



Initiating Mosque-Based Social Entrepreneurship through Participatory Action Research: Implications for Community Social Work

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Abstract

This study examines the initiation of mosque-based social entrepreneurship through the SM Klin programme in Pondok Hamlet, Selomartani, Sleman. A two-cycle Participatory Action Research design using Look-Think-Act involved 19 core participants representing mosque management, local leadership, and a women's religious study group. Data were collected through participant observation (transect walks), in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and documentation. Iterative thematic analysis mapped changes across cycles onto four dimensions: social value, civil society, social innovation, and economic activity. The first cycle generated awareness and basic production skills, although one group experienced technical failure. Collective reflection in the second cycle led to improved equipment and procedures, business-oriented training, the SM Klin brand, and a preliminary margin-sharing scheme. The initiative reached an early-stage social venture, reflected in stronger participation, skills, cooperation, and limited production. Economic sustainability cannot yet be established because market reach, sales volume, and net profit remain limited.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis proses perintisan kewirausahaan sosial berbasis masjid melalui program SM Klin serta implikasinya bagi pekerjaan sosial komunitas. Penelitian menggunakan Participatory Action Research dengan dua siklus Look-Think-Act yang melibatkan 19 partisipan inti dari unsur takmir masjid, tokoh masyarakat, dan kelompok pengajian perempuan. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, transek, wawancara mendalam, diskusi kelompok terarah, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis secara tematik berdasarkan empat dimensi kewirausahaan sosial: nilai sosial, masyarakat sipil, inovasi sosial, dan aktivitas ekonomi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siklus pertama menghasilkan kesadaran, keterampilan dasar, dan pengalaman produksi awal, tetapi masih diwarnai kegagalan teknis. Refleksi bersama pada siklus kedua mendorong perbaikan alat dan prosedur, peningkatan pembagian kerja, pelatihan pengelolaan usaha, pembentukan merek SM Klin, dan penyusunan skema awal pembagian margin. Nilai sosial tampak pada peningkatan keterampilan, kepercayaan diri, kerja sama, dan partisipasi perempuan. Inovasi utama terletak pada pengubahan dana serta jaringan masjid menjadi mekanisme usaha kolektif. Namun, tata kelola, kepemilikan, legalitas, pencatatan keuangan, dan keberlanjutan pasar belum terbentuk secara

Keywords

Social Entrepreneurship; Mosque; Participatory Action Research; Women's Empowerment; Community Social Work

Kata Kunci

Kewirausahaan Sosial; Masjid; Riset Aksi Partisipatif; Pemberdayaan Perempuan; Pekerjaan Sosial Komunitas



memadai. Penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa SM Klin telah mencapai tahap perintisan usaha sosial, bukan usaha yang telah terbukti meningkatkan kesejahteraan ekonomi. Temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya PAR dalam memfasilitasi pembelajaran kolektif, mobilisasi aset lokal, dan penguatan kapasitas komunitas.

Introduction

Economic vulnerability among rural households does not always manifest as extreme poverty. It is also evident in dependence on informal employment, income volatility, limited access to finance, and restricted opportunities to engage in productive economic activities (Azzahra et al., 2026; Ellis, 1998; Jabar et al., 2025; Mubarok et al., 2025; Odyuo & Thangkhiew, 2025). Addressing these conditions requires interventions that go beyond charitable assistance to mobilize local resources, expand community participation, and strengthen collective capacity (Laverack & Wallerstein, 2001; Mantle & Backwith, 2010; Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). From a community social work perspective, improving well-being involves more than providing material support. Interventions should enhance community members' agency, access to resources and opportunities, and collective capacity to address the challenges affecting their lives (Aprilia et al., 2025; Umam, 2024).

Mosques are locally embedded institutions with significant potential to facilitate community development processes. Beyond their religious functions, mosques possess various forms of social capital, including trust, congregational networks, moral legitimacy, meeting spaces, local leadership, and philanthropic resources (Kotani et al., 2023; Mondesir, 2023; Noorkamilah, 2021; Peucker & Ceylan, 2017). When effectively mobilized, these resources can support education, social services, and community empowerment. The economic role of mosques is also evident in community recovery initiatives that link religious solidarity with efforts to address residents' social and economic needs (Punuh & Sirine, 2024; Rizki & Zulaikha, 2022; Wartoyo et al., 2022). Nevertheless, many mosques continue to prioritize physical infrastructure and ritual activities, while the use of mosque funds and congregational networks to support productive enterprises remains limited.

A similar situation was observed in Pondok Hamlet, Selomartani Village, Kalasan District, Sleman Regency, Indonesia. Most residents work as agricultural laborers, casual workers, construction workers, factory workers, or domestic workers (Fieldnotes, 2023). Their reliance on unstable income sources has compelled some households to depend on informal loans when facing urgent expenses. Meanwhile, Sarimulyo Mosque possesses several potentially valuable community assets, including financial reserves, an established management committee, accessible social spaces, and regularly organized religious study groups (Fieldnotes, 2023). However, these resources have not been systematically mobilized to develop productive activities that could provide congregants with practical learning opportunities and supplementary income.

An initial effort to promote entrepreneurship was made through a digital marketing webinar organized by university students participating in a community service program. However, the initiative did not result in the establishment of a viable enterprise because

the participants lacked both a marketable product and sufficient production experience or opportunities for hands-on practice (Fieldnotes, 2023). This experience demonstrated that knowledge transfer alone was insufficient to stimulate community-based economic activity. What was needed was a participatory process in which community members could identify their needs, determine appropriate actions, experiment with potential solutions, evaluate unsuccessful attempts, and collectively revise their strategies.

