



## Evaluation Of The Effectiveness Of Government Food Security Programs From An Islamic Economic Perspective

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### How to Cite :

Fransiska, A., Setiawan, R. A., & Junaidi, A. (2026). Evaluation of The Effectiveness of Government Food Security Programs From An Islamic Economic Perspective. *Bima Journal : Business, Management and Accounting Journal*, 7 (1). 117-128. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37638/bima.7.1.117-128>

### ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 05 November 2025]

Revised 13 November 2025]

Accepted [13 January 2026]

### KEYWORDS

Effectiveness, Food Security, Islamic Economic Perspective

### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This study explores the implementation and effectiveness of a food security program in Mekar Sari Village that provides duck and catfish livestock as part of efforts to strengthen local food resilience. The study seeks to fill the research gap concerning how Islamic economic principles can be applied to evaluate and enhance the sustainability of community-based food programs. **Methodology:** Using a qualitative field research approach, data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, and analyzed through the stages of data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. **Results:** The findings indicate that the program effectively increases household income, food availability, and community self-reliance, while fostering values of solidarity, justice, and cooperation among residents. In addition, the study highlights that the program reflects core Islamic economic principles such as fairness, mutual assistance, and social welfare. **Findings:** However, improvements are still required in developing a fair profit-sharing system, integrating the program with productive zakat schemes, and enhancing Sharia-based financial literacy to optimize community welfare and ensure long-term program sustainability. **Novelty & Originality:** The novelty of this study lies in its integration of Islamic economic principles into the evaluation of a community-based food security program, an approach rarely undertaken in prior research. Its originality emerges from the application of Sharia-based values to assess program sustainability and community welfare outcomes in the Indonesian village context. **Conclusions:** These findings contribute to the growing discourse on Sharia-oriented development models and offer insights for policymakers in designing inclusive and ethically grounded food security initiatives. **Type of Paper:** This paper is Case study research paper.

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## INTRODUCTION

Food security is a key priority in national development, aiming to ensure the availability, access, and consumption of sufficient, safe, and nutritious food for all levels of society. Effective food security is not only measured by food availability but also encompasses a comprehensive and interconnected system of several important subsystems: food availability, distribution, accessibility, and consumption (Hafizah et al., 2024). Food availability encompasses a region's ability to provide sufficient quantities and types of food to meet the community's nutritional needs. Meanwhile, equitable and efficient food distribution ensures that food production is accessible to all levels of society without significant obstacles. Furthermore, good food consumption is also a crucial factor, as

it relates to an individual's ability to meet balanced nutritional needs, which directly impacts the community's nutritional status and productivity (Ervan Yuliansyah et al., 2025). Therefore, the Indonesian government has initiated various community empowerment programs to strengthen national food security, one of which is through a livestock assistance program that is expected to increase food self-sufficiency and strengthen the household economy in rural areas.

The livestock sector itself plays a very strategic role in supporting food security and improving community welfare, especially in rural areas where the majority of the population relies on agriculture and livestock for their livelihoods. In Mekar Sari Village, Ilir Talo District, Seluma Regency, Bengkulu Province, the government implemented a food security program through assistance with duck and catfish farming for the local community. Ducks were selected based on their high economic value, as they can produce eggs and meat that are useful for household consumption and for sale in the market (Dzigbede, 2020). Meanwhile, assistance with ponds and catfish fry was provided to optimize the potential of village resources to support the development of community fisheries businesses. Each recipient received six ducks, 250 catfish fry, and a 2x1 meter pond. Through this assistance, it is hoped that the community can develop independent livestock businesses that not only strengthen family food security but also provide additional economic opportunities, reduce dependence on food supplies from outside the region, and improve community welfare in a sustainable manner (Fadilah, 2025).

