Empowerment of Ecotourism Village: Integration of Community Empowerment and Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) Method

Lia Kamelia1, Ramdani Wahyu Sururie2, Rohmanur Aziz3, Annisa Martina4

1, 2Faculty of Science and Technology, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung; 3Faculty of Sharia and Law, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung, 4Faculty of Da’wah and Communication, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung

1lia.kamelia@uinsgd.ac.id, 2ramdani.wahyu@uinsgd.ac.id, 3ronaz@uinsgd.ac.id, 4annisamartina@uinsgd.ac.id

Abstract:
Empowering the community is an endeavor to prepare society for achieving progress, independence, and well-being within a sustainable social justice environment. Effective community empowerment must be tailored to the specific conditions of the target. Correspondingly, the objective of this program was to construct and empower an educational ecotourism village by implementing a hybrid method combining Sisdamas (Community Empowerment System) and Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD). This hybrid approach was expected to facilitate the identification of existing community assets and enhance synergy among stakeholders in creating an educational ecotourism village. Moreover, integrating these two methods could result in an effective, efficient, and sustainable coaching process. Cigugurgirang village possesses several assets that can be developed into an agricultural educational tourism area, including orange gardens, grape vineyards, and ornamental plant areas. They serve as the initial foundation for asset identification. The evaluation of the coaching process incorporated the Social Return on Investment (SROI) framework analysis, yielding a value of 10.16:1. Thus, every investment of 1 million rupiahs would generate a social value of 10.16 million rupiahs. In summary, the present community empowerment program had a multi-faceted impact, encompassing economic, educational, and social benefits. Its primary focus was establishing a sustainable and socially just environment, utilizing a combination of methods to maximize effectiveness. Furthermore, SROI analysis underscored the significant social value generated by the program’s investments.

Keywords: ABCD Methods; ecotourism village; empowerment; SROI
Introduction

Empowerment is assisting community members in collaborating toward common goals and objectives. This process involves the identification of resources, the organization of actions and campaigns, and the redistribution of power within society (Sururie et al., 2019). Additionally, empowerment is a constant developmental process that unfolds gradually, commencing from the initial stages and continuing through subsequent activities and evaluations. Its overarching aim is to enhance the economic, social, and cultural conditions within society while improving the overall quality of life. Empowerment enables communities to explore and leverage their inherent potential to meet their needs, with the ultimate objective of achieving self-sufficiency. It encompasses the mobilization of active social participation through collective actions to address issues and fulfill requirements (Simanungkalit et al., 2015).

The development of the Village Community Empowerment Program has shifted its focus to empowering the community as the primary target of development rather than being mere recipients of government programs. This shift represents a transition from a traditional development paradigm, which primarily emphasizes the role of the state and capital, to an empowerment paradigm that places importance on communities and local institutions. It also entails a transformation in the role of society from passive beneficiaries of external aid to active agents and participants in the development process. The ultimate objective is for communities to attain self-sufficiency, independently address their challenges, and meet their needs through active participation and collective actions (Widayanti et al., 2021).

From the empowerment perspective, the community is the principal agent of change. External stimuli, such as financial assistance programs, act as catalysts that require support through local self-help initiatives (Mgbako et al., 2020). Hence, the community must recognize that their actions, rather than those of outsiders, are instrumental in
shaping their destiny. External actors play a facilitative role in addressing the genuine needs of the community (Nugraha, 2022).

Likewise, the mentoring program aimed at enhancing the quality of distinctive products that in Cigugurgirang Village, sponsored by the Astra Prosperous Village Program, necessitated applying a participatory empowerment approach involving the community. It aimed to raise awareness of the village's potential for development as a tourist destination.

