

## Building Waqf Awareness for Improving Orphans' Education through Productive Waqf Education

Alizaman Dumangcag Gamon<sup>1</sup>, Nuril Hidayati<sup>2</sup>, Yopi Yudha Utama<sup>3</sup>, Amrul Muttaqin<sup>4</sup>, Ahmad Syakur<sup>5</sup>, Jamaludin A. Kholik<sup>6</sup>, Nilna Fauza<sup>7</sup>, Ulfi Dina Hamida<sup>8</sup>, Arif Zunaidi<sup>9</sup>, Ririn Tripuspitaningrum<sup>10</sup>, Imam Annas Mushlihin<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Al Khwarizmi International College Foundation Incorporated, Marawi City Philippine

<sup>2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11</sup> IAIN Kediri

[alizamanium@gmail.com](mailto:alizamanium@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>

### Article Info

Volume 2 Issue 4  
December 2024

### Article History

Submission: 05-11-2024

Revised: 27-12-2024

Accepted: 28-12-2024

Published: 31-12-2024

### Keywords:

Productive Waqf, Orphan Education, Waqf Management, Economic Empowerment, SDGs

### Kata Kunci:

Wakaf Produktif, Pendidikan Anak Yatim, Pengelolaan Wakaf, Pemberdayaan Ekonomi, SDGs



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### Abstract

*This community service activity aims to increase public awareness and understanding of the importance of productive waqf management in supporting orphan education. Based on existing data, orphan education in Indonesia still faces major challenges in terms of funding, so economic empowerment efforts are needed through productive waqf. This activity was carried out through seminars and training based on service learning and ABCD (Asset-Based Community Development), which involved speakers from waqf experts and sharia financial practitioners. Participants consisted of academics, waqf managers, and community leaders. The activity began with a socialization of the concept of productive waqf, followed by a simulation of waqf asset management planning. The results of the activity showed a significant increase in participant understanding, with 85% of participants claiming to be able to design a productive waqf management model for orphan education. This activity successfully introduced waqf-based solutions as an economic empowerment instrument to support orphan education in a sustainable manner.*

### Abstrak

Kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kesadaran dan pemahaman masyarakat tentang pentingnya pengelolaan wakaf produktif dalam mendukung pendidikan anak yatim. Berdasarkan data yang ada, pendidikan anak yatim di Indonesia masih menghadapi tantangan besar dalam hal pendanaan, sehingga diperlukan upaya pemberdayaan ekonomi melalui wakaf produktif. Kegiatan ini dilaksanakan melalui seminar dan pelatihan berbasis Service Learning dan ABCD (Asset-Based Community Development), yang melibatkan pemateri dari ahli wakaf dan praktisi keuangan syariah. Peserta terdiri dari akademisi, pengelola wakaf, dan tokoh masyarakat. Kegiatan dimulai dengan sosialisasi mengenai konsep wakaf produktif, diikuti dengan simulasi perencanaan pengelolaan aset wakaf. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan dalam pemahaman peserta, dengan 85% peserta mengaku dapat merancang model pengelolaan wakaf produktif untuk pendidikan anak yatim. Kegiatan ini berhasil memperkenalkan solusi berbasis wakaf sebagai instrumen pemberdayaan ekonomi untuk mendukung pendidikan anak yatim secara berkelanjutan.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental right for every child, including orphans who often face major challenges in accessing quality education (Gaviria, 2022). Financial constraints, lack of social support, and minimal resources are often the main obstacles for orphans to continue their education. Based on data from the Ministry of Social Affairs, the level of orphan education participation in Indonesia is still far from ideal, especially at the secondary and tertiary levels (Suryadarma et al., 2011). This raises the need for a sustainable funding model that can help

### Korespondensi:

Yopi Yudha Utama

[yopiyudhautama@iainkediri.ac.id](mailto:yopiyudhautama@iainkediri.ac.id)

improve access and quality of education for orphans. One potential solution that has not been optimally utilized is productive waqf.

Productive waqf, with proper management, has great potential to become a source of sustainable funding for various sectors, including education (Bayu Sudrajat & Ainul Imronah, 2023). However, public awareness of the importance of productive waqf is still low, and most people view waqf as just an idle and unproductive asset (Nurachmadi et al., 2024). On the other hand, suboptimal management of waqf is a challenge in itself. This condition inspired the Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business (FEBI) at IAIN Kediri to hold an international seminar entitled "Building Waqf Awareness for Improving Orphan Education through Productive Waqf Education."

The purpose of this activity is to increase public understanding and awareness, especially among academics, Islamic economic practitioners, and waqf institution managers, about the potential of productive waqf as an instrument for empowering orphans' education. This seminar also aims to provide education about productive waqf management models that can be implemented in Indonesia.

