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# BUILDING BRIDGE: COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM IN ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY AND THE PRACTICE OF UKHUWWAH (BROTHERHOOD)

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**Abstract:** *Economic inequality remains a pressing issue in Indonesia. Addressing this challenge requires government intervention and active engagement from higher education institutions. Although not immediately apparent, higher education plays a vital role in economic development, particularly community capacity-building through community empowerment programs. Islamic university, in particular, is interested in promoting the principles of Ukhuwwah (brotherhood) in community empowerment as a manifestation of Islam as a rahmatan lil 'alamin (mercy for all the worlds). This research looks at how community empowerment programs have evolved in Islamic universities. The study focuses on the current situation and has required features for community-engaged universities. The research findings will help us better understand how Indonesian colleges operate with their local communities. The Assisted Village programs (Desa Binaan) at Indonesian State Islamic University serve as case studies to demonstrate the methodologies and propose a framework for community empowerment programs by actualizing the principles of Ukhuwwah (brotherhood) to foster social and economic development within communities.*

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## **Introduction**

Economic and community development goals are quite similar (Lejano & Taufen Wessells, 2006); community development aims to create assets that strengthen community capability, while economic development aims to deploy assets to offer economic benefits. Both definitions pertain to the same assets: human, financial, and physical resources (environment or natural resources) (Moser, 2008). A more recent comprehensive definition of economic growth includes enhancing all societies' quality of life and living standards, rather than only assets and job creation (Phillips & Pittman, 2014). The two main goals of developing economies are (1) job creation and wealth, and (2) enhanced quality of life. The first goal frequently leads to the second, although society's business components are usually the focus (Gallardo, 2015). To summarize, the gap between community and economic development boils down to one strategy (community development) that focuses on larger social concerns rather than employment and business, and the other approach (economic development) that focuses primarily on jobs and business (Pittman et al., 2009). Both are communal or regional procedures. The only difference between the two terms is how they look at assets. In community development, assets can be generated, such as skills and expertise, through training programs, and used to increase the community's social and economic capacity so that it can face the challenges of dynamic world changes while still developing economically (Harrison et al., 2019).

Economic development in Indonesia is not solely the government's responsibility but also a shared responsibility of higher education institutions, albeit indirectly (Welch, 2012). Higher education institutions are today viewed as institutions that have a broader impact on society and economics locally and nationally, rather than simply giving knowledge to new generations (Tilak, 2008). Moreover, due to their projected impact on spatial knowledge creation, innovation, and social changes, higher education institutions have been identified as crucial players in the industrial revitalization and regional economic growth (Compagnucci & Spigarelli, 2020; Dallago, 2014; OECD, 2014). The role of higher education institutions is in line with the current economic development

paradigm which emphasizes sustainability with a focus on equality, justice, and enhancing the quality of human resources, rather than focusing just on economic growth (Khan & Khan, 2017). Sustainable economic development aims to address poverty reduction and the root causes of poverty. Poverty is a severe issue because individuals are caught in a cycle of poverty. The vicious cycle of poverty is a set of interconnected variables that produce situations in which individuals feel powerless, stuck, and find it difficult to overcome poverty (Andreoni & Miola, 2016). Community economic empowerment, which follows the notion of sustainable economic development, is one of the efforts that may be made to break the vicious cycle of poverty (Federico Cingano, 2014).

The current economic condition of Indonesia is still grappling with the issue of inequality, particularly among rural communities, according to the survey results of the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) of the government of Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2024), the number of poor people in March 2024 was 25.22 million (9.03%), of which 11.79% (2.97 million people) were rural poor. This figure is significantly higher than the poor urban population of 7.09% (1.79 million people). The reality of village community life depicts paradoxical circumstances: on the one hand, the village possesses local potential that may be exploited, but on the other hand, the community's economic well-being remains deficient. The BPS survey reinforces the survey conducted by the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Region, and Transmigration (Kemendes, DT) Government of Indonesia in 2024, which showed that the majority of villages in Indonesia are classified as developing villages (32,83%), which have strong resources, economic, and ecological potential to improve the welfare of the village community but are not being managed effectively (Kemendes\_DT, 2019). To address these issues, local potential-based community economic empowerment is considered the best course of action, because the community becomes the driving force behind change (Arismayanti et al., 2019; Dewi, 2020). Villages have different economic characteristics compared to cities, with most rural populations being farmers and agricultural laborers with little land ownership who work in the informal (Winarwan, 2021). Rice agrarian land is usually rainfed, with harvesting occurring just twice a year, raising the amount of unpredictability and relying heavily on season circumstances (Bafdal, 2016). The ability to satisfy basic requirements of life, such as clothes, food, and shelter, is severely limited when agricultural products are used

as a source of income. Furthermore, these individuals rely completely on the money generated by farming on the property of others. Villages are crucial in Indonesia's economy, particularly in contributing to the food sector (Winarwan, 2021). As it is known, most food crop production comes from rural areas. Despite this, the condition of rural communities is still far from ideal.