Social entrepreneurship offers a pertinent framework for understanding this process because it centers social value creation within entrepreneurial activity, while leveraging economic activities to sustain the underlying social mission. Unlike conventional commercial enterprises, whose performance is primarily measured by profit and market growth, social enterprises are also evaluated based on their ability to address social needs, foster innovation, mobilize resources, and generate benefits for targeted groups or communities (Austin et al., 2006; Mair & Martí, 2006). At the community level, social entrepreneurship may arise through collective action, the mobilization of local assets, and the development of enterprises that are jointly owned, managed, or controlled by community members (Peredo & Chrisman, 2006).

In Indonesia, previous studies have explored social entrepreneurship within religious organizations, productive zakat programs, and mosque-based economic empowerment initiatives. Punuh and Sirine (2024) demonstrate that religious organizations possess legitimacy, networks, and social resources that can support community empowerment. However, effective mobilization requires inclusive governance, sustained facilitation, and collaboration with relevant stakeholders. Efendi (2017) conceptualizes social entrepreneurship as an alternative model for managing productive zakat to enhance beneficiaries' economic self-reliance. Meanwhile, Sofia (2015) identifies four interrelated dimensions of social entrepreneurship: social value, civil society participation, social innovation, and economic activity. Studies on mosques similarly suggest that mosques can fulfill spiritual, educational, social, and economic empowerment functions when supported by adequate managerial capacity, organizational structures, and communication mechanisms. The experience of Jogokariyan Mosque, for example, illustrates how a mosque can develop community-responsive economic recovery programs (Ridwanullah & Herdiana, 2018; Rizki & Zulaikha, 2022).

Despite these contributions, the existing literature has predominantly focused on institutional functions or the evaluation of established programs. Less attention has been given to the formative process through which a mosque-based social enterprise emerges—specifically, how participants respond to initial failures, engage in collective reflection, negotiate ownership, and generate learning across successive cycles of action. This gap is significant because community enterprises rarely develop through a linear process; their formation often involves experimentation, setbacks, negotiation, and continuous adaptation among community members and institutional stakeholders.

This study addresses this gap by examining the establishment of SM Klin, a liquid soap production unit that links the institutional resources of Sarimulyo Mosque with the participation of a women's religious study group. It investigates how Participatory Action

Research (PAR) facilitated the formation of mosque-based social entrepreneurship and assesses the extent to which the process generated social value, strengthened civil society participation, fostered social innovation, and initiated community-based economic activity. PAR is particularly well-suited for this purpose because it integrates inquiry, reflection, action, and evaluation while positioning community members as active participants in understanding and transforming their own circumstances (Baum et al., 2006).

The study makes three key contributions. Theoretically, it extends the social entrepreneurship literature by examining how a locally embedded religious institution can serve as an organizational platform for collective economic action. Methodologically, it demonstrates how initial failure and reflection across PAR cycles can function as sources of organizational and community learning. Practically, it offers valuable insights for community social work practice, particularly regarding participatory assessment, women's group organizing, resource mobilization, capacity building, and the development of collectively managed economic activities. These contributions align with scholarship that positions entrepreneurship as a tool for intervention and empowerment in social work practice (Germak & Singh, 2009).

Literature Review

Social Entrepreneurship as an Analytical Framework

Social entrepreneurship has emerged as an approach that integrates a mission of social change with entrepreneurial practices. Mair and Martí (2006) conceptualize social entrepreneurship as a process that catalyzes social transformation and addresses pressing needs that existing institutions have inadequately met, without prioritizing direct financial gain for the entrepreneur. Although social entrepreneurship encompasses a wide range of organizational forms, it is generally characterized by the primacy of social objectives, innovation, risk-taking, and the use of economic activities to sustain a social mission (Peredo & McLean, 2006). Austin et al. (2006) argue that both social and commercial entrepreneurship involve opportunities, human resources, financial capital, and institutional environments. However, they differ in their value propositions, resource mobilization strategies, market characteristics, and measures of success. Accordingly, the performance of a social enterprise cannot be assessed solely in terms of revenue or profit; it must also be evaluated based on the social value it creates, the groups that benefit, and the sustainability of the changes it generates. Saebi et al. (2019) further emphasize the need for a multilevel approach that connects individual actors, organizational processes, and broader institutional conditions.

At the community level, social entrepreneurship is not necessarily driven by a single individual acting as the principal entrepreneur. Montgomery et al. (2012) introduce the concept of collective social entrepreneurship to explain how multiple actors collaborate to define social problems, build networks, pool resources, and negotiate divergent interests in pursuit of a common good. This perspective closely aligns with Peredo and Chrisman's (2006) concept of community-based enterprise, in which a community collectively acts as the initiator, manager, owner, and beneficiary of an enterprise.

Community-based enterprises are grounded in local culture, social capital, shared knowledge, citizen participation, and the community's capacity to exercise control over its resources and business mechanisms. This framework is particularly relevant to SM Klin because the enterprise was not established by an individual entrepreneur. Instead, it emerged through interactions among the mosque management committee, a women's religious study group, local community leaders, technical instructors, and residents who became its initial consumers.

Social entrepreneurship possesses a hybrid nature, as it must simultaneously uphold its social mission while developing economic activities that ensure organizational sustainability. Battilana and Lee (2014) explain that hybrid organizations may encounter tensions related to goal setting, resource allocation, organizational identity, and performance evaluation because they operate at the intersection of social and commercial logics. Similarly, Defourny and Nyssens (2017) demonstrate that social enterprise models vary based on the interests they serve, ownership structures, the roles of members and beneficiaries, sources of capital, and decision-making processes. Therefore, the mere existence of a product and the occurrence of commercial transactions are insufficient to determine the success of a social enterprise. A comprehensive analysis must also consider governance arrangements, levels of participation, benefit distribution, the use of financial surpluses, and mechanisms that safeguard the social mission.

