El-Ghiroh : Jurnal Studi Keislaman
P-ISSN: 2087-7854, E-ISSN: 2656-3126
https://jurnal.staibsllg.ac.id/index.php/el-ghiroh
D OI: https://doi.org/10.37092/elghiroh.v24i2.1446
Volume 24 No 2, September 2026, 261-273

THE ROLE OF NONFORMAL ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN THE EMPOWERMENT AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION OF RURAL COMMUNITIES

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Article History
Received :04-12-2025
Revised :02-08-2026
Accepted :01-09-2026

Keywords:
Community Empowerment;
Tutoring;
Social Participation;

Abstract

Community empowerment is a key element in achieving village self-reliance, particularly in the education sector and in social participation. Tungkal IV Village faces challenges in the form of a limited number of teachers and low community involvement in supporting an educational atmosphere. This paper aims to describe the implementation of the Kukerta (community service learning) program in improving educational capacity through tutoring sessions and revitalizing social participation through gotong royong (communal mutual cooperation) and Karang Taruna (the village youth organization). The method used is Participatory Action Research (PAR), which comprises the stages of observation, planning, implementation, and evaluation. The results of the service show that tutoring using a fun learning method succeeded in improving the academic readiness and learning motivation of elementary school (SD/MI) students. In addition, collaboration with Karang Taruna as a strategic partner and the revival of the gotong royong culture have strengthened social capital and village self-reliance. In conclusion, the synergy between educational innovation and the strengthening of youth organizations is able to create a sustainable learning-village ecosystem.

Introduction

Community empowerment is a fundamental pillar in efforts to realize national self-reliance, beginning at the smallest unit: the village. Conceptually, empowerment is not merely the provision of physical assistance but a systematic process of increasing the capacity and capability of a community so that it can identify obstacles, formulate solutions, and manage local potential independently. The Indonesian word for empowerment, *pemberdayaan*, derives from the word *daya*, meaning strength and ability, so that empowerment refers to a process of transferring ability or strength from those who possess it to those who are not yet empowered. Sulistyani (as cited in Ariyani & Dewi, 2021) states that the purpose

of empowerment is to encourage the emergence of self-reliance in thinking, acting, and controlling what the community does.

In the context of community empowerment, education is a strategic sector that plays a central role. Education functions not only as a means of transferring knowledge but also as an instrument of social transformation that shapes character, develops skills, and builds the critical awareness of the community. By building quality education, a foundation of intelligence, ability, and good individual character will be created, producing outputs in the form of ideas, concepts, and actions that have a positive impact on village development. Efforts to improve the quality of education continue to be made in order to meet the demands of globalization and increasingly complex local needs.

In the national education system, formal educational institutions such as schools are expected to guarantee the development of Indonesia's human resources for the future. These institutions are required to optimize and empower the available resources in order to produce a generation that is accomplished, creative, disciplined, and highly competitive. Through these institutions, not only the government but also communities and students' families place great hopes on their children's future (Chamariyah, Akbar, & Indrawati, 2025). Nevertheless, formal education alone is not sufficient to meet the complex and diverse needs of community empowerment.

This is where the role of nonformal education becomes very important as a complement to formal education. Nonformal education, including nonformal Islamic education such as *madrasah diniyah* (Islamic afternoon schools), *pengajian* (religious study sessions), and *majelis taklim* (community Islamic study assemblies), has a high degree of flexibility in reaching various layers of society, particularly in rural areas. Nonformal Islamic education not only teaches religious values but can also become a vehicle for community empowerment through the cultivation of the moral values, ethics, and social skills needed in community life.

Ki Hajar Dewantara once affirmed that responsibility for developing the education sector rests not solely on teachers in schools but is a shared role among the family, the community, and the government. Through the concept of the "Tri Pusat Pendidikan" (Three Centers of Education), collaboration among these three elements plays an active role in supporting the development of education in the surrounding environment. This concept is in line with the principles of Islamic education, which emphasize the importance of the roles of the family, the community, and educational institutions in shaping the character and personality of learners.

Challenges in the education sector are still experienced in various regions, including in Tungkal IV Village, Tungkal Ilir Subdistrict, West Tanjung Jabung Regency. Several aspects still require greater attention, including the availability of facilities and infrastructure, the quality of teaching, and community participation. The Head of the Education and Culture Office of West Tanjung Jabung stated that almost every elementary and junior high school in the West Tanjung Jabung area still lacks teaching staff (Ote, 2024). With regard to existing educational facilities, the Deputy Regent of West Tanjung Jabung has voiced the West Tanjung Jabung Regency Government's strong hope of improving educational facilities in the region, because educational development concerns not

only physical buildings but also the quality of teachers and the equitable distribution of professional education personnel (BeritaJambi.Co, 2025).