Given the economic conditions of villages, rural communities have become the primary target of community empowerment initiatives by Islamic universities, as part of their Community Service activities. This program attempts to improve the community's well-being by maximizing the potential of locally accessible resources, such as natural, human, economic, social, customary, and cultural resources (Team Desa Binaan, 2023). However, community empowerment programs are often designed with a one-size-fits-all approach, neglecting the specific cultural and socio-economic contexts of individual communities. Instead of creating sustainable programs, they often end up being one-off projects (Ceptureanu et al., 2018). This challenge highlights the importance of designing community empowerment programs that are contextually relevant and tailored to the specific needs of each community. By addressing these unique characteristics, initiatives can focus on sustainable solutions, such as enhancing the family economy through creative economy businesses, conducting training for handicraft and traditional food production using local ingredients, and improving community competence to boost productivity in existing business ventures.

Islamic universities, in addition to having the responsibility of carrying out development, also have the responsibility of promoting Islam as a mercy for all the world (*rahmatan lil 'alamīn*) (Desmaniar et al., 2022). Departing from this, implementing the principles of *Ukhuwwah* (brotherhood) becomes an important element as a manifestation of Islam as a mercy for all the world. *Ukhuwwah* is often interpreted exclusively as Islamic brotherhood, although the term originates from Islamic teachings (Jamil et al., 2023). *Ukhuwwah* comes from an Arabic term that translates to brotherhood or unity, this term encompasses not only the bonds between individuals but also the broader connections that unite communities and societies under the principles of faith, mutual support, and compassion (Ulum, 2017). *Ukhuwwah* as a form of human brotherhood is highly relevant to community service that focuses on the humanitarian aspect

(Mohamed & Ofteringer, 2015). Research on the implementation of *Ukhuwwah* principles that prioritize humanitarian aspects in community empowerment remains scarce. Several studies that mention this principle often discuss it within the broader framework of Islamic-based community empowerment, without providing an in-depth focus on *Ukhuwwah* as the primary concept (Ibrahim & Riyadi, 2023)(Alamsyah et al., 2022). Yet, this principle offers solutions with the potential to enhance social solidarity and create a more harmonious environment within society.

This study examines the concept of community empowerment in Islamic universities in Indonesia, particularly how the principles of *Ukhuwwah* are implemented within it. Through service projects that emphasize the achievement of common goals, how can Islamic universities in Indonesia develop their community participation? To find the answer, we will first evaluate the extent to which community service has taken shape in a specific case of community empowerment in Islamic universities in Indonesia; we will examine how the concept has been interpreted and recommend how the principles of *Ukhuwwah* are applied in community empowerment programs.

## Methods

### *Case Study*

The Assisted Village Program, one of the community empowerment activities at the state Islamic University/*Universitas Islam Negeri* (UIN) of Raden Intan Lampung, Indonesia, serves as a case study. This program focuses on empowering the rural economy by supporting economic development through fostering creative enterprises. It includes training activities in local craft production and traditional food processing using local ingredients. The training aims to enhance community skills in their respective trades, thereby increasing productivity (Team Desa Binaan, 2023). The target villages for the program at UIN Raden Intan include villages in two districts of Lampung Province: Bandungbaru Village in Pringsewu District, and Wai Sari and Sumber Jaya Villages in South Lampung District. These three villages share similar characteristics, particularly regarding their primary occupation as rain-fed farmers, with most of the population having primary and secondary education levels.

**Table 1. Occupation and education levels of the target villages**

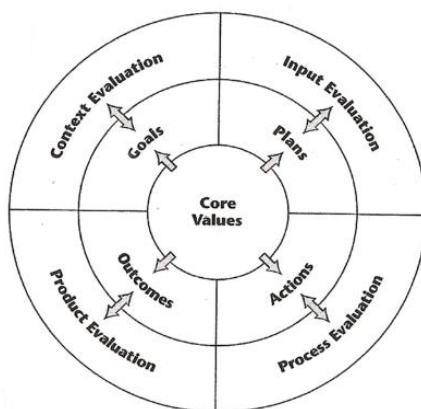
No	Criteria	Bandungbaru	Wai Sari	Sumber Jaya
1	Rain-fed farmer	13,29%	21,06%	25,54%
2	Education levels:			
	SMP (Secondary)	43,28%	20,7%	22,14%
	SMA (Primary)	31,54%	21,48%	19,19%

