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### **Islamic Community Development: Perspective, Science and Practice**

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## Islamic Community Development: Perspective, Science and Practice

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### ABSTRACT

In the field of Islamic studies and social work, Islamic Community Development (ICD) is one of studies that have philosophical and practical bases to a field with philosophical and practical foundations, emphasizing Islamic values, research and action, focusing on community and organizational works. The ICD also discusses current issues and challenges besides opportunities, and its intersectionality with other disciplines of studies. This article provided a comprehensive analysis of Islamic community development's dimensions including history, principles, body of knowledge and models for empowerment. At the level of implementation, this study discussed the ICD studies at Islamic Higher Education under the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, the reflection of ICD practices, and a lesson learning from Great Mosque of Istiqlal in Jakarta city.

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## Introduction

A remarkable example and model of community growth that was based on Islamic teachings and Muslim communities' ideals can be found in the historical period of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his companions. During his life in Madinah city, the Prophet Muhammad established mosques (Masjid Quba and Masjid Nabawi) used not only for praying, but also to empower Muslim and people around the mosque (Al Hakim & Maulidizen, n.d.; Wijaya et al., 2023). Recently, mosques as faith based organizations (FBOs) in among the main religious organizations that provide services to help life of the congregants and communities as a whole. Muslims have been encouraged by Islamic community development (ICD) to support one another, show compassion, and uphold the rights of those in need, especially when it comes to using community resources. In hadith, the Prophet states (Habib, 2023; Hassan et al., 2025): "Muslims and fellow Muslims are brothers and sisters and should not oppress each other or be wronged" (HR. Muttafaqun 'alaih). Another hadith is mentioned: "And Allah always helps His servant as long as His servant helps his brother" (HR. Muslim).

The Prophet's teachings emphasized the importance of helping one another as a central tenet of Islamic community development. This spirit of cooperation and mutual assistance is a key component of Islamic community development *da'wah*. The core principles of this *da'wah* include *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood), *ta'awun* (mutual assistance), and equality. Additionally, other scholars suggest that the focus of Islamic community development *da'wah* extends to justice and active participation (Bagasra & Bagasra, 2021; Ibrahim & Riyadi, 2023; Karimullah et al., 2023).

In recent years, the relevance of Islamic community development has grown significantly, particularly in response to contemporary social, economic, and environmental challenges (L. Bsoul et al., 2022; Koehrsen, 2021). The increasing complexity of global issues has highlighted the intersectionality of Islamic community development with other fields, such as social justice, public health, environmental sustainability, and economic development. This interconnectedness emphasizes the need for a multidisciplinary approach to address the multifaceted problems facing communities today. The theories and methods have been developed more to analysis social problem, human needs and improving services (Cui et al., 2021; Dmytriiev et al., 2021).

This study provided a comprehensive analysis of the various dimensions of Islamic community development, including its Islamic history, foundational principles, body of knowledge, models for empowerment and recommendations for developing the science and practices. This study further investigated the pivotal role of Islamic community development within the context of higher education, with a particular focus on Indonesia—the most populous Muslim-majority nation—where Islamic values are profoundly embedded in academic discourse and socio-cultural practices. In recent years, mosques, as central faith-based institutions, have increasingly expanded their roles beyond religious functions to encompass broader community engagement and educational initiatives (Daas, 2025; Ishaku et al., 2021). Therefore, a notable example of Indonesian mosque was provided, it is a state mosque of Istiqlal in Jakarta that has implemented a diverse array of programs and services aimed at both congregants and the wider public, thereby exemplifying the mosque's evolving function in supporting religious, educational and community development programs and services.

## Methods

The data collection process employed a qualitative methodology, incorporating techniques such as participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and secondary data analysis (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021; Price & Smith, 2021; Striepe, 2021). Participant observation was conducted throughout my professional engagement with the Islamic Community Development Association and Profession (P2MI) from 2013 to 2022, during which I was also involved in teaching the principles, theories, and practices of Islamic Community Development in both local and international contexts. Additional data were obtained through my role as a member of the management team at the Istiqlal Grand Mosque between 2020 and 2024. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with

fellow members of the mosque's management from August to September 2024. Supplementary data were gathered from organizational reports, official websites, and relevant prior research, thereby enhancing the depth and validity of the study (Cappa et al., 2022; Kumar & Praveenakumar, 2025).

## **Results**

### *Islamic Community Development: History and Principles*

Islamic community development (ICD) seeks to empower individual's life both physically and psychologically, applying religiosity and spirituality. This objective is pursued by guiding people toward a life grounded in Islamic principles, deepening their faith, purifying their hearts, and improving capabilities. Moreover, Muslims are responsible for enhancing family life, developing their communities and utilizing advanced technology (Ayob et al., 2025). Therefore, ICD encompasses efforts within Muslim communities to promote socio-economic growth, social justice, and spiritual well-being, all in alignment with Islamic teachings. Through this framework, ICD aspires to create a thriving, justice, and harmonious society that reflects Islamic ideals.

