The Strengthen *Muallaf* Resources Through Development of Local Creative Economic Potential

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**Abstract.** A proselyte (*muallaf* in Islam) has a condition of vulnerability that is still unstable in religion. This is a condition that still does not have a solid faith because their understanding of religion is still low, or strong environmental and economic temptations are often used as weapons by missionaries. Conversion of religion is a necessity in society, therefore religious teachings become something that is very important to be known and explored by a follower of its religion (*aqidah*), so that a *muallaf* will not be able to easily change their belief to other religions. However, it cannot be denied that the migration of an adherent of a religion to another religion can also be caused by other factors such as social, economic, political, cultural conditions, and so on. For this reason, in this advanced empowerment program, after strengthening the religious aspect, it is also important to intersperse with activities related to the creative economy that can be explored by converts. This effort to extract creative economic power is by utilizing materials from natural resources in their environment, such as banana blossoms, or also other plants that can be processed to become more usable for the community. This advanced empowerment program is expected to be able to motivate community creations in developing creative economic potential which is hoped to become a potential for their economic empowerment in the future so that they have the resilience to be independent from an economic point of view and are not easily influenced by incitement or lures to change their beliefs. The empowerment program between religious studies and the provision of additional knowledge is packaged in one time and place because of course the most important focus is a religious study but packaged with additional activities. It is hoped that it can increase their enthusiasm to always be present in every activity, and provide an impact on their economic power directly so that they can provide inner and outer reinforcement.

**Keywords:** *muallaf, economic, creative*

1 Introduction

Geographically, Turi District is bordered by 3 sub-districts. To the north, it is bordered by Mount Merapi, to the east by Pakem sub-district, to the south by Sleman sub-district, and to the west by Tempel. The total area of Turi sub-district is 4,309.30 ha. Bangunkerto Village is a sub-district located in Kapanewon Turi, Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta, about 17 km from the city of Yogyakarta and 7 km from the center of Sleman Regency.
The potential for community empowerment in the Turi region covers many segments. Having good natural resources encourages the majority of people to work in agriculture and animal husbandry. In agriculture as it is well known, the Turi region is very famous for its abundant production of snake fruit as almost every resident's yard and garden has *zalacca* plants.

From a religious point of view, the Turi people have a high enthusiasm in carrying out religious activities. The heterogeneous condition of society encourages people to mingle and share with each other between community organizations such as NU and Muhammadiyah, to non-Muslim communities. In the eastern Turi region, such as in Girikerto Hamlet, there are also many people who embrace religions other than Christianity, and even conversions from Islam to Christianity or vice versa still occur frequently. People who were originally Muslims became Christians/Catholics and vice versa. There are also those who become muallaf, that is choosing to embrace Islam. The religious heterogeneity that exists in the Turi community is sometimes used by missionaries.

Therefore, this condition encourages a group of people to carry out religious activities focused on those who convert and require strengthening of their understanding of Islamic teachings. This activity was initiated by a group of mothers who were accompanied by Mrs. Siti Aminah, of which the majority of members were mothers. Apart from reciting the Koran, these activities are mixed and interspersed with business training activities in order to attract the community. This is also due to the fact that it is not uncommon for these conversions to occur as a result of economic weakness which is then used as a weapon for missionaries to make them convert away from Islam.

![Figure 1. Muallaf activities](image)

Many models are offered in terms of providing muallaf education. There are also social organizations engaged in providing assistance to muallaf, as is the case with Arimathea or other Muallaf Centers. Developing the potential of the local creative economy is one of the solutions to strengthen the resources of muallafs in Indonesia from an economic perspective because they often face challenges in adapting to a new environment after embracing Islam in terms of social, economic, and so on. As a result, the psychological condition of converts needs treatments, as well as in terms of their external factors, especially economic situation. Therefore, efforts are needed to strengthen the resources of converts so that they can be more independent and contribute to society.

The potential of the local creative economy has a great opportunity to provide economic benefits for the local community. Various local creative economic potentials that can be developed include handicrafts, culinary, and tourism. These potentials can be developed by the muallafs as the main actors.