The establishment and empowerment of educational ecotourism villages are efforts to prepare communities to develop their villages as educational tourism destinations (Widiastuti, Mihardja, & Agustini, 2019). One way to enhance the potential of rural areas is through the implementation of an educetourism program. It is expected to impact the well-being of rural residents positively. Moreover, it is anticipated that rural communities can experience improvements in their socioeconomic and cultural conditions (Suyanto et al., 2022). Furthermore, the development of educetourism in rural areas also has the potential to create new job opportunities in the tourism sector, especially for rural communities, thereby increasing their income and reducing poverty levels in rural areas (Suyanto, 2019). The present study aimed to implement the Sisdamas (Community Empowerment System) and Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) methods as assistance in forming and empowering educational ecotourism villages. Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) is a community development approach that emphasizes the strengths and resources within a community rather than focusing on weaknesses. Additionally, it underscores the significance of identifying and developing existing resources in society, including individuals, groups, organizations, and infrastructure, rather than solely addressing problems (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). This approach aims to facilitate the development of independent and empowered communities by empowering individuals and groups to take initiative and develop solutions to problems. ABCD also emphasizes cooperation and synergy with other
stakeholders, such as the government, non-governmental organizations, and companies, to develop a sustainable society (Harrison et al., 2019).

Through the implementation of this method, it is expected that there will be an increase in public awareness to build a tourism village, record assets in the community, increase synergy between stakeholders, and form a sustainable educational ecotourism village.

With numerous assets in Cigugurgirang Village, a precise and structured method is required to develop them and engage the community in formulating goals collaboratively. Accordingly, the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) method is the right approach, as it involves an appreciation of inquiry, recognition of social capital, a participatory approach to development based on the principles of empowerment and ownership, a collaborative economic development model that prioritizes the best use of community resources, and efforts to strengthen civil society by involving communities as citizens rather than clients. In this regard, assets can be people, physical structures, natural resources, institutions, businesses, or informal organizations. The ABCD process involves communities in inventorying assets and capacities, constructing relationships, developing a vision for the future, and leveraging internal and external resources to support actions (Ye et al., 2002).

The Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) method unfolds in seven stages of community empowerment. It begins with the "Collect Assets" stage, where the community identifies its hidden strengths and resources. Subsequently, it "Organizes the Core Group," assembling dedicated leaders and members to guide the journey. "Mapping Capacity and Assets" creates a comprehensive map of community assets and their owners. Next, it "Develops a Community Vision and Plan," transforming dreams into a strategic roadmap. "Mobilizing and Connecting Assets" forges interconnections, followed by "Leveraging Activities, Investments, and Resources from outside the community" to accelerate progress. Ultimately, "Implementing the Plan"
and Evaluating Progress" keeps the community on track, resembling a well-crafted narrative of self-reliance, collaboration, and empowerment.

Within the community, a rich tapestry of assets grows, encompassing six distinct categories, as outlined by South et al. (2021). 

Firstly, individual assets shine brightly, comprising the unique skills, talents, and networking abilities of community members who ardently champion community empowerment (Hefni & Uyun, 2020). Secondly, organizational assets serve as the backbone of voluntary community groups and networks, offering resources and support to uplift the community. Institutional assets stand firm, with non-governmental organizations, government agencies, and businesses already woven into the community fabric. The physical realm unfolds as yet another asset, encompassing both natural wonders and human-made structures that provide a foundation for growth. Economic assets spring forth, nurturing community well-being through exchanging goods, services, voluntary labor, and the traditions of production and consumption. Lastly, cultural assets create a vibrant tapestry, weaving together the stories, history, culture, and cherished heritage of the community, forming a unique and valuable part of their collective identity (South et al., 2021).

The assistance process follows community empowerment methods and involves several stages, including initial socialization, community consultation, social reflection, social mapping, community organization, participatory planning, program synergy, program implementation, and monitoring/evaluation. One drawback of this approach is its focus solely on identifying problems in the community and finding solutions rather than maximizing the existing conditions and potential. The ABCD method addresses this shortcoming and aims to create a more effective and efficient program (Forrester et al., 2020).