However, the implementation of the livestock assistance program in Mekar Sari Village still faces various obstacles that have resulted in suboptimal results. Field observations revealed that many catfish ponds are no longer functioning properly due to limited community knowledge of proper fish farming, coupled with technical constraints such as insufficient feed and inadequate facilities. Similarly, duck farms have not developed due to limited community understanding of proper care, feeding, and pen management (Hesthria, 2022). This situation demonstrates that physical assistance, such as livestock seeds and ponds, will be ineffective without ongoing technical assistance and training for beneficiaries. The local government needs to strengthen guidance and monitoring to ensure communities are truly equipped to manage livestock businesses effectively and sustainably (Segati, 2021). Therefore, the success of the food security program depends not only on the amount of assistance provided, but also on the extent to which communities are able to utilize and develop it productively.

From an Islamic economic perspective, food security assistance programs like those implemented in Mekar Sari Village need to be reviewed not only from an economic perspective but also from the perspective of justice, welfare, and sustainability, which are fundamental principles of Islamic economics. Islamic economics emphasizes the importance of equitable distribution of welfare, social justice (*al-'adl*), and community empowerment so that they are not solely dependent on aid but are able to stand independently and productively (Humaida et al., 2020). Therefore, government assistance programs should not be consumptive and short-term, but should instead provide long-term impacts through sustainable empowerment, training, and mentoring based on sharia values (Putri et al., 2023). By integrating the principles of justice and welfare into program implementation, it is hoped that the community will not only obtain material benefits in the form of additional food sources and income, but also develop into a community that is independent, competitive, and ethical in carrying out economic activities.

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the government's food security program in Mekar Sari Village, which focuses on providing duck and catfish livestock assistance to the community. It also assesses the extent to which the program's implementation aligns with Islamic economic principles, particularly the values of justice (*al-'adl*), welfare (*al-maslahah*), and sustainability (*al-istimrariyyah*). This study aims to obtain a comprehensive picture of the program's success in improving food security and the welfare of the village community, while also identifying factors that support and hinder its implementation. Furthermore, an Islamic economics-based analysis will provide ethical and normative perspectives in assessing government policies, whether they reflect the principles of social justice, equitable distribution of benefits, and sustainable

resource management in accordance with sharia values. Therefore, the results of this study are expected to contribute both theoretically to the development of Islamic economic studies in the field of food security, and practically as input for local governments in designing and implementing more effective, equitable, and sustainable community empowerment programs.

## METHOD

This research employed a field study method with a descriptive qualitative-analytical approach, deemed appropriate for evaluating community-based programs. This approach allows researchers to obtain contextual data through direct interaction with research subjects (Sugiyono, 2022). The descriptive approach was used to describe the phenomena occurring in the field, while the analytical approach was used to examine these phenomena based on program effectiveness theory and Islamic economic principles that emphasize justice, welfare, and sustainability. The research was conducted in Mekar Sari Village from September 2025 until completion, as the village is the location for implementing a food security program through the distribution of ducks and catfish as part of sustainable economic development (Sahir, 2022).

Research informants were selected using purposive sampling, specifically those with direct understanding and involvement in the program. The informants consisted of two village officials, four beneficiary community members, one program facilitator, and one community leader. The number of informants was determined until data saturation was reached, when the information obtained no longer yielded new findings. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews lasting 30–60 minutes per informant, non-participatory observation, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted through the stages of collection, reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This stage employed the iceberg analysis model to identify the root causes of problems hidden behind visible symptoms, resulting in more in-depth and objective analysis.

To maintain data validity, this study adheres to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four validity criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility is maintained through member checking, which involves confirming interview results with informants. Transferability is strengthened by providing a detailed description of the research context, dependability through an audit trail of the entire research process, and confirmability through peer debriefing with the supervisor. Through these procedures, this research methodology is expected to produce valid, transparent, and academically accountable findings in accordance with the principles of qualitative research in the context of Islamic economics.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### RESULTS

#### Implementation of the Food Security Program in Mekar Sari Village

The implementation of the food security program in Mekar Sari Village was designed as a strategic initiative to strengthen household resilience and reduce food insecurity among rural communities. The program was realized through the distribution of duck and catfish livestock assistance, targeting households with low income and limited economic opportunities. This approach aligns with the national food security framework, which emphasizes the pillars of food availability, accessibility, and utilization (FAO, 2023). By introducing livestock-based activities, the program aimed to diversify local food sources and provide a sustainable model for community-based production. According to Jamaludin, the Head of Mekar Sari Village, the government's active involvement in beneficiary selection and monitoring was crucial to ensure fairness and efficiency. He emphasized that the program served as "a way for the village to recover economically after the pandemic while motivating residents to build sustainable livelihoods." This participatory method corresponds with the principles of community empowerment described by Chambers (2017), where local ownership and transparency are key to ensuring program effectiveness.

