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Local Economic Empowerment in Bencong Indah Urban Village, Tangerang Regency: A Plastic Waste-to-Paving Block Management Enterprise

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ABSTRACT

Local economic empowerment represents both a crucial challenge and objective within the implementation of decentralization in Indonesia, demanding innovative regional-level solutions capable of integrating social, economic, and environmental aspects such as waste management. This qualitative case study research aims to analyze the implementation mechanisms and the role of multi-stakeholder collaboration in facilitating economic empowerment through an innovative plastic waste-to-paving block program in Bencongana Indah Urban Village. It also evaluates the program as a practical implementation of decentralization and a potential model for sustainable local development. Primary data were collected through direct observation of business activities and in-depth interviews with the Secretary of the Urban Village, supported by secondary data from documentary studies of regulations and online publications. Data analysis employed a descriptive qualitative approach through content and thematic analysis. Findings indicate that this program transforms plastic waste into an economic product via an observed operational mechanism involving MSMEs/the community, strongly supported by multi-stakeholder collaboration and the facilitation role of the Urban Village Government. The program's implementation reflects local initiative within the regional autonomy framework and aligns with urban village and regency-level empowerment regulations. Although integrating sustainability pillars and attracting external attention, the program was identified as being in its early stages of development and facing resource and coordination challenges. It is concluded that the Bencongana Indah plastic paving block innovation constitutes a practice of decentralization implementation that facilitates economic empowerment through collaboration, offering a potential, integrative local development model whose sustainability and replicability, however, necessitate strategic management of implementation challenges.

Keywords: *Circular Economy; Decentralization; Local Innovation; Plastic Waste Management.*

INTRODUCTION

The administration of regional governance in Indonesia has undergone a fundamental transformation since the Reform Era, marked by strengthening the decentralization principle as a constitutional mandate (Palit, 2021). The decentralization policy, legally formalized through Law Number 22 of 1999, as revoked several times, lastly by Law Number 23 of 2014¹, essentially constitutes a delegation of partial authority from the central government to regional governments (Kamal, 2019). Its primary objectives are to bring public services closer to the community, enhance citizen participation in policymaking, and accelerate regional development toward local community welfare (Guntoro, 2021). Thus, decentralization is not merely an administrative shift but rather a political and legal strategy to realize governance that is more democratic, effective, and responsive to regional needs and aspirations (Simanjuntak, 2015).

Within a more specific spectrum, the economic dimension of decentralization emerges as a crucial pillar in efforts to enhance regional autonomy and competitiveness (Ramadhani et al., 2023). According to Article 1 point 6 of Law Number 23 of 2014, regional governments possess autonomous rights, authorities, and obligations to

¹Law Number 23 of 2014, as amended several times, lastly by Article 176 of Government Regulation in Lieu of Law Number 2 of 2022.

regulate and manage their governmental affairs and the local community's interests, including the management of local economic potential. This policy is anticipated to encourage regional governments to be more proactive in designing economic development strategies tailored to their regional characteristics and resources, thereby reducing interregional disparities and improving the quality of life for their populations (Hetharie & Tulia, 2021). Nevertheless, significant challenges persist, particularly concerning regional fiscal independence, as a substantial portion of regional revenue remains reliant on central government transfers, indicating the necessity for sustainably strengthening the local economic base (Erlanda & Ilman, 2024).

Strengthening the local economy within the decentralisation framework necessitates concrete initiatives at the grassroots level, particularly through the empowerment of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and the innovative utilization of local potential (Purwaningsih & Anisariza, 2022). MSMEs have proven to be the backbone of the national and local economies, contributing significantly to employment absorption and the formation of gross domestic product (Hendrawan, 2021). Consequently, the successful implementation of decentralization is often measured by the extent to which regional governments can create a conducive ecosystem for the growth and development of MSMEs, whether through supportive regulations, facilitated access to capital, or capacity-building programs (Nasution et al., 2024). Various instruments, such as Village-Owned Enterprises or other partnership programs, serve as strategic vehicles for translating the spirit of decentralization into tangible economic empowerment actions (Puspaningtyas & Ismail, 2023).

One compelling manifestation of innovation-based local economic empowerment efforts within the decentralization context can be observed in Bencongan Indah Urban Village, Tangerang Regency. This area initiated a plastic waste management program where waste is processed into an economically valuable product: paving blocks. This initiative represents an effort to address environmental problems related to the continuously increasing volume of plastic waste. It opens new economic opportunities for the local community, particularly through the involvement of MSMEs in the production process chain (Syahril & Anjarsari, 2023). Such a program exemplifies how local potential, including existing problems like waste, can be transformed into productive resources through a community-level circular economy approach.

