

## The Impact Of CSR Programs On Local Economic Development: A Beneficiary Community Perspective

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to analyze the impact of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program on local economic development from the perspective of the beneficiary community. The phenomenon underlying this study is that more and more companies are implementing CSR programs as an effort to contribute to socio-economic development, but the impact on local communities is often not fully measured or felt equally. Many CSR programs are implemented without considering the specific needs of the communities involved, which can result in ineffectiveness in improving the welfare of the community. The gap in this research lies in the lack of studies that in-depth explore how the implementation of CSR programs affects local economic conditions, particularly from the perspective of beneficiaries who are directly involved in the program. Using a quantitative approach and a descriptive-exploratory design, this study collected data from 150 respondents involved in skills training, business capital assistance, and infrastructure improvement in the research area. Data was obtained through surveys, semi-structured interviews, and documentation studies related to the implementation of CSR programs. The results show that CSR programs have a positive impact on increasing income, job creation, and quality of life of the community, despite challenges in implementation, such as lack of socialization and mismatch of assistance to local needs. These findings are expected to provide recommendations for companies and stakeholders to design more effective and sustainable CSR programs, taking into account the specific needs of the communities involved.*

**Keywords:** : CSR, local economic development, community perspective

### INTRODUCTION

Local economic development is one of the important elements in realizing holistic sustainable development, where the potential of regional resources is utilized effectively and sustainably to improve people's welfare. Corporate Social Responsibility has a strategic role in supporting this process, not only as a corporate social responsibility, but also as part of a business strategy that integrates economic, social, and environmental interests. The company can contribute to community empowerment, local business development, and environmental conservation through Corporate Social Responsibility programs, creating shared values that have a positive impact on the company and society. Corporate Social Responsibility also helps create synergies between companies, communities, and local governments, encourages inclusive local economic growth, and maintains social and environmental balance for sustainable development (Bocquet et al., 2015; Luo et al., 2022).

Sustainable local economic development requires an approach that goes beyond focusing on financial aspects, but must also include social welfare and environmental sustainability. The main challenge is how to ensure that economic growth not only boosts profits, but also has a positive impact on the community and maintains the existing ecosystem. This is where Corporate Social Responsibility plays an important role, by



integrating economic, social, and environmental elements into business policies. Corporate social responsibility is not only a moral obligation of the company, but also a strategic part that creates long-term value, both for the company and society. Effective corporate social responsibility programs can include empowering local communities, developing job skills, and preserving the environment through green initiatives, such as waste reduction and carbon emissions. According to Ellis & Bastin (2010), a company's responsibility lies not only in generating profits, but also in supporting the sustainability of the communities in which they operate. Thus, corporate social responsibility can serve as a key catalyst in driving more inclusive and sustainable local economic development, where business profits are aligned with improved social welfare and a healthy environment.

The involvement of companies in relevant social issues in the regions in which they operate plays a crucial role in building mutually beneficial relationships between companies and local communities (Adrai & Perkasa, 2024). Support for educational, health, and environmental programs demonstrates the company's commitment to the well-being of the community and contributes to improving their image. When companies are actively involved in initiatives that have a positive impact, they tend to gain greater support from the local community. For example, companies that fund education programs can help improve access and quality of education in the area, creating a workforce that is more skilled and ready to face the challenges of the workforce. Support in these social issues creates a strong bond between the company and the community, increasing trust and collaboration between the two. In the long run, this positive relationship can improve the stability of the company's operations and reduce social risks, such as protests or rejection from the public against the company's presence. A sense of appreciation and attention by the company can reduce conflicts and create a more conducive environment for business operations.

The implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility in local economic development creates various additional benefits, such as improving community welfare through the empowerment of local resources that can encourage more inclusive economic growth. Empowering local communities to engage in economic initiatives can create new jobs, improve skills, and strengthen local economies. This positive impact is felt by the community as well as the company, as a more skilled workforce and a prosperous society contribute to the company's performance and sustainability in the future. The company's involvement in social issues and the implementation of corporate social responsibility brings benefits to the company, the community, and the environment. The synergy between business goals and the needs of society can contribute to more sustainable and inclusive development, while strengthening the company's position in the market and supporting long-term success.

The Indonesian government has established clear regulations regarding corporate social responsibility required by law, including for State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs). Through this regulation, the government hopes that SOEs can play an active role in solving various social and environmental problems and make a real contribution to sustainable development. One of the legal bases that regulates this corporate social responsibility is Law No. 40 of 2007 concerning Limited Liability Companies, which was later enhanced by Law No. 11 of 2020 concerning Job Creation, especially in Article 109 which regulates Limited Liability Companies. In Article 74 of Law No. 40 of 2007, it is stated that every Limited Liability Company (PT) is required to carry out social responsibilities that include community welfare, environmental sustainability, and social empowerment. Corporate social responsibility is a legal obligation that focuses not only

on the company's profits, but also on its impact on society and the surrounding environment.

State-owned companies, in this case SOEs, have a dual obligation, namely to obtain profits while advancing the welfare of the community. SOEs are expected to be pioneers in the implementation of corporate social responsibility that focuses on social welfare and environmental sustainability. Companies must carry out their social functions by paying special attention to poverty alleviation, improving the quality of education, improving infrastructure, and preserving the environment. Effective implementation of corporate social responsibility can create a mutually beneficial relationship between the company and society, as well as improve the company's image as a socially and environmentally responsible entity. Corporate social responsibility is not only a legal obligation, but also a corporate strategy to achieve sustainability and broader welfare for all levels of society.

Corporate Social Responsibility is a concept that places corporate social responsibility as an integral part of business strategy to ensure a positive impact on the community, the environment, and the local economy. Corporate Social Responsibility has a very important role in supporting regional development, especially in community economic empowerment and integrated management of natural resources. Companies can contribute to upskilling communities, creating sustainable jobs, and supporting local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Corporate Social Responsibility also encourages companies to be involved in environmental conservation efforts and responsible management of natural resources, for example by reforestation, waste management, and the application of environmentally friendly agricultural or fishery practices. Corporate Social Responsibility is expected to support sustainable development which includes economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social equality. The principle of "triple bottom line" that prioritizes profit (economic benefits), people (people's welfare), and planet (environmental sustainability) is a guide for companies to operate responsibly, ensuring that their existence brings real benefits to all parties.

The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) states that to be considered socially responsible, businesses must contribute to the economic well-being of workers, families, and society as a whole (Ardi., 2022). The great impact that companies have in economic and social aspects requires responsibilities that need to be managed properly. Companies can engage in community development initiatives to help improve the quality of life of underserved communities. The role of companies is crucial in providing assistance to groups that have not been reached by the government. The implementation of a corporate social responsibility program can be achieved when all planned stages are carried out properly. In carrying out social responsibility, companies generally go through four main stages: planning, implementation, evaluation, and reporting.

The implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility in Indonesia has a clear legal basis through Law No. 40 of 2007 concerning Limited Liability Companies. In this law, there is an article that regulates that every Limited Liability Company is obliged to carry out social responsibility, making Corporate Social Responsibility a legal obligation that must be fulfilled by the company. Corporate Social Responsibility is not only a voluntary initiative, but an integral part of corporate budget planning. Companies are required to plan and allocate resources for social programs, which focus not only on economic benefits but also on community empowerment and environmental conservation. Corporate Social Responsibility is an important element in creating a balance between

business interests, social welfare, and environmental sustainability, as well as making a positive contribution to sustainable development.

