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Improving the Local Economy of the Community Thru Land Utilization for Livestock Farming

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ABSTRACT

Halaban Village, located in Besitang District, Langkat Regency, has great potential in the agricultural and livestock sectors, but still faces various challenges in developing sustainable livestock businesses. The main problems faced by the community are limited capital, low managerial skills, and dependence on wage labor. The community service program by the University of North Sumatra (USU) aims to improve the local economy by empowering communities in the field of animal husbandry. The approach used includes managerial training, providing capital in the form of breeding stock and developing livestock business infrastructure, as well as ongoing mentoring to strengthen entrepreneurial skills. The results of this program show an improvement in the community's ability to manage livestock businesses and financial records, as well as significant social changes, such as an increase in collective work spirit. Nevertheless, there are still challenges in managerial consistency and the division of tasks among members. This program is expected to strengthen the economic independence of the people of Halaban Village and serve as a model for community empowerment based on agribusiness that can be applied in other villages.

Keyword: Community Empowerment, Animal Husbandry, Entrepreneurship, Business Management, Local Economy

1. Introduction

Halaban Village, located in Besitang District, Langkat Regency, is one of the villages with very large natural resource potential, particularly in the agricultural and livestock sectors. With a fairly large and fertile land area, supported by favorable climatic conditions, Halaban Village possesses natural advantages that can be utilized for the development of agribusiness-based businesses, particularly in the livestock sector. The greatest potential in this village lies in the presence of extensive green land and an adequate supply of pasture, which can be utilized for livestock farming. Additionally, the community of Halaban Village is already accustomed to small-scale livestock farming activities, although not all of them can be managed to their full potential [1].

However, despite its great potential, the community of Halaban Village faces various obstacles that hinder the development of sustainable livestock farming businesses. The majority of the village population works as agricultural laborers or livestock workers with low- and unstable-income levels. The mindset of society, which tends to rely on wage labor, hinders the entrepreneurial spirit from independently developing businesses. Additionally, other problems faced include limited capital, low managerial skills in managing the business, and the inability of the community to determine a rational selling price for livestock, which is often based solely on urgent needs [2][3].

Livestock programs previously implemented in this village often failed to last due to several factors, including limited capital, a lack of understanding of business management, and the absence of sustained mentoring. These problems cause the livestock farming efforts being carried out not to develop optimally and sustainably.

Most livestock farming operations are temporary and poorly planned, which ultimately affects the economic stability of the village community.

Seeing this condition, the University of North Sumatra (USU), thru community service activities, is trying to offer solutions to improve the local economy by developing community-based livestock businesses. This program aims to create economic independence for the community by providing training, initial capital assistance in the form of breeding livestock, and the development of livestock business infrastructure such as barns [4][5]. In addition, the program also focuses on improving the managerial capacity of the community, including financial record-keeping, business planning, and strengthening the institutional capacity of livestock groups.

The approach used in this program not only aims to provide physical assistance such as breeding stock and housing but also to transfer knowledge related to business management, financial management, and entrepreneurship. With continuous mentoring, the community is expected to be able to manage livestock businesses independently and sustainably, so that the livestock businesses they operate can have a long-term impact on improving the economic well-being of the people of Halaban Village.

Beside the economic impact, this program also aims to strengthen social values in society, such as mutual cooperation and togetherness, which will accelerate the process of social change and improve collective well-being [6]. Thus, this service program is expected to be a driving force in creating an independent society in Halaban Village, with the capacity to manage businesses professionally, and be competitive in the wider market. Overall, this service program is expected to address various problems faced by the people of Halaban Village, as well as maximize existing potential, thereby bringing positive changes to the local community's economic and social life. This program is also expected to serve as an example of an agribusiness-based community empowerment model that can be applied in other villages with similar conditions.

2. Method

The method used in this community service program adopts a participatory approach, where the people of Halaban Village are not only beneficiaries but are also actively involved in every stage of the activity. This approach is believed to promote more sustainable change because the community feels a sense of ownership over the programs being implemented. Thru this approach, it is hoped that the program can run smoothly and have a lasting positive impact.

Here are the implementation stages carried out in this program: Before the program is implemented, the service team conducts an initial survey to identify the potential and problems faced by the community of Halaban Village. This survey includes interviews with community leaders, village officials, and direct observation of the village's land and environmental conditions [7]. The data obtained during this initial survey is used as a basis for designing appropriate interventions tailored to the community's socio-economic conditions.

