

Community Transformation through Mosque-Based Empowerment in Amplas Village, Medan City

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Abstract

Mosques are places of worship for Muslims and are important as centers of social activities and community empowerment. This service aims to increase public awareness of the dual role of mosques as places of worship and for activities related to the Islamic religion. This service activity method uses Participatory Action Research (PAR) with an integrated and participatory qualitative approach. The implementation service activities will be implemented from March to April 2024 at the Amplas Village Mosque, Medan City. The results of this service show that the mosque has experienced a community transformation, which can be seen from the use of the mosque as a base for community activities such as social activities such as group recitations, community service, and assistance. Initially, they agreed on this; as time went by, activities related to the mosque could not run smoothly due to a lack of awareness of the function of the mosque and being busy with their respective jobs. It can be concluded that the mosque-based empowerment program in Amplas Village has had a positive impact in increasing community capacity.

Keywords

Empowerment; Mosque; Transformation



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1. INTRODUCTION

Mosques are places of worship for Muslims and have an important role as a center for social activities and community empowerment. In the context of idealism, mosques should be agents of change that can positively impact the surrounding environment (Taufiq et al., 2023). The optimal function of the mosque includes various aspects of life, including education, economy, health, and socio-culture. Amid the dynamics of urban society, mosques can be a strategic solution to overcome various social problems the local community faces (Pratiwi et al., 2023).

Community transformation through mosque-based empowerment in Amplas Village requires an integrated and participatory approach. A well-designed empowerment program that engages all elements of society can create sustainable change (Millner, 2021; Nabilah Mokhtar et al., 2023). Economic empowerment through skills training, educational support through tutoring classes, and health awareness raising through health campaigns are some examples of initiatives that can be carried out (Nasution et al., 2021; Okunade & Osmani, 2020). With the full support of all parties, mosques in Amplas Village can become effective empowerment centers and contribute to the community's welfare. In addition, this activity can potentially restore the mosque's role as a place of worship and a place for social and community empowerment activities.

Amplas Village in Medan City is one of the areas with great potential to empower the community through mosques. In this area, various social and economic challenges require effective intervention. Many residents are still in inadequate economic conditions, with limited access to education and health services (Halimah & Machdum, 2023). Mosques in Amplas Village have a great opportunity to develop empowerment programs that can improve the quality of life of the community as a whole. Medan was established by Government Regulation 50 of 1991, issued on October 31, 1991. It has 77 villages and an administrative area of 1,377.3 ha (Tarigan, 2021). The phenomenon in Amplas Village shows that mosques have undergone community transformation; this is seen in using mosques as a basis for social activities, joint recitation, community service, social assistance, and routine studies. Initially, they agreed with this; as time went by, activities related to the mosque could not run smoothly due to a lack of awareness of the function of the mosque, and they were busy with their respective work.

The empowerment process requires community involvement and participation to empower the community. Not only do we need to participate and master science and technology to realize empowerment, but we also need to train people to adjust

their thoughts and actions to new developments, feel responsible, and contribute to maintaining the results or efforts made. To maximize and maintain the potential of Islamic society, empowerment activities are very important to raise awareness, motivate, encourage, make people aware, and empower all members of society (Jamilah, 2021; Salik, 2019). If done well, empowerment activities, such as the mosque-based empowerment approach in Amplas Village, Medan City, will be extraordinary in overcoming Muslims' worldly and spiritual problems.

Previous mosque-based community service was often limited to routine religious activities and temporary social assistance (Adhayanto, 2023; Afif et al., 2017; Kamaruddin, 2022; Khasanah et al., 2023; Winata, 2022). Sustainable and structured empowerment programs, especially those that address specific urban community problems, such as in Amplas Village, are still rare. Most initiatives are still sporadic and unintegrated, making their impact less significant and unsustainable. There is an urgent need to design and implement a holistic and sustainable empowerment program involving all elements of society and various stakeholders.

The mosque-based empowerment approach proposed in this program brings novelty by integrating various aspects of community life into one comprehensive framework. The program focuses on one area and covers education, economy, health, and socio-culture, centered on the mosque as the main place. Through skills training, tutoring classes, health campaigns, and other social activities, the mosque in Amplas Village is expected to become a center of activities that truly empower and create real changes in people's lives.

