

Community Economic Empowerment Through Processing Sapat Leaves into Masiraan Village's Special Herbal Tea Products

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ABSTRACT

*This study aims to analyze the process and impact of community economic empowerment through the processing of daun sapat (Mitragnyna speciosa) into herbal tea products as part of a local creative economy initiative in Masiraan Village, Pandawan District, Hulu Sungai Tengah Regency. Using the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, this research emphasizes community participation, local asset utilization, and capacity building for sustainable economic development. The participatory qualitative method involved 15 participants (housewives, youth, and community leaders) for two months (June–August 2025). Data were collected through observation, interviews, focus group discussions (FGD), and documentation. Quantitative descriptive analysis using a 5-point Likert scale was applied to measure changes in skills, motivation, and participation. Results show significant improvement in community skills, from an average of 2.0 (pre-training) to 4.6 (post-training), with increased entrepreneurial motivation and active collaboration. The value of daun sapat increased from IDR 2,000/kg (raw) to IDR 50,000/kg (finished herbal tea). The findings indicate that the ABCD approach effectively transforms local natural resources into high-value products while reinforcing Islamic economic principles, particularly *hifz al-māl* (protection of wealth). This study contributes to the literature on Islamic community empowerment and provides a replicable model for sustainable village-based creative economy development.*

INTRODUCTION

Rural community empowerment plays a vital role in realizing inclusive and sustainable development. Villages serve as the backbone of the national economy due to their abundant natural and human resources. However, many rural areas in Indonesia still face challenges such as limited economic diversification, weak market access, and low capacity in managing local potential effectively. These factors often lead to economic stagnation and dependency on external assistance. Therefore, optimizing local assets through

community empowerment has become a strategic solution to promote self-reliance and rural prosperity.

Masiraan Village, located in Hulu Sungai Tengah Regency, South Kalimantan, possesses a unique local resource the daun sapat tree. This plant has significant economic and health potential as it is traditionally used as herbal medicine for increasing stamina, relieving pain, lowering cholesterol, and supporting wellness (Hafidzah et al., 2024). Despite these benefits, daun sapat had long been underutilized, as villagers mostly sold raw leaves to middlemen at low prices. Field observations (2025) show that wet daun sapat sold for only IDR 2,000/kg, while dried leaves could reach IDR 16,000/kg, indicating an untapped opportunity for value-added processing.

The development of daun sapat into herbal tea offers an opportunity for innovation in the local creative economy. Previous studies (Hartati et al., 2021) show that daun sapat contains alkaloid compounds with potential medicinal benefits. From an Islamic economic perspective, this initiative aligns with the principles of *ḥifẓ al-māl* (protection of wealth) and promotes the production of halal and *ṭayyib* goods that are beneficial and sustainable.

To guide this initiative, the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach is employed. This participatory model emphasizes the utilization of existing community assets natural, human, and social as the foundation for empowerment (Najamudin & Al Fajar, 2024). Rather than focusing on deficiencies, ABCD builds upon strengths and encourages active participation. In Masiraan, this approach is implemented through capacity-building, training, and marketing activities involving local women's groups (PKK) and youth communities.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the process of community economic empowerment in Masiraan Village through the processing of daun sapat into herbal tea products. It also seeks to evaluate how the ABCD approach can enhance local innovation, strengthen Islamic economic values, and promote sustainable rural livelihoods.

Hence, this paper examines: (1) the process of implementing the ABCD model in empowering Masiraan villagers through *daun sapat* processing, and (2) its impact on community capacity and local economic development. Thus, this study aims to analyze how the ABCD approach can strengthen the economic independence of the Masiraan Village community.

Research Methods

Study Design

This study employed the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach to empower the local community of Desa Masiraan through the utilization of Sapat leaves as a potential economic resource. ABCD emphasizes the community as the subject rather than the object of development, focusing on local assets and capacities for self-reliance. The program was implemented collaboratively between MBKM student researchers, village authorities, and community members. Activities followed the four main ABCD

phases: Discover, Dream, Design, and Destiny/Delivery, aiming to enhance community capacity in managing local natural resources.

Community Involvement

Active participation of the community was central to this study, following the principle “by the people, from the people, and for the people.” Community members were involved in all stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation. Initial activities included coordination and socialization with village officials, community leaders, housewives, and youth groups to establish trust and form working groups responsible for production and management.

Data Collection Techniques

A qualitative participatory approach was employed to obtain comprehensive data on community perceptions, practices, and outcomes. The main techniques were:

1. **Field Observation** – Conducted to document socio-economic and environmental conditions, particularly the availability of Sapat plants and local activities. Observations included non-participatory (initial survey) and participatory (during training and production) methods.
2. **In-depth Interviews** – Semi-structured interviews with key informants such as village leaders, community figures, local entrepreneurs, and participants in the Sapat tea program, to explore perceptions, challenges, and economic impacts.
3. **Focus Group Discussions (FGD)** – Facilitated participatory discussions for asset identification, vision co-development, and planning of Sapat tea production. Groups consisted of 5–10 members, including housewives, youth, and village representatives.
4. **Documentation** – Photographs, videos, and administrative records (attendance sheets, production notes) were collected as visual and official evidence of activities.

