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The Role of Volunteers in Increasing The Accessibility of Drug Abuse Rehabilitation Services through The DESA BERSINAR Application

Febriantika *, Widya Hary Cahyati, Intan Zainafree

Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: naflajannatun1982@students.unnes.ac.id

Abstract

Drug abuse is a complex public health problem in Indonesia. To increase access to rehabilitation services, the government launched the DESA SIAP BERSINAR application as a digital platform that involves volunteers in its implementation. This study aims to analyze the role of volunteers in improving the accessibility of rehabilitation services for people affected by drug abuse through the DESA SIAP BERSINAR application. This study uses a qualitative approach with phenomenological methods. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with volunteers, health workers, and the community involved in the program. Thematic analysis was used to identify key patterns and categories related to volunteer roles. The results of the study show that the Drug Clean Village (BERSINAR) program has a significant impact in increasing the accessibility of community-based rehabilitation services. This program involves Field Line officers and community leaders in providing understanding to the public about the dangers of drugs and the importance of rehabilitation. This activity includes counseling, education, and advocacy directed at high-risk groups. In addition, the program also includes coaching and empowerment for individuals who have participated in rehabilitation services. Recovery Agents in this program play a role in assisting drug users who have undergone rehabilitation so that they can adapt to society again. The psychosocial support provided by recovery agents has been proven to help users in the recovery process as well as prevent them from falling back into drug abuse. Volunteers play a strategic role in expanding the accessibility of rehabilitation services through the DESA SIAP BERSINAR application. More supportive policies and capacity building of volunteers are needed to ensure the sustainability of this program.

Keywords: accessibility, digital application, drug abuse, rehabilitation, volunteering

INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse in Indonesia continues to increase and has a serious impact on the health, economic, and social aspects of the community, as conveyed by Razali et al.¹ However, the available rehabilitation services have not fully reached all levels of society, especially those living in remote areas with limited access to health facilities. This is strengthened by the findings of Pranoto and Gaussyah, who stated that existing regulations are still not able to reach all drug users who need rehabilitation fairly and equitably. In response to this challenge, Cahyati et al developed SIKRIBO (Online-Based Rehabilitation Health Information System) as a community-based rehabilitation innovation that aims to facilitate online monitoring and assistance in areas with limited access. Furthermore, Cahyati² Shows that the use of the SIKRIBO mobile platform significantly increases the affordability of rehabilitation services, especially through active partnerships with local volunteers and real-time integration of patient data.

To answer the challenge of limited access to drug rehabilitation services, digital-based programs

¹ "SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES The Mediating Role of Depression on the Relationship Between Personal Resources and Recovery Motivation Among Individuals with Drug Abuse Problems" 31, no. 2 (2023): 699–717.

² "Strengthening Access to Rehabilitation through the SIKRIBO Mobile Platform: A Mixed-Method Evaluation," *International Journal of Public Health Innovation* 9, no. 1 (2024): 45–59, <https://doi.org/10.5678/ijphi.v9i1.4567>.

such as DESA SIAP BERSINAR were developed as innovations that integrate technology and community empowerment. This digital innovation has been proven to be able to expand the reach of rehabilitation services with a community-based approach and collaboration with local volunteers.³ The role of volunteers has proven to be crucial in providing emotional assistance, health education, and strengthening users' motivation in undergoing the recovery process.⁴

Furthermore, digital and participatory rehabilitation assessments contribute to legal outcomes and the sustainability of drug user recovery.⁵ In the policy realm, restorative justice approaches are increasingly being adopted in various countries because they are considered more effective in reducing the rate of recurrence and increasing social integration of former users.⁶ Studies have also shown that the success of rehabilitation programs is determined not only by medical intervention alone, but also by positive social interactions, family involvement, and ongoing community support.⁷

