Strategic Social Marketing Communication of the "Buruan SAE" Program in Building Community Participation in Bandung City

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Abstract
Local governments rely on communication strategies that resemble social marketing to convert voluntary public participation into measurable program outcomes, yet most Indonesian studies on government persuasive communication still analyze message stages without connecting them to the social marketing mix. This study examines the social marketing communication strategy of the Food Security and Agriculture Department Bandung City in the Buruan SAE urban farming program, which promotes community-based food production under the (Healthy, Natural, Economical) principle. Using a descriptive qualitative approach grounded in a post-positivist paradigm, data were collected through in-depth interviews with three key informants and four supporting informants, complemented by non-participant observation and documentation study. Data were analyzed following the interactive model of data collection, reduction, display, and conclusion, with validity established through source and technique triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checking. Guided by four micro research questions concerning the stages of informing, explaining, convincing, and persuading, the findings show that the department applies a layered, community-embedded communication strategy: building awareness through motivational messaging and demonstration plots before technical content is introduced, deepening understanding through structured modules and sustained mentoring available mainly within established groups, reinforcing trust through visible peer success and responsive companionship, and converting willingness into action through material incentives offered only after residents demonstrate commitment. The program has sustained 555 groups, and based on the statements of the informants that trust-based communication and motivational approaches may have contributed to maintaining community engagement. The communication practices remain structurally dependent on territorial networks, while Instagram is underused as an open digital channel. As a result, residents outside these networks may have fewer opportunities to access information about the program and participate in its activities. The findings suggest that incorporating social marketing principles, audience segmentation and clear digital calls to action, could help broaden access to program information and participation.

Keywords: social marketing communication, persuasive communication, community participation, urban farming, local government communication

INTRODUCTION

Government communication has increasingly been recognized not merely as an information-dissemination function but as a strategic instrument for shaping public behavior and mobilizing voluntary participation. Studies on government social media use during large-scale public health and civic mobilization efforts show that transparency, trust, and dialogic engagement, rather than message volume alone, determine whether citizens move from passive exposure to active participation (Arshad & Khurram, 2020; Chen et al., 2020). This shift positions government communication programs closer to the logic of social marketing, an approach that adapts commercial marketing principles, audience segmentation, exchange, incentives, and competition analysis, to promote voluntary behavior change for public benefit rather than private profit (Domegan, 2021; Roger et al., 2023). Cross-sectoral evidence from public health campaigns further shows that interventions applying more social marketing benchmark criteria, such as formative research, audience segmentation, and clearly defined exchange value, consistently report stronger behavioral outcomes than campaigns relying on information delivery alone (Pastrana et al., 2020; Sommariva et al., 2025).

This logic is particularly relevant for urban food security programs, where local governments must persuade residents to voluntarily adopt an unfamiliar practice, in this case, small-scale urban farming, without regulatory compulsion. Bandung City faces a structural food security challenge: as much as 97 percent of the food consumed by its residents is estimated to be supplied from outside the city, while the city itself produces only 3 to 4 percent of its own food needs (Muharam, 2025). This vulnerability has been compounded by a steady loss of productive farmland, which shrank from 2,104 hectares in 2003 to just 702 hectares by 2024 as land use shifted toward housing and infrastructure (Bagaskara, 2024). In response, the Bandung City Food Security and Agriculture Agency (Dinas Ketahanan Pangan dan Pertanian, hereafter DKPP Kota Bandung) launched the Buruan SAE program, a community-based urban farming initiative built on the principles of Sehat, Alami, Ekonomis (Healthy, Natural, Economical), which invites residents to cultivate food on residential land and shared open spaces (Buruan SAE, 2020; DKPP Kota Bandung, 2026).

Internationally, the communication dimension of urban agriculture has drawn growing scholarly attention. Research on how urban farming initiatives communicate across society finds that messages emphasizing awareness, responsibility, and pride are central to sustaining public engagement, particularly on social media platforms where audiences outside existing farming networks are first exposed to the practice (Unay-Gailhard et al., 2025). Complementary work on city-wide urban farming governance shows that sustained public participation depends on a science-policy-practice community capable of bridging top-down program design and bottom-up community knowledge, a dynamic that is inherently communicative rather than purely administrative (Mabon et al., 2023). Within Indonesia, prior studies on Buruan SAE have concentrated on program implementation and its effectiveness in strengthening food security (Putri et al., 2023), while broader studies on persuasive communication by government actors have examined village-level apparatus persuading rural communities through informative, participatory,

and emotional approaches (Mustafa, 2024) and participatory communication in corporate-sponsored urban farming programs (Astuti et al., 2025).

Existing research on the Buruan SAE program and Indonesian local government communication provides a basis for understanding public outreach initiatives, but less attention has been paid to how local government persuasive communication practices can be interpreted through a social marketing perspective. In particular, further examination is needed of how communication channels facilitate the delivery of program messages, how persuasive communication seeks to encourage residents' participation, and how the benefits and costs associated with participation are presented or addressed. This study addresses this issue by examining the communication strategy employed by the Food Security and Agriculture Department of Bandung City to encourage community participation in the Buruan SAE program.

