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Socialization of Post-COVID-19 Community Economic Strengthening Strategy and Regional Poverty Alleviation Strategy in Aceh Besar Regency

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ABSTRACT

This community service activity aimed to address the economic challenges faced by the people of Aceh Besar post-COVID-19 and to develop effective poverty alleviation strategies for the region. Conducted on February 14, 2023, at the Dekranasda Aceh Besar office, this initiative was a collaboration between the Management Department, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Syiah Kuala, and the Government of Aceh Besar. The primary objectives were to enhance the understanding and skills of local stakeholders in formulating and implementing economic strengthening strategies and to foster collaboration among various community elements. The service-learning method was employed, integrating academic learning with community service to provide practical solutions to real-world problems. The activity involved 150 participants, including members of the Aceh Besar Regional House of Representatives (DPRK), 58 regional government organizations (OPD), Aceh's Development Planning Agency (Bappeda), the Head of Aceh Besar Statistics Bureau (BPS), representatives from NGOs, community leaders, local officials, academics, and other relevant stakeholders. The activities included presentations, workshops, and group discussions led by experts from Universitas Syiah Kuala and Bappeda Aceh. The results showed a significant increase in participants' understanding and skills, with 85% reporting improved knowledge in economic strengthening strategies. Additionally, eight concrete action plans were developed and implemented by the participants in their respective communities.

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic that has hit the world since the end of 2019 has had a significant impact on various sectors, including the economy. The impact of this pandemic is felt all over the world, including Indonesia, especially in Aceh Besar District. The pandemic has caused many business sectors to be disrupted, unemployment has increased, and people's income has dropped drastically. This condition exacerbates the level of poverty that already existed.

The problem of poverty and strengthening the community's economy is part of the 17 goals and 169 targets listed in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Some goals that are relevant to this problem include eradicating poverty (goal 1), ending hunger (goal 2), decent work and economic growth (goal 8), and reducing inequality (goal 10). Therefore, efforts to overcome the post-pandemic economic impact of COVID-19 and poverty reduction strategies in Aceh Besar District are very urgent and relevant.

In literature reviews, many studies show that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the local economy and community welfare (Hadi, 2020; Kurniasih, 2020; Putri, 2020; Rahmah et al., 2021; Rahmawati et al., 2021; Ulya, 2020). Theoretical studies and empirical research show that government support and innovation in economic strengthening strategies are very important for post-pandemic economic recovery (Abidin, 2021; Kristinae et al., 2023; Sutrisno, 2021; Telaumbanua & Ndraha, 2023). Previous community service reports also show that appropriate interventions and innovative strategies can have a significant positive impact on improving community welfare (Halim, Fakhurrazi, et al., 2023; Halim, Kesuma, et al., 2024; Halim, Kesuma, Siregar, Riyaldi, et al., 2023; Halim, Ramadhani, et al., 2023; 2021; I. Majid et al., 2021; MSA Majid et al., 2022). The current gap is a lack of understanding and implementation of innovative strategies that can help communities strengthen their economy and overcome poverty. Therefore, there needs to be an immediate and appropriate solution to overcome this problem.

Problem solving planning in this activity involves a new approach that focuses on strengthening local capacity through education and training, community economic empowerment, as well as collaboration between government, academics and the community. The new technology and approach used in this activity is the implementation of a sustainable and inclusive community-based economic development strategy.

The aim of this community service activity is to provide understanding and appropriate strategies to the people of Aceh Besar Regency in overcoming the post-pandemic economic impact and alleviating poverty. This article aims to document these community service activities and contribute to the development of science and technology and the achievement of the SDGs. The contribution of this article is two main things: first, contributing to the development of science and technology in the field of strengthening the community economy and poverty reduction strategies; second, supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in eradicating poverty and reducing economic inequality.

2. Methods

The target community in this activity is the people of Aceh Besar Regency which consists of various elements, including members of the Aceh Besar DPRK, 58 Aceh Besar Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD), the Aceh Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda), the Head of the Aceh Besar Central Statistics Agency (BPS), Representatives of

NGOs, community leaders, mukim, academics and related stakeholders. Overall, the number of participants involved in this activity was around 150 people. This community has an important role in implementing strategies to strengthen the economy and reduce poverty in its region. They are actively involved in every stage of this community service activity.

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This service activity involves several parties with diverse backgrounds and expertise. The main resource person is Prof. Dr. Mukhlis Yunus, SE, MS from the Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Syiah Kuala University, who has expertise in the fields of management and economics. Apart from that, Devizar, ST, MT from Bappeda Aceh, who has expertise in regional development planning, also acted as a resource person.

The service team from the Faculty of Economics and Business, Syiah Kuala University, plays a role in coordinating and facilitating activities. The method used in this activity is service learning, which combines academic learning with community service to increase participants' understanding and provide real solutions to problems faced by society (Agus Afandi et al., 2022). Implementation of this activity is carried out through several stages as follows:

1. Preparation: Includes coordination with the Aceh Besar District government, preparation of outreach materials, and invitations to participants.
2. Socialization and Training: Resource persons provide material on strategies for strengthening the economy and overcoming post-pandemic poverty to participants. This session includes presentations, discussions and questions and answers.
3. Workshop and Group Discussion: Participants are divided into several groups to discuss and formulate concrete action plans.
4. Monitoring and Evaluation: Carried out to measure the effectiveness of activities and obtain feedback from participants.

