



Community Empowerment in the Disadvantaged Village Through an Integrated Student Community Service Program

Wawan Putra¹, Syaiful Marwan²✉

¹Universitas Perintis Indonesia (UPERTIS) Padang

²Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, Indonesia

✉Email: syaifulmarwan@uinmybatusangkar.ac.id

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Received: 15-11-2024</p> <p>Revised: 30-12-2024</p> <p>Accepted: 22-03-2025</p> <p>Published 30-04-2025</p> <p>Keywords: Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD), Community Empowerment, Disadvantaged Village, Early Childhood Education, Student Community Service Program (KKN)</p>	<p>Background: Disadvantaged villages often face challenges such as low levels of education and limited access to technology, which hinder community welfare and development. These conditions also affect the quality of early childhood education (PAUD) as part of basic community services, requiring an integrated and asset-based approach to optimize local potential.</p> <p>Aims: This community service aims to empower communities in disadvantaged village areas through an integrated Student Community Service Program (KKN).</p> <p>Methods: This program employed the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, which focuses on leveraging local assets and community potential as the foundation for development. The program was implemented through participatory stages, including asset mapping, program planning based on local potential, implementation of activities such as skill training, digital literacy enhancement, and educational support, as well as evaluation and monitoring to ensure sustainability.</p> <p>Result: The program contributed to strengthening community capacity by identifying and utilizing local assets to support educational and economic activities. Students acted as facilitators, collaborating with the community to develop skills, improve digital literacy, and optimize local potential, which in turn supported the improvement of early childhood education practices.</p> <p>Conclusion: The integrated KKN program based on the ABCD approach is effective in empowering communities by utilizing local strengths. This approach not only enhances community welfare but also supports sustainable development in early childhood education.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

Community service programs have become a strategic approach in bridging the gap between academic knowledge and real societal needs, particularly in developing and disadvantaged areas (Cornet et al., 2024; Dushkova & Ivlieva, 2024). Previous studies indicate that higher education institutions play a crucial role in facilitating sustainable community empowerment through structured and participatory programs (Chen et al., 2025; Leal Filho et al., 2019). According to Rodríguez-Zurita et al., (2025), community engagement through service-learning enhances both student competencies and community resilience when designed collaboratively. Furthermore, research by Zainuri & Huda, (2023) highlights that integrated community service programs contribute significantly to social transformation when they are aligned with local contexts and needs. In addition, Arnold, (2022) emphasizes that participatory development approaches enable communities to become active agents rather than passive beneficiaries of development programs. These findings suggest that community service initiatives should move beyond charity-based models toward empowerment-oriented frameworks.

In the context of Indonesia, community service programs such as Kuliah Kerja Nyata (KKN) have been widely implemented as a form of higher education contribution to society. Several studies have shown that KKN programs are effective in enhancing community capacity when they adopt asset-based and participatory approaches (Darma & Alamsyah, 2024; Nurhikmah et al., 2024). For instance, research by Darma & Alamsyah, (2024) demonstrates that KKN programs can improve local economic and educational outcomes when community members are actively involved in planning and implementation processes. Similarly, Ziharani & Agustin, (2024) found that collaborative KKN models foster stronger relationships between universities and communities, leading to more sustainable program impacts. Moreover, highlight that the integration of local wisdom and community assets in KKN activities increases program relevance and acceptance among local populations. These studies underline the importance of aligning KKN programs with local potentials rather than focusing solely on external interventions. Consequently, an integrated and asset-based KKN approach is necessary to optimize community empowerment efforts, especially in disadvantaged village contexts.

In Indonesia, villages such as Nagari Koto Dalam Barat in Tanah Datar District face numerous challenges in development and community empowerment. Issues such as limited resources, low educational levels, and inadequate infrastructure hinder sustainable development in these areas. Research by Abidin, (2024) highlights the need for innovative interventions to optimize local potential and drive economic growth through social entrepreneurship in underdeveloped

villages. This study emphasizes the importance of approaches that not only address existing problems but also leverage local assets to foster positive change (Badrudin et al., 2022; Butarbutar et al., 2019; Sulaiman et al., 2024).

