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MEHELIAH OCEAN: EMPOWERING PONDOK COMMUNITIES THROUGH FISH-BASED SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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Abstract:

Community-based social entrepreneurship offers a practical approach to strengthening livelihoods among vulnerable and faith-based communities. Meheliah Ocean is a fish-based social entrepreneurship initiative implemented in Kampung Getting, Tumpat, Kelantan, to empower the pondok community through food processing, product innovation and entrepreneurial training. Addressing limited research on

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university-led technology transfer within faith-based pondok communities, this study examines how university-community collaboration enhances entrepreneurial capacity, income-generating opportunities and community resilience through the Lembah Barakah Programme. Universiti Malaysia Kelantan implemented the initiative through community engagement, training, facilitation and technology transfer. A qualitative descriptive case-study design was employed using semi-structured interviews, document analysis and programme observation. A total of ten participants were purposively selected, comprising six pondok community members, two project facilitators, one community representative and one technical/marketing support personnel directly involved in the initiative. Data was analysed thematically. Five themes emerged: strengthened entrepreneurial capacity; transformation of local fish resources into value-added products; improved production efficiency through Insoler Dryer technology; university-community collaboration for social impact; and enhanced community resilience through income-generating activities. Products developed included Meheliah dried fish, other fish-based products and anchovy seasoning. Participants reported acquiring processing skills, generating supplementary household income and gaining greater confidence in independently producing, packaging and marketing fish-based products with reduced reliance on external assistance; product quality was also reported to have improved through more consistent hygiene and drying outcomes following the introduction of Insoler Dryer technology. Overall, the initiative demonstrates that university-community collaboration can generate meaningful, inclusive social impact, while its long-term sustainability will depend on continuous mentoring, market access and sound financial management. These findings affirm the potential of fish-based social entrepreneurship to strengthen self-reliance and resilience among pondok communities.

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Keyword:

Community Empowerment; Food Processing; Pondok Community; Social Entrepreneurship; University Collaboration

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Introduction

Social entrepreneurship has increasingly become an important approach in community development because it combines economic activity with social value creation. Unlike conventional business models that focus mainly on profit, social entrepreneurship aims to solve community problems while generating income and strengthening social wellbeing (Mair & Marti, 2006; Yunus, 2010). This approach is particularly relevant for vulnerable communities

that face limited income opportunities, restricted access to employment and dependency on external assistance (Peredo & Chrisman, 2006; Haugh, 2007).

The pondok community represents an important faith-based community in Kelantan. Pondok institutions are traditionally associated with Islamic learning, religious practice and community life. However, some pondok communities may also face socio-economic constraints, especially among residents with limited employment opportunities, low income, ageing populations or restricted access to structured entrepreneurship programmes. Therefore, community-based economic initiatives can support the pondok community by providing practical income-generating opportunities without disrupting their religious and communal environment.

The Meheliah Ocean initiative was introduced as a fish-based social entrepreneurship project in Kampung Getting, Tumpat, Kelantan. The project focused on food processing and product development using local marine resources to create value-added products with income-generating potential. Through the Lembah Barakah Program, the initiative was implemented by Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK) through training, facilitation, technology transfer and community engagement. The project aimed to empower the pondok community by strengthening their skills in food processing, product innovation, packaging, marketing and the use of appropriate technology. Through this approach, the initiative provided practical opportunities for the community to improve livelihood capacity while promoting self-reliance and sustainable community wellbeing.

One important feature of the initiative was the application of the Insoler Dryer technology. This technology was introduced to improve product quality, increase production efficiency and reduce dependency on traditional drying methods that are affected by weather conditions (Bani Hani et al., 2022). Through this technology, the community was able to produce fish-based products such as Meheliah dried fish, processed fish products and anchovy seasoning in a more systematic manner.

This study explores the Meheliah Ocean initiative as a model of fish-based social entrepreneurship. It focuses on how university-community collaboration, food processing training and technology transfer contribute to community empowerment, livelihood improvement and rural economic development.

Problem Statement

Rural and faith-based communities often require livelihood interventions that are practical, culturally appropriate and sustainable. Although many communities have access to local resources, these resources may remain underutilised due to limited technical knowledge, lack of product innovation, weak marketing skills and insufficient entrepreneurial support (Krause et al., 2015; Joffre et al., 2018). In coastal and semi-coastal areas such as Tumpat, fish-based resources provide strong potential for downstream product development, but the community may not fully benefit from these resources without structured training and technology support (Bene et al., 2016; FAO, 2020, 2022).