The empowerment dimension is especially important when women are the primary participants. Haugh and Talwar (2016) demonstrate that participation in social enterprises can enhance women's agency by providing opportunities to learn, make decisions, access resources, and gain social recognition. However, women's involvement solely as production workers does not necessarily equate to empowerment. Genuine empowerment requires influence over decision-making, access to organizational information and resources, and an equitable role within the enterprise's governance structure.

Drawing on these arguments, this study employs four interconnected dimensions of social entrepreneurship as its analytical categories. The first dimension is social value, which encompasses responsiveness to community needs, solidarity, social benefits, and capacity development. The second dimension is civil society engagement, including citizen initiative, participation, collective ownership, accountability, and shared decision-making. The third dimension is social innovation, understood as the development of new methods to connect mosque-based funding and legitimacy, women's groups, technical expertise, and mechanisms of production and distribution. The fourth dimension is economic activity, which includes production, consumption, marketing, cost calculation, margin distribution, and efforts to sustain the continuity of the social mission. These dimensions are adapted from Hulgård (2010) and Sofia (2017), but they are treated as interdependent processes rather than discrete indicators. Their use also aligns with community social work, which emphasizes needs assessment, participation, resource mobilization, innovative intervention, capacity building, and improvements in community well-being.

Mosques as Community Institutions and Social Infrastructure

Religious institutions can serve as social infrastructure because they provide more than just spaces for ritual practice. They also facilitate social interaction, relational networks, leadership, moral norms, trust, and mechanisms for mobilizing and distributing community resources (Izudin et al., 2024). From an Islamic perspective, entrepreneurship is not solely focused on profit generation; it is also embedded in socioeconomic responsibilities, ethical commitments, and religious-spiritual purposes. Gümüşay (2015) explains that Islamic entrepreneurship rests on three interconnected pillars: entrepreneurial action, socioeconomic and ethical responsibility, and religio-spiritual orientation. From this perspective, the profit generated by a mosque-based enterprise should be regarded as a means to sustain its activities and expand collective benefits rather than as an end in itself.

This understanding aligns with Ridwanullah and Herdiana (2018), who demonstrate that mosques can fulfill educational, social service, spiritual development, cultural, and economic empowerment roles when supported by capable administrators, appropriate organizational structures, and strong relationships with congregants. Because mosques are deeply embedded in residents' daily lives, they are strategically positioned to identify local needs, encourage participation, and mobilize community resources (Pratama, 2024). The experience of Jogokariyan Mosque, for example, illustrates how a mosque can contribute to community economic recovery through social and economic programs designed to address residents' needs during the COVID-19 pandemic (Rizki & Zulaikha, 2022).

Nevertheless, religious legitimacy and congregational trust do not automatically ensure effective enterprise governance. Managing mosque-based productive funds requires a clear division of responsibilities, systematic financial record-keeping, internal controls, transparent disclosure, stakeholder participation, and accountability to the congregation (Rizki & Zulaikha, 2022). Transparency and accountability are especially crucial for maintaining congregational trust and sustaining participation in mosque-based initiatives (Chaniago et al., 2024). Without these mechanisms, the mobilization of religious resources may perpetuate unequal power relations or concentrate control in the hands of a limited number of institutional actors.

In this study, the mosque is positioned as an institutional context and a form of social infrastructure for initiating social entrepreneurship, rather than as a separate theoretical framework. Its role is examined through its capacity to provide start-up capital, mobilize congregants, confer moral and social legitimacy, connect local actors, and offer a space for deliberation. At the same time, the use of mosque resources requires critical analysis due to the potential power imbalance between the takmir-the mosque management committee that controls institutional funds-and the women congregants responsible for production.

Consequently, the success of SM Klin cannot be measured solely by the creation of a marketable product or the occurrence of sales. It must also be evaluated based on the extent to which congregants participate in selecting the type of enterprise, gain access to financial information, assess production activities, share risks, determine the allocation

of margins, and oversee the use of surpluses. From this analytical perspective, transparent and participatory governance is a necessary condition to ensure that the mosque's capital, networks, and legitimacy generate collective benefits rather than advantages concentrated among specific actors.

Participatory Action Research and Community-Based Change

Participatory Action Research (PAR) integrates inquiry, reflection, and action to generate knowledge while facilitating change that is meaningful to the community. Baum et al. (2006) emphasize that PAR requires individuals directly affected by a problem to participate actively in both the research process and the actions taken in response. Therefore, participation must extend beyond mere attendance at program activities. Community members should be involved in defining problems, planning interventions, interpreting their experiences, evaluating outcomes, and determining subsequent actions.

PAR is inherently cyclical. Stringer's (2014) Look-Think-Act model begins with observing and mapping a situation, proceeds to collective reflection and interpretation, and then advances to the planning and implementation of action. The outcomes of each action are subsequently observed and assessed to inform the next cycle. Benjamin-Thomas et al. (2018) emphasize that the quality of PAR depends on collaborative relationships, reflexivity, power sharing, and sustained participation. Within this framework, the production failure experienced during the first cycle should not be regarded solely as a programmatic weakness. Instead, it constitutes empirical and experiential knowledge that enables participants to identify problems and improve their equipment, procedures, product selection, and organizational arrangements in the subsequent cycle.

In this study, PAR serves as the methodological framework through which the social enterprise was developed, while social entrepreneurship provides the primary analytical lens for evaluating that process and its outcomes. The relationship between the two can be summarized as follows: participatory assessment and reflection facilitate the mobilization of mosque and community resources; collective action generates organizational and product innovations; and the resulting process is assessed through the creation of social value, the quality of civil society participation, the development of social innovation, and the emergence of sustainable economic activity.

