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Community-Based Economic Empowerment Using the ABCD Approach at FLOS Organic Hydroponics in Bansari Village

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ABSTRACT

Background: The objective of this community empowerment initiative is centered on community participation to overcome issues of limited technical capacity, business management, and market access that hinder the optimization of agricultural potential in Bansari Village, Temanggung Regency.
Contribution: Main focus of the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach is local community assets as the basis for strengthening the hydroponic agriculture-based economy. This study shows how mapping and optimizing human, social, natural, financial, technological, and spiritual assets can be a strategy for community economic empowerment.
Method: The study used a mixed method design with data collection techniques through observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and questionnaires. The research informants consisted of 10 people selected through purposive sampling, while quantitative data was obtained from 40 farmers who were members of the community. Qualitative data was analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, while quantitative data was analyzed descriptively using a Likert scale.
Results: The research results show that the ABCD approach can optimize various local community assets in developing hydroponic businesses. The program evaluation revealed that 77% of respondents gave a positive assessment of the empowerment activities.
Conclusion: The program also resulted in improved technical skills in hydroponic cultivation, additional income for farmers, and strengthened social solidarity within the community.

1. Introduction

Development is a dynamic process that aims to improve the welfare of society in various aspects of life, including economic, social, cultural, and environmental aspects [1]–[3]. Empowering the rural economy has become a strategic issue in sustainable development, especially amid the inequality of access to resources and economic opportunities between urban and rural areas [4], [5]. Villages are no longer understood as objects of development, but rather as subjects with potential, capacity, and local knowledge that can be developed independently. Therefore, an empowerment approach that focuses on community strengths is becoming increasingly relevant to encourage the economic independence of rural communities [6].

An empowerment approach that emphasizes community strength is increasingly important in promoting the economic independence of rural communities, but in practice it often faces various problems. One of the most common challenges is a top-down empowerment approach, where programs and policies originate from the central government without considering local conditions and potential [7]. This approach tends to place communities as passive objects of development that are dependent on external assistance. As a result, many empowerment programs cease after funding support ends because they do not grow from community initiatives. This condition shows that empowerment approaches that emphasize "needs" (needs-based approach) often fail to create community independence [8].

In empowering communities, it is important to consider the needs and local potential of the community. There are various potentials that have opportunities for development, such as individual potential, natural resource potential, and socio-cultural potential within the community [9]. Local potential includes the natural wealth, culture, and human resources of an area, where natural potential is greatly influenced by geographical factors, climate, and the region itself. The Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach places the potential and assets that exist in the community as the main force to drive community progress [10]. This approach was first introduced by John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight (1993), who emphasized the importance of viewing the community from the perspective of its strengths (assets), rather than its weaknesses (deficits). ABCD explains that every community has assets or basic capital that can be developed, such as human, natural, cultural, economic, and social resources. Through the identification, mapping, and development of these assets, communities can build themselves independently and sustainably.

Accordingly, In Bansari Village, empowerment is directed at managing agricultural potential, both in terms of natural and human resources, tourism, and culture, independently by the community so that they can play a leading role in improving the economy. One form of community initiative that has developed is FLOS Organic Hydroponics. FLOS Organic Hydroponics has become a platform for economic strengthening that encourages the formation of social networks and cooperation among community members. The existence of an organized farming community has created a space for shared learning, knowledge exchange, and economic solidarity.

Despite its great potential as a modern community-based agricultural enterprise, the development of FLOS Organic Hydroponics has not been fully optimized. A number of obstacles remain, particularly limited capital, market access, and the managerial capacity of some community members. On the market side, agricultural products are still marketed through conventional mechanisms with relatively long distribution chains, resulting in price fluctuations and weak bargaining power for farmers. In addition, the limited variety of products means that opportunities for added value and market expansion have not been fully utilized. The low level of collaboration, both among community members and with external parties, also limits the strengthening of business networks and knowledge exchange. Nevertheless, the FLOS Organic Hydroponics community has potential local assets, such as strong social solidarity, established farming experience, and village institutional support.