The pondok community in Kampung Getting has potential to participate in community-based economic activities. However, several challenges may restrict their involvement in entrepreneurship. These include limited exposure to business management, lack of processing technology, insufficient capital, weak market access and dependency on traditional production

methods. Without appropriate intervention, income-generating activities may remain small, informal and difficult to sustain (Bernama, 2026).

The Meheliah Ocean initiative was developed to address these issues by integrating fish-based product innovation, social entrepreneurship and university-community collaboration. However, the effectiveness of such an initiative needs to be examined to understand its contribution to skills development, product quality, income generation and community resilience. It is also important to identify challenges that may affect sustainability, including production consistency, branding, marketing, financial management and continuous technical support (Franco & Tracey, 2019).

Therefore, this study examines the Meheliah Ocean initiative as a qualitative case study. It aims to understand how the initiative empowers the pondok community and how university research and innovation can be translated into practical community impact.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. To explore the implementation of the Meheliah Ocean initiative as a fish-based social entrepreneurship project in Kampung Getting, Tumpat.
2. To examine the role of university-community collaboration in strengthening entrepreneurial capacity among the pondok community.
3. To identify the benefits of food processing training, product development and technology application in improving community livelihood.
4. To analyse the challenges faced in sustaining the Meheliah Ocean initiative.
5. To propose strategies for strengthening fish-based social entrepreneurship as a sustainable community empowerment model.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How was the Meheliah Ocean initiative implemented within the pondok community in Kampung Getting?
2. How does university-community collaboration contribute to the empowerment of the pondok community?
3. What are the perceived benefits of the initiative in terms of skills, income generation and community resilience?
4. What are the main challenges in sustaining the fish-based social entrepreneurship project?
5. What strategies can strengthen the sustainability of the Meheliah Ocean initiative?

Literature Review

Social Entrepreneurship and Community Empowerment

Social entrepreneurship refers to entrepreneurial activities that seek to create social value while also generating economic benefits for individuals and communities. Unlike conventional

entrepreneurship, which mainly focuses on profit maximisation, social entrepreneurship gives priority to solving social problems, improving livelihoods and strengthening community wellbeing. In the context of community development, this approach is highly relevant because it enables communities to use their existing resources, knowledge and local potential to develop practical income-generating activities (Nascimento et al., 2024). For the Meheliah Ocean initiative, social entrepreneurship is reflected through fish-based product development, where local marine resources are transformed into value-added products such as dried fish and anchovy seasoning. This shows that entrepreneurship can become a tool for addressing socio-economic challenges while creating meaningful community impact.

Community empowerment refers to the process of increasing the capacity of individuals and groups to make decisions, manage resources and improve their quality of life. Empowerment is not limited to financial improvement but also includes the development of skills, confidence, participation and self-reliance. Through social entrepreneurship projects, community members are given opportunities to learn new knowledge, participate in production activities and become more involved in local economic development (Stoeffler, 2018). In the Meheliah Ocean initiative, empowerment occurs through food processing training, product innovation, packaging, marketing exposure and the use of appropriate technology such as the Insoler Dryer. These activities help participants move from being passive recipients of assistance to active contributors in community-based economic activities.

Social entrepreneurship also strengthens community empowerment by encouraging collective participation and community ownership. When community members are involved in planning, producing and marketing their own products, they develop a stronger sense of responsibility and commitment toward the sustainability of the project. This is important because community empowerment should lead to long-term independence rather than continuous dependence on external support (Kummitha & Crutzen, 2017). In the case of the pondok community, social entrepreneurship provides a culturally suitable and practical platform for livelihood development because the activities can be implemented within the community setting without disrupting religious and communal routines. Therefore, social entrepreneurship serves as an effective mechanism for improving income opportunities, strengthening practical skills, enhancing resilience and promoting sustainable community wellbeing.