Additionally, Sari, (2024) underscore the significance of infrastructure in enhancing community economic activities. Their research on precast bamboo-reinforced concrete bridges illustrates how infrastructure innovation can significantly impact local economies. This is relevant to Nagari Koto Dalam Barat, where infrastructure development can play a crucial role in improving accessibility and promoting local economic growth. Their findings support the importance of collaboration between academia and communities in designing solutions that address local needs. Moreover, Kabeyi & Olanrewaju, (2022) discuss the role of environmentally friendly technologies, such as biogas from cattle dung, in improving the welfare of underdeveloped communities. Their research demonstrates that alternative energy technologies can reduce dependence on fossil fuels while enhancing community health and well-being. Implementing similar technologies in Nagari Koto Dalam Barat could significantly address energy and environmental challenges in the region. The importance of participatory approaches in community empowerment is further supported by Tarino & Purnomo, (2024), who highlight that community involvement in planning and executing programs is crucial for success. The Integrated Community Service Program (KKN Terpadu), involving students in empowerment activities, serves as a bridge between educational institutions and communities. Student involvement in such programs can accelerate knowledge and skill transfer that is directly relevant to community needs.

Furthermore, Delgado-Serrano (2016) emphasize the need for capacity building among facilitators to effectively map and utilize local potentials. Their study indicates that enhancing the skills of local facilitators is essential for the successful implementation of empowerment programs. In Nagari Koto Dalam Barat, such training can assist communities in identifying and leveraging their assets for economic and social development. The integrative and holistic approach to community empowerment, as described by Spitzer & Twikirize, (2023), is also relevant for Nagari Koto Dalam Barat. Collaborative and innovative community service programs can address the various challenges faced by underdeveloped villages. Through the Integrated Community Service Program, students can contribute to designing and implementing programs tailored to the specific needs of the community, fostering long-term success.

Afandi et al., (2024) further highlight the role of academic institutions in community development. Their research on the role of research and community service institutions underscores the importance of educational institutions in

providing necessary training and human resource development to enhance community capacities. Collaboration between students and communities can strengthen this process in Nagari Koto Dalam Barat. Finally, Yu et al., (2024) illustrate the impact of administrative support and technology use in improving the effectiveness of community empowerment programs. Their research on administrative assistance and technology application for village management shows how better administration and access to information can enhance community development efforts. This aligns with the objectives of the Integrated Community Service Program in improving the quality of life through better management and resource access.

The government has made various efforts to address the issues faced by underdeveloped areas through numerous development and community empowerment programs. However, these programs often utilize a top-down approach and lack direct involvement from the local communities in the planning and execution stages. Consequently, many programs fail to achieve their intended outcomes or lack sustainability because they do not align with the actual needs and potentials of the local population. This highlights the need for a more participatory approach that is grounded in local assets to ensure the success and sustainability of empowerment initiatives.

Nagari Koto Dalam Barat, located in Padang Pariaman District, is one such underdeveloped area in Indonesia. Despite its rich natural and cultural resources, this nagari faces significant challenges that hinder its social and economic growth. These challenges include low educational levels, limited access to technology, inadequate infrastructure, and constraints in developing local economic enterprises. These issues create a substantial gap between the potential available and the actual well-being of the community. Through the Integrated Community Service Program (KKN Terpadu), students from IAIN Batusangkar actively participate in supporting this empowerment process. KKN Terpadu is a program that integrates academic activities with community service, placing students directly within the community to assist in asset mapping, program development, and the execution of activities that meet local needs. Student involvement in this program allows them to apply the knowledge gained in their studies while providing tangible benefits to the community.

The Integrated Community Service Program (KKN Terpadu) aims to tackle the challenges in Nagari Koto Dalam Barat by enhancing educational outcomes, improving access to technology, developing local infrastructure, and stimulating economic growth. The program focuses on providing targeted training, implementing digital literacy initiatives, upgrading facilities, and supporting local enterprises to bridge the gap between potential and actual community well-being, creating a sustainable development model tailored to local needs.

METHODS

Community Service Design

This community service program employed the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, which emphasizes leveraging local assets as the primary foundation for sustainable community empowerment. The approach focuses on identifying, mobilizing, and optimizing existing community strengths rather than relying solely on external assistance.

