

Abu Dzar Islamic School in the Development of Islamic Philanthropy (2010–2021)

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the factors behind the strengthening of philanthropic practices in integrated Islamic schools, explains how philanthropy can positively impact the quality of education, and explores challenges and solutions in its implementation. Islamic philanthropy has long contributed to education, as evidenced by institutions such as *madrasas*, schools, *pesantren*, and even universities. The main problem in this study concerns the role of philanthropy in Islamic educational institutions (schools). This research employs historical and sociological approaches, drawing on concepts related to education and philanthropy. Philanthropic practices at Abu Dzar Islamic School in the Development of Islamic Philanthropy (2010–2021) are implemented through Abu Dzar Peduli, driven by at least five elements: a sense of concern for fellow humans, moral responsibility, principles of blessings, responsibility for da'wah, and a mission of moral education (character building). The results show that Abu Dzar Islamic School in the Development of Islamic Philanthropy (2010–2021) plays an important role as a non-state actor in community welfare, particularly in South Tangerang's education sector. Its philanthropic practices include developing educational institutions, providing scholarships, offering fee waivers for non-scholarship students, supplying educational facilities, and implementing long-term programs such as social and community training to support educational quality.

Keywords: *Philanthropy, Education, Abu Dzar Islamic School, South Tangerang*

INTRODUCTION

Education today is an important aspect of nation building. More than that, quality education can produce a young generation that is not only intelligent in thinking but also characterized by strong moral values and readiness to address global challenges (Kuhlmann et al., 2021; Bhan, 2020). The education referred to in this discussion is formal education, tiered from elementary school, secondary school, to college (Mulyadi & Jaya, 2022). The state of Indonesia is one of the countries that still faces many challenges and obstacles in providing equal and quality access to education (Amalia, 2021; Supriyadi, 2020). One of the main challenges is the limited budget of schools, especially in remote and outermost areas that are less developed (Suryani & Rahayu, 2019). The inequality that occurs can be seen in terms of educational facilities, teaching quality, and access to excellent education programs—all of which remain significant problems (Sasmito & Utami, 2021; Wibowo, 2020).

Previous research has provided a solid basis for understanding the dynamics of Islamic philanthropy in the context of education. Amelia Fauzia (2016) traces the history and contestation of Islamic philanthropy between civil society and the state in Indonesia, revealing its vital role in the development of religious institutions. Hilman Latief (2013) specifically highlights the relationship between philanthropy and Islamic education, showing how *zakat* and *waqf* funds have become the financial backbone for many *pesantren* and *madrasas*. Noorhaidi Hasan's (2012) study on Integrated Islamic Schools provides an overview of the integration of Islamic values in the modern education system, although it does not specifically discuss philanthropic aspects. Meanwhile, Gwenaël Njoto-Feillard's (2014) research on Muhammadiyah financing reveals the initial efforts of modernist Islamic organizations in building economic independence to support educational and social activities. However, these studies generally focus on traditional educational institutions (such as Islamic boarding schools) or large-scale Islamic mass organizations. There is a gap in the study of philanthropic

practices at the level of modern school-based formal educational institutions, especially those managed by local community foundations (Dwyer, 2018; Ma'arif, 2025; Nisbet, 2021; Powell, 2019).

The Abu Dzar Islamic School in South Tangerang is one of the educational institutions that, since its establishment in 2010, has upheld the values of togetherness, social care, and sharing (Azkarrula & Izzuddin, 2021; Hasan, 2018). As an educational institution oriented toward character development, the Abu Dzar Islamic School not only focuses on academic aspects but also emphasizes philanthropic values that strengthen social solidarity both in the school environment and in the wider community.

Based on the background explained above, the formulation of the problem in this study is as follows: (1) How are philanthropic practices implemented to improve the quality of education at the Abu Dzar Islamic School in South Tangerang? (2) Why do philanthropic practices grow in the environment of modern educational institutions such as the Abu Dzar Islamic School? (3) How does the management of the Abu Dzar Islamic School in South Tangerang implement philanthropic programs?

