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Strategies for Empowering Village-Owned Enterprises (Bumdes) Toward an Inclusive Community Economy in West Bandung Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the empowerment strategy of Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) in realizing an inclusive community economy in West Bandung Regency. The study used a qualitative approach, focusing on five BUMDes: BUMDes Kertamulya, Karangtanjung, Padalarang, Lembang, and Cipeundeuy. The analysis focused on local potential, empowerment issues and barriers, community participation, inclusiveness, and strategies for strengthening community economic development. The results showed that each BUMDes has different local characteristics and potential, so that empowerment strategies cannot be applied uniformly. The main obstacles include human resource capacity, business unit development, institutional strengthening, community participation, access to markets and financing, and the equitable distribution of economic benefits. The empowerment strategy was formulated through local asset mapping, identification of community needs, determination of superior business units, human resource capacity building, institutional strengthening, partnership development and market access, community involvement in the value chain, and evaluation of economic and social benefits. The model positions BUMDes as the driver of the village's economic ecosystem, connecting local potential with community needs and thereby expanding access, opportunities, and economic benefits in an inclusive and sustainable way. This research emphasizes the importance of a locally based potential approach and community participation in strengthening BUMDes' role as an instrument for empowering rural communities' economies.

INTRODUCTION

The economic progress of a country is not solely measured by macro growth parameters, but primarily by its distribution and inclusiveness, namely the extent to which economic benefits reach all levels of society without discrimination (Patta Rapanna & Zulfikry Sukarno

SE, 2017). Excessive orientation towards growth without equality risks widening the gap and causing social instability (Hastuti et al., 2025). Therefore, the development paradigm needs to shift toward an inclusive economy. This system ensures the active involvement in and utilization of development benefits by all levels of society, without exception. This concept emphasizes the empowerment of groups often left behind, such as the poor, rural micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and vulnerable and marginalized groups (people with disabilities, female heads of households, and indigenous communities) (Sholichah et al., 2025).

This inclusivity is key to creating sustainable and equitable growth. However, realizing it at the village level faces complex challenges. Inequality in asset ownership and access to opportunities remains significant (Wira et al., 2024). Villages hold a strategic position as the community's economic base and the vanguard in achieving inclusive economic development (Nurhayati, Lutfi, et al., 2025a). The majority of Indonesia's population lives in rural areas, where the main livelihoods, such as agriculture, fishing, and crafts, are found (Amika et al., 2022). Therefore, equitable national economic progress depends heavily on strengthening the economic foundations at the village level. The role of villages in inclusive economic development can be realized through several key functions. First, villages are the primary job creators for their residents, both through the agricultural sector and micro and small businesses. Furthermore, villages play a vital role as primary managers of local potential, including natural resources, culture, wisdom, and superior products. Optimizing this potential sustainably can become a key driver of the economy, rooted in the region's unique identity and strengths. Third, villages serve as a vehicle for strengthening a participatory people's economy, in which village-owned businesses, such as BUMDes, cooperatives, and MSMEs, can grow and synergize (Nurhayati, Lutfi, et al., 2025b).

According to a recent news report, there are 165 active Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes, Indoensian : Badan Usaha Milik Desa) in West Bandung Regency. The local government has designated these BUMDes as the driving force of the village economy, supported by a policy of allocating 20% of Village Funds to strengthen the local economy. The Village Fund allocation will be used, among other things, for infrastructure development of BUMDes business units and strengthening food security programs by 20 percent. The implementation of this policy is considered to be in line with village development goals and the government's hopes of promoting economic independence in villages (Alfian, 2025). More specifically, the development of BUMDes in West Bandung Regency demonstrates an interesting yet challenging dynamic. In general, BUMDes in this regency have been established in most villages in response to the mandate of the Village Law, marking a formal commitment to building local economic institutions. Their development is supported by diverse and promising local potential, such as the agricultural sector (especially horticulture and food crops), village tourism that capitalizes on the natural beauty of Lembang and Ciwidey, and the wealth of MSMEs in the crafts and culinary fields, as well as the potential for services such as venue rentals and local transportation (Maulana, 2025). This potential provides a strong foundation for BUMDes to design relevant and impactful business units.

However, despite this potential, the empirical condition of BUMDes in West Bandung Regency still faces several problems, such as suboptimal business activities, low community participation as owners and customers, limited human resource (HR) capacity of managers, and suboptimal empowerment of vulnerable groups such as smallholder farmers, farm laborers, people with disabilities, and female heads of households. Many BUMDes administrators and managers come from village officials or volunteers with inadequate entrepreneurial and managerial backgrounds (Agungunanto et al., 2016). In addition, citizen involvement in decision-making, business determination, and utilization of BUMDes services is often limited, resulting in BUMDes receiving insufficient social and market support from their own communities (Sopanah et al., 2023). This condition shows that establishing a BUMDes alone is not enough; an inclusive, comprehensive, and targeted empowerment strategy is needed to ensure that BUMDes does not stagnate or benefit only a handful of village elites (Purwanda, 2024). This strategy needs to be designed systematically, based on local potential, and involve the community in identifying needs, planning, and monitoring to create a sense of ownership, accountability, and equitable distribution of benefits (Panma et al., 2024).