However, the development of local creative economic potential for the muallafs cannot work by itself. Support and active participation from various parties are needed. The government, for example, can provide support in the form of training and mentoring.
programs for the muallafs to develop the skills and knowledge needed to manage their creative economic ventures.

In addition, the local community also needs to play an active role by providing support and promoting the potential of the local creative economy in their area. This support can be in the form of marketing local products, entrepreneurship training, and collaboration between converts and other local business actors. The potential of the local creative economy can be a sustainable source of income and provide benefits for the local community. Some of the potential for local creative economy that can be developed including handicrafts, culinary, and tourism. In this case, the muallaf resources can be used as the main actors in the development of the local creative economy.

However, developing the potential of the local creative economy is not easy. A support is needed from various parties, including the government and local communities. The support from the government can be in the form of providing facilities and funding, as well as policies that support the development of the local creative economy. Meanwhile, the support from the local community can be in the form of promotion and recognition of local creative economy products and businesses. In addition to support from various parties, developing the potential of the local creative economy also requires adequate skills and knowledge. Therefore, it is necessary to provide proper training and assistance for the muallaf. This training and mentoring can help them to develop the skills and knowledge needed to manage their creative economic ventures.

Thus, efforts to develop the potential of the local creative economy can be a solution to the economic problems faced by muallafs.

2 Methodology

The method in activities implementation to overcome the above problems contains the stages in the following diagram:

1. Initiation of a follow-up program of empowerment activities that will be carried out jointly between muallaf’s assistants and the Integrated, Effective, and Actual Advocacy, Rehabilitation, Aqidah Immunization Forum (Arimatea)
2. Exploration of the potential resources in the community that can be developed and have economic value.
3. Preparation of the training tools and materials.

1. Providing local creative economy-based training materials that were taken from natural resources in the surrounding environment.
2. The two activities, namely religious studies and training to empower local economic potential, were carried out at the same time and in the same place so that the muallafs have additional enthusiasm to continue reciting the Koran and to participate in additional activities.

3 Results and Discussion

According to the terminological meaning, the word “Muallaf” comes from Arabic which in the Qur'an is taken from the changed form of the word, namely allafa, yuallifu,
There are four verses of the Koran that discuss mu'allaf, seen from the form of the word, namely in surah Ali 'Imrān verse 103, surah al-Anfāl verse 63, surah at-Taubah verse 60, and surah an-Nur verse 43. Converts are divided into two, namely Muslims and the unbelievers. A person is no longer called a convert if his faith is strong and there are no longer fears of interference with Islam. The rights of converts are obtaining zakat, protection, and security. Their obligations are reciting the shahada, praying, fasting, and doing pilgrimage.

At-Tabari stated that the word ‘wa almu'allah qulūbuhum’ is interpreted with those whose hearts are still tamed to embrace Islam, themselves and their families will be good, such as Abū Sufyan ibn Ḥarb, ‘Uyainah ibn Badr, ‘Aqra’ ibn Hābis, and other tribal leaders. Furthermore, Ibn Kaṣīr interpreted converts consist of several groups. Among them are those who are given alms so they want to convert to Islam. As the Prophet Muhammad PBUH gave Šafwān ibn Umayya from the booty of Hunain, he was a polytheist and fought in the Hunain war. He said “the Apostle did not stop giving me until people loved me so much after they hated me so much”.

Meanwhile, Quraish Shihab interpreted the verse 103 of surah Ali 'Imrān to contain an order to hold fast to Allah's rope. The rope here is religious teachings or the Koran. His words fa allafa baina qulūbikum, translated into harmonizing or uniting your hearts, showed how strong their bond of affection and unity is because it is harmonized by Allah, not only their steps but also their hearts. If the hearts are united, any misunderstandings that exist will be easily resolved. The unity of the hearts of the people is the most important. People whose hearts have been united by God have the same nature as the others. The pain of his brother is equally felt and his joy is also shared. Brotherhood among fellow believers is established not only because of the similarity of faith but also like the brotherhood of descendants.