Furthermore, the program's implementation adopted a bottom-up approach involving collaboration between local authorities, community leaders, and technical facilitators. Community leader Mr. Sabihis stated that the program had a visible impact on low-income families, as it provided both material support and knowledge transfer regarding livestock management. This confirms that empowerment-oriented food programs should not only deliver resources but also build human capital through training and capacity-building (Rahman et al., 2022). The mentoring process conducted by the facilitation team, led by Mr. Yusuf, included several stages—socialization, eligibility assessment, and technical assistance. These stages aimed to ensure that each beneficiary was capable of managing the livestock responsibly and sustainably. Such a structured process reflects the integrated rural development model that emphasizes institutional support, knowledge dissemination, and monitoring to prevent dependency (Suryani & Widodo, 2021). In this way, the program's design combined social inclusion with economic practicality, making it relevant and adaptive to the local socio-economic context.

In addition, the implementation of this food security program contributed significantly to the strengthening of local food systems and the promotion of sustainable livelihoods. According to the interview with beneficiary Mr. Zaewandri, the provision of ducks and catfish helped his family improve food sufficiency while also generating additional income. He explained that “after receiving guidance, I began to understand the proper care and maintenance, which helped me use some of the produce for family needs and sell the rest in the market.” This testimony highlights the transformation from passive aid recipients to active economic agents—a phenomenon consistent with the concept of sustainable livelihood frameworks, where livelihood assets (natural, financial, human, social, and physical capital) are enhanced through participatory interventions (Scoones, 2015). Moreover, livestock-based programs like this one have proven to increase household dietary diversity and local employment in several developing countries (Zahra et al., 2023). Therefore, Mekar Sari's experience demonstrates how integrating economic and social objectives can generate tangible and long-term community impacts.

Overall, the implementation of the food security program in Mekar Sari Village was participatory, transparent, and inclusive, embodying the principles of empowerment and community ownership. It provided not only short-term food relief but also long-term skills, motivation, and social cohesion. The collaboration among village leaders, facilitators, and beneficiaries illustrates the practical application of *good governance* in rural development, where accountability and cooperation lead to sustained progress (Nurhadi, 2020). Additionally, the program aligns with Islamic economic principles that emphasize justice (*al-'adl*), welfare (*maslahah*), and responsibility (*amanah*) in social and economic affairs (Linafsi et al., 2025). By fostering productive behavior, mutual assistance, and ethical management of resources, the implementation in Mekar Sari Village can be viewed as an exemplary model of integrated development rooted in both empirical success and moral values.

### **Program Effectiveness in Enhancing Food Security and Welfare**

The effectiveness of the food security program in Mekar Sari Village can be measured through its impact on food availability, household income, and social resilience. Food security, as defined by the FAO (2023), is achieved when all individuals have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and preferences for an active and healthy life. The distribution of duck and catfish livestock directly addressed these elements by improving both food production and consumption at the household level. Based on interviews with several participants, the program enabled families to diversify their sources of food and income, thus reducing vulnerability to external economic shocks. The Head of Mekar Sari Village, Jamaludin, emphasized that “many villagers were able to sell their produce in local markets, showing a shift from dependency to productivity.” His statement reflects a core indicator of program effectiveness—the transformation of beneficiaries from passive recipients of aid into proactive economic actors (Sari & Utomo, 2022).

