



Revitalizing an Asset-Based Cultural Economy: Empowering MSMEs in the Balla Barakka ri Galesong Area Through an Asset-Based Community Development Approach

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Abstract

Rural economic empowerment increasingly faces a gap between strong cultural potential and limited managerial capacity to respond to global markets. In Galesong Kota Village, Takalar Regency, this is evident in the Balla Barakka ri Galesong customary settlement, where rich historical-cultural assets remain stagnant due to passive management and weak integration into a modern business ecosystem. The challenge is reinforced by limited cross-generational synergy, with MSMEs relying on traditional practices while youth creativity is underutilized. This community service program aimed to overcome stagnation by strengthening MSME economic independence, promoting sustainable well-being, and building collaboration among artisans, youth, and POKDARWIS to support the “Impact Village” vision. Implemented through the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, the program shifted participants toward an asset-oriented mindset. Conducted participatorily on October 5, 2025, with 50 participants, it used asset mapping and appreciative inquiry via workshops and FGDs to identify “hidden treasures” and design strategies that transform cultural value into economic value without undermining sacred traditions. Results were highly significant, shown by a 97% increase in understanding of business management and asset development. The program also produced functional integration: Balla Barakka’s historical narrative became the core value proposition of MSME products, while older generations safeguarded authentic production quality and younger generations led digital marketing and packaging innovation. Overall, ABCD proved effective in revitalizing the village economy by turning passive assets into productive capital through inclusive collaboration.

Keywords: Local Economic Empowerment; MSMEs; Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD); Impact Village; Cultural Tourism Integration

Abstrak

Pemberdayaan ekonomi pedesaan menghadapi tantangan berupa kesenjangan antara kelimpahan potensi budaya dan kapasitas manajerial masyarakat dalam merespons pasar global. Di Desa Galesong Kota, Takalar, Kampung Adat Balla Barakka ri Galesong memiliki aset sejarah-budaya yang kaya, namun stagnan karena dikelola pasif dan belum terintegrasi dengan ekosistem bisnis modern. Kondisi ini diperparah minimnya sinergi lintas generasi: UMKM masih berjalan tradisional, sementara kreativitas pemuda belum terwadahi. Program pengabdian ini bertujuan meningkatkan kemandirian ekonomi UMKM, mendorong kesejahteraan berkelanjutan, serta membangun kolaborasi pengrajin, pemuda, dan POKDARWIS untuk mewujudkan “Desa Berdampak” melalui pendekatan Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD). Kegiatan partisipatif (5 Oktober 2025; 50 peserta) menggunakan asset mapping dan appreciative inquiry melalui lokakarya dan FGD untuk menggali aset tersembunyi dan mengonversi nilai budaya menjadi nilai ekonomi tanpa mengurangi sakralitas tradisi. Hasilnya sangat signifikan: pemahaman meningkat 97% (pre–post test), disertai integrasi fungsional berupa narasi sejarah sebagai value proposition produk, kolaborasi produksi otentik oleh generasi tua, serta digitalisasi pemasaran dan inovasi kemasan oleh generasi muda.

Kata kunci: *Pemberdayaan Ekonomi Lokal; UMKM; Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD); Desa Berdampak; Integrasi Pariwisata Budaya*

Introduction

Local economic empowerment grounded in village potential through strengthening Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) has become central in national and global development discourse (Hadi & Arifin, 2021b)(Santoso, 2023). In the contemporary economic landscape, MSMEs are not merely business entities; they function as the backbone of economic resilience by absorbing labor and enabling a more equitable distribution of welfare. The “Impact Village” concept has emerged as a new paradigm that positions villages not as objects of development, but as subjects capable of managing local assets toward sustainable self-reliance. In today’s disruptive era, managerial capability and product innovation rooted in local wisdom are increasingly critical as market competition becomes more open and dynamic (Programme, 2016)(Bank, 2017). For higher education institutions, this context creates an academic responsibility to translate theory into practice through community service (Green et al., 2015)(Kretzmann et al., 1993). Synergy between management science and real field potential is therefore essential to transform villages with latent potential into competitive economic entities (Mathie et al., 2003), aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly inclusive rural economic growth.

Despite broad recognition of this urgency, field realities often reveal a substantial gap between existing potential and managerial capacity, as seen in Galesong Kota Village, Takalar Regency. The area holds a distinctive comparative advantage through the Balla Barakka ri Galesong customary, cultural, and constitutional settlement, which provides a foundation for craft-based MSMEs and local culture. However, preliminary observations indicate that this

economic potential has not been optimally capitalized to improve village welfare. Key issues include low business management capacity, conventional marketing strategies, uncompetitive packaging quality, and weak village economic institutions. In addition, a sociological challenge persists: youth groups and the Tourism Awareness Group (POKDARWIS) have not been strategically integrated into the local economic ecosystem. MSME artisans, POKDARWIS leadership and members in Takalar Regency, and Karang Taruna youth in the area experience innovation stagnation and limited synergy, causing Balla Barakka's cultural potential to remain a passive asset rather than evolving into a broad and impactful economic driver.

