

EMPOWERMENT OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES THROUGH THE USE OF VILLAGE FUNDS (CASE STUDY OF AEK TAPA LABUHANBATU UTARA VILLAGE)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the empowerment of Muslim communities through the use of Village Funds in Aek Tapa Village, North Labuhanbatu Regency. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of community empowerment in the village, as well as the potential of village funds as a tool to improve the welfare of Muslim communities in a sustainable manner. The results show that the use of the Village Fund in Aek Tapa Village has significantly improved the quality of life of the Muslim community. The programs implemented, such as infrastructure development, entrepreneurship training, and empowerment of Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes), have contributed to increased household income and community participation in economic activities. In addition, the strengthening of Islamic values is also reflected through the development of informal education institutions, such as Madrasah Diniyah and TPA, as well as the implementation of faith-based social programs. However, there are several challenges, such as the lack of community participation in program planning and the limited capacity of village governments to manage funds optimally. To overcome these obstacles, it is necessary to increase community involvement, fund management training for village officials, and assistance for the pag and evaluation system. The Triple Helix Proven Approach is effective in improving community welfare through inclusive and sustainable management of Village Funds.

Keywords: *Empowerment of Muslim communities, Village Fund, Triple Helix, Aek Tapa Village.*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pemberdayaan masyarakat Muslim melalui penggunaan Dana Desa di Desa Aek Tapa, Kabupaten Labuhanbatu Utara. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi pada pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang dinamika pemberdayaan masyarakat di desa, serta potensi dana desa sebagai alat untuk meningkatkan kesejahteraan masyarakat muslim secara berkelanjutan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan Dana Desa di Desa Aek Tapa telah secara signifikan meningkatkan kualitas hidup masyarakat Muslim. Program-program yang dilaksanakan, seperti pembangunan infrastruktur, pelatihan kewirausahaan, dan pemberdayaan Badan Usaha Milik Desa (BUMDes), telah berkontribusi pada peningkatan pendapatan rumah tangga dan partisipasi masyarakat dalam kegiatan ekonomi. Selain itu, penguatan nilai-nilai keislaman juga tercermin melalui pengembangan lembaga pendidikan informal, seperti Madrasah Diniyah dan TPA, serta pelaksanaan program-program sosial berbasis agama. Namun demikian, terdapat beberapa tantangan, seperti kurangnya partisipasi masyarakat dalam perencanaan program dan terbatasnya kapasitas pemerintah desa dalam mengelola dana secara optimal. Untuk mengatasi kendala tersebut, perlu dilakukan peningkatan keterlibatan masyarakat, pelatihan pengelolaan dana bagi aparat desa, serta pendampingan untuk sistem monitoring dan evaluasi. Pendekatan Triple Helix Terbukti Efektif Meningkatkan Kesejahteraan Masyarakat Melalui Pengelolaan Dana Desa yang inklusif dan berkelanjutan.

Kata kunci: *Pemberdayaan masyarakat Muslim, Dana Desa, Triple Helix, Desa Aek Tapa.*

A. INTRODUCTION

According to Prijonodan Pranarka (2006), empowerment or empower has two meanings. The first meaning is *to give power or authority to*, and the second meaning is *to give ability to or enable*. In the first sense, it is interpreted as giving power or delegating authority to another party, while in the second sense it is interpreted as a party to provide ability or empowerment. The concept of empowerment was born as an anti-thesis to the development model and the industrialization model that is less biased towards the majority of the people (Onny S. Prijono, Bimo Prasetyo, 1996).

Community empowerment is one of the goals that will be achieved, namely the realization of advanced and independent community empowerment in various aspects of life. Indonesian Republik Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages states that villages have rights of origin and traditional rights in regulating and managing the interests of the local community and playing a role in realizing the ideals of independence based on the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Conceptually, empowerment or empowerment comes from the word "power" because the main idea of empowerment comes into contact with the concept of power. Empowerment seen from the aspect of cooperation is a process of goals (Irmawati, 2019).

In the concept of empowerment, human beings are subjects and themselves. The empowerment process emphasizes the process of providing the ability to the community to become empowered, encouraging or motivating individuals to have the ability or empowerment to make their life choices. Furthermore, it is said that empowerment must be aimed at groups or layers of society that are left behind.

The concept of empowerment initially emphasized the process of giving or transferring part of the process of power, power, or ability to society, organizations or individuals to become more empowered. Furthermore, it emphasizes more on the process of stimulating, encouraging, and motivating individuals to have the ability or empowerment for what they choose to live (Kristiyanto et al., 2020).

The goal to be achieved from community empowerment is to shape individuals and communities to become independent. This independence includes the independence to think, act and control what they do. Community independence is a condition experienced by society which is characterized by cognitive, conative, psychomotor, and affective abilities, with the direction of resources owned by the community environment (Amsyal et al., 2021).