Based on the literature review and previous studies, a research gap exists: most research on BUMDes still focuses on the financial aspect, while studies on BUMDes as an inclusive economic instrument that empowers vulnerable and marginalized groups remain limited, especially in West Bandung Regency. Therefore, this research aims to go beyond financial analysis by formulating a BUMDes empowerment strategy oriented towards an inclusive community economy. This research is expected to provide practical, evidence-based recommendations to the West Bandung Regency Government, village governments, and BUMDes managers to strengthen institutions, increase community participation, and develop mentoring programs that can make BUMDes a driver of equitable and sustainable village economic development.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze strategies for empowering BUMDes in promoting an inclusive community economy in West Bandung Regency. The study was conducted at five research sites: BUMDes Kertamulya, BUMDes Karangtanjung, BUMDes Padalarang, BUMDes Lembang, and BUMDes Cipeundeuy. Primary data were collected through observations and interviews with BUMDes managers, village government officials, community members, and MSME actors. In contrast, secondary data were obtained from institutional documents, relevant regulations, and related literature. Data were analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, with a focus on local potential, challenges, institutional capacity, community participation, inclusiveness, and empowerment strategies. Data validity was ensured through source and technique triangulation. The findings were then used to formulate a BUMDes empowerment strategy model based on local potential, participation, inclusiveness, and sustainability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Conditions and Potential of BUMDes in West Bandung Regency

This research was conducted on five BUMDes in West Bandung Regency, namely BUMDes Kertamulya in Padalarang District, BUMDes Karangtanjung in Cililin District, BUMDes Padalarang in Padalarang District, BUMDes Lembang in Lembang District, and BUMDes Cipeundeuy in Padalarang District. These five BUMDes were selected because they are located in areas with different social, economic, and local potential characteristics. In general, BUMDes is a village economic instrument formed to collectively manage village potential, assets, services, and business opportunities to improve community welfare. BUMDes is also expected to expand community participation in economic activities, create job opportunities, develop productive businesses, and increase the village's original income.

1. Kertamulya BUMDes is one of the BUMDes that was established relatively earlier than other locations in this study. The BUMDes was established in 2019 based on the Decree of the Kertamulya Village Head Number 33 of 2019. BUMDes Kertamulya is located in the Padalarang District, which is strategically positioned, connected to trade activities, services, population mobility, and urban development in West Bandung Regency. In terms of governance, BUMDes Kertamulya has received assistance in developing a financial reporting system and recording receivables to increase transparency and accountability in its management.
2. The Karangtanjung BUMDes is located in Karangtanjung Village, Cililin District, West Bandung Regency. This BUMDes was established in 2022 based on Village Regulation and Decree Number AHU-02433.AH.01.33 of 2022. As a newer BUMDes, the Karangtanjung Village BUMDes has the opportunity to build organizational governance and business units from the start by adapting to community needs and local economic potential. Its location in the Cililin District also provides opportunities for business development based on rural potential, agriculture, local trade, and empowerment of community micro-enterprises.
3. The BUMDes in Padalarang Village, Padalarang District, West Bandung Regency, was established in 2022 based on Village Regulations and a Village Head Decree. Padalarang Village's location in an area with relatively high economic activity and community mobility is a crucial asset for the development of BUMDes business units. This BUMDes has the potential to develop services, trade, MSME partnerships, community provision, and marketing of local products. The Padalarang area's advantages lie in its accessibility and proximity to the center of economic activity in West Bandung Regency.
4. The Lembang BUMDes is located in Lembang Village, Lembang District, West Bandung Regency, and was established in 2022 based on Village Regulations and the Village Head's Decree. Lembang District is known as one of the areas with fairly developed tourism, trade, horticultural agriculture, and creative economy activities in West Bandung Regency. Therefore, the Lembang BUMDes has a strategic opportunity to develop business units related to the tourism sector, agricultural products, local cuisine, tourism support services, and the marketing of community MSME products. Lembang Village is also recorded as

receiving Village Funds in 2025, amounting to Rp1,397,913,000, indicating support for village fiscal resources to implement development and community empowerment.

5. The Cipeundeuy BUMDes is located in Cipeundeuy Village, Padalarang District, West Bandung Regency. The BUMDes was established in 2022 based on Village Regulations and a Village Head Decree. Cipeundeuy Village enjoys a strategic location within Padalarang District and offers access to the region's main routes. This presents an opportunity for the BUMDes to develop businesses based on trade, services, local product distribution, environmental management, and community-based productive enterprises. Within the context of inclusive economic empowerment, the Cipeundeuy Village BUMDes can also be directed to engage communities with limited access to economic opportunities by providing training, fostering business partnerships, and supporting local product marketing.

Based on the description above, the following is the strategic potential of each BUMDes.

Table 1. Potential Strategies of BUMDes in West Bandung Regency

No.	Name of BUMDes	Strategic Potential
1	BUMDes of Kertamulya	Established in 2019, it has extensive institutional experience, is located in Padalarang District, and has received assistance with financial reporting systems and accounts receivable recording.
2	BUMDes of Karangtanjung	Having a new institution with the opportunity to build governance and business units from scratch, potentially utilizing agricultural businesses, MSMEs, and local trade
3	BUMDes of Padalarang Village	Located in an area with high economic activity and community mobility, it has opportunities for market access, services, trade, and MSME partnerships.
4	BUMDes of Lembang Village	Has strong potential in the tourism, horticultural agriculture, culinary, and creative economy sectors, supported by the village's fiscal capacity
5	BUMDes of Cipeundeuy	Having access to Padalarang's economic activity routes has the potential to develop trade, services, distribution of local products, and environmental businesses.

Problems and Obstacles to BUMDes Empowerment

The empowerment of BUMDes in West Bandung Regency still faces several obstacles related to institutional capacity, human resources, community participation, business development, access to capital, and the ability to build marketing networks. Differences in regional characteristics and institutional age across the five BUMDes also contribute to varying

degrees of heterogeneity in the challenges faced. BUMDes that have been established for longer have relatively greater institutional experience, while newly established BUMDes still face challenges in establishing management systems and sustainably developing business units.

