

Religious Assistance and Economic Strengthening Through Empowering Boboko Craftsman

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ABSTRACT

This service is expected to create synergy between spiritual and material aspects. Religious assistance and economic strengthening aim to strengthen religion while improving the economic welfare of Boboko craftsmen. The method used is Service Learning, as the application of lecture knowledge to provide meaningful benefits to society. The participatory and collaborative approach includes the Investigation and Problem Mapping stages, training and assistance for economic strengthening, religious assistance, and monitoring and evaluation. The results show the effectiveness of the religious assistance program for boboko craftsmen in the Pagar Gunung Block, especially children and teenagers. The existence of the younger generation living in the Pagar Gunung Block is a hope for the sustainability of this religious program. Boboko craftsmen can increase innovation in boboko craft products and empower the local economy. There is a need for an innovation strategy to increase the empowerment of boboko craftsmen in the Pagar Gunung Block by improving the quality and competitiveness of their products. Boboko products began to be marketed through social media and local shops, directly increasing craftsmen's income.

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1. INTRODUCTION

One of the region's typical crafts is boboko, a traditional bamboo container with cultural value and practical uses in the daily life of the Sundanese people. However, amid modernisation and lifestyle changes, boboko crafts face major challenges, including declining market demand, limited product innovation, and limited access to marketing, which threaten the survival of artisans.

The majority of the residents of Cipanas Village work as farmers and farm labourers, cultivating rice and hillside fields [1]. It is a job that contributes to the social and economic sectors. In addition, there is a group of people who work in boboko, making woven bamboo,

and there are also small businesses in the field of natural stone. Sundanese customs and Islam dominate the lives of the people here, reflected in traditions such as recitation [2].

In addition to economic challenges, the people in the Pagar Gunung Block, Cipanas Village, also face problems in the religious field. The lack of spiritual assistance and religious guidance leads some people not to fully understand or practice religious teachings optimally. In fact, religious values play an important role in building a resilient, honest, and competitive society. This especially happens to the younger generation, namely, children who lack teachers.

Through a religious mentoring and economic empowerment program, it is hoped that synergy between spiritual and material aspects can be realised. This mentoring aims to strengthen the community's religious resilience while improving the economic welfare of boboko craftsmen. This approach is relevant given the great potential of Cipanas Village, which can be explored and developed through empowerment grounded in local wisdom [3]. This program is designed to provide business management training, product innovation, and market access to boboko artisans. On the other hand, religious mentoring programs will integrate spiritual values into daily activities, including business practices grounded in ethics and morals. Thus, this program not only aims to increase people's income but also to build spiritual awareness that can serve as a foundation for a more harmonious and prosperous life [4].

Religious mentoring and economic strengthening through the empowerment of boboko craftsmen are strategic steps toward overcoming socio-economic problems while building a religious, creative, and independent society. It is hoped that Cipanas Village can be a real example of the success of religious-based community empowerment and local wisdom in Cirebon Regency. To promote local economic empowerment and strengthen individuals' and communities' capacity, economic resource management is carried out independently to reduce dependence on external assistance [5]. In addition, mentoring programs must have a sustainable long-term impact, taking into account social, economic, and environmental aspects [6].

In the context of empowering boboko artisans in Cipanas Village, Cirebon Regency, some of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) goals implemented are SDGs 1, 8, 12, and 17. SDG 1: "No Poverty", it is hoped that by increasing access to marketing and empowering local artisans, it will be able to increase the income of village communities, which will be a concrete step in poverty alleviation. SDG 8: "Decent Work and Economic Growth", supports local economic growth through the empowerment of MSMEs, while creating sustainable job opportunities. SDG 12: "Responsible Consumption and Production", which encourages innovations to be carried out, encourages manufacturers to adopt more efficient and environmentally friendly production practices. SDG 17: "Partnerships to achieve the Goals", this programme's collaboration among universities, village governments, and communities underscores the importance of partnerships in creating sustainable impact. Economic assistance involves the active participation of the community as the main stakeholders. The community not only receives assistance but also plays a role in designing and implementing empowerment programs [7].

2. METHOD

The method of service that the community service activity team of religious assistance can provide to the community, especially children, is Service Learning [8]. This method is very appropriate because it applies course material to real-world situations in a community or society. This method provides students with an opportunity to apply classroom knowledge to community problems by participating as volunteers in the designated community. Some of the relevant courses in this study include religious courses, the Qur'an, Entrepreneurship, and Mathematics, among others.

