

## From Family Herbal Plants to Interaction Place: Enhancing Community Engagement in RW 05, Palmerah Urban Kampong

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### ABSTRACT

Taman Cempaka in Palmerah Urban Kampongs has the potential to be developed as a family medicinal plant (toga) garden as well as a social interaction space. This activity found that the number and variety of herbal medicinal plants increased, the park management system was better with digital technology, and the quality of the social interaction space improved. The UMB team identified two main challenges: the limited variety and quantity of medicinal plants and the suboptimal management of harvested produce. These issues were also confirmed by project partners. This project aims to enhance the function of the Taman Toga as both a green space and a social hub, improve its overall quality, and provide digital training for its managers. The methods used include planting, rearranging, management, and socialization. This program also includes technology training and the use of online platforms for marketing herbal plant products. The project stages include initial meetings, socialization, problem identification, solution implementation, digital system implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. The results showed an increase in the number and variety of toga plants and an increase in the use of the park as a community interaction space. Overall, this project succeeded in enriching the diversity of medicinal plants, improving digital park management, and improving the quality of the social interaction space. In addition, this activity has a positive impact on the environment by making the park more beautiful, comfortable, and functional for the surrounding community.

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## INTRODUCTION

A garden that grows medicinal plants for the family (commonly referred to as a Taman Toga) is a garden that is specifically dedicated to planting medicinal plants or herbal plants, which are commonly used in traditional medicine (Nugraha &

Agustiningsih, 2015; Savitri, 2016). The main concept of the Taman Toga is to increase public awareness of the use of natural medicinal plants and as a means of education regarding the health benefits that can be obtained from these plants. Toga plants have high health value due to the active compounds they contain (Susiloningrum et al., 2023; Widaryanto & Azizah, 2018). Having a Taman Toga in a large city settlement allows people to more easily access traditional medicinal plants that can be used for the treatment or prevention of disease, as well as maintaining general health.

While Taman Togas in urban kampongs provide health and environmental benefits, their sustainability remains a challenge due to inadequate management and low community engagement (Dhanny & Choiriah, 2020). Previous studies have highlighted the benefits of green spaces in urban environments (Savitri, 2016; Suharti et al., 2022), yet few have explored the role of digital management in enhancing sustainability and optimizing social spaces in urban kampongs. This study aims to address this gap by integrating a participatory gardening model with a digital system for inventory tracking and event management.

A Taman Toga in the big city of Jakarta, especially in urban kampong, has quite an important role (Indraswari, 2023; Ischak & Burhannudinnur, 2020). The Taman Toga not only functions as a green space for planting family medicinal plants but also as a place for social interaction between dwellers. Amid dense urban kampong settlements, the Taman Toga becomes an oasis that promotes health through the use of herbal plants while creating a space for dwellers to exchange knowledge about traditional medicine. In addition, it encourages a sense of collective responsibility in maintaining the garden and sustaining its benefits for future generations.

The Taman Toga in the urban kampong settlement area of RW 05 Palmerah District (named Taman Cempaka) was built in 2014. This park is the result of community self-help in the RW 05 Palmerah area. Currently, Taman Cempaka has several types of plants used for herbal medicine, namely turmeric, ginger, curcuma, galangal, butterfly pea flowers, betel leaves, and so on. The variants that already exist in this Taman Toga are quite complete, but the types can still be increased. In terms of quantity, the number of plants is not yet sufficient because planting is still limited to planting on land plots in Taman Cempaka. The arrangement of plants and maintenance in this park is also still not optimal due to the limited knowledge of dwellers.

The results of the Taman Cempaka herbal garden are currently being used as herbal medicine for dwellers in need. The Taman Cempaka management also utilizes the results of this herbal garden to be processed into ready-to-drink herbal medicine,

which is produced to be sold to dwellers in the RW 05 residential area. However, this activity is not carried out routinely by the Taman Cempaka management considering the small number of plants they have (Figure 1). Activities like this should be carried out more so that dwellers can take advantage of the existence of herbal medicine and natural medicine. To support this activity, there needs to be an effort to develop the garden and add varieties of medicinal plants. Thus, Taman Cempaka can contribute more to meeting the needs of dwellers for herbal medicine or jamu.