This survey also aims to explore existing problems, such as limited capital, weak business management, low entrepreneurial motivation, and difficulties in marketing livestock products. By identifying these issues, programs can be focused on the most pressing and relevant solutions for the community.

After the initial survey, a program socialization was conducted for the residents of Halaban Village. This socialization aimed to provide a clear understanding of the program's goals, the benefits the community would receive, and the responsibilities partners must undertake in implementing the program [8]. During this socialization, the community was given the opportunity to express their opinions and provide input, as well as to approve the program's implementation plan.

At this stage, the selection of partner groups to be involved in the program is also carried out. Partner groups are selected based on certain criteria, such as the community's readiness to actively participate in the program and alignment with the program's objectives. The selection of these partner groups is very important because they will be responsible for running and managing the livestock business built during the program. After selecting the partner groups, the next step is the formation of livestock groups. This group will be the core of the empowerment program being implemented. In the process of group formation, the service team provided guidance on structuring a simple organizational structure, dividing roles, and establishing mutually agreed-upon working rules.

The formation of this group is important because it provides a foundation for the collective and sustainable management of livestock businesses. Additionally, with a clear organizational structure, it is hoped that the group can manage the business more organized and professionally. This institutional strengthening also involves training local leadership so that group members are able to manage the group independently after the program ends.

The next stage is the construction of production facilities, which includes building livestock pens and providing breeding stock. The pens are built with the direct involvement of the community, so they have a sense of ownership over the facilities being constructed. The barn is built according to livestock needs, providing sufficient space for the animals to thrive.

In addition to the construction of the coop, breeding stock consisting of male and female chickens was also handed over to the livestock group. The provision of this breeding stock aims to provide initial capital for the group to start their livestock business [9]. The provision of assistance in the form of breeding stock and enclosures is stimulating, meaning the group is responsible for ensuring the sustainability of the business.

One important part of this program is the training provided to the community. This training covers several aspects, including:

Business Management: Training on how to effectively plan, manage, and develop livestock businesses. This training also includes learning about simple financial record-keeping, so the group can monitor cash flow and know the costs and profits earned.

Entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurship training aims to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset among members of the livestock group. Participants are taught to identify business opportunities, create business plans, and understand the importance of taking risks in the business world.

Livestock Maintenance and Animal Health: Extension services on good livestock management and how to prevent animal diseases. The community was also provided with information on efficient feed management and livestock waste management.

During the training, the service team also held interactive discussions to explore the problems faced by the group and provide appropriate solutions. This mentoring aims to ensure that the knowledge provided can be well applied in practice. The mentoring is conducted intensively and regularly by the service team to ensure that the community can implement the knowledge they have learned [10]. Monitoring was conducted through regular field visits to monitor the progress of livestock businesses, ensure financial records were maintained properly, and assist the group in overcoming technical obstacles. During the mentoring period, the team also evaluated the achievements made and provided feedback for improvement. This visit is not only aimed at monitoring but also at providing moral support and motivation to the livestock group so they remain enthusiastic in managing their business.

Activity documentation is an important part of this program. All activities, from barn construction and training to evaluation, are documented in the form of photos, videos, and written reports. This documentation is not only for academic accountability purposes, but also for dissemination to the general public as learning material.

In addition to documentation, scientific articles about this activity are also being prepared for publication in national or international journals. This aims to contribute academically and expand the impact of the community service program.

Evaluation is conducted at the end of each activity stage to measure the extent to which program targets have been achieved. This evaluation involves the community as the primary stakeholder, as they are the ones who best understand the challenges and progress experienced during the program. The evaluation results are used to improve the strategies and approaches used in the next stage.

With a systematic approach and active community involvement, it is hoped that this program can create sustainable change and provide long-term benefits for the people of Halaban Village. This participatory

approach not only helps communities manage livestock businesses but also builds their capacity to become independent and professional entrepreneurs.

3. Result and Discussions

The implementation of the community service program in Halaban Village successfully achieved various significant results. One of the main physical outcomes is the completion of livestock sheds built to a good standard. The constructed pens provide adequate space for the livestock and serve as the primary means for the livestock group to thrive. The formation of livestock groups has also been carried out well, with the established groups actively conducting their activities. The distribution of breeding stock, including male and female chickens, yielded positive results, with the community actively caring for and maintaining the cleanliness of the coop, as well as managing the feeding schedule. Overall, the community is fully involved in every stage, from construction to livestock maintenance.