With that in mind, using ABCD approach, the community service program in Bansari village focuses on improving the community's skills in processing various agricultural products into value-added products as an effort to strengthen the economic welfare of residents. In addition, this activity is also aimed at building an empowered community by involving local farmers as the main actors. These empowerment efforts include the creation of agricultural production facilities, agricultural development, the provision of supporting equipment and construction, the application of seed technology, technical training, and assistance in marketing aspects. Hence, the ABCD approach used in this development project incorporates various skill advancement necessary by actively engage community in decision making and resources management, aiming for sustainability [11].

Scholarly works on ABCD approach in community empowerment and development project are indeed not just a few, but most of them follow similar pattern of explanation. Respati [12] studies the implementation of ABCD approach on fish farming development in Mangunharjo. However, to achieve sustainability, its focus in on rural-urban synergy. Similarly, Guarino [13], although using the same approach, they use a different focus, service learning. The development project in Kuripan [14] indeed incorporates practical skill training, however, this study does not critically analyze the relationship between process and result. Oppositely, while the study in Ghana [15] critically evaluates the impact of ABCD approached development project, it lacks the critical analysis on the process itself. Similar works on the use of ABCD approach are indeed abundant but mainly with similar pattern of explanation as mentioned. There is a need for more comprehensive evaluative research that analyses that process and finally evaluate how is ABCD implemented and to what extent the process has advanced the development of local community.

Therefore, based on the actual development project using ABCD in Bansari village, this study examines the comprehensive process of combining community assets including human, social, natural, and institutional with appropriate technical skills improvements including hydroponic, product production, and digital tools. Using evaluative research approach, this study also analytically investigates the extent that the development project in Bansari village has advanced human, social, natural, and institutional assets of the community and resulted

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in a more sustainable economic development. This study therefore provides some critical contributions. Empirically, it offers practical description of how ABCD approach is applied in different contexts with different socio-economic situations. Theoretically, it expands the ABCD theory by incorporating a socio-technical and economic outcome oriented into a rural agribusiness context. Lastly, this study also provides practical insights on how to improve community livelihood by applying various and systemized process based on ABCD approach.

2. Method

This community service activity was carried out in the FLOS Organic Hydroponics community in Bansari Village, Bansari Subdistrict, Temanggung Regency, Central Java. The research approach used was a mixed method. A qualitative approach was used to examine the process and results of empowerment within the community. A quantitative approach was used to evaluate the output, namely to determine the extent of community change through technical, economic, and social impacts of empowerment [16]. Qualitative data was collected through in-depth interviews with informants. There were 10 informants in this study, consisting of 1 village head, 1 Gapoktan chairperson, 1 chairperson of the FLOS Organic Hydroponics Community, and 7 farmer members of the community. Informants were determined using purposive sampling. The data collection technique in this study used source triangulation (observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation) [17]. The qualitative data was then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing [18], [19].

Meanwhile, quantitative data was collected by distributing questionnaires to farmers who are members of the FLOS Organic Hydroponics community. The sample in this study consisted of 40 farmers. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively using a Likert scale to describe the respondents' perceptions of the implementation and benefits of the empowerment program [20]. The variables were measured as index variables, and these indicators were used as the basis for creating the questionnaire instrument. The Likert scale was used for each category of the instrument, with responses ranging from very positive (5) to very negative (1) [21]. This approach uses the ABCD (Asset Based Community Development) method. ABCD focuses on strengthening communities through the utilization of existing assets [22]. John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight (1993) emphasize the importance of viewing communities from the perspective of their strengths (assets), rather than their weaknesses (deficits). The basic framework of thinking in the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach consists of five interrelated stages, namely Discovery (assessment), Dream (vision), Design (procedure), Define (consolidation), and Destiny (goal) [23].

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Process

Favorable agroclimatic conditions and abundant clean water make this village ideal for agriculture and other highland commodities [24]. Most of the community works in the

agricultural sector, either as farmers or farm workers, and their social life is still characterized by a strong culture of mutual cooperation [25].

