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SYNERGY BETWEEN LEGISLATORS AND ACADEMICS FOR THE ECONOMIC SELF-RELIANCE OF PEMATANG JOHAR

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Abstract: This community service activity aims to strengthen village economic self-reliance through synergy between legislators and academics in Pematang Johar Village, Deli Serdang Regency. The program was designed using a participatory and educational approach that integrates academic perspectives and public policy to enhance community capacity in entrepreneurship, economic awareness, and understanding of policy support for village economic development. The implementation methods included lectures and interactive discussions focusing on local potential-based business development, community participation in economic activities, and the role of legislators in supporting village economic empowerment. Evaluation was conducted using pre- and post-activity questionnaires to assess changes in participants' understanding, attitudes, and motivation. The results indicate significant improvements across all evaluation indicators, including understanding of village economic self-reliance, awareness of community and legislative roles, entrepreneurial knowledge, self-confidence, and motivation to engage in sustainable economic activities. The findings demonstrate that synergy between academics and legislators provides added value in community empowerment by combining knowledge transfer with policy perspectives. Overall, this community service activity contributes to strengthening community capacity, collective awareness, and social capital as foundations for sustainable village economic self-reliance.

Keywords: community service; village economic self-reliance; community empowerment; legislators; academics

Abstrak: Kegiatan pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk memperkuat kemandirian ekonomi desa melalui sinergi antara legislator dan akademisi di Desa Pematang Johar, Kabupaten Deli Serdang. Kegiatan dirancang menggunakan pendekatan edukatif dan partisipatif yang mengintegrasikan perspektif akademik dan kebijakan publik untuk meningkatkan kapasitas masyarakat dalam kewirausahaan, kesadaran ekonomi, serta pemahaman terhadap peran kebijakan dalam pengembangan ekonomi desa. Metode pelaksanaan meliputi ceramah dan diskusi interaktif yang berfokus pada pengembangan usaha berbasis potensi lokal, partisipasi masyarakat dalam kegiatan ekonomi, serta peran legislator dalam mendukung pemberdayaan ekonomi desa. Evaluasi kegiatan dilakukan melalui kuesioner sebelum dan sesudah kegiatan untuk mengukur perubahan pemahaman, sikap, dan motivasi peserta. Hasil evaluasi menunjukkan adanya peningkatan yang signifikan pada seluruh indikator, termasuk pemahaman tentang kemandirian ekonomi desa, peran masyarakat dan legislator, pengetahuan kewirausahaan, kepercayaan diri, serta motivasi untuk mengembangkan usaha secara berkelanjutan. Hasil kegiatan ini menunjukkan bahwa sinergi antara akademisi dan legislator memberikan nilai tambah dalam proses pemberdayaan masyarakat melalui penguatan kapasitas dan perspektif kebijakan. Secara keseluruhan, kegiatan pengabdian ini berkontribusi dalam membangun kapasitas masyarakat, kesadaran kolektif, dan modal sosial sebagai fondasi kemandirian ekonomi desa yang berkelanjutan.

Kata kunci: pengabdian kepada masyarakat, kemandirian ekonomi desa, pemberdayaan masyarakat, legislator, akademisi

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INTRODUCTION

Pematang Johar Village is one of the villages located in Labuhan Deli Subdistrict, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra Province, with a recorded population of 14,807 residents, consisting of 7,412 males and 7,395 females (Pematang Johar, 2019). This relatively large population indicates significant human resource potential; however, at the same time, it presents challenges in terms of job creation and the equitable improvement of community welfare. Similar conditions have been observed in many rural areas where population growth is not accompanied by sufficient economic diversification (Amri et al., 2024).

Based on the occupational structure, approximately 46 percent of the productive-age population is engaged in small-scale agriculture and plantations, while around 32 percent work in the informal sector, including home-based enterprises, small trading activities, and non-formal services. Only about 12 percent of the population is employed in the formal sector, while the remainder falls into the category of non-permanent employment. This condition indicates that the village economy remains highly dependent on the primary sector and micro-scale enterprises with relatively low productivity and limited value added , a pattern commonly found in villages with limited entrepreneurial capacity and institutional support (Nazeri et al., 2024).

In terms of regional potential, Pematang Johar Village has extensive rice field areas covering approximately 1,750 hectares, some of which have been developed as a rice-field-based tourism village (BPS_Labuhan_Deli, 2024). Nevertheless, the economic contribution of the tourism sector remains suboptimal.

Previous community service initiatives demonstrate that creative-based empowerment activities can enhance household income potential, strengthen economic participation, and increase community self-confidence when local resources are processed into value-added products (Sinaga et al., 2024).