Figure 1. Existing condition of Taman Cempaka RW 05 Palmerah District

A place for social interaction is a place that can be used by dwellers to carry out their social interaction activities (Anggiani & Ayudya, 2024; Jamila, 2019). The existence of a place for social interaction in the middle of a residential environment of urban kampongs is essential (Noviantri et al., 2019) because the urban kampongs in Jakarta are very minimal in places for social interaction. Taman Cempaka, in addition to its function as a Taman Toga, also functions as a place for social interaction for dwellers of RW 05 Palmerah District (Figure 1). This park is divided into two macro zones, namely the Taman Toga zone and the social interaction zone. This place for social interaction can be used by dwellers of RW 05 to utilize the place for them to relieve fatigue, boredom, or activities related to interactions between dwellers of the environment.

The Taman Toga is not just a place to plant medicinal plants, but also a space that unites the community, through this place, dwellers can gather to engage in social interaction. Dwellers plant various plants such as ginger (*zingiber officinale*), turmeric (*curcuma longa*), lemongrass (*cymbopogon citratus*), and betel leaves (*piper betle*), and other types that have long been used in traditional medicine. Not only for its health benefits, the Taman Toga is also a social space that strengthens relationships between dwellers. The community gathers to plant, care for, and share knowledge about medicinal plants, creating a sense of togetherness. The Taman Toga not only improves the physical quality of the urban kampongs, but also becomes a center for social interaction activities. Several factors influence people's interest in using interaction spaces like the garden, including accessibility, comfort, available facilities, and the

presence of shaded areas. This shows that green spaces in urban kampongs can function as productive places while having deep social meaning.

The current condition of the social interaction zone in Taman Cempaka RW 05 is basically good enough to be used as a place for social interaction for dwellers. However, the condition of the facilities is lacking in maintenance from the park management. Currently, several facilities in the social interaction place cannot be used optimally by local dwellers. If the condition of the facilities in this social interaction zone is good enough, then dwellers will be happy to use them. The umbrellas as a place of shelter and seating are in a damaged condition, so dwellers become anxious when sitting under the large umbrella. The social interaction zone in Taman Cempaka RW 05 needs attention in the form of facility repairs.

Taman Cempaka RW 05 Palmerah urban kampong is a park that has a dual function, namely as a Taman Toga and a place for social interaction between dwellers. Its existence in the urban kampong of Jakarta is an oasis for dwellers in the area. The condition of the park that has not been optimized by dwellers means that the park has not had many positive impacts on dwellers. The problem of the Taman Toga with a minimal number and variety of plant types, as well as the concerning condition of the facilities for social interaction, is very important to be addressed, and the best solution sought. In light of this, it is hoped that Taman Toga would develop into a popular local destination for people to socialize and congregate, as well as a resource for RW 05 Palmerah District inhabitants.

Taman Cempaka RW 05 faces several physical and non-physical problems. Physically, there are only 15 types of plants, with harvests only twice a year. The solution is to add plant variants and carry out vertical planting to increase the harvest. In addition, the lack of social interaction places can be overcome by beautifying the park through murals on the floor. In the non-physical aspect, the park manager does not yet have adequate knowledge in managing the park, so they need to be given management training. In addition, local dwellers have not utilized the crops optimally, so socialization is needed so that the benefits of the park are better known and used by the community. The problems above can be solved in the ways listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Problems and Solution in Taman Cempaka RW 05

| Problems   | Solution  |
|--|---|
| Lack of plant types/varieties in the herbal medicine garden. | Increase the number of types/varieties of medicinal plants. |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Lack of plants in the herbal garden.  | Increase the number of medicinal plants planted by planting vertically.                        |
| Lack of places for social interaction in the RW 05 residential area.                | Utilizing medicinal plants as a place for social interaction for dwellers in the area.         |
| The Taman Toga is currently not being managed optimally.                            | Providing knowledge on how to manage a medicinal garden.                                       |
| Dwellers around the Cempaka Garden have not yet used the crops grown in the garden. | Providing ways to socialize the existence and benefits of herbal medicine gardens to dwellers. |

In the context of community service based on urban kampong architecture in RW 05 Palmerah District, sustainable technology is applied to empower the family medicinal plant garden (Taman Toga), which also functions as a place for social interaction. The methods used in the problems faced by partners consist of two major methods, namely the method to overcome the problems of the Taman Toga and the method to overcome the problems of social interaction places, both of which are in one area. These two methods are designed to target the best solution to each problem in their respective zones. The intervention of technology use in this activity is carried out to provide broader knowledge to the managers and users of the Taman Cempaka RW 05 Palmerah District.