Service Learning is one of the learning methods that emphasises the practical aspect by referring to the concept of Experiential Learning, namely the application of lecture knowledge in the midst of the community and becomes a solution to problems faced by the community, so that students can play a real role and balance their role between campus and serving the community [9]. Through the Service Learning method, it is hoped that the practical application of lecture knowledge in the community, especially among children, will help address problems faced by children in the Pagar Gunung Block, thereby enabling students and campuses to fulfil their real roles in community service. Thus, PTKI not only becomes an "ivory tower" within the community but also provides meaningful benefits to the community.

In addition to the Service Learning method, the service program will use a participatory and collaborative approach [10] with the following steps:

Step 1. Problem Identification and Mapping

This stage involves focus group discussions (FGDs) with communities, artisans, and religious leaders to identify key needs and issues. This approach refers to the participatory research method [10].

Step 2. Technical Training and Assistance

The training includes product innovation, business management, and digital marketing for Boboko artisans. Mentoring is conducted periodically, with continuous evaluation. This method is in accordance with the training-based empowerment model [11].

Step 3. Religious Mentoring

Religious mentoring is carried out through routine studies, lectures, and training on Islamic business ethics values, which refers to the integration of religious values into people's lives [12].

Step 4. Monitoring and Evaluation

Evaluations are conducted monthly to assess the program's progress against predetermined success indicators, such as increased religious understanding and artisan income. This method is adapted from a results-based program evaluation approach [13].

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

Demographic Overview of the Mountain Fence Block of Cipanas Village

The Pagar Gunung Block is inhabited by the majority of the population (99.1%), with an almost balanced gender composition (48.9% males and 51.1% females). The local

population is predominantly married. Most heads of families do not have significant economic assets.

Data on the formal education of residents of the Pagar Gunung Block shows that the majority have a low level of education. This is shown in Figure 1.

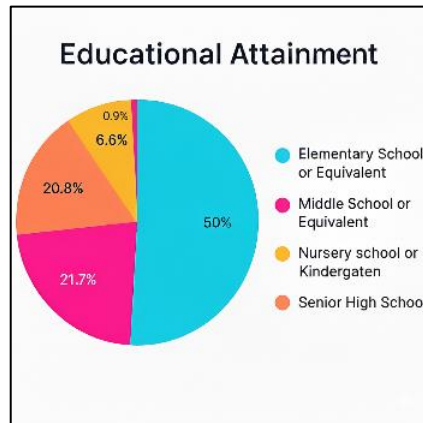


Figure 1. Formal Education Masyarakat Blok Pagar Gunung

Based on Figure 1, the distribution of formal education status shows that 6.6% of the population has never received formal education. 50% of the population completes education at the elementary level/equivalent. Around 21.7% of the population completed junior high school, and only 20.8% completed education up to the high school level/equivalent. This percentage is still relatively low and is an obstacle to improving job skills and further education opportunities. This is the main challenge in developing human resources in the region.

The non-formal education in the Pagar Gunung Block includes religious education and skills activities, although participation remains relatively low and uneven across the community. This is shown in Figure 2.

Non-Formal Education	Number
1. Do Not Attend School	64
2. Madrasah Diniyah	21
3. PONDOK PESANTREN	1

Figure 2. Non-formal Education of the Pagar Gunung Block Community

Based on Figure 2, about 64% of the population has never been involved in non-formal education, whether in religious or skill-based forms. Around 21% of the population has attended education at Madrasah Diniyah (MD). This education helps strengthen the

community's religious values, especially among children and adolescents, and only 1% of the population has studied at Islamic boarding schools. This suggests that structured religious education in Islamic boarding schools has not yet become the main choice in the region, likely due to access or economic factors.

The characteristics and obstacles that occur are that non-formal education mostly focuses on religious learning, such as recitation and activities in MD. This aligns with the community's needs, which are oriented toward strengthening morals and religious traditions. The main obstacle is low participation, driven by a lack of teaching staff, limited educational facilities, and limited awareness of the importance of non-formal education in supporting daily life.

Meanwhile, the majority of people's jobs in the Pagar Gunung Block are as Weaving Craftsmen, namely processing materials such as bamboo into boboko or other products that are the main source of income (26.4%), daily laborers (17.9%), farmers (14.2%), housewives (6.6%), and the rest are traders and small entrepreneurs (around 5%), namely some residents run small businesses, such as stalls or selling handicrafts. This can be shown in Figure 3.

