

## Optimization of the Community Rice Barn Program Towards the Pandemic-Affected Community in Palangka Raya City: A Collaboration between Students and Mosque Youth

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** This research paper investigates the Community Rice Barn Program's (*Lumbung Beras Rakyat*) effectiveness in addressing COVID-19's impact on Palangkaraya City. It analyzes economic vulnerability and food scarcity in pandemic-affected communities.

**Method:** his study combines qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys. Thematic analysis and statistical techniques interpret data on community needs and perceptions of the program's efficacy.

**Practical Applications:** Valuable for policymakers and humanitarian organizations, findings inform the enhancement of pandemic response strategies. Insights promote community resilience and offer guidance for similar programs in different regions.

**Conclusion:** The Community Rice Barn Program significantly alleviates COVID-19's repercussions on Palangkaraya's vulnerable communities. Results emphasize its positive impact on economic well-being and food security, contributing to pandemic mitigation approaches and sustainable development understanding.



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## Introduction

Indonesia is facing a concerning situation, particularly over the past two years. The coronavirus, or COVID-19, virus onset occurred on December 31, 2019. This virus has exhibited rapid transmissibility. COVID-19 has spread throughout Indonesia, even reaching remote villages. The first reported case was in March 2020 (Pradana Ratnasari, 2020). Various authorities have implemented policies to curb the spread of COVID-19 across different sectors, including education and societal well-being. A pandemic, such as COVID-19, is an epidemic that has spread across regions and countries, affecting many people (Rimapradesi & Fajrina, 2021). The pandemic has led to widespread outbreaks in various regions and nations. The term "pandemic" does not solely denote the severity of a disease but also indicates its widespread distribution. The COVID-19 pandemic, which has been a result of the coronavirus since late the previous year, has had a significant negative impact on Indonesia's economy in addition to health-related effects (Iswari & Muharir, 2021; Antara & Sri Sumarniasih, 2022). This impact extends beyond disrupted production to hindered investments.

Real Work Lecture, also known as KKN, is a way for students to give back to the community. This service involves cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary approaches in specific times and areas (Ni Nyoman Arini & Ni Wayan Mekarini, 2022). Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, a policy known as KKN-DR (Real Work Lecture from Home) was introduced. The legal basis for KKN-DR is the circular from the Director General of Islamic Education No. 697/03/2020, which amends Circular No. 567/03/2020 regarding efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Islamic higher education institutions. According to Dirjen Diktis No. B-713/DJ.I/Dt.I.III/TL.004/2020, KKN-DR is characterised by students' independent action through seven approaches that enhance awareness of and responsiveness to the COVID-19 outbreak, the relationship between religion and health, religious moderation, and Islamic education and preaching using social media. The goal of KKN-DR is for students to give back to the neighborhood in accordance with their abilities and the circumstances at hand, aiding in COVID-19 mitigation efforts and earning the respect of their neighbors.

As agents of change, students play a primary role and actively participate in combating and halting the spread of COVID-19 (Kriswanto dkk., 2021). They can generate solutions to alleviate the anxiety caused by Covid-19 and its transmission (Kusnan dkk., 2020) (Abdillah dkk., 2020). One way they can contribute is by aiding the economy of the pandemic-affected community through various measures aimed at stabilising the economic situation (Fitria dkk., 2021; Saksono dkk., 2020). Anak Masjid in Palangka Raya, led by Jepri Effendi and with 12 members and 107 volunteers, aims to revitalise the local mosque by organising events, programmes, and activities. The main objective is to promote mosque attendance, especially by youths, resulting in a thriving and active congregation. Their programmes include General Assistance, *Lumbung Beras Masyarakat* (Community Rice Barn), and *Dapur Pangan Rakyat* (Community Food Kitchen). Funding for these programmes primarily comes from online donations and FAQ boxes. The anticipated benefits of these initiatives include disseminating goodwill among the community and fostering a sense that sustenance is divinely provided.

In conclusion, KKN, particularly in the form of KKN-DR, plays a crucial role during the COVID-19 pandemic by engaging students in contributing to the well-being of their communities. Students' active involvement in various programs, like those conducted by Anak Masjid, showcases their commitment to combating the challenges posed by the pandemic, ultimately benefiting society.

## Method

This community service initiative was carried out in Palangka Raya City, Central Kalimantan Province. It prioritised communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly those deemed physically and economically vulnerable. The programme was conducted from August 17, 2021, to September 5, 2021. The tools and materials employed

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in the "Community Rice Barn" programme included motorbikes for volunteer transportation, cars carrying rice, 10 kg of rice by the recorded targets, writing materials, and writing boards.

The implementation methodology followed the Community Development (Condev) approach, involving several phases: Participatory Analysis, Planning, and Implementation; Building Awareness, Concern, and Trust; Social Mobilisation for Collective Problem Solving; Monitoring and Evaluation (Sanggal, 2018; Ayu dkk., 2019). The authors employed the Condev approach aligned with their community service, starting with identifying recipients through analysis and selecting participants, planning for recipient selection and program execution, raising awareness about those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, fostering compassion for fellow beings, and building trust based on personal data received from potential beneficiaries. The "Community Rice Barn" distribution was akin to social mobilisation, addressing economic challenges faced by pandemic-affected communities. Lastly, mentoring was conducted to educate and evaluate the programme.

