

PRODUCTIVE WAQF DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN LWP NU BENGKULU

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Abstract:

Waqf holds significant potential as a means of promoting socio-economic empowerment within Muslim communities. However, its management is often hampered by the limited availability of professional human resources. The Nahdlatul Ulama Waqf and Land Institution (LWP NU) Bengkulu, as a newly established organization, faces similar challenges, including a lack of mentoring, insufficient structural support, and limited institutional facilities. To address these issues, this community engagement program was initiated to strengthen the capacity of waqf human resources using the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach. The program was carried out through four stages: discovery (identifying assets), dream (formulating a shared vision), design (planning programs), and destiny (ensuring sustainability). Key assets leveraged in this process included the active involvement of students from the Zakat and Waqf Management and Islamic Economics study programs at Fatmawati Sukarno University Bengkulu. The findings show that applying the ABCD approach enabled the institution to map its available assets and develop productive waqf initiatives such as kios waqf, book waqf, Iqro waqf, and Qur'an waqf. The program also led to tangible benefits, including improved student skills in waqf management, greater institutional participation, and stronger collaboration between universities and community organizations. Overall, the ABCD approach has proven effective in empowering waqf human resources while opening pathways for the sustainable growth of productive waqf at the local level.

Keywords : community service, ABCD, productive waqf, human resources, LWP NU

Abstrak:

Wakaf memiliki potensi besar sebagai instrumen pemberdayaan sosial dan ekonomi umat. Namun, pengelolaannya sering terhambat oleh keterbatasan sumber daya manusia (SDM) yang profesional. Lembaga Wakaf dan Pertanahan Nahdlatul Ulama (LWP NU) Bengkulu, sebagai lembaga yang baru berdiri, menghadapi tantangan serupa, mulai dari minimnya pendampingan, lemahnya dukungan struktural, hingga keterbatasan sarana kelembagaan. Untuk menjawab persoalan ini, kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat dilakukan dengan tujuan memperkuat kapasitas SDM wakaf melalui pendekatan Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD). Proses pelaksanaan mencakup empat tahap: discovery (identifikasi aset), dream (perumusan visi bersama), design (perancangan program), dan destiny (implementasi berkelanjutan). Aset utama yang dimobilisasi adalah keterlibatan aktif mahasiswa dari Program Studi Manajemen Zakat dan Wakaf serta Ekonomi Syariah Universitas Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan bahwa metode ABCD mampu memetakan aset lembaga sekaligus

melahirkan berbagai inisiatif wakaf produktif, seperti wakaf kios, wakaf buku, wakaf iqro, dan wakaf Al-Qur'an. Dampak positif yang terlihat antara lain meningkatnya keterampilan mahasiswa dalam pengelolaan wakaf, bertambahnya aktivitas kelembagaan, serta terjalinnya sinergi antara perguruan tinggi dan organisasi masyarakat. Dengan demikian, pendekatan ABCD terbukti efektif dalam memperkuat SDM wakaf sekaligus membuka peluang pengembangan wakaf produktif yang berkelanjutan di tingkat lokal.

Kata Kunci: *pengabdian masyarakat, ABCD, wakaf produktif, SDM, LWP NU*

INTRODUCTION

Waqf is one of the key instruments in the social and economic development of the Muslim community, as it is able to provide sustainable benefits for community welfare (Ascarya, 2021; Siswantoro, n.d.). In many Muslim countries, waqf has been productively utilized to support education, healthcare, economic empowerment, and even infrastructure development. Global studies indicate that modern waqf can serve as a strategic development financing instrument if managed professionally and with a productive orientation (Çizakça, 2018). This highlights that waqf is not merely an individual act of worship but also holds broad and transformative socio-economic dimensions (Ihsan & Hameed Hj. Mohamed Ibrahim, 2011).

Productive waqf is broadly defined as the management of waqf (Islamic endowment) assets in ways that generate sustainable income and provide wider benefits for society. Unlike traditional waqf, which is often limited to land or buildings used for religious and educational purposes, productive waqf seeks to utilize endowed assets as instruments for socio-economic development (Kasdi, 2018). Beyond education, productive waqf also contributes to economic empowerment. In Indonesia, it is seen as a strategic instrument to enhance local economic resilience, especially during periods of global recession. However, the development of productive waqf remains constrained by weak legal and regulatory frameworks, limiting the optimization of cash waqf as a tool for community empowerment (Miftahul Huda et al., 2025)

In Indonesia, the potential of waqf is remarkably large. The Indonesian Waqf Board (BWI) records millions of square meters of waqf land spread across various regions with significant economic value (Asmara & Abubakar, 2019). Several studies emphasize the importance of innovation and accountable governance to optimize waqf as a source of social financing. Unfortunately, the management of waqf at the national level still faces challenges, particularly the shortage of professional human resources (HR), lack of innovation in asset management, and weak institutional support (Mubarok & Hasanah, 2022). As a result, many waqf assets have not yet been optimally utilized as a source of productive empowerment for the Muslim community.