This community service program aims to empower the community by improving economic skills, access to education, and health awareness by utilizing the mosque as a center of activity. The expected impact includes improving residents' economic welfare, improving children's and adolescents' academic achievement, increasing health awareness, and building a more solid and harmonious community in Amplas Village.

2. METHOD

The method of this service activity uses Participatory Action Research (PAR) with a qualitative approach. The technique is used by the events in the field, which are covered by the lack of community awareness in mosque-based empowerment in Medan Amplas District, Medan City. After that, information from books, written data, exploration findings, studies, and other research based on reading and managing library data and tracing data sources and written information through related websites

are used to collect the data. The interview was conducted with the Mosque Welfare Agency (BKM) Chairman, mosque administrators, and several community leaders by conducting mosque-based empowerment. This question-and-answer channeled insights into their vision regarding the actual function of the mosque.

Service activities are implemented from March to April 2024 at the Amplas Village Mosque, Medan City. This empowerment activity consists of various elements of community leaders, and the following is a list of informants along with data of informants who are invited as partners of this service activity:

Table 1. Informant Data

No.	Informant's Name	Age	Gender	Information
1.	Suryadi	48	Law – Law	Chairman of the Mosque Welfare Agency (BKM)
2.	Baguch Valueadi	38	Law – Law	Mosque Guard (Marbot)
3.	Sulistians	43	Woman	Housewives
4.	Goddess	31	Woman	Wiraswasta

By interviewing the four people, it is easy to get a comprehensive and in-depth picture of various perspectives and diverse opinions about community transformation through mosque-based empowerment in Amplas Village, Medan City. In addition, the different backgrounds, experiences, and opinions of various informants can also enrich the information I get. The observation activities are carried out directly on the exploration object using the senses of sight, hearing, and others at the service location. Analysis of documents carried out by researchers on books, archives, and data about individual empowerment exercises made by mosques to support research. This analysis provides a deeper understanding of community empowerment.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Mosque-based mentoring activities in Amplas Village, Medan City, have been carried out in various stages that reflect the reality in the field. The accompanying team is directly involved in mosque activities, ranging from religious teaching to skills training. This assistance covers various aspects of people's lives, including education, economy, and health. The team conducts observations and problem mapping in the early stages to understand the community's specific needs. Furthermore, relevant and needs-based programs are designed and implemented by actively involving the community.

Partners in this mentoring activity are community groups active in mosques, including mosque youth, recitation mothers, and the elderly. These groups were

selected based on their involvement in mosque activities and the need for empowerment. In addition, mentoring also involves community leaders and mosque administrators to ensure the program's sustainability. This collaborative approach aims to build the internal capacity of the community so that they can be independent in carrying out empowerment programs in the future.

The preparation carried out by the accompanying team is indeed important, but it is not the subject of the discussion. The main focus of this assistance is the implementation of programs that can empower the community effectively. The programs are designed to improve people's capacity and skills in various fields, including the creative economy, education, and health. For example, sewing skills training for mothers, computer courses for mosque teenagers, and health counseling for the elderly.

The evaluation of activities showed increased knowledge and skills in mentoring partners. The people involved in the program showed progress in various aspects. For example, women who participate in sewing skills training can produce products with economic value and be marketed. Mosque youth who took computer courses showed an improved ability to use technology for productive activities. In addition, health counseling provides a better understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle for older people.

In Islam, it is interpreted that Allah Swt. They created a society from a man and a woman who gathered to get to know and associate with each other. In Islam, citizens have equal freedom and commitment; Islam does not view special positions and awards to people or groups; a person's greatness in Islamic culture is only because of his devotion to Allah.

In simple terms, it encompasses all the equal relationships that start from the normal interests of customs, designs, strategies, frameworks, regulations, organizations, and all the parts of peculiarities that society summarizes in a broad and new sense.

3.1 Mosque as Community Empowerment in Amplas Village, Medan City

The exercise to strengthen local areas based on mosques in the city of Sandpaper, Medan City, has several perspectives, especially in the social and educational fields. The majority of the residents of Medan City in Amplas District are Muslims. The strengthening of mosque-based areas in the Sandpaper Area, Medan City, is a cycle to liberate the area with various strengthening programs by taking the focal point of action through mosques. To prosper Islamic culture in this world and the hereafter, it is necessary to carry out mosque-based strengthening exercises and rebuild the

capacity of mosques that are not just used as a place of love for Muslims. Mosques must serve more than just religious purposes; they should also serve a social purpose. Therefore, mosques are places where people can improve the quality of the economy, politics, culture, and dynamism, and they are filled with prayers and other religious ceremonies.