Recent literature has explored various strategies for empowering rural MSMEs. Studies by (Nugroho et al., 2022)(Santoso, 2023) show that interventions such as digital marketing training can substantially increase sales turnover (Hadi & Arifin, 2021a)(Bala et al., 2018) (Development, 2021) (Wijaya et al., 2021) highlight the role of packaging in enhancing the market value of local products (Kotler et al., 2016)(Rundh, 2016).. However, most approaches remain partial, focusing on a single technical dimension (e.g., marketing or production) without holistically integrating cultural institutional strengthening and cross-generational collaboration. The novelty of this community service initiative in Galesong lies in its integrative strategy: it not only addresses MSME technical-business capacity but also revitalizes the roles of POKDARWIS and youth as catalysts in Balla Barakka's cultural tourism ecosystem. This approach is justified because economic interventions in customary areas require culturally aligned methods that balance economic value creation with cultural preservationan under-addressed gap in prior programs at this site.

In response to these multidimensional challenges, this Community Service Program (PKM) was initiated under the theme "Local Economic Empowerment Based on Village Potential through Strengthening MSMEs Toward an Impact Village." The program was designed as a comprehensive solution to bridge competency and institutional gaps through a series of targeted trainings and mentoring. Specifically, the program aimed to: (1) strengthen village economic self-reliance through MSME capacity building based on local potential; (2) promote sustainable improvements in community well-being; (3) reinforce MSMEs as the primary driver of an impactful village economy; and (4) build synergy among MSME actors, youth, and POKDARWIS in developing the local economy and culture-based tourism. The expected benefits include improved business management, marketing, and local potential-based product development for MSME actors; increased economic activity and social welfare for the community; strengthened local economic institutions and an enhanced "Impact Village" image for village partners; and practical application of management expertise and academic contribution to rural development for the service team.

Method

This community service program applied the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach. ABCD emphasizes identifying and strengthening existing village assets—including MSME potential, local wisdom, youth roles, and support from customary and tourism institutions. The method was selected for its effectiveness in shifting communities from a

problem-oriented (deficiency-based) mindset to a strength-based perspective, making it particularly relevant for empowering local potential in customary settlements. Implementation was participatory, involving key stakeholders to support program sustainability. The program targeted MSME artisans, POKDARWIS leadership and members in Takalar Regency, and Karang Taruna youth, with a total of 50 participants. Activities were conducted at the partner site, the Balla Barakka ri Galesong customary, cultural, and constitutional settlement in Galesong District, Galesong Kota Village, Takalar Regency. The program took place on Sunday, October 5, 2025, as a strategic momentum to strengthen synergy between community actors and academics in village development.

Conceptually, the ABCD method used in this program extended beyond technical training and served as a structured value-discovery process. In partnership with Balla Barakkaka ri Galesong, ABCD was operationalized through participatory workshops and appreciative dialogue. The approach focuses on five core community assets human, social, physical, financial, and environmental which are then mobilized as economic strength. Program delivery combined structured presentations with Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) for asset mapping and demonstrations of MSME strengthening strategies. This design enabled two-way knowledge exchange: the service team contributed theoretical and strategic frameworks, while the community provided local context and cultural wisdom. Through this process, participants particularly POKDARWIS and youth were encouraged to recognize customary and tourism institutional support as primary capital that had not been fully optimized, rather than as supplementary elements. Accordingly, ABCD positioned the community as the main agent of change, co-creating a village future vision grounded in internal capacities identified and validated during the program.

Program stages were arranged systematically and chronologically to ensure a coherent learning trajectory. The program began with an opening session and an introduction to PKM objectives, during which the service team built rapport and aligned expectations. Participants then entered the first core session on identifying village potential and local economic assets, actively mapping existing resources within the Balla Barakka settlement through interactive discussion. The next session provided training on strengthening MSMEs based on village potential, offering theoretical and practical guidance on converting identified assets into value-added economic units. Once foundational understanding was established, the program continued with a discussion on the role of MSMEs in realizing an impact village, integrating economic aspirations with socio-cultural priorities. A subsequent critical stage engaged youth and POKDARWIS in local economic development by formulating cross-generational collaboration strategies. The program was deepened through Q&A and group discussions addressing partner-specific constraints. Activities concluded with closing remarks and the formulation of a Follow-Up Action Plan as a shared post-program commitment.