These challenges are even more evident at the regional level, especially in newly established waqf institutions. One example is the Nahdlatul Ulama Waqf and Land Institution (LWP NU) Bengkulu, which is still in its early stages of development. The institution struggles with limited mentoring, weak structural support, and inadequate administrative facilities (TIM LWP PBNU, 2021). Without appropriate strategies, these conditions may hinder LWP NU Bengkulu's role in mobilizing waqf potential at the local level.

Meanwhile, previous studies have largely focused on national waqf potential or general productive waqf management, but research specifically highlighting the

strengthening of waqf human resources through participatory methods at the regional level remains very limited. In the context of community empowerment, the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach introduced by (Kretzmann et al., 1993) and further developed by (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003) (García, 2020) as well as offers a relevant framework. This approach emphasizes identifying and mobilizing individual, social, institutional, and economic assets to drive community-based development.

Therefore, this study focuses on strengthening waqf human resources through the ABCD method in LWP NU Bengkulu. This focus not only provides practical benefits for the institution but also offers originality by presenting an asset-based empowerment model for waqf at the local level. Furthermore, this research contributes to enriching the literature on productive waqf development in Indonesia and demonstrates the potential synergy between universities and community organizations in strengthening Islamic economics(Huda & Santoso, 2022)

RESEARCH METHOD

This community engagement activity engaged students from the Zakat and Waqf Management and Islamic Economics programs at Fatmawati Sukarno University Bengkulu as the main implementers. They were embedded within LWP NU Bengkulu as partners, with activities centered at the institution's secretariat. Because structural support remained limited, collaboration with local PWNU administrators played a vital role in maintaining smooth operations (TIM LWP PBNU, 2021)

The approach adopted is Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD), structured into four main stages(Kretzmann et al., 1993). In the first stage, Discovery, the focus is on unearthing available assets at the individual, social, and institutional levels (Yusuf & Ali, n.d.). The second stage, Dream, involves crafting a shared vision to transform LWP NU Bengkulu into a productive waqf institution that benefits a wider community. Design, the third stage, operationalizes that vision by designing concrete, asset-based programs such as kios waqf, book waqf, Iqro waqf, and Qur'an waqf. Finally, in Destiny, the early implementation is initiated, alongside efforts to strengthen institutional coordination so that programs remain sustainable.

Data collection was carried out through participatory observation at the institution's secretariat (Satori & Komariyah, 2017), informal interviews with students and institution administrators (Arikunto, 2013), and document analysis of PBNU guidelines, activity logs, and internal institutional documents (TIM LWP PBNU, 2021). The collected data were analyzed using the interactive qualitative descriptive model of (Miles et al., 2014), involving processes of reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. To enhance validity, triangulation of sources and methods was employed comparing interview, observational, and documentary evidence (Fitriani & Hamid, 2021).

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participatory nature of the data collection ensured that all stakeholders students, administrators, and local community actors were actively involved in the process of identifying institutional strengths and challenges. This method encouraged mutual learning and collective reflection, allowing the research process itself to serve as an instrument of empowerment for the participants.

Furthermore, this participatory and asset-oriented framework contributes to the broader discourse on Islamic social finance by providing empirical evidence of how qualitative, community-driven methods can enhance institutional development. The findings underscore the importance of integrating local knowledge, academic expertise, and religious organizational values in designing sustainable waqf management models. In this sense, the study not only documents a process of community service but also demonstrates how the ABCD approach can bridge the gap between theory and practice in Islamic economic empowerment.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

When compared to experiences in other countries, this study presents a different perspective. Malaysia, for instance, is recognized as being more advanced in managing productive waqf due to strong regulatory support provided by the State Islamic Religious Councils (SIRCs) and the introduction of innovative instruments such as Waqf-Linked Sukuk. This demonstrates how structural support from the state can accelerate the development of productive waqf. Turkey, on the other hand, has a long-standing and well-established waqf tradition dating back to the Ottoman era, during which waqf was used to fund education, healthcare, and public infrastructure. However, the Turkish approach has been more top-down in nature, rooted in state policies. Meanwhile, in Egypt, al-Azhar has long managed productive waqf to finance educational operations, provide welfare for educators, and support facility development. These comparisons highlight that international models of productive waqf generally rely heavily on strong regulations and institutional frameworks. In contrast, the findings in Bengkulu demonstrate a micro-level, community-based model, in which students play the role of primary drivers.