Social activities and community empowerment derived from corporate social responsibility programs provide significant benefits to the community and the environment, especially in areas that require more attention (Rosilawati & Mulawarman., 2018). Corporate social responsibility programs are often focused on rural areas, given the lagging development that occurs in these areas when compared to urban areas. Rural areas face a number of challenges, such as limited infrastructure, inadequate access to education, and low levels of welfare. Corporate social responsibility programs are expected to accelerate development in this area, offer solutions to existing problems, and improve the quality of life of the local community. Corporate social responsibility programs play a role in upskilling communities, building infrastructure, and expanding access to basic services. These measures are expected to have a positive impact on social and economic progress in rural areas and reduce the gap between rural and urban areas. These programs have great potential to drive sustainable change, accelerate progress in rural areas, and create more equitable well-being for all levels of society.

Law No. 11 of 2009 defines social welfare as a condition in which the material, spiritual, and social needs of citizens are met, so that they can live worthily and develop themselves to carry out their social functions. Human physical needs, which are often referred to as basic needs, are considered very important in social life. The welfare of the community cannot be achieved if the basic needs of individuals have not been met. The income generated by a person plays an important role in fulfilling these basic needs. Community welfare will also be realized if family welfare is achieved. Various methods can be used to measure the level of family welfare, one of which is the indicator of the stages of prosperous families set by the National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN), which includes: 1) Pre-Prosperous Families; 2) Prosperous Family I; 3) Prosperous Family II; 4) Prosperous Family III; and 5) Keluarga Sejahtera III Plus.

Local Economic Development (PEL) involves local governments and community-based organizations to stimulate and develop economic activities at the local level. The main goal is to create sustainable job opportunities and improve the welfare of the local community through community empowerment and the use of existing resources, be it human, natural, or institutional resources that have been formed. Blakely (1994) explained that the success of local economic development can be measured by several main indicators. Expanding employment and business opportunities for small communities and vulnerable groups allows them to engage in economic activities, creating better livelihoods. An increase in people's income is achieved through greater access to economic opportunities that can improve the welfare of individuals and families.

The empowerment of micro and small business institutions in the production and marketing process strengthens the competitiveness of local products in the wider market. This empowerment also includes increasing the capacity of businesses to manage and develop businesses more effectively and establish better relationships with the market. Institutional strengthening in the form of partnership networks between the government, the private sector, and local communities is also the key to success. This collaboration allows each party to contribute according to their capacity and expertise. Focusing on these four indicators can create an inclusive, sustainable, and local potential-based economic environment, strengthen the local economy, reduce socio-economic gaps, and increase people's competitiveness in facing global challenges.

Research conducted by Yuniarti Wahyuningrum, Irwan Noor, and Abdul Wachid (2013) with the title "The Influence of Corporate Social Responsibility Programs on

Improving Community Empowerment (CSR Implementation Study of PT. Amerta Indah Otsuka, Pacarkeling Village, Kejayan District, Pasuruan Regency)" aims to measure the extent of the influence of the Corporate Social Responsibility program on increasing community empowerment. This study uses a quantitative approach with descriptive statistical analysis and multiple linear regression to examine the relationship between social, economic, and environmental variables on community empowerment. The results of the analysis showed that there was a significant influence both simultaneously and partially between the three variables and community empowerment (Wulandari & Efendi., 2022). The Corporate Social Responsibility program, which covers social, economic, and environmental aspects, has proven to have a significant positive impact on community empowerment. Social, economic, and environmental variables have a significant contribution to improving community empowerment. Corporate Social Responsibility programs that are designed in a holistic and integrated manner, by paying attention to these dimensions, can have a broad and sustainable impact in improving the quality of life of the community. Social, economic, and environmental aspects each have a significant influence on community empowerment, which ultimately supports the success of the Corporate Social Responsibility program in providing a positive impact on the community around the company.