Community empowerment is an effort to empower people by giving them power and authority (Imaniyah & Ma'ruf, 2023). While (Della Putri et al., 2021) said that community empowerment is an effort to improve the ability of independent communities, so that they are free and able to face problems in making decisions. The purpose of community empowerment is basically to help the authentic and integral human development of weak, poor, marginalized people and empower community groups socioeconomically so that they can be more independent and can meet their basic needs, but are able to play a role in community development (Susanti dkk., 2023).

In Islam, community empowerment aims to create welfare, especially in the economic field. Prosperity is a dream and hope for every human being. There is no human being who does not want to live in a prosperous condition. Any action that is contrary to the welfare aspect is very

incompatible with the teachings of Islam. Islam is a religion that wants its people to live a prosperous life, because this is the beginning of the birth of fame. To achieve fame, every human being must have economic independence. There are at least two things that a person can do in building economic independence, namely working hard and building empowerment. If the former is more focused on the potential of more individuals, then the second is more socially oriented. Community empowerment cannot be born without the social awareness of every community and local government. In fact, community empowerment is a manifestation of human social awareness.

Islam views empowerment over society as important so that empowerment in the Islamic view has a holistic and strategic paradigm. Empowerment in the context of the development of Islamic society is a learning for the community so that they can independently make efforts to improve the quality of life related to the welfare and safety of the world and the hereafter. One of the importance of community empowerment in Islam needs to be applied because empowerment will result in sustainable development (Marekan & Ansori, 2019).

There are at least three principles that must be carried out in empowering the community. First, the principle of care.¹⁸ This principle is actually an important part of Islamic teachings, and can even be said to be a form of manifestation of the concept of monotheism from Islamic teachings. Tawheed, which is the core teaching in Islam, does not just mean the recognition of the oneness of Allah. But it must boil down to a form of action in the humanitarian area. This action can be done by building concern for others as part of the principle of empowerment (Saeful et al., 2020).

A person who is monotheistic should practice social relations well. On the other hand, we must help every human being who has no power to become empowered. Tawhid but not practicing caring is the same as not having monotheism. Because the maura of monotheism is to deceive people who are in a weak economic condition. So that they can break free from the shackles of poverty. Poverty is a condition that can trap humans in disbelief. To avoid this trap, the principle of caring through empowerment should always be carried out. The concept of monotheism teaches humans to have a firm commitment to believe in Allah and emulate the behavior of the Prophet (saw). Faith in Allah can be carried out not only by performing individual worships, but also social worships. Because the concrete form of faith in Allah is a good deed to fellow human beings regardless of their social status. This act can be applied well, when empowerment is always carried out in helping the weak. Second, the principle of justice. The upholding of justice is at the core of the social mission of the prophets, since Adam (as). to Muhammad (saw). Justice in life will run well if it is accompanied by real actualization. The right to uphold justice is part of sunnatullah. As a sunnatullah, upholding justice is a part of the law that is objective, not dependent on the will of the human person, but is the will of God. It is called the Qur'an part of the cosmic law, which is the law of balance which becomes the law of the universe (Madjid, v 2008). Third, the principle of equality. This principle is based on the spirit of

humanizing humans. In this principle, all human beings are equal, so that every human being is forbidden to consider himself the most powerful. Instead, the empowerment inherent in empowered humans must be actualized in the form of empowerment for weak communities. The spirit of humanizing humans is a spirit that can give birth to awareness if every

human being definitely needs another human being. On the other hand, it can erode the arrogant attitude that often exists in humans.

In the Islamic view, community empowerment in the economic sector is carried out to realize happiness in the world and the hereafter (falah), as well as a good and honorable life (al-hayah al-thayyibah). Although human beings who are honorable before God are seen from the quality of piety, economic matters should not be looked at in a light-hearted way. A person whose economic condition is good and his social status will definitely become a respectable society. On the other hand, he will easily help in social activities that are part of religious teachings. A person who has a good economy has at least built a good life in the world as a provision for the next life.

The values in the Islamic Economic System are sourced from the Qur'an and the Sunnah, which are the basis of the Islamic outlook on life. Always held and facing the development of the times and changes in society, all developing problems, including the economy, must remain subject to sharia principles. Development in the Islamic view is a concept for the norms of behavior and the economic system that concerns how to create economic stability

The higher the social awareness that exists in humans, the more likely it is that community empowerment can be carried out (Amsyal dkk., 2021). One of the importance of community empowerment in Islam needs to be applied because empowerment will result in sustainable development. With something like this, they will continue to be able to improve their standard of living for the better. In Islam, there is a concept of community empowerment in the holy book, namely the Qur'an

Referring to the empowerment of village communities, Endah's research argues that village community empowerment is a form of empowerment and improvement of the capabilities of village communities that can provide positive value for welfare with a better standard of living (Endah, 2020). In line with that, according to (Adisasmita, 2013) stated that community empowerment is an effort to utilize and manage rural community resources more effectively and efficiently both in terms of input and input aspects (human resources, funds, equipment/facilities, plans, data), process aspects (implementation, monitoring, and supervision), and output or output aspects (achievement of goals, effectiveness and efficiency). The success of the village community empowerment program is evidenced by the existence of a source of funds. One of the sources of funding is village funds (Ridha, 2019).