The West Tanjung Jabung Regency Government has made various efforts to improve the education sector, including providing support to educators through the commemoration of National Teachers' Day as a moment to show appreciation for teachers and to foster collaboration for a better future of education. Another effort is to establish partnerships with local universities or higher education institutions in the Kuliah Kerja Nyata (KUKERTA) program, which involves students going directly into the community and carrying out various activities to support the development of potential in the local village area. One of the target programs of KUKERTA is community empowerment through teaching and learning activities in existing educational institutions and through assistance in increasing the community's social participation.

Social participation is defined in the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) as taking part, being involved, and playing an active role in an activity for the sake of the common interest. This participatory approach is considered crucial for improving the quality of education, as affirmed by Ki Hajar Dewantara. Through active participation, every contribution made by individuals or groups becomes an important effort in educational development. This collaboration can take the form of physical or nonphysical involvement by creating an environment conducive to learning, whether in formal institutions, nonformal institutions, the family, or the wider community, in order to achieve quality educational goals (Marten, Martinah, & Nesen, 2024).

In the context of nonformal Islamic education, community social participation has unique characteristics. Nonformal Islamic educational institutions such as *madrasah diniyah* and *majelis taklim* are usually managed on a self-help basis by the community, so the level of participation and sense of ownership of the community toward these institutions tends to be higher. This creates great potential for nonformal Islamic education to become an effective vehicle for community empowerment, not only in the religious aspect but also in the social, economic, and cultural aspects.

Several previous studies have shown the importance of community participation in empowerment through education. Siti Asiah (2024) stated in her research that community participation had a positive impact on the school, namely SMP YPPSB Sangatta, and on the community there. The forms of participation included establishing school partnerships that offer additional resources for various school programs, conducting fundraising activities to support educational initiatives at the school, and involving the community in school management through the school committee. Another study, by Amatul Jadidah (2024), stated that social empowerment in the community through educational activities can increase community awareness and participation by improving knowledge and skills that are aligned with supporting development.

Nevertheless, research that specifically examines the role of nonformal Islamic education in the empowerment and social participation of rural communities remains limited, particularly in the West Tanjung Jabung region. Yet understanding the dynamics and contributions of nonformal Islamic education in the local context is very important for formulating more effective and sustainable community empowerment strategies. This study seeks to fill this gap by

examining in depth how nonformal Islamic education in Tungkal IV Village contributes to community empowerment and to increased social participation.

Nonformal Islamic education has a strategic role in the social life of communities, particularly in rural areas, because it functions not only as a means of transmitting religious values but also as a medium for empowerment and for strengthening the community's social participation. The existence of nonformal Islamic educational institutions, such as *majelis taklim*, Qur'an education centers (TPQ), and religious study groups, often becomes a social space that brings together the religious and social dimensions simultaneously. In this context, nonformal Islamic education has the potential to encourage increased individual and collective capacity among community members in facing the various social, economic, and cultural issues that develop in the village environment.

In Tungkal IV Village, Tungkal Ilir Subdistrict, West Tanjung Jabung Regency, nonformal Islamic education has developed as part of the community's living and dynamic religious practice. However, the extent to which the role of nonformal Islamic education contributes to the process of community empowerment and influences the level of community social participation still requires deeper and more systematic study. Few studies have specifically examined how nonformal Islamic education operates in the social life of rural communities, how it influences community involvement in socio-religious activities, and what factors both support and hinder the optimization of this role.

Based on these realities, this study is directed at analyzing the role of nonformal Islamic education in the community empowerment process in Tungkal IV Village, Tungkal Ilir Subdistrict, West Tanjung Jabung Regency, while also describing its influence on community social participation. In addition, this study seeks to identify the various supporting and inhibiting factors that affect the optimization of the role of nonformal Islamic education in promoting the empowerment and social participation of rural communities. With this approach, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the position and contribution of nonformal Islamic education in the social life of rural communities.

Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to the development of scholarship on community empowerment based on nonformal Islamic education and to enrich the academic discourse on the relationship among religious education, empowerment, and community social participation. The findings of this study are also expected to serve as a reference for subsequent studies that examine the role of Islamic education in the social development of rural communities. Practically, the results of this study are expected to serve as material for consideration by local governments in formulating community empowerment policies through the strengthening of nonformal Islamic education in rural areas. For nonformal Islamic educational institutions, this study is expected to provide an understanding of the strategic role that can be developed in increasing the empowerment and social participation of the community. Meanwhile, for the community, this study is expected to raise awareness of the importance of active involvement in nonformal Islamic education as a vehicle for empowerment and for developing personal potential, and for academics, it is expected to enrich the body of research on nonformal Islamic education and community empowerment in Indonesia.

Reasearch Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with the *Participatory Action Research* (PAR) method. This method was chosen because it is oriented not only toward understanding social phenomena but also emphasizes efforts toward change and empowerment through the active participation of the community in the entire research process (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005; Afandi & Fitriyah, 2021). Through PAR, researchers are directly involved in the social dynamics of the community, from the introduction of the problem to the implementation and evaluation of action. This study was carried out within the context of the Kuliah Kerja Nyata (KUKERTA) program, which allows intensive interaction between the researchers and the village community.

The study was conducted in Tungkal IV Village, Tungkal Ilir Subdistrict, West Tanjung Jabung Regency, Jambi Province. The location was selected based on the presence of an active nonformal Islamic educational institution and the need to increase community participation in education and social empowerment. The research subjects were determined by *purposive sampling*, that is, by selecting informants considered to have knowledge and experience relevant to the focus of the study (Sugiyono, 2020). The informants included managers and educators of nonformal Islamic educational institutions, formal school teachers and principals, community and religious leaders, institutional administrators, parents, and *santri* (Islamic students) or pupils.

The research was carried out through interrelated stages, namely an initial mapping of the village's social and educational conditions, joint identification of problems with the community, participatory program planning, implementation of the empowerment program, and joint evaluation and reflection. Each stage was carried out on participatory principles, in which the community is not merely the object of the research but also an active subject in the process of social change (Reason & Bradbury, 2008). Evaluation and reflection were conducted collectively to assess program achievements, identify obstacles, and formulate recommendations for sustainability.

Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGD), documentation, and field notes. The data obtained were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model, which comprises data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources, methods, and time, as well as *member checking* to ensure the accuracy of the data and the congruence of the researchers' interpretations with the informants' perspectives (Creswell, 2016).

Discussion

Empowerment through Teaching and Learning Activities

One of the main pillars in implementing the KUKERTA program to empower the community of Tungkal IV Village is the strengthening of the nonformal education sector through tutoring activities. These activities were a response to the results of the initial observation, which showed obstacles in students' access to learning assistance outside school hours as well as limited literacy-supporting facilities in the village environment. The tutoring in Tungkal

IV Village is conducted routinely, three times a week, at the Tungkal IV Village Hall. Tutoring usually begins at around three in the afternoon and lasts until five, with an average attendance of 10 to 15 students. The method used in these activities is for the university students to act as facilitators and peer tutors who accompany students at the elementary school (SD) and Islamic elementary school (MI) levels. As for the material covered, the facilitators focus on fundamental subjects such as mathematics, English, and natural science. Because the students attending each session are diverse, the facilitators prepared a general curriculum for each subject.

Table 1. Tutoring Curriculum

Mathematics	**English**	**Natural Science**
Reading, Writing, Arithmetic (Calistung)	Greetings and introduction	The five senses
Basic number operations	Parts of body	Animal life cycles
Plane shapes	Animals and plants	The solar system
Solid shapes	Daily activities	Nature conservation

To increase student enthusiasm, the facilitators implemented interactive and enjoyable game-based learning media (*fun learning*). Rather than relying only on a pedagogical approach, namely contextual teaching and learning, the facilitators sought to connect the learning material with actual conditions in the surrounding environment. On the other hand, the game-based learning provided, such as math snakes and ladders and knowledge monopoly, is expected to make it easier for students to absorb knowledge without psychological pressure. On several occasions the facilitators also used online interactive quiz platform games to give students experience and encourage technological literacy. Given the available surroundings, the facilitators also invited students to explore the environment during teaching and learning activities so that they could learn scientific concepts directly. For example, when studying natural ecosystems, students can directly observe the flora and fauna around them. From this experience, students are expected to have stronger memories of what they have learned. Finally, the facilitators used simple educational teaching aids made from easily found materials such as cardboard, cans, balloons, and other materials. The use of these simple materials is intended so that students and their parents can also make them at home.