### *Historical Context of Islamic Community Development*

Islamic community development has a rich and enduring history that dates back to the time of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), who established the first Islamic community in Madinah city. Rooted in the values of the Qur'an and the example set by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), Islamic community development adopts a holistic approach aimed at fostering cooperation, self-reliance, social solidarity, and long-term sustainability (J. Ali, 2025; L. A. Bsoul, 2024).

The Prophet's model of community development was rooted in the principles of justice, cooperation, and collective responsibility. He underscored the importance of social welfare, ensuring access to basic needs such as food, shelter, and education, while integrating religious obligations into the fabric of everyday social and economic life (Alias et al., 2024; Zailani et al., 2023). Much of these initiatives were organized and facilitated through the Prophet's mosque (Masjid Nabawi), which served as a centre for both spiritual guidance and practical support, fostering a sense of unity and mutual care among the community.

Nowadays, social capital of Muslim communities helps support ICD programs in activities. For instance, trust and solidarity bind responsibilities and kindnesses showing obedience to Allah that will be granted with blessing and goodness. In addition, resources (infaq, sadaqah, zakat and waqaf) managed by professional Islamic organizations should follow the Islamic teachings in implementing and creating changes in the community (ummah) and society. The last of waqf system has created charitable assets for public welfare, such as financing hospitals, schools, and orphanages. Because these endowments were self-sufficient, long-term communal development was possible without exclusively depending on governmental funding. Throughout the Islamic world, this paradigm has

been imitated in many ways, particularly in areas like Mughal India and the Ottoman Empire.

Additionally, the ICD is important to implement fundamental Muslim's obligation for Dakwah or spreading messages of Islam and create fundamental change. The description of the Qur'anic foundation for Da'wah implementation (QS.An-Nahl/16:125) covers the strategies (Shukri, 2021; Varzandeh & Dewi, 2023): 1) *bil-hikmah* (conveying the truth - using religious law, natural law, and social law as part of the *sunnatullah*); 2) *mau'izah hasanah* (emphasizing aspects of information and values with successful communication, social interaction, and education); and 3) *wa jadiluhum billati hiya ahsan* (involving interactive and participatory dialogue by prioritizing active participatory roles and even community contributions in the da'wah process). All the points are reflected in ICD especially through religious, education and economic empowerment programs. In other words, de-reconstruction of Da'wah's concepts and methods is not only by conveying messages and effectively communication (*bil-lisan*), but also by action for making a fundamental change (*bil-amal*).

Furthermore, community activities can be enriched through the use of technology, while remaining aligned with Islamic values and Shari'a (Sany, 2019; Susilo, 2016). As a result, people's lives can flourish both religiously, social-economically and technologically. These insights suggest that the da'wah of ICD seeks to improve both the economic and technological aspects of life, grounded in Islamic values. This da'wah specifically aims to foster a civilization built on justice, cooperation, brotherhood, equality, and participation within society. The ultimate goal is to create a peaceful, safe, comfortable, and prosperous community.

In the contemporary times, Islamic community development has adapted to address the complex challenges faced by Muslim communities across both developing and developed countries. A range of organizations, including mosques as key faith-based institutions, have integrated Islamic principles into their community development efforts, focusing on critical areas such as poverty alleviation, education (both formal and informal), healthcare, and microfinance (Kharde et al., 2025; Roy & Ramachandran, 2024; Tandos & El Zieni, 2024). Mosques, particularly those in major cities like Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, and Bandung, play a crucial role in advancing community development. These prominent mosques must align their initiatives with core Islamic teachings and principles to ensure that their programs are not only impactful but also foster sustainable, positive outcomes for both the community and society at large.

#### *Principles of Islamic Community Development*

At its heart, Islamic community development is based on several fundamental principles derived from Islamic teachings. These principles provide a moral and ethical framework for development that shapes social and economic activities in Muslim communities. Key tenets include justice (*adl*), equality (*musawamah*), cooperation and mutual responsibility (*takaful* and *ta'awun*), benevolence (*ihsan*), and sustainability (*istidama*) (Kunhibava et al., 2024; Shahimi & Zahari, 2025). These values not only guide

individual behaviour, but also inform community practices aimed at fostering collective well-being and addressing societal challenges.

The following explains the ICD's guiding principles: First of all, one of Islam's core beliefs is fairness (*adl*), which is seen as a fundamental guideline for both individual behavior and communal growth. According to Islamic beliefs, justice is necessary to guarantee that people and communities are treated fairly, equally, and with dignity (QS.Al-Hadid/57:25). One of the key components in fostering harmony and peace in society is social fairness. On the other hand, the social order will experience social unrest, tension, and inequality if justice is not administered (Bhatt, 2022; Kaljonen et al., 2021). Addressing social injustices including poverty, illiteracy, and unequal access to resources is what community development is all about. Then, Islamic justice serves as a means of promoting social harmony and equity, directing community development projects to create a more just and balanced society.

Second, equality (*musawamah*) that according to Islam, the sole factor that separates people is their degree of piety toward Allah, which is the real indicator of a person's value (Azid et al., 2023; Ismail, 2022; Shanbaky, 2023). Allah's statements in the Qur'an, which emphasize equality among humans, lend support to this idea of equality (QS.Al-Hujurat/49:13). According to the Islamic notion of equality, everyone is equal and subject to the law, with the exception of those who obey God and serve humanity (Baderin, 2022; Herijanto, 2022). In addition, human rights and prosperity that respects people from different backgrounds (e.g. gender, religion, ethnicity, social status, and age) are also intimately linked to the idea of equality (Golubeva, 2025; Olovčić, 2023; Tripathi & Kumar, 2024).