The technology and approaches introduced in this activity include sustainable community-based economic development strategies, the use of data for more accurate planning, and the application of inclusive concepts in local economic development. Apart from that, data collection and analysis methods for program monitoring and evaluation are also introduced. The instruments used in this activity include presentation materials, training modules, questionnaires for evaluation, as well as stationery and technological devices for presentations (laptop, projector and sound system). To measure the success of the activity, questionnaires and other evaluation tools are used which are designed to assess participants' understanding and skills before and after the activity.

Data was collected through direct observation, questionnaires, interviews and group discussions. Each participant was asked to fill out a questionnaire before and after the activity to measure changes in their understanding and skills. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with several key participants to gain deeper insight. Indicators of the success of this activity include:

1. Level of participation and attendance of participants.
2. Increasing participants' understanding and skills in economic strengthening and poverty reduction strategies, as measured through pre-test and post-test questionnaires.
3. Implementation of action plans formulated by participants in the workshop.
4. Positive feedback from participants regarding the activities and materials presented.

The data obtained was analyzed using quantitative and qualitative descriptive methods. Quantitative analysis was carried out on questionnaire data to see changes in participants' understanding and skills. Qualitative analysis was carried out on interview and group discussion data to gain deeper insight into the effectiveness and impact of activities. Data is analyzed to see the success of activities in achieving predetermined goals.

3. Result and Discussion

Socialization activities on post-COVID-19 community economic strengthening strategies and regional poverty reduction strategies in Aceh Besar Regency showed significant results in accordance with the planned objectives and methods. Evaluation of participants shows an increase in understanding and skills in formulating and implementing these strategies.

Table 1. Increased Understanding and Skills of Participants

Assessment Aspect	Before Activities	After Activities
Understanding of economic strengthening	60%	85%
Strategies Ability to formulate action	55%	80%
Plans Ability to implement strategies	50%	75%

Source: Primary data processed (2023)

The data in Table 1 shows that participants' understanding of economic strengthening strategies increased from 60% to 85% after participating in the activity. The ability to formulate action plans increased from 55% to 80%, and the ability to implement strategies increased from 50% to 75%.

This activity is in line with previous theory and research which shows that government support and innovation in economic strengthening strategies are very important for post-pandemic economic recovery (Hadi, 2020; Kurniasih, 2020; Putri, 2020; Rahmah et al., 2021; Rahmawati et al. ., 2021; Ulya, 2020). The significant increase in participants' understanding and skills shows that the socialization and training methods used are effective in transferring knowledge and skills to the community.



Figure 1: Presentation by the speakers

The results of this activity are also in accordance with previous community service reports which show that appropriate interventions and innovative strategies can have a positive impact on community welfare (Abidin, 2021; Kristinae et al., 2023; Sutrisno, 2021; Telaumbanua & Ndraha, 2023). This activity succeeded in gathering active participation from various elements of society, which shows that a collaborative approach between government, academics and the community is effective in overcoming local economic problems.

The success and impressive achievement of this activity can be seen as the best practices applied by other authors/servants. This activity not only enhances the understanding and skills of participants, but also strengthens the collaboration between different parties in their efforts to achieve the Goals, especially in reducing poverty and improving public welfare.

Table 2. Indicators of Activity Success

Indicators of Success	Target	Realization
Level of participation and attendance	100 participants	150 participants
Increased understanding ($\geq 20\%$)	75%	85%
Implementation of action plans	5 action plans	8 action plans
Positive feedback	80%	90%

Sumber: Primary Data processed (2023)

Table 2 shows that the realization of activity success indicators exceeds the predetermined targets. The level of participation and attendance reached 150 participants from the target of 100 participants. Increased understanding reached 85%, higher than the target of 75%. The number of action plans implemented reached 8 of the target of 5 action plans. Positive feedback from participants reached 90%, higher than the target of 80%.



Figure 2: Discussion of the Community Economic Strengthening Strategy as a government work plan

4. Conclusion

Activities to socialize strategies for strengthening the community's economy after COVID-19 and regional poverty reduction strategies in Aceh Besar Regency succeeded in achieving the stated goals. Based on the evaluation results, there was an increase in participants' understanding and skills in formulating and implementing strategies for strengthening the economy and reducing poverty. Questionnaire data shows that 85% of participants experienced increased understanding after participating in this activity. This activity was also successful in gathering active participation from various elements of society, including members of the DPRK Aceh Besar, OPD, Bappeda Aceh, Head of BPS Aceh Besar, NGO representatives, community leaders, mukim, academics and related stakeholders. Participants showed enthusiasm and commitment in formulating concrete action plans to be implemented in their respective communities.

The implications of this activity are very positive, where participants not only gain new knowledge, but are also inspired to apply the strategies they have learned in everyday life and in development programs in Aceh Besar District. This activity strengthens collaboration between government, academics and society in efforts to overcome the post-pandemic economic impact and reduce poverty. It is hoped that the results of this activity can make a real contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in this area, especially in alleviating poverty and improving community welfare.

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including members of the DPRK Aceh Besar, 58 OPD Aceh Besar, Bappeda Aceh, Head of BPS Aceh Besar, NGO representatives, community leaders, mukim, academics and related stakeholders, who have actively participated and made a significant contribution to the success of this activity. Support and participation from all parties is very meaningful for the success of this service activity.

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