The tutoring that has been carried out is expected to improve students' academic readiness and increase their confidence in doing schoolwork without depending entirely on their parents, thereby fostering independence. On the other hand, the various learning methods used are expected to change the way students view learning.

Learning no longer happens because of coercion but becomes a need that answers their curiosity, so that knowledge can be absorbed more easily. This activity also gives children additional things to do in between their play. The village facility, which was formerly quiet and attracted little interest, has become a center of intellectual activity for children.

The continuity of these tutoring activities affects not only the academic aspects of the students but also contributes to the broader process of community empowerment. The active involvement of university students as facilitators

encourages knowledge transfer while building a participatory educational relationship between educators and learners. In the context of empowerment, this activity reflects a process of community capacity building, particularly among elementary school-age children, through strengthening basic literacy and critical thinking skills that form an important foundation for human resource development at the village level (Ife & Tesoriero, 2008).

In addition, conducting the tutoring in a public space such as the Village Hall helps strengthen the social function of village facilities as a shared learning space. The village hall is no longer understood merely as an administrative center but has developed into an inclusive space for educational interaction within the community. This condition indirectly encourages increased attention and support from parents for their children's learning activities, marked by higher student attendance and greater parental involvement in facilitating the continuity of the activities. This kind of social support is an early indicator of the growing collective awareness of the community regarding the importance of nonformal education as a complement to formal education (Sudjana, 2010).

From a pedagogical perspective, the application of the *fun learning* approach and contextual learning has proved effective in creating a learning atmosphere that is enjoyable and not stressful. This strategy is in line with the constructivist view, which positions learners as active subjects in building their own knowledge through direct experience and interaction with the surrounding environment (Vygotsky, 1978). The use of educational games, environmental exploration, and simple teaching aids also helps bridge the gap between abstract concepts and everyday realities close to students' lives.

Overall, the tutoring activities carried out in the KUKERTA program in Tungkal IV Village can be understood as an empowerment-oriented practice of nonformal Islamic education. These activities function not only as a means of academic assistance but also as a medium for character building, learning independence, and changing the community's perception of the meaning of learning itself. Thus, nonformal education through tutoring serves as an initial catalyst in building a culture of learning and sustainable social participation in the village environment.

Strengthening Village Social Participation

Social participation is another focus for the KUKERTA students, who view it not merely as physical presence at an event but as building the community's sense of ownership over the village development process. In this program, the students act as catalysts who seek to connect the layers of the community so that they move together in collective activities. The efforts made to achieve this goal include revitalizing the culture of gotong royong and activating the Karang Taruna organization.

Gotong royong is essentially a representation of the collectivist culture deeply rooted in Indonesian society (Sulistyowati, 2021).

More deeply, the implementation of social participation in this KUKERTA program revives the fundamental values of gotong royong, which include togetherness and unity, mutual assistance, and willingness to sacrifice. Through these activities, community members not only work physically but also strengthen their emotional bonds. The unity that emerges from this process creates a solid

social foundation, so that the community becomes more resilient and able to face village challenges independently. Every contribution from residents, however small, becomes a social safety net that ensures the burden of village development feels lighter because it is borne shoulder to shoulder. Social participation in this program involves sacrifices of time, energy, and even material resources from residents. The community is willing to set aside personal interests for the sake of the common good. As local wisdom passed down from generation to generation, this attitude of gotong royong becomes a highly effective driving force for the KUKERTA students. When the community is involved in social participation, it is no longer a passive object of development but an empowered subject. This social capital ensures that when problems or urgent needs arise in the education and social fields, the community has an internal drive to act independently and sustainably.

As agents of change, young people hold the key to the advancement or decline of a civilization. In the context of village-level development, this great potential is channeled through the Karang Taruna organization. As a youth organization born of collective social awareness and responsibility, Karang Taruna functions as an incubator for developing the social spirit and capacity of the younger generation in responding to the various challenges in their area, especially in the field of social welfare (Wijaya, Putri, Agustina, & Anisykurlillah, 2023). In implementing the KUKERTA program in Tungkal IV Village, Karang Taruna was positioned not merely as a program target but as a crucial collaborative partner. The role of Karang Taruna in strengthening social participation and education includes serving as a communication bridge between the KUKERTA students and local youth in organizing community activities that encourage residents to become more actively involved in village development. Karang Taruna also plays an important role in sustaining the various programs initiated during the KUKERTA program. The students transferred skills to Karang Taruna members so that they could become independent learning facilitators for the younger children in their village.