The study is guided by the following overarching research question: How does Food Security and Agriculture Department of Bandung City use persuasive communication to encourage community participation in the Buruan SAE program? This question is explored through four sub-questions concerning how the agency communicates with residents through the stages of (1) informing, (2) explaining, (3) convincing, and (4) persuading. Adapted from Alvonco's (2014) persuasive communication model, these four stages serve as the primary analytical categories for examining the agency's communication practices. Social marketing is used as an interpretive lens in the Results and Discussion rather than as the primary framework guiding data collection and coding. The findings are considered in relation to relevant social marketing concepts, particularly promotion, the exchange of perceived benefits and costs, and the role of communication channels in reaching residents (Andreasen, 2002). This approach does not assume that Food Security and Agriculture Department of Bandung City explicitly designed its communication practices according to a formal social marketing framework. Instead, it examines how the observed practices correspond with, and where they may fall short of, selected social marketing concepts.

This study contributes an empirical account of how an Indonesian city government communicates with residents to encourage participation in a community-based urban food security program. Conceptually, it connects Alvonco's four stages of persuasive communication with the promotion dimension of social marketing to examine the strengths and limitations of government outreach practices. It also develops an interpretive proposition concerning how territorial communication networks, such as neighbourhood and community administrative structures, may facilitate or constrain the circulation of persuasive messages. These contributions are discussed in light of the study's qualitative design and the scope of its empirical evidence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Marketing as a Strategic Communication Approach

Social marketing is commonly defined as the application of commercial marketing technologies to programs designed to influence the voluntary behavior of a target audience for the benefit of that audience and society (Andreasen, 1994; Kotler & Zaltman, 1971).

Unlike approaches that rely primarily on public information campaigns, social marketing emphasizes an exchange logic: audiences are more likely to consider adopting a behavior when they perceive its benefits as worthwhile in relation to the costs involved. These costs may extend beyond money to include time, effort, access to resources, skills, and the convenience of existing practices. Systematic reviews have examined the application of social marketing to behavior-change interventions in different contexts, including health promotion and environmental sustainability (Roger et al., 2023; Sommariva et al., 2025). At a systems level, social marketing also considers how behavior change is shaped by interactions among individuals, communities, institutions, and broader social and environmental conditions (Domegan, 2021). This perspective is relevant to Buruan SAE, a government-led program that relies on community participation to support urban food security.

Exchange is a central concept in this approach. It concerns the relationship between the benefits an audience perceives and the costs it associates with adopting and maintaining a behavior (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971; Andreasen, 2002). In the context of Buruan SAE, potential benefits may include access to fresh and affordable food, opportunities to develop practical skills, additional income, and stronger community relationships. Potential costs may include the time and effort required for cultivation, access to suitable land, the skills needed to maintain gardening activities, and the possible difficulties of sustaining participation. These examples represent potential dimensions of exchange rather than established motivations or experiences shared by all participants; their relevance must be assessed against the study's empirical findings.

Social marketing also emphasizes the importance of understanding the target audience, considering competing behaviors and alternatives, and integrating the elements of the marketing mix (Andreasen, 2002; French & Gordon, 2019). Within this mix, *product* refers to the behavior being promoted and its associated benefits or supporting services; *price* concerns the perceived costs of adopting and maintaining that behavior; *place* refers to the settings and arrangements through which the behavior and associated support can be accessed; and *promotion* concerns how the behavior and its benefits are communicated. In Buruan SAE, residential spaces, community networks, training, and other forms of support may be relevant to these dimensions, depending on the evidence available. Audience segmentation and exchange are also important social marketing considerations, but differences in communication channels alone do not establish that formal audience segmentation has taken place.

Persuasive Communication as the Promotion Element of Social Marketing

Within the social marketing mix, promotion concerns how a program communicates its message to encourage an audience to consider and adopt a desired behavior. This dimension can be examined through persuasive communication theory. Alvonco (2014) proposes five stages of persuasive communication: informing, explaining, convincing, persuading, and obtaining commitment. These stages describe a process through which communication seeks to develop audience understanding, consideration, and willingness to act. In this study, the first four stages are used as the primary analytical categories because the research focuses on Food Security and Agriculture Department of

Bandung City communication practices and how messages are delivered to encourage participation in the Buruan SAE program. Although obtaining commitment may also involve communicative acts, it is not treated as a separate analytical stage in this study because the analysis is delimited to the four stages used to examine the agency's persuasive communication practices. Commitment is therefore considered a subsequent dimension of the participation process rather than an outcome that can be assumed to result automatically from the preceding stages.

This analytical focus is complemented by the persuadee-position concept, which describes changes in audience position from not knowing, to doubting, and eventually to being persuaded (Hendri, 2019). From this perspective, persuasive communication should be understood in relation to both the communicator's efforts and the audience's existing perceptions. Audience attitudes may be shaped by prior observations and experiences with the object of communication, meaning that the interpretation and potential influence of a message depend not only on its design but also on the audience's pre-existing perceptions (Hendri, 2019). Accordingly, this study examines the four persuasive stages as a framework for interpreting Food Security and Agriculture Department of Bandung City's communication practices without assuming that exposure to these stages necessarily results in commitment or active participation.