A point requiring consistency before submission: the Introduction cites Sofia (2015), whereas this section cites Sofia (2017). The publication year and the corresponding reference-list entry should be verified and standardized.

Method

Study Design and Setting

The study employed a community-based participatory action research (PAR) design. PAR was chosen because the objective was not only to describe the circumstances of congregants but also to facilitate a collaborative process of problem identification, experimentation, evaluation, and revision. The research was conducted from August

through December 2023 in Pondok Hamlet, Selomartani Village, Kalasan District, Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Sarimulyo Mosque served as the institutional anchor.

Participants

The study involved 19 core participants: one local community leader, one member of the mosque management committee, and 17 members of the Salimah women's religious study group affiliated with Sarimulyo Mosque. Several additional residents attended the training sessions, bringing total attendance to approximately 20 people. Participants were purposively selected based on their involvement in mosque activities, knowledge of local conditions, and willingness to participate throughout the action process. A soap-production instructor provided technical expertise but was not counted among the core research participants.

Data Generation

Data were collected through participant observation, transect walks, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGD), and document analysis. Observations focused on mosque activities, group interactions, production processes, and equipment usage. Transect walks were conducted to map residential areas, fields, gardens, and human resources. Interviews with mosque management and local leaders explored economic vulnerabilities, the mosque's role in the community, and expectations for the initiative. FGD were employed to prioritize problems, select actions, evaluate each cycle, and plan subsequent steps. Documentary data included audio recordings, photographs, meeting notes, and preliminary business calculations.

Action Cycles

The intervention comprised two Look-Think-Act cycles. In Look-1, researchers and community members mapped economic vulnerabilities, dependence on informal credit, limited productive activities, and the potential of mosque funds and networks. During Think-1, participants considered snack production, packaged wedang uwuh (a traditional herbal beverage), and liquid soap. They selected dishwashing liquid because it met an everyday household need, could be produced collectively, and had an accessible initial market among congregants. Act-1 was conducted on October 14-15, 2023, through production training in four groups. The second cycle began with Look-2, which examined product failure, equipment suitability, procedural understanding, and teamwork. Think-2 resulted in decisions to improve equipment, test liquid detergent—because its production process was perceived as more manageable—and add basic business-costing materials. Act-2 was implemented on December 2-3, 2023, through a second training session, limited production, and the initial organization of the venture.

Data Analysis, Trustworthiness, and Participant Protection

Thematic analysis was conducted iteratively alongside the action process. Interview and FGD recordings were transcribed and coded according to problems, decisions,

actions, outcomes, and learning. Data from each cycle were organized into a comparative matrix covering skills, product quality, participation, governance, and economic activity. Themes were then mapped onto the four dimensions of social entrepreneurship: social value, civil society, social innovation, and economic activity. Preliminary interpretations were shared with participants during reflection meetings to assess whether they aligned with their experiences. Trustworthiness was enhanced through source triangulation involving mosque managers, local leaders, participants, and the technical instructor; method triangulation across observations, interviews, FGD, and documentation; and comparison across the two cycles. Participant identities were represented by codes in the manuscript, particularly when discussing economic conditions or borrowing experiences. Production involved an experienced instructor, and failed products were neither distributed nor sold. All participant quotations below are presented in English translation.

Table 1. Two Cycles of Participatory Action Research

Cycle	Stage	Primary activity	Outcome/reflection
I	Look-1	Interviews, transect walks, observation, and FGDs to map problems and assets in Pondok Hamlet.	Economic vulnerability, limited productive activity, mosque funds and networks, and initial congregational interest were identified.
I	Think-1	Collective deliberation on business options closely related to household needs.	Dishwashing-liquid training was selected as the initial action.
I	Act-1	Training on October 14-15, 2023, organized in four production groups.	Three groups produced the expected consistency; one group failed, prompting evaluation.
II	Look-2	Evaluation of equipment, procedures, task allocation, and production outcomes.	Failure was associated with incomplete procedural understanding, undersized equipment, and inconsistent stirring.
II	Think-2	Planning a second training, improving equipment, selecting liquid detergent, and adding basic business costing.	An initial production plan and division of roles were developed.
II	Act-2	Training on December 2-3, 2023, limited production, margin calculation, and product branding.	Production proceeded more smoothly; the SM Klin brand and a preliminary margin-sharing scheme were established.

Source: Author's elaboration, 2026

Result

Cycle 1: Participatory Assessment and Initial Production Trial

The Look 1 phase revealed that community needs extended beyond access to affordable household cleaning products. More fundamental concerns included limited opportunities for productive economic engagement, unstable household incomes, and the underdeveloped socioeconomic role of the mosque. A mosque management representative explained that participation in mosque activities generally increased during Ramadan, while activities beyond regular religious observances remained limited (TM, interview, August 2023). The participatory assessment also found that some residents relied on informal loans to meet urgent household expenses. As one community leader stated, “People often become trapped in loans from bank emok (informal moneylenders) because they are easily accessible here” (DN, interview, August 2023). These findings prompted participants to consider how the mosque could generate more direct social benefits without restricting its response to charitable assistance.

During the Think 1 phase, participants discussed three potential economic activities: snack production, packaging wedang uwuh-a traditional herbal beverage-and liquid soap production. Members of the congregation actively contributed ideas, although they acknowledged that not all proposals could be implemented within the available time and resources. Through a focus group discussion held in early September 2023, participants collectively selected liquid soap production for three reasons. First, soap is routinely used by all households. Second, it can be produced collectively. Third, members of the mosque congregation could serve as an initial consumer base. This decision emerged through group deliberation rather than being unilaterally determined by the researchers.