A strong culture of mutual cooperation encourages communities to form farmer groups as a forum for sharing knowledge, labor, and experience in horticultural land management. [24]. Over time, many agricultural challenges have arisen, such as limited capital, limited crop production, and market access. The existence of these local farmer groups has become an asset that strengthens the economic resilience of the village.

By utilizing these assets, the local community has become more open to adaptive and sustainable agricultural innovations. The FLOS Organic Hydroponics Community was born as a collaborative initiative by residents to develop horticultural cultivation through a hydroponic approach. This community has grown as a shared learning experience that integrates local farmers, village youth, and farmer groups. Through collaboration and mentoring, the FLOS community serves as a driving force that increases the capacity of farmers, the economy, and strengthens social networks.

Community service for the FLOS Organic Hydroponics Community is carried out using the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach [26]–[28]. These assets are then processed and developed into solutions for various problems that arise in the areas where empowerment is carried out. Through this approach, communities are encouraged to utilize their potential or resources as the basis for implementing empowerment programs [29], [30].

Based on research Prasad and Ravita [31], there are seven types of community capital, namely physical capital, financial capital, environmental capital, technological capital, human capital, social capital, and spiritual capital. These seven types of capital are resources owned by the community that can function as strengths or weaknesses of the community. Community capital is considered a potential that enables the community to play an active role in participation. As seen in Figure 1, the assets discussed in this study are as follows.

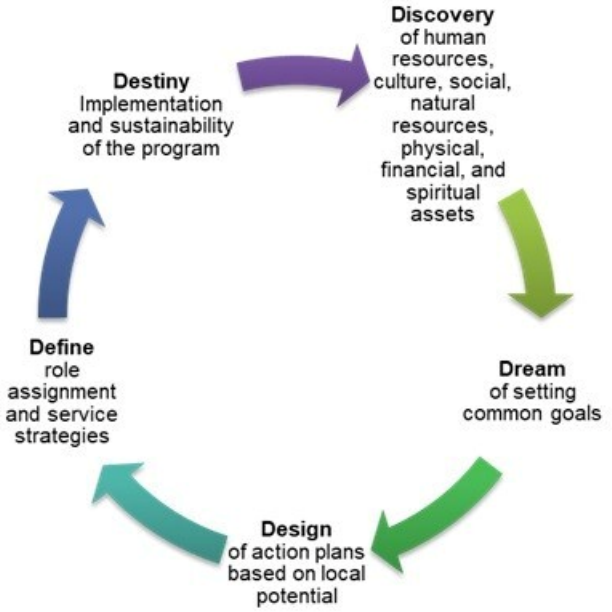

Figure 1. Steps in implementing community service

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3.1.1. Discovery

As seen in Figure 1, the discovery stage is the initial stage in the ABCD approach, which focuses on exploring existing strengths, experiences, and successful practices. This process is carried out through participatory observation and interviews. At this stage, the community service team has successfully identified several assets.

a. Human Resources Assets

Bansari Village has strong human assets in agriculture, supported by the experience and skills of the local community. Human resources are not only positioned as production workers, but as key players in economic decision-making, agricultural business management, and market network development. Human resource capabilities are a key factor in managing and developing local assets [32], [33].

b. Local Wisdom and Cultural Assets

Local wisdom in agriculture remains an important source of knowledge for the community. Farmers have a generational understanding of planting patterns, seed selection, and planting times that are in harmony with natural conditions. This knowledge includes values, norms, and practices that have been passed down from generation to generation to meet needs [34]. Local wisdom such as Pranata Mangsa not only serves as an ecological guide, but also contributes to agricultural production efficiency and reduces the risk of crop failure [35]. Inherited local wisdom is an economic asset that supports sustainability, while strengthening the competitiveness of FLOS Organic Hydroponics products in the market.

