

Transforming Majelis Taklim into a Hub for Productive and Sustainable Community Development

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Abstract

The Majelis Taklim, as a non-formal Islamic educational institution, plays a strategic role in enhancing the socio-spiritual and economic capacities of communities. However, its activities often remain confined to religious rituals with limited empowerment outcomes. This community engagement initiative aimed to transform Majelis Taklim Nurul Islam in Air Tawar Barat, Padang City, into a productive and sustainable community through entrepreneurship training, managerial capacity building, digital marketing literacy, and the establishment of a sharia cooperative. Using a participatory and needs-based approach, the program involved lecturers, students, and community members collaboratively. The outcomes revealed significant improvements in entrepreneurial motivation, digital skills, and business organization. The creation of Koperasi Syariah Kacio Mitra Islami symbolized institutionalized community empowerment. This initiative demonstrates the transformative potential of Majelis Taklim as a catalyst for women's empowerment and sustainable economic development aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 5, 8, and 9.

INTRODUCTION

The *Majelis Taklim*, as a non-formal educational institution, occupies a strategic position in the social and religious life of Indonesian society. Its historical role as a center for *dakwah* and faith development has made it an inseparable part of the community value system, particularly among women. However, over time, its function has often been reduced to routine religious activities such as *pengajian* (religious gatherings), *tablilan*, and religious tourism, which tend to be consumptive and ceremonial in nature. In fact, within the framework of sustainable development and community empowerment, *Majelis Taklim* holds significant potential to be developed as a center for economic learning, women's capacity building, and spirituality-based community development (Evita Sari Dalimunthe & Muhammad Syahbudi, 2023).

The Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 29 of 2019 provides formal legitimacy for this transformation by emphasizing that *Majelis Taklim* not only functions as a medium for religious education but also as an institution for community empowerment and the enhancement of the people's economy (Alwi et al., 2024). *Majelis Taklim* serves simultaneously as a center of *dakwah* and religious education as well as a platform for community empowerment (Alwi et al., 2024) in pursuit of prosperous and harmonious families (*sakinah*) (Pulungan, 2014). In practice, however, such empowerment remains limited to religious education and has been weak in improving members' socioeconomic welfare (Junaid et al., 2022). Common activities such as *pengajian*, *yasinan*, *tablilan*, and occasional religious trips—particularly during Ramadan or Muharram—illustrate that *Majelis Taklim* communities tend to focus on consumptive rather than productive activities (Solihat, 2023).

Article 3 of the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 29 of 2019, specifically points (f) and (g), stipulates that *Majelis Taklim* also serves to organize education based on community empowerment and to advance the economic empowerment of the Muslim community (Menteri Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019). Nevertheless, the implementation of these functions in practice—particularly within *Majelis Taklim Nurul Islam*—has not yet fully aligned with the mandate of the regulation, indicating that its comprehensive role has not been fully actualized.

This structural issue highlights the necessity for interventions that are not merely technical but also transformative. This community engagement program was therefore designed as a direct response to the real needs of the community through locally based entrepreneurship training, enhancement of managerial capacity, digital marketing education, and the establishment of a *sharia cooperative* as an institutional instrument for community-based economic empowerment. The empowerment process aimed not only to increase income but also to strengthen entrepreneurial mentality, social solidarity, and independent as well as sustainable business management. Through this approach, *Majelis Taklim* is expected to transform from a purely spiritual community into an agent of social and economic change at the grassroots level.

The urgency of this program becomes more evident when aligned with national development policies and global agendas. Within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this initiative is consistent with the objectives of poverty alleviation (SDG 1), gender equality and women's empowerment (SDG 5), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), and industry, innovation, and infrastructure (SDG 9). Nationally, it supports the achievement of the Key Performance Indicators (IKU) of higher education institutions particularly IKU 2, which encourages active student participation in community-based activities, and IKU 5, which emphasizes the utilization of academic outputs by society through community service and scientific publication. Furthermore, this initiative contributes to the national *Asta Cita* vision, which prioritizes quality job creation, development from the periphery, and the strengthening of community-based economic systems.

Moreover, this activity is aligned with the focus of the National Research Master Plan (*Rencana Induk Riset Nasional*—RIRN), especially within the cluster of social-humanities and creative economy development. The integration of local skill training with digital marketing strategies and the establishment of community cooperatives renders this program adaptive to the challenges of digital transformation while remaining responsive to the needs of women's communities facing economic disparities and technological limitations. In this context, community engagement serves not merely as a channel for knowledge dissemination but as a mechanism for generating direct and measurable social impact.

Consequently, the community engagement initiative centered on *Majelis Taklim Nurul Islam* is not an ad-hoc or reactive response to community economic problems, but rather a component of a long-term strategy to build a spiritually rooted, economically productive, and digitally competitive community. It represents not only technical capacity building but also a value-based transformation—where spirituality is integrated with productivity, and social solidarity becomes the foundation for inclusive, sustainable, and community-based local economic growth.