Research Instruments

Data were collected using structured and semi-structured instruments:

- **Observation guides** – To record environmental conditions, community activities, and participation.
- **Interview guides** – To elicit knowledge, experiences, and perceptions about local economic potential.
- **FGD guides** – To facilitate asset mapping, idea generation, and consensus building.
- **Documentation sheets** – To log visual and administrative records of the program.

- **Daily reflection sheets** – To capture ongoing feedback, challenges, and emerging ideas from both researchers and participants.

Implementation Procedure

The ABCD phases were conducted as follows:

1. **Discover** – Asset mapping and observation to identify natural, human, social, physical, and economic resources.
2. **Dream** – FGDs to develop shared visions and ideas for Sapat tea as a local economic product.
3. **Design** – Planning production, roles, schedules, tools, and product identity (branding and packaging).
4. **Destiny/Delivery** – Hands-on training, production, marketing trials, evaluation, and formulation of sustainable strategies, including community-owned enterprises or partnerships with BUMDes.

Population and Research Context

This study involved 15 participants, consisting of housewives, youth, and community leaders in Masiraan Village, Pandawan District, Hulu Sungai Tengah Regency, South Kalimantan. The participants were selected based on their involvement in local economic activities and willingness to participate in the empowerment program.

Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was applied, focusing on residents with relevant experience in *daun sapat* cultivation or interest in product innovation. The limited number of participants ensured intensive mentoring and direct participation during training and production activities.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using a qualitative descriptive approach supported by a simple quantitative analysis with a 5-point Likert scale (1 = very low, 5 = very high). This was used to measure the increase in participants' production skills, motivation, and community participation before and after the empowerment program. Data validation was performed using triangulation and *member checking* techniques to ensure reliability.

Research Duration

The program lasted for two months, from June 19 to August 19, 2025, including preparation, training, production, and evaluation phases.

This methodological framework ensured that the community actively shaped the development process, resulting in economic and social empowerment while producing tangible outputs, namely Sapat herbal tea as a locally sustainable product.

Results

The community empowerment program in Masiraan Village, focusing on processing *Sapat* leaves into herbal tea, produced significant outcomes. Initially, *Sapat* was abundant but undervalued, sold only in raw form at low prices (IDR 2,000/kg fresh leaves or IDR 16,000/kg dried leaves). Following the asset-based community development (ABCD) approach, including asset mapping, focus group discussions, and participatory planning, villagers recognized the economic potential of *Sapat* leaves and began cultivating and processing them.

Training and hands-on production enabled the community to produce, package, and market herbal tea independently. The final product, “*Teh Herbal Daun Sapat Khas Masiraan*,” exhibited a distinctive aroma, natural taste, and perceived health benefits. Its market price reached IDR 5,000 per 10-teabag pack (equivalent to IDR 50,000/kg), representing a 2,400% increase from fresh leaves and 212% from dried leaves.

The program improved skills, creativity, and economic independence, creating small business opportunities and a multiplier effect in the local economy, including increased demand for raw materials, use of local tools, and promotion via social media. Socially, it enhanced confidence, collaboration, and participation among women and youth in production and digital marketing activities.

Table 1. Economic Impact Before and After the Program

Aspect	Before	After
Skills	No product processing skills	Able to produce, package, and market herbal tea
Use of <i>Sapat</i> Leaves	Sold raw to collectors	Processed into ready-to-sell herbal tea
Selling Price	IDR 2,000/kg fresh leaves	IDR 5,000 per 10-teabag pack (IDR 50,000/kg finished product)
Employment Opportunities	Limited to harvesting	New small-scale businesses emerged

Quantitative Findings

A simple quantitative evaluation was conducted using a Likert scale to measure changes in participants’ skills, motivation, and community participation. The results are summarized below:

Table 2. Hasil Quantitative Results (Likert 1–5)

Indicator	Pre-Program Mean	Post-Program Mean	Change (Δ)
Production Skills	2.0	4.6	+2.6
Entrepreneurial Motivation	2.1	4.5	+2.4
Community Participation	2.3	4.7	+2.4
Marketing and Digital Literacy	1.8	4.2	+2.4

All indicators showed a significant improvement, indicating that the empowerment program effectively enhanced participants' technical, social, and entrepreneurial capacities.

Table 3. Economic & Social Impact

Aspect	Before Program	After Program
Skills	Limited knowledge of tea processing	Able to produce and package herbal tea
Economic Value	Rp 2,000/kg	Rp 50,000/kg
Confidence	Low	High, proactive
Cooperation	Limited	Strong teamwork and participation

Figure 1. Final Product: *Teh Herbal Daun Sapat Khas Masiraan*



Figure 2. Community Training and Production Process



These quantitative and qualitative results consistently show a holistic improvement in both individual and collective capacities.