Thirdly, Muslim communities cannot function well without cooperation and mutual responsibility (*takaful and ta'awun*), especially when it comes to resilience and communal welfare. An Islamic concept known as *takaful*, or mutual aid, entails people making contributions to a group fund or pool in order to support members who are in need, particularly during emergencies, sickness, or natural disasters (Hassan et al., 2025; Muhamat et al., 2022). Similarly, a fundamental tenet of Islamic growth is the idea of *ta'awun*, which promotes collaboration between people, organizations, and communities, as mentioned in a verse of al-Qur'an (QS.Al-Ma'idah/5:2). This principle can empower Islamic society to care more about one another and maintain solidarity in the community setting by emphasizing cooperation and mutual help in encouraging good and righteous activities among the community (Akhtar, 2024; Kujur, 2023; Surbakti et al., 2024).

Fourth, benevolence (*ihsan*), which is frequently interpreted as aiming for greatness or doing good deeds, is a cornerstone of Islamic ethics. It highlights how crucial it is to act honourably, kindly, and sympathetically in all interactions, whether with family, neighbours, or the general public (Holst & Hastrup, 2024; Mursalin, 2023). The importance of benevolence (*ihsan*) as a means of fostering a fair and peaceful society, where members of the community are inspired by a feeling of shared humanity and a dedication to the common good, is emphasized over and over again in the Qur'an and Hadith (QS.an-Nahl/16:90). From the standpoint of community development, benevolence

(ihsan) inspires people to make contributions to society not only out of duty but also out of a moral imperative to improve the lives of others.

Fifth, the idea of stewardship (khilafah) which refers to humanity's responsibility as custodians of the land, is inextricably linked to sustainability (istidama). The significance of protecting the environment and making sure that natural resources are handled fairly and responsibly, not just for the benefit of the present generation but also for future generations, is emphasized in the Qur'an (QS.Al-An'am/6:141). Islam promotes the preservation of natural resources like air, water, and land from waste and overuse, therefore sustainable development goes beyond economic expansion to include ecological balance (Hariram et al., 2023; Jie et al., 2023).

Finally, to effectively implement community development programs, it is crucial for ICD practitioners to promote active participation from community members, which fosters a sense of ownership and empowerment. This participatory approach is grounded in the understanding that empowerment fosters self-reliance and resilience, thereby strengthening the agency of marginalized communities (Pendakur, 2023; Silverman et al., 2023). Additionally, building strong partnerships and collaborations is essential for creating meaningful and lasting change. These collaborations not only facilitate the integration of local knowledge but also ensure that interventions are culturally and contextually relevant, maximizing their effectiveness and sustainability (Hadlos et al., 2022; Im et al., 2023; Mawere & Mukonza, 2025). By embracing these principles, the ICD Foundation can drive sustainable social transformation, advancing social justice and human dignity in the process.

The following section delves deeper into the concept of ICD as an interdisciplinary field, exploring how it draws on diverse theories and frameworks from disciplines of studies, such as social welfare, sociology, and psychological social. This integration of multiple perspectives enriches the understanding of Islamic community dynamics and enhances the practical application of development strategies, providing a more comprehensive approach to addressing the complex needs, particularly to this specific religious community.

#### *Islamic Community Development as A Science*

As previously mentioned, the principles of Islamic community development (ICD) encourage individuals to live in a manner that fosters equality, justice, kindness, and respect for both humanity and the environment. This reflects the profound and enduring relevance of Islamic teachings in addressing real-world challenges. One central concept within ICD is the dissemination of Islamic teachings, or da'wah, which is rooted in the idea of being a "mercy to all worlds" (rahmatan lil'alam). The ultimate aim of da'wah is to establish a society where relationships - whether between humans, nature, or the Divine - are balanced, fostering harmony and coexistence across all forms of life (B. Ali, 2024; Maharana & Behura, 2024; Zhao, 2025). This vision of social equilibrium is foundational to the ICD's goals, illustrating how Islamic values can be applied to create a just and compassionate society.



At this juncture, ICD places significant emphasis on community and organizational initiatives, seeking to drive meaningful, long-term change by applying relevant theories, concepts, methods, and approaches. Organizing for social change, as defined by Lu et al.,(2023), is the process through which individuals and groups use their skills, resources, and collective potential to gain control over their future and work toward shared goals. Achieving these objectives requires the development of mutually supportive communities, where collaboration and solidarity are key to overcoming socio-economic challenges. As Trivedi & Ray, (2024) underscores, effective social change depends on channelling the voices of people, empowering them to act collectively in pursuit of justice and equality. These efforts, grounded in Islamic values, provide a blueprint for building communities that are not only socially cohesive but also resilient and sustainable.