*Source: BPS Lampung Selatan and Pringsewu (processed data)*

### *Evaluation Criteria*

This study employs qualitative methodologies and field investigation using Daniel L. Stufflebeam’s CIPP (Context, Input, Process, and Product) evaluation model. The CIPP model is a comprehensive framework for formative and summative evaluations. In other words, the CIPP model is an evaluation of the program’s impact (summative) and its process (formative) (Stufflebeam, 2003). CIPP evaluation consists of four interrelated components, the relationship between the four components is illustrated in the following image (Stufflebeam, 2015):

**Figure 1. Relationship of CIPP evaluation components**



The CIPP evaluation describes how the Assisted Village program was implemented to promote community empowerment in Lampung Province. The basic goal of the CIPP evaluation technique is to improve rather than to prove something. The evaluation criteria for the Assisted

Village program based on the CIPP model are presented in the following table:

**Table 2. CIPP evaluating criteria in an assisted village program**

No	Aspect	Components Evaluated	Evaluation Criteria	Instrument
1	Context	Program needs for institutions and communities/villages	Implementation of FGDs involving community participation to formulate program needs for institutions and communities/villages and to determine the alignment between the service program and the university's vision and mission.	Interview and documentation
		Issues within the community/village	Preliminary surveys to identify issues within the community/village.	Interview and documentation
		Program objectives	Availability of strategic planning documents, guidelines, and other supporting regulations.	Interview and documentation
		Available local resources	Availability of documents mapping the potential local resources in each target village to determine the most appropriate empowerment themes.	Interview and documentation
2	Input	Strategies used	Availability of strategic planning documents for the assisted village program.	Interview and documentation
		Work plan	Availability of work plan documents.	Documentation
		Budgeting	Availability of sustainable budgets.	Interview and documentation
3	Process	Monitoring and evaluation process	Implementation of scheduled monitoring and identification of	Interview and documentation

			existing obstacles.	
		Documentation	Availability of documentation for the implementation of the assisted village program.	Documentation
		Program	Availability of monitoring reports for the assisted village program.	Documentation
4	Product	Impact: Program reach and impact on the community	Reaching vulnerable communities in the target villages and providing positive economic impacts.	Interview and observation
		Sustainability: Program Sustainability	High community acceptance and expectations for the assisted village program.	Interview and observation
		Effectiveness: Effectiveness, efficiency, and significance of results	The program is implemented effectively and efficiently, producing significant outcomes.	Interview and observation
		Transferability: Program adaptability	The assisted village program can be applied in other locations with similar problem characteristics.	Interview and observation

*Source: Stufflebeam's CIPP evaluation framework (processed data)*

### **Collecting Data**

Interview and observation procedures are used to acquire primary data, whereas documentation and literature are used to collect secondary data (Aziz et al., 2018). Interviews were conducted with informants from the university and external informants from the community. The list of informers can be found in the table:

**Table 3. List of Informants for the Assisted Village Program**

Category	Number of Informants	Position/Role	Village
Internal	Informant 1	Vice-Rector	



	Informant 2	Head of Planning and Finance Division	-
	Informant 3	Head of LPPM	
	Informant 4	Head of Assisted Village Program	
<b>External</b>	Informant 5	Neighborhood Leader	Bandungbaru
	Informant 6	Community Leader	
	Informant 7	Resident	
	Informant 8	Resident	
	Informant 9	Village Official	
	Informant 10	Local entrepreneurs	
	Informant 11	Religious leader	
	Informant 12	Neighborhood Leader	Wai Sari
	Informant 13	Community Leader	
	Informant 14	Resident	
	Informant 15	Resident	
	Informant 16	Village Official	
	Informant 17	Local entrepreneurs	
	Informant 18	Religious leader	
	Informant 19	Neighborhood Leader	Sumberrejo
	Informant 20	Community Leader	
	Informant 21	Resident	
	Informant 22	Resident	
	Informant 23	Village Official	
	Informant 24	Local entrepreneurs	
	Informant 25	Religious leader	

The interview method used is semi-structured. This method is considered the most suitable for this research as it allows the researcher to gather in-depth and flexible information while allowing respondents to explain their views and experiences in greater detail. The interview guide in a semi-structured interview serves as a framework that guides the researcher in asking questions but still provides room for further exploration based on the direction of the conversation as it unfolds (Barrick, 2020).

Inductive qualitative data analysis was used, which means qualitative research did not begin with theoretical deduction but rather with empirical facts. Researchers go out into the field to observe, evaluate, interpret, and form conclusions from what they see. Researchers are confronted with data gathered on the ground. Researchers must examine this data to uncover meaning, which then becomes the research's outcome (Siyoto, Sandu & Sodik, 2015). Data triangulation is used to enhance the reliability of research findings by integrating various primary and secondary data

sources. This approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of the researched topic (Hussein, 2009).