Productive waqf is one of the Islamic economic instruments that has great potential to provide a significant impact on community welfare (Fatimatuzzahra et al., 2024). Good waqf management not only aims to maintain the value of waqf assets but also ensures that these assets can provide sustainable benefits to beneficiaries, including the education of orphans (Syamsuri et al., 2021). By managing waqf productively, the assets owned can be optimized to generate income that is used to support social programs, such as providing scholarships, building educational facilities, and improving the quality of life of orphans.

One of the main points of the importance of productive waqf management is its ability to create economic independence for the community. In the context of orphan education, funds generated from productive waqf assets can reduce dependence on irregular donations so that children's educational needs can be met consistently (Syamsuri et al., 2021). In addition, professional waqf management can also increase public trust in waqf management institutions, encouraging more individuals to participate in waqf practices.

Productive waqf management also plays a role in reducing social inequality. By empowering waqf assets for economic activities, such as productive agriculture, property management, or other halal investments, the benefits generated can be distributed fairly to groups in need (Nurhidayat et al., 2022). This is in line with the purpose of waqf as a form of worship that provides social and economic impacts at the same time.

No less important, productive waqf can be a solution in supporting sustainable development programs (SDGs), especially in the fields of education and poverty alleviation (Siregar, 2024). By utilizing waqf assets for planned and targeted purposes, waqf institutions can contribute to creating a more just and prosperous society. Therefore, it is important for waqf managers to master strategies and skills in managing waqf assets optimally so that the great potential of waqf can be realized in real terms.

With all these benefits, productive waqf management is not only an option but also an urgent need for the Muslim community. Integrating spiritual values with a professional managerial approach, productive waqf can be a catalyst for positive change that has a long-term impact.

The results of the literature review show that in several countries, such as Malaysia and Saudi Arabia, productive waqf has succeeded in supporting the education sector through sustainable funding. For example, the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) manages productive waqf funds to finance scholarships for underprivileged students. Another study by Hasanuddin (2021) shows that the implementation of productive waqf in Indonesia still faces obstacles, such as the lack of waqf literacy among the community and limited supporting regulations. This seminar is expected to be a forum for discussion and sharing experiences on effective, productive waqf management.

By involving various parties, such as academics, waqf managers, philanthropic institutions, and the general public, this seminar aims to create synergy in building a productive waqf ecosystem that supports orphans' education in a sustainable manner. The Faculty of Islamic

Economics and Business of IAIN Kediri is a strategic location for this activity, considering its role as a center for the development of Islamic economics in the East Java region.

## 2. METODE

The implementation method of this community service activity uses the ABCD (Asset-Based Community Development) approach because this approach is very suitable for exploring and maximizing community potential in managing productive waqf. ABCD focuses on utilizing assets owned by the community as an initial step in empowerment so that this activity can be more sustainable and relevant to local conditions (Zunaidi, 2024).

### a. Community Asset Identification and Mapping

The initial stage involves identifying physical, social, and economic assets owned by the community. In the context of productive waqf management, this activity includes mapping waqf institutions, potential land or property that can be used as waqf assets, and social networks that support waqf management. The location of the implementation at the FEBI IAIN Kediri Campus utilizes the academic potential of students and lecturers as the main human resources in providing education.

### b. Education and Training

Education is carried out through international seminars involving experts from within and outside the country to provide insight into productive waqf management. Seminar materials include theories and practices of waqf management, successful case studies from other countries, and implementation strategies in Indonesia. The training was conducted using a participatory method, where participants were actively involved in simulations of productive waqf management, such as financial planning and investment strategies.

ABCD emphasizes collaboration and empowerment, not just providing assistance. With this approach, the community is not only a beneficiary but also a major actor in change. This approach also allows the community to be more independent and able to manage their assets productively, which is very relevant to the goal of developing productive waqf for orphan education.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of an international seminar with the theme "Building Waqf Awareness for Improving Orphan Education through Productive Waqf Education" at the Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business (FEBI) IAIN Kediri succeeded in attracting the attention of various groups. The event, which lasted for two days, was attended by 220 participants consisting of academics, students, waqf managers, community leaders, and social activists. Participants came from various areas around Kediri. The enthusiasm of the participants was evident from the high level of participation in panel discussions and training sessions.

The seminar activity was in the form of a theoretical presentation on the urgency of productive waqf as one solution to support orphan education. The results of this session showed that 85% of participants felt a significant increase in their understanding of the concept of productive waqf, based on an evaluation through a post-test questionnaire conducted at the end of the first session.



**Figure 1.** Delivery of material

Management of productive waqf is one of the strategic solutions to overcome the challenges of financing orphans' education. Waqf, as an Islamic economic instrument, has great potential if managed productively to create sustainable benefits. In the context of orphans' education, productive waqf can be a stable source of funding to support educational needs, such as school

fees, provision of learning facilities, and skills development. This approach is in line with the principle of sustainability in Islam, which aims to provide long-term benefits to beneficiaries.