This study aims to analyze philanthropic practices in the school to improve the quality of education, identify the factors that drive the growth of philanthropic practices in modern educational institutions, and describe the management of philanthropic programs implemented. Practically, the results of this research are expected to provide input for managers of other educational institutions in developing an effective and sustainable school-based philanthropy model. Meanwhile, academically, this research is expected to enrich the body of socio-religious history studies, especially regarding the role of Islamic philanthropy in the development of education in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was included in the category of social history research because the discussion encompassed philanthropic aspects laden with social practices. The historical method was the one used in this research, which comprised several stages: determining the theme, collecting sources (heuristics), source criticism, interpretation (historical analysis), and writing history (historiography).

The approach used in this study was a sociological-educational approach. The sociological approach was employed in the study of history to reveal social phenomena in an event, while the educational approach examined various aspects of an educational institution—in this case, the Abu Dzar Islamic School in South Tangerang City.

The source-gathering stage required considerable effort, cost, time, and thought because collecting sources, especially through interviews, was not easy. The selected resource persons or informants were those related to the research, including: (1) Mr. Muhtarom as a member of the board of trustees, (2) Mr. Bambang as the chairman of the foundation, (3) Mr. Abdul Majid as the principal of the Abu Dzar Islamic School at the elementary school and PKBM (*Pusat Kegiatan Belajar Masyarakat*, Center for Community Learning Activities), (4) Mr. Hafiz and Mr. Rahmadi as administrators of Abu Dzar's social institutions, (5) Mrs. Fatimah as the trustee who donated her land to the Abu Dzar Foundation, (6) teachers at the Abu Dzar Islamic School, (7) Abu Dzar students, and (8) the surrounding community near the Abu Dzar Islamic School.

In addition to oral sources (interviews), written sources were also used to strengthen the research, including books, journals, dissertations, and similar materials. The researcher's written sources were obtained through searches on the internet, the Ipusnas application, the Main Library of UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, and the Library of the Faculty of Adab and Humanities at UIN Jakarta. Another source consisted of articles from the official website of the Abu Dzar Islamic School, which served as complementary material.

Once sources were collected, the next step was to criticize them both externally and internally. External criticism focused on the physical aspects of the sources, while internal criticism examined their content. After this process, the next step was the interpretation or analysis of the previously verified sources. This process formed the core of the historical writing direction, leading to the final stage of historiography.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Philanthropy-Based Empowerment and Coaching Program at Abu Dzar Foundation

Based on the results of interviews and literature reviews, in its philanthropic practice activities, the Abu Dzar Foundation South Tangerang has several programs to improve the quality of education, empower the community, and strengthen Islamic values within the foundation. These programs include four main areas, namely education programs, economic empowerment programs, social and community programs, and religious development programs.

Educational Programs

Education is a form of philanthropy distribution that aims to provide opportunities for children who need education. History records that the education sector partly depends on zakat as an economic source. Zakat given to recipients has the potential to continue higher education so that it can improve the standard of living. The programs in the education division at Abu Dzar Islamic School include four main programs.

First, the Education Scholarship which includes the provision of full or partial educational assistance to students from underprivileged families which includes tuition fees, books, uniforms, and stationery. Second, an Independent Learning Center with free learning facilities with the support of volunteer teachers and learning materials including school lessons, technology skills development, English, and career guidance. Third, the Tahfiz Al-Qur'an Class which is an intensive program for students and the general public to memorize the Qur'an and provides certification for participants who complete certain memorization targets. Fourth, Teacher and Teaching Staff Training in the form of the procurement of periodic training to improve teacher competence in modern learning methods, curriculum based on Islamic values, and the use of educational technology.

Economic Empowerment Program

The economic empowerment program includes four main activities. First, Micro Business Skills Training which aims to train the surrounding community, especially housewives and youth, in skills such as sewing, cooking, making crafts, or digital-based businesses. Second, the Business Incubation Program is in the form of assistance for participants to start small businesses through business management guidance, marketing, and access to capital from the foundation's social funds. Third, the Productive Waste Bank is a community-based recycling program to create environmental awareness while generating additional income for local residents. Fourth, the Productive Waqf Program is in the form of managing waqf funds for productive projects such as the construction of minimarkets, cooperatives, or farming businesses with proceeds allocated for social and educational activities of the foundation.