Conceptually, the waste-to-paving block initiative in Bencongan Indah aligns with the principles of community empowerment. As defined by Coburn and Gormally (2017), empowerment refers to the process by which individuals or communities acquire the knowledge, capabilities, and power to independently meet their life needs—physical, economic, and social—. The community and MSMEs' involvement in this program can enhance their productive capacity, foster self-confidence, expand

access to livelihoods, and encourage active participation in local socio-economic activities, all of which are crucial indicators of community empowerment within the context of participatory development (Riyanto & Kovalenko, 2023).

Although various studies have examined the general impact of decentralization on regional economic development (Christia & Ispriyarso, 2019; Rachmad et al., 2023), there remains a paucity of empirical research specifically analyzing the operational mechanisms and replication potential of community-based economic empowerment innovation models at the lowest administrative levels, such as the urban village. In-depth research investigating how specific programs, like the plastic waste-to-paving block initiative, are implemented, their mechanisms for empowering MSMEs and the community, and their linkage to the micro-level decentralization policy framework are pertinent to addressing this knowledge gap. Focusing on the urban village level provides a unique perspective on implementing decentralization policies at the frontline of service delivery and direct community interaction.

Deriving from the aforementioned background and identified research gap, this study posits two primary, interrelated objectives. Firstly, it aims to analyze the implementation mechanisms of the innovative plastic waste-to-paving block program and the role of multi-stakeholder collaboration (Urban Village Government, Private Sector, Academia, Community) in facilitating the economic empowerment of MSMEs and the community within Bencongana Indah Urban Village. Secondly, this research evaluates this innovation program as a practical implementation of decentralization policy at the urban village level and as a potential model for sustainable local economic development by analyzing its enabling factors, challenges, and sustainability based on empirical data and local government perspectives. The study will concentrate on the case study of this program in Bencongana Indah Urban Village, analyzing relevant data and information about the program's implementation period in 2023.

By attaining these objectives, this research is anticipated to make significant theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the body of knowledge within constitutional law and decentralization, particularly in implementing local economic empowerment policies and community-based innovation models. Practically, the findings are projected to provide valuable input for the Tangerang Regency Government, especially the Bencongana Indah Urban Village administration, in evaluating and developing similar programs. Furthermore, it aims to serve as a reference or potential model for other regional governments in formulating innovative policies for concurrent environmental management and inclusive, sustainable community economic empowerment.

METHOD

This research was designed as empirical legal research, emphasizing the identification and analysis of law within the reality of its implementation in society (Qamar & Rezah, 2020). This study adopted a case study approach to gain a profound and contextual understanding of local economic empowerment through waste management innovation in a specific area. This approach was selected for its relevance in intensively exploring the plastic paving block program as a unique case within the framework of decentralization policy and economic empowerment at the urban village level.

The research location was focused on the administrative area of Bencongan Indah Urban Village, Kelapa Dua Subdistrict, Tangerang Regency, Banten Province, as the primary locus for implementing the innovation program studied. The research data collection process was meticulously conducted between January and April 2025. It is important to distinguish that this data collection timeframe is separate from the research's analytical focus, which examines the program's execution in 2023.

Primary data collection in this study utilized two principal techniques: in-depth interviews and direct observation. In-depth interviews were conducted with key informants from the Urban Village Government to understand the local government's perspective deeply, policy rationale, program implementation details, established collaborations, and encountered challenges. Concurrently, direct observation was systematically applied at the research site to factually observe and comprehend the plastic paving block business activities, production processes, and field interactions as part of the program's implementation.

Meanwhile, secondary data were gathered through comprehensive documentary study and literature review methods to supplement and enrich the analysis within legal and theoretical frameworks (Sampara & Husen, 2016). It included the analysis of relevant laws and regulations such as Law Number 23 of 2014, Ministerial Regulation Number 130 of 2018, Tangerang Regency Regulation Number 4 of 2016, and various other related regulations. Furthermore, online documentation containing information on the role and stance of the Bencongan Indah Urban Village Government in supporting this program was traced and analyzed, alongside a review of relevant reference books and scholarly journal articles.

