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Fostering Social Entrepreneurs Through Community Service Programs

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Abstract

KKN, as a form of community service in implementation, is carried out in Bumi Asih Village, Palas District, aiming to foster and develop the community's potential to become social entrepreneurs through various series of activities starting with discussions about local business management, business assistance, and product development. This activity aims to increase the community's ability to manage businesses towards independence. The method applied is the ABCD (Assets-Based Community Development) method. Therefore, community service activities like this need to continue to be pursued to have a long-term impact by improving the village economy, community independence, and changes in community behavior towards a better and more productive life. The program's results show an increase in existing micro businesses, increased community income, and the development of superior products in Bumi Asih Village. Therefore, it can be said that community service activities like this need to continue to be pursued to have a long-term impact in the form of improving the village economy, community independence, and changes in community behavior towards a better and more productive life.

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INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is very important in the economic development of communities towards achieving a prosperous life. Entrepreneurs can drive the economy of rural communities and create job opportunities (Arfah & Arif, 2021). The high level of competition in the job market requires people to possess the best skills and competencies to compete and achieve a decent standard of living. As one of the global alternative concepts, social entrepreneurs analyze activities from an economic perspective and include social and environmental studies (Padjadjaran, 2024). Currently, social entrepreneurs have been able to provide solutions to market failures and economic development, especially in local economies, leading to the emergence of social entrepreneurs, particularly among young people who are becoming increasingly aware of their surrounding environment (Solihah et al., 2022).

Market failures occur because the government does not intervene to anticipate them, such as by providing public goods, redistributing income, and regulating other economic activities. Therefore, new thinking about community-based economic development is

urgently needed to stimulate rural economic activities, especially in nonprofit organizations and cooperatives (Alfiana et al., 2023).

KKN (Community Service Program) is a platform for students to apply the knowledge they have acquired. It also focuses on enabling students to collaborate and synergize with the community. As a millennial generation with an entrepreneurial spirit, KKN can encourage the formation of social entrepreneurs (Anwas, 2011). KKN has great potential to become an incubator for the emergence of social entrepreneurs. Several reasons why KKN can play an important role in this regard are as follows:

First, KKN provides direct exposure to real problems. During KKN, students interact directly with the community and face various social, economic, and environmental issues. This experience sharpens their analytical and problem-solving skills, essential for an entrepreneur. Second, KKN provides opportunities to develop business ideas. In identifying and solving problems, students can discover untapped business opportunities. KKN is an ideal space to refine these ideas into more mature business concepts. Third, KKN can test the feasibility of business ideas. Through KKN activities, students can directly test the feasibility of their ideas in the field. They can conduct market surveys, gauge consumer interest, and build business networks. Fourth, The KKN program can implement entrepreneurial concepts. This means that KKN activities can become a platform for students to apply various entrepreneurial concepts, such as project management, marketing, finance, and innovation (Solihah et al., 2022).

Based on these realities, the development of a new pattern in the KKN program is necessary—not just as a community service program but also focusing on activities oriented towards profit-sharing, emphasizing activities that lead to community independence and welfare, realizing social justice for all members of society (Apun & Femei, 2018). The KKN in question is KKN Group 118 in Bumi Asih Village, Palas Subdistrict, South Lampung. According to the Head of Bumi Asih Village, Mr. Poniran, Bumi Asih Village has a population of 2,637 people and 847 households. Of the total population, 80% are farmers. Bumi Asih Village is a hidden gem in the Palas Subdistrict because it has great potential for development. The village possesses fertile agricultural land rich in water and minerals. Moreover, the community of Bumi Asih is known for its strong sense of cooperation, well-organized social structures, and a village government highly concerned with maintaining a peaceful and harmonious social life. Equally important is that Bumi Asih Village is surrounded by four traditional markets: Bumi Daya Market, Bangunan Market, Palas Market, and Sidomulyo Market. Additionally, Bumi Asih Village is located along the East Cross Road, the main access route from Bakauheni Port to several districts in Lampung Province and Palembang. These potentials can be used as a foundation for developing business activities optimally despite various obstacles that may hinder progress. Recognizing these potentials, students from KKN Group 118 of UIN Raden Intan initiated a community empowerment program focusing on social entrepreneurship development. The program targeted 25 prospective social entrepreneurs through discussions and business mentoring over 15 days, with self-sustaining ventures such as cassava chips and herbal drink production.