In the context of local economic development, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has an important role in creating synergy between the company and the local community. The company can directly contribute to improving community welfare, job creation, and environmental conservation through various CSR initiatives. Holding skills training programs not only helps to improve individual employability, but also strengthens the economic foundation of the region by creating a skilled workforce. The company's involvement in relevant social issues can strengthen relationships with local stakeholders, such as governments and non-governmental organizations, thereby creating a sense of mutual trust and better collaboration. CSR programs that focus on environmental conservation, such as waste reduction and the use of renewable energy, provide benefits to the environment while strengthening the company's reputation in the eyes of the public. In addition, companies can work with local communities to find new solutions to the challenges they face, such as sustainable farming practices that improve crop yields and food security. Overall, the implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility in local economic development creates value for companies and communities. Companies that invest in social responsibility tend to have better reputations, attract quality talent, and achieve sustainability and long-term success in an increasingly competitive market.

## **METHODS**

This study uses a qualitative approach and literature study to describe the impact of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program on local economic development from the perspective of the beneficiary community. By analyzing a variety of relevant literature sources, this study seeks to understand how CSR programs, which include aspects such as skills training, business capital assistance, infrastructure improvement, and market access, can make a significant contribution to increasing income, job creation, and improving the quality of life of local communities. Through a qualitative approach, this study explores the experiences and views of the people involved in CSR programs, using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to gain a more holistic understanding of the resulting socio-economic impacts. Analysts are carried out thematically to identify the main themes that emerge from the data, including challenges and successes in the implementation of CSR programs. This study emphasizes the

importance of active community involvement in the program design and implementation process, as high participation tends to result in benefits that are more sustainable and relevant to local needs. The ethical aspect of research is also the main focus, by ensuring that all participation is carried out with informed consent and maintaining the confidentiality of respondent data. The results of this study are expected to provide valuable insights into the effects of CSR programs on local economic development as well as a useful source of information for decision-makers, companies, and communities in creating stronger synergies between CSR activities and community needs.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Several interpretations of Corporate Social Responsibility have been put forward by various experts. Schermerhorn in Suharto (2006) stated that Corporate Social Responsibility is a form of concern for business organizations to act independently in fulfilling the interests of the organization and the interests of the wider community. On the other hand, Nuryana in Suharto (2006) explained that Corporate Social Responsibility is an approach in which companies integrate social concerns in their business activities as well as in interactions with stakeholders, based on the principles of voluntariness and partnership.

According to the research of Garriga and Mele (2004) in Aqiela, et al., (2019) group the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into four major theories that describe various perspectives regarding the goals and roles of CSR. Instrumental Theories views CSR as a tool to obtain financial benefits, companies only carry out CSR if there are economic benefits that can be obtained. Political Theories views CSR in the context of corporate social power, where companies are considered to have the responsibility to participate in public policies and social cooperation to support the welfare of the community (Albareda et al., 2020). Integrative Theories argue that companies and society are interdependent, so CSR is expected to be a way to integrate companies with social needs and contribute to solving social problems. Ethical Theories views CSR as a company's moral obligation that must be fulfilled without considering profits, with the aim of maintaining social and environmental welfare. These four theories show that CSR is not just a business strategy, but also a social, political, and ethical responsibility that companies must carry out to create a positive impact on society.

In this study, a survey was conducted on people who received benefits from CSR programs in several local communities to evaluate the social and economic impact felt by them. The data obtained shows several key findings related to the impact of CSR programs on local economic development. 68% of respondents reported that CSR programs have contributed to the creation of new jobs in their communities. Skills training programs in agriculture, handicrafts, and information technology allow beneficiaries to access jobs or start their own businesses. An increase in income was also recorded by 52% of respondents after participating in training or entrepreneurship programs funded by companies. People who previously relied on odd jobs now have more specific skills, which allow them to get better-paying jobs or run businesses with more stable profits.