Pondok Community and Livelihood Development

Pondok communities are faith-based communities that are centred on Islamic learning, religious practice and communal living. Traditionally, pondok institutions play an important role in preserving Islamic knowledge, moral education and community values. Although their main identity is religious and educational, some pondok communities may also experience socio-economic challenges, especially among residents with limited employment opportunities, low income, ageing members or restricted access to structured livelihood programmes (Badri, 2025). Therefore, livelihood development in pondok communities should not be seen only as an economic intervention, but also as a supportive approach to improve wellbeing while respecting the religious and communal environment of the community.

Livelihood programmes in pondok settings must be designed sensitively so that they are compatible with Islamic values, daily religious routines and the capacity of participants. Economic empowerment activities should be manageable, ethical, community-oriented and suitable for implementation within the pondok environment. In this context, food processing

and small-scale entrepreneurship are appropriate because they can be carried out collectively, require practical skills and can be adapted according to participants' abilities (Sihabudin et al., 2025). For the Meheliah Ocean initiative, fish-based product development provides a suitable livelihood activity because it uses local resources and allows the community to participate in income-generating activities without disrupting their religious and communal responsibilities. Food processing also supports livelihood development by creating opportunities for supplementary income, skills development and community cooperation. Through activities such as preparing dried fish, fish-based products and anchovy seasoning, participants can gain practical knowledge in production, hygiene, packaging and marketing. These activities help strengthen self-reliance because the community is not only receiving assistance but also learning how to use available resources for economic benefit. At the same time, collective production encourages cooperation, shared responsibility and mutual support among community members (Johnson et al., 2023). Thus, livelihood development in pondok communities can contribute to both economic improvement and social strengthening when it is implemented in a way that respects community values, builds local capacity and promotes sustainable participation.

Fish-Based Product Innovation

Fish-based product innovation refers to the process of transforming raw fish or marine resources into value-added products that have higher market potential and longer usability. Instead of depending only on the direct sale of fresh fish, communities can process fish into various products such as dried fish, fish paste, fish floss, fish crackers, fish-based seasoning and ready-to-cook seafood products (Kyule et al., 2025). This process is important because raw fish is often perishable and may provide limited economic returns if sold without processing. Through product innovation, local fish resources can be developed into more attractive, practical and marketable products that meet consumer needs.

For rural and coastal communities, fish-based product innovation provides an opportunity to develop local enterprises using resources that are already available within their environment. This is especially relevant for the Meheliah Ocean initiative, where the pondok community in Kampung Getting, Tumpat uses local fish resources to produce Meheliah dried fish, fish-based products and anchovy seasoning. The transformation of local marine resources into value-added products helps increase product value, extend shelf life and create additional income opportunities for the community. In this way, fish-based innovation supports social entrepreneurship by connecting local resources with practical livelihood development (Van de Walle et al., 2011).

However, successful fish-based product innovation requires more than access to raw materials. Communities need proper knowledge and training in food processing, hygiene, product quality, packaging, shelf life, branding and marketing. Without these elements, products may remain informal and difficult to commercialise. Therefore, support from universities, facilitators and technical experts is important to guide the community in producing safe, consistent and marketable fish-based products. In the Meheliah Ocean initiative, product innovation is strengthened through training, technology application and university-community collaboration, which help the community improve production quality and build confidence in developing their own community-based enterprise.

International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices
IJEMP
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Technology Transfer in Community Development

Technology transfer plays an important role in community development because it enables communities to improve productivity, product quality and work efficiency through the use of suitable tools and techniques (Joffre et al., 2018; Krause et al., 2015). In community-based projects, technology should not be too complex or costly, but should be practical, affordable, manageable and appropriate to the local context. Appropriate technology is important because it allows community members to adopt new methods without becoming overly dependent on external experts. In the Meheliah Ocean initiative, the introduction of the Insoler Dryer technology represents a practical form of technology transfer, as it helps improve the drying process of fish-based products produced by the pondok community in Kampung Getting, Tumpat.

Traditional drying methods often depend heavily on weather conditions, open spaces and manual monitoring. These methods may affect product consistency, especially during rainy seasons or when sunlight is limited. In addition, open drying may expose fish-based products to hygiene risks such as dust, insects and environmental contamination. The use of drying technology can help overcome these limitations by providing a more controlled, cleaner and efficient drying process (Alam, 2023). Through the Insoler Dryer, the community can produce dried fish and related products with better consistency, improved cleanliness and more reliable product quality. This is important because hygiene, appearance and quality are key factors that influence customer acceptance and marketability.

