

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Impact and Community Insights in Kampung Serting Ilir

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Introduction

Community Social Responsibility (CSR) has emerged as a strategic framework that mobilizes local resources and facilitates collaborative engagement to promote social inclusion, encourage civic participation, and advance sustainable community development (Bansal et al., 2017). Rooted in the principles of inclusivity and mutual benefit, CSR in rural contexts aims to bridge the gap between institutional initiatives and community realities (Andhayani et al., 2024). In Malaysia, the integration of CSR within local communities has garnered increasing attention, especially in efforts to strengthen social cohesion and economic participation in rural communities (Ismail et al., 2015)

In this context, the Department of Commerce at Politeknik Port Dickson organized a community engagement program in Kampung Serting Ilir, Negeri Sembilan. The program, which featured communal activities such as *gotong-royong* (collective community clean up) and festive Hari Raya celebrations, was designed to not only enhance students' soft skills, but also foster genuine partnerships with rural communities.

This article presents a comprehensive evaluation of the program by examining the extent of community involvement, measuring the program's effectiveness, and identifying challenges and recommendations. The intention is to derive actionable insights for enhancing future community-based CSR endeavours, particularly within the Malaysian educational and developmental landscape.

Community Participation and Demographic Insights

The participation rate in CSR activities among Kampung Seriting Ilir residents were very encouraging. Survey data revealed that 31.1% of respondents are actively involved in local initiatives, while 44.3% occasionally participate. This distribution illustrates a moderate to high level of civic engagement. Notably, 65.6% of respondents were female, and the majority were young adults aged 18 to 25, comprising mostly students and early career workers.

The primary motivations for participation included a sense of civic duty and the desire to enhance the cleanliness and aesthetic appeal of public spaces, particularly the community hall and mosque surroundings. Approximately 70.5% of respondents cited these factors as their main reasons for involvement. These findings echo regional studies which stress the importance of civic engagement in rural sustainability (Victor et al., 2021).

Furthermore, community programme like this aligns with strategic priorities set by the Malaysian Ministry of Youth and Sports (KBS), which advocates for youth empowerment through structured community programs (KBS, 2023). The demographic segment of young adults aged 18 – 25 represents a strategically significant group for advancing institutional collaborations aimed at enhancing rural development initiatives, especially those that strategically engage women and youth.

Program Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the program was measured based on participants' feedback on the implementation of core activities. The *gotong-royong* part received positive responses, with 88.5% of participants indicating that the initiative effectively contributed to environmental beautification efforts. The focus areas, specifically the community hall and mosque compounds, were symbolic as well as functional spaces, reflecting cultural values and social unity.

The Hari Raya feast, another highlight of the program, was rated as highly enjoyable by 96.7% of respondents. Cultural inclusivity and emotional bonding were key features, with 83.6% of participants expressing overall satisfaction. These figures reflect a successful integration of the community service and celebration, an approach consistent with government strategies promoting socially embedded CSR practices (KPKT, 2023).

Importantly, this culturally rooted approach aligns with best practices in community development, as documented by Zhou et al. (2023), who emphasized the critical role of traditional and localized elements in enhancing program acceptability and long-term participation. Embedding CSR within local customs not only ensures greater relevance and fosters stronger ownership among community members.

Challenges and Improvement Suggestions

The main barriers to community participation were identified as time constraints (63.9%) and lack of information. To enhance engagement, 62.3% of respondents recommended offering recognition through certificates or rewards, along with the establishment of regular schedules for *gotong-royong* activities. Other creative proposals included organizing traditional games and decoration contests to attract broader participation, especially among youth. These findings align with broader community development strategies in Malaysia, which emphasize structured

volunteer opportunities and the importance of acknowledging civic contributions. As Gutterman (2021) highlights, effective community engagement requires not only logistical planning but also emotional investment through visible appreciation and inclusive activities. Supporting this, research by Henfrey et al. (2022) suggests that embedding local cultural elements in community programs can foster deeper inclusivity, cultural relevance, and long-term participation.

Broader Implications for CSR in Rural Area in Malaysia

The CSR program conducted by the final year student in Kampung Serting Ilir underscores several important implications for CSR programs in rural Malaysian contexts:

- 1. Educational Institutions as Catalysts:** The active involvement of students in community projects demonstrates how educational institutions can function as agents of social change. This not only enriches student learning but also contributes meaningfully to local development goals.
- 2. Cultural Integration as a Strategy:** By embedding CSR within cultural practices such as Hari Raya feasts and communal clean-ups, the program successfully fostered community buy-in and emotional engagement. Future initiatives would benefit from maintaining a strong emphasis on cultural relevance.
- 3. Policy Alignment:** The initiative reflects key pillars of Malaysia's Shared Prosperity Vision 2030, which advocates for inclusive, community-centered development as a path toward national resilience and sustainability (Economic Planning Unit, 2021).
- 4. Scalability and Replicability:** The model implemented in Kampung Serting Ilir offers a replicable template for similar rural interventions across Malaysia. With proper documentation and institutional support, this model could inform national CSR strategies aimed at underdeveloped areas.

Conclusion

The CSR initiative in Kampung Serting Ilir illustrates the transformative potential of community-oriented programs that are well-structured, culturally grounded, and inclusively designed. The high participation rates, strong satisfaction levels and practical improvement suggestions underscore the program's overall success and continued relevance. Moving forward, future CSR initiatives should prioritize consistent communication, reward mechanisms, and culturally relevant programming. Through such efforts, rural communities in Malaysia can be further empowered to achieve sustainable growth, foster social unity, and enhance local resilience.

As Malaysia continues its progress toward equitable development under the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030, integrated CSR programs, particularly those facilitated by educational institutions, will remain essential tools for shaping a more inclusive and vibrant society.

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