Program effectiveness was assessed using a comprehensive evaluation instrument covering cognitive and participatory dimensions. First, knowledge gains were measured through pre-tests and post-tests on asset management and MSME development; comparative analysis indicated the extent of learning uptake. Second, affective and psychomotor aspects were assessed via participation observation during discussions and asset mapping,

documenting engagement, initiative, and interaction quality. In addition, a participant satisfaction questionnaire was administered at the end of the program to capture feedback on materials, facilitation, and relevance to community needs. Data from these instruments were analyzed descriptively using qualitative and quantitative approaches. The evaluation results served not only as indicators of current program performance but also as empirical evidence to inform development policy recommendations for Galesong Kota Village and to support planning for subsequent community service periods.

Result and Discussion

The Community Service Program (PKM) themed “Local Economic Empowerment Based on Village Potential through Strengthening MSMEs Toward an Impact Village” was implemented comprehensively on October 5, 2025. The activity was conducted in the strategic area of the Balla Barakka ri Galesong customary, cultural, and constitutional settlement and involved 50 participants, including MSME actors, members of POKDARWIS, and Karang Taruna youth. The ABCD approach enabled participatory and dialogical implementation, ensuring full partner engagement at each stage. The program activities are described as follows:

1. Opening Session and Introduction to the PKM Program

The program began with an opening ceremony that brought together the service team, community leaders, and participants. This session was essential for rapport-building and trust formation. The team presented the program’s rationale, aligned understanding of the “Impact Village” concept, and outlined the activity roadmap. Participants showed strong enthusiasm, although some expressed concern about transforming cultural assets into economic commodities without diminishing sacred values. This initial dialogue effectively bridged communication gaps and established shared commitment to complete the activity series.

2. Identification of Village Potential and Local Economic Assets

Using ABCD instruments, participants conducted asset mapping through FGDs. Unlike deficiency-focused approaches, this session explored hidden community strengths. Results indicated that in addition to Balla Barakka as a physical asset, the community also possessed skill assets (local artisans not yet organized) and social assets (strong mutual cooperation values). Participants identified the historical narrative of Galesong as an overlooked value proposition that can be embedded in MSME products to enhance distinctiveness.

3. Delivery of MSME Strengthening Materials Based on Village Potential

This session emphasized technical and managerial capacity building. Materials covered basic financial management, local-wisdom-based branding, and modern packaging practices. The team demonstrated how craft and culinary products can be packaged with designs that convey Galesong’s cultural story, thereby increasing perceived value among tourists.

4. Discussion on the Role of MSMEs in Realizing an Impact Village

The discussion expanded beyond profit generation to social impact, emphasizing MSMEs as pillars of village economic resilience. Participants explored how each enterprise unit contributes to local employment and poverty reduction, aligning with village SDG indicators.

5. Engagement of Youth and POKDARWIS in Local Economic Development

This session addressed regeneration-related innovation stagnation. Youth and POKDARWIS were supported to design digital marketing strategies. A collaborative model emerged: older generations ensured authentic product quality, while younger generations developed creative social media content. Participants agreed to position Balla Barakka as a central showcase for MSME products jointly managed by POKDARWIS.

6. Question-and-Answer and Group Discussion

This forum clarified technical constraints, including access to capital and product quality consistency. Facilitated by the service team, participants formulated community-based solutions such as establishing a collective fund and standardizing product quality before marketing in the tourism area.

7. Closing and Formulation of the Follow-Up Action Plan (RTL)

The program concluded with the signing of a shared commitment to implement the RTL. The plan included a schedule for continued mentoring, targets for business legality (NIB), and a timeline for launching MSME-integrated tourism packages.

Knowledge transfer effectiveness was quantified through pre-test and post-test instruments, which indicated substantial increases in participants' understanding of business management and village tourism development strategies.

Table 1. Comparison of Participants' Average Understanding Scores (0–100 Scale)

Assessment Aspects	Average Pre-test	Average Post-test	Rate of Increase (%)	Comprehension Category
MSME Management	42.5	88.0	107%	Highly significant
Village Asset Knowledge (ABC	38.0	85.5	125%	Highly significant
Digital Marketing Strategy	45.0	82.0	82%	Significant
Institutional Synergy	50.0	90.0	80%	Significant
Overall Average	43.9	86.4	97%	

Based on these data and qualitative observations, the primary outcomes are summarized as follows: (1) participants' understanding of the impact village concept and local-potential-based MSME strengthening increased, as shown by a 97% rise in average test scores; (2) village assets and sustainable economic potential were identified, particularly the integration of the Balla Barakka historical narrative with tangible MSME products; (3) functional synergy was established among MSME actors (production), youth (digital marketing), and POKDARWIS (destination management) within a single village economic ecosystem; and (4) community motivation increased, reflected in participant-driven initiative to develop the RTL.