All collected data, comprising primary data from interviews and observation notes and secondary data from physical and online documents, were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative approach. This data analysis aimed to identify how law and policy operate within the actual social context (law in action) concerning the innovation program in Bencongan Indah Urban Village (Irwansyah, 2020). Technically, content

analysis and thematic analysis were employed to process the relevant qualitative data, identify patterns, and formulate the main themes emerging from the entire dataset. To refine the discussion and address the research problems formulated in the objectives, this analysis was enhanced by utilizing the theoretical frameworks of regional autonomy and fiscal decentralization as interpretive instruments. Based on this structured discussion, conclusions were drawn using the deductive method, deriving specific inferences about how the innovation program's implementation reflects decentralization policy principles and its potential as a model for local economic development derived from analysing empirical data within the broader framework of concepts and theories. The trustworthiness of the data in this qualitative research was ensured through the triangulation of primary (interviews and observation) and secondary data sources, as well as the application of research ethics principles, including obtaining informed consent from informants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Implementation Mechanisms, Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration, and Facilitation of Local Economic Empowerment through Plastic Paving Block Innovation

Implementing the innovative program of processing plastic waste into paving blocks in Bencongan Indah Urban Village represents a concrete manifestation of efforts to address dual challenges: environmental degradation caused by plastic waste and the urgent need to strengthen the local community's economy. Direct field observations and documentary analysis, enriched by information from an interview with Mr Syarif², indicate that this program's initial success and potential heavily rely on implementation mechanisms involving the active collaboration of various stakeholders. More than just a technical waste processing project, this program was designed and executed as an ecosystem to facilitate economic empowerment, particularly for MSMEs and community groups, including local youth. Understanding the operational mechanisms, collaborative networks, and the facilitation role of the urban village government is key to unravelling how this program contributes to these empowerment objectives ([Hidayat et al., 2024](#)).

The fundamental operational mechanism of this program centres on transforming plastic waste into an economically valuable product, a process observed functioning at the research site. The stages involving the collection, sorting of specific types of plastic waste, further processing, and moulding into paving blocks effectively create added value from material previously considered residue. This process offers a solution for waste management at the source and yields an alternative building material product. However, interview results indicate

²Interview with Syarif, S.Sos., M.I.P., Secretary of Bencongan Indah Urban Village, on 23 April 2025.

that the production scale of these paving blocks is still limited. In the early stages of development, creating value from waste constitutes the core innovation that opens new economic opportunities based on community-level circular economy principles.

The economic activity generated through this program directly provides residents with a mechanism for livelihood facilitation. As observed in the field and confirmed through explanations from the Secretary of the Urban Village, various stages of the process—from raw material handling to production—involve labour from the surrounding environment. As revealed in interviews, the emphasis on involving youth in training and production processes indicates a conscious effort to utilize this program as a means for skills enhancement and the provision of employment opportunities for the productive age group. Even while its scale is still evolving, the establishment of this new economic activity represents a tangible contribution of the program in facilitating the diversification of income sources for the Bencong Indah Urban Village community.

Specifically, this program functions as a facilitation instrument for local MSME development, aligning with the mandate of Tangerang Regency Regulation Number 4 of 2016. This regulation underscores the importance of fostering a conducive business climate and development so that MSMEs can grow independently and become resilient. Analysis of the program's implementation, supported by interview data, reveals facilitation efforts through several means: related entrepreneurship training programs, microfinance counselling in cooperation with other MSMEs for access to savings and loans, and potential partnerships with the private sector for distribution or other support. However, the effectiveness of this facilitation must also be viewed within the context of challenges faced by the urban village, such as budgetary and human resource limitations, as well as general challenges encountered by MSMEs regarding access to information and technology, as noted by [Islam and Eriyanti \(2024\)](#), signifying the need for sustained support.

One of the main pillars supporting the implementation of this program is the multi-stakeholder collaboration mechanism actively fostered by the Urban Village Government. Interview results explicitly highlight the crucial role of external partners: Universitas Pelita Harapan provided not only training and mentoring but also concrete support in the form of a plastic shredder machine, while the private sector (companies such as Karawaci, Serpong, Lippo) contributed through CSR programs and training support. This synergistic collaboration serves as a vital mechanism for overcoming the urban village's internal resource limitations and accelerating knowledge and technology transfer, demonstrating a strategic partnership model in supporting innovation and empowerment at the local level ([Asmah et al., 2022](#)).

Furthermore, active community participation constitutes an essential supporting mechanism for the program's sustainability. Information from the Secretary of the Urban Village indicates that residents are not merely passive beneficiaries but are involved in various forms: attending training, forming business groups, providing input through the annual Development Planning Deliberation (*Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan - Musrenbang*), participating in cooperation (*gotong royong*), and proactively bringing plastic waste for processing. Community involvement in planning and evaluation mechanisms (through citizen forums/social media) signifies efforts to build a sense of ownership and ensure the program operates according to the community's real needs.