1. Established in 2019, the Kertamulya BUMDes boasts a relatively long institutional experience. However, this institutional age does not automatically indicate that the empowerment process has been optimal. Issues that require attention include how to develop the business so it doesn't remain limited to routine activities, improve management professionalism, expand community participation, and ensure the BUMDes provides broader economic benefits. Another challenge is optimizing the Padalarang region's potential to translate it into productive business units while simultaneously engaging the community as economic actors.
2. The Karangtanjung BUMDes, established in 2022, is still in the relatively early stages of institutional strengthening and business development. Obstacles that may be of concern include limited management experience, limited ability to develop business plans, develop business units based on local potential, and foster community participation. Furthermore, the BUMDes needs to ensure that its business activities are not solely oriented toward organizational sustainability but also provide economic access for the village community, including those with limited access to economic resources.
3. Padalarang's BUMDes benefits from its location in an area with relatively dynamic economic activity. However, this situation also requires BUMDes to be competitive and understand market needs. Issues that need to be addressed include the ability to identify genuine business opportunities, limited innovation and business diversification, marketing capabilities, and the potential for suboptimal partnerships with MSMEs and local economic actors. Another challenge is ensuring that BUMDes' economic activities not only generate income for the institution but also create economic opportunities for the village community.
4. The Lembang BUMDes has significant potential related to tourism, the creative economy, local products, and services. However, this potential can be less than optimal if it is not supported by management's ability to innovate, market, digitize, and build networks with tourism and MSMEs. Empowerment challenges also relate to ensuring that local communities benefit from the growing economic activity in the Lembang area. Therefore, the challenge is not only to develop commercially attractive businesses but also to build business models that can engage local communities as workers, producers, suppliers, and BUMDes partners.
5. Cipeundeuy BUMDes has the opportunity to develop economic activities related to trade, services, and community needs because it is located in the Padalarang District. Issues that need to be addressed include BUMDes' ability to identify business units appropriate to market needs, limited managerial capacity, strengthening marketing efforts, and developing partnerships with the community and MSMEs. Furthermore, empowerment needs to be directed so that the BUMDes' existence not only functions as a service provider or business manager, but also increases the community's economic capacity through job creation, business partnerships, and expanded market access.

Table 2. Main Obstacles to BUMDes

No.	BUMDes	Main Problems/Obstacles	Impact on Empowerment
1	Kertamulya Village	Business development needs to be continuously strengthened through professional management capacity, community participation, and the optimization of local economic potential.	The economic benefits of BUMDes have not yet reached the wider community.
2	Karangtanjung Village	The institution is relatively new; it has limited experience in management, business planning, and business development based on local potential.	Business development and community involvement require institutional strengthening.
3	Padalarang Village	Business competition, business innovation and diversification, marketing, and partnerships with MSMEs	Regional economic potential does not necessarily automatically result in community empowerment.
4	Lembang Village	Tourism potential management; innovation; digitalization; marketing; connectivity with tourism actors and MSMEs	The economic potential of tourism is at risk of failing to provide equitable benefits to local communities.
5	Cipeundeuy Village	Determination of business units, managerial capacity, marketing, partnerships with the community, and MSMEs	The role of BUMDes as a driver of the community economy is not yet optimal.

Based on the results of the identification and analysis of the conditions of the five BUMDes that became the focus of the research, namely BUMDes Kertamulya, BUMDes Karangtanjung, BUMDes Padalarang, BUMDes Lembang, and BUMDes Cipeundeuy, it is known that each BUMDes has different characteristics, potential, and challenges. These differences are primarily related to institutional capacity, human resources, business unit development, community participation, market access, partnerships, and the ability to create inclusive economic benefits for village communities. The results of the analysis of these aspects then serve as the basis for identifying needs and formulating BUMDes empowerment strategies appropriate to each region's characteristics.

First, in terms of institutional capacity and human resources, the five BUMDes need to strengthen their professional business management capabilities. BUMDes Kertamulya has an

advantage in terms of institutional age, having been established in 2019, whereas BUMDes Karangtanjung, Padalarang, Lembang, and Cipeundeuy were established in 2022. However, the length of an institution's existence cannot be the sole indicator of empowerment success. Older BUMDes must still be able to innovate and improve their managers' capacity, while relatively new BUMDes require strengthening their management systems, business planning, financial management, marketing, and business evaluation. From the perspective of empowerment theory (Mardikanto & Soebianto, 2012), these conditions relate to aspects of human and institutional development, namely, increasing human capacity and strengthening organizations so that communities and institutions can develop independently. This also shows that empowerment through BUMDes is not only related to economic activities but also encompasses human, business, environmental, and institutional development.

Second, from a business development perspective, there are challenges in ensuring that the business units developed truly stem from the potential and needs of each region. BUMDes Kertamulya, Padalarang, and Cipeundeuy are located in Padalarang District, which has community economic activity and relatively strategic access to strategic areas. In contrast, BUMDes Lembang has a different context because it is located in an area with potential for tourism, the creative economy, local products, and services. Karangtanjung has rural characteristics that can be developed through local economic potential. These differences indicate that empowerment strategies are not appropriate if they use a uniform approach. The concept of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) emphasizes that empowerment should begin with the identification and utilization of assets or strengths that the community already has, rather than solely from its shortcomings (Kretzmann, 1995), positioning ABCD and the stakeholder approach as important perspectives in community empowerment through BUMDes.

Third, a more substantive issue relates to community participation. It can be said that BUMDes has not fully implemented its empowerment function if the community is only positioned as consumers or beneficiaries. At the same time, their access to planning, decision-making, business management, employment, product supply, and supervision remains limited. This is highly relevant to the concept of participatory empowerment, which positions the community as the subject of development rather than merely the object of programs. Rahayu and Febrina's research shows that low community participation can be a factor preventing BUMDes from developing optimally and even risks making village resource management more elitist (Rahayu & Febrina, 2021). Thus, for the five BUMDes in West Bandung Regency, success is measured not only by the presence or absence of business units, but also by the extent to which the community has access and opportunities to participate in BUMDes' economic activities.