However, technology transfer is not only about providing equipment to the community. It also involves training, knowledge sharing, technical guidance and continuous mentoring so that the community can use the technology independently. Participants need to understand how to operate, clean, maintain and troubleshoot the equipment to ensure long-term use. Without proper guidance, the technology may not be fully utilised or may become difficult to sustain after the project ends. Therefore, effective technology transfer in community development must combine equipment provision with hands-on training, follow-up support and community ownership. In the Meheliah Ocean initiative, the Insoler Dryer contributes not only to better production but also to the empowerment of the pondok community through practical learning and improved confidence in managing fish-based enterprise activities.

University-Community Collaboration

University-community collaboration is an important mechanism for translating academic knowledge, research and innovation into practical community impact. Universities do not only function as centres of teaching and research, but also as institutions that can contribute directly to community development through knowledge transfer, training, technical support and social innovation. In community-based projects, universities can assist communities by identifying local needs, designing suitable interventions, providing mentoring and evaluating project outcomes. This type of collaboration becomes meaningful when it is not implemented as a one-off activity, but as a continuous engagement process that strengthens community capacity and supports long-term development.

In the Meheliah Ocean initiative, university-community collaboration is clearly reflected through the involvement of Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK) in supporting the pondok community in Kampung Getting, Tumpat. UMK played an important role in providing training,

International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices
IJEMP
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Volume 9 Issue 35 (September 2026) PP. 644-663

facilitation, technology transfer and implementation support based on the local community context. This collaboration enabled academic knowledge, practical skills and community engagement to be translated into meaningful social impact, particularly through fish-based product development, entrepreneurial capacity building and the use of Insoler Dryer technology. Through this collaboration, the community received exposure to food processing, product innovation, packaging, marketing and the use of Insoler Dryer technology (Guine et al., 2020). These forms of support helped transform university research and innovation into practical benefits for the community.

University-community collaboration also strengthens the sustainability of social entrepreneurship projects by providing guidance beyond the early implementation stage. For community enterprises such as Meheliah Ocean, continuous mentoring is important to ensure that participants can maintain product quality, manage production, improve branding and expand market access (Ip, 2025). The involvement of university can also support monitoring and evaluation, allowing project facilitators to identify challenges and propose suitable improvements. Therefore, effective university-community collaboration should be based on shared responsibility, mutual trust and community ownership. In this study, the collaboration between Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK) and the pondok community demonstrates how higher education institutions can play a strategic role in empowering rural communities, improving livelihood opportunities and promoting sustainable community wellbeing. Through training, facilitation, technology transfer and continuous community engagement, UMK helped translate academic knowledge and innovation into practical social impact within the local Kelantan context.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive case study design. A qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to explore the implementation process, participant experiences, community impact and sustainability challenges of the Meheliah Ocean initiative (Yin, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The case study design was appropriate because the research focused on a specific fish-based social entrepreneurship project implemented within the pondok community in Kampung Getting, Tumpat.

Study Location

The study was conducted in Kampung Getting, Tumpat, Kelantan. This location was selected because it was the implementation site of the Meheliah Ocean initiative under the Lembah Barakah Program. The area provides a relevant context for examining fish-based social entrepreneurship, pondok community empowerment and university-community collaboration.
Participants and Sampling

Participants were selected using purposive sampling. This technique was appropriate because the study required informants who had direct involvement, knowledge or experience related to the Meheliah Ocean initiative (Patton, 2015). The proposed participants included pondok community members who joined the project, community representatives and project facilitators from the university or implementing team.

International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices
IJEMP
EISSN : 2600-8750
Volume 9 Issue 35 (September 2026) PP. 644-663

For a stronger qualitative study suitable for journal submission, the study involved a total of 10 participants. The participant categories are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Participant Categories

Participant Category	Number of Participants	Rationale
Pondok community participants	6	To explore direct experiences in training, food processing, product development and income-generation activities.
Community representative	1	To understand local coordination, community acceptance and project relevance.
Project facilitators	2	To examine implementation process, training approach, technology transfer and sustainability planning.
Technical or marketing support personnel	1	To understand product quality, technology use, packaging and market-related issues.