The "Community Rice Barn" initiative lasted approximately 30 days. The programme was not conducted daily but twice a week. Surveys were carried out on Tuesdays, and rice distribution occurred on Sundays. The process began with discussions among volunteers, including KKN-DR students from IAIN Palangka Raya. The intention behind the "Community Rice Barn" programme was to provide modest assistance to economically disadvantaged communities impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The implementation was conducted using various approaches, such as surveys and field observations. It was done to ensure that the targeted communities matched the objectives of the mosque and the KKN-DR students: to aid those economically vulnerable, particularly those affected by the pandemic.

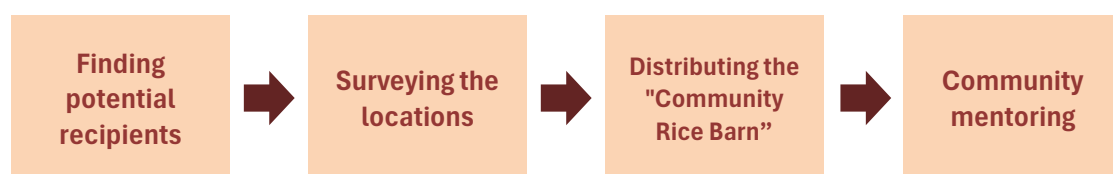
## Result

The "Community Rice Barn" programme is a collaborative effort between KKN-DR (Real Work Lecture from Home) students and the Anak Masjid (Mosque Youth) group in Palangka Raya City. This initiative was conducted in Palangka Raya City, with execution from August 17, 2021, to September 5, 2021. Subsequent actions by the Anak Masjid to continue the programme are also planned. The objective of this community engagement initiative through the "Community Rice Barn" programme is to assist fellow citizens affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly those who are economically disadvantaged and physically vulnerable.

The stages of this community engagement correspond to the phases of the Condev (Community Development) method. The implementation method begins with identifying the target audience, conducting site surveys to ascertain the distribution areas for the "Community Rice Barn," and verifying the accuracy of the target data, including family information in Palangka Raya City for communities impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. These communities are then engaged as beneficiaries, aiming to ensure the continuity of the "Community Rice Barn" programme in the future.

The "Community Rice Barn" program's stages of implementation, which serve as a means of community engagement for COVID-19 pandemic victims, are consistent with the Condev strategy. The following outlines the stages of community engagement implementation in response to the pandemic in Palangka Raya City.

Figure 1. The stages of community engagement implementation



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1. Finding Potential Recipients or Targets

The first step entails visiting various locations near the mosque base camp to identify targets or potential recipients. The mosque leader can appoint teams to observe these locations. Aside from identifying potential recipients through on-site observations, recommendations can also come from the mosque and neighbourhood chiefs (RT or RW), recommending communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic who are eligible and considered economically disadvantaged to receive the "Community Rice Barn." Donors who trust the mosque's efforts fund the "Community Rice Barn" to be distributed to the community. Donations are collected through Infaq and contributions, both online and offline. The funds are then utilised to purchase rice for distribution to the community.

Figure 2. Finding Potential Recipients



2. Surveying the Locations of Potential Recipients

The second phase involves surveying the locations of potential recipients of the "Community Rice Barn." During this stage, the mosque's leader assigns mosque volunteers or members to survey where potential recipients reside. It involves conducting interviews and collecting comprehensive biodata from potential recipients, which is needed for the "Community Rice Barn" acceptance files. The objective is to ensure that the "Community Rice Barn" recipients are genuinely in need, particularly those who have been economically and physically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Surveys and interviews aim to identify and prioritise deserving recipients.

Figure 3. Surveying the locations



3. for distribution of the "Community Rice Barn."

The third stage involves distributing the "Community Rice Barn," consisting of 10 kg of rice. After completing the first step of identifying potential recipients and the second

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step of surveying and conducting interviews for the necessary documentation, the third step involves voluntarily providing rice to the targeted community. Mosque volunteers and members, using a vehicle, deliver the rice to the targeted individuals based on the number of recipients identified in the previous steps. The goal is to lessen the financial burdens placed on those by the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Figure 4. Distribution Process 1*



*Figure 5. Distribution Process 2*



*Figure 6. Distribution Process 3*



#### 4. Community Mentoring

After completing several stages, the final step involves considering the "Community Rice Barn" targeted recipients as mentored community members. These individuals will receive guidance from the mosque's youth group to return to Allah SWT, the Quran, and Hadith teachings.