This contrast underscores the uniqueness of the Bengkulu case, where the development of productive waqf does not depend on strong legal structures or longstanding traditions, but rather on the mobilization of local assets through a community-based approach. The involvement of students as agents of change provides fresh energy, innovative ideas, and technical support that enable the institution to initiate productive waqf initiatives despite limited structural and financial resources. Such an approach illustrates how the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) model can be effectively applied in newly established institutions, where formal governance and regulatory support are still minimal, yet the potential for grassroots-driven transformation remains substantial.

This community engagement program was carried out at the Waqf and Land Affairs Institute of Nahdlatul Ulama (LWP NU) PWNU Bengkulu, a relatively new institution that is still in the early stages of development. At the beginning of the program, the institution faced several challenges, including the absence of adequate administrative facilities, the lack of professional mentors, and limited structural involvement from the PWNU board (TIM LWP PBNU, 2021). However, these conditions positioned LWP NU Bengkulu as a strategic partner for the program, particularly in terms of optimizing its local potential through asset-based empowerment.

The participants of this program were students from the Department of Waqf and Zakat Management and Islamic Economics, UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu, who were conducting their internship at the partner institution. Their role was not limited to being interns; they also acted as driving assets in supporting institutional activities. The students were directly involved in asset mapping, program design, and the initial implementation of productive waqf initiatives(Fitriani & Hamid, 2021).

The scope of the program covered three main aspects: first, the identification of institutional, social, and economic assets owned by LWP NU Bengkulu; second, the formulation of productive waqf initiatives, such as waqf kioss, waqf books, waqf iqro, and waqf Qur'an; and third, institutional coordination to ensure the sustainability of the program. All stages were carried out based on the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, which emphasizes the mobilization of existing strengths and resources within the community(Yusuf & Ali, n.d.).

Thus, this community engagement activity not only provided students with practical learning experiences but also strengthened the institutional capacity of LWP NU Bengkulu. Moreover, it highlights the potential of developing a local model of productive waqf management that could be replicated in other regions.

In a broader context, this initiative reflects a strategic effort to bridge academic learning and community application. By implementing the ABCD method, the program demonstrates that institutional growth can be nurtured from within, even in settings with limited external resources. The model developed through this collaboration may serve as a reference for other nascent waqf institutions, particularly those in developing regions, seeking to integrate social empowerment, educational involvement, and economic sustainability within the framework of Islamic philanthropy. Ultimately, the experience of LWP NU Bengkulu underscores the transformative potential of productive waqf when managed through participatory and asset-based approaches. While challenges remain such as the need for structured mentoring, improved institutional facilities, and stronger coordination with organizational stakeholders the groundwork established through this initiative offers a promising direction for the evolution of waqf institutions in Indonesia and beyond.

Table 1: Stages of ABCD Implementation in LWP NU Bengkulu.

ABCD Stage	Main Student Activities	Outcomes / Outputs
Discovery (Asset Identification)	Conducting office/institution observation, interviews with administrators, and mapping individual, social, institutional, and physical assets	Initial asset map of LWP NU Bengkulu
Dream (Formulating Aspirations)	Joint discussions between administrators and students to formulate a shared vision and direction for productive waqf development	Final asset map & vision for productive waqf development
Design (Program Planning)	Designing productive waqf programs, such as kios waqf, book waqf, Iqra waqf, and Qur'an waqf	Draft of productive waqf programs
Destiny (Implementation & Sustainability)	Implementing the designed programs and conducting joint evaluations with LWP NU administrators to ensure sustainability	Activity documentation and sustainability recommendations

Table 1 illustrates the sequence of student community engagement activities

in supporting the development of productive waqf at LWP NU Bengkulu through the AssetBased Community Development (ABCD) approach. The Discovery stage began with asset identification through observation and interviews, resulting in an initial asset map. The Dream stage involved collaborative discussions between students and administrators to formulate a shared vision, producing a final asset map and a development direction for productive waqf. The Design stage focused on formulating concrete initiatives such as kios waqf, book waqf, Iqra waqf, and Qur'an waqf. Finally, the Destiny stage emphasized program implementation and joint evaluation, producing activity documentation and sustainability recommendations. This sequence provides the foundation for strengthening the institutional role of LWP NU PWNU Bengkulu in managing productive waqf.