## Results and discussion

### *Context*

A contextual analysis of the assisted village program implementation highlights a discrepancy between the university's program execution and the community's active involvement, as substantiated by the data confirmation table:

**Table 4. Confirmation of context data aspects**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Summarize the Interview with an internal informant</b>	<b>Summarize the Interview with an external informant</b>	<b>Documentation</b>
<b>Context</b>	The village development program has been implemented according to established procedures and in alignment with the program's vision. The process commenced with an initial survey, including the utilization of survey results conducted by community service students.	The university team came to conduct training programs on food processing and handicrafts. The community members simply participated in these programs. There was no effort to jointly formulate common goals with the community.	Documents regarding regulations, procedures, and program plans are available. However, documents related to the initial survey results and the mapping of community potentials and problems are missing.

Procedurally, the village development program has adhered to regulations, but the approach taken remains top-down. This is evident in the fact that the community has merely been beneficiaries without being involved in the goal setting and needs assessment phases. The lack of crucial documents such as the results of the initial survey and analysis of community potential indicates that the planning process has not been strongly evidence-based, potentially reducing the program's effectiveness.

UIN Raden Intan Lampung has the vision to become a leading university

in the development of integrative multidisciplinary Islamic studies with an environmental perspective (LPM UIN Raden Intan, 2020), therefore All activities, including the Assisted Village initiative, shall be carried out following the university's vision, However, so far, the Assisted Village program has only focused on fostering home industries by conducting training in food processing and handicraft making (Team Desa Binaan, 2024). This is certainly not in line with the vision of environmental awareness that should address environmental issues such as turning garbage into marketable goods, using animal manure as renewable energy, and other ecological preservation steps.

Guidelines-based community service must be built on the partnership principle, in which the institution and society are on equal footing (Susan et al., 2011). In the context of the partnership, the most important thing is for the community to actively participate in formulating common goals (Keith et al., 2007). The Assisted Village program has so far been seen as more of a top-down approach, with the university as the party that knows best and has more control, while the community only receives what is offered. Equality in the principle of university-community collaboration believes that community economic empowerment is a shared duty, with each party providing resources (Nichols et al., 2013). In community economic empowerment, the university contributes financial assets, expertise, and technology, while the community provides natural resources and social capital (Cooper et al., 2014). The benefits that can be acquired for the institution include advancing research and technology, while the community gains economic empowerment. The asset components of the University and the community can be empowered together, so the appropriate approach model is "asset-based community development", though the traditional "need-based community development" approach is still possible, particularly for immediate relief in crises faced by the community (Preece, 2017).

In determining the model for the Assisted Village program, mapping potential resources and issues becomes a very important factor, the success of mapping two crucial things, namely, challenges and prospective community resources, has a significant impact on the economic empowerment program's efficacy (McPherson et al., 2020). The problem mapping document must be able to map not only current problems but also potential future problems (risks), whereas the mapping document on

potential local resources, in addition to knowing the potential available resources, is also useful for raising awareness. a society that they have the potential to develop. The approach that must be employed in executing economic empowerment programs is based on the problem and potential mapping document (need-based or asset-based).

***Input***

The assisted village program has been designed within a strategic plan involving stakeholders, but the participation of village communities, as primary stakeholders, is suboptimal. The absence of the community in the strategic planning process reflects a less participatory approach, despite the program having regular budget support. The documentation of strategic planning and budgeting indicates an effort for sustainability, but the limited budget and the absence of a holistic long-term plan may hinder the effectiveness of the program and the overall achievement of the university's vision. This is evident on the table:

**Table 5. Confirmation of input data aspects**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Summarize the Interview with an internal informant</b>	<b>Summarize the Interview with an external informant</b>	<b>Documentation</b>
<b>Input</b>	The implementation of the assisted village program has been included in the strategic planning, which was developed through a process involving stakeholders. The program is also supported by sustainable funding through regular university financing.	The village community, as stakeholders, feels they were never involved in drafting the strategic plan. So far, their involvement has only been as participants in training sessions.	strategic planning documents for the program are available but do not yet include long-term plans that provide holistic support for achieving the university's vision. Budgeting documents for the program are available, but the allocated amount is minimal.

The financial framework for the economic empowerment program for the Assisted Village community uses a regular budget from the university but with a limited nominal amount (less than USD 2000 per program), so far the university's budget has been more focused on education and

research. On the contrary, based on its nominal quantity, it is insufficient, especially in light of the lack of any alternative funding sources. This, of course, makes achieving the goals of the community economic empowerment program, namely the creation of an independent society, extremely difficult.

Through collaboration with the government and the corporate/private sector, the possibility of securing alternative financing is rather open. Many government programs for poverty reduction, such as the Independent National Community Empowerment Program (PNPM), the Coastal Community Empowerment Program (PPMP), and the District Development Program, have not been fully explored, and existing cooperation with local governments has not been followed up concretely in a mutually beneficial relationship. So far, the government's role in the Village Development program has been very minimal.