Data Collection

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, document analysis and programme observation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants to obtain detailed information on their experiences, skills gained, perceived benefits and challenges (Berndtsson, 2017). This method allowed participants to share their views while enabling the researcher to explore important aspects of the project.

Programme observation was conducted during or after project activities to understand the training process, production environment, use of the Insoler Dryer, product preparation, packaging activities and participant engagement. Observation notes were used to support and contextualise interview data.

Document analysis was conducted on relevant project materials such as programme reports, training notes, photographs, product information, promotional materials and project documentation. These documents helped provide background information on the implementation process and project outputs.

Interview Protocol

The interview questions were developed based on the research objectives. The following questions were used as the interview guide:

1. Can you explain your involvement in the Meheliah Ocean initiative?
2. What motivated the community to participate in this project?
3. What types of training or activities were conducted through this initiative?
4. What skills did participants gain from the project?
5. How did the use of the Insoler Dryer help improve production?

International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices
IJEMP
EISSN : 2600-8750
Volume 9 Issue 35 (September 2026) PP. 644-663

6. What products were developed through the initiative?
7. How did the project contribute to income generation or livelihood improvement?
8. What challenges were faced during the implementation of the project?
9. What kind of support is needed to sustain the project?
10. How can university-community collaboration be strengthened in the future?

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using thematic analysis. The process began with repeated reading of interview transcripts, observation notes and project documents. Important statements were identified and coded according to the research objectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Similar codes were grouped into categories, and the categories were developed into themes.

The analysis focused on identifying themes related to entrepreneurial capacity, food processing skills, technology application, product development, income generation, community resilience, university-community collaboration and sustainability challenges. The themes were then interpreted in relation to the literature on social entrepreneurship and community empowerment.

Trustworthiness of the Study

Several strategies were used to strengthen the trustworthiness of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). First, data triangulation was applied by using interviews, document analysis and programme observation. Second, participant triangulation was used by involving different categories of participants, including community members, community representatives and project facilitators. Third, member checking was conducted by confirming key points with selected participants. Fourth, peer review was conducted with research team members to refine the themes. Fifth, thick description was used to explain the project context, implementation process and participant experiences (Meydan & Akkas, 2024).

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted according to ethical research principles. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their participation was voluntary. Consent was obtained before interviews were conducted. Participants' identities were protected using participant codes such as P1, P2 and P3. The study respected the dignity, privacy and religious-cultural context of the pondok community. The data were used only for academic and research purposes.

Findings

The findings revealed five main themes: strengthening entrepreneurial capacity among the pondok community, transforming local fish resources into value-added products, enhancing production efficiency through Insoler Dryer technology, building university-community collaboration for social impact and improving community resilience through income-generating activities.

International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices
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Theme 1: Strengthening Entrepreneurial Capacity among the Pondok Community

The first theme highlights the role of the Meheliah Ocean initiative in strengthening entrepreneurial capacity among the pondok community. Participants were exposed to practical knowledge related to food processing, product development, packaging and marketing strategies. This exposure helped them understand that local resources could be transformed into income-generating products.

The initiative encouraged participants to view entrepreneurship as a practical activity that could be managed at the community level. The training provided opportunities to learn by doing, particularly through product preparation and packaging activities. This practical approach was important because participants could directly apply the knowledge to the production of dried fish, fish-based products and anchovy seasoning.

The findings suggest that entrepreneurial capacity building should include both technical and business-related skills (Haugh, 2007; Peredo & Chrisman, 2006). Participants need not only to know how to produce food products but also how to manage costs, maintain quality, package products and reach customers.

Theme 2: Transforming Local Fish Resources into Value-Added Products

The second theme relates to product innovation. The Meheliah Ocean initiative demonstrated how fish resources could be transformed into value-added products with market potential. Products developed through the initiative included Meheliah dried fish, fish-based products and anchovy seasoning.

This transformation is important because raw fish products often provide limited economic returns. By processing fish into dried products and seasoning, the community can increase product value, extend shelf life and create more diverse market opportunities.

The findings show that product innovation plays an important role in community-based social entrepreneurship. It enables the community to move beyond raw resource dependency and develop products that are more attractive, practical and marketable (Bene et al., 2016; FAO, 2020, 2022). However, product innovation must be supported by quality control, packaging, branding and customer feedback.