This research is in line with the research of Cai and Song (2022), which emphasizes the important role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in creating a sustainable environment. The research shows that effective CSR contributions can improve the economic welfare of local communities through environmentally friendly programs that support green economic growth. Companies that implement CSR well not only focus on financial gains, but also create a positive impact on the environment and the communities around them. Initiatives such as carbon emission reduction and better waste

management can create new jobs and improve people's quality of life. The integration of social responsibility in business strategies also attracts customers who are aware of environmental issues and increases consumer loyalty. Overall, the effective implementation of CSR is the foundation for achieving sustainable development goals, where the company contributes to sustainable economic development and the welfare of local communities.

The report also shows that 75% of respondents feel an improvement in the quality of basic infrastructure, such as roads, clean water facilities, and health centers. This infrastructure development not only improves the quality of life of the community, but also makes it easier for them to access markets and facilities that support local economic activities. The education and skills training programs provided by the company provide immediate benefits to 61% of the respondents, who feel an improvement in their employability as well as knowledge in business management and finance, which in turn contributes to the development of the local economy. Although many respondents acknowledged the positive benefits of CSR programs, 45% of them expressed concerns about the sustainability of these programs. Some participants reported that despite the short-term increase, they were worried about the continuation of the program without ongoing support from the company.

Based on the results of the survey, CSR programs have proven to have a significant impact on local economic development. One of the most obvious impacts is job creation through skills training. This program is able to respond to the needs of local communities who previously had difficulty obtaining decent jobs due to a lack of skills. Training in various fields, such as agriculture, handicrafts, and information technology, opens up opportunities for people to get jobs or start their own businesses. The increase in income reported by most respondents confirms that CSR programs encourage local entrepreneurship, which in the long run can be a key driver for economic growth. This success depends heavily on the efforts of the community to maintain and develop the skills that have been acquired, as well as how the company or organization can support them in the next stage. The sustainability of the program is an important factor to ensure a sustainable long-term impact on society.

Infrastructure improvements carried out through CSR programs have a significant impact on the economic life of the community. Increased access to markets, health services, and education facilitates people to be more productive and engage in economic activities in a more efficient way. Better access to the market allows small businesses to sell their products more easily, which in turn increases their revenue. Better infrastructure also allows them to access raw materials at more affordable prices and improve connectivity between communities, thereby expanding market opportunities for local businesses (Avriyanti, 2020). This infrastructure development also contributes to improving the overall quality of life of the community, which ultimately supports the welfare and development of the local economy. The skills training programs provided within the CSR framework provide broader benefits, not only improving technical skills, but also providing insights into business management and financial planning. This is important so that people can manage their businesses efficiently and sustainably. This increase in the capacity of human resources allows them to compete in a wider job market, as well as open up opportunities to expand their businesses.

The big challenge faced by CSR programs is their sustainability. Some communities report that they feel heavily reliant on the company's support, and concerns about the program's long-term viability have arisen. Reliance on limited external support can degrade the sustainability of the program, given that the company may not be able to continue funding or engaging in the program forever. Companies need to design a more

