

Strengthening Post Disaster Community Resilience Through Participatory Humanitarian Assistance in Bengkelang Village Aceh Tamiang

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Abstract. Natural disasters can disrupt access to basic needs, social services, household facilities, and community well-being, making collaborative post-disaster recovery essential. This community service activity aimed to support the recovery of disaster-affected communities and strengthen community resilience through participatory humanitarian assistance in Bengkelang Village, Aceh Tamiang Regency. The activity employed a participatory and collaborative approach involving the Universitas Terbuka community service team, village government, community leaders, volunteers, and affected residents. The implementation consisted of four stages: needs assessment, program planning and aid procurement, distribution of assistance, and monitoring and evaluation. Data were collected through field observations, interviews with village officials, and discussions with affected residents and were analyzed descriptively. The results showed that the assistance provided was aligned with identified community needs, particularly in the areas of energy, clean water, sanitation, household activities, accommodation, and spiritual support. The distributed assistance included generators, water tanks, stoves, bathroom equipment, mats, blankets, sarongs, cooking utensils, and the Qur'an. The program contributed to improving access to essential resources, supporting daily household activities, increasing comfort in temporary living conditions, and strengthening social solidarity between the university and the local community. The participatory needs assessment and collaboration among stakeholders also facilitated more targeted and transparent assistance distribution.

Keywords: Community service; Disasters; Humanitarian Assistance; Community Resilience; Aceh Tamiang

1. Introduction

Disaster management is increasingly understood not merely as an emergency response mechanism, but as a comprehensive process that connects risk reduction, preparedness, response, recovery, and community empowerment. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 emphasizes the importance of understanding disaster risk, strengthening disaster risk governance, investing in resilience, and

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improving preparedness for effective response and recovery (Hamill-Stewart, 2025; Nekoei-Moghadam *et al.*, 2024). Within this framework, affected communities are not simply recipients of assistance but important actors in identifying risks, determining priorities, and rebuilding their social and material capacities. Norris *et al.* (2008) conceptualize community resilience as a process that links adaptive capacities, including economic resources, social capital, information and communication, and community competence, to the capacity of communities to adapt following disruptive events. Thus, an ideal post-disaster intervention should address immediate humanitarian needs while simultaneously strengthening the social capacities that enable communities to recover and adapt.

Post-disaster communities frequently experience multiple and interconnected disruptions. Damage to household facilities, limited access to electricity and clean water, inadequate sanitation, disrupted transportation, and temporary living conditions can make daily activities difficult and prolong the recovery process. In Aceh Tamiang, flooding has repeatedly disrupted community activities and access to local infrastructure. The National Disaster Management Agency reported that flooding in October 2022 caused the Tamiang River to overflow, with water levels reaching approximately 80 centimeters in some areas and road access between several villages becoming disrupted (Basriwijaya *et al.*, 2026; Nur Alifa *et al.*, 2025). Bengkelang Village was also among the villages affected by flooding in the Aceh Tamiang area documented by disaster authorities. These conditions demonstrate that post-disaster assistance needs to be responsive to the concrete circumstances of local households rather than relying solely on standardized forms of relief.

The literature further demonstrates that community resilience depends not only on physical infrastructure but also on social relationships, access to information, community participation, and the ability of local actors to mobilize resources. Aldrich & Meyer (2015) emphasize that social capital and community networks play a critical role in disaster survival and recovery, suggesting that social infrastructure can be as important as physical infrastructure in strengthening resilience. Norris *et al.* (2008) similarly identify social capital, information and communication, and community competence as key adaptive capacities. In the Indonesian context, Lessy *et al.* (2026) show that village resilience is closely related to access to basic services, disaster-management systems, risk-reduction actions, emergency preparedness, and recovery preparedness. Their study also places community participation and collaboration among local governments, universities, nongovernmental organizations, and community groups within the broader framework of village resilience.