Theme 3: Enhancing Production Efficiency through Insoler Dryer Technology

The third theme focuses on the role of technology in improving product quality and production efficiency. The introduction of the Insoler Dryer helped improve the drying process for fish-based products. Compared to traditional drying methods, the technology provided better control over drying conditions and reduced dependency on unpredictable weather.

Participants perceived the technology as useful because it helped improve hygiene, consistency and production efficiency. The use of technology also exposed the community to more systematic food processing practices. This is important because product quality and cleanliness are key factors in customer acceptance (Maurya, 2024).

International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices
IJEMP
EISSN : 2600-8750
Volume 9 Issue 35 (September 2026) PP. 644-663

However, the findings also suggest that technology transfer must be accompanied by continuous training. Participants need to understand how to operate, clean, maintain and troubleshoot the equipment. Without proper technical guidance, the technology may not be fully utilised in the long term.

Theme 4: Building University-Community Collaboration for Social Impact

The fourth theme highlights the importance of university-community collaboration in strengthening the Meheliah Ocean initiative. The initiative was implemented through the involvement of Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK), which provided training, facilitation, technology transfer and implementation support to the pondok community in Kampung Getting, Tumpat. This collaboration allowed university knowledge, technology and innovation to be translated into practical community benefits, particularly through fish-based product development, entrepreneurial capacity building and the use of Insoler Dryer technology.

The findings show that university can play an important role in community empowerment by providing training, facilitation, monitoring and technical knowledge. The collaboration also strengthened the link between academic expertise and real community needs. For the pondok community, the project provided access to knowledge and technology that may not have been easily available otherwise.

However, the findings also indicate that university-community collaboration should be sustained beyond the initial project phase. Continuous mentoring, follow-up visits and market support are necessary to ensure that the project does not end as a one-off intervention.

Theme 5: Improving Community Resilience through Income-Generating Activities

The fifth theme concerns community resilience. The Meheliah Ocean initiative created additional income-generating opportunities for the pondok community. Although the project may begin on a small scale, it introduced participants to a livelihood activity that could support household income and community self-reliance.

The project also contributed to resilience by strengthening practical skills and reducing dependency on external assistance. Participants gained experience in producing, packaging and potentially marketing fish-based products. These skills can support future enterprise development if the project is continued systematically (Stiles et al., 2024).
The findings suggest that social entrepreneurship contributes to resilience when it enables communities to use local resources, develop practical skills and participate in productive economic activities. However, resilience requires sustained support, especially in financial planning, market linkage and product commercialisation.

Discussion

The findings indicate that the Meheliah Ocean initiative has strong potential as a fish-based social entrepreneurship model for the pondok community in Kampung Getting. The initiative successfully connected local resources, technology transfer, university collaboration and community empowerment.

First, the project strengthened entrepreneurial capacity through practical training. This is important because community empowerment requires more than motivation. Participants must be equipped with skills in production, packaging, marketing and business management. The hands-on nature of the training helped participants understand the practical process of developing fish-based products (Nsereko & Kiwanuka, 2018).

Second, the project created value through fish-based product innovation. By producing Meheliah dried fish, fish-based products and anchovy seasoning, the community could increase the economic value of local marine resources. This is consistent with the idea that rural entrepreneurship should build upon resources that are already familiar to the community.

Third, the use of Insoler Dryer technology improved production efficiency and product quality. This demonstrates how university innovation can support community enterprise. However, technology alone is insufficient. The community must be trained to operate and maintain the technology so that it remains useful after the project period.

Fourth, university-community collaboration played a central role in the success of the initiative. The involvement of Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK) provided institutional support, knowledge transfer, facilitation and implementation capacity within the local Kelantan context. Such collaboration reflects the role of university in producing social impact beyond academic outputs by translating research, innovation and community engagement into practical benefits for rural communities.

Fifth, the initiative contributed to community resilience by creating additional livelihood opportunities. The pondok community was exposed to practical entrepreneurship activities that could increase income and strengthen self-reliance. However, the long-term impact depends on market access, production consistency, branding and community ownership.

Overall, the Meheliah Ocean initiative shows that social entrepreneurship can become an effective tool for empowering faith-based rural communities when it integrates technology, training, local resources and continuous support.

Implications of the Study

This study provides several implications for community development and social entrepreneurship.