The program implemented in Cigugurgirang Village was aimed at the formation and development of an educational tourism village, particularly focused on *Kampung Jeruk* (Citrus village) tourism.
Creating a thriving tourist destination necessitates adherence to specific criteria, as articulated by Dolezal and Burns (2015). First and foremost, it should be a superior location for provincial or regional tourism development, attracting visitors seeking unique experiences. Furthermore, it should serve as a regional identity, whether through historical significance, bustling shopping centers, picturesque mountains, pristine beaches, or other distinctive features. The area should also harmoniously coexist with other zones, seamlessly integrating cultivation areas, trade hubs, and protected natural spaces. Furthermore, diversity in tourist attractions is paramount, encompassing established and undiscovered gems, ensuring a well-rounded experience for visitors. Lastly, the demarcation of the area's boundaries, whether defined by physical elements like roads or intangible factors such as cultural themes and tourism product/activity themes, is essential to provide a clear identity and cohesion that attracts tourists.

Results

The empowerment endeavor was carried out by combining two methods: the Sisdamas (Community Empowerment System) and the ABCD (Asset-Based Community Development). The asset data collection process consisted of two stages: community consultation and social reflection. At the asset mapping phase, two additional stages were carried out: social mapping and participatory planning. Mobilizing assets occurred during the program synergy and program implementation stages.
In the initial socialization cycle, the program proposing team conducted outreach to local community bases to raise awareness about the potential of Cigugurgirang village as a tourist destination. The asset data collection process began with community consultations, allowing residents to engage in social reflection simultaneously. Immediately afterward, these individuals were encouraged to invite locals to participate in a citizen consultation to discuss the assets to be developed as superior products. During this forum, the program proposing team ensured that the community reached a consensus on which assets should be prioritized for development to promote Cigugurgirang village as a tourist destination. The social mapping process followed the asset data collection and involved grouping assets, a hallmark of the ABCD method. Asset mobilization process synergized the program with stakeholders and human resource assets, assuring coordinated, organized, and measurable program implementation.

The evaluation process followed the assessment standard for the Astra Prosperous Village program, known as Social Return on
Investment (SROI) analysis. SROI is a framework for measuring and accounting for a broader concept of value, aiming to reduce inequalities and environmental degradation while enhancing well-being by incorporating social, environmental, and economic costs and benefits (Gosselin, Boccanfuso, & Laberge, 2020). SROI measures change in a way relevant to organizations involved in or contributing to a program by quantifying social, environmental, and economic outcomes and representing them using monetary values. It enables the calculation of the benefits-to-costs ratio. For instance, a ratio of 3:1 indicates that a 1 million investment generates a social value of 3 million (Davies et al., 2019).

**Figure 2.**
*Freemont oranges typical of Cigugurgirang village*

This community service program has been carried out in Cigugurgirang Village, Parongpong District, West Bandung Regency, since August 2019. Cigugurgirang Village is located in the North Bandung area. It is designated as a Provincial Strategic Area/KSP from an environmental perspective and is situated north of Bandung. It possesses significant socioeconomic and physical characteristics due to its location within the Bandung Basin Development Area, serving as the National Activity Center in West Java, thus requiring special oversight.
Figure 3.
An example of an Orange Grove tourist spot

Cigugurgrang Village is one of seven villages in Parongpong District, West Bandung Regency, with a population of 16,383 people. This highland village, despite its relatively remote location from the city center, boasts substantial potential, including agricultural land and natural tourism. Effective management from various angles has been instrumental in this village's success. Community harmony and the active involvement of the village support organizational structure have propelled the management to a more advanced level. In this regard, most Cigugurgrang Village residents engage in agriculture on existing land, generating a significant portion of their economic activity from agricultural practices.