c. Social Assets

Social assets in Bansari Village grow from cooperative relationships and mutual trust between various social groups such as Karang Taruna, farmer groups, the Jaran Kepang art group, PKK, and Majelis Taklim, which provide a space for residents to interact, support each other, and develop social capital. This strong social capital serves as a strategy in supporting community-based economic empowerment.

d. Natural Resource Assets

Bansari Village is located on mountain slopes that support agricultural activities. This condition is in line with the livelihoods of the agrarian community [36], [37]. Thus, these natural resources contribute to economic development through high-value horticulture and agriculture.

e. Financial Assets

Sources of village economic management through BUMDes Tirta Sembada, agricultural business income, and agribusiness partnership schemes. Hydroponic partnerships provide price and market guarantees for partner farmers, thereby increasing the stability of income and cash flow for farmer groups. In addition, funding support from village funds and institutional cooperation strengthen local economic capacity.

f. Technological Assets

The application of *Internet of Things* (IoT)-based smart farming technology further strengthens the cultivation process. Dhanaraju, Muthumanickam, [35] Through IoT, agricultural devices can be connected to each other and provide real-time data, contributing directly to increased productivity, cost efficiency, and consistency in crop quality, which ultimately improves product competitiveness and expands market access.

g. Spiritual Assets

Open character, religious values, honesty, and social solidarity serve as ethical capital in community-based business management. These values strengthen internal and external trust, which is important in maintaining the sustainability of economic partnerships and community business governance.

3.1.2. Dream

As seen in Figure 1, the dream stage was implemented through focus group discussions (FGD). The results of the FGD showed that the people of Bansari Village wanted to transform from conventional agricultural and marketing practices to a modern agricultural system. This dream was realized through the formation of an organized agricultural community as a forum for learning, production, and collaboration among farmers. The development of FLOS Organic Hydroponics as a center for modern agriculture based on local potential increased the added value of agricultural products through product diversification and cultivation innovation, as well as the realization of sustainable economic independence for farmers while maintaining local wisdom and environmental sustainability.

3.1.3. Design

As seen Figure 1, based on the results of asset mapping, it is known that FLOS Organic Hydroponics and the community of Bansari Village have fertile natural resources, strong social capital, and adequate local knowledge and agricultural experience. However, this potential has not been fully integrated into a productive and sustainable agricultural business system. Agricultural and marketing practices still tend to be conventional, product variety is limited, and collaboration and partnership networks have not been optimally utilized as community economic strengths.

3.1.4. Define

As seen in Figure 1, the design stage focuses on developing strategies and action plans to realize the community's dreams from the previous stage. The program design utilizes and optimizes the community assets identified in the discovery stage so that the intervention does not create new dependencies but rather strengthens economic capacity in a sustainable manner. Planning is carried out participatively by involving the community as the main subject so that the program reflects the needs, capacities, and economic potential of Bansari Village. The community service team agreed on the following program designs: First, strengthening human resource capacity. Second, developing community institutions. Third, utilizing local assets. Fourth, strengthening existing networks

3.1.5. Destiny

As seen in Figure 1, the destiny stage is the actual implementation stage of the entire ABCD-based empowerment process. At this stage, the community plays an active role as the main actor, while the community service team functions as facilitators and assistants.

3.2. Problem Identification and Program Socialization Stage

The problem identification and program socialization stages are the initial steps in implementing community service programs. At this stage, the team conducts a needs assessment and coordination regarding the mapping of socioeconomic conditions, local potential, and problems faced by farmers in the management and development of organic hydroponic businesses.

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Figure 2. Assessment and coordination process

Figure 2, this activity involved the Head of Bansari Village and village officials, the manager of BUMDes Tirta Sembada, and farmers who are members of the FLOS Organic Hydroponics community as the main target group. The team serves as facilitators in gathering information and bridging community aspirations. Identification and socialization were carried out at the Bansari Village Office, Bansari Subdistrict, Temanggung Regency, in the initial stage before the program began, as a basis for targeted and sustainable activity planning.