## METHOD

Methods for improvement in this Taman Toga include increasing the number of herbal plants in the RW 05 Palmerah District urban kampong. The addition of plant types and quantities of herbal plants must be done to increase the variety and number of herbal plants. The layout of the plants must also be improved; planting types of herbal plants should be grouped according to the category of each type of plant. For maintenance and care, it is necessary to carry out technology-based education and training programs to increase dwellers' knowledge, and online platforms support the marketing of herbal plant products to dwellers in the RW 05 Palmerah District urban kampong.

Meanwhile, the method for increasing the use of social interaction places in Taman Cempaka RW 05 Palmerah District includes improving the quality of existing facilities in Taman Cempaka. The furniture in the social interaction zone of Taman Cempaka must be repaired and rearranged. The unsuitability of the furniture makes dwellers of RW 05 Palmerah District urban kampongs reluctant to come to Taman Cempaka to interact socially there. In addition to repairs, socialization via online platforms of the environment

and optimization of social interaction places in Taman Cempaka RW 05 Palmerah District urban kampong is already in very good condition.

The program begins with a preliminary stage, namely conducting pre-observations to the Taman Cempaka with core partners to identify existing problems. Furthermore, socialization is carried out with partners and their members to prepare for the implementation of the program. At the implementation stage, several steps are taken: adding types and numbers of toga plants, improving the condition of the garden (furniture and paving floors), and transferring knowledge to partners regarding garden management and socialization. After implementation, the program continues with management and recording of results. The final stage involves evaluation and mentoring to improve partners' abilities in managing the Taman Toga. The steps taken in this activity consist of several stages which are depicted in Figure 2 below.

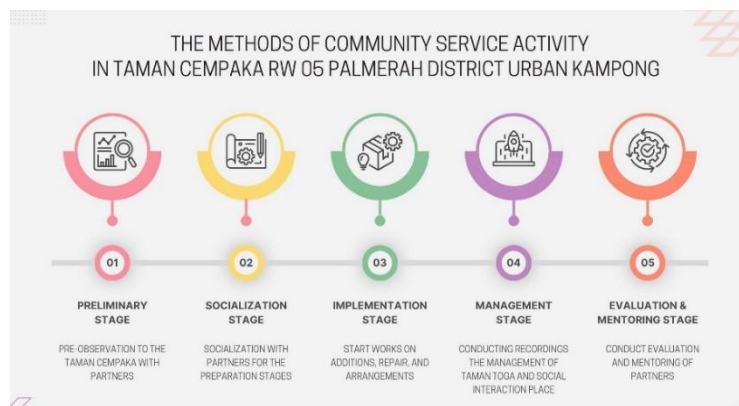


Figure 2. Methods in the activities

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### First Stage

This community service activity began in the third week of August 2024 by conducting a kick-off meeting between the UMB implementing team and partners. At this stage, the UMB implementing team re-recorded the problems that occurred in Taman Toga and the social interaction place in Taman Cempaka RW 05, Palmerah District urban kampong. Partners said that the problems and obstacles they experienced were in accordance with the initial discussion, namely the constraints of the number and variety of herbal medicine plants that were lacking and the management of Taman Toga results had not been carried out optimally. Likewise, the garden used as a place for social interaction was already in an unsuitable condition because there was no maintenance.

At this stage, the UMB implementing team and partners made a direct observation of Taman Cempaka (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Kick-off meeting at Taman Cempaka RW 05

### Second Stage

In the second stage (2 September 2024), the implementing team conducted socialization with partners and provided an overview of solutions to the problems faced by partners in Taman Cempaka. This socialization activity is an activity to transfer knowledge from the implementing team to the partners. The implementing team presented a visual plan for improving Taman Cempaka through a 3-dimensional design and a park management plan with a regular maintenance picket schedule by partners. This activity was continued with initial tidying work, cleaning the organic and inorganic waste in Taman Cempaka, which was carried out by the implementing team and partners. This cleaning is done to facilitate the implementation of the next stage, which requires the garden to be ready for the addition of plants, the arrangement of the medicinal plant garden, and the repair of facilities (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Socialization and initial cleaning activities at the Taman Cempaka RW 05