#### *Community Development in Islamic Studies*

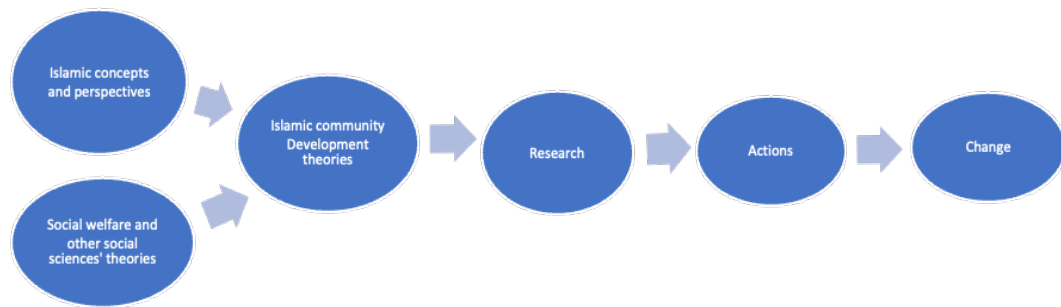
In the field of knowledge, Islamic Community Development (ICD) is a crucial component of Da'wah science, integrating an Islamic perspective with the exploration of community dynamics, social challenges, and their solutions. ICD promotes a holistic approach that goes beyond theoretical discussions, incorporating practical methods such as mixed and participatory research. It emphasizes a social work or social welfare perspective, grounding its ethical considerations and actions in the principles of Islam while addressing the real-world needs of communities.

The philosophical foundations of Islamic community development serve as a guide for practice, ensuring that development initiatives align with Islamic principles and contribute to long-term social transformation. The foundations include epistemology, ontology, and axiology of Islamic community development that offer a comprehensive framework for understanding how development is both conceived and implemented within the Islamic tradition. The epistemology refers to the method of thinking, ontology represents the subject or object of that thinking, and axiology reflects the outcome, always intertwined with values, ethics, and the moral principles that guide human behaviour (Edwards, 2023; Groothuizen, 2024).

In the context of Islamic community development, the epistemology is gained through set of analysis from disciplines of studies, the ontology are object of the study that are the communities and organizations (e.g. issues, strengths and resources), and the axiology focuses on the ethical dimensions of development practices, guiding how actions are taken to promote the well-being of individuals and communities. This framework enables the effective addressing of community challenges while remaining firmly rooted in Islamic ethical values. Figure 1 shows the frameworks applied in the ICD knowledge and practices.



Figure 1. The Logical Framework of ICD



In the discussion of ICD, the term Islam extends beyond religious teachings to encompass leadership, organizations, and congregations. This broader paradigm can help address contemporary challenges, such as the global impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which affected countries, systems, and individuals alike. While the pandemic caused significant negative consequences, particularly in health and the economy, it also heightened awareness of the need for local, national, and global collaboration to mitigate risks. Moreover, it demonstrated the potential of virtual interactions as an alternative means to bridge distances and foster global connections efficiently.

Additionally, the concept of development is framed within an Islamic perspective, aiming to empower individuals to take control of their lives, articulate their aspirations, and find solutions to the challenges they face daily. From an Islamic viewpoint, development efforts are meant to enhance life by nurturing a sense of brotherhood, recognizing equality before Allah, promoting tolerance, encouraging the pursuit of good and the prevention of wrong (*amar ma'ruf nahyi munkar*), making decisions through mutual consultation (*shura*), ensuring social justice, and supporting one another to improve the common welfare. These efforts are rooted in the three foundational pillars of the religion: Iman (faith), Islam (submission), and Ihsan (excellence in worship and conduct) (Dhifallah, 2024; Mutalib et al., 2022; Shaukat, 2024).

Moreover, the term of community development is used interchangeably with other terms such as community work, community organizing, community action, community practice, and community - based services. Then, community development as a process seeks to strengthen and empower communities to develop their full potential. It seeks to equip individuals and groups of people with the knowledge, skills, experiences to create fundamental, participative and progressive changes in their own communities. It ranges from small initiatives within a small group to large initiatives that involve the broader community, and produces self-reliant and self-sustaining communities that mobilize resources for the benefit of their members.

Performing actions is directed to create fundamental change (*Taghyir*) as a verse in al-Qur'an says: "Indeed, Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change the condition that is in themselves." (QS.Ar-Ra'd/13:11). The implication is that

humans do not only have the ability of the physical (nafsiyah), but also the spiritual which will move the potential to think (cognitive), behavior (behavior), and the will (motivation) to make changes that can have implications for individuals, families, groups, communities and a nation. This is what is meant by social change in community development. Furthermore, the desirable changes are expected to have implications on structural changes or social systems (institutions or social organizations) emphasizing more on aspects of humanity, solidarity, and justice (Beagles, 2022; Mikulewicz et al., 2023; Sangiovanni & Viehoff, 2023). At this point, individual and group awareness should be continued with collective awareness (society) by fostering social responsibility and national spirit.

#### *Islamic Community Development in Islamic Higher Education*

Development (ICD) but also examined how ICD has been institutionalized and practiced in Indonesia through Islamic higher education initiatives led by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA). As previously mentioned, the ICD is a key component of Da'wah science (Islamic Studies), with a strong emphasis on creating tangible societal changes by leveraging available resources within Muslim communities. By developing the concept of ICD, the term "Islam" is understood in a broader context, encompassing not only religious teachings but also scholars, leaders, organizations, institutions, and congregations. This expansive approach reflects the holistic nature of ICD, which integrates spiritual, social, and institutional elements to address community needs effectively.