Fourth, there are challenges in realizing economic inclusivity. Different economic potential across regions does not automatically lead to an inclusive distribution of benefits. For example, Lembang's tourism potential can generate significant economic activity, but a key research question is whether local communities are positioned as workers, suppliers, MSMEs,

business partners, or simply consumers. Similarly, in the Padalarang and Cipeundeuy BUMDes, the relatively dynamic economic activity needs to be tested to see whether it has created economic access for MSMEs, low-income communities, women, youth, and other vulnerable groups. Conceptually, community empowerment is people-centered, participatory, empowering, and sustainable development, so economic success should be measured not only by institutional gains but also by increased community capacity and independence (Habib, 2021).

Fifth, from a governance perspective, BUMDes require a balance between business orientation and social orientation. While BUMDes must be managed professionally, this professionalism must not diminish their character as village economic institutions focused on community welfare. Government Regulation No. 11 of 2021 explicitly positions BUMDes as legal entities that can serve as consolidators of community products/services, producers of community needs, community business incubators, public service providers, and levers for village independence, guided by the principles of professional, efficient, effective, and accountable organization. Therefore, the fifth issue for BUMDes is not simply how to increase BUMDes revenue, but how to convert that revenue and activities into economic opportunities and increase community capacity.

Sixth, barriers to marketing, partnerships, and access to resources. Empowerment strategies also need to be considered. BUMDes cannot work alone if they want to develop the community economy inclusively. BUMDes need to build relationships with village governments, MSMEs, community groups, financial institutions, and the private sector. Research on BUMDes shows that limited capital and human resource capacity can prevent BUMDes from maximizing their role in economic empowerment. Conversely, other research shows that BUMDes can increase community participation and economic independence by creating business opportunities, employment, training, mentoring, and developing productive enterprises (Amelia & Tondi, 2024).

Community Participation and Level of Inclusiveness of BUMDes

Community participation is an important aspect in assessing the success of empowerment through BUMDes (Amelia & Tondi, 2024). Based on the characteristics of the five BUMDes that became the research locus, namely BUMDes Kertamulya, Karangtanjung, Padalarang, Lembang, and Cipeundeuy, the existence of BUMDes essentially provides space for the community to be involved in village economic activities. However, the existence of BUMDes institutions and business activities does not automatically indicate that the community has actively participated. Participation needs to be viewed more broadly, ranging from community involvement in identifying needs and determining the type of business, to providing input in decision-making, becoming workers or business partners, utilizing BUMDes products and services, and supervising BUMDes management.

This perspective aligns with the concept of community empowerment. Mardikanto & Soebianto (2012) position the community as the subject of development and emphasize the importance of increasing community capacity, participation, and independence. Therefore,

BUMDes is not ideal if the community is only positioned as consumers or beneficiaries. At the same time, the planning and management processes are entirely carried out by BUMDes managers or the village government. Substantive participation is demonstrated when the community has access, a voice, opportunities, and a real role in the economic processes carried out by BUMDes. When linked to the five research loci, regional characteristics provide different opportunities for participation. BUMDes Kertamulya, Padalarang, and Cipeundeuy, located in Padalarang District, can develop participation through community involvement and MSMEs in trade, services, and local supply chains. BUMDes Lembang has broader opportunities to engage the community through tourism, the creative economy, local products, and services. Meanwhile, BUMDes Karangtanjung can develop participation through leveraging the economic potential of rural communities. These differences indicate that the form of participation need not be uniform; its mechanisms must be tailored to the assets, needs, and economic characteristics of each village.

This can be further analyzed using the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach. Kretzmann (1995) views the ABCD approach as seeing the community not merely as experiencing problems and needing assistance, but as a community possessing various assets that can be mobilized for development. In the context of BUMDes, these assets can include the skills of individuals, community groups, and MSMEs; social networks; natural resources; local products; village facilities; and institutional networks. Therefore, community participation should focus on identifying, connecting, and mobilizing these assets for productive economic activities. With this approach, BUMDes functions as a connector and driver of community assets, rather than replacing the community's role in economic activities. This aspect of participation is then closely related to the level of BUMDes inclusivity. An inclusive economy is not measured solely by increases in BUMDes revenues or profits, but also by who gains access to and benefits from these economic activities. In the context of this research, inclusivity is evident in the extent to which BUMDes create opportunities for village MSMEs, low-income communities, women, youth, farmers, and other vulnerable groups to participate as workers, suppliers, producers, business partners, and beneficiaries. Thus, the important question is not only “does BUMDes make a profit?”, but also “who benefits from these profits and economic activities?”

This situation is crucial because there is a risk of economic exclusion even if the BUMDes is functioning institutionally. For example, developing a tourism business in Lembang can increase economic activity, but it is not necessarily inclusive if profits are enjoyed only by certain managers or business actors. Similarly, the development of trade or services in the Padalarang area cannot be considered inclusive if small MSMEs and communities with limited capital are unable to gain access to and participate in the BUMDes value chain. This means that the growth of BUMDes economic activity and economic inclusivity are two related but not identical concepts.

From the perspective of BUMDes as a village economic institution, this condition is also in accordance with Government Regulation No. 11 of 2021, which positions BUMDes as, among other things, a consolidator of community products or services, a producer of community needs, a community business incubator, and a provider of public services. This means that BUMDes has the space, normatively, not only to manage village-owned businesses but also to consolidate and develop community economic activities. Based on this description, the inclusiveness of the five BUMDes should be assessed across four main dimensions: access,

participation, benefits, and empowerment. Access indicates whether the community has the opportunity to use or participate in BUMDes economic activities; participation indicates whether the community has a role in the decision-making process and business implementation; benefits indicate whether the wider community can feel the results of BUMDes activities; while empowerment indicates whether this involvement increases the community's economic capabilities and independence. These four dimensions can serve as a basis for comparing the conditions of BUMDes in Kertamulya, Karangtanjung, Padalarang, Lembang, and Cipeundeuy.