Relatively low tourist visitation rates and the limited availability of supporting tourism products have resulted in the village's economic potential not yet having a significant impact on increasing community income. This condition indicates that the natural resources owned by the village have not been fully transformed into sustainable economic growth without adequate community empowerment and business development strategies (I Putu Gede Didik Widiarta et al., 2025).

From an economic institutional perspective, the Village-Owned Enterprise has been established as an instrument to drive the village economy; however, its contribution to village original revenue remains low, accounting for less than 10 percent of total village income. This situation is influenced by limited business management capacity, low levels of product innovation, and insufficient understanding of entrepreneurship and business management among both the community and institutional managers. Previous studies highlight that weak managerial capacity is a major constraint in village economic institutions (Rasyid et al., 2025).

Human resource conditions also constitute an important factor affecting village economic development. Approximately 58 percent of the population has completed education only up to junior and senior secondary school levels, while residents with diploma and undergraduate educational backgrounds account for

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less than 10 percent of the total productive-age population. This relatively low level of formal education affects limitations in business planning capabilities, financial management, technology utilization, and access to market information (Sucipto & Fatihin, 2024).

In addition to technical and structural factors, village economic development is closely related to policy support and the role of stakeholders at the regional level. In practice, there remains a gap between the real needs of the village community and their understanding of the role of legislative institutions in promoting and overseeing village-based economic development. The community tends to view economic activities as an individual responsibility, while opportunities for policy support, program advocacy, and institutional facilitation have not been optimally utilized. Such gaps between community needs and policy awareness have been identified as barriers to effective rural empowerment (Rasyid et al., 2025).

These conditions indicate that the community of Pematang Johar Village requires not only improvements in technical skills and entrepreneurial knowledge, but also a deeper understanding of the role of public policy and institutional support mechanisms that can strengthen the sustainability of village economic activities. Community-based development literature emphasizes that collective action and social capital are critical elements in strengthening local economic resilience and sustaining empowerment initiatives at the village level (Pretty, 2003). Empirical evidence from community service programs highlights that empowerment initiatives grounded in creative skills development can serve as an effective entry point for strengthening community economic resilience (Sinaga et al., 2024). Collaborative governance literature emphasizes that effective community development outcomes are more likely to be achieved when policymakers, academics, and local communities engage in structured collaboration, shared decision-making, and mutual trust (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Synergy between academics and legislators is therefore relevant in this context, as academics play a role in strengthening human resource capacity through scientific approaches and mentoring, while legislators have a strategic function in bridging community aspirations with regional development policies and facilitating access to economic empowerment programs (Amri et al., 2024; Nazeri et al., 2024).

Based on this situational analysis, community service activities adopting a synergy-based approach between legislators and academics are considered a strategic step to promote the economic self-reliance of Pematang Johar Village. This activity is designed to address the real problems faced by the village community in a comprehensive manner, not only through improving individual capacities, but also through strengthening collective awareness, policy understanding, and cross-stakeholder collaboration toward sustainable village economic development (I Putu Gede Didik Widiarta et al., 2025).

METHOD

The community service activity entitled *Synergy between Legislators and Academics for the Economic Self-Reliance of Pematang Johar Village, Deli Serdang* was implemented using a participatory and educational approach that integrates academic perspectives and public policy. Participatory development

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approaches are widely recognized for their ability to enhance community ownership, learning processes, and empowerment outcomes when local actors are actively involved in program implementation (Mohan & Stokke, 2000). This approach was designed to comprehensively strengthen the capacity of the village community, including entrepreneurial knowledge, economic awareness, and understanding of the role of policy in supporting village economic development.

The activity was conducted in October 2025 and took place at the village pavilion of Pematang Johar Village, Labuhan Deli Subdistrict, Deli Serdang Regency. This location was selected because it serves as a public space that is easily accessible to the community and supports intensive and dialogical interaction between participants and resource persons.

The participants consisted of 30 male residents with backgrounds as farmers, micro-enterprise actors, informal sector workers, and village community leaders. Participants were purposively selected by considering their strategic roles in household and community economic activities, as well as their potential as driving agents for village economic self-reliance.

The implementation methods comprised lectures and interactive discussions. The lecture method was used to deliver structured material on the concept of village economic self-reliance, strengthening businesses based on local potential, and the importance of collaboration among the community, academics, and legislative institutions. The lecture materials focused on issues relevant to the conditions of Pematang Johar Village, such as the utilization of local resources, the development of micro and small enterprises, increasing the value added of village products, and strengthening the role of the community in community-based economic development.