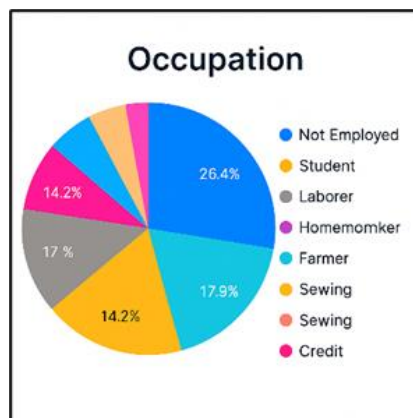


Figure 3. Mountain Fence Block Community Work

The main challenges for the people of Blok Pagar Gunung are low income, with most family incomes below Rp 500,000 per month, limited market access to sell handicraft products, and reliance on informal work without guaranteed job security. The people of the Pagar Gunung Block rely on various sources of loans to meet their economic needs, including daily needs, small businesses, and other urgent needs. This pattern of lending reflects a reliance on informal sources of funds that are often more accessible than formal financial services.

Natural Tourism Potential in the Mountain Fence Block of Cipanas Village

The Pagar Gunung Block has significant potential for natural and cultural tourism, though its development remains limited. Nature Tourism in Blok Pagar Gunung is offering natural tourist destinations, such as Pasir Parat Campground and Puncak Gunung Koneng, which are attractive to nature lovers. In addition to the campground, there is also a waterfall.

Some of the tourism destinations and activities that can be found or developed in this area include natural and cultural tourism. Natural tourism in the Pagar Gunung Block includes forests and Plantations. The Pagar Gunung Block area is surrounded by forests and

plantations, offering beautiful views and fresh air. This tour is perfect for trekking, hiking, or just enjoying the quiet rural atmosphere. This forest also has the potential to be developed into an environmental education tourist attraction. In addition, a Campground in the highlands offers camping with beautiful views and cool air. This campground can also be a tourist attraction for families or groups looking for an outdoor camping experience. The existence of Mount Koneng Peak in the Pagar Gunung Block is a destination for nature lovers and climbers. This peak offers beautiful views from a height, including a panoramic view of Cirebon and its surroundings. It is very suitable for hiking tours, photography, and environmental conservation campaigns.

The potential of Cultural Tourism in the Mountain Fence Block of Cipanas Village can be seen in the strong religious traditions, such as marhabanan, recitation, and the routine yasinan. In addition, this tradition can be packaged into a religious tourism attraction that introduces local Islamic culture to tourists.

Traditional Arts are carried out by several residents who still practice bamboo weaving. The process of making woven goods can be a tourist attraction and a form of cultural education. In addition, tourists can also learn directly how to weave or buy local products as souvenirs.

Infrastructure and Information Media

Public Street Lighting Infrastructure (PJU) on the road to the Pagar Gunung Block to improve accessibility and security, established by DT Peduli Cirebon. In addition, assistance from PLN Peduli has reached the area. After the advent of electricity, internet access emerged, though it was still very limited.

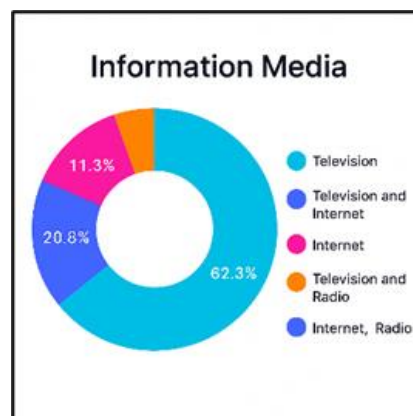


Figure 4. Information media in the Pagar Gunung Block

The media in the Pagar Gunung Block are shifting towards digital technology, though some people still rely on traditional media.

Based on preliminary investigations, Cipanas Village has a predominantly handicraft and livestock-based workforce. The main obstacles are budget constraints, a lack of public awareness, and the area's inaccessibility. Efforts to improve welfare are carried out through training, assistance, and collaboration with external parties.

The majority of the population is informal workers, with relatively harmonious relationships. Government assistance includes subsidies and social programs that are sometimes difficult for all residents to access. Common challenges include limited funding and a lack of community participation. Coordination between neighbourhood units (RTs) and the village government is conducted through monthly meetings. Community empowerment is achieved through skills training and small-scale economic programs, particularly in boboko crafts. Routine activities such as holiday celebrations strengthen community solidarity.

Religious leaders actively conduct religious activities such as recitations and lectures. They play an important role in resolving social conflicts and improving people's morale. The problem that often arises is the lack of teachers to teach young people. In addition, religious education remains lacking in the Pagar Gunung Block. It is hoped that the younger generation, especially children, will be fostered through religious activities and character education, as well as through learning to recognise hijayah letters.

The collection effort involves gathering boboko crafts from the surrounding community. The obstacles faced are price fluctuations and competition. Goods are usually obtained from artisans who have become subscribers. The relationship with the community is quite good, thanks to mutual support. However, this business still does not generate enough income to meet the family's needs due to marketing constraints.

