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# A Social Entrepreneurship Initiative in Batu Pahat to Address Economic Challenges of Single Mothers
*(Inisiatif Keusahawanan Sosial di Batu Pahat untuk Menangani Cabaran Ekonomi Ibu Tunggal)*

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## ABSTRACT

Social entrepreneurship is a critical sector for addressing social and environmental challenges. As an educational institution, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) recognises its role in enabling students to become problem solvers and innovators in tackling these issues. This paper aims to describe a program established in a residential hall to solve the economic challenges of single mothers in the Batu Pahat area. To effectively achieve this goal, an emphasis was placed on organised development procedures and creative strategies. The paper extensively explains the social entrepreneurship project development process, including early planning, identification of economic concerns encountered by the single mothers in Batu Pahat, and actions taken to solve these problems effectively. Through four linked approaches, the program harnesses cooking talents, instils entrepreneurship, boosts product durability, and forges a sustainable business model. These methodologies include Potential Mapping, Innovation, Capacity Building, and Business Model Development. The project's accomplishments are detailed with relevant data and statistics to indicate the beneficial impact achieved in improving the economic position of single mothers in the region. The success of this initiative will serve as an inspiration for other social entrepreneurship projects addressing social and economic challenges in the communities. Finally, social entrepreneurship is critical in tackling social and environmental challenges. It is anticipated that the insights gathered in this paper will inspire and guide future social entrepreneurship ventures to better success in addressing pertinent social and economic challenges.

Keywords - Social entrepreneurship, Economic empowerment, Single mother, Sustainable Development

## *ABSTRAK*

*Keusahawanan sosial adalah sektor kritikal untuk menangani cabaran sosial dan alam sekitar. Sebagai sebuah institusi pendidikan, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) mengiktiraf peranannya dalam membolehkan pelajar menjadi penyelesai masalah dan inovator dalam menangani isu-isu ini. Kertas kerja ini bertujuan untuk menghuraikan program yang diwujudkan di dewan kediaman bagi menyelesaikan cabaran ekonomi ibu tunggal di kawasan Batu Pahat. Untuk mencapai matlamat ini dengan berkesan, penekanan diberikan kepada prosedur pembangunan yang teratur dan strategi kreatif. Kertas kerja ini menerangkan secara meluas proses pembangunan projek keusahawanan sosial, termasuk perancangan awal, mengenal pasti kebimbangan ekonomi yang dihadapi oleh ibu tunggal di Batu Pahat, dan tindakan yang diambil untuk menyelesaikan masalah ini dengan berkesan. Melalui empat pendekatan berkait, program ini memanfaatkan bakat memasak, menyemai keusahawanan, meningkatkan ketahanan produk dan membentuk model perniagaan yang mampan. Metodologi ini termasuk Pemetaan Berpotensi, Inovasi, Pembinaan Kapasiti dan Pembangunan Model Perniagaan. Pencapaian projek itu diperincikan dengan data dan statistik yang relevan untuk menunjukkan kesan bermanfaat yang dicapai dalam meningkatkan kedudukan ekonomi ibu tunggal di rantau ini. Kejayaan inisiatif ini akan menjadi inspirasi untuk projek keusahawanan sosial lain yang menangani cabaran sosial dan ekonomi dalam komuniti. Akhir sekali, keusahawanan sosial adalah kritikal dalam menangani cabaran sosial dan alam sekitar. Adalah dijangkakan bahawa pandangan yang dikumpul dalam kertas kerja ini akan memberi inspirasi dan membimbing usaha niaga keusahawanan sosial masa hadapan ke arah kejayaan yang lebih baik dalam menangani cabaran sosial dan ekonomi yang berkaitan.*

*Kata kunci - Keusahawanan sosial, pemerkasaan ekonomi, ibu tunggal, Pembangunan Mampan*

## INTRODUCTION

Social entrepreneurship has emerged as a potent tool for solving major societal issues in recent years through innovative and long-term projects (Rosca et al., 2020; Mohamad Fazli SabriAhmad Hariza Hashim, 2020; Weaver, 2023). Wee-Liang et al. (2005) conclude that social entrepreneurs are individuals who meet the following five criteria: (i) the ability to combine and use entrepreneurial skills to solve community problems, (ii) involving the entire or a portion of the community in the process, activity, or project, (iii) activities, processes, or projects undertaken within a timeframe; (iv) the process or project must be partially or entirely for the community; and (v) the ability to innovate and take risks (Hariyaty Ab Wahid et al., 2019; Kadir & Sarif, 2016; Wee-Liang et al., 2005; Zamry & Sahid, 2021). The aims and activities of social entrepreneurs clearly separate them from commercial entrepreneurs. Social entrepreneurship aims to help the community, and the operation is designed to achieve that goal (Zarinah Hamid et al., 2019; Hariyaty Ab Wahid et al., 2019; Rusyda Ramly et al., 2021; Adriana Mohd. Rizal et al., 2020)

This project investigates social entrepreneurship in the setting of residential colleges, with a particular emphasis on the Batu Pahat region. The project sheds light on the significant initiative known as "Mak Janda Johor," a joint effort aimed at reducing the economic challenges of the region's disadvantaged single moms (Nur Husna Norhisam & Nurazwa Ahmad, 2019; Siti Nur Zakirah, 2014).