The Act 1 phase was conducted over two days, October 14-15, 2023. Approximately 20 participants attended and were divided into four groups to produce dishwashing liquid. The production process required a coordinated division of labor, with some participants continuously stirring the mixture while others gradually added the ingredients in the prescribed sequence. Three groups produced a mixture with the texture expected by the instructor, while one group was unsuccessful.

The unsuccessful attempt served as a valuable source of experiential learning. It exposed limitations in the available equipment, highlighted differences in participants’ understanding of the procedures, and underscored the importance of maintaining consistent stirring throughout the production process. Therefore, the primary outcome of the first cycle was not the establishment of a successful enterprise. Instead, it fostered awareness of local socioeconomic needs, provided participants with their initial practical production experience, and laid the foundation for collective reflection and subsequent action. At this stage, technical knowledge remained concentrated with the external instructor, indicating that the community still relied heavily on outside facilitation.

Cycle 2: Reflection, Adaptation, and Initial Enterprise Development

During the Look 2 phase, participants and the instructor collaboratively evaluated the initial production trial. The reflective evaluation identified three primary issues: some participants had not fully understood the correct sequence for adding ingredients; the

containers were too small for the volume being produced; and the division of responsibilities within the groups had not been consistently maintained. Participants also found that prolonged manual stirring was physically demanding. One participant noted, “The stirring made my arms sore; the mixture became heavier the longer we stirred it” (ST, reflection FGD). This experience indicated that the feasibility of community production depended not only on the availability of ingredients but also on whether the production process was compatible with participants’ physical capacities.

The Think 2 phase generated adaptations at both the technical and enterprise levels. Technically, participants proposed using larger containers and more durable stirring implements. Notably, these adaptations leveraged resources already available within the community. One participant suggested, “We should use larger buckets, perhaps the used paint buckets. I have several at home that we could use” (ST, planning FGD, November 2023). Another participant offered to mobilize household resources to improve the equipment: “I can ask my husband to prepare the stirrers. He has leftover pieces of wood that could be made into stirring tools” (END, planning FGD, November 2023). A third participant proposed reusing packaging materials: “I have quite a few bottles at home. They are used, but still in good condition and made of durable material” (RR, planning FGD, November 2023).

These proposals demonstrated an emerging capacity to identify and mobilize locally available resources. Rather than relying solely on new equipment provided by the research team, participants began contributing materials, knowledge, and family-based support to address the practical limitations encountered during the first cycle. However, the suggested reuse of containers and bottles highlighted the need for standardized cleaning, sanitation, and product safety procedures before any broader distribution could occur.

At the enterprise level, participants decided to shift from producing dishwashing liquid to liquid laundry detergent because they found its production process more manageable under the existing conditions. They also requested practical guidance on calculating production costs, determining selling prices, and allocating profit margins. This phase marked a transition from participating in a one-time training activity to the initial development of a collectively managed enterprise. However, the governance structure, assignment of responsibilities, and financial procedures had not yet been formally established.

The Act 2 phase demonstrated improvements in both production and group coordination. Participants followed the production sequence and completed the packaging process with less direct assistance from the instructor than in the first cycle. After group deliberation, the product was named SM Klin, an abbreviation of Sarimulyo Klin. This name provided an initial collective identity and explicitly connected the product to Sarimulyo Mosque.

By the end of the research period, both the participants and the instructor considered the product suitable for limited use, and it had begun to be introduced to members of the mosque congregation. However, the packaging design, seals, labels, regulatory authorization, quality control procedures, and business-recording system had not yet

been completed. Therefore, SM Klin should be regarded as an emerging community enterprise rather than an established social enterprise. The second cycle yielded tangible advances in technical competence, community resource mobilization, group participation, and enterprise planning, but organizational consolidation and market development remained incomplete.

SM Klin Through Four Dimensions of Social Entrepreneurship

Social Value

The social value generated through SM Klin was evident in its response to congregants' economic vulnerability, the development of practical skills, increased confidence, and enhanced cooperation during production. For participants, learning to produce an item they had previously purchased represented an initial experience of self-reliance, even though the activity had not yet resulted in measurable changes in household income. One participant explained, "It is quite useful because we no longer need to buy it from the local shop" (ST, interview, December 2023). Another commented on the perceived quality of the product: "The product is good. It produces plenty of foam, works well, and lasts longer" (END, interview, December 2023).

Participants also attributed religious significance to the initiative, viewing it as a form of mutual assistance and a means of strengthening the mosque's social role. The soap-production initiative expanded mosque-related activities beyond routine worship and religious study. However, the study found no evidence that SM Klin had reduced participants' reliance on informal loans or improved household well-being. At this stage, the empirically observable social value was limited to changes in skills, confidence, participation, cooperation, and group relationships. As one participant stated, "Thank God, I am very happy. It turns out that we can make soap ourselves" (DN, interview, December 2023).

The production process required tangible forms of cooperation. One participant continuously stirred the mixture while other group members added the ingredients in the correct sequence. During the planning discussion, a participant volunteered, "The next time we make soap, I will do the stirring so that the mixture remains consistent" (RR, planning FGD, November 2023). The failure experienced by one group during the first cycle helped participants recognize that product quality depended on coordination rather than individual skill alone. This collaborative process strengthened interactions among congregants and created a new space for women to participate in mosque-based activities beyond their regular religious study meetings.