Location and Time of Implementation

The program was conducted in Koto Dalam Barat Village, Padang Pariaman Regency, Indonesia, which is categorized as a disadvantaged area with limited access to education, technology, and economic resources. The implementation of the program took place over the period of the Integrated Student Community Service Program (KKN), from July to August 2022.

Participants and Informants

The target participants of this program were community members of Koto Dalam Barat Village, particularly vulnerable groups with limited access to education and technology. Key informants included village officials, community leaders, and local business practitioners who have in-depth knowledge of local conditions, resources, and development potential. In addition, KKN students acted as facilitators in all stages of the program.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using participatory techniques, including focus group discussions (FGDs), field observations, and informal interviews. These methods were used to identify community assets, understand local needs, and explore potentials that could be developed to support community empowerment.

Program Implementation Procedure

The implementation of the program followed several structured stages based on the ABCD approach:

Asset Mapping

In this initial stage, KKN students collaborated with the community to identify various local assets, including human resources, natural resources, and economic potentials. This process was conducted through FGDs with community leaders and direct field observations to explore existing strengths.

Program Planning

Based on the results of asset mapping, students and community members jointly designed program activities tailored to local needs and potentials. The planned programs included skill training, digital literacy enhancement, and the development of small-scale businesses based on local resources. This stage was conducted through participatory village meetings involving all community elements.

Program Implementation

In this stage, students acted as facilitators in implementing the agreed programs. Activities included skill training sessions, digital literacy workshops, and mentoring for micro-enterprises. Active participation from community members, especially youth and women, was emphasized to enhance their capacity in managing local economic potential.

Evaluation and Monitoring

Evaluation was conducted participatorily by involving community members and key informants to assess program effectiveness and its impact on community welfare. Monitoring was carried out periodically to ensure program sustainability and continuous benefits for the community.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing based on findings from observations, discussions, and interviews. The analysis focused on identifying changes in community capacity, participation, and utilization of local assets.

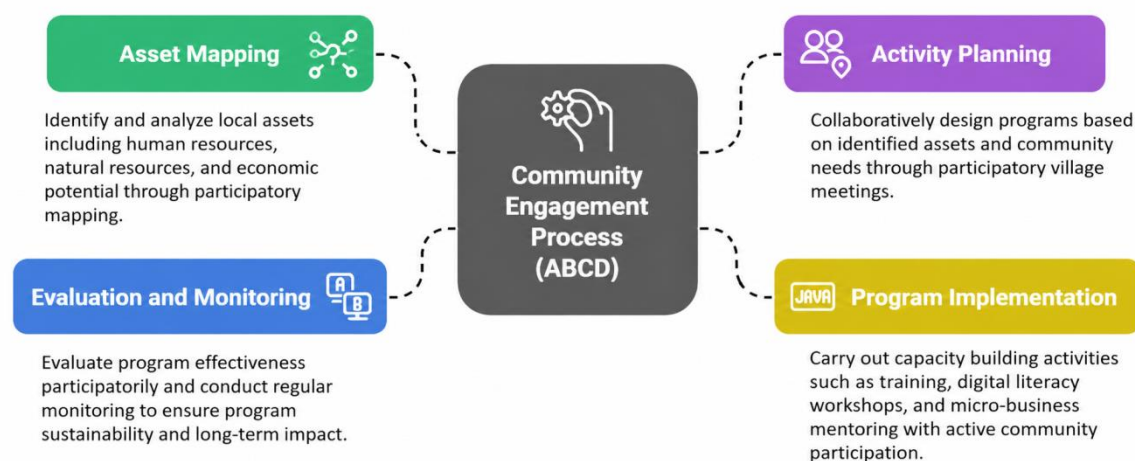


Figure 1. ABCD Procedure

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results of the community service program in Koto Dalam Barat Village, utilizing the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, reveal significant achievements in harnessing and developing local assets. During the asset mapping phase, KKN students from IAIN Batusangkar identified several key potentials within the village, including valuable traditional skills in handicrafts and agriculture, as well as natural resources like fertile agricultural land. This mapping also highlighted the presence of existing small businesses, such as local handicrafts and agricultural products, with substantial potential for further expansion. Through focus group discussions and field observations involving community leaders, village officials, and local entrepreneurs, valuable insights were gained into the village's strengths and opportunities.