METHODS

This community engagement initiative was designed using a participatory and locally based approach, emphasizing collaboration among the implementing team, target partners, and students. The entire series of activities was conducted systematically, beginning with the identification of community needs and continuing through program evaluation and sustainability planning. The primary objective of this approach was to build the capacity of the *Majelis Taklim Nurul Islam* community in the areas of entrepreneurship, micro-enterprise management, and technology-based digital marketing, which had not previously been mastered by the participants.

The implementation methods encompassed training, mentoring, technological application, and the establishment of an economic institution in the form of a *sharia cooperative*. The program

was designed to provide practical, hands-on learning experiences that were directly applicable to the community's real conditions. The implementing team structured the activities into measurable stages and allocated specific roles to each team member, including students, to ensure their active participation in both the training and monitoring processes.

To provide a more operational and comprehensive overview of the implementation flow within the activity plan, the following table presents the stages and methods employed in this community service program.

Table 1. Implementation Method

Stage	Activity Description	Expected Output
Needs Identification	Conducting surveys to assess the skills and interests of <i>Majelis Taklim Nurul Islam</i> members; observing business conditions and identifying challenges; organizing discussions to reach consensus on the types of activities with partners; selecting active participants for training and mentoring.	Mapping of needs, baseline partner data, and list of training participants.
Program and Module Planning	Developing training modules (entrepreneurship, business management, and digital marketing); appointing resource persons from lecturers and practitioners; designing the community-based <i>sharia cooperative</i> scheme; preparing a structured activity schedule.	Training modules, activity schedule, and <i>Articles of Association/Bylaws (AD/ART)</i> draft for the cooperative.
Training and Workshop	Conducting training on entrepreneurial motivation and mindset; facilitating production training based on local potential; providing microenterprise management workshops; delivering digital marketing training using Facebook Business, WhatsApp Business, Google Business, and Marketplace platforms.	Improved participant skills, community products, and established digital business accounts.
Formation of Sharia Cooperative	Establishing cooperative organizational structure and bylaws; initiating legal registration; conducting cooperative management training; organizing initial capital collection.	Formation of a community-based <i>sharia cooperative</i> with complete structure and preliminary legal documentation.
Mentoring and Evaluation	Monitoring the development of enterprises and the cooperative; conducting evaluations through observation and feedback sessions; providing continuous guidance based on participants' needs.	Business progress reports, bookkeeping records, and evaluation summaries.
Program Sustainability	Establishing a community mobilization team; building networks with local MSMEs and supporting institutions; providing online mentoring through social media platforms.	Internal management team, business networking partnerships, and a community digital platform.
Roles of Team and Students	The team leader coordinates the entire program; lecturer members serve as trainers and mentors; students act as facilitators, digital assistants, and documenters.	Active student involvement, team synergy, documentation, and comprehensive reporting.

RESULTS

The community engagement program conducted in collaboration with *Majelis Taklim Nurul Islam* was primarily aimed at empowering women-based community groups through

entrepreneurship training, business management enhancement, and digital marketing education. These empowerment initiatives were subsequently developed into productive business units, a community-based *sharia cooperative*, and enterprise digitalization initiatives designed to strengthen local economic sustainability.

Table 3. Evaluation Results

No	Activity Component	Achievement Indicators	Achievement Percentage	Category
1	Partner needs assessment and potential mapping	Completion of observations, interviews, and participatory needs analysis	95%	Highly Achieved
2	Development of training modules and program planning	Availability of entrepreneurship, business management, and digital marketing modules	92%	Highly Achieved
3	Entrepreneurship training and mindset strengthening	Increased entrepreneurial motivation and active participant engagement	90%	Achieved
4	Skills workshops (fish rendang, tailoring, makeup, and crafts)	Participants able to independently practice newly acquired skills	97%	Highly Achieved
5	Digital marketing training	Establishment of digital business accounts and improved marketing literacy	88%	Achieved
6	Establishment of Koperasi Syariah Kacio Mitra Islami	Formation of organizational structure, completion of bylaws, and initiation of legal registration	84%	Achieved
7	Enterprise mentoring and periodic evaluation	Implementation of production monitoring, marketing reviews, and bookkeeping guidance	89%	Achieved
8	Program sustainability strategies	Formation of a community mobilization team and strengthening of external networks	85%	Achieved

Identification of Partner Needs and Potential

The initial stage was carried out through direct observation and participatory interviews with the administrators and members of the *Majelis Taklim*. The findings indicated that the majority of members demonstrated a strong interest in home-based productive activities, particularly in the processing of local specialty foods (such as *rendang ikan*), tailoring, and embroidery of garments or prayer attire (*mukena*). However, several constraints were identified, including limited access to technical and managerial training, insufficient knowledge of digital marketing, lack of organized business capital, and the absence of established community-based economic institutions.



