

# Environmental Cleanliness in Maintaining Public Health in Lapangan Merdeka Medan

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## Abstract

**Background of the study:** Environmental cleanliness is an important factor in maintaining public health and environmental sustainability.

**Purpose and scope of the paper:** Students of Universitas Terbuka Medan play an active role in increasing public awareness through environmental cleanliness socialization activities carried out at Merdeka Square, Medan.

**Methods:** The methods used in the socialization include counseling, waste management demonstrations, and clean-up actions involving the local community. The results of the activities show an increase in public awareness and participation in maintaining environmental cleanliness.

**Results:** With this socialization, it is hoped that a sustainable culture of caring for the environment will be created among the people of Medan.

**Conclusion :** Through adequate facilities, the active role of cleaners, and high public awareness, the cleanliness of Merdeka Square can be well maintained.

## A. Introduction

Merdeka Square in Medan is one of the green open spaces that plays an important role as a place for recreation, sports, and social activities for the community. However, the high number of visitors often causes cleanliness issues, especially related to waste management. Therefore, waste management in Merdeka Square has become an important issue that needs serious attention from various parties ([Gs & Anggraini, 2025](#)).

Environmental cleanliness is a fundamental aspect that is directly related to the quality of public health ([Kusuma, 2022](#)). In densely populated urban areas, such as Medan's Merdeka Square, maintaining environmental cleanliness is becoming increasingly crucial given its function as a multifunctional public space that serves as a center for social, economic, and recreational activities for city residents ([Henry & Surya, 2023](#); [Nurdiana, 2025](#)). Unmaintained public areas can become breeding grounds for disease vectors and sources of infection, which in turn will have a negative impact on collective health ([Kusuma, 2022](#)).

In this context, a healthy and clean environment has a very important role as the main requirement for achieving and maintaining an optimal level of public health ([Angreni et al., 2024](#); [Nurafifah et al., 2024](#)). A polluted environment, whether by garbage, waste, or air pollution, is not only a source of various communicable and non-communicable diseases, but also significantly reduces the comfort as well as aesthetics of an area, adversely affecting the overall quality of life ([Kurniawansyah et al., 2022](#)). In contrast, efforts to maintain a clean environment on a regular basis have been shown to be strongly

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associated with reduced disease rates, increased life expectancy, and the development of communities that are more resilient to health risks ([Netrawati et al., 2022](#)).

Lapangan Merdeka Medan, due to its strategic location and its importance in people's daily lives, requires more attention in maintaining the cleanliness of the area ([Dara Wisdianti, 2022](#)). The problem of waste accumulation, poor drainage systems, and lack of public awareness about the importance of maintaining cleanliness, is often a challenge ([Kitole et al., 2024](#); [Nanda et al., 2024](#)). An unsanitary environment can lead to a number of environmentally related diseases, such as diarrhea, dengue fever, and acute respiratory infections (ARI), which will place an additional burden on the health system and reduce the productivity of the community ([Eddy Siswanto & Agus Setiabudi, 2023](#); [Lestari et al., 2025](#)).

The purpose of this study is to increase public awareness through environmental cleanliness socialization activities carried out at Merdeka Square, Medan.

## **B. Methods**

The implementation of the Community Empowerment Program for a green, clean and productive environment by Open University students starting from March 16, 2025. The activity was carried out in several stages, including the first stage of preparation.

Before starting to walk and clean the field, the preparations that must be made are, survey the area to be carried out in the independent field, then go to the Open University office, prepare facilities in the form of captains, plastics, clothes and gloves. Overall, the methods carried out are:

### Regular Cleaning

- Transportation of garbage is carried out periodically by the cleaners.
- Sweep the Merdeka Square area every morning and evening to maintain cleanliness.

### Waste Management System

- Waste sorting into organic and inorganic to facilitate the recycling process.
- Separate bins placement for plastic, paper, and food waste.

### Supervision and Evaluation

- Involve the cleanliness task force to ensure that the area remains clean.
- Giving reprimands or sanctions to visitors who litter.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the cleaning program and make improvements as needed.

## **C. Results and Discussion**

Medan City Merdeka Square is one of the green open spaces that has an important role as a place for recreation, sports, and community social activities ([Yusri, 2024](#)). However, high levels of visits often cause hygiene problems, especially related to waste management. Therefore, the implementation of waste cleanliness in Merdeka Square is an important issue that needs serious attention from various parties.



**Figure 1.** Briefing with all the communities

### **Cleanliness Conditions at Merdeka Square**

As a crowded public space, Merdeka Square often experiences problems with garbage accumulation, especially after big events or holidays. The types of waste that are often found include plastic, paper, food scraps, and drink bottles. Even though garbage cans are available at some points, public awareness in disposing of garbage in its place still needs to be improved.