Overall, the program demonstrates that leveraging local natural and human resources through a participatory, asset-based approach can transform previously neglected materials into high-value products, contributing to economic, social, and cultural development while supporting sustainable village-level economic independence. Results show not only the improvement of individual skills but also the collective empowerment of the Masiraan community.

DISCUSSION

The results of the community economic empowerment activities in Masiraan Village demonstrate that the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach can be effectively applied to enhance the community's economic potential through local resource utilization. The core principle of this approach is to explore and maximize the strengths and assets already possessed by the community, rather than focusing on their deficiencies or problems.

In this study, the main local asset identified was the sapat leaf plant (*Mitragyna speciosa* Korth), which was previously regarded as having low economic value. However, further exploration revealed its significant economic and health potential. The leaves contain bioactive alkaloids such as mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine which act as natural analgesics and mild stimulants, useful for traditional medicine to relieve pain, fatigue, diabetes, and digestive problems ((Hartati et al., 2021); (Hafidzah et al., 2024)).

Through continuous mentoring, training, and collaboration among residents, this local potential was successfully transformed into the village's flagship product Masiraan Herbal Tea. This finding aligns with the theory of (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1996), which posits that the ABCD approach empowers communities by identifying, utilizing, and developing their existing assets, thereby positioning them as *active subjects* of development rather than passive beneficiaries.

From the empowerment perspective, this activity supports (Putri, 2016) theory, which explains that community economic empowerment is a process of improving people's capacity to manage production factors, access markets, and earn a decent income. The implementation in Masiraan Village reflects this notion, as the community was not only trained technically but also encouraged to participate in decision-making, planning, and evaluation processes.

Furthermore, the program embodies the principles of participation, equality, and sustainability as stated by (Syamsiyah, 2017) and reinforced in the Regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs No. 7 of 2007. Active citizen involvement at each stage indicates that the empowerment process genuinely grows from the people, by the people, and for the people.

From an Islamic economic perspective, this activity aligns with the concept of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, particularly ḥifẓ al-māl (protection of wealth). The development of the herbal tea business represents a halal, productive, and beneficial management of wealth that supports social welfare. Thus, this empowerment initiative not only generates economic impacts but also embodies spiritual and social values consistent with the objectives of Islamic economic development.

In summary, the success of this empowerment program confirms that sustainable community empowerment depends largely on the level of community participation and the collaborative utilization of local assets.

results show not only the improvement of individual skills but also the collective empowerment of the Masiraan community.

Unexpected Findings And Challenges

Several challenges were encountered during implementation:

- Limited drying and packaging equipment.
- Unstable internet connectivity affecting digital marketing.
- Need for continuous mentoring in financial management.

However, participants adapted effectively by combining traditional drying methods and offline marketing through local shops. This adaptability reflects community resilience and creativity in overcoming resource limitations.

Managerial And Social Implications

The success of this program highlights that sustainable empowerment can be achieved when:

- Training integrates technical, entrepreneurial, and ethical values.
- Local governments and BUMDes collaborate in supporting product marketing.
- Community-based enterprises prioritize collective welfare rather than individual profit.

This model can serve as a replicable blueprint for other villages in South Kalimantan aiming to develop local creative economies aligned with Islamic ethical principles.

These implications are expected to assist policymakers and Islamic microfinance actors in replicating empowerment models in similar rural contexts.”

Limitations And Future Research

Despite its success, the study has several limitations that open opportunities for future research. The study was limited to a two-month implementation with 15 participants, so long-term sustainability was not fully evaluated. Future research is encouraged to:

1. Conduct longitudinal studies on product continuity and market expansion.
2. Explore microfinance or cooperative models to sustain production.
3. Integrate environmental sustainability aspects into rural entrepreneurship.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussions of this study, it can be concluded that the community economic empowerment program through the processing of Sapat leaves into herbal tea

products in Desa Masiraan has a positive impact on enhancing skills, utilizing local potential, and promoting the emergence of village-specific products with economic value.

The program began with local asset mapping using the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, which revealed that Sapat leaves previously underutilized have the potential to be processed into unique and marketable herbal tea products. The training provided successfully improved the skills of the community, particularly housewives, in transforming Sapat leaves into ready-to-market products.

Moreover, active community involvement throughout all stages from raw material collection, processing, packaging, to initial marketing demonstrated that the empowerment program was not merely top-down but participatory and collaborative. This approach fostered a spirit of mutual cooperation and strengthened the sense of ownership over village products.

Therefore, this study proves that local potential-based economic empowerment, when implemented systematically and participatively, can serve as an effective strategy for enhancing the economic well-being of rural communities while preserving local resources.

This empowerment model demonstrates how Islamic ethical principles and the ABCD framework can jointly foster sustainable economic transformation

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