Village funds are funds sourced from the state budget intended for villages, which are transferred through the district revenue and expenditure budget. This fund is used to finance the implementation of government, the implementation of development, community development, and the empowerment of village communities. Village funds are allocated from the State Budget (APBN) based on article 72 paragraph 1 letter b of Law No. 6 of 2014 concerning Villages) (Ridha, 2019). In this case, community empowerment is one of the priorities for the use of village funds. As stipulated in the Regulation of the Minister of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, 2020 concerning the Priority Use of Village Funds in 2021 Chapter I Article 1 paragraph (2). The use of village funds in community empowerment activity programs must be adjusted to the needs of the village community. This of course requires good management from the village government, so that it can realize the achievement of the goals

and objectives of village funds, especially those related to community empowerment activities.(Mas'ud & Maesaroh, 2020)

Aek Tapa Village, located in Marbau District, North Labuhanbatu Regency, has a population of 2,886 people with 760 families. The majority of the residents in this village adhere to Islam, which is 2,831 people, while there are only 10 families who adhere to Christianity with a total of 55 people (Us, 2024). Aek Tapa Village is one of the villages in Marbau District, North Labuhanbatu Regency, which has received Village Fund Allocation (ADD) since 2015. Based on data obtained from the Village Government Office of North Labuhanbatu Regency, the Village Fund Allocation (ADD) received by Aek Tapa Village in 2024 will reach the largest amount, namely Rp 922,267,000.00. In running the government in the village, the village government certainly needs a certain amount of funds. Based on Article 72 of Law 6/2014jo. Perppu 1/2020, villages have several sources of income. If detailed, the opinion comes from original revenues, state budget allocations, revenue sharing of tax revenues and regional levies, financial assistance from provincial and district/city budgets, grants and donations from third parties, and village funds (Hukumonline, 2022).

Table 1 Village Funds Received by Aek Tapa Village, Marbau District, North Labuhanbatu Regency

He	Year	Sum
1.	2021	IDR 566,720,000.00
2.	2022	IDR 798,076,000.00
3.	2023	IDR 980,135,000.00
4.	2024	IDR 922. 267,000.00
	SUM	IDR 3,267,198,000.00

Source: APBD 2021-2024

Research (Susanti et al., 2023) states that village funds are funds sourced from the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget intended for villages that are diverted through the Regency or City Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget. Village Fund Allocation or commonly referred to as ADD is a special allocation for villages allocated by the government through the Regional Government (Amsyal dkk., 2021). Based on data from the Aek Tapa Village Budget, the Aek Tapa Village fund, Marbau District, North Labuhanbatu Regency with a total amount of Rp.3,267,198,000.00. Village funds have experienced a significant increase from 2021 to 2023, and have experienced a slight decline in 2024. Although the village funds received by Aek Tapa Village continue to increase, there is no special concentration on the Muslim community empowerment program. The use of funds is more focused on infrastructure development and community needs, while religious-based programs or Islamic economics still receive little attention.

Some of the programs or policies of the Aek Tapa Village government that have been implemented in 2021 that aim to increase community empowerment include the construction of road paving, concrete roads in alleys and the construction of culverts. Meanwhile, in 2022 it will be used to continue several programs that have not been completed in the previous year, such as paving the community economic crossing and procuring village libraries and Arabic-speaking schools. After two consecutive years, the government has been able to run several programs optimally compared to the previous existence of village funds as a driver of development and empowerment. Economic empowerment at the village level has both positive and negative impacts. Community involvement in involvement is very important in empowerment such as the provision of a creative economy

at the village level to support the economy in the village. The negative impact is that some people are not involved in these activities, this is affected by poor communication. Based on the existing problems, the author is interested in conducting research on the Empowerment of Muslim Communities Through the Utilization of Village Funds (Case Study of Aek Tapa Village, North Labuhanbatu).