At the university level, Islamic Community Development (ICD) became a recognized concentration or department in the 19th century, a time when most Islamic higher education institutions were still structured as state or private institutes (IAIN) or colleges (STAIN). At universities like UIN, the ICD discussions are closely linked to Social Welfare Studies, as the ICD discipline evolved from Islamic Studies, while the Social Welfare department grew out of a collaborative master's program in Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies (Master of Social Work) offered at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta from 2003 to 2005. This program, funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in partnership with the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Directorate of Islamic Higher Education, helped integrate social welfare with Islamic teachings, laying the foundation for further development in the field.

In November 2013, the ICD department at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah organized a national seminar that brought together managers and lecturers from ICD departments across various Islamic higher education institutions (UIN, IAIN, and STAIN) throughout Indonesia. One of the key outcomes of this forum was the establishment of the Islamic Community Development Education Association (APPMI), a professional organization for ICD. In 2017, APPMI evolved into the Islamic Community Development Education and Profession Association (P2MI), with a focus on developing curriculum and discussions, enhancing professionalism, promoting evidence-based practices, and strengthening networks that integrate both local values and global perspectives ([www.p2mi.org](http://www.p2mi.org)). Between 2012 and 2014, several significant meetings of the ICD department were held at prominent State Islamic Universities, including UIN Sunan

Kalijaga in Yogyakarta, UIN Alauddin in Makassar, and UIN Syarif Hidayatullah in Jakarta. These meetings were crucial for advancing the ICD department, particularly in refining the development of the APPMI/P2MI, as well as improving the curriculum, and designing effective learning and teaching processes within the field.

Nowadays, the P2MI has undertaken more strategic efforts to build its capacity and forge partnerships with both governmental and non-governmental organizations to support various programs, particularly those aimed at strengthening internal capabilities among lecturers, students, and alumni. Through these collaborations, the organization seeks to develop robust theoretical frameworks, effective methods, and best practices that are deeply rooted in local wisdom. By reinforcing core values, mobilizing resources, and fostering solidarity, P2MI aims to contribute to the development process at both local and national levels. These efforts not only enhance the organization's impact but also ensure the sustainability and relevance of its programs within diverse communities.

#### *Improving Islamic Community Development Practices*

The study offered valuable insights into the practical application of Islamic Community Development (ICD) principles and provided recommendations for improving future practices. Key suggestions included strengthening the integration of ICD with broader academic curricula, enhancing community engagement, and fostering innovation to address the evolving needs of society. Additionally, the study emphasized the importance of equipping future practitioners with the necessary skills to tackle emerging challenges. Through this exploration, the study highlighted the need for continuous adaptation and cross-disciplinary collaboration to create sustainable, inclusive, and impactful community development initiatives that are firmly rooted in Islamic values.

#### *Foundations and Models*

In conducting ICD, the foundations consist of three main points: 1) avoiding blaming the victims, 2) people (active) participation, 3) partnership and collaboration for creating fundamental change. These points are very consistent with core principles that form the basis of its body of knowledge, ethics and practices. The core principles of equality, social justice and human dignity need to be ensured particularly for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups such as the poor, the defenceless, and the needy by addressing the root causes of inequality. This supports the notion of development for all beings requiring the redistribution of resources, the alteration of power dynamics, and the reinventing technologies (Pansera & Fressoli, 2021; Ramjit, 2025; Wiese, 2025).

The ICD's theories and practices contains the discussions of community development and organizing that emphasize the importance of utilizing local resources or assets, which, according to Engelman et al.,(2022) including human and natural resources, infrastructure, public amenities, as well as organizations, associations, leaders, and community groups. In addition, Turner et al.,(2022) highlighted the need to foster change from the ground up by not only valuing local resources but also recognizing the significance of local knowledge, culture, skills, and processes. Moreover, the resources are crucial in ensuring active community participation at every stage of the development

process - from preparation and community mapping to identifying issues and needs, planning actions, implementing programs and activities, and conducting monitoring and evaluation, all the way through to the termination phase.

Models of community development that reflect various needs of communities including aspects of religiosity, social welfare, education, health, and the economy. These models might be integrated in the ICD in forms of: 1) community economic empowerment through programs such as Islamic microfinance, zakat, and poverty alleviation; 2) strengthening religious communities and organizations via Islamic education and youth empowerment initiatives; 3) empowering communities in conflict areas by promoting peacebuilding efforts and interfaith dialogue; 4) increasing women's participation in healthcare and social welfare services; and 5) fostering digital participation by raising awareness on critical issues such as environmental sustainability, gender equality, and countering violent extremism and terrorism. Finally, each of these models must incorporate core the principles of justice, equality, partnership, integration, and sustainability, as previously discussed, to ensure they are not only impactful but also inclusive, enduring and innovative. The next section provided an example of the ICD developed by the Great Mosque of Istiqlal, which have evolved more with the mosque's new vision began in 2020 (<https://www.istiqlal.or.id>). The Istiqlal Mosque has become a role model for other major mosques in Indonesia and potentially for mosques across the South East Asia region, as it has conducted various international initiatives based on strategic partnerships and collaborations. These efforts showcase how an institution can inspire and foster both local and global development within an Islamic framework.