Achievement of Program Objectives and the Program’s Internal Logic

The strong outcomes demonstrate clear alignment with the program objectives. The first objective economic self-reliance was supported by the sharp increase in MSME management understanding (post-test 88.0). As participants learned to identify assets through ABCD, dependence-oriented thinking shifted toward self-reliance, as they recognized that primary business capital already existed within their environment. This directly supports the second objective sustainable well-being because effective local asset management can reduce economic leakage and keep value added circulating within the village. The third objective strengthening MSMEs as impact-economy drivers was validated by discussions that positioned MSMEs as integral to the Balla Barakka tourism ecosystem rather than as stand-alone units. This mindset shift matters because an “Impact Village” requires multiplier effects from local economic activities. Finally, the fourth objective building institutional synergy was evidenced by concrete cross-generational collaboration in RTL formulation. Aligning the visions of older MSME actors and younger POKDARWIS/Karang Taruna members serves as a strong qualitative indicator that sociological barriers to innovation are beginning to diminish. Overall, the program’s internal logic operated effectively: knowledge intervention and asset mapping drove cognitive change that translated into readiness for collaborative action to advance economic self-reliance.

Practical Implications for Partners and Broader Impact

For artisans, POKDARWIS, and youth in Galesong Kota Village, these outcomes offer practical responses to persistent constraints. Given the initial issue of Balla Barakka’s cultural potential being treated as a passive asset, asset identification generated a clear implication: the development of experience-based tourism products. For MSME actors, improved understanding of branding and packaging directly strengthens product competitiveness. They no longer sell commodities alone; they sell Galesong’s cultural “story” through product narratives and packaging, which can plausibly increase willingness to pay. For POKDARWIS and youth, the established synergy addresses innovation stagnation by opening new village creative economy roles such as tour guiding, content creation, and village marketplace management. This shifts youth positions from observers to strategic actors within the village value chain. At the district level, Takalar Regency may consider this revitalization model as a blueprint for professional heritage-area management that preserves identity while improving welfare, responding to longstanding capacity constraints in local economic governance.

Scientific Context and Comparison with Previous Studies

The program’s findings contribute to the empowerment literature by highlighting the primacy of local assets. While prior studies emphasize digital marketing as a key driver (Nugroho et al., 2022)(Hadi & Fremerey, 2021) (Kurniawan, 2022), the present results suggest that digitalization alone is insufficient without a strong local-asset foundation. This shifts the focus from tools (technology and marketing) to substance (cultural assets and local wisdom). Consistent with work on cultural sustainability in tourism (Richards, 2018) (Salazar, 2020), this program reinforces the argument that cultural value is among the most resilient economic assets. Its novelty, relative to packaging-focused or institutional-only interventions (Wijaya et

al., 2021)(Santoso, 2023), lies in an integrative ABCD framework that connects product (MSMEs), place (Balla Barakka), and people (youth–POKDARWIS synergy) simultaneously. The program supports the view that strengthening local economic institutions is more effective when driven by a strength-based approach rather than relying solely on capital injections (Rahman, 2019) (Kammer-Kerwick et al., 2022), particularly in customary contexts where cultural adaptation is essential.

Limitations, Strengths, and Critical Reflection

Despite positive outcomes, limitations should be acknowledged. A one-day implementation schedule constrained the depth of technical content, particularly digital marketing practice, which typically requires repeated simulation. Moreover, shifting collective mindsets from passive to proactive generally requires sustained incubation beyond a single workshop. Nevertheless, these limitations were offset by methodological strengths of ABCD, especially its capacity to foster strong community ownership. Because strategies were derived from participants' own asset mapping rather than top-down instruction, resistance to change was minimal. The approach also supports psychological sustainability by recognizing strengths rather than emphasizing deficiencies. Cross-generational synergy represents another distinctive strength, as many empowerment programs underperform when youth are not positioned as change agents. Accordingly, future initiatives should prioritize sustained post-training mentoring to convert short-term enthusiasm into consistent implementation.

Conclusion

The ABCD-based community service program in the Balla Barakka ri Galesong area successfully revitalized the community's economic paradigm from conventional practices toward local-potential-based self-reliance. Comprehensive evaluation indicates that all strategic objectives were achieved. MSME capacity strengthening (Objective 1) and reinforcement of MSMEs as economic drivers (Objective 3) were empirically supported by a 97% increase in participant understanding of business management and asset mapping, indicating a transition from producing goods to managing culturally valued economic assets. Institutional synergy (Objective 4) was concretely realized through a collaborative work chain linking older artisans as the production base and youth (POKDARWIS/Karang Taruna) as the digital marketing spearhead. This functional integration provides a foundation for sustainable well-being improvement (Objective 2), evidenced by participant-driven commitment to implement the Follow-Up Action Plan (RTL). Overall, the program concludes that achieving an impact village depends on the community's ability to identify internal "treasures" and orchestrate social, cultural, and economic assets within an integrated tourism narrative, thereby strengthening economic resilience rooted in local identity.

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