Village-Owned Enterprises Empowerment Strategy Based on Local Potential

The BUMDes empowerment strategy based on local potential is an approach that uses local resources, capabilities, regional characteristics, and community needs to determine the direction of business development (Srirejeki et al., 2020). The five BUMDes that became the research locus, namely BUMDes Kertamulya, Karangtanjung, Padalarang, Lembang, and Cipeundeuy, have distinct regional characteristics, so their empowerment strategies cannot follow a uniform pattern. BUMDes Kertamulya, Padalarang, and Cipeundeuy, located in Padalarang District, have the opportunity to develop businesses in trade, services, and MSMEs to meet the needs of the surrounding community. BUMDes Karangtanjung has opportunities to develop businesses that leverage rural economic potential, while BUMDes Lembang has stronger opportunities in the tourism sector, the creative economy, local products, and services. These differences indicate that empowerment strategies need to be formulated based on the unique assets and needs of each village.

This approach aligns with the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) concept developed by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993). ABCD emphasizes that community development should begin by identifying and mobilizing the assets a community already possesses, rather than simply addressing its problems or deficiencies. These assets can include the skills of individuals, community groups, local organizations, MSMEs, natural resources, village facilities, social networks, or existing economic potential. In the context of BUMDes, this approach means that managers do not simply determine business units based on profit projections, but first map out what assets are available, who owns them, how they can be developed, and how the community can benefit from the process.

At the Kertamulya BUMDes, the empowerment strategy can focus on optimizing the institutional experience established since 2019 and leveraging the Padalarang region's position to develop business activities that meet community needs and support local economic activity. This strategy can be strengthened through developing partnerships with MSMEs, providing market access, developing community economic services, and increasing management capacity in management and marketing. Thus, institutional experience is not merely maintained as an organizational routine but is converted into the capacity to create business innovation and expand community involvement. At the Karangtanjung BUMDes, the empowerment strategy is better directed toward mapping the village community's economic potential and developing business units directly related to community economic activities. Because this BUMDes was established in 2022, strengthening the institution and management capacity is a crucial part of the strategy. Business development can be carried out through identifying superior village products or services, strengthening community business groups, improving entrepreneurial skills, and establishing partnerships between the BUMDes and local business actors. This

strategy allows the BUMDes to function as an aggregator and facilitator of community economic activities, rather than simply as a stand-alone business manager.

In the Padalarang and Cipeundeuy BUMDes, empowerment strategies can leverage community economic activity and regional location within the Padalarang District. BUMDes development can be directed toward trade and service businesses, partnerships with MSMEs, market access, and digital marketing of community products. BUMDes can act as a liaison between small businesses and the broader market. This strategy is crucial because one of the issues in economic empowerment is not always the lack of products, but rather limited access to markets, information, capital, and business networks. Thus, BUMDes can provide added value by consolidating community products, building shared brands, opening digital marketing channels, and establishing collaborations with external parties. Meanwhile, BUMDes Lembang has a strategic opportunity to develop an empowerment model based on tourism and the creative economy. Tourism potential can be linked to MSME products, local culinary delights, crafts, services, the creative economy, and other community activities. However, this strategy must avoid development patterns that only increase tourism activity without improving the economic position of local communities. BUMDes can develop a local value chain, connecting tourists with products and services produced by the local community. Communities can be positioned as producers, suppliers, workers, service managers, and business partners so that increased tourism activities produce a multiplier effect on the village economy.

Local potential-based strategies also require strengthening human resource capacity (Sudiarti et al., 2025). Economic potential will not result in empowerment if the community and BUMDes managers lack the skills to manage it. Therefore, empowerment programs need to include training in business management, financial management, entrepreneurship, digital marketing, product development, customer service, and partnership-building skills (Mannahali et al., 2024). From the perspective of Mardikanto and Soebiato (2015), the empowerment process can be understood as strengthening human, business, environmental, and institutional development. This framework is relevant to BUMDes because business development must go hand in hand with human capacity building and institutional strengthening. In addition to business development, empowerment strategies need to focus on strengthening the local economic ecosystem (Setyawan et al., 2025). BUMDes should not compete with community-owned MSMEs but can act as aggregators, incubators, facilitators, and partners for community businesses. BUMDes can help provide access to raw materials, financing, training, marketing, technology, and business networks. This model aligns with Government Regulation No. 11 of 2021, which provides space for BUMDes to act as consolidators of community products and services, producers of community-based goods and services, and community business incubators.