Moslem people who change their religion due to apostasy are common in several areas of Yogyakarta, especially in rural and remote areas where the economy is still very weak and lacks information facilities. There are several areas where religious conversions are very high, even those that used to be Muslim majority have turned into a minority, such as in the Minggir Sleman area and a small part of the Turi area.

Therefore, efforts to empower the community apart from being focused on efforts to strengthen Islamic studies are also mixed with activities to strengthen creative businesses in the community with the hope that they can add insight to explore potential and develop it so that it can be useful as additional income and their economy in the future. Even though the local mu'allafs already have some potential as a result of their creative endeavors, it seems that they still need to add new insights as an effort to develop it, so that it can become a support for the economy or become an additional value for family income.

The resources that exist in the Turi convert community are already available, including natural resources from agriculture. Several members of the community already have creative businesses in the form of food such as eggrolls and bakpia. The processing of natural resources is still focused on salak agricultural products. Therefore, we took the initiative to provide new insights regarding the processing of natural resources available in the surrounding environment by collaborating with speakers or trainers who are competent in this field who are still under the auspices of Arimathea, such as processing banana blossoms where banana plants are commonly found in the environment.

Based on the explanation above, in this empowerment program, we tried not only to share insights into knowledge of Islamic teachings as a step towards understanding Islamic teachings, but also to provide insight into the development of knowledge about creative endeavors by utilizing natural resources in the surrounding environment. The follow-up program that will be developed in addition to religious studies together with Arimatea's social activists is the management of local resource potential in the community, where Arimatea's partner in assisting converts also has a special field related to this problem, namely with Mr.
Markus who is experienced in processing of natural resources into something efficient. Mr. Markus has the expertise to process natural materials which in society lack many benefits into ingredients for medicines such as herbs, or into food ingredients that provide nutritional value for health.

**Figure 2. Muallafs’ training and development activities**

One example of an empowerment program was the initiation on how to use parts of a banana tree because this tree is easy to find in residents' neighborhoods. This initiation was to process the blossoms of the banana into food that can be consumed and has nutritional value. Additionally, there was also the utilization of coconuts which can be made and processed into virgin coconut oil (VCO).

This empowerment activity program has a dual benefit objective, namely in addition to additional knowledge so that muallafs have economic power from creative processed products from natural resources around them, it is also an encouragement tool for them to always take part in religious studies which remains their main activity. Thus, these two activities were delivered at one time and in one place without overpowering the study of religious knowledge.

The program of strengthening activities for muallaf in the Turi region has been going well. They already have a routine activity agenda every Wednesday which focuses on activities used to strengthen Islamic studies. Islamic studies activities are the main activity. However, it does not rule out the possibility of other activities besides religious activities, such as the one being conducted in the joint service team with Arimate Yogyakarta, namely interspersion activities by providing knowledge on the utilization of natural resources in the Turi region such as utilizing banana weevils to be used as delicious snack foods and processing coconuts into virgin coconut oil.

Furthermore, the activity was also interspersed with the provision of knowledge about the use of local plants that can be used as traditional medicines. These various activities can provide motivation to the recitation congregation to always be enthusiastic about attending study activities, reducing boredom, and increasing knowledge.
Figure 3. Knowing traditional medicine

4 Conclusion

Basically, there will be many challenges that will be faced by the muallaf community. The conversion from one belief to another will certainly have an impact on changing the life of the converts themselves or the social life that they will face.
The causes of people moving from one belief to another are also caused by certain factors, both internal influences due to their own desires and external factors such as economic problems and others.

For this reason, it is necessary for the muallafs to strengthen internally, namely through a deep understanding of Islamic teachings, especially issues of monotheism related to faith as well as procedures to implement Islamic teachings in daily life related to Islamic shari'ah. As for the external factors, it can be solved by providing assistance and additional insight for them to develop their own potential both related to the economy through developing the potential of local creative economic and related to social activities such as strengthening their understanding of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) Islamiyah that all Muslims are brothers and sisters, must help each other, and must share in any way so as to provide peace and comfort in the hearts of the muallafs.

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