Education is a fundamental right that must be fulfilled, especially for orphans who often face limited access due to economic conditions. Management of productive waqf provides an opportunity to transform idle assets into active assets that generate income. For example, assets in the form of waqf land can be developed into productive gardens, education centers, or even businesses whose results are dedicated to supporting orphans' education. With this approach, orphans' education does not only depend on sporadic donations, but also has a sustainable funding base.

In addition to economic benefits, management of productive waqf also has a significant social dimension. Through good management, local communities can be involved in the production process or management of waqf-based businesses. This not only increases community participation but also creates a sense of shared ownership of the programs being run. In the long term, this community involvement can strengthen social solidarity and build collective awareness of the importance of education as a social investment.

Research and best practices show that well-organized productive waqf management can create real impacts. Case studies from several countries, such as waqf management in Turkey and Malaysia, show that productive waqf funds have successfully supported thousands of orphan students to continue their education to university level. This provides strong evidence that productive waqf is not only theoretically relevant but has also proven to be successful in practice.

Therefore, it is important for stakeholders, including waqf institutions, academics, and the government, to work together to develop an innovative productive waqf management model that is relevant to local needs. Thus, orphan education is not only an individual responsibility but also a collective commitment supported by sustainable Islamic economic instruments (Zunaidi, 2023).

In addition, the community service team also provided examples of real case studies of productive waqf management in several areas in the Philippines, such as waqf management in the Philippines, which succeeded in generating a steady income for orphan education. This case study motivated participants to think creatively in utilizing existing assets. Based on the final survey of the activity, 90% of participants felt inspired to apply the concepts they learned in their respective communities.



Figure 2. Group photo

The increase in participants' understanding can be attributed to the approach used in this activity, namely ABCD (Asset-Based Community Development), which has proven effective in empowering communities based on the assets they have. According to the theory of community empowerment, this approach is more sustainable than the need-based approach because it encourages communities to see existing potential and maximize it. This finding is consistent with previous research by Mathie & Cunningham (2003), which stated that ABCD is able to create a sense of ownership and responsibility in the community.

In addition, the results of the training showed that practice-based education and training had a greater impact than just delivering theory. This is relevant to the findings in the study by Ahmed et al. (2020), which showed that practice-based training can improve participants' ability to apply concepts directly in the field. By involving participants in a simulation of productive waqf management, they not only understand the concept but are also able to visualize real applications in their environment.

The success of this activity can also be attributed to the collaboration involving various parties, such as academics, waqf practitioners, and local communities. This collaboration supports the creation of a dialogue rich in ideas and experiences, thus providing new insights for

participants. As explained by Salim (2019), cross-sector collaboration in the management of productive waqf is one of the keys to the success of the waqf-based empowerment program.

This program proves that a community-based education and training approach can have a real positive impact on the management of productive waqf. In an international seminar held at FEBI IAIN Kediri, participants showed a significant increase in understanding after receiving education on the basic concepts, strategies, and opportunities for productive waqf management. Based on the results of the post-test questionnaire, 85% of participants stated that their understanding of productive waqf had increased, with an average increase in understanding score of 30% compared to the pre-test results. This data shows the success of the activity in increasing productive waqf literacy among participants.

The interactive training sessions that are the main part of this activity also provide relevant practical skills. A total of 220 participants, consisting of academics, students, community leaders, and waqf managers. In addition, this program also involves the introduction of real cases from other regions as references. One of the cases presented is the success of waqf management in the Philippines used for orphan scholarships. This case study inspires participants that productive waqf management not only has an impact on direct beneficiaries but also on the sustainability of other social programs. Based on the final survey of the activity, 92% of participants expressed high motivation to apply the concepts they had learned in their respective communities.

The results of this activity also emphasize the importance of literacy and skills as an initial foundation in managing productive waqf. The increased awareness of participants is an indicator of the success of the program, showing that a community-based approach is able to create significant social transformation. By placing the community as the main actor, this program opens up opportunities for productive waqf management to support the economic independence of the community, especially in helping the education of orphans. As a follow-up step, it is necessary to design a sustainable mentoring program to ensure the implementation of the productive waqf concept that has been designed during this training.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Community service activities in the form of an international seminar with the theme "Building Waqf Awareness for Improving Orphan Education through Productive Waqf Education" have succeeded in achieving the goals and targets set. This program significantly increased participants' understanding and awareness of the importance of productive waqf management to support orphan education. Based on the evaluation of the pre-test and post-test results, 85% of participants showed a significant increase in understanding of the concept and application of productive waqf. In addition, the interactive training session succeeded in training participants in designing a waqf management model that is relevant to local needs, such as optimizing land for productive agriculture or managing property assets. This program not only provides literacy about productive waqf but also creates practical skills that can be applied immediately. The success of this program confirms that a community-based approach with a participatory method is able to create significant social transformation, especially in supporting orphan education in a sustainable manner. These results also underline the importance of synergy between waqf institutions, academics, and the community in optimizing the potential of productive waqf as an instrument of social and economic empowerment. With the impact achieved, this program is expected to be a model for the development of similar activities in the future.

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