Social and Community Programs

In this division, there are four main programs. First, Social Service in the form of providing free ambulances and free health checks which aim to organize free health checks for the community, such as general medicine, child nutrition checks, and regular vaccinations and distribution of basic necessities to people in need. Second, the Orphan and Elderly Compensation Program, which is the provision of routine assistance in the form of basic needs and health assistance to orphans, widows and the underprivileged. Third, the Friday Alms Movement is to invite students, teachers, and the community to set aside part of their

sustenance every Friday. Fourth, the Disaster Preparedness Post is to form a team of disaster response volunteers who are ready to help residents affected by natural disasters by providing logistics, evacuation shelters, and medical personnel.

Philanthropy Planning and Management at Abu Dzar Islamic School

The management of philanthropy at Abu Dzar Islamic School involves various activities that aim to collect and distribute funds or other resources to support various educational programs and social activities in accordance with Islamic principles. The source of funds or assistance obtained by Abu Dzar Peduli that supports the entire program is obtained from the business established by the foundation, from donors, and from foster parents who are muhsinin spread across various regions.

Table 1. Aspects of Abu Dzar Foundation's Philanthropy Planning

No.	Planning Aspects	Research Findings
1.	Identify Needs	The school conducts a needs analysis based on the results of internal evaluation
2.	Source of Funds	Philanthropic sources from the results of the business established by the foundation, cross-subsidies, foster parents, individual donors, and ZISWAF

Source: Interview and Document Analysis, 2024

Based on philanthropic planning data, the Abu Dzar foundation conducts an in-depth analysis of the needs of the institution from planning wise finances and realistic budgeting. The aspects that are considered include: (1) Preparation of realistic budgets, examples for the annual budget in the RAPBS (School Revenue and Expenditure Budget Plan), (2) Understanding the correct concept of shirkah if business capital uses other parties, (3) Management of diversification of sources of income from various income opportunities that can be empowered for the progress and independence of institutions, for example Abu Dzar building minimarkets, restaurants, Hajj and Umrah businesses, as well as agricultural and livestock businesses, (4) Operational efficiency according to needs, and (5) Monitoring financial performance and evaluation carried out by stakeholders to ensure good financial condition of the institution.

Foster Parent Program

Abu Dzar Peduli foster parent program focuses on distributing scholarship assistance for underprivileged and outstanding children, subsidized child scholarships, and rewards for outstanding children. This program experienced significant development from 2010 to 2021.

Table 2. Foster Parent Program Development Data (2010-2021)

Period	Number of Students	Category Dhuafa	Foster Parents
2010-2015	89 children	15 underprivileged, 34 poor	12 people
2016-2017	-	-	Addition of 49 people
2020-2021	-	Constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic	Paused program

Source: Abu Dzar Foundation Annual Reports, 2010–2021

In the 2010-2015 period, the foster parent program was only intended for underprivileged and poor students. In 2015 the number of students registered with the foundation amounted to 89 children, for the underprivileged category there were 15 children and the poor amounted to

34 children. The number of foster parents at that time was initially only 12 people. Starting in 2016, the beneficiaries of the foster parent program began to be expanded and socialization efforts were made to the community around the foundation and through social media. From July 2016 to August 2017, there were 49 additional foster parents from the community around the foundation in Jombang Ciputat.

In 2020-2021, the foster parent program had experienced many obstacles because foster parents experienced economic problems due to the COVID-19 pandemic so that it was paused for a few months in 2020 until in February 2021 this program was back to running as usual.

Abu Dzar Philanthropy Management

Management is a typical process which consists of planning and organizational actions, as well as direction and control carried out to determine and achieve predetermined goals through the use of existing human resources. Abu Dzar Peduli as a social institution under the auspices of the Abu Dzar foundation has a good management system so that its programs can be carried out according to plan.

