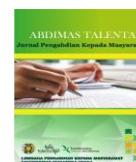




ABDIMAS TALENTA Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat

Journal homepage: <https://talenta.usu.ac.id/abdimas>



Revitalization of Environmental Aesthetics Through Mural Activities at the RT Community Hall of Kampung Deles IV, Surabaya

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received : 04 November 2025

Revised : 12 February 2026

Accepted : 22 February 2026

Available online: 17 July 2026

E-ISSN: 2549-418X

P-ISSN: 2549-4341

How to cite:

Roosandriantini, J., Hidayat, A., Harianto, Y.K., Setyawan, S.A., Tanaya, J.R., and Setiadi, W. (2026). Revitalization of Environmental Aesthetics Through Mural Activities at the RT Community Hall of Kampung Deles IV, Surabaya. ABDIMAS TALENTA: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat, 11(1), 18-25.

ABSTRACT

Environmental aesthetic revitalization is a crucial effort in creating a comfortable, green, and functional public space for the community. Mural art, as a form of visual expression, holds great potential in beautifying the environment and reinforcing local identity. This community service program was conducted at the RT Hall of Kampung Deles IV, Surabaya, an area experiencing visual degradation due to dull and poorly maintained walls. Through a participatory approach, the service team and local residents collaboratively planned, designed, and implemented mural artworks that highlight local wisdom and communal values. The results showed significant improvement in environmental aesthetics, a strengthened sense of belonging among residents, and increased motivation to maintain the RT hall as a hub for social activities. This project demonstrates that mural art can serve as an effective medium for community-based empowerment and environmental revitalization.

Keyword: Mural, Environmental Aesthetics, Community Empowerment, Revitalization, Participatory



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<http://doi.org/10.32734/abdima.talenta.v11i1.23387>

1. Introduction

An aesthetic and well-organized residential environment not only reflects the quality of life of its inhabitants but also plays a crucial role in building mental health, social harmony, and a sense of pride and care among residents [1]. However, in the urban context of Indonesia, many urban villages face challenges related to limited green open spaces and the visual dominance of dull, dirty, and unmaintained walls. This monotonous and uninspiring environmental condition can contribute to a decline in the sense of belonging and the desire to participate in the maintenance of the shared environment [2].

Mural art, as a form of visual art expression in public spaces, has developed rapidly and undergone a shift in meaning. Once often associated with acts of vandalism, murals are now recognized as an effective medium for public education, conveying social messages, and most importantly, as a tool for the aesthetic revitalization of an area [3]. The presence of murals can transform previously neglected spaces into attractive, colorful, and meaningful focal points, thereby creating new landmarks on an environmental scale [4]. Public spaces are the heart of social interaction in urban areas, functioning as places for gathering, expression, and building community identity [5]. Based on an article by [6], mural art not only serves as an aesthetic element but also acts as a catalyst for the revitalization of urban residential areas through community participatory approaches.

The success of revitalization heavily depends on the active involvement of residents in every stage, from planning to implementation, which ultimately builds a sense of belonging and program sustainability.

Kampung Deles IV in Surabaya is an example of a dense settlement with a strong community spirit but still holds potential for development in terms of visual beauty. Several spots in the environment, particularly around the RT Hall (Balai RT), still have underutilized walls that tend to look monotonous. Based on observation and dialogue with residents, there is a collective desire to enliven the neighborhood atmosphere and create a new icon that can strengthen the kampung's identity.

In response to these conditions, this community service activity was realized in the form of the program "Aesthetic Environmental Revitalization Through Mural Activities at the RT Hall of Kampung Deles IV, Surabaya". This program is oriented not only towards the physical output in the form of an art piece but also towards a participatory and educational process. A collaborative approach with residents was chosen to ensure that local values, community stories, and residents' aspirations are internalized in the artwork, thereby enhancing the sense of ownership and pride [7].

The objectives of this activity are: (1) To transform the visual appearance of the Kampung Deles IV RT Hall area from monotonous to more lively, colorful, and inspiring through mural art; (2) To provide basic mural technique training and mentoring to the youth of the karang taruna; (3) To enhance residents' sense of care, togetherness, and sense of belonging towards their environment through a collaborative creation process; and (4) To create a new icon or landmark that can become a source of pride for residents and a potential environmental attraction.