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore and analyze how village funds can be effectively utilized to empower the Muslim community in the village. This study aims to understand the impact of the use of village funds on improving the economic and social welfare of the community, as well as identify strategies that can be implemented to increase community participation in village fund management. The uniqueness of this research lies in its approach that integrates Islamic economic perspectives in the analysis of community empowerment, so that it not only focuses on economic aspects, but also on social and cultural values that are relevant to Muslim society. This approach makes a new contribution in understanding the dynamics of community empowerment in the local context, as well as strengthening the theoretical basis regarding the use of village funds within the framework of Islamic values.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This research method uses a qualitative approach with the *Triple Helix model* which involves three main elements, namely the government, the community, and academics in empowering the Muslim community through the use of village funds. A case study was conducted in Aek Tapa Village, North Labuhanbatu, to analyze how collaboration between village governments, community participation, and academic contributions can

improve the effectiveness of village fund management. Data is collected through various methods such as observation, interviews, literature studies, and documentation. Interviews are conducted with parties involved in Triple Helix (academics, business, government) to understand their views and experiences. Secondary data such as journals, scientific papers, reports, and data from survey institutions are also utilized. Data analysis is carried out qualitatively and descriptively, including data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification. The collected data is processed and reduced without eliminating the essence of the information, then interpreted comprehensively.

Sampling method is carried out using *a purposive sampling* technique, where informants are selected deliberately based on their relevance to the research, such as academics, business people, and the government. The interview techniques used included in-depth interviews to dig up detailed information from the actors involved in the Triple Helix model. The data obtained were analyzed descriptively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing to understand the interaction patterns and contributions of each actor in the development studied

Key concepts *Triple Helix* It is a synergistic collaboration between three parties, namely academics, the business world, and the government. Academics act as drivers of innovation by utilizing resources, science, and technology to create discoveries that can be applied. Meanwhile, the business sector is tasked with utilizing these innovations to generate economic benefits and provide real benefits to society. On the other hand, the government plays a role in ensuring the balance and sustainability of the

relationship between the two parties through the implementation of supportive and conducive regulations (Sumartono & Huda, 2020).

The research location is located in Aek Tapa Village, Marbau District, North Labuhanbatu Regency. The researcher took several subjects contained in the strata of the structure of the Aek Tapa Village Government to be used as informants. Informants are selected based on predetermined criteria in accordance with the research objectives. The informants in question are as follows: Mr. Surrahman Manalu as the Head of Aek Tapa Village, Mr. Ahmad Yunus Nst of Aek Tapa Village, Mrs. Kembang Delima as the Head of Finance of Aek Tapa Village. Meanwhile, the object of this research is the role of the village government in managing village funds for the empowerment of the people of Aek Tapa Village.

The data used in this study are primary data and secondary data. Primary data is in the form of interviews with Aek Tapa Village officials, while secondary data is in the form of documents for the realization of the 2024 APBDes and other relevant literature. Data collection techniques are carried out through several ways, namely literature studies, documentation studies, and field research. Literature review is carried out by reading books and other references related to research. The documentation study is carried out by collecting various documents, notes, transcripts, agendas, reports, letters, images and so on from the research location that are considered relevant to the research object. Through this documentation technique, the researcher obtained data in the form of images during the interview

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

A. Overview of Aek Tapa Village

1. A Brief History of the Establishment of Aek Tapa Village

Aek Tapa Village is one of the villages located in Marbau District, North Labuhanbatu Regency, North Sumatra. The history of this village, like many villages in North Sumatra, is closely related to the development of the region since the colonial period and the beginning of Indonesian independence. **Origin of the Name** The name "Aek Tapa" comes from the Batak language which means "calm water" (Aek = water, Tapa = calm). The name reflects the natural conditions around the village which used to have many small rivers with calm and slow-flowing water. **Colonial Period** During the Dutch colonial period, the Labuhanbatu area and its surroundings were known as rubber and oil palm plantation areas. Aek Tapa Village is likely to be formed from settlements that develop along with the opening of plantation land in the area. Locals are often involved as laborers on this plantation. **Post-Independence Development** After Indonesia gained independence in 1945, the region underwent several administrative changes.

In 2008, North Labuhanbatu officially became a separate district after the expansion of Labuhanbatu Regency. Aek Tapa Village is part of Marbau District, which geographically and economically continues to focus on the agricultural and plantation sectors. **Social and Cultural Life of Aek Tapa Village**, like most villages in North Sumatra, is inhabited by a variety of ethnic groups, including Batak, Malay, and Javanese. The social life in this village is colored by traditional traditions, especially the strong Batak culture in terms of traditional ceremonies, weddings, and death ceremonies.

Economic Development The main source of livelihood for the residents of Aek Tapa Village is agriculture and plantations. Most of the population works in oil palm and rubber plantations, which are the main commodities in the region. Along with the development of agricultural technology and the support of the local government, the economy of this village continues to grow.