Based on the findings from the asset mapping phase, the planning phase of the program was strategically designed to harness the village's key potentials. The program included skill training aimed at enhancing community capabilities in processing coconut products, such as coconut oil, copra, and desiccated coconut, which have significant export potential. Additionally, training focused on improving digital literacy to enable effective marketing of these products online. The development of micro-businesses leveraging local assets was also planned, incorporating business mentoring and initial capital support. Village deliberations ensured that all community members participated in prioritizing program activities according to local needs.



Figure 1. Stages of the ABCD Community Empowerment Model

During the implementation phase, KKN students from IAIN Batusangkar acted as primary facilitators, leading skill training sessions, digital literacy workshops, and providing micro-business mentoring. Key findings during this phase revealed strong community engagement, particularly from youth and women. The program also addressed technical challenges related to digital materials by adapting teaching methods. Despite these challenges, the training

significantly improved participants' abilities to manage and market coconut products and other local goods, resulting in increased sales and product diversification. Furthermore, the program identified additional village potentials in livestock farming and natural tourism, further contributing to the community's economic development.



Figure 2. Integrated KKN Program Workflow Based on Local Asset Mapping

Evaluation and monitoring were conducted to assess the program's effectiveness and sustainability. Participatory evaluation, involving community members and key informants, indicated that the program successfully enhanced community skills and capacities but underscored the need for continued support. Regular monitoring ensured that activities continued as planned and delivered long-term benefits. The findings showed that while most activities were effectively executed, some micro-businesses required additional support, particularly concerning marketing and accessing broader markets.



Figure 3. Collaborative Framework for Rural Empowerment Through ABCD Approach

Further analysis revealed that the village possessed valuable traditional skills in handcrafts and agriculture, such as weaving and traditional textile products, which emerged as major strengths. Field observations indicated that these products had significant potential for wider development and marketing.

Additionally, agricultural produce, including vegetables and fruits from the village's fertile land, demonstrated high quality and could become flagship products with proper training and support in processing and marketing. Despite the village's considerable potential, challenges in market access and technology remained significant hurdles.

The planning phase highlighted the necessity of tailoring skill training to local conditions and community capacities. For instance, training in agricultural processing was designed considering the limited facilities and technology available in the village. Therefore, the program was developed with practical, easy-to-implement approaches, utilizing simple equipment and techniques suited to local capabilities. Digital literacy training was designed for beginners, focusing on existing devices and providing repeated sessions to ensure all community members could effectively use information technology.

Implementation findings also revealed shifts in attitudes and motivations among training participants. Most participants showed high enthusiasm for skill and digital literacy training, with a strong desire to apply the acquired knowledge to their ventures. However, some participants initially experienced anxiety about using new technology and required more time to adapt. To address this, KKN students employed a personalized approach, offering additional support to ensure participants felt comfortable and confident in utilizing technology and applying their new skills.

In the evaluation and monitoring phase, it became evident that the program's sustainability heavily relied on ongoing support beyond the program's conclusion. Although the program significantly enhanced community skills and capacities, some micro-businesses faced challenges in marketing and accessing broader markets. Therefore, it was recommended to develop partnerships with external organizations or institutions to provide additional support in marketing, business development, and access to financial resources. The evaluation suggested that with such support, the program could be more effective in delivering long-term benefits and improving the community's well-being sustainably.

Discussion

The results of this community service program indicate that the implementation of the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach through an integrated KKN program has a positive impact on community participation and empowerment. The active involvement of community members in asset mapping, program planning, and implementation reflects a shift from passive recipients to active contributors in the development process. This finding

aligns with previous community service studies which emphasize that participatory approaches significantly enhance community engagement and ownership of programs (Carson & Domangue, 2010; Gusmita et al., 2025; Yulianingsih et al., 2020). The identification and utilization of local assets enabled the community to recognize their own potential, thereby strengthening their confidence in managing local resources. Compared to top-down approaches, this asset-based model provides a more sustainable and context-relevant solution. Therefore, the ABCD approach proves effective in fostering community-driven development in disadvantaged village contexts.