The novelty of this community service project, based on previous community service initiatives, is as follows:

Table 1. Previous Community Service Journals

No	Title of Community Service	Year	Focus of Community Service
1	Utilizing Mural Art to Enhance Aesthetic Value in Semen Gresik Alley, Sekardangan Village [8]	2021	Enhancing environmental aesthetics and providing mural painting skills training for the youth community (karang taruna).
2	Assistance in Creating 3D Murals to Enhance the Tourist Appeal of Batik Village in Semarang [9]	2020	Using 3D-themed murals with the primary goal of boosting the village's tourism potential and creative economy.
3	Visual Transformation of an Urban Village through Collaborative Painting Activities on Concrete Walls in RW 09, Malang [10]	2023	Collaborative painting activities with residents to transform the visual of a slum neighborhood and create a new icon.

Based on the previous community service journals above, the novelty of this community service project compared to previous ones can be seen. The main objective of this project lies in socio-environmental revitalization rather than commercialization, focusing more on the aspects of environmental maintenance and social capital, not on economic value.

This community service does not only train the youth community (karang taruna), but also actively involves other age groups (teenagers, mothers from family welfare groups - ibu-ibu dasawisma) in the creative process, building a stronger sense of belonging.

It is hoped that with the realization of this activity, the aesthetics of the RT Hall environment in Kampung Deles IV will improve significantly. Furthermore, this activity is also expected to spark other creative initiatives from the residents in their ongoing efforts to beautify and add meaning to their living spaces.

2. Method

This community service activity was carried out using the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method, integrated with an asset-based community development (ABCD) approach. This method was chosen to ensure that the entire process is community-centered, starting from exploring the potential and needs of the residents, collaboratively designing solutions, to implementing and evaluating the activities together. This method emphasizes the cycle of planning, action, observation, and reflection.

1. Time and Place of Implementation

Time: The activity was carried out from September to December 2025, divided into three main stages: preparation, implementation, and evaluation.

Location: The RT Hall and its surrounding environment in Kampung Deles IV, Surabaya City.

2. Stages of Implementation

The implementation of the activity was divided into three main stages:

A. Preparation Stage

This stage aimed to build relationships, analyze needs, and collaboratively design the program.

Initial Observation and Coordination: The team conducted an initial visit to identify the physical conditions of the location (wall texture, lighting) and carried out initial socialization and coordination with the RT Head and Community Leaders to obtain permits and support. Focused Group Discussion (FGD): An FGD was held as a guided discussion forum with representatives from various community elements (RT administrators, youth group - karang taruna, mothers from family welfare groups - ibu-ibu Dasawisma, and the elderly). The goals were to:

- a. Explore the values, history, characteristics, and shared aspirations for the Kampung Deles IV environment.
- b. Determine the main theme and narrative to be featured in the mural.
- c. Build a sense of belonging from the outset.

Participatory Design: The design team processed the FGD results into several rough mural design concepts. These concepts were then presented back to the residents in a forum for feedback and were deliberated upon until a final, mutually agreed-upon design was reached.

Logistics Preparation: Gathering all necessary tools and materials, including exterior wall paint, brushes, rollers, newspaper sheets, gloves, and safety equipment.

B. Implementation (Action) Stage

This stage involved the implementation of the agreed-upon design.

a. Surface (Wall) Preparation:

- 1) Cleaning the wall from dust, dirt, and mold.
- 2) Applying a base coat (primer) in a neutral color (usually white) to create a uniform surface and make the mural colors sharper later on.

b. Participatory Painting Process:

- 1) Outline Transfer: The core team transferred the outline or sketch of the final design onto the wall using trained techniques.
- 2) Block Coloring: The karang taruna and youth took the lead role in filling in the large color blocks.
- 3) Detailing and Finishing: More skilled team members (artists or the design team) refined the details, final outlines, and emphasized shapes to achieve an optimal result.
- 4) Involvement of All Residents: To enhance participation, specific areas (such as solid color fields or simple patterns) were intentionally left for children and mothers to fill in with guidance, ensuring all community elements felt they had contributed.

C. Evaluation and Sustainability Stage (Post-Action)

Participatory Reflection and Evaluation: Holding a reflection meeting with residents to evaluate the process, results, and impact of the activity. Qualitative feedback was gathered through discussion.

Establishing a Maintenance Commitment: Agreeing with the karang taruna and RT administrators to create a self-funded schedule for maintaining and cleaning the mural area and the surrounding plants.

Documentation and Dissemination: Documenting the entire process from start to finish in the form of photos and videos for reporting, and disseminating the results through residents' social media to build pride and serve as an inspiration for other neighborhoods.

3. Result and Discussion

Community service activities held in Deles IV Village, Surabaya, were carried out as follows:

A. Problem Identification and Potential Mapping Stage

Through discussions with neighbourhood (RT) leaders and residents, several main issues related to public spaces were identified:

- 1) The village walls appear dull and poorly maintained.
- 2) Young people lack spaces to express themselves in their environment.
- 3) The village's identity is not as prominent compared to other villages in Surabaya.