2. Geographical conditions of the village

Aek Tapa Village is one of the villages located in Marbau District, North Labuhanbatu Regency, North Sumatra Province. This village has an area of 9,200,000 m² which is divided into 5 hamlets including:

- a. Hamlet I Batu Satu
- b. Pikirkan II Bulu Rejo
- c. Hamlet III Bulu Telang
- d. Dusun IV Purwosari
- e. Dream V Sukkah Makmur

Aek Tapa Village is located in a lowland area that is generally suitable for agriculture and plantations. This condition allows this village to become one of the main producers of plantation commodities, such as oil palm and rubber. As the name implies, "Aek" which means water, this village is passed by several small rivers or ditches that drain water from the upstream area. The existence of this water source greatly supports agricultural activities. Aek Tapa Village has a tropical climate with two seasons, namely the rainy season and the dry season. The average temperature ranges from 25°C to 32°C. Rainfall is quite high, especially in the wet months (October to March), which is excellent for the growth of plantation crops.

3. Population

This village has a population of 2,886 people with a total of 760 families with 1434 males while the number of females is 1,452. This village has its own characteristics that distinguish it from other villages. The majority of the people of Aek Tapa Village adhere to Islam, only 10 families adhere to Christianity. The number of residents of Aek Tapa Village who adhere to Islam is 2,831 people while the number of Christians is 55 people. This figure shows that Aek Tapa Village has a significant population in the region. With the large number of residents in this village, of course, many funds are also channeled to this village. So that the management of fund allocation must also be carried out. Village fund management is a fund that must be allocated by the district government for villages, which is sourced from central and regional financial balance fund funds received from the district which is used for 30% of apparatus and operational expenditure and 70% for public expenditure and empowerment. Residents of Aek Tapa Village generally earn a living as oil palm and rubber farmers.

B. Empowerment of the Muslim Community of Aek Tapa Village with Village Funds

In Government Regulation Number 60 of 2014 concerning Village Funds sourced from the State Budget, Article 1 paragraph 2 Village Funds are funds sourced from the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget intended for Villages which are diverted through the Regency/City Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget and are used to finance government administration, the implementation of development, community development, and community empowerment. The purpose of the village fund is basically to realize inclusive economic growth by more equalizing income. The distribution of funds is the most important thing for more

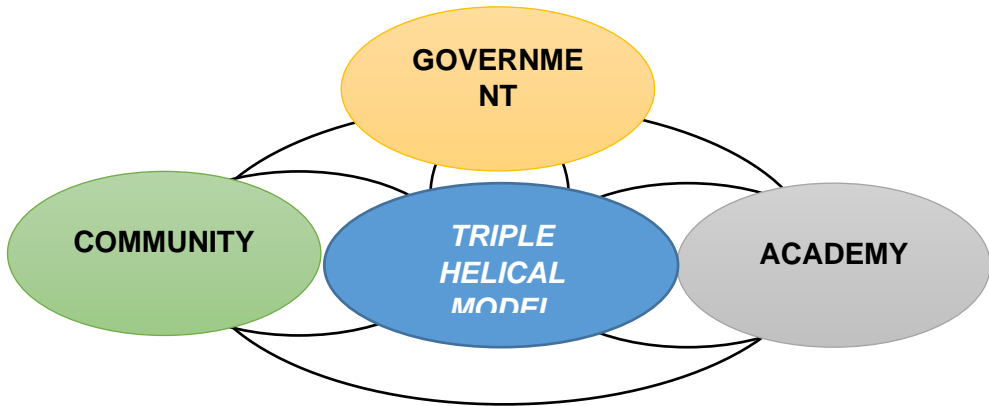
advanced village development. With the enactment of Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, there is a disbursement of billions of rupiah directly to villages sourced from the allocation of village funds which is part of the balance of funds received by the Regency/City (Kristiyanto dkk., 2020).

In an interview with Mr. Surahman Manalu as the head of Aek Tapa village, he said "with the existence of village funds, the village government invites and embraces all levels of society in empowerment and development so that it can be improved from various elements, be it population empowerment, welfare, and so on, thank God we have developed a little. An example is the procurement of BUMDES which is carried out at the village hall every week. Bumdes sells food products derived from the PKK program, in health activities, namely latrines and posyandu cadres and in the field of education, namely the procurement of educational facilities and infrastructure for minors (PAUD), as well as the development of MDTA and the empowerment of LINMAS".

Looking at the current situation, with this village fund, it can be used as best as possible by the village government in trying to improve Aek Tapa Village. Development in physical or infrastructure aspects, community empowerment in all aspects needs to be improved. With a large enough fund for the current village, in order to improve the quality of the village, and the quality of the community to be more advanced and better.

C. Application of *Triple Helix* in Village Fund Management

figure 1. Kind *Triple Helix*



Source: Image processed by researchers 2025

The Triple Helix approach involves synergy between three main elements, namely the government, the community, and academia, in managing village funds effectively. In Aek Tapa Village, this collaboration is realized through a community empowerment program that aims to improve the welfare and economic independence of residents. The following is a detailed discussion based on the role of each party.