Government Communication and Citizen Participation

A growing body of international research examines how government communicators build citizen engagement through digital and face-to-face channels alike. Studies of government social media use during crises show that dialogic engagement and message transparency, rather than posting frequency, predict whether citizens move beyond passive viewing into active participation (Chen et al., 2020). Related work on short-video platforms finds that citizen engagement with government accounts is shaped by emotional valence and the presence of a clear call to action within each message, factors that determine whether awareness converts into a measurable response (Chen et al., 2021). At the level of political trust, government presence on social media has been shown to encourage online civic participation only when residents perceive the government as transparent, trustworthy, and responsive, underscoring that channel presence alone is insufficient without message design that builds credibility (Arshad & Khurram, 2020).

Community Participation and Local Communication Networks

Community participation in this study, which distinguishes participation in decision making, participation in implementation, participation in enjoying benefits, and participation in evaluation (Putri et al., 2021). The Buruan SAE program primarily demands participation in implementation, that is, residents' physical involvement in managing residential land for continuous food cultivation. Participation is an individual's mental and emotional involvement in a group situation that drives them to contribute ideas and share responsibility for common goals (Siregar, 2020), a definition that underscores why participation cannot be mandated but must be built through a convincing communication process.

Research explicitly linking government communication with community-based urban agriculture remains relatively limited in Indonesia. Prior studies on Buruan SAE have focused on program implementation effectiveness for food security (Putri et al., 2023), while research on village government persuasive communication shows that combining informative, participatory, and emotional approaches effectively builds shared awareness, though trust barriers persist even within relatively homogeneous rural social structures (Mustafa, 2024). Research on participatory communication in corporate-sponsored urban farming programs similarly highlights community empowerment as the core determinant of program success (Astuti et al., 2025). Within the broader strategic communication literature, studies published in Ultimacomm show comparable patterns relevant to this study. Research on the Instagram account @Pandawaragroup finds that digital environmental activism can move beyond mere clicktivism toward real participation when communication is designed with a clear call to action (Erika & Alawi, 2024), a finding relevant for interpreting the limitations of DKPP Kota Bandung's official Instagram content in this study. Research on marketing public relations strategy further confirms that a strategically designed bundling or incentive program can strengthen audience awareness and loyalty toward a brand or program (Septiana, 2025), while ethnographic research on the Lubuk Larangan tradition shows that environmental communication grounded in local wisdom and community networks can build cross-generational collective awareness in protecting shared resources (Wiguna & Adiprabowo, 2026), a pattern that parallels Buruan SAE's dependence on RT/RW networks as message-distribution nodes.

Based on this review, the present study positions itself to bridge stage-based persuasive communication research and mix-based social marketing scholarship by analyzing DKPP Kota Bandung's communication strategy on the Buruan SAE program as a single, coherent social marketing strategy rather than a set of independent message stages.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach grounded in a post-positivist paradigm, selected because the communication strategy under study is complex, contextual, and better understood through in-depth meaning-making than through quantitative measurement (Sugiyono, 2024). Within this paradigm, the researcher functions as the key research instrument, data collection is triangulated across sources and techniques, and analysis proceeds inductively, emphasizing interpretation of meaning over statistical generalization. The research does not test a hypothesis but seeks to describe and interpret how DKPP Kota Bandung's persuasive communication practice unfolds and is received by its intended audience, both from the side of the communicator designing the message and the community members interpreting and responding to it.

Informant Determination and Selection

Informants were selected using purposive sampling, a technique commonly applied in qualitative research to identify data sources based on their direct experience, understanding, and involvement in the object under study (Sugiyono, 2024). Three key informants were chosen for their direct authority over and involvement in the program:

the Head of DKPP Kota Bandung, who initiated and holds overall responsibility for the program; the Junior Food Security Analyst who also chairs the Local Food Development Team and coordinates the program operationally; and a field agricultural extension officer serving Cicendo and Andir Districts, who interacts directly with communities and Buruan SAE groups on the ground.

Four supporting informants were selected purposively from two deliberately contrasting categories to capture both successful and stalled persuasion outcomes: two representatives of active Buruan SAE groups (the secretary of Buruan SAE Dabaresih and the treasurer of Buruan SAE Pajajaran Hegar), who could describe how they received and responded to each stage of the agency's persuasive communication; and two Bandung residents who were aware of the program but had not joined, drawn from Sukajadi and Babakan Ciparay Districts, who could identify at which stage the persuasion process had stalled for them and describe barriers experienced by residents who had not yet been convinced to participate. This dual selection allowed the study to capture both the perspective of successfully persuaded participants and the perspective of residents for whom the communication process had not yet produced commitment.

Data Collection Technique

Primary data were obtained directly from informants through three techniques. In-depth interviews were conducted with all seven informants in June 2026 to explore in depth their experience and understanding of how DKPP Kota Bandung carried out the four stages of persuasive communication in the Buruan SAE program, and how the community responded to the program. Non-participant observation was conducted by directly observing the communication process between DKPP Kota Bandung and the community during program activities at Buruan SAE Dabaresih and Buruan SAE Pajajaran Hegar, allowing the researcher to see how persuasive communication was actually carried out in the field without influencing the conditions observed. Documentation study was conducted by collecting and examining documents related to Buruan SAE's implementation and DKPP Kota Bandung's persuasive communication, including photographs of extension and training activities, socialization materials, official social media content, program activity reports, and other relevant official publications (Sugiyono, 2024; Gunawan, 2022).