#### *Case Study: Programs at Great Mosque of Istiqlal*

Learning mosque's roles and functions was shown by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and His companions through Madinah mosque that till now becomes the second largest mosques for Muslims. As illustrated in table 1, the vision and mission of mosques have historically encompassed a range of functions, including religious practices, social services (such as education, the arts, healthcare, and economic development), governance, and diplomacy. Some previous studies found that mosques provide a distinctive setting for reflecting collective thought and preserving communal memory (Buljubasic, 2023; Hamdan, 2021; Hoelzchen, 2022).

<b>Roles</b>	<b>Functions</b>	<b>Activities</b>
Center for religious activities	Improving the quality of faith and obedience Improving knowledge and Islamic insight	Praying together and performing <i>dzikir</i> and <i>du'a</i> Learning and teaching al-Qur'an and <i>Hadit</i>

Center for Education	Teaching sciences	Running classes on sciences (philosophy, astronomy, arts, economics, etc.)
	Having a Library	Having Islamic book collections and other facilities
<b>Roles</b>	<b>Functions</b>	<b>Activities</b>
Center for Improving Economy	Establishing “ <i>Baitul Maal</i> ”	Collecting <i>zakat</i> , <i>infaq</i> and <i>shadaqah</i>
Center for social activities	Providing space for gatherings or <i>sillaturrahim</i>	Inviting the congregation to come and get involved in the activities
	Providing social services	Distributing social assistance Treating patients Providing “shelter” for people without homes
Center for Governance	Performing political activities	Welcoming delegations from other countries

Table 1. Roles and functions of Mosques.

The next part reflected more about the roles and functions of modern mosque by taking example from the Great Mosque of Istiqlal, a national mosque located in Jakarta, serves as a prominent model for various programs, activities, and services within Islamic community development (Chaplin, 2025; Istiawan et al., 2023; Wiryomartono, 2023). In this context, "community" refers not only to the mosque's congregations and Muslim groups, but also to all elements of society that involve and access to the mosque offline and online. The following points illustrate how the mosque has successfully implemented the principles of ICD by applying models and introducing best practices that be possibly modified for similar initiatives.

### *Islamic Education*

The foundation of Islamic education is based on the Quran, which places great emphasis on the pursuit of knowledge (QS.Al-‘Alaq/96:1-5). The first revelation to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was a command to "Read!" (Iqra), highlighting the significance of literacy and learning in Islam. Education, in this context, is seen as an act of worship and a means to understand the world through the lens of Islamic values such as justice, compassion, and the pursuit of truth. The Prophet Muhammad (pbug) says, "Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim" (Sunan Ibn Majah), reinforcing the idea that education is both a personal and collective responsibility for all members of the Muslim community. Islam places a high importance on education, and community development initiatives frequently concentrate on expanding access to high-quality education, particularly for underprivileged populations like women and the impoverished (Majebi et al., 2024; Wang, 2021; Ziso et al., 2022).

The Istiqlal Mosque offers a comprehensive educational program that spans from kindergarten (*raudhatul athfal*) to postgraduate studies, all grounded in Islamic principles. One of its most notable initiatives is the Ulama Cadre Education Program, a fully funded initiative designed to produce male and female scholars (*ulama*) with a moderate, peaceful, and tolerant understanding of Islam (<https://pku.istiqlal.or.id>). This program aims to equip future religious leaders with the knowledge and skills to convey Islam's message of peace and coexistence. To ensure its success, the program is supported by Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs and Ministry of Finance, which provide scholarships to students pursuing this transformative education. In addition to formal academic programs, the mosque is actively involved in offering leadership training, occupational skill development, and mentorship opportunities to engage youth and prepare them to make positive contributions to society. These programs are particularly impactful for women, with informal Islamic study groups (*majelis taklim*) serving as a crucial platform for female congregants to receive religious education, leadership development, and community engagement. This inclusive and diverse model of religious education, which blends formal and informal learning, has become widely popular across Indonesia, reflecting the mosque's commitment to fostering both spiritual and socio-economic development within the broader community. By combining religious education with practical life skills, the Istiqlal Mosque exemplifies how Islamic institutions can contribute to the holistic development of individuals, preparing them not only for religious leadership but also for active, constructive roles in society. This approach aligns with Indonesia's broader educational and social goals, promoting a peaceful and tolerant interpretation of Islam while empowering local communities, especially women and youth.

