



MUTUAL ASSISTANCE AND THE REVITALIZATION OF UKHUWAH TA'AWUNIYAH

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Abstract:

The decline in awareness of mutual cooperation in environmental protection remains a major problem. This condition results in a decline in social awareness and environmental cleanliness. This community service program focuses on revitalizing the ukhuwah ta'awuniyah (brotherhood of mutual cooperation) through mutual cooperation activities and the implementation of environmentally friendly waste burning as an educational effort for the community. This program aims to increase collective awareness, strengthen social solidarity, and encourage community independence in maintaining environmental cleanliness. The method used is a collaborative participatory approach, involving residents in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of activities. The results of the study show increased community participation, increased awareness of the importance of environmental management, and strengthened social cooperation among residents. This program demonstrates that strengthening the value of ta'awun can be an effective strategy in rebuilding the culture of mutual cooperation in society.

Keywords: mutual cooperation, revitalisation, ukhuwah ta'awuniyah.

INTRODUCTION

The community in Dusun Pagarbata, Sidorejo Village, based on observations during the first week (January 7–13, 2026), showed signs of declining Ukhuwah Ta'awuniyah—the concept of brotherhood grounded in shared purpose, mutual support, and cooperation in doing good. This was evident from the reduced participation of residents in large-scale collective activities. One clear example was the weakening sense of gotong royong (communal mutual assistance), which has long been a hallmark of social identity in rural communities, especially in Dusun Pagarbata, Sidorejo Village. Activities such as communal clean-ups at the mosque, graveyard, public garden, and water springs—traditionally carried out during specific times like the month of Rajab—have become increasingly rare. According to Mr. Zainul, the hamlet head of Pagarbata, before the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019, the people of Pagarbata used to enthusiastically join together in gotong royong to clean the mosque, graveyard, garden, and water sources, particularly during the months of Rajab and Sha'ban. The decline in Ukhuwah Ta'awuniyah among rural communities has also been influenced by growing dependence on the village government to handle environmental issues. This situation reflects a broader shift in the value of togetherness in villages, driven by changes in people's lifestyles (Firmansyah et al., 2025).

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The community of Dusun Pagarbata in Sidorejo Village is fundamentally a communal society that still upholds strong values of togetherness. However, since 2019, when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, those values of togetherness have begun to fade – particularly the principle of *ukhuwah ta'awuniyah*, which is embodied in the cultural practice of *gotong royong* (communal mutual assistance). Starting from this observed phenomenon, it becomes necessary to revive the culture of *gotong royong* and at the same time raise the community's environmental awareness. In reality, the residents of Dusun Pagarbata, Sidorejo Village, possess considerable potential: they still maintain close social ties and have an active local leadership structure, both of which greatly facilitate the implementation of community empowerment-based programs. This approach aligns with previous research findings that the effectiveness of village-level environmental programs is heavily influenced by how emotionally connected residents feel to the issues at hand (Nurfadillah, Sadono, and Wahyuni 2023). Earlier studies have also shown that direct involvement of the community significantly increases concern for environmental cleanliness and strengthens social solidarity (Hafizoh et al. 2026). Another study emphasized that an approach grounded in the value of *ukhuwah ta'awuniyah* is more readily accepted and applied in rural communities that already have strong social bonds (Syamsiyah et al. 2025). The present activity is consistent with prior research indicating that cross-generational participation has a substantial impact on the long-term sustainability of village social initiatives (Ilmu et al. 2018). On the technical side, environmentally friendly waste burning was demonstrated directly using methods designed to minimize smoke and odor, in line with earlier research on village waste management. This hands-on, practice-based approach simultaneously reinforces the value of *ukhuwah ta'awuniyah*, because the activities are carried out collectively and actively foster community solidarity (Istifadlah et al. 2025). Furthermore, the initiative aims to awaken a genuine sense of responsibility for protecting the environment – especially in Dusun Pagarbata – by involving a portion of the local residents in *gotong royong* activities. In doing so, it also seeks to encourage the emergence of local leaders who can serve as drivers of ongoing social change (Ilmu et al. 2018).