Secondary data supported and reinforced the primary data through three sources: book references on persuasive communication, organizational communication, development communication, community participation, and qualitative research methodology; prior scholarly work, including journal articles and theses, used to position this study within existing research and clarify its contribution; and credible online sources, including the official websites of the Bandung City Government and DKPP Kota Bandung, used to complete factual and current information about the program's development.

Data Validity Technique

Data credibility was established through three techniques (Sugiyono, 2024). Triangulation was applied at the level of sources, by comparing information obtained from the three key informants with the four supporting informants, and at the level of technique,

by comparing in-depth interview data with non-participant observation results at the Buruan SAE Dabaresih and Pajajaran Hegar group locations, as well as with documentation from Instagram publications and DKPP Kota Bandung activity materials; the comparison across these sources showed consistency, strengthening confidence in the findings. Peer debriefing was conducted with a communication studies peer whose own research examined persuasive communication on Instagram content, used to test the accuracy of data categorization into Alvonco's (2014) persuasive communication stages and to obtain input on the consistency of the researcher's interpretation of field findings. Member checking was conducted with all key and supporting informants after interview transcription was completed, to reconfirm statements related to the persuasive communication process in the Buruan SAE program before the data were used as the basis for the results presented in this study.

Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis followed the interactive model comprising four stages, conducted continuously from the beginning of data collection until the completion of the research (Sugiyono, 2024). Data collection gathered material through interviews, observation, literature study, and online tracing related to the Buruan SAE program; interview results were recorded as audio files for transcription, while observation and documentation data were recorded and classified according to the research focus. Data reduction summarized, selected, and focused the data relevant to the research, discarding irrelevant material while categorizing and coding the primary data to simplify the analysis. Data display presented the reduced data as narrative descriptions organized by communication stage, supported by interview excerpts and documentation. Conclusion drawing and verification compared field findings against Alvonco's (2014) persuasive communication theory to identify points of alignment and divergence between theoretical concepts and field practice, producing the finding that DKPP Kota Bandung's four communication stages proceed gradually and interdependently, though their reach remains concentrated among residents active within territorial networks.

Research Location and Time

The field research was carried out offline at three different places that are associated with the Buruan SAE project: the DKPP Kota Bandung office located at Jalan Arjuna No. 45, Cicendo District; the Buruan SAE group operating in RW 03, Pajajaran Village, Cicendo District; and the Buruan SAE group in Dago Village, Coblong District. The other sources of data used offline were the official Instagram account of DKPP Kota Bandung (@bdg.pangan), the official website of the Buruan SAE project, and the official website of DKPP Kota Bandung. The duration of research was about eight months from February 2026 to September 2026, with interviews taking place in June 2026.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings according to the four stages of persuasive communication adapted from Alvonco (2014): informing, explaining, convincing, and persuading. Each stage examines how the department communicates information about the Buruan SAE program, explains its objectives and implementation, builds residents'

confidence in the program, and encourages their participation. The findings are subsequently discussed through a social marketing perspective to examine how the department's communication practices relate to the promotion of community participation in Bandung City.

How DKPP Kota Bandung Carries Out the Stage of Informing Residents of Bandung City

At the informing stage, communication is not yet directed toward making residents join a group, but toward introducing the existence of Buruan SAE, building awareness of urban food security, and cultivating initial enthusiasm among city residents who mostly lack a farming background. The Head of DKPP Kota Bandung explained that the agency deliberately avoids opening with technical content, prioritizing motivation first, since urban residents are generally not farmers and tend to doubt their own ability to farm on limited land.

> *"First, we do not go into technical matters right away, but motivate people, build their spirit, and make sure the community knows about and is willing to join Buruan SAE. At the same time, we show examples of the program's success, because technically we build demonstration plots that the community can see, so that city residents can see for themselves."* (Ir. Gin Gin Ginanjar, M.Eng., Head of DKPP Kota Bandung, research interview, June 8, 2026)

The demonstration plot (demplot) is a showcase farming site built by DKPP Kota Bandung to display the tangible results of Buruan SAE cultivation. Field observation confirmed that these demplots are distributed across several points in the city and deliberately placed in locations that are relatively easy for residents to access, functioning as a visual communication medium that builds public awareness on an ongoing basis rather than a one-time announcement.

Beyond demonstration plots, informing is also carried out through monthly or as-needed socialization sessions, including Musrenbang (Development Planning Deliberation) forums and Council recess sessions, which the Junior Food Security Analyst identified as an entry point through which residents entirely new to the program first learn about it, sometimes proceeding directly into cultivation training.