According to Syafar, the meaning of every strengthening action is to place the region as the target of improvement by focusing on the capacity and assets owned to encourage impartiality and justice, especially in developing regional networks (Syafar, 2015) and first, strengthening mosque-based local areas in the city of Sandpaper, Medan City, in the social sector. Social problems are side effects or peculiarities that arise in the truth of community activities. Distinguishing social problems in the eyes of the community varies from one person to another. Examples of social problems in Amplas Village, Medan City, include juvenile delinquency, population problems, and social problems related to mosques.

To improve the quality of Muslim development in Amplas Village, Medan City, services are provided to meet the needs, including 1) Organizing Mass Circumcision and Orphan Compensation Events, organizing mass circumcision events for the community in collaboration with the nearest Health Center. They also provide facilities for mass circumcision events, mosques prepare rooms and look for children by registering. For children who need help, they also organize an orphan and dhu'afa compensation event to accompany them at least once a year, precisely on the 1st of Muharram. 2) Every Eid al-Adha, the people in Amplas Village, Medan City, who perform Qurbani, provide or carry out the slaughter and distribution of sacrificial animals. Each cow is given to one person for each group of seven people. So, people who want to perform prayers at the mosque are urged to immediately register their names before Eid al-Adha arrives because, in addition to being able to ease the financial burden, it can also be reached by people from the lower classes' financial level who want to do penance. People can learn to truly share with those less fortunate by making sacrifices. With this repentance, the local community also felt how enjoyable Islam was with this day of repentance. 3) Serving the receipt of *zakat*, *infak*, and *sedekah* installments in the City of Sandpaper, Medan City, by providing the administration of *zakat*, *infak*, and *sedekah*, the local area does not experience obstacles in finding a place to distribute *zakat*, especially in the long span of *Ramadan*. Therefore, the mosque manager makes it an ideal location to collect *zakat*, *infak*, and *sedekah* for those around it. Second, the mosque-based local areas in the City of Sandpaper, Medan City, should be strengthened in the schooling field. Education is an important part of cultural

progress in the City of Sandpaper Medan City; the presence of mosques plays a big role in working on the essence of schooling. As a reason for change and strengthening, Mosques give extraordinary consideration in laying the foundation of education (Booker et al., 2021; Putranta & Wilujeng, 2019).

The low quality of education is the impact of unequal population growth. Things that have an impact on the low level of education in the City of Sandpaper, Medan City include the following: lack of public understanding of the importance of education so that they cannot attend high school (especially girls); low per capita salary so that guardian cannot send their children to additional education or even not be expelled from school in any way, as well as limited budgets and the government's ability to offer educational programs that are affordable to the community (Neuman & Powers, 2021; Sethi et al., 2019).

To prevent any issues, a meeting was organized at the mosque in Amplas Village, Medan City, to prepare the work program. In addition to focusing on social empowerment, the mosque also offered religious education programs based on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad saw. One such program involved the establishment of a children's Qur'an education park. At that time, few such parks were available, so the mosque aimed to provide a nearby place for children to learn the Qur'an without traveling far. The education included the Iqro method for beginners learning Arabic letters, reading the Qur'an, group reading sessions, memorization of short surahs from Juz Amma, learning the science of *tajwid*, and practicing the recitation of *wudu*, obligatory prayers, and daily prayers.

Furthermore, the mosque held traditional recitation sessions for *Ta'lim* management to uphold ethics and ensure the accurate dissemination of Islamic teachings. Women's recitation sessions were organized to provide them with strict information, conducted every Friday at 2 PM. These sessions typically included lectures and Qur'an recitations, and specific topics were discussed during special occasions like the month of Rajab and *Isra* and *Miraj* of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. Ustad Syawalludin, a prominent scholar, frequently led these sessions.

Additionally, the mosque hosted a recitation program for men, which took place regularly every Friday night from 8 PM to 9 PM. These sessions included the recitation of *tahlil*, *Yasin*, and other practices, followed by a communal meal. These efforts aimed to foster a strong sense of community and ensure that both men and women had access to religious education and fellowship.