In terms of capacity building, this program contributed to improving community skills, particularly in digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and local resource management. The training and mentoring activities provided practical knowledge that can be directly applied in daily life, especially for youth and women groups. Similar findings have been reported in previous PKM programs, where skill-based interventions significantly improved community independence and economic productivity (Arintyas, 2024; Danladi et al., 2023; Del Soldato & Massari, 2024; Sors et al., 2023; Wulandari et al., 2025; Zamiri & Esmaili, 2024). In addition, the integration of early childhood education (PAUD) support within the program enhanced awareness of the importance of education as a foundation for long-term development. This indicates that combining economic empowerment with educational support creates a more holistic impact. As a result, community service programs that integrate multiple sectors tend to produce more sustainable outcomes.

Furthermore, the role of students as facilitators in the KKN program played a crucial role in bridging academic knowledge and community needs. Through direct interaction, students were able to transfer knowledge while also learning from local contexts, creating a reciprocal learning process. This finding is consistent with previous studies highlighting that student involvement in community service programs enhances both community outcomes and student competencies (Bhuttah et al., 2024; Rodríguez-Zurita et al., 2025; Tawafak & Al Hinaai, 2024; Zainuri & Huda, 2023). The collaborative interaction between students and the community also strengthened social relationships and trust, which are essential for program sustainability. In addition, the flexibility of the ABCD approach allowed programs to be adapted based on real community conditions. Therefore, KKN Terpadu serves not only as an academic activity but also as a strategic model for community empowerment.

Another important finding is the improvement in basic educational practices, particularly in early childhood education (PAUD), as part of community development efforts. The support provided in learning activities, parenting awareness, and simple educational interventions contributed to better learning

environments for children. This aligns with previous research indicating that community-based educational interventions can significantly enhance children's development and parental involvement (Bogale, 2024; Cosso et al., 2022; Gil & Johnson, 2024; Metcalfe et al., 2021; Moss & Gu, 2022). Although not the primary focus, the inclusion of PAUD elements strengthens the long-term impact of the program by investing in early human development. This shows that integrating education into community empowerment programs provides added value. Therefore, holistic approaches that include education are more effective in achieving sustainable development goals.

Community Service Contribution

This community service program contributes to community empowerment by strengthening local capacity through the identification and utilization of local assets, improving skills in digital literacy and entrepreneurship, and enhancing participation in community-based development. In addition, the integration of early childhood education (PAUD) support provides added value by promoting awareness of the importance of education as a foundation for long-term development. The collaborative model implemented through the KKN program demonstrates that synergy between students and the community can produce meaningful and sustainable impacts. From both practical and academic perspectives, this program offers an adaptive and replicable model for community empowerment in disadvantaged areas using the ABCD approach.

Limitations and Suggestions

This program has several limitations, including its relatively short duration, which limits the observation of long-term impacts on community welfare. In addition, the implementation was limited to a single village, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. The evaluation process also relied primarily on qualitative observations, which may not fully capture measurable outcomes. Therefore, future programs are recommended to be conducted over a longer period, expanded to multiple locations, and supported by more comprehensive evaluation instruments. Strengthening collaboration with local stakeholders and institutions is also necessary to ensure sustainability and scalability of the program.

CONCLUSION

The community service program in Koto Dalam Barat Village, leveraging the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, effectively capitalized on the village's key assets, particularly its coconut agriculture, which yields valuable

products suitable for export, alongside its livestock farming and natural tourism opportunities. Significant findings included the community's active participation and responsiveness to tailored skill and digital literacy training, which enhanced their ability to manage and market these products. Challenges with technology and market access were addressed through the program, but for sustained success, ongoing support and partnerships are essential to fully exploit the village's potential and ensure long-term development.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

WP contributed to the conceptualization, coordination of the community service program, and manuscript writing. SM was responsible for designing and implementing the program activities. JW contributed to data collection, observation, and documentation during the implementation process. All authors participated in the evaluation, analysis, and revision of the manuscript and approved the final version for publication.

AI DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The authors used ChatGPT during the preparation of this work for improving academic language quality, structure, and clarity. After using the tool, the authors thoroughly reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no financial, institutional, or personal conflicts of interest that could have influenced the conduct of this study, the analysis of data, the preparation of the manuscript, or its publication.

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