> *"There are often quite a lot of people who have not yet joined Buruan SAE at Musrenbang or recess sessions, so those residents just take part in the training. We cannot select the participants, because a recess session is when the Council listens to community aspirations; for instance, someone says, "I want to join Buruan SAE," so they follow the Buruan SAE training."* (Tina Apriliana Kusmardiani, Junior Food Security Analyst and Chair of the Local Food Development Team, research interview, June 9, 2026)



Figure 1. Buruan SAE socialization at a Musrenbang (Development Planning Deliberation) forum

Source: Researcher's fieldwork documentation, 2026

This illustrates one of the channels through which DKPP Kota Bandung introduces Buruan SAE to the public: socialization through a Development Planning Deliberation forum.The Local Food Development Team Chair further described a layered channel structure combining social media, printed banners and leaflets at agency events, and direct communication to sub-districts, villages, and schools from early childhood through junior secondary level, alongside independently managed Instagram and TikTok accounts run by individual Buruan SAE groups.

> *"So the channels can be social media, leaflets, banners at exhibitions or DKPP Kota Bandung activities, which are usually displayed, plus communication to sub-districts, villages, regional agencies, and schools from kindergarten to junior secondary level... Sometimes they even have their own Instagram account for each Buruan SAE area. Some have their own TikTok too."* (Tina Apriliana Kusmardiani, research interview, June 9, 2026)

This layered structure reflects a distinction between primary and secondary communicators: DKPP Kota Bandung acts as the primary communicator, while territorial forums, RT/RW leaders, existing communities, and secondary social media accounts act as mediators that transmit the message to the broader audience. The field study showed that the DKPP Kota Bandung regularly meets RT and RW leaders in order to inform them about the Buruan SAE and then expects them to spread the information in their respective territories.



Figure 2. RT/RW leaders' gathering and education session conducted by DKPP Kota Bandung

Source: Researcher's fieldwork documentation, 2026

As illustrated in Figure 2, DKPP Kota Bandung engages RT/RW leaders through gatherings and educational sessions as part of its territorial communication strategy. The multi-layered communication channel framework identified in this study is consistent with findings from international literature on urban agriculture communication, which highlight the importance of community awareness and visibility in sustaining engagement, particularly among individuals outside existing program networks (Unay-Gailhard et al., 2025). However, observations of DKPP Kota Bandung's official Instagram account, @bdg.pangan, indicate that its content predominantly documents activities that have already taken place, including community activities and program implementation. Although such posts can demonstrate the program's ongoing activities and make community participation more visible, they provide fewer explicit opportunities for residents to learn how to join or become involved in Buruan SAE. This observation is consistent with the impression expressed by one resident, who perceived the account as emphasizing activity documentation rather than providing clear calls to action. Thus, the account's observed content orientation suggests a potential limitation in its role as an entry point for residents who are not yet involved in the program.

> *"I checked DKPP Kota Bandung's Instagram once, but the content is mostly showing results from the groups, like harvest photos or their activities. There is not much content that specifically invites people to join or explains how."* (Fanisa Salwa Az Zahra, Bandung resident, research interview, June 22, 2026)

This gap is consistent with international findings on government engagement via short-video and social media platforms, where citizen engagement is shaped less by posting frequency than by the presence of a clear call to action within each message (Chen et al., 2021), and with domestic research on the @Pandawaragroup Instagram account, which found that digital environmental activism converts into real participation specifically when accompanied by concrete calls to action rather than mere documentation of activity

(Erika & Alawi, 2024). The Local Food Development Team Chair confirmed that the agency is aware of this gap and is currently developing clearer infographic content explaining the joining procedure.

How DKPP Kota Bandung Carries Out the Stage of Explaining to Residents of Bandung City

Unlike the informing stage, which reaches the general public including residents who have not yet participated, the explaining stage intensifies only after residents already hold initial program information and show interest in learning more. At this point, more detailed and intensive training is introduced. The field extension officer explained that explanation begins with introducing Buruan SAE's basic concept as an integrated urban farming system.

> *"First, we introduce what Buruan SAE is and what it includes. Buruan SAE is integrated urban farming, so there is farming, livestock, fisheries, and also waste management... What is emphasized the most is actually residents' participation."* (Vivi Apanti, Field Agricultural Extension Officer, research interview, June 9, 2026)

An active Buruan SAE group member confirmed that training on the program's eight components is conducted regularly and is easy for group members to understand.

> *"DKPP Kota Bandung usually holds training for Buruan SAE groups, and it usually explains the eight components of Buruan SAE... The activities happen maybe about once or twice a month."* (Agus Sukaryat, Secretary of Buruan SAE Dabaresih, research interview, June 11, 2026)

By contrast, the two general-public informants confirmed they had never received direct technical explanation from DKPP Kota Bandung or the extension officers, consistent with their position outside any established group or territorial activity.

> *"Never. No one from the government or the extension officers has ever come to my neighborhood either."* (Fanisa Salwa Az Zahra, research interview, June 22, 2026)

Field observation confirmed that every explanation instrument identified in this study, whether the eight-component training, extension mentoring, or basic concept introduction, was consistently found only within established groups or among residents already active in territorial socialization. Beyond group-based training, DKPP Kota Bandung structures its explanation stage formally through a training syllabus and printed modules distributed at socialization events, alongside continuous mentoring through WhatsApp groups and direct visits, as described by the Head of DKPP Kota Bandung and confirmed by the Local Food Development Team Chair.