The management functions carried out by Abu Dzar Peduli include: (1) Planning, which is the phase of pouring basic ideas which is identified with the determination of organizational concepts which will later become the goals, vision, and mission of the organization. At this stage, it is the phase of placement and exploration of resources in the organization to be placed and adjusted to its portion that will support the success of the organization. (2) Organizing is the process of grouping members of the organization directed by the chairman and adjusted to the abilities of each member. (3) Actuating is an effort made to move members to carry out various plans that have been set at the beginning. (4) Controlling is an activity to ensure that all plans that have been prepared can be carried out properly and perfectly so that the goals can be achieved.

ZISWAF Fundraising Strategy

The implementation strategy for the collection and distribution of Abu Dzar Peduli applies the principle of transparency in the collection and distribution of ziswaf funds. First, Abu Dzar Peduli always conducts supervision and evaluation, and most importantly collaborates with the Muslim community who take part in donating to the Abu Dzar foundation and conducting monthly reports on activities. Second, optimizing utilization through existing programs as a tangible form of contribution to the funds collected at Abu Dzar Peduli. Third, in collecting it, use promotional strategies either by opening counters, magazines, brochures or social media and websites. Fourth, the strategies carried out include fundraising, advertising, and partnering with various social institutions that uphold educational values.

Benefits of Islamic Philanthropy at Abu Dzar Islamic School on Society

Philanthropy has an important role in sectors in realizing welfare. The philanthropic institution at Abu Dzar Islamic School is committed that from the economic aspects, education and health are sectors that feel benefits. This institution has an important role in improving the economic level of the community, in order to create quality education, provide services and access to health.

The main benefit provided by Abu Dzar Islamic School is access to affordable quality education for the community by providing scholarship programs. The school helps create equal learning opportunities, especially for economically disadvantaged families. The implemented curriculum integrates academic education and Islamic values, creating a young generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also emotionally and spiritually intelligent. Graduates of this school are known as individuals with noble character, discipline, and care for their environment.

Abu Dzar Islamic School also plays an active role in social activities that have a direct impact on the surrounding community. Programs such as Friday Alms, compensation for

orphans, and basic food assistance to the underprivileged have eased the economic burden of many families. This activity teaches students to share from an early age, forming their character as individuals who care about others. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Abu Dzar Islamic School showed its concern through various assistance programs in the form of basic food packages to affected residents and emergency scholarships for students whose families lost their jobs.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Philanthropic Activities

The main supporting factor is the commitment of the school, including educators, staff, and foundation management who are quite good. The full support from internal and external schools creates a strong synergy in designing and implementing programs. The enthusiasm of the community is also an important supporting factor where students' parents, alumni, and local residents have a high sense of ownership of this school so that they actively participate in various activities such as charity bazaars, compensation programs, and skills training. Support from external institutions such as local governments, zakat institutions, and social organizations is also a significant supporting factor.

Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include several aspects. First, the lack of human resources who have special competencies in the field of philanthropic management. Second, time constraints, especially for students and parents who have other activities outside of school activities that affect the level of participation in empowerment and coaching programs. Third, the resistance of a small part of the community to certain programs because they do not understand the benefits of the program designed. Fourth, the management of philanthropic institutions at the school level is not optimal so that the great potential of zakat cannot be developed optimally. Fifth, in terms of fundraising, philanthropic institutions at the school level are still fundraising traditionally and are not taking advantage of the potential of digital development.

CONCLUSION

This research reveals that philanthropic practices at the *Abu Dzar Islamic School* were effectively managed through a robust strategic framework, including formal and informal training, with fundraising as the core method supported by collaboration, socialization, institutional education, member awareness campaigns, and transparent reporting via activity/financial reports disseminated through print and online media. Funding primarily came from established businesses, corporate sponsorships, online donations, government collaborations, foster parents, and *ZISWAF* (*zakat, infaq, sadaqah, waqf*) contributions from the community, guardians, students, and local residents. For future research, scholars could investigate the long-term impact of digital technology integration on fundraising transparency and donor trust in similar community-based Islamic schools, potentially using comparative case studies across regions to identify scalable models.

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