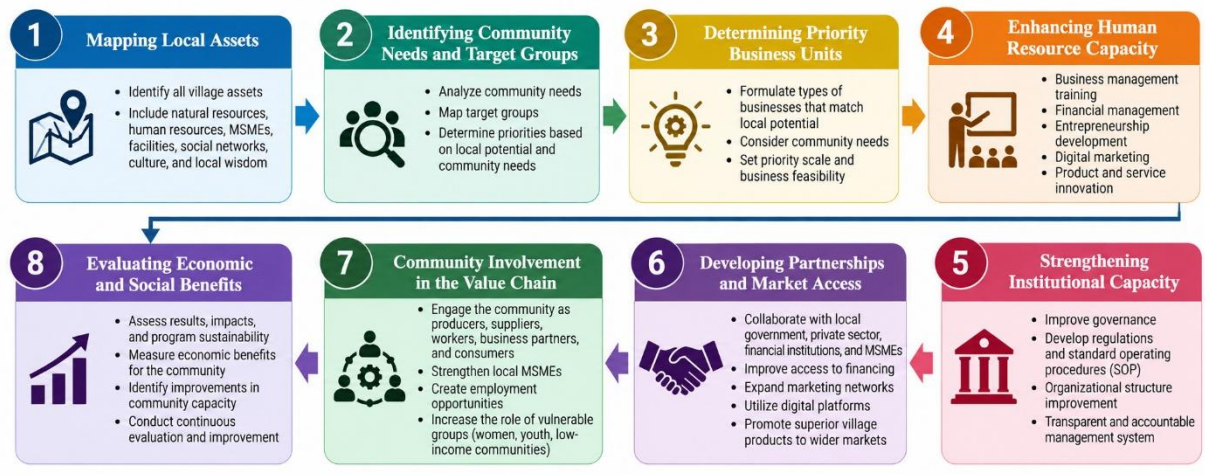


Figure 1. Village-Owned Enterprise Empowerment Strategy Based on Local Potential

Strategy for Strengthening the Inclusive Community Economy

The strategy for strengthening the inclusive community economy is a continuation of the BUMDes empowerment strategy, grounded in local potential (Setyawan et al., 2025). While the previous stage focused on asset identification, business unit development, capacity building, and institutional strengthening, this stage aims to ensure that the benefits of BUMDes economic activities are accessible and enjoyed by the wider community, especially groups with limited access to economic resources. This is crucial because the growth of BUMDes business activities does not automatically indicate the creation of an inclusive economy. An inclusive economy must be seen in terms of the community's ability to access business opportunities, jobs, capital, markets, knowledge, and economic benefits. Bappenas also identifies expanding access to capital, markets, and skills, and strengthening collaboration, as essential components of the empowerment model for poor and vulnerable communities toward economic independence (Nurhayati, Pujiriyani, et al., 2025).

In the context of the five BUMDes that were the focus of the research, strategies for strengthening an inclusive economy need to be tailored to each region's characteristics. BUMDes Kertamulya can be directed to expand partnerships with MSMEs and local business actors by leveraging the experience of established institutions. BUMDes Karangtanjung can strengthen the community economy through business development that stems from rural potential and local community needs. BUMDes Padalarang and Cipeundeuy can optimize economic activity in the Padalarang area by strengthening trade, services, MSMEs, and market access. Meanwhile, BUMDes Lembang has the opportunity to build an economic chain that connects the tourism sector with local products, culinary arts, the creative economy, and community services. Thus, an inclusive strategy should not use a one-size-fits-all approach, but rather be formulated based on the assets, characteristics, and community groups found in each village.

The first strategy is to expand community access to BUMDes business activities. BUMDes need to create mechanisms that enable communities to become not only consumers,

but also producers, suppliers, workers, business partners, and actors in the value chain. This approach aligns with Kretzmann and McKnight's (1993) Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) concept, which positions community assets as the primary capital for development. Within this framework, communities are viewed as possessing skills, social networks, business groups, MSMEs, local resources, and knowledge that can be mobilized to generate economic activity. Thus, BUMDes can function as a bridge and strengthen community assets, rather than replacing their role in economic activity.

The second strategy is to strengthen MSMEs and micro-enterprises within the BUMDes ecosystem. BUMDes should not be positioned as competitors to community businesses, but rather as aggregators and partners that help increase community businesses' capacity. This can take the form of providing marketing access, product packaging, product standardization, joint promotions, access to financing, business administration assistance, and expanding marketing networks. This direction also aligns with inclusive economic development policies that position MSMEs as a key instrument for economic equality. Bappenas emphasizes that MSME strengthening needs to be carried out through an integrated ecosystem, including training, access to financing, entrepreneurial networks, and digital transformation.

The third strategy is to expand access to financing and markets. Limited capital and markets can leave communities constrained to small-scale economic actors, preventing them from expanding their business capacity. Therefore, BUMDes can build partnerships with financial institutions, local governments, the private sector, cooperatives, and supporting institutions. In addition to financing, market access needs to be strengthened through digital marketing, marketplaces, social media, product exhibitions, inter-village trade cooperation, and partnerships with third parties. Bappenas (National Development Planning Agency) positions microfinance as an instrument to help MSMEs grow their businesses, expand markets, and reduce economic inequality.

The fourth strategy is to increase the involvement of groups with more limited economic access. In this study, these groups could include women, youth, low-income communities, small farmers, micro-SMEs, and other vulnerable groups, depending on the empirical conditions of each village. This involvement is not sufficient through one-off training activities; it needs to be directed towards ongoing engagement in the BUMDes value chain. For example, women can be involved as producers or product managers, youth as digital marketers and in the creative economy, and MSMEs as suppliers or production partners. With this model, empowerment moves beyond simply providing programs to creating sustainable economic access. Bappenas' policy on empowering poor and vulnerable groups also emphasizes the importance of skills, access to capital and markets, and cross-stakeholder collaboration to build economic independence.

The fifth strategy is to build transparent, participatory, and accountable governance of BUMDes. An inclusive economy will not be achieved if access to business activities is limited to certain groups. Therefore, the public needs information on programs, partnership opportunities, beneficiary criteria, and BUMDes business developments. Mechanisms for

deliberation, conveying aspirations, reporting, and community oversight need to be strengthened. Normatively, the legal framework for BUMDes includes provisions on organization, capital, assets, business units, cooperation, accountability, and development as part of the BUM Desa regulations.

When associated with the empowerment framework (Mardikanto & Soebianto, 2012), the strategy for strengthening an inclusive community economy can be summarized in four dimensions. Human development is achieved by improving community skills, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and digital capacity. Business development is carried out through MSME development, access to capital, marketing, product innovation, and local value chain development. Environmental development aims to create a social and economic environment that supports business sustainability. Meanwhile, institutional development is carried out through strengthening governance, partnerships, transparency, participation, and accountability of BUMDes. This four-dimensional framework is widely used in community empowerment analyses, including research by Mardikanto and Soebiato that explicitly operationalizes human development, business development, environmental development, and institutional development. Based on the description above, the following strategic directions are formulated:

Table 2. Strategy for Strengthening the Inclusive Community Economy

Dimensions	Strategy	Target
Economic access	Opening access to business, jobs, capital, and markets	Village community
Strengthening MSMEs	Partnership in production, marketing, mentoring, and digitalization	Micro and small MSMEs
Vulnerable groups	Involvement in the BUMDes value chain	Women, youth, low-income communities, vulnerable groups
Market access	Digital marketing, marketplace, exhibition, partnership	Local products
Financing	Partnerships with financial institutions and external parties	Community business actors
Institutional	Transparency, participation, SOP, and accountability	BUMDes managers and the community
Sustainability	Periodic evaluation of economic and social impacts	BUMDes and the community

BUMDes Empowerment Strategy Model in West Bandung Regency

Based on the analysis of the conditions, potential, problems, community participation, and the need for inclusive economic strengthening in BUMDes Kertamulya, Karangtanjung, Padalarang, Lembang, and Cipeundeuy, a BUMDes empowerment strategy model in West Bandung Regency needs to be developed through an approach that is based on local potential, participatory, inclusive, and sustainable. This model does not impose the same development pattern on all BUMDes, as each village has distinct asset characteristics, socioeconomic conditions, institutional capacity, and market opportunities. Therefore, the developed strategy needs to be adaptive while maintaining the same goal: increasing BUMDes capacity and expanding economic benefits for the community.

The strategic model begins with mapping local assets. This stage serves as the foundation because BUMDes development needs to be based on the resources actually available in each village. The assets mapped include not only natural resources and physical facilities, but also community skills, MSMEs, social groups, institutional networks, local products, tourism potential, and local knowledge and wisdom. This approach aligns with Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD), developed by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), which emphasizes that community development should begin with identifying and mobilizing the community's existing assets. Thus, BUMDes not only serves as a manager of village assets but also as a liaison among various community assets, bringing them into a shared economic force.

The second stage is identifying needs and community groups. Potential mapping should be followed by identifying the parties who will be involved and benefit from BUMDes development. At this stage, BUMDes needs to identify community needs, the characteristics of business actors, community groups with limited access to economic resources, and opportunities for community involvement in business activities. This approach is crucial so that business development is not based solely on profit considerations, but also considers community needs and empowerment goals. This way, the community is positioned as the subject of empowerment, not merely the object or consumer of BUMDes activities.

The third stage is determining superior business units based on local potential and needs. The results of mapping assets and community needs serve as the basis for determining business types with economic prospects while also providing space for community participation. BUMDes Kertamulya, Padalarang, and Cipeundeuy can develop strategies related to trade, services, MSMEs, and the economic needs of the Padalarang area. BUMDes Lembang has the opportunity to develop links between tourism, the creative economy, local products, culinary arts, and services. In contrast, BUMDes Karangtanjung can develop businesses more oriented towards rural economic potential. These differences demonstrate that empowerment strategies must be contextual and not use a one-size-fits-all approach.

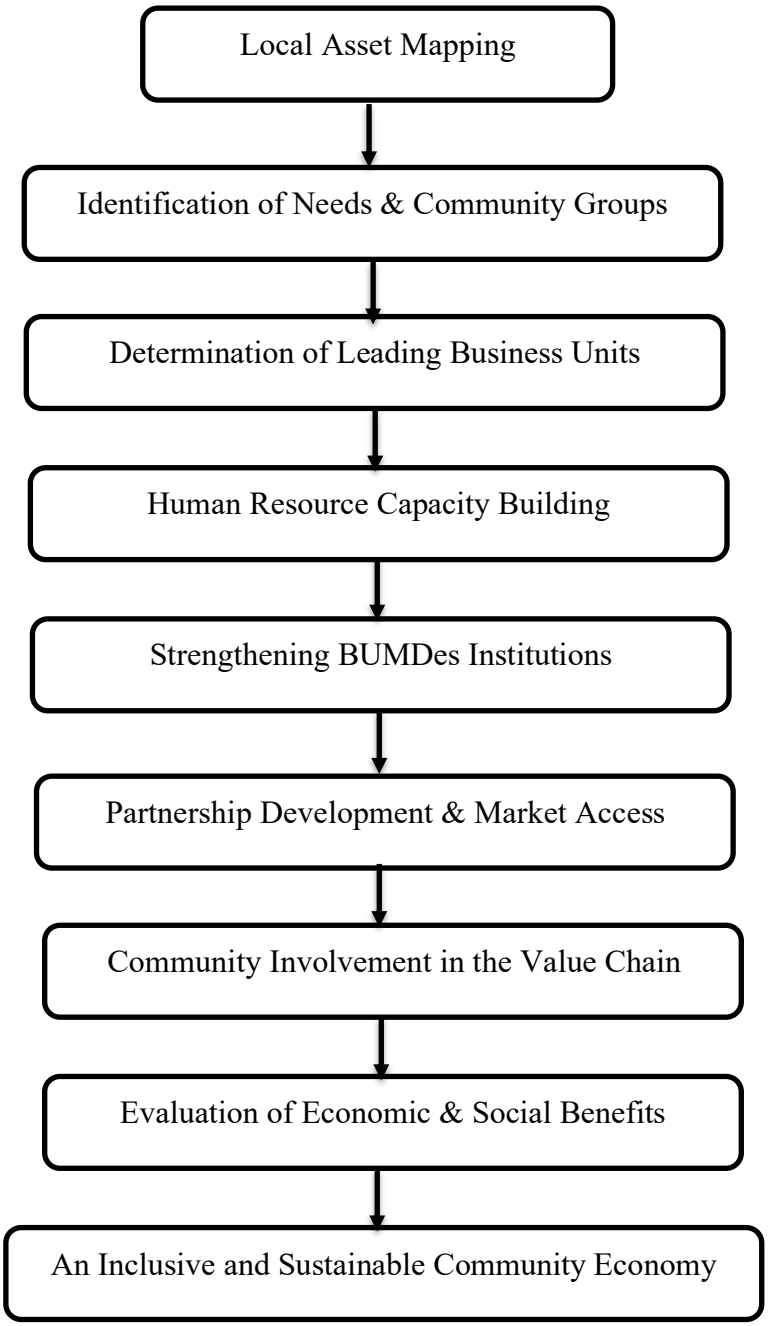
The fourth stage is human resource capacity building. Local potential development will not be optimal without the support of managers and the community. Therefore, empowerment strategies need to include training and mentoring in business management, financial management, entrepreneurship, digital marketing, product innovation, services, and business network development. According to Mardikanto and Soebiato (2015), the empowerment process encompasses strengthening people, businesses, the environment, and institutions. In the context of BUMDes, improving human resource capacity is a prerequisite for communities not only to receive assistance but also to manage economic opportunities independently and sustainably.