The results of the assessment and coordination show that the community has limited skills, business management, and access to economic development. In addition, there is a strong desire among the community to have a shared platform that can serve as a space for learning and collectively strengthening organic hydroponic businesses. This situation emphasizes the importance of programs that focus not only on improving individual capacity, but also on strengthening community institutions.

The identification process was carried out through assessments, interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs). Based on these results, the community service team compiled a scale of priority issues and developed a program. This revealed limitations in skills, business management, and access to economic development. Therefore, the community service program is intended not only to improve individual capacity but also to strengthen community institutions to be more empowered and sustainable. This priority scale was agreed upon jointly by the community service team and the community so that the program implemented is truly in line with the needs and capacity of the community members of the FLOS Organic Hydroponics community.

3.3. Activity Implementation Stage

The implementation phase of the activities is carried out in a scheduled and participatory manner, adjusting the timing of activities to farmers' free time. The program implementation focuses on increasing human resource capacity in modern agricultural management based on local potential.

In the initial stage of implementation, the activity began with an introduction to the local potential of Bansari Village, particularly its horticultural potential and the development of hydroponic systems. As seen in Figure 3, participants were then given basic training on hydroponic cultivation, including an introduction to facilities and infrastructure, selection of planting media, plant nutrition management, and sustainable plant care.

Figure 3. Plant nutrition management process

The training also covered technical skills, such as greenhouse management, drip irrigation systems, and the use of agricultural technology to increase productivity and crop quality. At this stage of implementation, the activities have resulted in more structured hydroponic cultivation practices and higher economic value agricultural commodities, such as melons, sambal uwur, and vegetable chips.

Figure 4. Dried chili seed products

As seen in Figure 4, the main objectives of the community service activities at this stage of implementation are to impart basic knowledge, improve technical skills, and strengthen the capacity of farmers to run their agricultural businesses independently and sustainably. In supporting the success of the activity, the team acted as facilitators and mentors, as well as helping to provide the initial support facilities needed during the activity. In addition, the team also played a role in connecting the community with various related parties, such as BUMDes, village governments, and agribusiness collaborators, in order to expand cooperation networks and business development opportunities in the future.

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3.4. Monitoring and Evaluation Stage

During the empowerment implementation phase, interviews and field observations revealed positive changes among farmers who are members of FLOS Hidroponik Desa Bansari. These changes can be seen in the increased participation of farmers in group activities, their active involvement in the production process and management of hydroponic businesses, and the growth of farmers' confidence in developing their businesses.