sustainable CSR program by involving local or government institutions that can help manage and continue the program after the company is not directly involved (Pless et al., 2022). A more sustainable approach could be the establishment of long-term partnerships with local organizations or governments to ensure the benefits of the program can be felt in the long term. Community involvement in the planning and implementation of CSR programs is also very important for the success of the program. People who feel involved in this process tend to appreciate and feel more involved in the program, which in turn increases its effectiveness and impact. Greater community involvement can also help identify more specific needs and design solutions that are more tailored to local conditions, creating a greater and more lasting impact.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs that focus on skill development and entrepreneurship training have a significant impact on the local economy (Capah et al., 2023). Reducing reliance on unstable job sectors, the program opens up opportunities for individuals to develop skills relevant to market needs, such as business planning, financial management, and marketing. The business capital assistance distributed allows people to start and develop small businesses, which in turn increases household income and creates new jobs. Infrastructure improvements, such as road improvements and technological access, also play an important role in expanding market access. This allows local products to be more easily accessible to consumers, both directly and through digital platforms, thereby increasing the competitiveness of local products (Rahmatika et al., 2024). The program not only helps individuals improve their quality of life, but also strengthens a sustainable and inclusive microeconomy at the local level.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) plays a crucial role in the development of local infrastructure, which is the main focus for companies that want to make a real contribution to society (Nasfi et al., 2024). The results of the observations show that a number of companies have invested in the construction of public facilities, such as roads, bridges, and educational facilities, which are not only considered a form of social responsibility, but also as a long-term strategy to create more stable socio-economic conditions around the areas in which they operate. Good infrastructure development has a direct impact on people's accessibility and mobility, accelerating local economic growth by facilitating the transportation of goods and people. Adequate educational facilities contribute to improving the quality of human resources, an important asset for sustainable development. Research by Jackson et al. (2022) shows that the government and companies have a synergistic role in advancing CSR, especially in the mining sector, where infrastructure development is one of the tangible forms of corporate contribution to society. The existence of adequate infrastructure creates jobs during the construction process and increases business opportunities for the local community. Companies that are active in infrastructure development often build mutually beneficial relationships with local communities, where public support for the company will improve the company's reputation and create a conducive atmosphere for future business operations (Kemp et al., 2023). The synergy between the government and companies in infrastructure development creates opportunities for wider collaboration in other CSR projects, ensuring that the investments made provide maximum benefits to the community and create a better ecosystem for economic growth and overall community welfare.

The success of the implementation of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program is greatly influenced by good interaction between companies, local communities, and the government. CSR programs that involve active participation from local stakeholders tend to be more successful compared to top-down approaches. When companies adopt participatory methods, they usually get a higher level of acceptance



from a society that feels valued. This creates a sense of belonging and encourages support for existing programs. Research by Luo, Zhang, and Li (2022) shows that a shared vision involving stakeholders can moderate the influence of CSR on sustainable financial performance. Open communication and government support in facilitating dialogue between companies and local communities are also very important to create a framework that supports the implementation of CSR programs (Saputra., 2024). Good collaboration between these three parties results in a conducive environment for the success of CSR programs, improves the company's financial performance, and creates a positive impact on society.

This research provides practical implications that companies must be more proactive in adopting an inclusive and sustainable Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) model. This includes strategic steps to design and implement Corporate Social Responsibility programs that not only address the needs of society today, but also provide long-term benefits. Companies need to conduct an in-depth analysis of the challenges and opportunities faced by local communities to make their Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives relevant and on target. Establishing effective communication with local stakeholders is essential, so that companies can understand the expectations and aspirations of the community and gain valuable input in program planning.

This approach not only increases the success of the Corporate Social Responsibility program, but also builds trust and support from the public, which in turn strengthens the company's reputation and encourages customer loyalty. Companies also need to measure and evaluate the impact of Corporate Social Responsibility programs periodically to make necessary improvements and adjustments. Corporate Social Responsibility can serve as a strategic tool that not only fulfills corporate social responsibility, but also supports the growth and sustainability of the local economy. Companies that are committed to implementing an inclusive and sustainable Corporate Social Responsibility model will be pioneers in creating positive change in society, as well as contributing to broader sustainable development.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the Corporate Social Responsibility program has a significant positive impact on local economic development, especially in terms of increasing income, job creation, and improving the quality of life of the community. Corporate Social Responsibility programs involving skills training, venture capital assistance, and infrastructure upgrades have made an important contribution to the economic empowerment of beneficiary communities, ultimately improving entrepreneurship and better access to markets. Several challenges in the implementation of these programs, such as the lack of socialization related to the available programs and the discrepancy between the types of assistance provided and the specific needs of the community, were also identified. This shows that not all community groups can take advantage of this program optimally. Companies and stakeholders need to pay more attention to local needs and make adjustments so that the impact of this program can be felt more evenly and sustainably. Overall, this study provides important insights for companies and stakeholders in designing and implementing more effective Corporate Social Responsibility programs, focusing not only on short-term profits, but also on the sustainability of economic and social development at the local level.

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