> *"We have agricultural extension officers, so we do have dedicated personnel for mentoring, including education. There is a syllabus, a training work plan... starting from the introduction stage, then practice, and there are modules distributed at socialization activities."* (Ir. Gin Gin Ginanjar, M.Eng., research interview, June 8, 2026)



Figure 3. Buruan SAE pocket module distributed to residents during a socialization session
Source: Researcher's fieldwork documentation, 2026

This shows one of the learning materials used in Buruan SAE socialization sessions. New groups receive more intensive visits, at least five times until their first harvest, after which monitoring continues via WhatsApp, while an active group member emphasized that hands-on practice is more effective for her than materials alone.

> *"For me, I prefer direct practice. If I'm only given materials, I often forget. But when someone comes directly, for example if a plant has pest damage or spotted leaves, it gets explained right there, so it's easier to understand."* (Nurul Awaliah, Treasurer of Buruan SAE Pajajaran Hegar, research interview, June 13, 2026)

Overall, the explaining stage combines a structured syllabus and learning modules, intensive mentoring supported by a scheduled visit plan, WhatsApp groups as an internal communication channel, and explanations delivered during public activities such as the Cheap Food Movement (*Gerakan Pangan Murah*). Instagram video content also provides a potential channel for communicating information about the program. However, the presence of video content does not necessarily mean that the account provides sufficient instructional information or clear calls to action for residents who have not yet participated in Buruan SAE. As observed in the official Instagram account, @bdg.pangan, posts predominantly document activities that have already taken place, while opportunities for prospective participants to learn how to join the program appear less prominent. For residents already involved in a group, structured explanations and direct mentoring support their learning process. In contrast, residents who have never engaged with a group or public activity may have limited opportunities to receive direct explanations, a gap that one general-public informant suggested could be addressed through a more visual, experience-based approach similar to a product demonstration.

> *"It's kind of like sales. So they tell or explain the product or program while also showing the results. Or explaining while showing how to plant, or how it's done, that would probably be more appealing."* (Fanisa Salwa Az Zahra, research interview, June 22, 2026)

How DKPP Kota Bandung Carries Out the Stage of Convincing Residents of Bandung City

At the convincing stage, communication is directed toward building residents' trust that Buruan SAE genuinely delivers tangible benefits. The Head of DKPP Kota Bandung explained that this trust is built through visual evidence and consistent, responsive mentoring.

> *"One way is through examples of success that people can see directly, like the demplot, so that city residents see the results for themselves. Besides that, continuous mentoring and quickly responding to complaints in the field is also a way to build trust, so people know this program is genuinely accompanied, not just launched and then left alone."* (Ir. Gin Gin Ginanjar, M.Eng., research interview, June 8, 2026)

The Local Food Development Team Chair added that the visible success of other groups functions as a particularly strong indicator for convincing residents, given a common social tendency for residents to want to join once they see other groups succeeding, a pattern confirmed directly by a general-public informant who became interested after seeing a Buruan SAE group near a location she regularly passed.

> *"At first I didn't know what it was, so I asked the person managing it, and I was told it's a DKPP Kota Bandung program, where residents grow their own produce and the harvest is shared with residents. They even offered some to me right there, saying, "take some if you want.""* (Fanisa Salwa Az Zahra, research interview, June 22, 2026)

Yet this same informant's experience reveals a critical gap: her interest, successfully built through the convincing stage, stalled because she did not know whom to contact to join, precisely because she was not active in territorial activities through which the joining procedure is typically conveyed. The extension officer confirmed that trust-building at the field level proceeds through gradual personal approach, with material assistance positioned only as a stimulant rather than the primary driver.

> *"Actually, extension officers are advised to approach the community first until they feel comfortable and trust us... Secure the human element first. Once that is secure, whether or not there is assistance, they will still carry on. The assistance is really just a stimulant."* (Vivi Apanti, research interview, June 9, 2026)

The extension officer also deliberately shares harvest results on her personal WhatsApp status as a continuous form of social proof, extending trust-building beyond DKPP Kota Bandung's formal channels into informal, interpersonal networks.

> *"When there is a harvest or good results, I usually post it on my WhatsApp status... that is really part of the job, showing off the results to motivate other people to become interested too."* (Vivi Apanti, research interview, June 9, 2026)

This combination of visual and social evidence closely parallels international findings on urban farming governance, where sustained public trust depends on intermediary actors capable of translating a program's success into a form residents can

verify directly for themselves (Mabon et al., 2023). Nonetheless, a general-public informant's remaining doubt was found not to originate from Buruan SAE specifically, but from a broader distrust toward government programs in general.

> *"I really don't trust government programs much, because of the lack of transparency and many issues that happen. The government doesn't seem responsible enough for finishing what it starts. But regarding this program specifically, I don't know the full activities yet, so I can't really judge it fully."* (Agung Zehan Fadillah, Bandung resident, research interview, June 24, 2026)

This finding confirms Mar'at's argument that persuasive effectiveness depends on the object a persuadee perceives, which in this case was not Buruan SAE specifically but the broader category of "government programs" in general, meaning that visual or social evidence, however strong, risks failing to penetrate a perception already formed before the program was known, unless accompanied by a clear brand differentiation strategy (as cited in Hendri, 2019).