Revitalization refers to the process or act of reviving or reactivating something. In essence, revitalization is a deliberate effort or method to bring back to life something that previously functioned or existed quite effectively. According to the Regulation of the Minister of Public Works No. 18 of 2010 concerning Guidelines for Revitalization, revitalization is defined as an endeavor to enhance value through development or to revive something that was once carried out but had been interrupted due to a particular event or circumstance that caused its loss or decline, and is then brought back into operation in a way that generates positive change. The term revitalization is most commonly associated with the renewal of areas or regions, yet its meaning extends beyond physical spaces or zones. It can apply to other contexts as well. In the case of Dusun Pagarbata in Sidorejo Village, for example, certain long-standing communal practices had gradually faded – especially following the COVID-19 outbreak in 2019 and amid growing lack of awareness among residents about preserving their surrounding environment. Through revitalization, the aim is to

restore and strengthen the values of gotong royong (communal mutual assistance) that had long been practiced in Dusun Pagarbata. This kind of revitalization is expected to awaken greater awareness among the local people – particularly in Dusun Pagarbata, Sidorejo Village – so they will work together to protect and sustain their environment. In doing so, it helps reduce damage that could harm the local surroundings, while ultimately fostering a clean, green, and pleasant living space free from the risk of disease outbreaks that could negatively affect the community.

The concept of Al-Ta'awun is a fundamental principle in Islam that stresses the importance of mutual assistance in righteousness and piety, while strictly forbidding cooperation in sin or enmity. Philosophically, ta'awun serves as an ethical and social foundation that strengthens solidarity and togetherness within the community – particularly in Dusun Pagarbata, Sidorejo Village – by placing spiritual values at the forefront, prioritizing the common good and obedience to Allah. In this context, ta'awuniyah is far more than just physical or material help extended to others; it also encompasses a sincere intention (ikhlas) and a clear orientation toward goodness that ultimately brings blessings and barakah. (Saputra 2022)

Meanwhile, the concept of Al-Ukhuwwah emphasizes a universal brotherhood that transcends blood ties and is rooted in faith, commonly known as Ukhuwwah Islamiyyah. Ukhuwwah Islamiyyah is not merely a biological family relationship; rather, it is a spiritual and social bond that unites the entire Muslim community as one large family, grounded in shared belief in Allah and His Messenger (Islam et al., n.d.). This brotherhood teaches solidarity, mutual respect, and assistance in all that is good, thereby fostering harmony and peace within a pluralistic society. In a broader sense, ukhuwah also encompasses a universal dimension (ukhuwwah basyariyyah), which recognizes the brotherhood of all humankind regardless of ethnicity, nationality, or religion, and upholds inclusive humanistic values.

Ukhuwah Ta'awuniyah is a form of brotherhood in Islam that is built upon mutual assistance in righteousness and piety. The word “ukhuwah” means brotherhood, while “ta'awun” means helping one another. This concept teaches that every Muslim has a duty to support fellow believers in matters that bring shared benefit and goodness. The foundation of ukhuwah ta'awuniyah is found in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Maidah verse 2, which commands Muslims to cooperate and help one another in acts of goodness and God-consciousness (taqwa), and forbids helping one another in sin and enmity.