As individuals who understand practical strategies for solving social problems, social entrepreneurs must drive positive community life changes through their initiatives. Social entrepreneurs believe that their work is a way to make significant changes in the world, connect themselves to their life goals, and help others find their purpose (Junarto & Salim, 2022). In other words, the main goal of a social entrepreneur's career is not merely to seek profit but to prosper the community (Nugrahaningsih et al., 2021).

Efendi (2017) emphasizes that social entrepreneurs are businesspeople who develop their businesses based on social missions that contribute to minimizing social,

environmental, and humanitarian problems. Unlike other businesses, their activities focus on social missions, not just creating wealth (Solihah et al., 2022).

Social entrepreneurship is an effort to combine innovative ideas for social change by applying business strategies and skills. It is carried out by empowering the community to improve its welfare through utilizing available resources and innovation (M. A. Syaripudin, 2015). Its concept, community-based social enterprise, concentrates on meeting the needs of its community, ensuring that all members benefit, even if in different forms (Murdiawati & Sihotang, 2024).

METHODS

During the implementation of KKN, Group 118 adopted a strong and comprehensive methodological approach, focusing on the ABCD (Asset-Based Community Development) model. This approach aims to achieve a social order where the community becomes the agent and determinant of its transformation (social transformation) (M. A. S. M. A. Syaripudin et al., 2025). It was supported by meticulous data collection techniques, including observation (discovery) and in-depth interviews (Apun & Femei, 2018).

The observation technique (Discovery) involved using observation sheets to monitor local business activities during the data collection. This technique aimed to guide students in gaining firsthand experience by observing, measuring, analyzing, understanding, explaining, and drawing conclusions (Alfansyur & Mariyani, 2020). Meanwhile, to obtain accurate, definite, and reliable information, students conducted in-depth interviews by building rapport, probing, and empathizing with the observed subjects.

This approach was designed with consideration for the needs and aspirations of the targeted community group, with implementation stages carried out through a series of activities as follows:

1. Socialization: Socialization was conducted in the form of a focus group discussion (FGD) with business actors and village officials to emphasize the importance of social entrepreneurship for village progress in accelerating community welfare achievements. The FGD was attended by the Village Head and other village officials, business actors, and several young prospective business actors. The focus was then determined, according to the agreement in the discussion, this is a stage that must be carried out. The intended activities are carried out in a relaxed manner with the Village Head and his apparatus, as seen in the following Figure 1.

Figure 1 Socialization; activities for the potential community of bumi asih village

2. Discovery: The team collected data on Bumi Asih Village's potential to obtain an accurate picture for determining the direction of mentoring, particularly identifying potential home-based businesses (home industries) (Alfiana et al., 2023).
3. Dreams: Once the necessary and potential resources were identified, the team organized a discussion forum to explore the community's hopes, aspirations, and desires regarding what should be realized to drive Bumi Asih Village's excellence and competitiveness.

4. The technique applied was "Low Hanging Fruit," aimed at identifying community aspirations that could be realized using the community's assets or resources without external assistance. The priority was determining the criteria for deciding which dream should take precedence, identifying who has the right to set the priority scale, and empowering the community to establish their priorities (Permana, 2021).
5. Design: At this stage, the team and the selected resources determine the goals to be realized tangibly and begin taking strategic steps toward the desired changes. This is carried out through a focus group discussion (FGD) involving the team, selected resources, and other relevant elements, such as stakeholders, partner groups, and other institutions with similar commitments (Syaripudin et al., 2025).
6. Destiny: The team then conducts regular mentoring and monitoring to ensure that all elements implement the participatory programs designed and agreed upon. Mentoring is carried out to foster enthusiasm and independence within the community. Additionally, progressive evaluations are conducted during mentoring to ensure the achievement of programs that are aligned with the shared expectations (Arfah & Arif, 2021).