3.2 *The Role of Mosques as the Base for Community Transformation in Amplas Village, Medan City*

Growing the function and ability of mosques as a liaison in strengthening the region provides opportunities to create an empowered and free network. The tendency of society to evolve towards modernity is one of the contributing factors. Mosques have a reciprocal role in fostering their worshippers by using the phrase "Mosque Builds *Jemaah*, and *Jemaah* Builds Mosque" as a working guideline. With the existence of a mosque, individuals can come to the mosque to ask questions and make the mosque a center for strict Islamic improvement training or a kind of strict change of events (Hamdi et al., 2022; Rifat et al., 2023). Therefore, the mosque's presence is a marker of the progress of Muslims.

The role of the mosque as the basis for community transformation is very important in Islam, and it is based on the Qur'an, which emphasizes the important role of the mosque in the lives of Muslims. Mosques can be reduced to several strategic steps as a center for religious and social activities to maximize their roles and functions: a) compiling the recitation of various Islamic sciences to improve the skills of worshippers so that by always being guided by Islamic teachings, they will live more controlled and focused in their daily lives. Arranging them according to the ability and purpose of the pilgrims, b) reciting various kinds of prayers, including mandatory prayers, *sunnah* prayers, and *fardhu khifayah* prayers, and c) holding various socio-religious events, such as commemoration or welcoming other pilgrims (Martiskainen, 2017; Prabowo et al., 2021).

Improving education is the second goal. Activities consist of 1) organizing formal educational institutions, such as kindergartens and universities, according to the needs and preferences of congregation members; 2) organizing informal education, such as recitation that is attended by all ages; 3) selecting courses to train unique abilities such as dialects, PCs, sewing which of course are adjusted to the needs of the parties; 4) working on imaginative capacities in the assembly, such as reading the Quran, *nasyid*, self-preservation following the capacity of the assembly; 5) Maintain high standards for mosque libraries. The third mission is to foster friendly relationships; the exercises include 1) friendship between the mosque management and all assembly members. Therefore, reliable information about mosque worshippers is needed; 2) turning the mosque into a place for events such as weddings, *zikir*, and farewell for pilgrims; and 3) activating and directing congregational prayers periodically under the direction of the *imam*.

As time goes by, the role and function of mosques in Amplas Village, Medan

City, is decreasing. It used to be the center of Islamic civilization, a place to discuss everything related to the interests of the world and the hereafter. Mosques are available for five prayers and closed after prayers; Muslims in Indonesia still have a limited view of the capabilities of mosques (Kadarin, 2018).

The mosque-based empowerment approach in Amplas Village, Medan City, has similarities with previous service research that emphasizes the importance of the role of mosques in social transformation. According to research conducted by Suryanti et al. (2024), mosques have great potential as a center for community empowerment because of their social and spiritual functions. Scientific studies also show that community-based empowerment, such as those in mosques, is effective in building independence and improving community welfare (Ardiansyah et al., 2021). By comparing these results, it can be concluded that the mosque-based empowerment program in Amplas Village has positively impacted community capacity.

4. CONCLUSION

According to the discussion above, it can be concluded that the mosque-based empowerment program in Amplas Village has had a positive impact on increasing community capacity. In mosque-based community empowerment, community transformation refers to efforts to change directed towards spiritual, moral, and social improvement by Islamic teachings that include behavior, thoughts, and actions that support Islamic values, such as justice, truth, compassion, and wisdom based on the Qur'an. The existence of supporting factors for the implementation of activities that focus on the internal management of mosques cannot be separated from the success of mosque-based community empowerment. Resources (knowledge and skills, competence, financial support, infrastructure availability), communication (socialization and coordination), and organizational structure (complexity, formalities, and centralization) all contribute to the success of mosque-based community empowerment. The three variables are interrelated and impact each other in supporting the strengthening of mosque-based areas.

The weakness of the mosque-based empowerment program in Amplas Village is that the existing programs are still sporadic and less integrated, so the impact is less significant and sustainable. Limited funding and reliance on donations also hinder running more sustainable programs. For further service, it is recommended to increase community participation through more intensive socialization and involve all elements of society in the planning and implementation of the program.

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