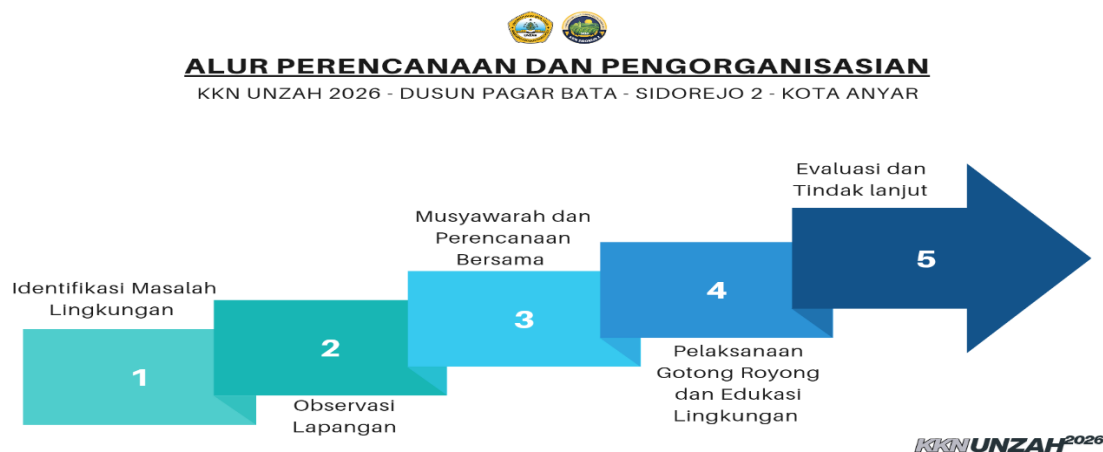
Through the implementation of these strategies, the expected social changes include a heightened sense of collective responsibility for maintaining environmental cleanliness and the emergence of a more participatory mindset among community members. The revitalization of Ukhuwah Ta'awuniyah – expressed through gotong royong activities – is hoped to give rise to a new social institution in the form of active

local working groups dedicated to addressing cleanliness and environmental issues, particularly in Dusun Pagarbata, Sidorejo Village.

METODE PENELITIAN

The community service program in Dusun Pagarbata employs a qualitative research method with the ABCD (*Asset-Based Community Development*) approach. This approach insists that development must be centered on the community itself, enabling people to grow and progress based on the potentials and assets they already possess. It also places strong emphasis on the direct involvement of residents at every stage of the activities. The selection of Dusun Pagarbata in Sidorejo Village as the subject of this service effort is deliberate: the local people here are the ones most directly affected by the declining awareness and practice of gotong royong in managing household waste.

The action planning process was carried out through several participatory stages. It began with field observations to map out the environmental problems, followed by focused group discussions (*musyawarah*) involving community leaders, youth, and family representatives. In every meeting, residents were actively involved in identifying the main issues, formulating action strategies, and drawing up a collective gotong-royong schedule. The program implementation phase consisted of two core activities: carrying out communal environmental clean-up through gotong-royong and providing practical education on environmentally friendly waste burning practices. The gotong-royong clean-up engaged people from all walks of community life – from karang taruna youth groups and housewives to village officials – ensuring broad participation across different segments of society.



In this evaluation phase, our KKN team worked together with the community to conduct joint monitoring (follow-up) in order to assess the effectiveness of the activities and observe any emerging changes in behavior. The evaluation was carried out through short interviews with participating residents, direct observation of the environmental conditions after the activities, and open discussions about the next steps needed. This kind of participatory evaluation method has proven effective in boosting residents' sense of social responsibility, as demonstrated in previous studies examining the long-term effects of gotong-royong activities on community behavior. It also became clear that collective reflection serves as a powerful means to reinforce residents' motivation to maintain environmental cleanliness. Furthermore, this

community-based evaluation approach helps create new social institutions that support the ongoing sustainability of village-level environmental programs (Safitri and Sihombing 2024).

HASIL & PEMBAHASAN

1. Plannning

The action planning process was carried out through several participatory stages, including:

- a. Field observation and initial interviews were conducted to map out the environmental issues. This activity took place from January 7–10, 2026. From the preliminary observations, it was found that the environment in Dusun Pagarbata, Sidorejo Village, suffered from abundant scattered waste, roads heavily overgrown with wild grass, and a severe lack of street lighting. These conditions became the primary focus in formulating the work program for the KKN (community service) activities in Dusun Pagarbata, Sidorejo Village.
- b. Focused group discussions were held with community leaders, youth, and family representatives. During these discussions with community figures in Dusun Pagarbata, it became clear that many residents lack sufficient awareness of the importance of gotong-royong activities. As a result, numerous access roads have become heavily overgrown with wild grass, seriously disrupting the daily activities and mobility of the people in Dusun Pagarbata.
- c. Developing strategies to revive the spirit of gotong-royong in Dusun Pagarbata. One effective strategy is to begin with gotong-royong activities as the initial step to gradually rekindle concern and care for the environment, establishing it as the core foundation. Through these simple yet consistent early actions, a shared sense of responsibility toward the environment will slowly but steadily grow among the community.