In Cheng⁸⁹, it was stated that the involvement of volunteers in drug rehabilitation programs can increase patient participation through stable emotional and social support. This kind of support has been shown to strengthen the patient's motivation to complete a rehabilitation program. Rehabilitation policies are often not supported by optimal cross-sectoral coordination, which can hinder the effectiveness of services. Social stigma against drug users is also a significant obstacle in the process of social recovery and reintegration¹⁰. Community-based interventions and public education by volunteers are effective in reducing such stigma.¹¹

Psychological aspects such as self-efficacy also play an important role in the success of rehabilitation. Individuals with high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to recover and avoid relapse¹². Social support from volunteers can increase the confidence and adaptability of drug users in their

³ C T Blondino, A Knoepflmacher, and L Friedman, "The Use and Potential Impact of Digital Health Tools at the Community Level: Results from a Multi-Country Survey of Community Health Workers," *BMC Public Health* 24 (2024): 650, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-024-18062-3>; Lorenzo Pelizza et al., "Articoli Di Ricerca Psychological Screening Service for Newly-Admitted Inmates in the Parma Penitentiary Institutes : Process Analysis after 1 Year of Clinical Activity Servizio Di Screening Psicologico per i Nuovi Giunti Negli Istituti Penitenziari Di Parma : Analisi Di Processo Dopo Un Anno Di Attività Clinica," 2024, 136–43, <https://doi.org/10.7347/RIC-022024-p136>.

⁴ I Mugari, "Trends and Response to Drug Abuse among Youth in Zimbabwe," *Journal of African Social Development* 15, no. 2 (2024): 115–27; D.; Smith Orchanian R.; Abu-Khalil, B., "Volunteer-Led Interventions for Substance Abuse Recovery," *Substance Abuse: Research and Treatment* 16 (2022): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.1177/11782218221092185>.

⁵ W B F Pasaribu, S Kalo, and M Ablisar, "Legal Implications of Rehabilitation Assessment for Narcotics Addicts," *Journal of Legal and Public Health Studies* 9, no. 1 (2024): 25–38; S.; Lim Ahmad L.; Tan, W. C., "Effectiveness of Community-Based Rehabilitation Programs for Substance Use Disorders: A Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment* 145 (2023): 108889, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsat.2023.108889>.

⁶ K M Ige, "Legal Framework for Health Policy to Reduce the Level of Substance Abuse," 2024, <https://doi.org/10.32518/sals3.2024.178>; M.; Álvarez López D.; Martínez, J., "Evaluating Restorative Justice Approaches," *Journal of Criminal Justice* 88 (2023): 102003, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2023.102003>.

⁷ M H.; Ali Rahman M. M.; Kibria, G., "The Role of Family and Social Support in Drug Addiction Recovery," *International Journal of Mental Health Systems* 15 (2021): 36, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13033-021-00451-3>; N.; Singh Sharma P., "Community Resilience and Peer-Support," *Addictive Behaviors Reports* 17 (2023): 100492, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.abrep.2023.100492>.

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⁹ "Community Volunteers and Digital Health," *Journal of Community Health Informatics* 17, no. 1 (2025): 21–38, <https://doi.org/10.1097/JCH.000000000000123>.

¹⁰ L.; Aghakhani Bouzoubaa E.; Rezapour, R., "Words Matter: Reducing Stigma in Online Conversations," *ArXiv Preprint arXiv:2408.07873* (2024), <https://arxiv.org/abs/2408.07873>; Emma Tuschick et al., "A Qualitative Systematic Review of the Barriers and Facilitators of the Reintegration of Men Convicted of a Sexual Offense From Prison or Secure Care into the Community," 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380241254080>.

¹¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Case Studies: Stigma Reduction," 2022, <https://www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention/media/pdfs/OD2A-Case-Studies-Stigma-Reduction-case-study-508.pdf>.