The focus of the material was also directed toward providing the community with an understanding of the role of legislators in supporting village economic development. In this context, the resource person explained the functions of legislators in absorbing community aspirations, promoting policies that support people-centered economic development, and facilitating community access to empowerment programs and business mentoring. This material delivery aimed to ensure that the community not only understands technical business aspects, but is also able to optimally and sustainably utilize opportunities for policy support.

The lecture material was delivered by a member of the community service team who serves as a university lecturer and concurrently as a legislator. In his capacity as an academic, the resource person provided conceptual and practical reinforcement related to entrepreneurship, simple business management, and village economic planning. Meanwhile, in his capacity as a legislator, he presented policy perspectives and institutional roles that can be utilized by the community to support economic self-reliance.

Furthermore, the discussion method was used as a means to explore the real problems faced by the community in carrying out daily economic activities. The discussions focused on constraints related to capital, limited market access, business management challenges, and the need for continued assistance. Through these discussions, the community was given space to express aspirations and empirical experiences, while also obtaining clarification regarding the forms of support and the roles of legisla-

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tive institutions and higher education institutions in strengthening the village economy.

During the implementation of the activity, the community service team conducted observations of participant participation levels, discussion dynamics, and community responses to the material presented. The results of these observations were used as preliminary evaluation materials to assess the effectiveness of the implementation methods and as a basis for planning more applicable and sustainable follow-up community service activities.

Through lecture and discussion methods focused on strengthening community capacity and understanding of policy roles, this community service activity is expected to provide tangible benefits for the people of Pematang Johar Village and to strengthen synergy among the community, academics, and legislators in promoting the realization of village economic self-reliance.

DISCUSSION

The implementation of the community service activity with the theme *Synergy between Legislators and Academics for the Economic Self-Reliance of Pematang Johar Village, Deli Serdang* proceeded well and received positive responses from all participants. The activity, which was conducted using lecture and discussion methods, took place in a conducive, orderly, and participatory manner. Participants demonstrated a high level of enthusiasm, as indicated by their focused attention during the presentation of materials and their active participation in asking questions, expressing opinions, and sharing experiences during the discussion sessions.

Figure 1. The team

To assess the success of the activity, the community service team conducted an evaluation using questionnaires administered to participants before and after the activity. This evaluation aimed to measure changes in participants' levels of understanding, attitudes, and motivation related to village economic self-reliance, as well as their understanding of the roles of academics and legislators in supporting community economic development. The total number of respondents was 30, and all questionnaires were returned and could be processed, resulting in a response rate of 100 percent. The results of the questionnaire evaluation are presented in Table 1 below.

Based on Table 1, it can be observed that all evaluation indicators experienced significant improvement after the implementation of the community service activity. For the indicator of understanding village economic self-reliance, the percentage of participants who reported understanding this concept increased from 32 percent before the activity to 90 percent after the activity, representing an increase of 58 percent. This result indicates that the materials delivered were able to provide participants with a more comprehensive understanding of the importance of village economic self-reliance as a foundation for local development.

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Table 1. Changes in Participants' Understanding and Attitudes Before and After the Community Service Activity

Evaluation Indicators	Before the Activity (%)	After the Activity (%)	Increase (%)
Understanding of village economic self-reliance	32	90	58
Understanding of the community's role in village economic development	35	88	53
Understanding of the role of legislators in supporting the community economy	25	85	60
Knowledge of business development based on local potential	30	87	57
Self-confidence to participate in village economic activities	28	83	55
Motivation to develop businesses independently and sustainably	33	89	56

The indicator of understanding the community's role in village economic development also increased from 35 percent to 88 percent, representing a rise of 53 percent. This increase indicates that participants became more aware of the active roles they can play as key actors in village economic development, rather than merely as beneficiaries of development programs.

For the indicator of understanding the role of legislators in supporting the community economy, the highest increase was observed, rising from 25 percent before the activity to 85 percent after the activity, or an increase of 60 percent. This result indicates that the community service activity successfully provided new insights to participants regarding the functions and roles of legislative institutions in absorbing community aspirations, promoting policies that support people-centered economic development, and facilitating access to village economic empowerment programs. These findings reinforce the relevance of the synergy between legislators and academics as reflected in the title of the activity.

Furthermore, the indicator of knowledge related to business development based on local potential increased from 30 percent to 87 percent, or by 57 percent. This improvement indicates that participants began to understand the importance of utilizing local resources and potential as the basis for sustainable economic development at the village level.

From the attitudinal and psychological perspectives, the indicator of self-confidence to participate in village economic activities increased from 28 percent to 83 percent, representing an increase of 55 percent. In addition, motivation to develop businesses independently and sustainably increased from 33 percent to 89 percent, with a rise of 56 percent. These results indicate that the community service activity not only had an impact on cognitive aspects, but also succeeded in building participants' self-confidence and motivation as social capital for village economic development.