The effectiveness of the Assisted Village Program is contingent on several measures, in addition to a sufficient financial framework. Policies are directions and instructions for carrying out operations to achieve goals determined by the leadership, both written and unwritten, outside of statutory restrictions and not in conflict with them (Agustina, 2019). The policy for the UIN Raden Intan supported the village's economic empowerment program and was written during strategic planning, but it is still general and cannot be used as practical guidance in program execution.

The division's strategic plan, in this example the Institute for Research and Community Service/Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian Masyarakat (LPPM), should include the university's strategic plan. The LPPM Strategic Plan outlines the organization's vision, goal, objectives, and methods for doing research and providing community service. The Strategic Plan is then translated into an Operational Plan. The operational plan is a short-term strategy that elucidates the strategic plan into a series of more specific and practical actions (Schmuck, 2022). The Operational Plan serves as a realistic reason for proposing a budget.

### ***Process***

The implementation of the assisted village program has generally been aligned with the goal of empowering the target village community.

However, the program's duration of only three days and its limited number of participants (30 people) indicates a very restricted scope, making it less effective in delivering significant empowerment impacts. Although monitoring and evaluation were reportedly conducted, the absence of documentation for monitoring and evaluation results reflects a lack of accountability and transparency in assessing the program's success. This issue could hinder efforts to achieve continuous improvement in the program. Data confirmation for the process aspect can be seen in the table:

**Table 6. Confirmation of process data aspects**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Summarize the Interview with an internal informant</b>	<b>Summarize the Interview with an external informant</b>	<b>Documentation</b>
<b>Process</b>	The assisted village program was implemented in accordance with its goal of empowering disadvantaged communities in the target village. Monitoring and evaluation were also conducted through visits during the program's implementation.	The community was only provided with a three-day training program for 30 participants.	Monitoring and evaluation reports for the program are unavailable.

The implementation of community services must follow a systematic process (de Witt, 2010). The process begins with LPPM forming The Assisted Village team, which is tasked with conducting a preliminary survey in the target village to determine the theme of empowerment. Based on the survey results, the team compiles a program proposal that includes a design and methods for implementing the program, as well as compiling the Term of Reference (TOR) as a basis for budget submissions. The community is participating as an object of the survey at this level of planning; community engagement has not been witnessed in setting shared goals or deciding program designs. Some projects did not function as planned and did not produce substantial effects due to a lack of community engagement during the program design stage.

The implementation stage of the economic empowerment program for the Assisted Village community takes place after all of the planning processes have been completed and the funding framework has been approved. According to the report on the results of the Assisted Village documents, implementation at the Assisted Village is still too limited, with only 3 days of implementation, with no follow-up plans.

The monitoring and evaluation stage is the final step. Monitoring and evaluation are inextricably linked tasks (Fred & Elizabeth, 2013). LPPM, in partnership with the Quality Assurance Agency/Lembaga Penjaminan Mutu (LPM), conducts monitoring and assessment. The Assisted Village Team monitored solely during the implementation stage, and even then, it did not generate a sufficient written document on the monitoring outcomes. All stages of an activity should be monitored, including the input stage (preparation and planning), the process stage (activity implementation), the output stage (activity results), and the outcome stage (outcome) (activity results function). They should all be in line with what has been planned and carried out as intended.

Evaluation is the process of measuring and assessing a project's implementation. Measuring and assessing are two different things. Measuring compares implementation results to preset metrics and indicators, whereas assessing compares results to a set of criteria (Basarab & Root, 2012). The goal of the Economic Empowerment Program for the Community in the Assisted Village review was to see if the program's results and impacts on the community's economy were relevant to the empowerment goals. It is impossible to know with certainty whether the training program had a beneficial impact on the community economy because the community service center did not conduct a program impact evaluation on the training program that was implemented, as evidenced by the lack of evaluation findings documentation.

### *Product*

The village mentoring program has made a positive contribution to improving community welfare; however, its impact tends to be short-term due to the lack of follow-up actions such as post-training mentoring. Insufficient attention to the village's local potential, such as agricultural, livestock, and plantation products, indicates that the program has not fully

aligned with the community's needs and strengths. This mismatch has resulted in university-provided tools being unused. The program's approach, which lacks adaptability to local potential, risks hindering the sustainability and long-term effectiveness of the empowerment efforts. The following table further illustrates this phenomenon:

**Table 7. Confirmation of product data aspects**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Summarize the Interview with an internal informant</b>	<b>Summarize the Interview with an external informant</b>	<b>Observation</b>
<b>Product</b>	The program has had a positive impact on improving community welfare and will continue to be implemented to reach other villages in Lampung Province.	The program conducted by the university ends without any follow-up actions, such as post-training mentoring.	The village has high potential agricultural, livestock, and plantation resources that remain untapped due to a lack of attention from the university. This has led to university-provided tools being unused as they do not align with the village's local potentials.