### Third Stage

The third stage is the main implementation stage: technology and innovation delivered to partners. Activities in this stage consist of two stages, namely the problem-handling stage in the toga park and the social interaction place in Taman Cempaka, with activities in each section:

#### a. Taman Toga.

At this stage, the initial work that has been done in the previous stage, which is cleaning, is continued with the procurement of the number of toga plants and toga plant variants. The number of toga plant variants is increased by 35 types, so that if added to the initial condition (15 types), the types of toga plant variants are currently 50 types. The addition of toga plant variant types is also carried out. Previously, each type consisted of 1–3 plants/trees, but now each type has 5 plants/trees (Figure 5). After the addition, the layout of the toga plants in Taman Cempaka is rearranged. The existing condition, the position of the plants, is in irregular position, so in this activity, the plants are rearranged according to their respective groups. This is done to make it easier to find plant types later and easier for the maintenance.



Figure 5. Procurement of goods (above) and repair work for Taman Cempaka (bottom)

#### b. Social interaction place.

In the stage of optimizing the place of social interaction in Taman Cempaka, the stages carried out after the site cleaning process that had been carried out previously were continued with the stage of improving the condition of the facilities in the social interaction zone. The existing condition of the furniture in this social interaction place, in the form of benches and umbrellas, was in a state of poor



maintenance so that dwellers were less able to use it properly. Damaged furniture was repaired by welding and connecting, then repainted (Figure 5). In this park, lighting at night is also not yet available, so dwellers can only use it on bright days. Therefore, the addition of lights in the park was also carried out at this stage. The park improvement activities were carried out by the implementing team together with partners.

### Fourth Stage

After the stages of repair, procurement, and arrangement in Taman Cempaka RW 05 are finished, the activity moves on to its fourth stage. At this point, partners will receive assistance from the UMB implementation team in maintaining the Taman Toga and social interaction place inside of the site. Management of Taman Cempaka RW 05 can be done digitally to facilitate data collection and recording (Figure 6). Through a digital system, the accuracy of inventory data in Taman Cempaka RW 05 is easier to access. In addition, with a digital system, growth, development, or increased usage graphs can be created quickly and accurately. The use of a digital system in the management of Taman Cempaka RW 05 is very beneficial for data collection of the park itself and increases digital knowledge for partners.