The first stage of the present program involved collecting asset data through community consultations and initial outreach efforts. Some of the assets recorded at this stage included farmers and orange groves in Cigugurgrang Village, the picturesque natural landscapes, and the favorable climate conditions in the North Bandung area. Additionally, several community organizations display high potential. The collected asset data were subsequently categorized during the asset mapping stage and are presented in Figure 4.
Figure 4.  
Asset mapping

- **Personal/Human Assets:**
  - Orange Farmers
  - Vegetable Farmers
  - Tourist spot entrepreneurs
  - Guest house owners

- **Associations or Social Assets:**
  - Farmers
  - Village governance
  - Youth organization

- **Institutional Assets:**
  - PT Astra International, Tbk
  - UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung
  - Government tourism office
  - Department of Agriculture

- **Natural assets**
  - Orange grove
  - Favorable climatic conditions
  - Picturesque landscapes

- **Physical assets**
  - Swimming pool
  - Guest houses

- **Spiritual and Cultural assets**
  - Friendly Sundanese Culture
  - Community commitment
In Cycle 1, the program proposing team conducted outreach to local community bases to raise critical awareness about the potential of Cigugurgirang Village. Socialization techniques employed various channels, including banners, leaflets, and social media posts. Subsequently, they engaged key figures from the local community who were tasked with inviting residents to participate in a citizen consultation. The purpose of the residents' meeting was to discuss the development of premium orange and lemon products as their key focus.

During the citizen consultation forum, the program proposing team ensured that the community reached a consensus regarding the significance of developing these premium citrus and lemon products to make their village a future tourist destination. The outcome of Cycle 1 involved categorizing various assets into different groups, as illustrated
In Figure 3. In addition, the team created social maps identifying potential tourist areas.

In Cycle 2, which focused on "Social Mapping and Community Organizations,” the program proposing team convened a second meeting with the community, with the primary agenda being social mapping and community organizations. The community carried out social mapping under the guidance of the program proposer team. This process involved describing factors that either supported or hindered the development of the Citrus tourism village and proposing solutions to overcome obstacles. The community was responsible for creating a map detailing these supportive and inhibiting factors, such as profiles of community human resources, land areas, soil fertility levels, and more. After the social mapping process was completed, the program proposing team encouraged the establishment of community organizations responsible for implementing the tourism village development program. This organization oversaw the establishment of the orange tourism village in Cigugurgirang Village, facilitated by the program team. The outcome of Cycle 2 was the creation of documents, including a social map for developing the tourism village and an organization tasked with developing the orange tourism village.

In Cycle 3, “Participatory Planning and Program Synergy,” the program proposer team encouraged the organizations formed in Cycle 2 to collaboratively develop a plan with other community members in the form of a “Term of Reference” (TOR), which included program urgency, the legal basis, estimated costs, implementation time, allocation of responsibilities for various activities, and accommodations. Furthermore, it involved promoting synergy between mass organizations and related institutions, such as the Department of Agriculture, Department of the Environment, the Office of Tourism, and the industrial sector, to establish partnerships with the organizations involved in this program. The output of Cycle 3 was the creation of a comprehensive planning document containing a timeline and strategies for achieving program objectives that were collectively
agreed upon by the community. This document served as a reference for the implementation of the Tourism Village Formation Program, which was executed by mass organizations.

Figure 6.
The empowerment process

In Cycle 4, “Program Implementation and Evaluation Monitoring,” community organizations put the program into action by improving the quality of premium orange and lemon products as outlined in the planning document. While implementing the program, community organizations, with the support of the program proposer team, undertook a series of activities, including workshops, training sessions, assistance in enhancing the quality of superior products, and the development of marketing strategies for the products and the tourism village. Program implementation was closely aligned with the previously agreed-upon planning documents to assure that the direction and objectives of the superior product improvement program were precise, resulting in outcomes that could enhance the welfare of the residents of Cigugurgirang Village, advancing its status as an Astra Prosperous Village. To guarantee the quality, monitoring was conducted, culminating in an evaluation by the team proposing the program and the community organizations. The output of Cycle 4 was the enhancement of superior citrus and lemon products, with results
that could be practiced in local businesses, ultimately improving the well-being of the community and the tourism village destinations.

Discussion

Evaluation is a process undertaken to evaluate an implemented activity or program. It aims to determine whether the activity aligns with its intended goals and to gauge its success or failure. The evaluation can be conducted by the organization responsible for the activity or by relevant external parties. One valuable tool for evaluating an activity or program is Social Return on Investment (SROI).