Economic empowerment is aimed at those who are socially and economically disempowered (Khairani et al., 2021). As a result, the empowerment program's success is largely dependent on the effectiveness of identifying the less empowered group (Cohen, 1994). Even if the aim agrees with the target, the evaluation reveals that the objective is sufficiently appropriate to reach mothers and women who need more income. However, the reach is still regarded as insufficient to offer meaningful outcomes. Since the topic of empowering women, today is a central issue, justice of rights and gender equality are a demand, while women in reality still face a lot of discrimination (Tripathi, 2013), the Assisted Village economic empowerment program focuses on mothers and women as a means of increasing gender equality and justice. Even though the empowerment goal was reasonable, the training reach (just 30 participants) was deemed insufficient to yield meaningful outcomes.

In terms of economic impact, the Assisted Village Program has not



demonstrated the significance of the results; efforts begun by the community as a result of the training have not been sustained due to a variety of factors, including marketing constraints, production costs that do not match the selling price, and inefficient technology. The program's minimal impact is also due to the failure to implement programs based on the principle of sustainability; programs that have been implemented simply end without being followed up on, even though the community in the target village has a high need for empowerment, acceptance, and expectations.

The major goal of community economic empowerment is for individuals to be able to fulfill their requirements (Farida & Qabandiya, 2022); the community's ability will rise if people can access productive sources that allow them to raise their income and purchase the products and services they require resources (Shaffer, 1990). Local sources of income are those that are reasonably easy for the community to access. The economic empowerment program launched through the Assisted Village program has not fully used the potential of local resources. Moreover, training programs also have not been maintained by the community as well as the abandoned supplied equipment tools. The university's donated screen-printing equipment has not been used since it does not fit the recipients' requirements. This draws attention to a lack of needs analysis before the program started, which led to equipment being useless for the local economic situation, potential, or interests. As a result, the receivers find it difficult to make good use of the equipment productively, therefore wasting resources. Comprehensive needs evaluations, community involvement in planning, and guarantees that the help given supports the economic activity the community values will help to avoid such problems.

### ***Ukhuwah Principles Practices to Community Empowerment Program***

Based on the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation of the Assisted Village program, several weaknesses have been identified that could hinder the achievement of its objectives. In the aspect of Context, there is a mismatch between the program's objectives and the community's needs, resulting in an inappropriate focus on the program. Input weaknesses occur due to inadequate resources, such as funds and manpower, or insufficient planning. On the Process side, program

implementation can be disrupted by poor coordination, inadequate monitoring, or unrealistic scheduling. Lastly, in the Product, the program's results have less significant impact or are not relevant to the needs of the community. To address this weakness, a framework that is more aligned with the characteristics of Islamic higher education institutions is needed.

Islamic universities must not only provide higher education but also promote Islamic ideals as the foundation for carrying out Tridharma obligations (Education, learning, and community service). Ukhuwwah is a notion in Islam that is relevant to the work of community service. Ukhuwwah, in terms of terminology, means brotherhood, derived from the root word “akhā” which generally means paying attention (Shihab, 2013). In Islamic teachings, the concept of Ukhuwwah is divided into four types, namely: (1) Ukhuwwah ‘Ubudiyah (Brotherhood among creatures who submit to Allah SWT), (2) Ukhuwwah Islamiyah (Brotherhood among Muslims), (3) Ukhuwwah Wathaniyah (Brotherhood among a nation and country), and (4) Ukhuwwah Basyariyah (Brotherhood among humanity) (Shihab, 2011). The concept of Ukhuwwah consists of the following principles: Ta’aruf, Tafahum, Ta’awun, and Takaful (Suriati et al., 2020). The principle of Ta’aruf is mutual acquaintance both physically and mentally. The Ta’aruf Assisted Village program is the initial step for UIN Raden Intan as an empowering actor to get to know the community both physically through direct observation of the village community's environment such as housing conditions, employment, and education, and mentally by understanding the social system, customs, and culture that prevail within the community. Getting to know each other, will open up opportunities to share knowledge and experiences (Shihab, 2017), and foster sensitivity towards the issues that arise, especially the socio-economic problems of rural communities. The process of understanding the community must then produce a document mapping the potential problems and needs of the village community, followed by formulating common goals to reduce the gap between the expected objectives and the community's needs that have been present all along.

The principle of Tafahum is a mutual understanding of conditions to encourage cooperation and reduce misunderstandings (Rofiqi & Haq, 2022). After getting to know the community and the accompanying problems, each party understands the need for economic empowerment for UIN Raden Intan and the community. For UIN Raden Intan,

economic empowerment is a means of developing science and technology, while economic empowerment is needed to improve welfare for the community. Therefore, formulating common goals based on the principle of university-community partnership becomes a key factor in this principle of mutual understanding. Partnership is a form of association between two or more parties that forms a cooperative bond based on agreement and mutual need to enhance capacity and capability in a specific endeavor or goal, thereby achieving better results (Raharjo Weda, 2018). Thus, although the university acts as an empowering actor and the community as the object of empowerment, with the partnership paradigm, there are no superior or inferior parties, which aligns with the empowerment process itself which is a collective action to enhance shared capacity.