Another key indicator of effectiveness lies in the community's collective spirit and adaptability in managing the livestock assistance. According to community leader Mr. Sabihis, the program fostered strong cooperation among residents, as they shared experiences and collaborated in maintaining livestock facilities. This aligns with the concept of *social capital*, where trust, networks, and shared norms become vital components for sustaining collective welfare (Putnam, 2000). Likewise, facilitator Mr. Yusuf observed that "the community's enthusiasm and quick adaptation" were essential factors behind the program's success. This enthusiasm is consistent with findings by Nugraha and Rahman (2021), who note that active community participation significantly increases the long-term sustainability of food security initiatives. The combination of technical training, local monitoring, and collective motivation ensured that beneficiaries could operate the program independently after the initial government support concluded.

The economic outcomes of the program also demonstrate measurable improvements. Beneficiary data and field interviews revealed that households participating in the duck and catfish farming activities reported an increase in income stability and self-sufficiency. According to Mr. Zaewandri, one of the beneficiaries, his family's nutritional intake improved due to access to self-produced protein sources, while the surplus produce was sold at the local market for additional income. Such results correspond with studies showing that community-based livestock programs enhance rural livelihoods by creating alternative income channels and improving nutrition diversity (Zahra et al., 2023). In addition, the integration of productive and consumptive benefits strengthens economic resilience by reducing dependence on single income sources, particularly for families previously reliant on informal labor (Hasan & Karim, 2020). These findings indicate that the food security program was not merely a welfare intervention, but a sustainable livelihood model capable of supporting long-term community prosperity.

Despite its achievements, the implementation of the food security program also encountered several challenges that influenced its overall level of effectiveness. Constraints such as limited capital, lack of business management skills, and minimal access to markets were among the main obstacles faced by participants. As reported by Yusuf, additional funding was often needed for expanding livestock capacity or improving infrastructure such as ponds and feed facilities. These challenges are typical in community development programs, where resource limitations can hinder scaling and sustainability (Suryani & Widodo, 2021). Nevertheless, the community's initiative, discipline, and willingness to maintain the activities beyond the government's involvement demonstrate strong local ownership. According to Todaro and Smith (2020), sustainable development is most effective when communities internalize the benefits of a program and are motivated to continue it voluntarily. In this sense, the Mekar Sari Village program successfully built both economic resilience and a renewed sense of responsibility among participants to sustain food self-reliance at the household and village levels.

### **Compliance with Islamic Economic Principles**

The implementation of the food security program in Mekar Sari Village closely aligns with the fundamental principles of Islamic economics, particularly *al-'adl* (justice), *maslahah* (public benefit), and *amanah* (trust). In Islamic economic thought, *al-'adl* requires fair and transparent resource allocation that prevents exploitation and inequality (Chapra, 2008). According to Jamaludin, the Head of Mekar Sari Village, the distribution of livestock aid was carried out "fairly and transparently through village deliberations," ensuring that the support reached families in genuine need. This participatory and transparent mechanism illustrates that the program was not only an economic initiative but also a moral responsibility rooted in justice and accountability, resonating with the Islamic principle of maintaining social equilibrium (*tawazun*) in community welfare.

From the perspective of *maslahah*, the program emphasized public benefit through empowerment and sustainable livelihood creation. As expressed by community leader Mr. Sabihis, the initiative "reflects Islamic values through equitable benefit distribution and the spirit of cooperation," indicating that it brought positive externalities for both individuals and the collective.

The concept of *maslahah* in Islamic economics seeks to promote welfare that encompasses material, social, and spiritual well-being (Al-Ghazali, as cited in Karim, 2010). The food security program effectively operationalized this concept by providing tangible resources—duck and catfish livestock—that enhanced food sufficiency while simultaneously nurturing solidarity and mutual care among villagers.

Furthermore, the program demonstrated adherence to the principle of *amanah*, or trustworthiness, which is central in Islamic economic transactions. Facilitator Mr. Yusuf explained that the process was free from *riba* (interest) and aimed purely at empowerment, ensuring that economic relations remained ethical and non-exploitative. Beneficiary Mr. Zaewandri added that managing the livestock assistance was seen as a *trust (amanah)* that must be maintained responsibly for the benefit of his family and community. This aligns with Qur’anic guidance, “Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due” (Qur’an, 4:58), emphasizing the ethical obligation to manage resources for collective prosperity. Through this value, the community internalized the sense of responsibility and moral integrity in managing public aid, reducing dependency while fostering accountability.