Participatory approaches are particularly relevant because the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance is strongly influenced by whether interventions correspond to the needs and priorities identified by affected communities. Islam *et al.* (2020), in their study of sustainable disaster recovery in Bangladesh, found that meaningful community participation is shaped by structural and operational factors and emphasized the importance of collaboration and integration among government and non-governmental recovery actors. Similarly, Tagliacozzo & Magni (2016) argue that communication with affected communities should be treated as an integral component of humanitarian assistance, particularly during post-disaster reconstruction. Their findings indicate that affected populations require not only material support but also access to information, opportunities to communicate their needs, and channels through which they can



participate in recovery processes. These perspectives reinforce the importance of needs assessment, dialogue, feedback, and local collaboration in designing post-disaster community service interventions.

Research on participatory recovery in Indonesia also indicates that involving affected residents can contribute to longer-term disaster awareness and capacity building. A study examining post-disaster housing reconstruction in Aceh, Yogyakarta, and Padang found that participation in reconstruction was associated with disaster awareness and suggested that participatory methods can contribute to community capacity during the recovery process (Benazir et al., 2026; Setyonugroho & Maki, 2024). Nevertheless, much of the existing literature focuses on disaster preparedness, housing reconstruction, risk assessment, or broader community resilience frameworks. Less attention has been given to university-led humanitarian assistance that begins with a local needs assessment and directly links the distribution of practical household resources with social and spiritual dimensions of post-disaster recovery. This gap is particularly relevant for community service programs because their contribution should not be measured merely by the quantity of aid distributed, but also by the relevance of the assistance and its contribution to community recovery.

The present community service activity offers a distinct contribution by positioning humanitarian assistance as a participatory recovery intervention rather than as a one-way distribution of relief goods. The program begins with direct observation, interviews, and discussions with village officials and affected residents to identify urgent needs, followed by planning, procurement, distribution, and evaluation. The assistance includes generators, water tanks, stoves, bathroom equipment, mats, blankets, sarongs, cooking utensils, and the Qur'an, thereby addressing energy, water, sanitation, household, accommodation, and spiritual needs simultaneously. This approach extends the people-centred orientation of disaster recovery discussed by prior researchers by combining practical material assistance, community participation, institutional collaboration, and spiritual support within a single university-led intervention. Such integration is also consistent with the broader humanitarian principle that affected communities should be treated as active partners whose needs and feedback shape program implementation (Beckham et al., 2023; Nurdin, 2024; Ogie et al., 2022).

The involvement of higher education institutions is significant because universities possess academic knowledge, human resources, institutional networks, and social responsibilities that can be mobilized during disaster recovery. Gibbs et al. (2022) argue that universities have an important role in disaster resilience because they function not only as educational institutions but also as knowledge producers and socially embedded actors capable of contributing to disaster risk reduction and recovery. Their work highlights the need for universities to develop relationships with multiple stakeholder groups and to connect academic functions with broader social responsibilities for resilience. In the context of community service, this role can be translated into direct engagement with local governments and communities through needs-based humanitarian programs. The present activity therefore has significance not only for the beneficiary community but also for strengthening the practical implementation of the university's social responsibility through a collaborative and locally responsive model of post-disaster assistance.

Based on this context, the community service activity was conducted to support post-disaster recovery and strengthen community resilience in Bengkelang Village, Aceh



Tamiang Regency, through participatory humanitarian assistance. Specifically, the activity aimed to identify the priority needs of affected residents, provide assistance that corresponded to those needs, strengthen collaboration between Universitas Terbuka, the village government, community leaders, and local residents, and examine the contribution of the intervention to the fulfillment of basic needs and social resilience. By documenting the implementation and outcomes of this intervention, the activity seeks to demonstrate how university-led community service can move beyond short-term aid distribution toward a more participatory, collaborative, and holistic approach to post-disaster community recovery.

2. Methods

This community service activity was implemented in Bengkelang Village, Aceh Tamiang Regency, as part of the 2026 Disaster Scheme Community Service Program of Universitas Terbuka. The activity adopted a participatory and collaborative approach that positioned the affected community as an important source of information in determining the priorities of assistance (Mallory, 2024; Omodan & Dastile, 2023). The implementation involved the Universitas Terbuka community service team, the Bengkelang Village Government, community leaders, volunteers, and representatives of disaster-affected residents. This approach was selected to ensure that the intervention reflected the actual conditions and priority needs of the local community while strengthening coordination among institutional and community actors.