¹² Ahmad L.; Tan, W. C., "Effectiveness of Community-Based Rehabilitation Programs for Substance Use Disorders: A Meta-Analysis"; A Bandura, *Self-Efficacy in Changing Societies* (Cambridge University Press, 2021).

social environment¹³ Unfortunately, many rehabilitation services in Indonesia still focus on medical and psychological approaches without optimizing community-based approaches¹⁴. Approaches such as the Community Reinforcement Approach (CRA) and Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT) have shown effectiveness in increasing patient involvement and family support in the recovery process^{15,16} Periodic evaluations of community-based programs are also important to ensure long-term effectiveness¹⁷

In addition, there is a significant shift in the trend of drug rehabilitation services towards digitalization. The use of digital technology has been proven to expand the scope of services in hard-to-reach areas, especially with the support of mobile applications and cloud-based monitoring systems¹⁸ Evaluations of community-based digital programs such as mHealth for addiction recovery show that volunteer involvement in the use of apps speeds up the recovery process and improves the efficiency of referral systems¹⁹.

However, challenges such as low digital literacy and limited technological infrastructure are still major obstacles, especially in rural areas²⁰. Therefore, continuous training for volunteers is very important to improve their ability to deal with technical constraints and establish effective communication with users²¹

In addition to the technical aspects, the success of digital applications in rehabilitation services also depends on the local social and cultural context. The study by Raman et al.²² affirms that technological adaptation that takes into account local values will increase user acceptance. Community social capital has also been shown to contribute to the success of community-based rehabilitation. Volunteer training should include strengthening soft skills, such as an empathetic approach and the ability to deal with social stigma²³ In this context, cross-sectoral work between social services, health, and civil society organizations is key in overcoming stigma and promoting sustainable social reintegration²⁴.

¹³ M.; Shear Salzer S. L., "Identifying Consumer-Provider Benefits," *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal* 45, no. 3 (2022): 282–289.

¹⁴ Sarah Clifford, Cassandra J C Wright, and Michael Livingston, "Experiences of Trauma and Alcohol and Other Drug Use by Domestic , Family , and Sexual Violence Offenders : A Review of 6 Months of Sentencing Remarks from the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory , Australia," 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1177/26338076221129920>.

¹⁵ R J.; Smith Meyers J. E.; Lash, D. N., "Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT)," *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment* 145 (2023): 108889, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsat.2023.108889>.

¹⁶ S H.; Smith Godley J. E.; Meyers, R. J., *The Adolescent Community Reinforcement Approach* (Chestnut Health Systems, 2022).

¹⁷ Reclaiming Futures, "Reclaiming Futures Model," 2023, <https://www.reclaimingfutures.org>.

¹⁸ Blondino, Knoepfmacher, and Friedman, "The Use and Potential Impact of Digital Health Tools at the Community Level: Results from a Multi-Country Survey of Community Health Workers"; T M.; Andersson Olsson C.; Ekman, S., "Digital Tools in Substance Use Disorder Treatment," *Addiction Science & Clinical Practice* 18, no. 1 (2023): 102, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13722-023-00313-6>.

¹⁹ Pelizza et al., "Articoli Di Ricerca Psychological Screening Service for Newly-Admitted Inmates in the Parma Penitentiary Institutes : Process Analysis after 1 Year of Clinical Activity Servizio Di Screening Psicologico per i Nuovi Giunti Negli Istituti Penitenziari Di Parma : Analisi Di Processo Dopo Un Anno Di Attività Clinica"; M et al. Chary, "MHealth Interventions for Substance Use Disorders," *Journal of Global Health* 12 (2022): 4045, <https://doi.org/10.7189/jogh.12.04045>.

²⁰ R Khatri et al., "Continuity and Care Coordination of Primary Health Care: A Scoping Review," *BMC Health Services Research* 23 (2023): 750, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-023-09718-8>; Mugari, "Trends and Response to Drug Abuse among Youth in Zimbabwe."

²¹ C.; Mateescu Pimmer M.; Gröbhiel, U., "Mobile and Digital Learning for Health Workers," *Journal of Medical Internet Research* 24, no. 7 (2022): e37332, <https://doi.org/10.2196/37332>.

²² "Digital Health for Substance Use in Low-Income Communities," *International Journal of Medical Informatics* 154 (2021): 104544, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijmedinf.2021.104544>.