First, pondok communities should be recognised as potential sites for inclusive livelihood development. Economic empowerment initiatives can be implemented in ways that respect religious routines and community values.

Second, food processing can be a suitable social entrepreneurship activity because it is practical, locally relevant and adaptable to community resources.

Third, technology transfer should be designed as a learning process. Communities need hands-on training, technical manuals and follow-up support to use technology effectively.

International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices
IJEMP
EISSN : 2600-8750
Volume 9 Issue 35 (September 2026) PP. 644-663

Fourth, university-community collaboration can translate research and innovation into meaningful social impact. Universities should continue to support communities through mentoring, monitoring and product development.

Fifth, sustainability requires market access and business planning. Community products must be supported through branding, packaging, digital marketing, costing and customer networks.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the sustainability of the Meheliah Ocean initiative can be strengthened through a more structured capacity-building approach. A specific training module should be developed to guide the pondok community in food processing, hygiene practices, packaging, costing, branding and marketing. This module is important because participants need continuous and systematic learning, not only one-time exposure. In addition, continuous technical training should be provided on the operation and maintenance of the Insoler Dryer so that the community can use the technology effectively and independently. Proper technical knowledge will help ensure that the equipment remains functional, improves production efficiency and maintains product quality over time.

The findings also suggest that product development and market readiness should be improved. The branding of Meheliah dried fish, fish-based products and anchovy seasoning needs to be strengthened so that the products can be recognised more clearly by customers. Attractive labels and packaging should also be developed to improve product image, customer confidence and marketability. At the same time, simple financial record systems should be introduced to help the community monitor production costs, sales and profit. This is important because good financial management can help participants understand business performance and make better decisions for future production and reinvestment.

Furthermore, stronger market linkages and continuous mentoring are needed to ensure the long-term impact of the initiative. The products can be promoted through local shops, restaurants, cooperatives, pondok networks and community markets. Digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook and TikTok should also be used to increase product visibility and reach wider customers (Titin et al., 2024). To coordinate these activities, a community enterprise group

should be established to manage production, marketing and sales more systematically. University facilitators should continue to provide mentoring after the initial training phase, while follow-up evaluation should be conducted to assess changes in income, production output and community participation. These recommendations are important to ensure that the Meheliah Ocean initiative can move from a short-term intervention toward a sustainable community-based social entrepreneurship model.

Proposed Meheliah Ocean Social Entrepreneurship Model

Based on the findings, this study proposes the Meheliah Ocean Social Entrepreneurship Model. The model consists of five components:

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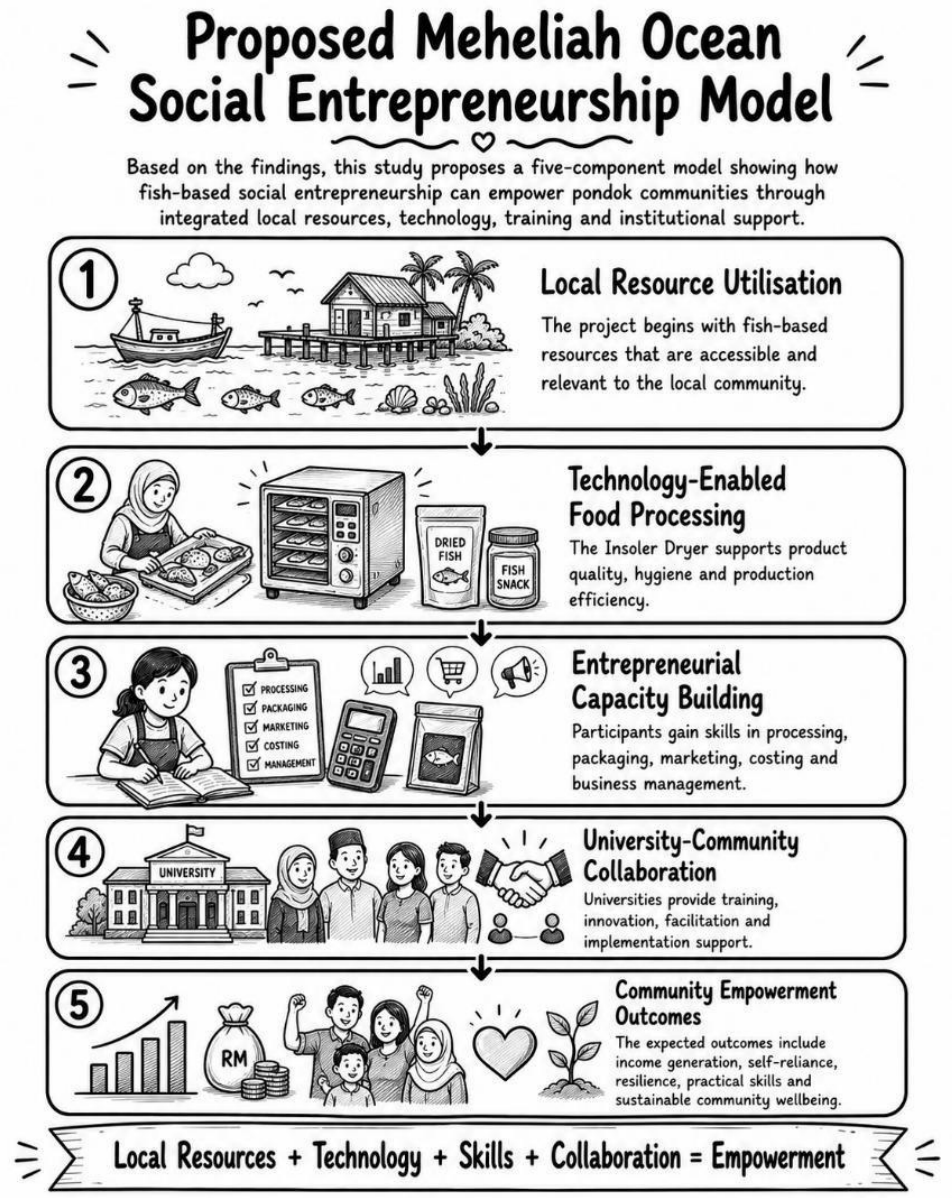


Figure 1: Proposed Meheliah Ocean Social Entrepreneurship Model

The Meheliah Ocean Social Entrepreneurship Model explains how fish-based social entrepreneurship can empower pondok communities through the systematic integration of local resources, technology, skills development and institutional support. The model begins with local resource utilisation, where accessible fish-based resources are used as the foundation for product development. These resources are then strengthened through technology-enabled food processing, especially the use of the Insoler Dryer to improve hygiene, product quality and production efficiency. At the same time, participants are empowered through entrepreneurial capacity building, including skills in processing, packaging, marketing, costing and business management. The model also highlights the importance of university-community collaboration, where universities provide training, innovation, facilitation and implementation support. As a result, the expected community empowerment outcomes include income generation, self-reliance, resilience, practical skills and sustainable community wellbeing (Khamaludin, 2023). Overall, this model shows that pondok communities can be empowered

when local resources, appropriate technology, entrepreneurship training and continuous institutional support are connected in a structured and sustainable way.

Conclusion

The Meheliah Ocean initiative demonstrates the potential of fish-based social entrepreneurship as a community empowerment model for the pondok community in Kampung Getting, Tumpat. Through food processing, product innovation, packaging and marketing training, the initiative strengthened entrepreneurial capacity and created additional income-generating opportunities. The application of the Insoler Dryer technology also improved product quality and production efficiency.

The study highlights that university-community collaboration can translate research and innovation into meaningful social impact. The involvement of Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK) contributed to knowledge transfer, technical support, facilitation and community engagement within the local Kelantan context. Through this support, the Meheliah Ocean initiative was able to strengthen fish-based product development, entrepreneurial capacity and the use of appropriate technology among the pondok community. However, the sustainability of the initiative depends on continuous mentoring, market access, financial management, branding and community ownership.

Overall, the Meheliah Ocean initiative can serve as a practical model of fish-based social entrepreneurship that supports rural economic development, pondok community empowerment and sustainable community wellbeing. Future studies may examine the long-term impact of the initiative on income, production capacity, market expansion and community resilience.

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Ethics Statement: The study was conducted according to ethical research principles. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their participation was voluntary. Consent was obtained before interviews were conducted. Participants' identities were protected using participant codes such as P1, P2 and P3. The study respected the dignity, privacy and religious-cultural context of the pondok community. The data were used only for academic and research purposes.

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