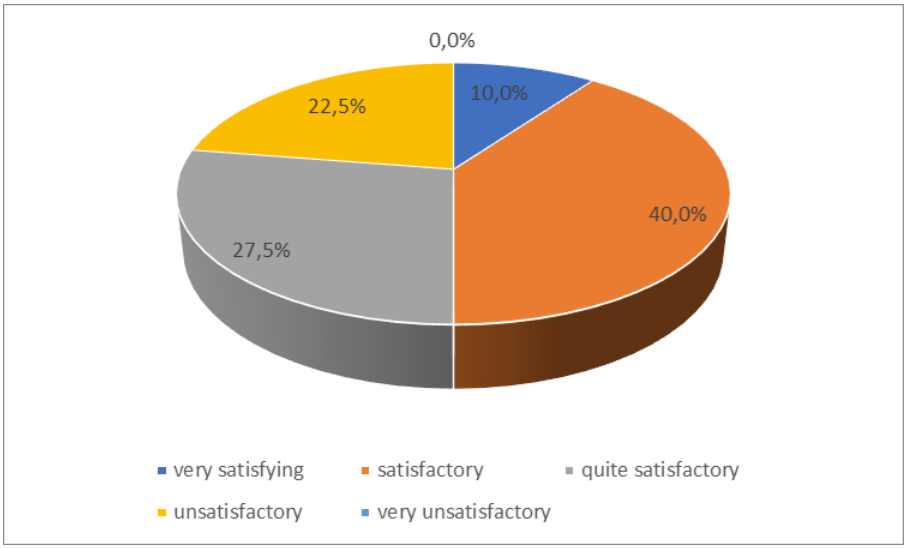

Figure 5. Evaluation diagram of the FLOS Organic Hydroponics program

Based on Figure 5, this study involved 40 respondents from a total of 52 farmers participating in the program. The evaluation results showed that all respondents gave positive assessments, with 10.0% (4 people) rating the program as very satisfactory, 40.0% (16 people) as satisfactory, and 27.5% (11 people) as fairly satisfactory. Meanwhile, 22.5% of respondents (9 people) rated the program as unsatisfactory, and no respondents gave a very unsatisfactory rating (0%). In general, these results show that the community empowerment program through FLOS Organic Hydroponics is considered to be beneficial and has received a relatively positive response from the farmers who were the research respondents. The questionnaire scores were processed and compared with the maximum possible score, reflecting the program's success rate based on the respondents' perceptions. The indicators for measuring success were analyzed based on three main aspects: technical impact, economic impact, and social impact of empowerment.

The initial impact of empowerment is seen in the technical skills of farmers. Through direct involvement in hydroponic activities, farmers have improved their ability to apply cultivation techniques, manage production facilities and infrastructure, and understand crop quality standards. This has boosted their confidence and fostered their independence. In addition, the economic impact of empowerment is beginning to be felt. Farmers earn additional income from hydroponic cultivation, accompanied by production cost efficiencies due to more planned and knowledge-based management. Business management opens up opportunities for wider market access, strengthening farmers' bargaining position in economic activities.

These improvements in capacity and economic conditions have had a social impact. Relationships between farmers have become closer, with solidarity, cooperation, and mutual trust growing within the community. Farmers no longer run their businesses individually, but

have begun to build collective awareness in decision-making and joint business management. The results show an increase in participants' abilities after participating in empowerment activities. A comparison was made between the conditions before and after. The comparison is presented in the following Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison table before and after empowerment

Impact of Empowerment activity	Before the Empowerment activities	After the Empowerment Activities
Skills (Technical)	Farming Practices remain conventional Knowledge of agricultural technology is limited	Mastering greenhouse techniques Use of high-quality seeds Improved cultivation skills
Economy	Dependent on conventional farming Fluctuating crop prices Long marketing chain	Product diversification Cooperation with offtakes Stable prices
Social	Limited community collaboration Long marketing chain	Increased community cooperation More active community participation Established cooperation with various parties

In line with the research results Liam Marclure [37] and Q. Ma [38] The ABCD approach can increase community participation and independence through the strengthening of local assets. This activity demonstrates the optimization of internal community assets, such as local wisdom, which can be a major driver of the sustainability of community-based agricultural enterprises. The evaluation results show an increase through community-based economic empowerment using the ABCD approach, which not only has an impact on improving the technical and economic capacity of farmers but also strengthens social solidarity, trust, and community institutional governance. This approach has the potential to be replicated in other agricultural communities with similar characteristics as a strategy for sustainable rural economic development.

In general, the implementation of the FLOS community empowerment program went well. However, during the interview stage, there were obstacles in the form of limited initial understanding of the research instruments used by some members. This was due to differences in the level of understanding and experience of members in conveying information systematically. To overcome this, the researchers provided assistance during the interview process so that each question could be understood properly and the data obtained was more accurate.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the application of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) in economic empowerment in the FLOS Organic Hydroponics community in Bansari Village has the potential to increase technical skills, economic independence of farmers, and strengthen social solidarity in the community. Optimizing various local assets owned by the community, such as human, social, natural, and institutional assets, is an important factor in encouraging

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hydroponic-based agricultural business management. The implementation of the Discovery, Dream, Design, Define, and Destiny stages also shows that the community can play a major role in the community development process. However, the success of its implementation can be influenced by social conditions, human resource capacity, and institutional support at the local level. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen collaboration between stakeholders and conduct further research to explore more adaptive and sustainable asset-based empowerment models in various community contexts.

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