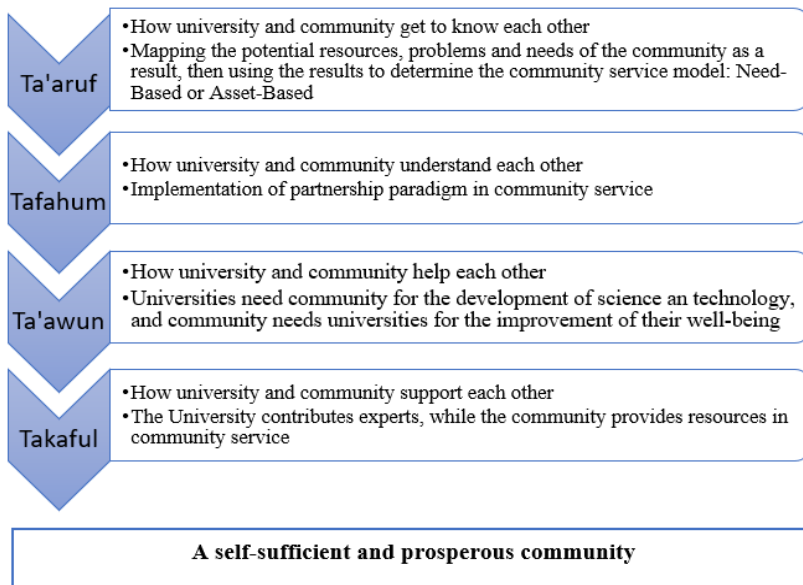
The principle of *Ta'awun*, or mutual assistance taught in Islam, is helping each other in goodness and piety. *Ta'awun* encourages reciprocal cooperation and enhances community development and social cohesion by creating synergy for sustainable growth and an integrated approach to common goals in society (Mhd Sarif & Ismail, 2022). *Ta'awun*'s guiding concept is used in the Assisted Village Program to propel the village community toward social and economic independence. *Ta'awun* is implemented in this program given the different support given to the community, especially through training courses targeted at home industry or home-based businesses. Training in many disciplines is part of this curriculum, including handicrafts using locally grown raw materials and processing of regional specialty foods with great market value. This strategy not only teaches new skills but also gives the community chances to grow enterprises depending on special local potential. Furthermore, this Assisted Village program offers the tools required to launch or grow small businesses, therefore enabling program members to instantly apply gained skills and raise their production capacity. Since the community no longer has to commit significant funds to buy manufacturing equipment, this equipment support is quite vital to support business survival.

Realizing the sustainability of the economic empowerment program inside the Assisted Village program depends mostly on the *Takaful* concept—that of mutual guarantee or assurance (Billah et al., 2019). The success and sustainability of this initiative depend much on the combined dedication of all the engaged parties. In this instance, UIN Raden Intan actively helps to guarantee program sustainability using ongoing mentoring. The Village

Development program thus appears to be simply a one-time initiative hence accompanying programs including technical supervision, administrative support, as well as monitoring and evaluation of the business development conducted by the community are necessary to increase their efficacy. On the other side, the community also significantly contributes to guaranteeing the program's survival. Whether in labor, raw materials, or unique traditional knowledge, they can help by offering local resources. The community's will to progress their hamlet, and the spirit of cooperation become great assets to guarantee this program can run for a long time. The cooperation between UIN Raden Intan and the local community in advancing the Takaful concept fosters a close link whereby both sides support and maintain each other.

Community empowerment by Islamic universities as practices of the principles of Ukhuwwah can be illustrated in the image:

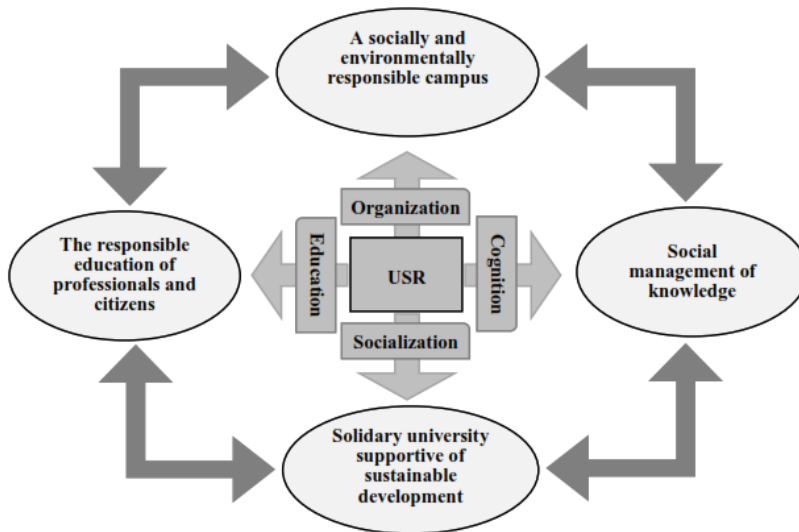
**Figure 2. Ukhuwwah practices in the community empowerment program**