The results of the questionnaire evaluation are consistent with observations made during the activity, where participants appeared active, responsive, and directly engaged in the discussions. Participants did not merely listen to the material, but also began to relate it to the economic conditions they experience in their daily lives. The discussions that developed indicate a shift in mindset from an individual-oriented approach toward collective awareness in building village economic self-reliance.

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The discussion results indicate that this community service activity successfully achieved its intended objectives. The synergy between academics and legislators proved to provide added value in the process of community empowerment, through increased understanding, changes in attitudes, and strengthened motivation of the Pematang Johar Village community toward sustainable economic self-reliance. The community service activity with the theme *Synergy between Legislators and Academics for the Economic Self-Reliance of Pematang Johar Village, Deli Serdang* generated several outputs that are non-physical in nature yet provide direct benefits to the community. These outputs serve as important indicators of the success of the community service activity, as they are closely related to capacity building, attitudinal change, and the formation of socio-economic foundations that support village self-reliance.

Figure 2. Participants

The primary output of this activity is the increased community understanding of the concept of village economic self-reliance. The community no longer views economic activities solely as individual efforts, but has begun to recognize the importance of managing local potential in a more structured and collective manner. This understanding can be utilized by the community as a basis for planning and developing more sustainable economic activities in accordance with the conditions and potential of Pematang Johar Village.

In addition, the activity produced outputs in the form of increased community understanding of the role of legislative institutions in supporting village economic development. The community gained insights into the functions of legislators in absorbing public aspirations, promoting policies that support people-centered economic development, and facilitating access to economic empowerment programs. These outputs can be utilized by the community to build more effective communication with policy stakeholders and to optimally take advantage of available development support programs.

Another output of the activity is the increased self-confidence and motivation of the community to actively engage in village economic activities. This positive attitudinal change can be utilized as social capital in the formation and strengthening of community business groups, cooperation among residents, and community-based economic initiatives. The motivation developed through this activity serves as an important factor in encouraging the sustainability of village economic development programs.

The community service activity also generated outputs in the form of increased community knowledge regarding strategies for business development based on local potential. This knowledge can be utilized by the community to improve the management of existing businesses or as an initial reference for those who intend to start new enterprises. Thus, these outputs contribute to improving the quality of micro and small enterprise management at the village level.

In addition to individual-level outputs, the activity also produced social

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outputs in the form of the establishment of a dialogue and communication space among the community, academics, and legislators. The relationships formed during the activity constitute important capital for the sustainability of mentoring, policy advocacy, and cross-stakeholder collaboration in the future. These outputs can be utilized as a foundation for sustainable cooperation in promoting the economic self-reliance of Pematang Johar Village.

The outputs and benefits of this community service activity are not only felt in the short term, but also have the potential to generate long-term impacts on strengthening community capacity and village economic development. The outputs generated serve as an initial foundation for the people of Pematang Johar Village to develop economic activities in an independent, participatory, and sustainable manner.

CONCLUTION

The community service activity entitled *Synergy between Legislators and Academics for the Economic Self-Reliance of Pematang Johar Village, Deli Serdang* was successfully implemented and achieved its predetermined objectives. This activity was designed as a village community empowerment initiative through an educational and participatory approach that integrates academic perspectives and public policy.

Based on the implementation and evaluation results, it can be concluded that the community of Pematang Johar Village demonstrated a significant increase in understanding of the concept of village economic self-reliance, the active role of the community in local economic development, and the importance of policy support in promoting the sustainability of village economic enterprises. This is reflected in the results of the pre- and post-activity questionnaire evaluations, which show improvements across all indicators of participants' understanding, attitudes, and motivation.

The activity also succeeded in increasing community awareness of the role of legislative institutions in supporting village economic development. The community gained a more comprehensive understanding of the functions of legislators in absorbing public aspirations, promoting policies that support people-centered economic development, and facilitating access to relevant empowerment programs. The synergy between academics and legislators was proven to provide added value in the community empowerment process.

In addition to increased knowledge, this community service activity produced outputs in the form of enhanced self-confidence and motivation among community members to actively engage in village economic activities. Participants' enthusiasm, active involvement in discussions, and engagement throughout the activity indicate that the approach employed was effective in building collective awareness and social capital, which are essential for strengthening village economic self-reliance.

Overall, this community service activity not only provided short-term benefits in the form of improved understanding and positive attitudes among community members, but also served as an initial foundation for the sustainable economic development of Pematang Johar Village. The synergy among academics, legislators, and the village community represents a strategic approach that is relevant and replicable for community service activities in other village areas.

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