Civil Society Engagement and Community Participation

The civil society dimension was evident in the involvement of the women's religious study group and the mosque management committee in identifying problems, selecting an economic activity, evaluating the unsuccessful production attempt, and planning the second action cycle. The mosque provided institutional legitimacy and start-up capital, while congregants contributed their time, labor, skills, household resources, and access to an initial consumer network. A mosque representative stated:

“Please use the mosque fund as the initial capital. We would appreciate it if the mosque could contribute to addressing the social problems experienced by its congregants” (TM, planning FGD, November 2023).

The initiative also received support from the Pondok Hamlet administration. The hamlet head stated, “I fully support this initiative. For matters related to the mosque, you may coordinate directly with the mosque management committee” (Hamlet Head, interview, August 2023). These relationships brought together institutional, financial, social, and human resources that had previously operated independently.

Although participation increased during the two action cycles, decision-making authority had not yet been distributed equitably. The proposed arrangement positioned the mosque as the provider and owner of capital, while the women’s group primarily served as the production team. By the end of the study, no written rules had been established regarding ownership of the SM Klin brand, decision-making rights, financial oversight, dispute resolution procedures, or the succession of enterprise managers. Consequently, civil society engagement remained at a formative stage. Further development will require a governance structure that formally protects producers’ representation and decision-making authority.

Social Innovation

The innovative aspect of SM Klin did not primarily reside in the soap itself, as similar products were already widely available. Instead, its social innovation was embedded in the institutional framework through which the product was developed. Mosque funds were repurposed as productive capital, the women’s religious study group became the production team, local residents formed the initial market and distribution network, and the resulting profits were intended to be shared among the mosque, producers, and distributors. This arrangement began to transform the relationship between the mosque and its congregants from a conventional donor–recipient dynamic into a model of collaborative production.

A further innovation involved the participants’ proposal to defer the distribution of their production-related earnings and record them as collective savings to be distributed before Eid al-Fitr. One participant suggested:

“What if our share is not distributed immediately? We could save it and distribute it before Eid al-Fitr. That way, we would have holiday savings-our own Eid allowance” (DN, planning FGD, November 2023).

The proposal was met with laughter and apparent agreement from those attending the discussion. Participants viewed this arrangement as a straightforward method for accumulating savings to cover anticipated holiday expenses. Nevertheless, such an arrangement would require individual, explicit consent, transparent financial records, and an option for members to receive their earnings immediately. Without these safeguards, deferred payment could restrict women’s control over the economic returns from their labor.

Economic Activity

Economic activity began to emerge after the second action cycle through limited-scale production, consumption, and distribution. Members of the mosque congregation and residents of Pondok Hamlet constituted the initial consumer base. Participants reported encouraging initial demand, with much of the first production batch purchased shortly after packaging. One participant stated, “Thank God, we did not have to wait long. As soon as the products were packaged, they were purchased by members of the congregation because everyone needs soap” (DN, interview, December 2023). This initial response suggested the presence of a locally accessible market, although the absence of systematic sales records prevented a reliable assessment of demand.

The preliminary calculation for one batch indicated a direct material cost of IDR 85,000 and potential sales revenue of IDR 150,000 for approximately 10 liters of product. The difference of IDR 65,000 was considered the gross margin. Participants proposed allocating this margin as follows: 20% to the mosque as the capital provider, 50% to the production team, and 30% to the distributors (planning FGD, November 2023).

This calculation did not represent net profit because it excluded the costs of bottles, labels, seals, transportation, water, electricity, equipment depreciation, unsuccessful production, quality assurance, and regulatory compliance. Additionally, the study lacked systematic data on production frequency, sales volume, repeat purchases, individual earnings, and changes in participants’ household income. Therefore, the economic dimension of SM Klin had only emerged at an experimental scale. Its commercial viability and organizational sustainability could not yet be established based on the available evidence.

Table 2. Findings Across the Four Dimensions of Social Entrepreneurship

Dimension	Primary evidence	Current achievement	Limitation
Social value	New skills, confidence, cooperation, and religious meaning.	Social benefit emerged at the level of capacity and group relationships.	No evidence yet of changes in income, debt, or household welfare.
Civil society	FGD, collective business selection, cross-cycle evaluation, and women's participation.	Participation and an initial sense of ownership developed.	Rules on ownership, authority, and accountability were not formalized.
Social innovation	Mosque capital, congregant production, community distribution, and margin sharing.	Mosque resources were recombined into a collective enterprise mechanism.	The institutional innovation remained facilitation-dependent and had not been tested longitudinally.
Economic activity	Limited production, consumption, distribution, and gross-margin calculation.	Pilot transactions were established.	Full costs, sales volume, net profit, and repeat demand were unavailable.

Source: Author's elaboration, 2026

Table 3. Preliminary Calculation for One SM Klin Production Batch

Component	Amount	Note
Ingredient cost per batch	IDR 85,000	Excludes indirect costs.
Projected sales revenue for approximately 10,000 mL	IDR 150,000	Based on the initial selling price.
Gross margin	IDR 65,000	Not net profit.
Mosque capital share (20%)	IDR 13,000	Capital recovery and reinforcement.
Production-team share (50%)	IDR 32,500	To be divided among production members.
Distributor share (30%)	IDR 19,500	Marketing and distribution incentive.

Source: Author's elaboration, 2026

Note. Amounts are based on field calculations from 2023 and do not include all indirect or compliance-related costs.

Discussion

The findings suggest that SM Klin is more accurately understood as an emerging community-based social venture rather than an established enterprise that has demonstrably improved economic well-being. Its development illustrates that community-based social entrepreneurship arises through a nonlinear learning process involving problem identification, idea formulation, actor mobilization, experimentation, failure, collective reflection, and adaptation. During the first action cycle, the community did not immediately establish a stable production unit. One of the four groups failed to achieve the expected soap consistency due to differences in participants' understanding of the production procedures, inadequate equipment, and an inconsistent division of labor. Rather than ending the initiative, this technical failure prompted several adjustments in the second cycle. Participants adopted larger containers, produced stronger stirring implements from locally available materials, shifted to liquid laundry detergent because its production process was considered more manageable, and incorporated cost and margin calculations into subsequent training.