Synthesized through the empowerment theoretical framework by Coburn and Gormally (2017), the identified series of mechanisms—transforming waste into economic value, creating local economic activity, facilitating MSMEs, mobilizing multi-stakeholder collaboration for resources and capacity, and engaging active community participation—collectively work to facilitate empowerment. This program provides an arena for residents and MSMEs to enhance knowledge (through training), productive capabilities (through business activities), access to resources (through partnerships), and participation in local decision-making (through *Musrenbang*). Manifestations of this empowerment are evident in the ongoing economic activities and the collective initiatives emerging at the community level.

The role of the Urban Village Government in orchestrating these mechanisms, despite possessing limited direct implementation authority, appears significant in its functions of data collection, planning, and especially facilitation. Efforts to establish collaboration with Universitas Pelita Harapan and the private sector and facilitate community participation demonstrate the urban village's proactive role as a catalyst for local development. The alignment of these empowerment activities with the normative framework of Ministerial Regulation Number 130 of 2018 provides institutional legitimacy and unlocks the potential utilization of instruments such as the Urban Village Fund to support the sustainability of similar empowerment initiatives in the future, thereby strengthening the linkage between local innovation and the national empowerment policy framework.

B. Reflection on Decentralization Policy and Evaluation of the Paving Block Innovation's Potential as a Sustainable Local Development Model

The existence and implementation of the innovative program processing plastic waste into paving blocks in Bencongan Indah Urban Village serves as an economic empowerment initiative and an empirical reflection of how decentralization policy operates at the level of government closest to the

community. Analyzing this program within the broader context of the legal and policy framework for decentralization, enriched by the urban village government's perspective obtained through interviews, allows for identifying manifestations of the regional autonomy principle and evaluating the program's potential as a local development model. This assessment is crucial for understanding how decentralization can foster innovation while simultaneously being constrained by the capacity and realities of governance at the grassroots level.

The implementation of this program demonstrates the utilization of the autonomous space granted by Law Number 23 of 2014. The perspective of the Secretary of the Urban Village confirms that the decentralization framework provides flexibility for the urban village government to identify local potential and problems—in this case, the abundance of plastic waste and the economic needs of the community—and to design programs deemed suitable for the area's character. Such local initiatives embody the exercise of regional autonomy in formulating policies responsive to the needs of the local populace, a finding consistent with the views of Rohim (2024). Nevertheless, the acknowledged limitations in the urban village's authority regarding technical implementation aspects, which still require support from the Subdistrict or Regency, indicate that the practice of autonomy at the urban village level operates within specific structural constraints.

The operationalization of decentralization is also evident through the program's connection to specific policy instruments like Ministerial Regulation Number 130 of 2018. This regulation provides a foundation for urban villages to conduct community empowerment activities that can be funded through the Urban Village Fund allocation. The alignment between the types of activities in the paving block program (encompassing economic empowerment and the potential use of its products for infrastructure) and the scope of this Ministerial Regulation indicates the existence of a formal channel for fiscal decentralization policy to support innovation at the urban village level. Productively utilizing transfer funds for such economic empowerment programs is viewed as a potential mechanism to drive local economic growth and welfare (Widodo et al., 2024). However, the challenge of overall budget limitations remains a significant constraint acknowledged by the urban village authorities.

Furthermore, the synergy between the program at the urban village level and policies at the regency level is manifested through its alignment with Tangerang Regency Regulation Number 4 of 2016. This Regional Regulation is a product of the regency government's autonomous authority in responding to its specific regional needs. The paving block program's efforts to involve and facilitate local MSMEs, as observed and supported by the documented stance of the urban village government, demonstrate vertical policy coherence within the decentralized

system. It suggests that the decentralization framework can function to integrate regional policy direction with more specific program implementation at lower levels.

Viewed through the lens of sustainable development, this plastic paving block program inherently integrates the three main pillars. The plastic waste management mechanism addresses the environmental dimension, reducing potential pollution. The economic dimension is realized through the creation of productive activity and MSME involvement (Sirait et al., 2025). Meanwhile, the social dimension is present through the engagement of local labour, the potential for skills enhancement, and increased community awareness and participation in waste management. The management of local resources (waste) into value-added products observed in this program aligns with perspectives on the positive role of decentralization in fostering more autonomous resource management to support sustainable growth.