Wawancara awal dengan tokoh Masyarakat
Dusun Pagarbata



Perencanaan Program antara Mahasiswa, Masyarakat dan Dosen Pendamping

2. Implementation

The implementation of the KKN program in Dusun Pagarbata, centered on revitalizing the value of “ukhuwah ta’awuniyah” and the culture of gotong-royong, offers a clear, real-life illustration of how collaboration between university students and the local community can bring about meaningful and substantial social change.



The first gotong royong activity was carried out during the second week of the KKN implementation, specifically on Friday, January 16, 2026. The choice of Friday was based on a mutual agreement reached during the planning stage. This decision was made because the majority of residents in Dusun Pagarbata, Sidorejo Village, work as farmers or self-employed individuals and typically have Fridays off. During this initial gotong royong, the enthusiasm among residents was not yet visible, and only a small number participated. As a result, the environmental clean-up effort was not fully effective and was limited to just one location—around the cemetery area of Dusun Pagarbata. Because of this, an evaluation was conducted, followed by a joint meeting with community leaders.

The second gotong royong took place on Friday, January 23, 2026. By this time, residents’ enthusiasm for participating in the environmental clean-up gotong royong had become noticeable and was clearly on the rise. This improvement was largely due to the consistent effort and enthusiasm shown by the KKN participants and local community figures, who actively socialized and encouraged involvement among the villagers. The activity successfully covered two locations: the main entrance road to the hamlet and the internal roads within Dusun Pagarbata.

Based on the observations, one of the main findings of this program was the revival of the gotong-royong culture that had previously declined. Through a “community engagement” approach—meeting directly with residents, holding musyawarah discussions, and jointly identifying environmental problems—the activities reflected a process of empowerment rooted in social capital. By nurturing solidarity and rebuilding mutual trust, these efforts created essential pillars that enabled the community to act collectively in addressing environmental challenges (Firmansyah et al. 2025). The joint activities carried out alongside the residents—including cleaning the cemetery, clearing roadside areas, collecting scattered waste, cutting overgrown grass, and practicing low-smoke waste burning—not only produced a visibly cleaner environment but also restored connections among

community members. Through these shared efforts, the values of “*ukhuwah ta’awuniyah*” came alive once again. This shows that gotong-royong is far more than a technical action; it is a form of social interaction that reinforces norms of togetherness and builds a strong, enduring space for solidarity (Stm et al. 2022).

In this context, the students acted as a bridge that reconnected the residents with these traditional values. Their direct accompaniment transformed the gotong-royong activities from mere routine events into meaningful moments for building emotional bonds and a shared sense of ownership over the environment.

The key to the program’s success lay in the high level of community participation. This aligns closely with the “participatory collaborative model” – an empowerment approach that involves the community at every stage: planning, implementation, and evaluation. Active participation by residents also serves as the primary indicator of success for community-based social interventions (Sultan, Muhammad, and Samarinda 2024). Throughout the activities, the students did not position themselves as the sole leaders or directors. Instead, they worked side by side with the residents as equal partners. This approach fostered relationships of mutual respect, allowing villagers to feel that their opinions were valued and motivating them to engage directly and wholeheartedly. The experience reinforces the argument that community development cannot rely on intervention from a single party alone; it must be carried out through strong social partnerships. Moreover, the involvement of people across generations – youth, adults, elders, and even children – provided clear evidence that gotong-royong can serve as an effective medium for strengthening social networks and ties among community members.