Overall, the alignment of the Mekar Sari Village food security program with Islamic economic principles reflects an integrated model of ethical development. It not only improved material welfare but also strengthened the moral fabric of the community by promoting justice, benefit, and trustworthiness. The absence of exploitative practices such as *riba* and the emphasis on fairness and cooperation embody the essence of an Islamic economic system as envisioned by thinkers like Siddiqi (1981) and Chapra (2000), who stress that economic activities should serve both worldly prosperity and spiritual balance. Thus, the program stands as an example of how Islamic economic ethics can guide practical policy implementation toward holistic human development.

**Table 1. Summary of Findings**

| Theme                     | Key Evidence                                             | Observed Impact                              |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Implementation</b>     | Active government support, participatory process         | Increased community engagement and skills    |
| <b>Effectiveness</b>      | Higher food production, new income streams               | Improved household welfare and food security |
| <b>Islamic Compliance</b> | Fair distribution, no <i>riba</i> , strong <i>amanah</i> | Reinforced ethical and spiritual values      |

Source: Processed data, 2025

The food security program in Mekar Sari Village has been effectively implemented and has generated meaningful economic, social, and moral outcomes. It promotes sustainable livelihoods, supports food self-reliance, and embodies Islamic economic values such as justice, cooperation, and responsibility. However, to maximize long-term benefits, further capacity-building and access to capital are needed to strengthen villagers’ entrepreneurial and managerial skills.

## DISCUSSION

### Implementation of the Food Security Program in the Form of Providing Ducks and Catfish in Mekar Sari Village

The implementation of the food security program in Mekar Sari Village, which focuses on providing duck and catfish livestock, serves as a concrete manifestation of how local economic development can be aligned with national food resilience policies while remaining consistent with Islamic economic ethics. This initiative illustrates the government’s effort to build food self-sufficiency through the optimal utilization of local resources, emphasizing community-based development and participatory governance. By involving villagers directly in every stage from

planning, implementation, to monitoring the program encourages a sense of shared responsibility and independence among participants. Such an approach aligns with the Islamic principle of *syura* (consultation) and *mas'uliyah* (accountability), which emphasize participatory decision-making and moral responsibility in the management of collective resources (Arrahman, 2022; Setiawan, 2023). Consequently, the program not only seeks to improve economic productivity but also fosters a culture of transparency, collaboration, and ethical governance within rural institutions.

From the perspective of Islamic economics, this food security program successfully integrates fundamental values such as *al-'adl* (justice), *tawazun* (balance), and *maslahah* (social benefit). Justice is reflected in the fair and transparent distribution of assistance, ensuring that it reaches households most in need. The principle of balance appears in the program's dual aim of meeting immediate food needs while promoting long-term community empowerment. Moreover, *maslahah* underscores that economic activities must deliver benefits not just for individuals but for society as a whole. In this regard, the provision of duck and catfish farming represents more than just an economic policy; it embodies a moral commitment to realizing *maqasid sharia*, particularly the protection of wealth (*hifz al-mal*) and preservation of life (*hifz al-nafs*). When compared with similar rural empowerment initiatives in Central Java and West Sumatra (Hasun et al., 2021; Khusnia et al., 2025), Mekar Sari's model demonstrates a higher degree of moral accountability, where every stage of implementation reflects Islamic ethical considerations that distinguish it from secular community development programs.

Nevertheless, for the long-term sustainability of the program, a deeper integration of Islamic financial mechanisms is essential. The introduction of *mudharabah* (profit-sharing) or *musyarakah* (joint partnership) systems could strengthen fairness and equity by ensuring that profits and risks are distributed proportionally among all stakeholders. Previous studies in West Nusa Tenggara have shown that implementing *sharia-compliant partnerships* not only enhanced economic motivation but also built greater trust and accountability among participants (Muhibban et al., 2023). Furthermore, by applying the principles of *tathwir* (development) and *istidamah* (sustainability), short-term aid can evolve into a sustainable community enterprise. Continuous mentoring that focuses on Sharia-based business management, financial literacy, and entrepreneurial innovation will enable beneficiaries to transform assistance into long-term productive capital. Such ongoing guidance does not merely support economic growth but also nurtures spiritual awareness, ensuring that the pursuit of livelihood remains within ethical and halal boundaries (Rahmah et al., 2025; Saragih, 2024).