The fifth stage is strengthening the BUMDes institutional structure. BUMDes require transparent, professional, participatory, and accountable governance to ensure that empowerment strategies are not dependent on specific individuals. Institutional strengthening includes a clear division of tasks and authorities, the development of standard operating procedures (SOPs), a financial management system, oversight mechanisms, and performance evaluations, as well as strengthening the relationship between BUMDes, the village government, and the community. At this stage, BUMDes professionalism needs to be balanced between business orientation and empowerment orientation. This means that BUMDes need to generate economic value, but this value must be linked to improving community welfare.

The sixth stage is developing partnerships and market access. BUMDes cannot optimally develop the community economy if they operate in isolation. Therefore, it is necessary to build networks with local governments, MSMEs, financial institutions, the private sector, universities, communities, and the broader market. Partnerships can be used to strengthen access to capital, technology, knowledge, raw materials, marketing, and distribution. BUMDes can also function as aggregators of community products, providing MSME and village business group products with broader market access.

The seventh stage is community involvement in the BUMDes value chain. At this stage, the concept of inclusivity is the main differentiator of the empowerment model offered. Communities are not merely consumers, but can also act as producers, suppliers, workers, business partners, distributors, and beneficiaries. Women, youth, MSMEs, farmers, low-income communities, and other vulnerable groups need to be given space in line with their respective capacities and potential. Thus, BUMDes activities can generate a broader multiplier effect on the village economy.

The final stage is evaluating the economic and social benefits. The evaluation cannot simply rely on BUMDes profit or revenue indicators. It should also include increased community income, job creation, the number of MSMEs involved, increased community capacity, expanded market access, the involvement of vulnerable groups, and the sustainability of the business units. With this approach, BUMDes success can be measured simultaneously across two dimensions: economic performance and empowerment impact.



This model can be understood as a cycle rather than a process that stops at the evaluation stage. Evaluation results must be reused to refine asset mapping, identify new needs, develop business units, and improve empowerment patterns. Thus, the BUMDes empowerment strategy is adaptive and sustainable. Conceptually, this model also demonstrates that an inclusive economy is the result of a series of empowerment processes, not simply the result of the BUMDes' existence. A BUMDes can be considered successful in carrying out its empowerment function if it can connect local assets with community needs, develop economically viable

businesses, strengthen capacity and institutions, open market access and partnerships, and ensure communities gain a real position in the economic value chain. Thus, the model not only pursues profitable BUMDes but also builds productive, participatory, inclusive, and sustainable BUMDes.

Table 3. Empowerment Strategy Model Table

Stage	Strategic Focus	Form of Intervention	Expected Output
Asset mapping	Identifying village potential	Mapping of natural resources, human resources, MSMEs, facilities, networks, and culture	Local asset database
Identify needs	Determining needs and target groups	Mapping of communities and vulnerable groups	Empowerment priorities
Leading business unit	Determining potential business	Analysis of potential, market needs, and business feasibility	Priority business units
Human Resources Capacity	Improve skills	Management, finance, digitalization, entrepreneurship training	Competent human resources
Institutional	Strengthening governance	SOP, organizational structure, transparency, accountability	professional BUMDes
Partnership & market	Expanding the network	Partnership between the government, MSMEs, the private sector, financial institutions, and the digital market	Access to capital and markets
Value chain	Expanding participation	Society as producers, suppliers, workers, partners, and consumers	Wider distribution of benefits
8. Evaluation	Measuring impact	Economic, social, participation, and sustainability evaluation	Continuous strategy improvement

The final result	Inclusive economy	Increased access, capacity, opportunities, and economic benefits	A more independent and prosperous society

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the discussion, the empowerment of BUMDes in West Bandung Regency faces challenges in the areas of human resource capacity, business development, institutions, community participation, market access, partnerships, and the equitable distribution of economic benefits. The five BUMDes have distinct local potentials, so empowerment strategies need to be tailored to each region's characteristics. The formulated strategy model includes mapping local assets, identifying community needs, determining superior business units, increasing human resource capacity, strengthening institutions, developing partnerships and market access, involving communities in the value chain, and evaluating economic and social benefits. This strategy aims to build productive BUMDes while expanding economic access and benefits for the community inclusively and sustainably.

BUMDes managers and village governments are advised to strengthen human resource capacity, governance, local potential-based business development, and partnerships with MSMEs, the government, financial institutions, and the private sector. Community participation, particularly for groups with limited economic access, also needs to be expanded so that the community is not just a consumer, but also becomes an actor and beneficiary of BUMDes activities. Further research is recommended to employ more measurable indicators and strategy formulation methods, such as SWOT or AHP, to more objectively determine the priorities of BUMDes empowerment strategies. This study has several limitations. First, the study focused only on five BUMDes in West Bandung Regency, so the results cannot be generalized to all BUMDes in Indonesia. Second, the strategy analysis is still based on the conditions and potential of each BUMDes, so it does not fully quantify the impact of empowerment, such as increased community income, job creation, and BUMDes' contribution to community welfare. Third, limited data on the involvement of vulnerable groups and the economic performance of BUMDes means that the level of inclusiveness cannot be measured comprehensively. Therefore, further research needs to use broader data and quantitative indicators to test the effectiveness of the formulated empowerment strategy.

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