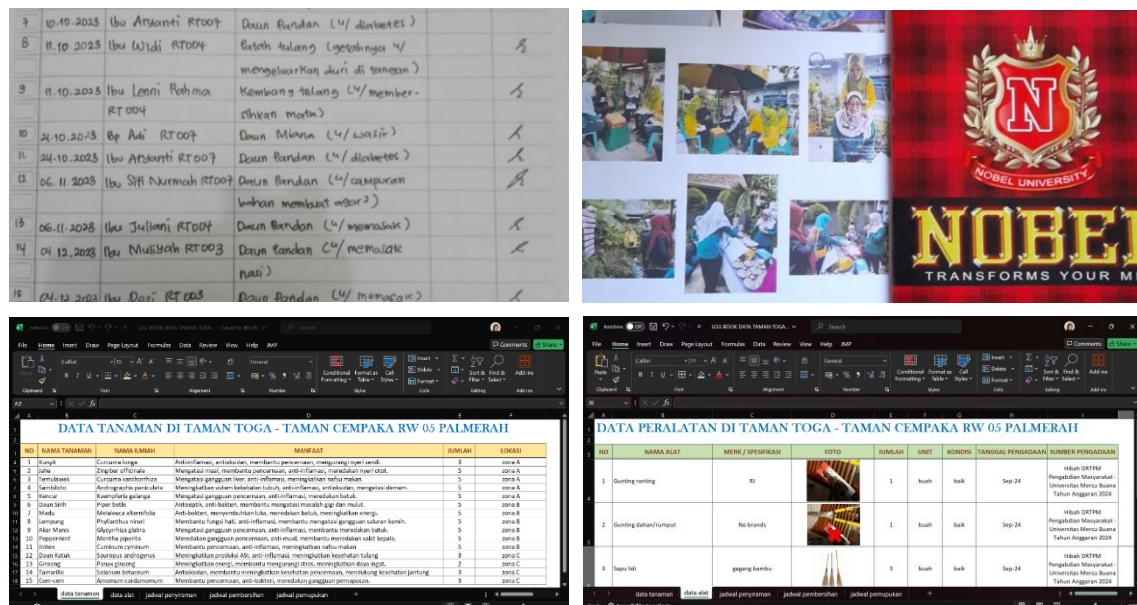


Figure 6. Digitalization of design and management of Taman Cempaka RW 05

### The Taman Toga management system will be managed digitally through:

- Plant data management, including details of each type of plant in Taman Cempaka RW 05.

- Plant care schedule, details of watering schedule, fertilization, pruning, pest control, crop rotation, and others. Each Taman Toga officer is arranged in the form of a weekly and monthly schedule, as well as its realization.
- Management of maintenance tool inventory, such as shovels, hoes, plant shears, fertilizer stock, compost, and pesticides; the number of seedlings or new plants to be planted.
- Keeping track of the Taman Toga's growth and production will allow researchers to monitor and assess the productivity of individual toga plants over time by examining patterns in plant growth or harvest outcomes.
- Recording pests and diseases by creating a log of pests and diseases that affect toga plants by recording the date of occurrence, type of pest, actions taken, and results of treatment.
- Publicizing the existence of the Taman Toga via social media via the RT WhatsApp Group.

**b. The social interaction park management system will be managed digitally through:**

- Periodic monitoring of the condition of park facilities by recording the inventory in the park and checking its condition per month.
- Management of the schedule of major activities that will be carried out in the park by dwellers so that the use of social interaction places is recorded.
- Survey of user satisfaction of social interaction places that have been used by dwellers so that managers can always carry out evaluations related to improving the quality of the place.
- Publicizing the existence of social interaction places via social media through the RT WhatsApp Group.

### **Fifth Stage**

The fifth stage is the final stage carried out in community activities in Taman Cempaka RW 05. At this stage, the monitoring process of Taman Cempaka RW 05 is carried out quarterly (4 times a year). Monitoring looks at data that has been digitally inputted by Taman Cempaka officers. In addition to quarterly monitoring, a satisfaction evaluation is also carried out through a digital-based questionnaire to dwellers of RW 05 who have utilized the existence of Taman Cempaka RW 05, both the results of the Taman Toga and the use of social interaction places. Through this evaluation, Taman

Cempaka managers will know the results of feedback from users so that they can make continuous improvements or enhancements.

## **CONCLUSION**

Community service activities in the form of optimizing the function of the herbal medicine garden and a place for social interaction for dwellers of RW 05, Palmerah urban kampong, have increased the quality of Taman Cempaka. The types of variants and quantities of herbal medicine plants in Taman Cempaka have now increased from 35 types into 100 types, so that dwellers have more freedom in utilizing the herbal medicine plants they need. Assistance in training on the use of digital formats for park management also increases insight into the use of technology by the herbal medicine garden management officers. The use of digital formats from conventional formal greatly helps inventory recording in Taman Cempaka. The place for social interaction in Taman Cempaka is used by dwellers in the RW 05 environment, both for formal and informal events. The use of the place for social interaction for dwellers of RW 05 has become a comfortable place for dwellers to visit. This community service project has improved the Taman Toga and social interaction space, making it more useful and inviting for residents. The number of medicinal plant species has grown from 35 to 100, providing greater biodiversity and encouraging the community to learn more about herbal medicine. With better facilities and a more organized layout, the garden has become a lively gathering place where residents can connect, share knowledge, and strengthen their sense of community.

## **SUGGESTION**

The existence of the Taman Toga and social interaction place in Taman Cempaka RW 05 Palmerah urban kampong should receive more intensive and detailed periodic assistance from several related government agencies, such as the Dinas Pertamanan, Dinas Lingkungan Hidup, Dinas Kesehatan, and Dinas Kesejahteraan Sosial serta Pemberdayaan Masyarakat. Government agencies, leveraging their expertise, should collaborate to sustain the monitoring and management of the Taman Toga and social interaction place in RW 05 with the aim of further enhancing the quality of Taman Cempaka.

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