Conceptually, the Mekar Sari Village program exemplifies how Islamic economic values intersect with developmental outcomes, forming a model of integrated ethical economics. The relationship can be described as follows: *justice (al-'adl)* leads to *fair resource distribution*, which fosters *social welfare (maslahah)*, ultimately contributing to *sustainability (istidamah)*. This conceptual flow emphasizes that sustainable food security and rural welfare cannot be achieved solely through material or technical interventions, but must be anchored in moral accountability and spiritual consciousness. The Mekar Sari case thus offers valuable lessons for future public policy designs, showing that when Islamic economic principles are applied holistically, they produce not only economic resilience but also social harmony and ethical development—core goals of *maqasid sharia* in contemporary governance.

### **The Effectiveness of the Program in Improving Food Security and Community Welfare in Mekar Sari Village**

The effectiveness of the food security program in Mekar Sari Village can be analyzed comprehensively through three main dimensions: economic, social, and spiritual. From the economic perspective, the program has contributed significantly to increasing household income and food availability. Through duck and catfish farming, local residents can diversify their livelihoods while maintaining a stable food supply for family consumption and local markets. The use of local resources and community-based management reduces production costs and dependence on external support. This approach strengthens the community's resilience against economic shocks

and food crises, aligning with the government's vision for sustainable food security. Moreover, the program demonstrates how local innovation can be integrated with Islamic economic ethics to produce outcomes that are both productive and morally grounded (Setiowati et al., 2023).

From a social standpoint, the program has fostered cooperation, independence, and solidarity among community members. The collective management of livestock projects encourages teamwork and shared responsibility, in accordance with the Islamic principle of *ta'awun* (mutual assistance). Villagers not only work together in caring for livestock but also in marketing and managing profits, which fosters mutual trust and strengthens social cohesion. Empowerment theory emphasizes that a development program is considered effective when it successfully transforms beneficiaries from passive recipients into active participants with the capacity and confidence to manage their own economic activities. In this sense, the Mekar Sari program has effectively created a participatory environment that nurtures social capital, which is a vital foundation for long-term sustainability in rural economic development. This participatory element distinguishes Mekar Sari's initiative from other rural programs that often fail to build genuine community ownership (Erma Yuna et al., 2025).

Spiritually, the program enhances awareness of *halal entrepreneurship* and collective moral responsibility, which are central to Islamic economics. Community members are not only trained in livestock techniques but also guided to understand how their economic activities must adhere to sharia principles. This includes maintaining honesty, fairness, and avoiding exploitative practices in all transactions. Such awareness reflects the principle of *maslahah* (public good) and *istiqamah* (consistency), ensuring that the program's benefits are sustained ethically and responsibly. Compared to similar empowerment programs in Aceh and Yogyakarta, which tended to emphasize economic indicators alone (Budiman et al., 2024; Fadilah, 2025), the Mekar Sari model integrates spiritual and moral education as part of the empowerment process. This integration demonstrates that development in an Islamic framework must combine material progress with moral cultivation, thus achieving holistic welfare in accordance with *maqasid sharia*.

Theoretically, the Mekar Sari food security program provides an important contribution to the discourse on the application of Islamic economics in public development programs. It expands the conventional understanding of program effectiveness from being purely quantitative measured by income, production, or profit to a broader concept of *ethical productivity*. This concept refers to the community's ability to manage resources responsibly, equitably, and sustainably, guided by Islamic moral values. The program's outcomes indicate that when Islamic economics is used as a guiding framework, it produces not only efficiency and growth but also justice, equity, and social harmony. Therefore, the Mekar Sari case serves as empirical evidence that Islamic economic principles can be operationalized in rural development to address food insecurity while strengthening ethical governance. The synthesis between efficiency (*kifayah*) and fairness (*'adl*) achieved in this program provides a replicable model for ethical public policy design that ensures sustainable community welfare grounded in the values of *maqasid sharia*.