These adaptations demonstrate that the primary outcome of participatory action research (PAR) was not merely the creation of a finished product but the community's increasing capacity to interpret experiences and translate the lessons learned into revised decisions and practices. This finding aligns with Baum et al.'s (2006) conceptualization of PAR as an iterative cycle of collaborative inquiry, action, and reflection. It also supports Haugh's (2007) model of community-led social venture creation, which includes opportunity identification, idea articulation, the development of collective ownership, stakeholder mobilization, opportunity exploitation, and reflection. Unlike mosque-based empowerment studies that primarily describe institutional functions or evaluate established programs, the present study offers process-oriented

evidence of how technical failure and initial dependence on an external instructor can become sources of organizational learning. Nevertheless, participants' reduced reliance on the instructor during the second cycle should not be equated with community self-reliance. Knowledge transfer remained incomplete, production procedures had not been standardized, and the enterprise's governance structure had not been fully established.

The social value generated by this process was most evident in capacity development, group relationships, and women's participation, rather than in measurable income gains. Participants acquired production skills, gained experience in manufacturing a household product they had previously purchased, increased their confidence, and engaged in a new sphere of mosque-based activity beyond routine religious study. These findings align with Mair and Martí (2006) and Austin et al. (2006), who identify social value creation-not private profit maximization-as the central focus of social entrepreneurship. However, immediate social value must be distinguished from long-term welfare outcomes. The available evidence does not demonstrate that SM Klin reduced participants' reliance on informal credit, increased household income, or strengthened household economic resilience. Therefore, its empirically observable social value at this stage was limited to improvements in skills, participation, confidence, cooperation, and collective relationships.

This distinction is particularly important when assessing women's empowerment, as participation in productive activities does not necessarily indicate substantive empowerment. Haugh and Talwar (2016) demonstrate that social entrepreneurship can enhance women's agency by providing opportunities for learning, access to resources, social recognition, and meaningful involvement in decision-making. Conversely, women who contribute primarily as production workers without control over the enterprise's resources, returns, and strategic direction cannot be considered fully empowered. In SM Klin, women congregants participated in product selection, evaluated production failures, adapted equipment, mobilized household resources, and negotiated the division of labor. However, their involvement in pricing, financial oversight, brand ownership, surplus allocation, and strategic planning remained limited or insufficiently formalized. This pattern aligns with Umam's (2024) finding that women's economic empowerment develops through critical awareness, capacity building, resource mobilization, and adaptive transformation, while its sustainability remains constrained by access to markets, capital, and institutional support. Accordingly, SM Klin's social contribution during the research period should be characterized as the formation of initial capacity and agency rather than the achievement of economic independence.

The creation of social value was facilitated by the mosque's role as social infrastructure, connecting financial resources, moral legitimacy, congregational networks, local leadership, and spaces for collective deliberation. Sarimulyo Mosque contributed more than just initial capital; it provided social legitimacy for the initiative, linked the mosque management committee with the women's religious study group, and facilitated access to local leaders, a technical instructor, initial consumers, and potential distributors. These findings support the arguments of Ridwanullah and Herdiana (2018) and Rizki and Zulaikha (2022) regarding the potential of mosques to serve as centers for

social service provision and economic empowerment. They also align with Kotani et al. (2023), who suggest that mosques can function as hubs for coordination, distribution, and community service when they activate internal networks and establish relationships with external actors. In rural Indonesia, membership in religious organizations may similarly promote civic engagement, volunteerism, and charitable giving. However, religious networks may have limited bridging capacity if they reinforce internal ties without fostering relationships across diverse social groups and institutions (Mondesir, 2023).

A similar tension was evident in SM Klin. Although the mosque successfully consolidated internal resources, the initiative had not developed institutional mechanisms to connect with broader markets, government agencies, regulatory institutions, or business-support networks. This case therefore indicates that mosque-based bonding social capital may initiate collective action, but the long-term development of a social enterprise also requires bridging and linking relationships beyond the congregation. Moreover, social capital should not be assumed to produce an equitable distribution of power. The mosque management committee controlled the capital, while women congregants primarily occupied production roles. This arrangement risked separating financial authority from productive labor. As Pratama (2024) argues, participation results in substantive community ownership only when governance is bottom-up, transparent, communicative, and supported by equal access to relevant information. Strengthening the civil society dimension of SM Klin would therefore require a jointly governed management structure, formal representation of women producers, regular decision-making forums, transparent financial reporting, and accountability mechanisms that transform congregational participation into substantive control over the enterprise.

From a social innovation perspective, SM Klin's novelty did not stem from liquid soap as a product, since similar products are widely available. Instead, its innovative character lay in the recombination of local assets and the restructuring of institutional relationships. Mosque funds were converted into productive capital, the women's religious study group became a production team, local residents served as initial consumers and distributors, and the gross margin was intended to be shared among the mosque, producers, and distributors. This arrangement began to transform the relationship between the mosque and its congregants from a donor-recipient model into one of collaborative production. Social innovation in this context, therefore, involved the creation of a new institutional configuration through which existing religious, social, human, and financial resources were mobilized for a collective economic purpose.