**Figure 2.** Clean The Merdeka Square

### **The Government's Efforts in Maintaining Cleanliness**

The Medan City Government through the Cleanliness and Environment Service has taken various steps to maintain cleanliness in Merdeka Square, including:

1. **Provision of Cleaning Facilities:** Placement of more and strategic garbage cans to make it easier for visitors to dispose of garbage.
2. **Routine Transportation of Garbage:** Cleaners are deployed daily to transport garbage to prevent excessive buildup.
3. **Socialization and Education:** Environmental awareness campaigns are carried out through the installation of banners, social media, and educational programs to the community.
4. **Implementation of Sanctions:** Imposing fines or sanctions for individuals or groups caught littering.

In addition, maintaining cleanliness at Merdeka Square has several main objectives, including:

1. **Preserving the Environment:** By maintaining cleanliness, the surrounding ecosystem is maintained and free from pollution.
2. **Improves Public Health:** A clean environment can reduce the risk of diseases caused by waste.
3. **Increases Comfort and Tourist Attraction:** Cleanliness can improve the aesthetics of tourist attractions so that they attract more visitors.
4. **Encouraging Community Participation:** By increasing awareness of the importance of cleanliness, people can be more active in maintaining the cleanliness of the surrounding environment.



**Figure 3.** Evaluation and Monitoring

### **The Role of The Community**

The main role of community in order to maintain the cleanliness of the Merdeka Field is not only the responsibility of the government, but also the community. Some of the steps that can be taken by residents to maintain cleanliness include:

1. Dispose of Garbage in Place: Bring your own garbage bags and do not litter.
2. Reduce the Use of Single-Use Plastics: Bring your own beverage bottles and use reusable food containers.
3. Participate in Cleanup Activities: Participate in mutual cooperation activities that are often held by the environmental community.
4. Educating Others: Invite family and friends to care more about environmental cleanliness.

Positive Impact of Merdeka Field Cleanliness Maintaining the cleanliness of Merdeka Field has various benefits, both for the environment and society, such as:

- Creating a Healthy Environment: Reducing the risk of disease spread due to accumulated waste.
- Improves Visitor Comfort: A clean space makes visitors more comfortable to do activities.
- Supporting the Beauty of the City: A clean and beautiful Merdeka Square will enhance the city's aesthetics and tourist attraction.

The implementation of waste cleanliness in Merdeka Square, Medan City requires cooperation between the government and the community. With adequate facilities, the active role of cleaners, and high public awareness, the cleanliness of Merdeka Square can be well maintained. It is hoped that this effort will continue to be improved so that Merdeka Square remains a comfortable and clean green space for all residents of Medan City.



Figure 4. Conclusion

Students of the Open University (UT) Medan participated in the Word Clean Up Day (WCD) activity held around Merdeka Square, North Sumatra. This activity was chaired by WCD Cleaning Activity and collaborated with UT Medan, and involved various communities that care about the environment.

Some of the partners who participated in this activity included Medan Osijo Club, Clean-Up Medan, Clean the City Medan Community, Mapala UT North Sumatra, North Sumatra Genre Forum, and Nourageous. This event was held in the afternoon and was attended by 45 participants, including 9 students from UT Medan. During the activity, the participants were active in cleaning the area around Merdeka Square. Thanks to joint efforts, this activity managed to collect as much as 94.55 kg of waste. This shows the strong commitment of the participants in maintaining environmental cleanliness and increasing awareness of the importance of waste management in public spaces.

With this activity, it is hoped that more people will care about environmental cleanliness and more communities will play an active role in social actions like this. UT Medan itself is committed to continuing to support activities oriented towards environmental concern and life sustainability.

#### **D. Conclusion**

The implementation of waste cleanliness in the Merdeka Field in Medan City requires cooperation between the government and the community. With adequate facilities, the active role of cleaners, and high public awareness, the cleanliness of Merdeka Square can be well maintained. It is hoped that this effort will continue to be improved so that Merdeka Square remains a comfortable and clean green space for all residents of Medan City.

Some measures that can be strengthened to improve the effectiveness of cleanliness at Merdeka Square include:

1. Improvement of Hygiene Infrastructure: Addition of garbage cans with sorting system to encourage better waste management.
2. Continuing Education: A regular counseling program on the importance of cleanliness and its impact on the environment.
3. Collaboration with Communities and Institutions: Collaborating with communities that care about the environment and educational institutions in cleaning activities.
4. Stricter Supervision: Implementation of stricter sanctions for violators of hygiene rules to create a deterrent effect.



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