1. The Role of Village Government

The Aek Tapa Village Government, led by the Village Head, Mr. Surahman Manalu, has the main responsibility in managing village funds to support the needs of the community. Based on the results of the interview, the government focuses on infrastructure development such as village roads, irrigation canals, and mosques. Repairs to roads that were previously badly damaged now make it easier for residents to access markets and gardens, supporting their daily economic activities. The construction of irrigation canals also helps to increase agricultural yields, which are a major source of livelihood for most people.

In addition to infrastructure, the village government also seeks to improve community skills through entrepreneurship training. The program includes chipmaking training, small business management, and other skill development tailored to local needs. The government hopes that this training can help the community start an independent business, as conveyed by the Village Head, Mr. Surahman: *"We want people to have the skills to improve their standard of living"*.

Not only that, the government also provides business capital assistance to residents who need an initial boost to start a small business. This assistance is targeted at families with unstable economic conditions. According to Mr. Surahman who argues that: *"We want this assistance to be a starting point for the community to create a thriving business"*.

However, the challenges faced by the village government are not few. One of the main obstacles is the low participation of the community in the early stages of planning. Many residents were not present during the village deliberations, so their needs were not fully accommodated. To overcome this, the village government plans to increase socialization and involve youth who are considered more creative in providing input.

Based on the results of the interview, Mr. Surahman argued that: *"We involve residents in monitoring and reporting the use of funds openly through village deliberations and information boards at the village hall"*.

The village government seeks to implement transparency in the management of village funds by actively involving the community. Supervision is carried out through village deliberations, where residents can provide input and know firsthand the allocation and use of funds. In addition, the information board at the village hall is used as a means of publication so that the community can easily access the village financial

report. This aims to ensure that village funds are used in accordance with the needs and interests of the community, as well as to prevent budget abuse.

2. The Role of the Community

The people of Aek Tapa Village play an important role in the successful implementation of the village fund program. Based on the interviews, the involvement of the community can be seen from their participation in village deliberations and the receipt of benefits from the programs implemented. Mrs. Rima, one of the residents, revealed that:

"We as a community are very helped by this village fund program. I myself took the chipmaking training which gave me new skills. Now, I can help the family economy by selling chips, and this is very helpful."

In addition to training, the community also receives business capital assistance that is used to develop their business and the training provided encourages their confidence in developing their business. As stated by Mrs. Halimah, a grocery store owner:

"This capital assistance really helps me in increasing the variety of products sold. Now, I can provide more processed products such as chips that customers are interested in. This training gives me the confidence to continue to grow my business".

However, the community also faces challenges, especially related to the transparency of the use of village funds at the beginning of the program. Some residents feel that they do not have clear information about the management of the fund. As expressed by Mrs. Halimah: *"Initially, we didn't know what the village funds were used for, but now the government is more open, and we feel more involved."*

The community also showed enthusiasm in the village planning process. Mr. Baron, a worker, appreciated the opportunity given to provide

input. Said: *"We can make proposals, and the programs implemented really reflect the needs of the residents."*

This opinion reflects the importance of inclusive dialogue between the government and the community so that the programs carried out are on target. In addition, the community began to understand the importance of sustainability in the programs carried out. They are taught to utilize local resources, such as using raw materials from agricultural products for processed products. This not only supports the family economy but also encourages empowerment based on local potential.

3. The Role of Academics

Academics from Labuhan Batu University represented by students and lecturers contribute through training and innovation that is relevant to the needs of the community. Based on interviews, students provide entrepreneurship training based on local potential, such as processing agricultural products into products with higher selling value. Sri Indah Pratiwi, a student, explained that this training includes making processed products, designing attractive packaging, and marketing through social media. *"We want their products to not only be sold in the village, but also reach a wider market,"* he said.

In addition to training, lecturers also provide continuous assistance to ensure that the community can apply the knowledge received. Elvina, SE, M.Si, a lecturer at the Faculty of Economics explained that mentoring is not only theoretical but also practical. *"We are introducing simple technologies, such as chipper cutting tools, that can improve production efficiency,"* he said. This approach allows people to increase their productivity and competitiveness in the market.

Academics also help change people's mindsets about business management. Previously, many residents were hesitant to start a business because they were afraid of failure. After getting the training, they become more confident. "They understand how to manage income and expenses to keep their business running," Elvina added. Collaboration between the campus and the community has a significant impact. In addition to improving community skills, this program is also a valuable experience for students in applying the knowledge they have learned. *"We learned a lot from the community and feel proud to be able to make a real contribution,"* said Sri.