3.2. Discussion

Economic Assistance for Boboko Craftsmen

The results of the problem identification and potential analysis were used to understand the community's socio-economic conditions, the artisans' capacity, and the challenges they face. These results were used to design programs tailored to needs, such as developing product innovations and increasing production efficiency.

Next, the team conducted training and capacity building through skills workshops and internships with bamboo craft experts. This training covered more modern production techniques, innovative product design, and effective business management strategies. This training involved recruiting peer educators who played a strategic role in increasing innovation and productivity among boboko artisans. As workshop resource persons and partners, they acted as facilitators, mentors, and motivators in efforts to empower the economy by optimising skills and leveraging local potential. In addition, they provided assistance to Boboko artisans on how to innovate their products. Examples of woven products made from bamboo and boboko after being innovated by peer educators:



Figure 5. Bamboo Woven Craft Products

The team also teaches craftsmen about the importance of creating a variety of boboko designs that are not only functional but also have high aesthetic value, such as decorative boboko for modern household needs. In marketing management, guiding artisans on marketing strategies, including the use of social media and e-commerce platforms to reach a wider market. Through this collaboration, it not only provides technical training but also supports artisans in understanding market trends and creating products in demand with consumers, thereby improving their competitiveness and economic well-being.



Figure 6. FGD with Boboko Craftsmen in the Mountain Fence Block

The next stage is to facilitate marketing and promotion through both digital and offline channels. Artisans are taught to use social media and marketplaces to reach a wider market, and are encouraged to participate in local exhibitions to promote products directly. In addition, the team helps artisans access resources and capital, including through the People's Business Credit (KUR) program, government grants, and collaborations with cooperatives. To ensure business sustainability, artisans are provided with financial management and business strategy training.



Figure 7. Economic Strengthening Workshop in Cipanas Village

In the final stage, the team focused on regular monitoring and evaluation. Field visits are conducted to evaluate training implementation, provide feedback, and address problems that arise during mentoring. This mentoring also includes continuous improvement, such as product brand development and market research to ensure products remain relevant to consumer needs. With this approach, economic assistance can create a long-term impact on community welfare and the development of local handicraft businesses.

Religious Assistance in the Mountain Fence Block

Based on interviews with religious leaders in the Pagar Gunung Block, religious assistance can be carried out by strengthening community participation, especially among youth and children, in religious activities. Currently, routine religious activities, such as weekly recitation and Islamic holiday celebrations, are underway, but participation by adult men and youth is minimal. Therefore, mentoring can begin by organising interesting, innovative programs, such as flashboarding schools for teenagers, interactive studies, or Islamic competitions involving the entire community.

This religious assistance focuses on fostering the younger generation, especially children, through the introduction of hijaiyah letters and more interactive recitation activities, as well as improving existing religious facilities. The assistance is focused on increasing the participation of the younger generation and fostering local religious leaders. Activities such as interactive studies, iqro learning, flash Islamic boarding schools, and prayer room renovations have attracted public attention. However, the challenge of participation persists, especially among young people who are busy working outside the village. The solution is to schedule religious activities at a more flexible time.



Figure 8. Religious Assistance by the Head of the Abdimas Team

The mentoring team made hijaiyah posters for children. Religious assistance through hijaiyah posters for children, as seen in Figure 2, so that it can be used properly. It is hoped that by giving the poster, children will be interested in learning to read the Quran more deeply. In this religious assistance, it is hoped that in the future there will be teachers to recite for children. Therefore, Abdimas recommended to LP2M UIN Siber Syekh Nurjati Cirebon to hold KKN again in the Pagar Gunung Block of Cipanas Village, so that religious assistance can continue.



Figure 9. Hijaiyah Letter Poster for Kids Mountain Fence Block

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the service activities, it was concluded that the religious mentoring program in the Pagar Gunung Block has been effective in increasing the spiritual understanding of boboko artisans in the Pagar Gunung Block, especially children and adolescents, who began to actively learn the hijaiyah letters given during the mentoring. The

presence of the young generation in the Pagar Gunung Block is a hope for the sustainability of this religious assistance program.

Boboko artisans face various challenges in the process of economic empowerment, especially related to production and marketing. In production, it includes limited tools, quality raw materials, and design innovation. On the marketing side, artisans have struggled to expand their market reach due to a lack of access to digital technology and distribution networks.

Strategies to increase the empowerment of boboko artisans include training and coaching programs focused on product innovation, efficient production techniques, and digital marketing.

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