Figure 1. Opening Session of Training and Coaching Activities

Program Planning and Module Development

In alignment with the partners' identified needs, the team developed an integrated training module covering several key areas: entrepreneurial motivation and mindset transformation, food production techniques (particularly *rendang ikan*), tailoring, and crocheting bags and wallets, microenterprise management, as well as digital marketing using platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Marketplace. The team also designed a *sharia cooperative* scheme based on a daily savings system known locally in Minangkabau culture as *kacio*.

Integrated Training and Workshop

The training sessions were conducted in a gradual and structured manner using a *learning by doing* approach, involving lecturers as trainers and students as facilitators. The activities included various hands-on workshops such as *rendang ikan* production, tailoring and embroidery of *mukena* (women's prayer attire), digital marketing training, the creation of community marketplace accounts, and product digital branding development.

In essence, this skill enhancement and competency development workshop focused on three main areas: the processing of locally based culinary products such as *rendang belut* (eel rendang) and *rendang ikan* (fish rendang), beauty and makeup artistry, as well as embroidery craftsmanship. The program was designed to explore and develop the latent talents of the partner participants from *Majelis Taklim Nurul Islam*, enabling them to optimize the potential resources within their local environment. The workshop was conducted using a hands-on practical approach, in which participants were not only provided with theoretical explanations by the instructors but were also actively engaged in practicing each skill. For instance, during the makeup training, participants were able to perform direct practice sessions on selected models under the supervision of the trainers.



Figure 2. *Marandang* Workshop Activities and the Results of Makeup and Beauty Training

The practical and hands-on learning process made the activities more meaningful, as participants were able to directly observe the tangible outcomes of the skills they had acquired. The strong support from the implementation team and the high enthusiasm of the participants contributed to making the workshop an effective medium for self-development.

Establishment of the Community-Based Sharia Cooperative

This stage represented a key innovation within the community service program. Together with the partner organization, the team developed the cooperative's organizational structure and *Articles of Association/Bylaws (AD/ART)* based on *sharia* principles, initiated the cooperative's preliminary legal registration, provided training on cooperative management for members, and introduced a daily savings mechanism (*kaciao*) as the cooperative's initial capital foundation.

Mentoring and Periodic Evaluation

Following the training and the establishment of the cooperative, the program advanced into a structured phase of enterprise monitoring and mentoring designed to strengthen participants' operational capabilities. This stage encompassed hands-on production assistance to improve product quality, evaluations of digital marketing practices to enhance online visibility, and guidance in maintaining accurate and systematic business record-keeping. Throughout this mentoring process, students played an active role by supporting data collection, documenting activities, and compiling progress reports, ensuring that every development was well recorded. Their involvement also contributed to the continuity and effectiveness of the overall empowerment initiative.

Program Sustainability

To ensure sustainability, several strategic initiatives were implemented to secure the long-term continuity of the community empowerment outcomes. A dedicated internal community mobilization team was established to oversee operations, coordinate activities, and ensure that the business units formed during the program continue to function effectively after the project's completion. This team is responsible for managing routine production, monitoring financial practices, and maintaining the cooperative's administrative processes. In addition, partnerships with local MSMEs, supporting institutions, and digital platforms were strengthened to expand market access and provide continuous external support. The introduction of online mentoring channels such as WhatsApp groups and social media communication further reinforces the participants' ability to seek guidance whenever needed. Together, these mechanisms create a self-

sustaining ecosystem that allows the empowered business units to operate independently, adapt to changing market demands, and maintain the momentum of community-based economic development in the long run.

CONCLUSION

The community engagement initiative conducted with Majelis Taklim Nurul Islam demonstrates that non-formal religious groups possess substantial potential to evolve into productive centers of community-based economic empowerment. Through a participatory and needs-driven approach, the program effectively identified the community's challenges and tailored interventions accordingly. The activities ranging from entrepreneurship training, managerial capacity building, skills enhancement, to digital marketing literacy significantly strengthened participants' entrepreneurial motivation, technical competencies, and ability to manage home-based enterprises more systematically. These efforts also resulted in the emergence of more organized business units and the establishment of digital business platforms to support product marketing.

A key achievement of this initiative was the establishment of the Koperasi Syariah Kacio Mitra Islami, which serves as an institutional foundation for sustaining the community's economic activities. The cooperative, supported by a daily savings mechanism (kacio), provides a structured model for capital formation rooted in social solidarity and sharia-based principles. Continuous mentoring and periodic evaluation helped ensure that the empowerment process extended beyond technical training and fostered long-term behavioral and organizational change within the community.

Overall, the program confirms that transforming Majelis Taklim from a purely spiritual gathering into a catalyst for socio-economic development is not only feasible but impactful when implemented through systematic, integrated, and future-oriented strategies. This initiative contributes meaningfully to women's empowerment, enhancement of household economic resilience, and the advancement of sustainable development goals at the grassroots level.

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