The initial mapping revealed that, although newly established, LWP NU Bengkulu already possesses diverse assets that can serve as institutional capital. These assets are grouped into five categories:

1. Individuals: internship students, supervising lecturers, and LWP NU administrators.
2. Institutional: support from Universitas Fatmawati Sukarno and PWNU structures.
3. Physical: temporary office facilities and official PBNU guidelines.
4. Social/Relational: alumni networks, IPNU/IPPNU, and mosque partners.
5. Economic: potential waqf funds and preliminary productive program designs.

This finding reinforces the ABCD principle that every community has assets that can be mobilized, even when external resources are still limited. Based on the asset mapping, students and administrators jointly designed several productive waqf programs, including kios waqf, book waqf, Iqra waqf, and Qur'an waqf. Students played not only the role of interns but also acted as change agents who initiated institutional innovation. This aligns with (Fitriani & Hamid, 2021), who highlight the crucial role of young generations in pioneering waqf institutional development.

The program generated significant positive impacts. Students gained practical skills in waqf management, while LWP NU Bengkulu experienced strengthened institutional dynamics through active involvement of administrators. Moreover, the initiative enhanced strategic partnerships between universities and NU at the regional level, opening broader opportunities for collaboration in social and religious agendas.

Nonetheless, several challenges emerged, including limited availability of experienced mentors, weak coordination with PWNU, and inadequate institutional facilities(Mubarok & Hasanah, 2022). These findings suggest that although ABCD is effective as an initial empowerment strategy, program sustainability largely depends on structural support, continuous guidance, and strengthened institutional networks.

A closer examination of the application of the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach in the case of LWP NU Bengkulu reveals three key findings. First, the asset-based strategy enables a newly established institution to possess an "initial capital" in the form of both tangible and intangible resources. Without having to wait for external assistance, asset mapping fosters institutional confidence to take action(Mathie & Cunningham, 2003).

Second, the involvement of students has proven to be a significant catalyst. Positioned as agents of change, students contribute new energy, fresh ideas, and technical skills that accelerate the formulation of productive waqf initiatives. This

contribution aligns with recent studies highlighting the vital role of the younger generation in strengthening the ecosystem of waqf and Islamic philanthropy(Mohsin & et al, n.d.)

Third, although the program has successfully nurtured institutional awareness, its sustainability remains dependent on structural support and external networks. This indicates that ABCD cannot stand alone but rather requires integration with institutional and policy frameworks to ensure long-term impact. In other words, ABCD may serve as an effective entry point, but it must be reinforced by a solid institutional ecosystem(Mujahidin et al., 2025).

Overall, these findings affirm that the ABCD approach is relevant as an initial strategy to activate newly established institutions. However, the continuity of such programs is largely determined by the presence of structural support, ongoing mentoring, and the strengthening of institutional networks to ensure that the identified potentials can be developed more optimally and sustainably.

CONCLUSION

The application of the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach has proven effective in encouraging the growth of the Nahdlatul Ulama Waqf and Land Agency (LWP NU) in Bengkulu, which is still at an early stage of development. Asset mapping revealed considerable potential in individual, social, institutional, physical, and economic aspects. The involvement of students as key drivers contributed significantly, not only in identifying these assets but also in designing ideas for productive waqf such as kioss, books, Iqra, and Qur'an waqf. This initiative further served as a practical learning platform for students in the field of waqf management, encompassing planning, program design, and sustainability-oriented practices. Through this process, students enhanced their technical capacity and cultivated stronger social awareness. Nevertheless, challenges remain, particularly in ensuring program sustainability due to the limited number of mentors, suboptimal coordination with the provincial NU board (PWNU), and inadequate institutional facilities. To address these challenges, the continuity of structured mentoring, stronger institutional coordination with PWNU, the provision of formal facilities, and the expansion of networks with external stakeholders such as Islamic financial institutions and potential donors are crucial. By implementing these strategies, LWP NU Bengkulu has the potential to develop into a model for strengthening human resources in waqf management at the local level while simultaneously fostering synergy between universities and community organizations. Future studies could further explore how ABCD-based approaches to waqf development can be adapted in different sociocultural contexts or scaled up to larger organizational structures to ensure long-term sustainability.

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