In the long term, academics hope that this program can run independently without relying on outside assistance. This approach creates an empowerment model that focuses not only on results, but also on the process of building community capacity.

The implementation of *Triple Helix* in Aek Tapa Village shows the success of the synergy between the government, the community, and academics in managing village funds. This collaboration creates an empowerment program that is inclusive, sustainable, and relevant to local needs. With the active involvement of these three elements, Aek Tapa Village has succeeded in utilizing village funds to improve the welfare of the community as a whole. This model can be used as an example for application in other villages by adjusting the needs and potentials of each region.

D. DISCUSSION

A. Application of *Triple Helix* in Village Fund Management

The Triple Helix approach refers to the synergy between three main elements: government, society, and academia. In Aek Tapa Village, this collaboration is reflected in various empowerment programs designed to improve the welfare and economic independence of residents. Through this synergy, the management of village funds is expected to be more effective and have a positive impact on the community. The Aek Tapa Village Government, led by Mr. Surahman Manalu, plays an important role in managing village funds. The government's main focus is on infrastructure development that can support community economic activities, such as repairing village roads and irrigation canals. Repairs to previously damaged roads allow for easier access to markets and gardens, while the construction of irrigation canals helps increase agricultural yields that are a source of livelihood for most villagers.

In addition, the village government also implements an entrepreneurship training program to improve community skills. This training includes chip making, small business management, and other skills tailored to local needs. This program aims to equip the community with skills that can improve their standard of living, as expressed by the Village Head, who wants the community to have the ability to start an independent business.

The government also provides business capital assistance to residents who need support to start small businesses. This assistance is targeted at families with unstable economic conditions. With this assistance, the community is expected to be able to start a thriving business. However, the main challenge faced by the government is the low participation of the

community in the early stages of planning. To overcome this, the government plans to increase socialization and involve youth to provide more creative input.

The people of Aek Tapa Village play a key role in the successful implementation of the village fund program. They are actively involved in village deliberations and receive benefits from various programs implemented. Some residents, such as Mrs. Rima, stated that her chipmaking training helped her start a small business that also supports her family's economy. This program also provides business capital that allows them to develop their business, as experienced by Mrs. Halimah, a grocery store owner who has succeeded in increasing the variety of products she sells.

However, the community also faces challenges related to the transparency of the use of village funds. Some residents felt that they did not get clear information about the allocation of village funds at first. However, as time went on, the government began to be more open, and the public felt more involved in overseeing the use of funds. Community involvement in village planning is also increasing, with residents being given the opportunity to submit proposals that truly reflect their needs.

Academics from Labuhan Batu University also contribute to community empowerment through training and mentoring. Students provide entrepreneurship training based on local potential, such as processing agricultural products into products with higher selling value. Lecturers also provide practical assistance, such as the introduction of flake cutting tools that increase production efficiency. This approach helps people to improve their skills and competitiveness in the market.

Overall, the implementation of *Triple Helix* in Aek Tapa Village shows the success of the synergy between the government, the community, and academics. This collaboration creates an empowerment program that is inclusive, sustainable, and relevant to local needs. With the active involvement of these three elements, village funds can be optimally utilized to improve community welfare and become a model that can be applied in other villages by adjusting their respective potentials and needs.

B. Aek Tapa Village Government's Efforts in Increasing the Empowerment of Muslim Communities Through Village Funds

Talking about the village government's efforts in improving the empowerment of Muslim communities, this is closely related to the role played by the village government. The performance of the village government is also inseparable from its quality. The quality in question is the extent to which the village government is able to carry out development and community empowerment activities. This activity is expected to support the economic life of the community and meet the needs of the village community in general. In addition, every activity carried out by the village government is expected to bring significant changes in various aspects of the lives of the people of Aek Tapa Village, the majority of whom are Muslims.

Discussing how the form and implementation of programs carried out by the village government are inseparable from the stages that the village government goes through in implementing the program, especially in the context of empowerment funded through village funds. The funds that have been received from 2021 to 2024 amounted to IDR 3,267,198,000. The amount of village funds increases every year along with the increase in the

population and the area of the village. The funds are allocated for village empowerment and development in accordance with government decisions.

According to the Secretary of Aek Tapa Village, Mr. Ahmad Yunus Nst, he said that the process or stages of community empowerment through the village fund program are carried out through various village work programs. The mechanism began with the Hamlet Deliberation (MUSDUS), which was attended by all elements of the community in the hamlet. The goal is to accommodate the aspirations of the community and determine the programs desired by residents. In MUSDUS activities, the community prioritizes several aspirations, such as the establishment of MDTA or TPA (Al-Qur'an Education Park) for their children, the development of BUMDes businesses, and the development of basic infrastructure such as village roads, clean water, and lighting. Good infrastructure not only improves Muslim people's access to places of worship and education, but also facilitates economic activities in villages.