In addition to gotong-royong, education on environmentally friendly waste burning emerged as a crucial element of the program. During the initial observations, the students discovered that open waste burning was still being carried out carelessly and without proper control. This practice carried serious risks of air pollution and health hazards for the community. To address this, the students introduced directed, controlled burning methods through *musyawarah* (communal deliberation), hands-on demonstrations, and clear counseling sessions about the dangers of uncontrolled waste burning. This educational approach proved effective: it noticeably raised the residents’ knowledge and encouraged real shifts in their waste management behavior (Stm et al. 2022). The response from the people of Dusun Pagarbata reflected similar positive change – they gained a clearer understanding of how to burn waste properly and showed willingness to apply the safer methods in their daily lives. Beyond the technical aspects, these educational activities also carried a strong social-emotional impact. The shared learning process created a space that reinforced togetherness, demonstrating how community-based education can deepen social bonds and cultivate a collective commitment to adopting new, healthier practices (Safitri and Sihombing 2024). In this way, the program went far beyond delivering technical know-how; it also helped foster greater social discipline and mutual accountability within the community.



Pelaksanaan Edukasi Pembakaran Sampah Ramah Lingkungan

The most significant impact following the program was the emergence of a new social structure that supports the ongoing cleanliness activities. Residents began forming small working groups on their own and independently drew up weekly cleaning schedules. This phenomenon demonstrates that the KKN program succeeded in sparking genuine social transformation, rather than producing only short-term or superficial changes. It aligns with earlier research showing that active community involvement can give rise to “*local leaders*” or grassroots motivators who take on the role of guardians of the sustainability of social movements (Ali 2024). The presence of these local leaders makes it much easier to maintain and preserve the new norms that were established during the KKN program.

In addition, the joint activities carried out by the students and residents created a shared collective experience that strengthened the community’s social identity. This aligns with the “*learning community*” theory, which holds that collaborative efforts accelerate the process of community learning while reinforcing the social values that have been mutually agreed upon (Firmansyah et al. 2025).



Gambaran Kolektivitas Sosial Berbasis Ukhuwawah Ta’awuniyah

The value of “*ukhuwah ta’awuniyah*” served as the philosophical foundation throughout the entire series of activities. When this concept was explained in simple, relatable language that fit their everyday context, the residents felt a deep personal connection to the religious teachings they already held dear. This connection greatly strengthened their motivation to maintain environmental cleanliness, viewing it as an

integral part of social worship. This religious approach proved to be a powerful driver in fostering lasting behavioral change. For the community, gotong-royong was no longer seen merely as a social custom or communal task; it became a living expression of religious teachings on cleanliness and shared responsibility (Sultan, Muhammad, and Samarinda 2024).

Overall, this KKN activity also demonstrated clear and tangible social transformation in several key areas: 1) The emergence of collective behavior in maintaining the cleanliness of the surrounding environment, 2) A noticeable increase in residents' sense of care and concern toward their local environment, 3) The rise of voluntary local leaders who take initiative on their own, 4) And a marked improvement in the community's understanding of environmentally friendly waste management practices (Safitri and Sihombing 2024).

Through these transformations, it becomes evident that a collaborative approach between university students and the local community can serve as an effective strategy for improving environmental quality while at the same time strengthening social solidarity.

KESIMPULAN

The revitalization of ukhuwah ta'awuniyah through the gotong-royong movement and environmentally friendly waste management in Dusun Pagarbata clearly shows that community collaboration is the main key to building genuine ecological awareness. This participatory and collaborative approach successfully encouraged residents to take active roles—from the planning stage, through carrying out cleanliness activities, right up to adopting safer waste-burning practices that are kinder to the environment.

The implementation of this program also proved effective in deepening the community's understanding of why environmental cleanliness matters, while at the same time strengthening social solidarity and breathing new life into the value of gotong-royong that had previously weakened. In this way, reinforcing the principle of ta'awun can serve as a sustainable strategy—not only to keep Dusun Pagarbata clean over the long term, but also to shape a community character that is caring, responsible, and truly committed to looking after their shared environment.

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