This institutional recombination simultaneously endowed SM Klin with the characteristics of a hybrid organization, enabling it to balance its social mission with commercial demands. Battilana and Lee (2014) explain that hybrid organizations commonly face tensions related to goal setting, organizational identity, resource allocation, and performance measurement. Similarly, Ebrahim et al. (2014) identify two distinct governance challenges in social enterprises: maintaining accountability for both social and financial objectives and responding to stakeholders with diverse, and

potentially competing, interests. These tensions were evident in SM Klin. Product prices needed to remain affordable for congregants while covering the full costs of production; the mosque needed to recover and potentially expand its capital, while producers were entitled to fair compensation for their labor. Likewise, the proposed deferral of producers' earnings as savings for Eid al-Fitr offered potential social value but could restrict members' control over their income unless participation was voluntary, individually approved, and supported by transparent financial records.

The absence of written rules governing brand ownership, decision-making authority, surplus allocation, earnings withdrawal, and financial oversight created risks of mission drift and the concentration of power among certain actors. Therefore, the sustainability of SM Klin's social innovation depends on combining institutional creativity with participatory accountability, informed and voluntary member choices, transparent bookkeeping, and explicit safeguards to protect its empowerment mission. Without these measures, an initiative designed to expand women's economic agency could inadvertently perpetuate unequal relations between those who control capital and those who perform productive labor.

The economic dimension places SM Klin at the initial stage of testing its organizational and commercial sustainability. During the research period, production, consumption, and distribution were limited, with some products purchased by members of the mosque congregation. Preliminary calculations indicated direct material costs of IDR 85,000 and potential revenue of IDR 150,000 for approximately 10 liters of product, resulting in a gross margin of IDR 65,000. However, this figure cannot be considered net profit, as it excludes costs related to packaging, labels, seals, water, electricity, transportation, equipment depreciation, regulatory compliance, quality assurance, and production failures. Additionally, the study did not generate systematic data on production frequency, sales volume, repeat purchases, individual earnings, or changes in household income. Therefore, SM Klin should be classified as an early-stage community social venture rather than an enterprise with established economic viability and sustainability.

From a community social work perspective, this early-stage outcome remains significant. The process incorporated participatory assessments of needs and assets, group organizing, capacity development, local resource mobilization, connections to external technical expertise, and collective evaluation. These elements align with the empowerment domains identified by Laverack and Wallerstein (2001), particularly community participation, local leadership, organizational structures, resource mobilization, and the capacity to manage community programs. However, as Umam (2024) and Pratama (2024) emphasize, community-based economic innovation requires ongoing intervention at organizational and structural levels to sustain local learning after external facilitation ends. Therefore, the next phase of SM Klin's development should prioritize standardized production and quality-control procedures, appropriate regulatory authorization, full-cost accounting, systematic business records, gradual market expansion, enhanced ownership and decision-making rights for women producers, and longitudinal evaluation of household income and social functioning.

The principal contribution of this study is not evidence of conclusive economic success but rather an explanation of how PAR, mosque-based social infrastructure, women's participation, and the recombination of local assets collectively established the initial foundations of community-based social entrepreneurship. The findings demonstrate that religious resources become socially entrepreneurial not merely when used to finance a product, but when mobilized through iterative learning, participatory governance, and institutional arrangements that empower community members to influence both the economic activities and social objectives of the emerging venture.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Participatory Action Research can serve as an effective mechanism for initiating mosque-based social entrepreneurship through iterative processes of assessment, action, reflection, and collective adaptation. Although the two Look-Think-Act cycles did not immediately result in an established enterprise, they successfully brought together previously disconnected resources-including the mosque's financial capital and institutional legitimacy, congregational networks, participation from a women's religious study group, support from local leaders, and the instructor's technical expertise-to lay the foundational groundwork for a productive community initiative. The technical failure encountered during the first cycle became a valuable source of collective learning, leading to improvements in equipment and procedures, a clearer division of labor, the inclusion of basic business management training, the creation of the SM Klin brand, and the development of an initial margin-distribution scheme. Therefore, the study's principal achievement lies in the community's growing capacity to transform experience, including failure, into more adaptive collective decisions and actions.

Across the four dimensions of social entrepreneurship, SM Klin generated social value by enhancing participants' skills, confidence, cooperation, and opportunities for women to engage in mosque-based activities beyond routine religious study. Civil society engagement was evident in congregants' involvement in selecting activities, evaluating production outcomes, mobilizing local resources, and planning subsequent actions. The social innovation did not primarily reside in the soap product itself but in an institutional recombination that connected mosque capital, women as producers, and residents as initial consumers and distributors. Economic activity also began to emerge through limited production, sales, and preliminary margin calculations. However, participation had not yet evolved into substantive community ownership and control because rules governing decision-making authority, brand ownership, financial recordkeeping, surplus allocation, and accountability had not been formalized. Similarly, the initial transactions could not establish economic feasibility or sustainability, as data on full production costs, repeat sales, net profit, and changes in participants' income were not yet available.

This study contributes to the social entrepreneurship literature by demonstrating that social value, civil society engagement, social innovation, and economic activity are interdependent dimensions in the formation of a community social venture. Methodologically, it illustrates how PAR can capture the nonlinear nature of venture

formation and position failure as a source of knowledge production and organizational learning. For community social work, the findings emphasize the importance of participatory assessment, group organizing, local asset mobilization, women's capacity development, and the facilitation of democratic governance. These conclusions are limited by the single research setting, short engagement period, small number of participants, and SM Klin's early stage of development. Future longitudinal research should examine production continuity, market development, changes in household income and reliance on informal credit, women's control over resources, and the enterprise's contribution to community social functioning. Practically, SM Klin's development will require a jointly governed management structure, transparent financial records, standardized production and regulatory compliance, protection of producers' rights, and gradual market testing to ensure that its social mission remains central as its economic activities expand.

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