supporters of educational activities, such as parents, community leaders, or village youth. For example, the community participates in light physical development of the school—such as repairing classroom ceilings, building bamboo fences, or maintaining school security. These activities are usually carried out through mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), considering the limited government budget for school maintenance in remote areas.

Furthermore, community empowerment is also evident in support for student learning outside school hours—such as providing informal study spaces in homes, assisting students with homework, or sharing private Wi-Fi access at a central location in the village. A teacher in the Cibogo area said: *“We’re helped by residents who have Wi-Fi at home. Children can study there after school because the signal at school is often lost. So, we cooperate with the residents.”*

The Education Department recognizes that relying solely on government resources is insufficient. Therefore, schools and communities are encouraged to build mutually supportive relationships. For example, some schools have formed partnerships with village cooperatives or farmer groups to organize practice-based learning activities—such as compost-making, identifying local crops, or learning about household economics. Thus, optimizing local resources becomes a smart adaptation strategy amid limitations, while also strengthening the community's sense of ownership toward education in their environment. This strategy is essential to ensure the sustainability of basic education programs in remote areas of Subang Regency.

## 2. Challenges in Improving the Quality of Education in Remote Areas of Subang Regency

The challenges of improving the quality of education in remote areas of Subang Regency are as follows:

a. Geography and Infrastructure

The geographical characteristics of Subang Regency, which include highlands, lowlands, and coastal areas, create complex challenges in the provision of basic education. Remote regions such as Cisalak, Tanjungsiang, and Cibogo Subdistricts experience significant limitations in accessibility. Narrow and unpaved roads, as well as long distances between students' homes and schools, hinder the mobility of both teachers and students. As a result, the distribution of teaching staff, school supervision, and delivery of learning materials are often suboptimal.

Moreover, supporting infrastructure for education—such as proper school buildings, sanitation facilities, and access to clean water—remains problematic in several areas. This affects the safety and comfort of the learning environment for students. Limited access to electricity and internet networks also increases the isolation of these regions from the digital transformation of education. Due to these constraints, remote areas in Subang are at risk of falling behind in technology-based and innovative learning development.

b. Budget Constraints

Budget allocation is a major challenge in supporting affirmative policies for basic education in remote areas. Although education funding has been established at both the national and regional levels through the Regional Budget (APBD), the actual costs of reaching remote locations far exceed the available budget. The construction of educational facilities, provision of school transportation, teacher training, and distribution of learning materials require substantial funding, which is not always proportionally available across all districts.

Budget limitations also restrict the capacity for innovation in education management in peripheral areas. Schools in remote regions tend to struggle with curriculum updates, digital competency-based teacher training, and collaborative programs with external parties. Furthermore, procurement and supervision efforts are often hampered by limited human resources within the Education Office and local technical implementation units. As a result, educational interventions tend to be partial and do not comprehensively address core problems.

c. Community Participation

Socio-cultural factors also contribute to the lack of community involvement in basic education, particularly in remote areas of Subang Regency. Some rural communities still view education as not necessarily guaranteeing improved livelihoods, especially when job opportunities are largely dominated by informal and agricultural sectors. This leads to a low level of parental awareness in encouraging their children to pursue continued education.

The lack of education literacy and minimal community engagement in school management also weaken the role of community-based supervision in education implementation. Many schools in remote areas do not have active school committees or community forums that serve as communication bridges between schools and the public. This increases the gap between education policies created by the local government and the realities on the ground. Therefore, collaborative strategies are needed to encourage active citizen participation in supporting education programs as part of sustainable development.

d. Teacher Quality

The quality of teachers in remote areas of Subang Regency remains a serious challenge in efforts to improve educational quality. Many teachers in these areas lack adequate educational backgrounds, with some only being high school graduates. This affects their ability to teach effectively, understand the curriculum, and apply appropriate teaching methods. Furthermore, there is a shortage of qualified graduate

teachers willing to work in remote areas due to distance, inadequate facilities, and minimal incentives.

Limited access to professional training and development is also a significant barrier. Teachers in remote areas rarely receive ongoing training—either in-person or online—due to poor internet connectivity and transportation issues. Therefore, local governments need to establish special policies such as providing scholarships for prospective teachers from remote regions, incentives for teachers willing to work in difficult areas, and accessible online training. These steps are essential for improving teacher quality and narrowing the education gap between central and peripheral regions.

#### D. CONCLUSION

The strategy undertaken by the Education and Culture Office of Subang Regency to improve access and quality of basic education in remote areas demonstrates a strong commitment to addressing educational disparities. Various efforts have been implemented, including the improvement of school infrastructure, provision of internet access, teacher training, as well as scholarship programs and educational assistance. These initiatives are aimed at ensuring that children in remote areas can still obtain their right to proper and quality education, despite geographical and economic limitations. However, several challenges still need to be addressed in a sustainable manner. The low quality of teachers, budget constraints, difficult transportation access, and low community participation remain major obstacles that directly affect the achievement of education quality. Therefore, the strategies implemented must be inclusive and adaptive, involving various stakeholders—from the local government, educational institutions, community groups, to the private sector—in collaboratively building an equitable and inclusive education system. Going forward, there is a need to strengthen policies that are more innovative and responsive to the needs of remote areas. This includes providing special incentives for teachers, digitalizing education tailored to local conditions, and developing a curriculum based on local content. Through these measures, it is hoped that basic education in Subang Regency will not only become more accessible, but also more relevant, meaningful, and capable of improving the quality of life for communities in underdeveloped regions.

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