The potentials that were successfully mapped include:

- 1) The enthusiasm of youth to participate in mural activities.
- 2) Local cultural values such as mutual cooperation (gotong royong) and city icons of Surabaya.



Figure 1. The mural work on the first day began after the walls were cleaned

B. Concept and Mural Design Development Stage

From the discussion forum involving residents, neighborhood (RT) leaders, and youth organization (karang taruna), three main mural design concepts were agreed upon as follows:

- 1) Theme: “Cleanliness” – illustrating the expected attitude of residents to maintain the cleanliness of their surroundings.
- 2) Theme: “Togetherness and Mutual Cooperation (Gotong Royong)” – visualizing community activities such as working together, playing, studying in groups, and interacting.
- 3) Theme: “Health” – depicting the closeness between a mother and her child to emphasize children's mental and emotional well-being.

The mural design concepts above were collectively agreed upon by the residents, RT leaders, and youth organization, and were created as scaled wall sketches with wall dimensions of 4 x 8 m². Below is an example of a mural on the wall with the “Cleanliness” theme:



Figure 2. Example of a Mural with the Theme of “Cleanliness”

C. Mural Activity Implementation Stage

The mural was executed collaboratively over 1 month with approximately 30 residents participating in shifts. The youth organization (Karang Taruna) acted as the driving force in the painting process, while the Dasawisma mothers assisted in providing coffee and snacks, and the neighborhood unit (RT) officials also helped with the work.

The results achieved:

- 1) Three village wall spots have been decorated with bright-colored murals using good quality paint.
- 2) Residents feel proud and have started using the murals as photo spots for group pictures and social media.
- 3) The neighborhood environment appears more lively, cheerful, and has a new visual appeal.



Figure 3. The implementation of a mural activity at the neighborhood hall



Figure 4. The involvement of the residents of Deles IV Village, Surabaya



Figure 5. The teamwork of the community service team

D. Evaluation, Reflection, and Sustainability Stage

The evaluation was carried out through a community forum after the activity was completed. Several key achievements were identified:

- 1) Improved environmental aesthetics: The previously dull neighbourhood has become more visually appealing.
- 2) Increased social participation: The mural activity strengthened interactions among residents across generations.
- 3) Emergence of a sense of ownership: Residents have become more concerned about maintaining the cleanliness and sustainability of the mural.
- 4) Handover to the neighbourhood and community leaders, residents, and the women's group (Dasawisma) of Deles IV.



Figure 6. The final result of the mural on the neighborhood hall wall



Figure 7. The handover ceremony of the mural activity



Figure 8. The presentation of certificates to the community service team



Figure 9. The presentation of certificates to the community service team



Figure 10. Group photo of the community service team with the youth organization, the Dasawisma women's group, and the neighbourhood committee

4. Conclusion

The participatory mural activity grounded in local values has proven effective as a strategy to revitalize the aesthetics of densely populated residential areas. The visual transformation of the neighbourhood hall wall—from a previously monotonous and dull surface into a vibrant space full of colour, stories, and identity—has successfully created a new landmark that evokes community pride and a strong sense of belonging. This success demonstrates that a community art approach can serve as an appropriate, affordable, and sustainable solution to enhance the visual quality of urban neighbourhoods.

The application of the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach has effectively fostered an inclusive and meaningful empowerment process. The active involvement of various community elements—from youth organizations and women's groups (PKK) to children—through every stage, from thematic discussions to the painting process, ensured that the resulting mural genuinely represents the community's aspirations and collective identity. This process not only produced a physical output but also strengthened social capital, solidarity, and residents' confidence in managing their environment.

This activity has generated impacts that go beyond aesthetics. Beyond serving as a visual enhancement, the mural has functioned as:

- a) an educational medium that instils values of togetherness and local history;
- b) a catalyst for other environmental initiatives, such as organizing surrounding spaces and planting greenery; and
- c) a positive branding tool that enhances the image of Deles IV Village in the eyes of the broader public.

A long-term impact observed is the emergence of self-initiated commitment from the youth group and residents to maintain the artwork and even expand mural projects to other parts of their neighbourhood.

The success of this program was supported by a key factor—strong partnership between the community service team and the local community. The full support of community leaders and the neighbourhood head served as a catalyst that facilitated the entire process. This collaboration highlights that the role of academics and practitioners is to act as facilitators and enablers, while the community itself is the main actor driving change within its own environment

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