#### *Islamic Micro-business and Philanthropy*

Mosques, as faith-based organizations, have increasingly turned to business ventures to support their financial sustainability by providing facilities or rental spaces for individuals to run businesses in the vicinity of the mosque. This model capitalizes on the frequent congregation of worshippers who attend prayers and participate in mosque activities regularly, especially during the weekends. The visitors to the mosque are not limited to Muslims; non-Muslims from both local communities and international visitors are also welcomed, making the mosque a vibrant hub for social interaction. This diverse interaction creates a unique environment where business opportunities can thrive, serving both the spiritual and economic needs of the surrounding community (Kahf, 1998; Khan, 1993; Khan & Hunjra, 2015). Such Islamic micro-business programs, as Ahmed (2002) points out, play a significant role not only in fostering economic development but also in strengthening the moral and social fabric of communities. These programs offer a sustainable alternative to conventional finance, particularly for the economically disadvantaged, by promoting ethical financial practices and supporting community-driven initiatives.

In this regard, mosques, such as Indonesia's Istiqlal Mosque, have supported initiatives aimed at fostering the growth of small enterprises, including food businesses and everyday necessities, by setting up canteens, cafes, and restaurants in the vicinity of their buildings. Istiqlal Global Fund, which also collects waqf from donors and



congregations, oversees the business and economic projects (<https://igf.or.id>). New opportunities are presented by the expanding use of technology in the development of Islamic communities. People may now more easily access services, volunteer for community projects, and make Zakat contributions thanks to mobile platforms, social media, and digital financial instruments. Furthermore, the necessity of interfaith and cross-cultural cooperation is becoming more widely acknowledged, as it allows Islamic community development to be incorporated into larger global development projects.

Islam encourages Muslims to contribute to the well-being of others, particularly those who are marginalized or in need, through both voluntary acts of charity (*sadaqah*) and obligatory almsgiving (*zakat*). The Quran highlights the importance of helping the poor, the sick, and the vulnerable, stressing that caring for others is a means of attaining divine favor (QS.Al-Baqarah/2:177). Then, the collected fund are transferred to the Istiqlal bank account. The initiative has proven to be a vital tool for empowering the mosque community, as it provides opportunities for income generation, meeting the needs of congregants and poverty alleviation (Ahmad et al., 2024; Aneesh et al., 2024). According to Ahmad et al., (2024), such initiatives are consistent with the Islamic principles of economic justice and community solidarity, where the mosque serves as not only a spiritual centre, but also a platform for socio-economic development.

Lastly, by facilitating these business programs, mosques contribute to the broader goals of social welfare, creating opportunities for individuals to enhance their livelihoods and fostering a sense of communal responsibility. This model of mosque-driven entrepreneurship aligns with the Islamic concept of *waqf* (charitable endowment), which is used to fund community services, including educational, health, and business ventures (Johari et al., 2024; Usman & Ab Rahman, 2023). As such, the Istiqlal Mosque's initiatives exemplify how religious institutions can integrate social entrepreneurship with their core spiritual mission, thus addressing both immediate economic needs and long-term community empowerment.

### *Islamic Social Assistances*

Islamic social and health assistances are deeply rooted in the principles of charity, compassion, and social justice. In early Islamic history, the mosque of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in Madinah serves patients by medical treatment and providing guidance on maintaining hygiene and well-being (Tandos & El Zieni, 2024). The Quran's emphasis on holistic well-being to ensure that Islamic social and health assistance programs address both the material and spiritual needs of individuals (QS.An-Nahl/16:90). Thus, Islamic social and health assistance serves as a comprehensive model for fostering a just and equitable society, where the health and welfare of every individual are a shared responsibility (Von Heimburg & Ness, 2021; Žižek et al., 2021). With numerous Islamic groups operating clinics, hospitals, and health education initiatives, Islamic community development also encompasses healthcare to vulnerable groups for free or at a very low cost.

The Great Mosque of Istiqlal has long been at the forefront of community-oriented initiatives, offering a variety of programs that extend beyond religious services to



address the social and health needs of the community. One key initiative is the mosque's clinic, which provides medical services to both the mosque's management staff and congregants, enabling them to monitor their health and receive treatment for various ailments.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the mosque played an instrumental role in national efforts to combat the virus. It launched a large-scale vaccination program, prioritizing religious leaders and the elderly, groups that are often at higher risk. The mosque also organized hybrid interfaith dialogues aimed at raising awareness about the importance of vaccination and promoting hygiene practices, in line with Islamic teachings on health and cleanliness (QS.Al-Baqarah/2:222). These dialogues brought together religious and community leaders from diverse faiths to foster understanding and encourage public health measures.

In addition to health initiatives, the mosque has been actively involved in providing social aid to those most affected by the pandemic. Through the distribution of essential daily need packages, the mosque helped vulnerable groups, including low-income families and marginalized communities, navigate the hardships caused by lockdowns and economic disruptions. The mosque's commitment to social welfare continues, particularly during the holy month of Ramadan, when it not only distributes food packages but also organizes communal iftar meals, allowing people to break their fast together in solidarity. These actions are in keeping with Islamic principles of charity and community support, as emphasized in the Quran (QS.At-Taubah/9:60), and reflect the Istiqlal mosque's broader mission to serve as a hub for both spiritual and social welfare. The mosque's ongoing efforts underscore the role of religious institutions in addressing public health crises and fostering social cohesion, ensuring that the most vulnerable members of society receive the assistance they need.