This approach reflects our commitment to carrying out community service using a proper evidence-based and results-oriented framework. It not only ensures the program's success but also demonstrates our dedication to fostering positive change within the Bumi Asih Village, Palas District community.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Social entrepreneurs solve social problems innovatively by combining local wisdom with social innovation. They also strive to balance social activities with business activities. Business activities are developed to ensure the independence and sustainability of the social mission (Palesangi, 2013). To enable students to optimally carry out their tasks in forming social entrepreneurs, several strategies are implemented, including: First, mentoring; to develop social entrepreneurship, students need to be accompanied by mentors with experience, in this case, field supervising lecturers. Lecturers as mentors provide guidance about the benefits, opportunities, and challenges faced when forming social entrepreneurs so that students and the community can understand the objectives of the activities being held (Winarsih & Ismail, 2024). These activities can be seen in the following Figure 2.

Figure 2 FGD with social potential at the Bumi Asih village hall, palas district.

Mentors provide guidance and direction in developing business ideas as village potential and help address various challenges faced in the field. Second, collaboration with the business world means that community service programs need to establish partnerships with the business world to conduct benchmarking studies before starting

business development. The intended collaboration allows the community to broaden their understanding of the business world and develop networking opportunities. Third, organizing business competitions: Holding competitions to motivate the community to develop innovative and creative business ideas (Nugrahaningsih et al., 2021).

The development of the potential of Bumi Asih Village into social entrepreneurs has increased after the mentoring activities carried out through community service programs. Students not only gain field learning experiences but also experience direct interaction, training themselves to identify social problems and seek innovative solutions to existing social issues. After mentoring the community, the number of home industry players has increased, which demonstrates the rising enthusiasm of the community to become social entrepreneurs, as can be seen in the following Table 1.

Table 1 Data local business of the community bumi asih village, palas district before and after training

No	Type of Business	Total UMKM		Average Income Increase
		Before	After	
1.	Cassava Chips	15	21	20%
2	Snack Cakes	3	4	25%
3	Crackers	5	7	15%
4	Catfish Farming	4	6	12%
5	Chicken Breeding	1	2	20%
6	Quail Eggs	2	3	22%
	Total	30	43	

The investigation results show several obstacles home industry managers face in Bumi Asih Village face that can be identified, including 1) Lack of Funding (Capital): Many business ideas struggle to develop due to limited capital. However, from the results of the FGD, through discussions about the best potential for important business development reasons, solutions were found to seek support from various parties, such as the government, financial institutions, or social enterprises. Regarding this reality, not only in Bumi Asih Village, several regions in Indonesia also experienced a similar fate (Pitaloka, 2020). 2) Lack of Guidance (Daniel et al., 2021): Not all students know enough about social entrepreneurs. However, after discussions with the field supervisors (DPL), the difficulties were resolved by requesting DPL to become mentors or guides for social entrepreneurship in Bumi Asih Village. 3) Sustainability of Social Enterprises (Hidayatullah et al., 2024): Typically, after the KKN program ends, all businesses may be unable to survive. However, thanks to the guidance, a community of social entrepreneurs has been established to provide motivation and ongoing training and find potential markets. Thus, the effort to establish social entrepreneurship in Bumi Asih Village has become a reality, and it is hoped that activities will continue even after the KKN program has ended.

CONCLUSION

The KKN program has significant potential to serve as a platform for forming social entrepreneurs. With the right strategies, KKN can lead to creative, innovative, and independent social entrepreneurs. The government, higher education institutions, and the business world need to synergize to support the development of social entrepreneurs through various activities, one of which is through the KKN program from higher education institutions.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

KKN activities that are directed to foster and assist the formation of social entrepreneurs will reduce or even eliminate conflicts of interest, this is because business activities carried out by the community are based on their own desires to achieve real independence. This article is based on the results of direct observations during mentoring of KKN activities group 118 in Bumi Asih Village, Palas District. The collection of the required data was carried out directly by assigning several students, namely Ahmad Rosul (Group Leader), Malik Rahman (Member), and Alice Widya Andari (Group Secretary), to observe and record the activities carried out.

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