How DKPP Kota Bandung Carries Out the Stage of Persuading Residents of Bandung City

At the persuading stage, communication actively drives residents toward the concrete decision to join and begin participating in a Buruan SAE group. The Head of DKPP Kota Bandung emphasized that target selection is never based on territorial or group segmentation, but solely on individual readiness and willingness.

> *"We never segment or determine who the target should be. Because the ultimate target of Buruan SAE is the household, the family, so whoever is part of that family becomes part of the target. The consideration is more about the family's or individual's readiness and willingness, not based on territory or a particular group."* (Ir. Gin Gin Ginanjar, M.Eng., research interview, June 8, 2026)

This statement shows that the department does not formally segment its audience or define target groups in advance: selection is left to the readiness and willingness of households and individuals. The results below should therefore not be read as evidence of deliberate audience segmentation by the agency. Any differentiation that emerges, for example between residents inside and outside RT/RW networks, is better understood as an unintended consequence of the channels used, and this study treats the absence of formal segmentation as a gap relative to social marketing benchmark criteria.

Regarding the form of support provided, material assistance is positioned as a stimulant given only after residents show willingness, not as an upfront inducement to trigger initial participation.

> *"Perhaps through support such as providing facilities and infrastructure. Even though it isn't the main goal, for us that assistance is only a stimulant. After they have the willingness, the desire, the enthusiasm, only then do we give the stimulant. But it is very decisive."* (Ir. Gin Gin Ginanjar, M.Eng., research interview, June 8, 2026)

The extension officer added that the pattern of new-group initiation has shifted: rather than being driven primarily by officers approaching RW leaders, an increasing number of residents now proactively request that a new group be formed, an indication of a positive snowball effect from years of sustained persuasive communication.

> *"At first we were indeed helped by the territorial structure. For instance, if an RW didn't yet have a Buruan SAE group, they would pass along information... Now it's actually more common for residents to come on their own and ask for a Buruan SAE group to be formed."* (Vivi Apanti, research interview, June 9, 2026)

Both active group members confirmed that the persuading stage translated directly into their decision to join. For the Buruan SAE Dabaresih secretary, the decision was driven by economic development potential, with DKPP Kota Bandung directing his group toward a specific opportunity aligned with their existing activity.

> *"DKPP Kota Bandung encouraged us through extension mentoring, seed provision, training access, and opportunities to develop activities suited to our group's potential. At that time, DKPP Kota Bandung saw that our group had potential in livestock, because we were already processing organic waste into animal feed. So we were encouraged to focus more on that."* (Agus Sukaryat, research interview, June 11, 2026)

For the Buruan SAE Pajajaran Hegar treasurer, a personal invitation from her RT leader was the starting point, subsequently reinforced by DKPP Kota Bandung's continuous support.

> *"The invitation was from the start because our RT leader invited us, and over time DKPP Kota Bandung kept supporting us by often providing seeds or other things needed for Buruan SAE, and we were always guided."* (Nurul Awaliah, research interview, June 13, 2026)

According to the interviews, DKPP Kota Bandung targets a minimum of 80 to 100 new groups annually. Although the agency does not formally restrict who may join, field observation found that residents' territorial activeness functions as the decisive factor easing entry into the program compared to residents who are not territorially active. Both informants who had joined entered through social or territorial proximity, one through an already-existing community and the other through a personal invitation from her RT leader, while genuine openness toward residents entirely unfamiliar with the program, represented here by the two general-public informants, has effectively never been tested, because no direct or active invitation has ever reached them.

> *"No one from the government or an extension officer has ever come to my housing complex to invite people to join. Not from the RW either."* (Fanisa Salwa Az Zahra, research interview, June 22, 2026)

This informant proposed door-to-door brochure distribution through RTs, and more frequent, comprehensive socialization sessions, as concrete solutions, while the

other general-public informant emphasized the importance of a digital approach tailored to younger residents.

> *"Maybe to invite young people my age, it really has to be aggressive on social media so people get more motivated... So maybe the delivery has to be more fun and more detailed in its explanation."* (Agung Zehan Fadillah, research interview, June 24, 2026)

Both proposals align with directions the Head of DKPP Kota Bandung had begun to mention, including planned collaboration with youth organizations such as Karang Taruna and plans to improve Instagram content to more clearly explain the joining procedure. However, as of this study, these plans remained at the discussion stage and had not yet been realized, evidence that as long as the persuading stage continues to be carried out reactively, waiting for already-interested residents to come forward or for proactive RT/RW leaders to reach out, a segment of interested residents will remain never fully persuaded.

The four stages address the overarching research question by illustrating how DKPP Kota Bandung communicates the Buruan SAE program to encourage community participation. The findings reveal a combination of communication practices, including the use of territorial networks to disseminate information, structured explanations to support understanding, evidence of program activities to build trust, and material assistance to support participants' involvement. Viewed through a social marketing perspective, these practices demonstrate the relevance of communication and the presentation of program benefits in encouraging participation. However, the findings do not establish that DKPP Kota Bandung has adopted a formally designed social marketing strategy. As indicated by the agency head, formal audience segmentation is not undertaken, while differences in residents' access to information appear to be associated with their connections to existing community and administrative networks. Similarly, material assistance may help support participation, but the available evidence is insufficient to determine whether it forms part of a systematic exchange strategy. Accordingly, this study identifies how selected social marketing concepts can be used to interpret the agency's persuasive communication practices, while acknowledging the limits of the available evidence in establishing the extent to which these practices constitute a comprehensive social marketing strategy.