Figure 1. Construction of Livestock Pens in Halaban Village

Beside physical results, non-physical achievements are also very evident. Business management and entrepreneurship training improves community members' ability to manage livestock businesses. The group's ability to record financial information and calculate costs is improving, although many members initially struggled. The regular mentoring provided has yielded results, with group members now able to create simple financial reports and set livestock selling prices based on more rational calculations.

Some important findings that emerged during the program's implementation were the social transformations occurring in society. Previously, people were more accustomed to working individually, but now they are starting to show a spirit of collective work and mutual cooperation in managing livestock businesses. This spirit of togetherness is evident as they work together to clean the stables, repair facilities, and regularly discuss business developments in group meetings. With the formation of a solid group, this program shows results that are not only physical, but also include significant social changes in the community.



Figure 2. Cage Suitability Inspection

However, despite the initial achievements showing positive results, there are still some challenges that need to be addressed. One of the main challenges is in terms of financial record-keeping and the division of tasks, which are not yet operating optimally. Some group members still struggle with consistency in financial record-keeping, and the division of tasks is sometimes uneven, leading to gaps in engagement among group members. This needs to be improved in the next stage so that business management can run more efficiently and sustainably.

Regarding entrepreneurial motivation, although there have been positive changes, some members still feel more comfortable working as laborers than managing their own businesses. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen entrepreneurial motivation thru a more intensive approach, emphasizing the importance of courage to take risks and plan businesses more maturely.



Figure 3. Cage Conditions

This program not only impacts the economic improvement of the people in Halaban Village but also contributes to empowering the community to manage businesses independently. The participatory approach implemented allows the community to feel ownership and responsibility for the sustainability of the livestock business. With continuous training and mentoring, it is hoped that the community will not only be able to run this business in the short term, but also develop their businesses in the long term.

From a social perspective, this program also strengthens the values of mutual cooperation and collaboration among group members. This aligns with the program's goal of creating a more self-reliant society with high solidarity among members. The institutional aspects that have been established in this program also serve as a strong foundation for the sustainability of livestock businesses in the future.

Despite achieving some important milestones, challenges remain, particularly in terms of consistency in financial management and fair division of tasks among members. Improvements are needed in mentoring to enable the group to manage their businesses more efficiently. Additionally, the work schedule distribution should be better managed thru mutually agreed-upon group rules, so that the workload is not concentrated on just a few members.

It's also important to increase group members' understanding of the importance of structured financial record-keeping and the use of technology to simplify business management. Further training on marketing and using digital platforms for livestock product promotion should also be considered, given the limited market access in the village.

4. Conclusion

The implementation of the community service program in Halaban Village has shown various significant results, both physically and non-physically. The completion of the livestock barn construction according to plan and the provision of well-developed breeding stock are results that can be seen directly. Additionally, this program also successfully improved the community's ability to manage livestock businesses thru the business management and entrepreneurship training provided. More rational financial record-keeping and cost calculation began to be implemented by group members, although there were still challenges in the consistency of its execution.

Socially, there are positive changes in society, with the development of a spirit of collective work and mutual assistance among members of the livestock group. Communities that previously worked individually are now starting to support each other and cooperate in running their livestock businesses. This reflects a shift in the mindset and mentality of society, which is beginning to show an entrepreneurial spirit despite some remaining obstacles related to unequal division of labor.

However, this program still faces some challenges, particularly in terms of consistent financial management and a fairer division of tasks among members. There are still some group members who are having difficulty recording finances in a structured way and in balancing their responsibilities. Therefore, more intensive mentoring is needed to strengthen managerial aspects and improve the community's ability to manage livestock businesses more professionally.

Institutionally, although livestock groups with simple organizational structures have been formed, strengthening the institution and implementing clearer group rules are essential to ensure the sustainability of the business. Further involvement of universities in the form of mentoring and providing more focused human resources is expected to help partner groups become more independent in running their livestock businesses in the future.

Thus, although this service program has shown positive results, further strengthening is still needed in certain aspects to ensure that livestock farming can develop sustainably and have a greater impact on the local economy of Halaban Village.

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