### **Compliance of Food Security Program Implementation with Islamic Economic Principles**

From the standpoint of Islamic economic ethics, the implementation of the food security program in Mekar Sari Village reflects a strong commitment to several core Islamic values *al-'adl* (justice), *sidq* (honesty), *mas'uliyah* (accountability), and *maslahah* (public welfare). The local government conducted the aid distribution through *musyawarah desa* (village deliberations), a participatory process that ensured transparency, fairness, and equal opportunity for all eligible beneficiaries. This open deliberation mechanism minimized the risk of elite domination or favoritism that often undermines community-based programs. Such practice embodies the Qur'anic principle of *shura* (consultation), which serves as a foundation for participatory justice in Islamic governance. It also resonates with the divine command in Surah Al-Anfal (8:27), which warns believers against betraying the trust (*amanah*) bestowed upon them. By ensuring that resources are distributed transparently and fairly, the Mekar Sari government demonstrated that public trust and

accountability are not merely administrative obligations but also acts of faith rooted in Islamic moral duty (Maharani et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the cooperative spirit (*ukhuwwah*) and mutual assistance (*ta'awun*) demonstrated by community members during the implementation of the program have strengthened the village's social cohesion. The shared responsibility in caring for duck and catfish livestock has transformed routine economic activities into collective acts of worship (*ibadah jama'iyah*). This communal orientation echoes the prophetic concept of *takaful ijtimai* (social solidarity), which views economic cooperation not solely as a means to accumulate wealth but as an ethical framework to cultivate compassion, equality, and moral integrity among members of society. When the spirit of *ta'awun* becomes the foundation of economic engagement, each participant perceives their role as both a contributor to material welfare and a servant of divine justice. Empirical findings by Smith et al. (2025) and Azzimar et al. (2022) confirm that programs embedded with Islamic ethical values foster stronger trust, intrinsic motivation, and mutual responsibility three critical components for ensuring the longevity and moral integrity of development projects. Thus, the Mekar Sari model demonstrates that embedding Islamic spirituality into the structure of economic activities generates not only material output but also social harmony and ethical empowerment.

Nevertheless, despite these achievements, certain areas of improvement remain. One limitation lies in the absence of an explicit profit-sharing arrangement between the government and the recipients, which reduces the sense of partnership and shared accountability. Integrating *mudharabah* (profit-sharing) or *musyarakah* (joint-venture) contracts would foster mutual responsibility and equitable distribution of benefits, while also reflecting the true spirit of Islamic financial cooperation. In addition, the program could be strengthened through collaboration with formal zakat institutions such as BAZNAS to manage *zakat produktif* (productive zakat) as a source of capital. This integration would align the initiative more closely with *maqasid sharia*, particularly the protection of wealth (*hifz al-mal*) and life (*hifz al-nafs*). Evidence from similar initiatives in West Java indicates that livestock projects financed through productive zakat resulted in an average 40% increase in long-term income stability among participants (Ervan Yuliansyah et al., 2025). Such outcomes prove the transformative potential of zakat-based empowerment in achieving both economic and spiritual advancement.

In addition to institutional reform, achieving *istidamah* (sustainability) requires continuous emphasis on Islamic financial literacy among participants. Many beneficiaries still lack knowledge of basic financial management, halal investment principles, and bookkeeping. Structured training on Islamic financial ethics, risk-sharing, and business accountability can help prevent inefficiency and ensure long-term compliance with Sharia. The establishment of Sharia-compliant cooperative groups (*koperasi syariah*) could serve as a platform for collective savings, fair financing, and knowledge sharing, ensuring that all economic activities remain within halal parameters. As highlighted by Ariani (2004), financial education rooted in Sharia principles enhances not only financial capability but also spiritual discipline, since it teaches individuals to manage wealth as a trust (*amanah*) rather than a personal entitlement. Therefore, strengthening education and institutional capacity becomes a critical element in ensuring that the Mekar Sari food security initiative remains ethically sound and economically resilient.