Nevertheless, this success largely circulates within a single ecosystem: the RT/RW social and territorial network already connected to the program. This structural dependency is consistent with research on local-wisdom-based environmental communication, where community-based communication effectiveness is strongly determined by the strength of existing social networks, yet that same strength also limits reach beyond those networks (Wiguna & Adiprabowo, 2026). Within Buruan SAE, urban youth who are not territorially active consistently emerge as the segment most difficult to reach through current mechanisms. Instagram could, in principle, serve as a territory-independent alternative channel, consistent with research on government communication showing that message transparency and trust, not mere account presence, drive online civic participation (Arshad & Khurram, 2020). As long as available content remains oriented

toward activity recaps without an explicit joining procedure, this potential remains underused.

These findings confirm that formalizing DKPP Kota Bandung's communication strategy into an explicit social marketing framework, by adding more systematic audience segmentation, a competitive analysis addressing general distrust toward government programs, and a clear digital call to action, has the potential to convert already-broad public awareness into more equitable participation, without needing to replace the territorial, trust-based approach that has proven effective thus far.

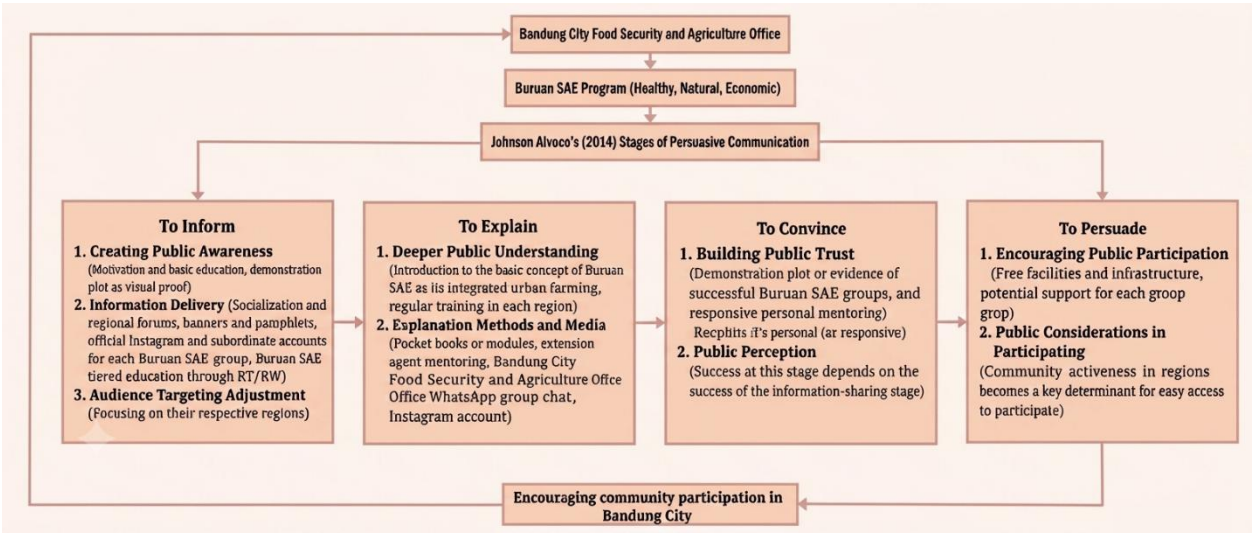


Figure 4. Research Results Model

Source: Researcher's fieldwork 2026

CONCLUSION

This study finds that DKPP Kota Bandung's communication practice on the Buruan SAE program functions as a coherent, if informally structured, social marketing strategy. Awareness is built through motivational messaging and visible demonstration plots before technical content is introduced; understanding is deepened through structured, sustained mentoring available primarily within established groups; trust is reinforced through peer-verified social proof rather than direct institutional persuasion; and material incentives are offered only after residents demonstrate willingness, functioning as an exchange value rather than an upfront inducement. This alignment between message, channel, and incentive explains the program's unusual durability, sustaining 555 active community groups over six to seven years, a rare outcome for voluntary, government-led participation programs in Indonesia.

At the same time, this strategy remains structurally dependent on RT/RW territorial networks as its primary entry point, leaving residents outside these networks, particularly younger urban residents, largely unreached regardless of how many communication channels are formally available. The agency's Instagram account, which

could serve as a territory-independent alternative channel, remains underused as a participation gateway because its content emphasizes activity recaps rather than explicit calls to action. The study recommends that DKPP Kota Bandung formalize its existing communication practice around explicit social marketing benchmark criteria, particularly systematic audience segmentation beyond territorial proximity, competitive analysis of public distrust toward government programs in general, and a clearly stated digital call to action, without abandoning the territorial, trust-based approach that has proven effective. Future research could quantitatively measure the scope of this participation gap across age and territorial-activity variables, or comparatively examine whether the same territorial dependency pattern appears in other Indonesian cities' urban farming and food security programs.

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