The community's social participation is rooted in the harmonization of the local wisdom of gotong royong with the revitalization of the role of Karang Taruna. These two elements have proved to be effective empowerment instruments in building a village ecosystem that is more dynamic and more attentive to issues of education and social welfare. The combination of a gotong royong culture that involves all age groups and the strategic role of Karang Taruna as a young driving force has created social transformation at the service location. The community's social participation is no longer ceremonial but has developed into a collective force oriented toward village self-reliance.

The strengthening of social participation built through the KUKERTA program in Tungkal IV Village shows that community involvement in collective activities can form a more mature and sustainable social awareness. Participation that was initially mobilized through the presence of the students gradually developed into participation that is voluntary and based on shared awareness. The community has begun to view gotong royong and other social activities not merely as a temporary obligation but as a social necessity for sustaining village life. This shift marks an important transformation from instrumental participation to emancipatory participation, in which the community has control over, and

responsibility for, the development process it undergoes.

In the village's social context, the revitalization of gotong royong serves as a medium for strengthening social cohesion as well as a means of reproducing the collective values that have been eroded by social change. Through joint activities, the community rebuilds trust among residents, strengthens solidarity, and fosters a sense of mutual ownership of the village's social space. The social relations built through this collective work create emotional bonds that increase concern for shared problems, including children's education and families' social welfare. Gotong royong thus becomes not only a cultural practice but also an effective social mechanism for strengthening the social capital of the village community.

The strengthening of the role of Karang Taruna in the KUKERTA program also broadens the spectrum of social participation, particularly among the younger generation. Young people's involvement in various social and educational activities provides space for self-actualization while increasing their leadership capacity. Through the collaborative process with the KUKERTA students, Karang Taruna members gained direct experience in organizing activities, managing local resources, and building inclusive social communication. This experience contributes to the formation of young people's critical awareness of their strategic role as agents of change at the village level, while also strengthening their sense of social responsibility for the sustainability of empowerment programs.

Furthermore, the synergy between the KUKERTA students and Karang Taruna creates a reciprocal pattern of social learning. The students act as facilitators who transfer knowledge and skills, while the village youth are local actors who understand the social and cultural context of the community. This collaboration produces an adaptive and contextual model of participation, in which the programs carried out are not top-down but start from local needs and potential. In practice, Karang Taruna members have begun to take on the role of drivers of nonformal education activities and learning facilitators for village children, so that the sustainability of the program does not depend entirely on the presence of the students.

From an empowerment perspective, the social participation that develops through the strengthening of gotong royong and Karang Taruna implies an increase in the community's collective capacity to manage social problems independently. The community no longer waits for external intervention when facing challenges but is able to mobilize its own social resources to seek joint solutions. This condition reflects the formation of social self-reliance, an important prerequisite for sustainable village development, especially in the context of education and social welfare.

Overall, the strengthening of social participation in the KUKERTA program in Tungkal IV Village shows that community-based development is more effective when it rests on local wisdom and actively involves social actors. The revitalization of gotong royong values involving all layers of the community, combined with the strategic role of Karang Taruna as the driving force of the younger generation, has formed a village social ecosystem that is more dynamic, inclusive, and resilient. The social participation that has been built is no longer symbolic or ceremonial but has developed into a collective force that sustains the process of empowerment and village development in a sustainable manner.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Optimizing the Role of Nonformal Islamic Education

The sustainability of nonformal Islamic education in the context of rural community empowerment is greatly influenced by various supporting factors that originate from the social, cultural, and institutional conditions of the community itself. A religious culture that is deeply rooted in village life is a very valuable form of social capital. The tradition of gotong royong and close kinship ties create a social atmosphere conducive to the delivery of nonformal Islamic education. The high level of community trust in religious leaders and Islamic educational institutions encourages relatively high participation in various religious education programs. In addition, local wisdom values that are in line with Islamic teachings make it easier for educational material to be internalized into the community's daily practices.

Another supporting factor lies in the flexibility of the nonformal Islamic education learning system. This flexibility covers the time, place, and learning methods, which can be adapted to the conditions of rural communities, most of whom are busy in agriculture or other informal work. Learning activities can be scheduled around the planting season, the harvest period, or residents' economic activities. The learning methods used are also diverse, such as *pengajian*, *halaqah* (study circles), *majelis taklim*, and skills training, so that they can be adjusted to the needs and characteristics of learners from various age and educational backgrounds.