The "Mak Janda Johor" initiative arose in response to a critical issue recognised by the Batu Pahat authorities after an intensive assessment. This poll emphasised the severe circumstances of the area's disadvantaged population, finding that many endured economic difficulty. Unemployed single moms made up a whopping 30% of these poor individuals. These data highlight the critical need for focused interventions to improve these marginalised people's lives and empower them to achievefinancial independence.

An article titled "Realiti dan Cabaran Ketua Isi Rumah Ibu Tunggal Malaysia," published inNovember 2020, emphasised the varied issues encountered by Malaysian single moms ( Mohamad Fazli Sabri & Ahmad Hariza Hashim, 2020). According to the report, these women's main challenges were financial restraints and societal shame. These difficulties influence not just their personal well-being but also their families and the community as a whole.

In response to these issues, Kolej Kediaman Dalam Kampus, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (KKDK UTHM), took a proactive role in tackling the economic struggles of Batu Pahat's single moms. The "Mak Janda Johor" initiative was conceived with the goal of providing realistic and long-term answers to these women's financial problems ( Faizah Bte Abd Ghani & Hazirah, 2013). The project comprises the creation and execution of a complete module designed by the KKDK UTHM that focuses on utilising single moms' cooking talents.

The many features of the "Mak Janda Johor" project are explored in this research article, including its genesis, development, and predicted consequences. This study intends to give valuable insights into the potential of such projects to promote good change at the grassroots level by studying the intersections of social entrepreneurship, economic empowerment, and community involvement. This study highlights the importance of collaborative efforts in tackling complex social challenges and supporting sustainable development within local communities through a comprehensive review of the project's objectives, techniques, and predicted impact.

## PROJECT SIGNIFICANCE

Through the "Mak Janda Johor" project (Figure 1), KKDK UTHM proactively resolved the economic challenges of Batu Pahat's single moms. The project, sponsored by RM18 thousand from Yayasan Pelajaran Johor, was an innovation by KKDK students to solve social issues. Bydeveloping a cooking-focused module, this effort intends to give long-term answers to their financial issues. The article delves into the project's origins, outcomes, and potential to effect good change through social entrepreneurship, economic empowerment, and community participation. It emphasises the need for joint efforts for long-term local development ( Azlah Md. Ali et al., 2004; Rohayu Roddin et al., 2020).

## METHODOLOGY

This paper goes into the transforming journey of the "Mak Janda Johor" initiative in elevating poor single moms in Batu Pahat. The initiative harnesses cooking abilities, instils entrepreneurship, increases product durability, and forges a sustainable business model through four interconnected methodologies: Potential Mapping, Potential Innovation, Capacity Building, and Business Model Development (Awan & Sroufe, 2022; Turoń, 2022; Ibrahim Yahaya Wuni, 2022). Figure 2

Figure 1. “Mak Janda Johor” trademark

shows the flow chart of the “Mak Janda Johor” project. This project explores the effect of various techniques, providing light on their potential to empower and accelerate constructive community transformation.

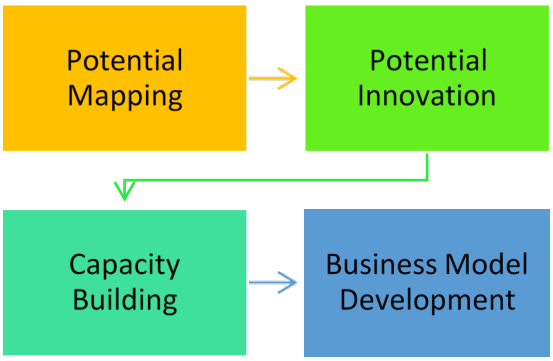



Figure 2. “Mak Janda Johor” project flowchart

## DISCUSSION

This section will delve into the incredible journey of the "Mak Janda Johor" project, which is committed to elevating economically disadvantaged single moms in Batu Pahat. This section will describe skill development, entrepreneurial fostering, improved product resilience, and building a long-term and sustainable company structure. The project takes through the complex terrain of four interrelated methodologies: potential mapping, potential innovation, capacity building, and business model development.

### Potential Mapping:

The first stage is to locate and appraise the potential of single moms in the Batu Pahat region. KKDK UTHM conducts a comprehensive survey to assess these women's talents and strengths. This examination will primarily focus on their culinary talents, taking into account their cooking expertise (Hunt, 1996). This phase seeks to discover single moms who have a talent for cooking and can use it to launch a business.