### *Peace and Interfaith Dialogues*

Addressing societal issues and promoting social cohesiveness need interfaith discussion, community development, and peacebuilding. In Islamic framework, the Quran highlights the significance of community well-being by promoting togetherness and aiding those in need (QS.Al-Baqarah/2:177). The Quran also calls for the promotion of peace and reconciliation, hence peace-building is also central to Islamic teachings (QS.Al-Hujurat/49:9-10), encourages understanding and cooperation among different faiths (QS.Al-Ma'idah/5:48). The Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) interactions with Christian and Jewish leaders in Medina highlight the importance of peaceful coexistence and mutual respect (Ghazali & Kamal, 2023; Khan et al., 2024). Williams, (2023) points out that interfaith discussion can be a potent instrument for fostering trust and tackling prevalent societal concerns including poverty, inequality, and environmental sustainability. In addition, As noted by Saleem & Milovanovic, (2023), interfaith dialogue can serve as a powerful tool for building trust and addressing common social.

In addition, Islam emphasizes on peace, exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) actions in Medina, underscores the importance of dialogue and reconciliation in overcoming social divisions. Interfaith dialogue, which involves open and respectful communication between different religious communities, is also deeply rooted in Islamic

tradition. For instance, the Istiqlal Mosque is renowned for its active role in promoting interfaith dialogue and peace-building, making significant strides in fostering religious tolerance and social harmony.

One of the most historic events in recent years took place during the visit of Pope Francis to Indonesia in September 2024. In a landmark moment, the Pope, together with the Grand Imam of the Great Mosque of Istiqlal, Prof. Dr. Nasaruddin Umar, and their respective teams, engaged in a profound interfaith dialogue that culminated in the drafting of the Istiqlal Declaration. This declaration, which reflects a shared commitment to interfaith cooperation and peace, was subsequently sent to the Vatican, where it received a positive and supportive response. The Istiqlal Declaration is a powerful document of interfaith diplomacy, focusing on critical global issues such as humanitarian concerns and environmental sustainability. It emphasizes that religious values, including those of Islam and Christianity, offer vital solutions to pressing challenges like dehumanization, climate change, and social inequality (Sirken, 2025; Sumaktoyo, 2025). The declaration represents a collective vision of religious leaders committed to peace, coexistence, and the common good of humanity.

The significance of such initiatives cannot be overstated, as they exemplify the potential for interfaith dialogue and peace-building to create a more inclusive, just, and peaceful world. In a global context increasingly marked by religious and ideological divisions, these efforts are essential for building bridges between communities and promoting mutual understanding. As highlighted by experts like Ciocan, (2024), interfaith dialogue not only reduces misunderstandings and stereotypes but also provides a platform for communities to collaborate on shared goals, such as combating poverty, protecting the environment, and promoting human rights. By fostering interfaith communication, religious institutions like the Istiqlal Mosque help create social cohesion, where individuals from diverse backgrounds can work together to tackle common challenges and build a world characterized by peace, trust, and mutual respect.

Finally, the integration of the three areas of community development, peace-building, and interfaith dialogue societies foster a more inclusive, just, and peaceful world. This becomes more crucial in a world that is increasingly interconnected yet divided by religious and ideological differences, interfaith dialogue and peace building can be a powerful tool for building lasting peace and social cohesion. Through such efforts, communities can move beyond stereotypes, build trust, and work together toward common goals.

## **Conclusion**

Islamic community development encompasses three fundamental areas: concepts, studies, and practices, all of which are deeply rooted in a rich history of Islamic social welfare. Historically, Islam has emphasized the importance of using all available resources within Muslim communities to uphold principles of justice, equality, collaboration, and sustainability. The mosque, as a central institution, plays a pivotal role in empowering

communities—primarily by supporting its congregants and their neighbors. The Great Mosque of Istiqlal stands as a prominent example of how a mosque can effectively serve as a catalyst for social empowerment. Through its initiatives, Istiqlal Mosque has become a role model for implementing the concept of community empowerment, demonstrating how religious institutions can directly contribute to the welfare and development of society.

Grounded in the values of justice, cooperation, and benevolence, Islamic community development offers a holistic approach to addressing socio-economic challenges faced by Muslim communities around the world. It draws from a rich historical tradition of social welfare, where solidarity and collective responsibility have been central to building resilient communities. Contemporary Islamic community development efforts continue to emphasize the empowerment of individuals, promoting sustainable, inclusive growth that aligns with Islamic principles. These efforts are designed not only to alleviate poverty and social inequality but also to nurture a sense of community and shared responsibility. While challenges remain in fully realizing the potential of Islamic community development, its capacity to positively influence global development efforts is vast. The principles of social justice, mutual care, and ethical governance inherent in Islam provide valuable insights and actionable models for creating more equitable and resilient societies.

In conclusion, the integration of Islamic community development, peace-building, and interfaith dialogue can play a transformative role in fostering a more just and peaceful world. These efforts, deeply rooted in the teachings of Islam, call for collective action, compassion, and a shared commitment to building inclusive and harmonious communities. By embracing these values, not only Muslims but individuals from all faiths can collaborate to create a world grounded in justice, peace, and mutual respect. The example of mosques like Istiqlal Mosque highlights how religious institutions can be powerful agents of positive change, offering a pathway to address both spiritual and socio-economic challenges in a divided world.

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