From an institutional standpoint, the existence of *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), *madrasah diniyah*, *majelis taklim*, and TPQ/TPA (Qur'an education centers) provides a fairly strong supporting infrastructure for nonformal Islamic education. These institutions have long experience in managing Islamic education as well as broad social networks within the community. Support from Islamic community organizations and religious institutions also provides social legitimacy and additional resources. In addition, partnerships with village governments and religious agencies further strengthen the position of nonformal Islamic education in community life. The availability of human resources in the form of *ustadz*, *kiai*, and religious leaders who are highly committed is also an important asset, even though not all of them have a high level of formal education. The educators' emotional closeness to the community, the regeneration of preachers through *pesantren* alumni, and the involvement of educated young people also enrich the variety of learning methods and materials.

Nevertheless, nonformal Islamic education in rural areas also faces a number of significant inhibiting factors. Limited resources and infrastructure are the main obstacles, especially the lack of funding and learning facilities. Many institutions still rely on community self-help, even though the community is itself economically limited. Facilities such as learning buildings, libraries, learning media, and access to information technology are still inadequate. Limited internet access in rural areas also hinders the use of digital learning resources and the development of technology-based learning methods, while limited transportation makes it difficult for educators and learners to travel, especially in relatively remote areas.

Besides infrastructure problems, the quality of educators is also a challenge in itself. Although the number of educators is relatively sufficient, not all of them

have adequate pedagogical competence. Many teachers still rely on traditional methods without updating their knowledge of contemporary learning strategies. The lack of continuous training and capacity building causes the quality of learning to stagnate. Limited mastery of information technology and an inadequate incentive system also make it difficult to retain and attract quality educators.

Other challenges arise from the dynamics of modernization and globalization, which bring changes in the community's values and lifestyles. The influence of uncontrolled mass media and social media has the potential to shift young people's interest away from nonformal Islamic education. Urbanization reduces the number of potential learners because young people prefer to work in cities. In addition, the perception that nonformal Islamic education is less relevant to the demands of the modern world of work also lowers the level of community participation. Increasingly consumerist and individualistic lifestyles also often conflict with the values of gotong royong and simplicity taught in Islamic education.

Another equally important obstacle is the weak management and administration systems of nonformal Islamic educational institutions. Many institutions are still managed traditionally without structured planning. The absence of a standardized curriculum makes it difficult to evaluate and develop programs. Disorderly documentation and reporting of activities hinder the measurement of program achievements and impact, while weak coordination among institutions leads to duplication of activities and inefficient use of resources. Differences in religious understanding within the community also have the potential to cause social friction, especially when the learning approach is exclusive and not very dialogical.

The low awareness and participation of some community members regarding the importance of continuing Islamic education is also an inhibiting factor. Day-to-day economic concerns often lead Islamic education to be viewed as not a top priority, especially for adults. Patriarchal culture in some areas still limits women's participation in nonformal Islamic education. On the other hand, weak synergy between nonformal Islamic educational institutions and the village government, formal schools, the private sector, and philanthropic institutions means that policy and funding support is not yet optimal.

In facing these various factors, a comprehensive and sustainable optimization strategy is needed. Institutional strengthening through improving management systems, developing a curriculum that is structured yet remains flexible, and increasing educators' capacity through regular training are important steps. The diversification of funding sources through Islamic philanthropy, partnerships with the private sector, and village budget support needs to be continually pursued. The modernization of learning methods through the selective use of information technology, the strengthening of synergy among stakeholders, and the integration of religious education with economic empowerment and life skills are expected to increase the relevance and effectiveness of nonformal Islamic education in empowering rural communities.

Conclusion

The implementation of the KUKERTA program in Tungkal IV Village demonstrates that effective community empowerment is rooted in the integration of strengthening the education sector and revitalizing social participation. Through adaptive and innovative tutoring activities, the students succeeded in overcoming obstacles to nonformal education access in the area. The transformation of the learning method into *fun* learning not only improved students' academic readiness and independence but also reconstructed the paradigm of learning into an enjoyable emotional need, while reactivating the village facility as a productive center of intellectual activity.

On the other hand, the success of this community empowerment rests on the synergy between the social capital of gotong royong and the strategic role of Karang Taruna as an agent of change. Gotong royong emerges as a collective force that unites residents in building a conducive educational environment, while Karang Taruna serves as a collaborative partner that ensures the sustainability of the program through skill transfer. Overall, this collaboration creates a learning-village ecosystem in line with the concept of the "Tri Pusat Pendidikan" (Three Centers of Education), in which the community's active participation is no longer ceremonial but has been transformed into a collective awareness to realize sustainable village self-reliance.

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