### Potential Innovation:

Based on the potential mapping phase findings, KKDK UTHM develops new techniques to capitalise on the culinary potential of the identified single moms. The idea is to turn their culinary expertise into business prospects. The project team aids these single moms in developing distinctive culinary goods or services that have market potential and correspond with their skill sets through seminars, training, and collaborative brainstorming sessions.

One notable outcome of the Potential Innovation phase has been the decision by KKDK UTHM to create a product tailored to address natural disasters like flash floods. This shift in focus indicates the project's dedication to larger social concerns and

emphasises its resilience indeveloping solutions beyond its initial scope.Four types of products were decided, which were “Ayam Massak Ungkep”, “Ayam Masak Kicap”, “Ayam Masak Kari”, and “Daging Masak Hitam”, as shown in Figure 3.




FIGURE 3. “Mak Janda Johor” products.

Capacity Building

With an emphasis on sustainability, the concept incorporates retort technology into the single moms' culinary offerings. This method assures that the items have a minimum 2-year shelf life. By doing so, the initiative hopes to address the time restrictions that single moms confront in addition to childcare and household management (Diyana Isahak et al., 2009; Siti Nur Zakirah, 2014; Nurul Shafini Shafurdin et al., 2019; Maymunah Ismail et al., 2023). This phase of capacity growth includes technical training on retort technology,quality control, and packaging to ensure the goods' lifespan.

The decision to channel the culinary talents of single mothers into creating disaster-resilient products highlights the project's capacity to pivot and innovate in response to emerging challenges. Natural disasters, such as flash floods, have far-reaching impacts on communities, often causing loss of life and property. By venturing into this new terrain, the project showcases its versatility in addressing economic empowerment and broader issues concerning community safety and resilience. The “Mak Janda Johor” products also came out with their own packaging that has their own safety to ensure the shelf life of their products (Figure 4).

This innovative direction also exemplifies the alignment between social entrepreneurship and sustainable development. By harnessing the existing culinary expertise of single mothers, KKDK UTHM is not only enabling incomegeneration but also fostering a spirit of creativity and adaptability. This shift in focus amplifies the project's impact, potentially making a tangible difference in disaster-prone regions.



FIGURE 4. “Mak Janda Johor” floods relief pack

Business Model Development

KKDK UTHM develops a detailed business model outlining the operational components of the "Mak Janda Johor" project. This model provides project stakeholders and potential investors with a clear guide to understanding the project's objectives, tactics, revenue streams, and sustainability metrics. Marketing techniques, distribution methods, pricing structures, and relationships with local markets or vendors are all part of the business strategy. The goal is to ensure the project's viability as a social company and to allow it to

solve the economic issues that single moms confront. Figure 5 summarises the business model development for the "Mak JandaJohor" project.




FIGURE 5. Business model development for "MakJanda Johor" project

## ACHIEVEMENTS

The remarkable accomplishment of the "Mak Janda Johor" project is highlighted by demands from both Yayasan Pelajaran Johor and Yayasan UTHM, as well as an impressive third-place recognition at the "Minggu Penyelidikan dan Inovasi 2023" (MPI 2023) held on May 29 and 30, 2023 at Kolej Universiti TATI. Other than that, this project provides single mothers with an additional income of up to RM200 per month, boasting an impressive annual return on investment (ROI) of 54.41% for the whole project (Figure 6).

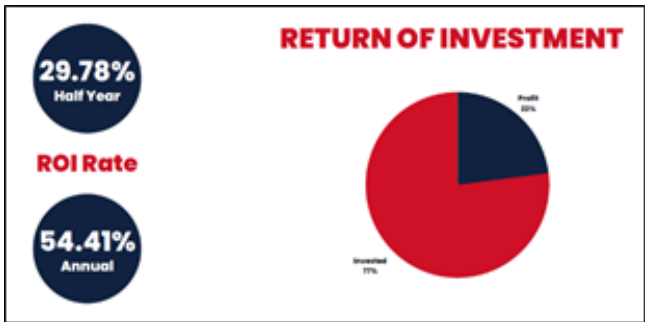



FIGURE 6. Return of Investment of "Mak JandaJohor" project

## CONCLUSION

The paper's approach promotes the development of single moms' cooking potential into sustainable business endeavours through these four interconnected phases. The method not only economically empowers these women but also demonstrates social entrepreneurship's ability to tackle societal concerns and support inclusive growth in local communities.

Collectively, these techniques (Potential Mapping, Potential Innovation, Capacity Building, and Business Model Development) transcend their particular contributions, weaving together to form a story of empowerment, inventiveness, adaptation, and resilience. The project's capacity to pivot and address critical concerns such as catastrophe resilience demonstrates its adaptability, while the complete business model demonstrates its potential to make a long-term change in the lives of single moms and the community at large.

As a whole, the "Mak Janda Johor" project shows the transforming potential of comprehensive approaches, providing a model for grassroots projects that may empower, elevate, and develop communities while staying adaptive in the face of changing circumstances.

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