After all the aspirations of each hamlet were collected, it was followed by a Village Meeting (MUSDES) which was attended by representatives from each hamlet and community leaders. The implementation of MUSDES is intended to follow up on all aspirations submitted by each RT or hamlet, as well as to determine and compile a priority scale of proposed programs that will be implemented or funded as village programs. The priority programs that have been determined will then be included in the RPJMDes (Village Medium-Term Development Plan) and RKPDes (Village Government Work Plan), as guidelines in the implementation of sustainable community development and empowerment.

There are several programs approved by the village government based on the aspirations of the community, namely:

1. Increase in Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes).

One form of utilizing village funds in Aek Tapa Village is by forming Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes). Through BUMDes, village Muslim communities are empowered to take advantage of local economic potential, such as agriculture and handicrafts. Village funds are used to provide start-up capital, skills training, and marketing of local products. As a result, there has been an increase in household income, as well as the creation of new jobs for rural communities, especially for youth and housewives. One of the businesses developed is the manufacture of cassava chips. This activity began with members of the Family Welfare Empowerment (PKK) who opened opportunities to develop a cassava chip manufacturing business. This of course indirectly encourages the community to participate in this BUMDes activity. In addition, the village government organizes skills-based and entrepreneurship-based training that integrates Islamic values, such as business ethics in Islam, honesty, and mutual cooperation. As a result, the community becomes more economically independent, but still upholds religious values.

2. Construction of Informal Educational Institutions

Village funds are also used to establish informal educational institutions such as Madrasah Diniyah and TPA (Al-Quran Education Park) located in Hamlet 1 Batu Satu Aek Tapa Village and in Hamlet III Bulu Telang Aek Tapa Village, which serves to strengthen religious education for children and adolescents. Education is an effort made by a person to impart or instill knowledge in others to become a better person. This indicates that education is very important, especially Islamic education. This is in accordance with research conducted by Faizah, N, (2022) which states that Islamic Education is a form of education whose basic thinking

and material are based on Islamic religious teachings. Islamic education is an educational process carried out by teachers to students so that students have *akhlakul karimah* as the ultimate goal of Islamic education. The output of religion-based education is very closely related to the formation of human beings who obey their religion and god and have noble morals both in school, family, society, nation and state.

3. Religious Infrastructure Development

Village funds are also used for infrastructure development that supports religious activities, such as mosques, madrasas, and other public facilities. In addition, the development of basic infrastructure, such as village roads, clean water, and lighting, is also a priority. Good infrastructure not only improves Muslim people's access to places of worship and education, but also facilitates economic activities in villages.

The results of the use of village funds in Aek Tapa Village show a significant improvement in the quality of life of the Muslim community. Per capita income is increasing, children's participation in religious education is increasing, and social relations between citizens are getting closer. In addition, programs in Aek Tapa Village also strengthen Islamic values in the daily life of the community, where mutual cooperation and social justice are increasingly applied.

However, in the implementation of the use of village funds, there are several challenges. First, there is still a lack of community participation in program planning. Second, the limited knowledge of the village government in managing funds according to the specific needs of the Muslim community. To address this, the involvement of religious leaders, community groups, and special training for village officials on village fund management has been proposed as a solution.

E. CONCLUSION

The application of *the Triple Helix approach* in Aek Tapa Village shows that synergy between the government, the community, and academics can increase the effectiveness of village fund management. Through this collaboration, empowerment programs that include infrastructure development, entrepreneurship training, and the provision of business capital have succeeded in improving the welfare and economic independence of villagers. Despite challenges, such as low community participation and transparency in the use of funds, efforts to increase citizen socialization and engagement are bringing about positive change. This collaboration can be used as an example for other villages to optimize local potential in realizing sustainable development.

This research succeeded in revealing the great potential of the Village Fund in empowering the Muslim community in Aek Tapa Village. Through various programs oriented to improving the economy, education, and infrastructure, this village has undergone a significant transformation. Active community participation, strong leadership, and appropriate allocation of funds are the keys to success in implementing empowerment programs. As a result, the quality of life of the community has improved, the village economy has grown, and religious values are increasingly embedded in daily life. Although it has achieved significant success, this study also identifies several challenges in the implementation of empowerment programs through the Village Fund. The lack of community participation in program planning and the limited capacity of the village government in managing funds are some of the obstacles that need to be overcome. To overcome these challenges, more intensive efforts are needed to increase human resource capacity, strengthen community participation,

and develop better monitoring and evaluation systems. This research shows that the integration of religious values in development programs can be a strong force in empowering the community. Aek Tapa Village has succeeded in proving that development does not only focus on physical aspects, but also on spiritual and social aspects. By involving religious leaders and strengthening religious education, this village has succeeded in creating a more harmonious and empowered society.

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