An evaluation of this innovation program's potential as a replicable local development model reveals significant supporting factors. The uniqueness of the solution offered (addressing waste while simultaneously empowering the economy), the established multi-stakeholder collaboration (with Universitas Pelita Harapan, the private sector, and the community), mechanisms for community participation (through *Musrenbang* and direct contributions), and the existence of initial monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are important assets. The attention garnered from external parties, including a visit by representatives from ASEAN countries, also indicates recognition of this innovation's value. These factors collectively build an argument for the program's potential as an inspiring model.

However, a balanced evaluation must also consider the existing challenges and limitations. The perspective of the Secretary of the Urban Village identifies structural constraints such as budget limitations, human resource capacity, and inter-sectoral coordination. Additionally, the program's status as still being in its early stages with a limited production scale and not yet having achieved broad market penetration are crucial points regarding its long-term economic sustainability. These challenges align with general findings in the literature, such as those noted by Sukardi et al. (2022) and Aryani et al. (2023) concerning barriers to implementing MSME empowerment programs. Therefore, the potential for replicating this model depends on the ability to overcome such contextual challenges in new locations.

Reflectively, the plastic paving block innovation program in Bencongan Indah Urban Village, despite its local scale and the challenges it faces, provides a valuable empirical illustration of the dynamics of decentralization in Indonesia. This

program demonstrates how autonomous space and decentralization instruments, even if limited, can be utilized by the urban village-level government to foster innovation that addresses local needs in an integrated manner. It serves as a real-world practice of how decentralization can facilitate the emergence of alternative, community-based development models that strive to align economic, social, and environmental goals—a crucial agenda in contemporary regional governance.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of the innovative program processing plastic waste into paving blocks in Bencong Indah Urban Village operates through an operational mechanism involving the transformation of waste material into an economically valuable product and the creation of productive activity for the local community. The sustainability and effectiveness of this mechanism are significantly supported by active multi-stakeholder collaboration among the Urban Village Government, the private sector, academic institutions (Universitas Pelita Harapan), and community participation. The Urban Village Government, consistent with the perspective conveyed by the Secretary of the Urban Village and supported by documentation, performs crucial roles as a facilitator and initiator, striving to align the program with the regulatory framework for local MSME empowerment (Tangerang Regency Regulation Number 4 of 2016) and community empowerment policies at the urban village level (Ministerial Regulation Number 130 of 2018), despite facing implementation challenges related to resources and coordination.

Furthermore, this innovative program empirically reflects the practical implementation of decentralization policy at the urban village level. This local initiative demonstrates the utilization of regional autonomous space, as stipulated in Law Number 23 of 2014, to respond to the specific problems and potential of the area. The program's alignment with decentralization policy instruments, such as Ministerial Regulation Number 130 of 2018 and Tangerang Regency Regulation Number 4 of 2016, indicates a functional linkage between national, regional, and lowest-level implementation policies. By integrating economic, social, and environmental dimensions, this program possesses attributes as a potential model for sustainable local development; however, its evaluation must consider the program's status as still being in the early stages of development, its limited production scale, and the tangible challenges concerning financial sustainability, human resource capacity, and broader market access. Consequently, its replication potential necessitates contextual adaptation and significant support.

Based on these conclusions, several suggestions are formulated. To the Bencong Indah Urban Village Government and the Tangerang Regency Government,

it is recommended to strengthen the established multi-stakeholder partnership forum to develop more structured and sustainable joint work plans, particularly in overcoming challenges related to funding and the marketing of paving block products. Enhancing the capacity of human resources at the urban village level in planning, managing, and monitoring economic empowerment programs should be prioritized, accompanied by the optimization of cross-sectoral coordination. Furthermore, ensuring adequate resource allocation, including the potential for more strategic utilization of the Urban Village Fund by Ministerial Regulation Number 130 of 2018, is necessary to support the sustainability and scaling up of community-based innovative programs.

For academic development and future research, this study opens several opportunities. Follow-up research using a qualitative approach involving in-depth interviews with MSME actors and beneficiary communities is essential to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics and impacts of empowerment from their perspectives. Quantitative studies are also relevant for measuring the economic and environmental impacts of the program more precisely over the long term. Additionally, comparative research among regions implementing similar innovations, along with in-depth analysis of the key success factors for replication and scaling-up, would provide valuable contributions to developing theory and practice in regional development within the decentralisation framework in Indonesia.

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