Today universities are not only required to develop academics but also to have social responsibility for community problems in the form of community service ((UNIBILITY) et al., 2017). The concept of University

Social Responsibility (USR) is a higher education response to community social and economic problems, with a focus on fostering, developing, and empowering community capacity so that people can be self-sufficient by utilizing existing local resources (Compagnucci & Spigarelli, 2020). USR is a policy of ethical quality from the performance of the university's academic community (students, faculty, and administrative staff. employees) through management that is responsible for the education, cognitive, labor, and environmental impacts generated by the university, in the interactive dialogue with the community (Lo et al., 2017). USR distinguishes four types of university impacts: organizational impacts that affect the university and community environment, including students, staff, and academics; educational impacts that relate to educating people and shaping ethics and values; and cognitive impacts that relate to building and producing knowledge, consolidating the relationships between the technological and social contexts of science and society. These four impacts enable Vallaeys to outline four areas of socially responsible university management, as shown in the image below (Bokhari, 2019):

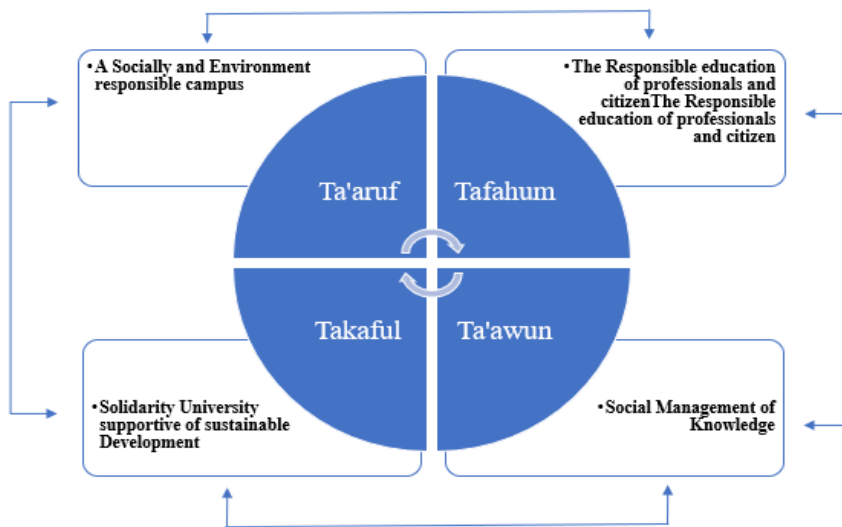
**Figure 3. Four areas of social responsibility management at the university**



The concept of USR emerged due to the awareness that the level of trust and community engagement greatly influences the existence of higher

education institutions (Sengupta et al., 2020). Therefore, higher education institutions are not only obligated to produce graduates but must also have a high social concern for community issues in the form of community service (Albulescu & Albulescu, 2014). Referring to the practices of Ukhuwwah principles and their relevance to the USR concept, the framework for the community empowerment program can be proposed as follows:

**Figure 4. A framework for community empowerment program**



The framework of the community empowerment program outlined in the image illustrates systematic stages starting with fostering community awareness of self-potential through the principle of Ta'aruf (mutual acquaintance), which aims to open their understanding of the strengths and resources they possess. The next stage is the enhancement of knowledge and skills through the principle of Tafahum (mutual understanding), intending to increase the capacity of human resources (HR) within the community. After that, the implementation stage using the principle of Ta'awun (mutual assistance) focuses on the community's ability to produce and apply skills practically. The final process is mentoring based on the principle of Takaful (mutual guarantee), which ensures that community efforts can run sustainably and independently.

The entire framework emphasizes collaboration, awareness, and sustainability as the main pillars of achieving community independence.

## **Conclusion**

The implementation of Ukhuwah principles in community empowerment not only increases program effectiveness but also strengthens the relationship between universities and the community. In line with Islamic values that uphold brotherhood and care for others, Ukhuwwah serves as a solid foundation for sincere collaboration between academics and the community. By fostering a sense of brotherhood, mutual respect, and working together as one unit, the community will be more motivated and open. This will build trust, promote inclusivity, and improve the community's quality of life. Ukhuwwah, as a manifestation of faith, becomes a bridge connecting the academic world with the real world, creating a broader and more sustainable social impact.

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