SROI is a methodology employed to quantify and reevaluate the social impact of a program or activity carried out by an organization. In this context, SROI analysis serves as a tool for measuring the social value generated by a program, enabling organizations to ascertain its effectiveness and sustainability. Hence, organizations can use it to determine whether their programs are effective and sustainable.

By employing SROI analysis, organizations can further assess whether the activities or programs they have executed align with their intended objectives and define the degree of their success. It can also facilitate comparisons among activities or programs carried out by several organizations, offering insights into their relative performance.

In the present study, the initial step was documenting the stakeholders involved in the program, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Stakeholders Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Role in the Program (Reason for Inclusion)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>PT Astra International Tbk</td>
<td>Corporate Branding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung</td>
<td>Facilitator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cigugurirang Village</td>
<td>Benefit recipients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture</td>
<td>Policies, legalization of farmer groups, extension workers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The subsequent step was to determine the expected outcomes, as indicated in Table 2.

**Table 2.**

*Program outcomes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Program Stakeholders</th>
<th>Outcomes (Changes) Created (Intentional/unintentional changes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Year 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>PT Astra International Tbk</td>
<td>Improvement in PR value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge and experiential gain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Flagship program distinctiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung</td>
<td>Implementation of research results in society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Collaboration between the academic community and society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Institutional branding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cigugurgirang village</td>
<td>Citrus farmers’ welfare improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture</td>
<td>Third-party farmer assistance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The SROI analysis process was carried out by inputting the results of in-depth interviews and converting each activity into rupiah values based on several standards. The calculation also considered Impact, Deadweight, Displacement, Attribution, and Drop Off values. The SROI analysis results are presented in Figure 7.

Figure 7.

**SROI analysis results**

According to SROI values in Figure 7, the mean score is 10.16. In this context, SROI is a metric utilized to measure the social impact of an investment or activity. The calculation compares the value generated by the activities with the costs incurred to carry them out. Thus, an SROI value of 10.16 indicates that for every rupiah spent on the activities, a social value of 10.16 rupiah was generated. It represents the level of social benefit derived from the investment. Furthermore, based on the value standards provided in Table 3, it can be concluded that the program achieved a 5-star rating.
Table 3.

*SROI value standards*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment criteria</th>
<th>SROI Value Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1</td>
<td>1 star</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥1 - ≤1.5</td>
<td>2 stars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;1.5 - ≤3</td>
<td>3 stars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;3 - ≤7</td>
<td>4 stars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;7</td>
<td>5 stars</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The subsequent analysis aimed to determine the percentage of impact on each stakeholder. It was revealed that the Cigugurgirang village community, the target community for this program, experienced the most significant impact. On the other hand, the Government Tourism Office and the Department of Agriculture had a relatively minor impact. It can be attributed to the program’s limited socialization at the district level, resulting in a scarcity of respondents to explore its impact. As a recommendation for the following year, it is advised to establish more intensive communication with the relevant agencies.

**Conclusion and Suggestion**

The development of an integrated educational tourism village based on the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) method is a sustainable, multiyear program that harnesses the potential within a community as a valuable resource for fostering the growth of an educational tourism village. The research findings demonstrate that this program effectively enhanced the quality of life for community members, boosted the local economy, and contributed to an increased influx of tourists to the village. Moreover, the program significantly benefitted the managers overseeing and expanding the village. These
results suggest that other villages with similar potential should consider adopting this program. In addition, it is essential to conduct regular evaluations to gauge its successes and identify areas for improvement.

References


Mgbako, Ofole, Emily H. Miller, · Anthony, F Santoro, Robert H.
Empowerment of Ecotourism Village…


Widiastuti, Tuti, Eli Mihardja, and Prima Agustini. 2019. “Women’s Participation on Tourism Villages’ Management in the Dieng Pandawa Tourism Awareness Group.” *ASEAN Journal of*
Lia Kamelia, et.al

*Community Engagement* 3, no. 1: 122–38. https://doi.org/10.7454/ajce.v3i1.175.