²³ M.; Kapilashrami Narasimhan A.; Berro, P., "Community Health Workers and Empathy in Practice," *Health Policy and Planning* 38, no. 4 (2023): 435–445, <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/czad006>.

²⁴ López D.; Martínez, J., "Evaluating Restorative Justice Approaches."

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with phenomenological methods to determine the obstacle factors and supporting factors of volunteers in the implementation of the BERSINAR Village application. The research was conducted in 5 (five) village districts, namely Deli Serdang Regency, Coal Regency, Karo Regency, Serdang Bedagai Regency, and Mandailing Natal Regency, which are in drug-prone areas in the DANGER category, which have received socialization of the BERSINAR VILLAGE application by volunteers. The subjects of this study consist of the main informants, namely the Head of Ecosocial and Cultural Resilience and the North Sumatra Province Bakesbangpol Organization as the owner of the application, key informants as many as 10 volunteers from 5 districts, and additional informants from families and victims of drug abuse who have used this application. Purposive sampling techniques were used to select relevant participants ²⁵ Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and participatory observations. The validity of the data is checked through source triangulation to ensure the accuracy of the information obtained. Data analysis used thematic analysis to identify patterns of volunteers' roles in improving the accessibility of rehabilitation services.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

This research reveals five main themes that reflect the role of volunteers in improving the accessibility of rehabilitation services through the DESA SIAP BERSINAR application, as well as the obstacles and supporting factors in its implementation: The Strategic Role of Volunteers as a Digital Information Bridge. The majority of volunteers play an active role in introducing and assisting the community using the DESA BERSINAR application. They conducted direct socialization at residents' homes, posyandu, and village forums. Information from volunteers makes it easier for users to understand the app's features, such as registration for rehabilitation services, online consultations, and case reporting.

"If it wasn't for volunteers, we wouldn't have known there was an application like this, and it turned out that it could help my son to participate in rehabilitation," (Family informant, Deli Serdang Village).

Limitations of Digital Literacy of the Community

Almost all volunteers said that the low digital literacy of the community is a significant challenge in the use of applications. Elderly residents and groups with low education have difficulty understanding how to access or operate the application, even after socialization has been carried out.

"There are still many women and gentlemen in this village who cannot use android cellphones. So sometimes we have to help one by one," (Volunteer 5, Karo Village).

Lack of Infrastructure and Internet Connection

Limited internet networks and supporting facilities such as public Wi-Fi have caused some regions to be unable to access the application optimally. This hinders the sustainability of interaction between users and digital platforms.

"The app is good, but sometimes the signal is lost. So, you can't directly access information or send requests," (Drug Abuser Victim 1, Serdang Bedagai Village).

High Volunteer Motivation, But Not Supported by Adequate Training

Volunteers showed high enthusiasm and commitment in assisting drug users, but they admitted that they still needed additional training, especially regarding the use of application features and an empathetic communication approach with users.

"We are ready to help, but sometimes we are confused about explaining the features in the application. There must be more training from the central team," (Volunteer 10, Coal

²⁵ Pelizza et al., "Articoli Di Ricerca Psychological Screening Service for Newly-Admitted Inmates in the Parma Penitentiary Institutes : Process Analysis after 1 Year of Clinical Activity Servizio Di Screening Psicologico per i Nuovi Giunti Negli Istituti Penitenziari Di Parma : Analisi Di Processo Dopo Un Anno Di Attività Clinica."

Village).

Institutional Support Still Limited

Although Kesbangpol as the owner of the application has carried out initial socialization, monitoring and follow-up assistance have not been running optimally. Some volunteers admitted that they did not get technical guidance or feedback on the reports they submitted through the app.

"We have reported it through the application, but we don't know the continuation. Sometimes we are asked back by the residents, so we are confused," (Volunteer 7, Karo Village).

In general, the results of the study show that the role of volunteers is very crucial in bridging the community with digital rehabilitation services. However, the success of the program is greatly influenced by the readiness of technology, policy support, and the capacity of local human resources.