The primary objective of the "Community Rice Barn" programme is to aid communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in Palangka Raya City, particularly those who are economically disadvantaged and physically vulnerable. The aim is to transform these recipients into mentored community members who will continuously receive support through the "Community Rice Barn" programme, which involves the distribution of rice to those identified in the data and potentially expanding the programme to other COVID-19-affected individuals in need. The benefits that accrue after achieving these goals include providing a degree of economic relief, albeit modest, and assisting individuals in securing staple food supplies. By receiving the "Community Rice Barn," recipients are alleviated from worrying about essential food supplies, specifically rice.

The "Community Rice Barn" programme is an initiative that offers free rice to mentored community members. The programme, which commenced on August 17, 2021, and continues to the present, is an integral part of the mosque's efforts. The program's execution follows a four-step process: identifying potential recipients, surveying their locations, distributing the rice, and mentoring the community. In the first step, the mosque assigns members to identify worthy recipients through observation and recommendations. Donated rice is collected through infaq and contributions, and these funds are used to purchase rice for distribution.

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In the second step, assigned mosque members conduct on-site surveys to ascertain potential recipients' backgrounds, ensuring they qualify based on economic and physical needs. Data is collected through direct interviews, covering aspects like income, dependents, and living arrangements. The third step focuses on distributing the "Community Rice Barn." Mosque volunteers and members deliver the rice to eligible people, aiming to alleviate the economic burdens imposed by the pandemic.

The final step involves converting the recipients into mentored community members. The mosque's youth group will guide these individuals to reconnect with Allah SWT, the Quran, and Hadith teachings. According to the Indonesian dictionary, optimisation means effectively and efficiently achieving results according to desire. Winardi states that optimisation is a measure leading to goal achievement. From these definitions, it is evident that optimisation is achieved when effectiveness and efficiency align. This process involves maximising activities to yield the desired profits.

Implementing the "Community Rice Barn" programme requires collaboration between volunteers and mosque members for smooth execution in line with shared goals. In this context, our KKN-DR Group 79 authors participated in the program's implementation, working alongside the mosque to ensure its success. Through combined efforts, the programme reached pandemic-affected community members in need. This collaborative approach, involving KKN-DR students and the mosque, optimally executed the "Community Rice Barn" programme, ensuring its ongoing success. This program's continuity will provide much-needed relief to the COVID-19-affected economy of Palangka Raya City, lightening the burden for those in need through the "Community Rice Barn" initiative.

## **Discussion**

The "Community Rice Barn" programme presented in this study highlights a proactive and community-driven response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in Palangka Raya City. The initiative's foundation lies in the collaboration between KKN-DR students and the Anak Masjid group, showcasing the potential of collective action in addressing pressing socio-economic issues during crises. Adopting the Community Development (Condev) approach, the programme systematically identifies, supports, and empowers vulnerable communities, reflecting a holistic and comprehensive strategy.

The significance of this programme lies in its multifaceted approach, which addresses both the immediate and long-term needs of the impacted communities. Identifying potential recipients through observational data and recommendations ensures a targeted approach, reaching those most in need. This approach mitigates the risk of misallocation of aid and enhances the program's effectiveness (Ramraj dkk., 2020). Additionally, the volunteer surveying process makes sure that the assistance given matches the recipients' actual needs. This attention to accurate data collection helps create a sustainable and adaptable initiative.

The "Community Rice Barn" program's distribution phase marks a pivotal point where intentions materialise into tangible relief. Delivering rice, a staple food, addresses economic concerns and fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility. This act of giving reflects the reciprocal relationship between the contributors and the recipients, emphasising that solidarity and empathy are essential in times of crisis. Furthermore, the provision of 10 kg bags of rice underscores the program's practicality and effectiveness in aiding families' nutritional needs. The integration of mentoring as part of the programme demonstrates a forward-thinking approach to community development. Transforming recipients into mentored community members extends the program's impact beyond immediate relief (Collier, 2021). This phase ensures that the beneficiaries have knowledge, skills, and a sense of empowerment to navigate challenges beyond the pandemic. It aligns with the broader goal of fostering self-sufficiency and resilience, echoing the principles of the Condev approach.

An essential aspect of the program's success is its alignment with the KKN-DR framework. By engaging students as agents of change, the initiative taps into a motivated and resourceful pool of individuals eager to contribute to their communities. The students'

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involvement amplifies the program's reach and cultivates a sense of social responsibility among the younger generation. This hands-on experience equips students with valuable community engagement, problem-solving, and collaboration skills crucial for personal and professional development (Washington & Mondisa, 2021).

In the larger context, the "Community Rice Barn" programme exemplifies the potential of bottom-up approaches to addressing complex challenges. It showcases the pivotal role that local organisation, such as the Anak Masjid group, play in fostering community well-being and resilience. The program's success stems from its adaptability, responsiveness, and close integration with the needs and aspirations of the community.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the "Community Rice Barn" programme was an inspiring community engagement model during the COVID-19 pandemic. It signifies the importance of collaboration between students, local organisations, and communities in addressing the multifaceted challenges brought by the pandemic. By offering practical assistance through rice distribution, this initiative not only eases immediate economic burdens but also empowers recipients for long-term development. Applying the Condev approach strengthens the program's efficiency, enables sustainability, and ensures continued support for those affected.

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