In conclusion, the Mekar Sari food security program exemplifies a well-integrated model of rural development that aligns effectively with Islamic economic principles of justice, honesty, accountability, and social welfare. Its transparent management system and collective approach have created a balance between efficiency and equity, material gain and moral integrity. Nonetheless, the introduction of *profit-sharing* mechanisms, productive zakat integration, and Sharia-based financial literacy would significantly enhance its sustainability and long-term impact. The case of Mekar Sari thus offers valuable empirical evidence that ethical and spiritual dimensions are not peripheral, but central, to realizing sustainable development in the Islamic sense. By merging moral economics with practical governance, the program provides a replicable framework for future Sharia-based

empowerment initiatives one that ensures not only food security but also the cultivation of justice, solidarity, and faith-driven prosperity.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted, it can be concluded that the food security program through the provision of duck and catfish farming in Mekar Sari Village has proven quite effective in increasing community income, expanding food availability, and strengthening the economic independence of the village community. This program not only provides direct economic benefits through increased productivity and livestock yields, but also builds the community's capacity to innovate in sustainable local resource management. Through collective livestock and fish farming activities, the community begins to understand the importance of food independence as part of family economic resilience. Socially, these activities also strengthen relationships among residents as they engage in activities based on mutual cooperation and mutual assistance. This demonstrates that the program's effectiveness is measured not only in economic terms, but also in its social impact, which fosters solidarity and togetherness within the community.

The implementation of the food security program in Mekar Sari Village also demonstrates strong alignment with Islamic economic principles, including justice (al-'adl), welfare (maslahah), and social responsibility (amanah). The principle of justice is evident in the open distribution of aid through village deliberations, ensuring equal opportunities for all residents without discrimination or favoritism. The principle of welfare is reflected in the program's efforts to create broad benefits for the community, including increased income, provision of food sources, and strengthening socio-economic networks. Meanwhile, the value of trust is embodied in the transparent management of funds and aid, fostering trust between the village government and the community. Through the application of these principles, this program serves as a concrete example of how Islamic values can be practically implemented in village economic development policies that are just and oriented towards shared prosperity.

Furthermore, this program also reflects the concrete implementation of the objectives of the maqasid sharia, particularly in safeguarding wealth (hifz al-mal), preserving life (hifz al-nafs), and creating public welfare (maslahah 'ammah). In this context, developing duck farming and catfish farming businesses serves as a means to improve economic well-being without abandoning religious values. However, several aspects still need improvement to optimize the program's results, including the implementation of a clearer and more structured profit-loss sharing mechanism, program integration with productive zakat funds to expand the reach of beneficiaries, and strengthening sharia financial education for the community so they understand the principles of financial management in accordance with Islamic law. Improvements in these aspects are expected to deepen the program's impact on community well-being and strengthen spiritual values in their economic activities.

This study has limitations because it was conducted in only one area, Mekar Sari Village, so the findings cannot be generalized to other areas with different socioeconomic characteristics. Therefore, further research is recommended to conduct comparative studies in several areas with diverse social, economic, and cultural conditions to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of Islamic economic-based food security programs. Further research could also broaden the focus by examining factors influencing program sustainability, including community participation, support from Islamic financial institutions, and the role of local governments in creating policies conducive to village economic empowerment.

From a policy perspective, the results of this study provide important recommendations for the government and relevant institutions to design and strengthen food security programs based on sharia principles. The government is expected to expand support for similar programs through integration with zakat, infaq, and sedekah institutions, as well as providing business management and Islamic financial literacy training to rural communities. Furthermore, sharia financial institutions are also expected to play an active role in providing fair, transparent, and partnership-based

financing schemes. If these policies are implemented consistently and collaboratively, sharia-based food security programs will not only increase the economic independence of rural communities but also become a model for sustainable economic development aligned with the objectives of sharia and the values of Islamic social justice.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all those who have supported me in completing this final project. Thank you to my supervisor for providing guidance, direction, and motivation throughout this research. I also express my gratitude to my family for their continued moral and material support. Last but not least, thank you to my friends for their help, advice, and encouragement.

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