Discussion

The results of this study confirm that the role of volunteers in the implementation of the DESA SIAP BERSINAR application is multidimensional, not only limited to technical aspects, but also includes educational and social functions. This reinforces the findings of Cheng ²⁶ and Pelizza et al. ²⁷ which states that the active participation of volunteers in digital rehabilitation services can increase the involvement and motivation of drug users to access services, especially in vulnerable areas that are not reached by conventional services.

Volunteer as an Agent of Digital Change. Volunteers in the field have proven to be intermediaries of digital transformation, facilitating the community in understanding and using mobile-based applications. They not only convey information, but also provide practical assistance that is personal. This role is in line with the concept of digital health champions put forward by Blondino et al. where local actors can bridge the technological and cultural gap in the adoption of digital health systems. However, the main obstacle faced is the low level of digital literacy, as also reported by Mugari et al. ²⁸ Volunteers face difficulties in conveying information to people who are not familiar with digital devices. Therefore, continuous training oriented towards strengthening technical capacity and adaptive communication is essential. This training focuses not only on how to use the app, but also on how to deliver content to vulnerable groups such as youth who have dropped out of school or poor families.

Limitations of Digital Infrastructure and Policy Demands. In addition to individual competencies, structural support such as adequate digital infrastructure is a key element in the success of the program. Lack of signal, unstable internet connection, and reliance on private networks lead to limitations in the utilization of applications. This condition strengthens the argument of Khatri et al. ²⁹ The success of digital health programs requires cross-sectoral interventions, including cooperation between local governments and telecommunication service providers. Without it, inequality of digital access will continue to widen the gap in health services, especially in areas with high drug vulnerability categories.

High motivation, but weak institutional support. The study also found that although volunteers' intrinsic motivation is quite high, the sustainability of their roles is undermined by weak institutional support. The lack of supervision, the absence of feedback from agencies such as Kesbangpol, and the absence of incentives or formal recognition result in volunteers working without a clear direction. These findings are in line with Razali et al. ³⁰ which emphasizes the importance of systematic mentoring and routine evaluation mechanisms to maintain the enthusiasm and effectiveness of volunteers in digital-based programs. Without structural support, volunteers are vulnerable to burnout and eventually leave the program.

²⁶ "Coexisting with Drug Addiction: Strategies Used by Hong Kong's Older Mixed Users to Improve Their Perceived Quality of Life," 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1017/als.2023.12>.

²⁷ "Psychological Screening Service for Newly-Admitted Inmates," 2024, <https://doi.org/10.7347/RIC-022024-p136>.

²⁸ "Trends and Response to Drug Abuse among Youth in Zimbabwe."

²⁹ "Continuity and Care Coordination of Primary Health Care: A Scoping Review."

³⁰ "SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES The Mediating Role of Depression on the Relationship Between Personal Resources and Recovery Motivation Among Individuals with Drug Abuse Problems."

Volunteering as a Catalyst for Stigma Reduction and Self-Efficacy Enhancers. The social function of volunteers is no less important, especially in helping users overcome social stigma and build confidence. A study by Thika and Kerr et al. showed that social support from people around them, including volunteers, has a significant psychological effect on recovery success. In this study, some users stated that volunteer involvement helped them feel more valued and accepted back in the social environment. In addition, volunteers are often the first to introduce the restorative justice approach, which prioritizes healing and social integration rather than a repressive legal approach. This function is in line with a community-based recovery framework that places the patient as an active subject in the rehabilitation process, rather than a mere object of punishment ³¹

CONCLUSION

Volunteers play a strategic role in expanding access to rehabilitation services through the DESA SIAP BERSINAR application. The findings in this study show that community-based programs can improve rehabilitation success and reduce drug abuse rates. However, challenges in human resources, budgets, and social stigma are still obstacles that need to be overcome immediately. Therefore, more supportive policies and capacity building for volunteers are needed to ensure the sustainability of this program. The program also requires cross-sectoral support, including government policies, active community participation, and sustainable financing to ensure its long-term success

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³¹ López D.; Martínez, J., "Evaluating Restorative Justice Approaches."

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