The first stage was a community needs assessment conducted through direct field observation, interviews with village officials, and discussions with affected residents. The assessment focused on the conditions experienced by the community after the disaster and on urgent needs that could support daily life during the recovery period. The information gathered covered basic necessities, sanitation, energy, household equipment, and spiritual needs. The results of this assessment were then used as the basis for determining the type and priority of humanitarian assistance, thereby ensuring that the assistance was needs-based rather than distributed solely according to predetermined packages.

The second and third stages consisted of program planning, procurement, and distribution of assistance. Based on the assessment findings, the service team developed an assistance plan and procured items considered most relevant to the community's immediate conditions. The assistance consisted of generators, water tanks, stoves, bathroom equipment, mats, blankets, sarongs, cooking utensils, and the Qur'an. Distribution was conducted directly in Bengkelang Village in coordination with village officials to facilitate orderly and transparent delivery to beneficiaries. During the distribution process, the service team also interacted and communicated with community members to understand their experiences and provide moral support in addition to material assistance.

The fourth stage involved monitoring and evaluation of the implementation and utilization of the assistance. Monitoring was conducted to observe whether the distributed assistance could be utilized by beneficiaries and whether it responded to the needs identified during the initial assessment. Evaluation was carried out through discussions with the village government and community representatives concerning the benefits of the program and additional needs that remained after the intervention. The feedback obtained from these discussions was used to assess the implementation of the



activity and formulate recommendations for subsequent community service programs. Thus, evaluation was not limited to the completion of aid distribution but also considered community feedback and the sustainability of future interventions.

The data generated throughout the activity were analyzed using a qualitative descriptive approach. The analysis focused on describing the implementation process, the types of assistance provided, community needs identified during the assessment, and the perceived contribution of the intervention to post-disaster recovery. Information obtained from observations, interviews, discussions, and monitoring activities was interpreted descriptively to provide an overall understanding of how needs-based humanitarian assistance supported the affected community. The effectiveness of the activity was reflected in the correspondence between identified needs and the assistance delivered, the utilization of the assistance for daily activities, and the collaborative process involving the university, village government, community leaders, and residents.

3. Results and Discussion

The implementation of the 2026 Disaster Scheme Community Service Program in Bengkelang Village, Aceh Tamiang Regency, was carried out through coordination among the Universitas Terbuka service team, the village government, community leaders, and representatives of disaster-affected residents. The activity was designed around the needs identified through field observation, interviews, and discussions, allowing the assistance to be directed toward resources considered important for daily life during the post-disaster recovery period. The implementation indicates that humanitarian assistance was not treated solely as a process of delivering relief goods, but also as an opportunity to establish communication and collaboration between the university and the affected community (Fu & Zhang, 2024; Lin & Lee, 2025).

The findings demonstrate three interconnected outcomes of the program. First, participatory needs identification enabled the service team to provide assistance that corresponded to the concrete conditions experienced by residents. Second, the assistance supported the restoration of basic household functions, particularly access to electricity, clean water, cooking facilities, sanitation, and temporary living needs. Third, interaction among the university team, village government, and residents contributed to social solidarity and provided material as well as spiritual support during the recovery period. These three findings suggest that the contribution of university community service in disaster contexts extends beyond short-term relief toward supporting the social process of community recovery.

3.1. Needs Based Humanitarian Assistance Through Participatory Assessment

The first finding concerns the relevance of the assistance to the actual needs of the affected community. The initial assessment identified limitations in basic needs, sanitation, energy availability, household equipment, and spiritual requirements. Based on these findings, the service team prioritized generators, water tanks, stoves, bathroom equipment, mats, blankets, sarongs, cooking utensils, and the Qur'an. The sequence shows that the intervention was based on a needs-assessment process rather than on a uniform aid package. Field observation, interviews with village officials, and discussions with affected residents provided the information used to determine the priorities of assistance. This finding is important because post-disaster recovery takes place within specific local conditions. Different households may face different disruptions depending on the extent



of damage to infrastructure, access to services, and household resources. In this activity, the participatory assessment created a direct connection between community conditions and the form of intervention. The involvement of village officials and residents also facilitated the distribution process and helped ensure that assistance could reach the intended beneficiaries in an orderly manner.

Table 1 Community Needs Assessment and Corresponding Humanitarian Assistance

Assessment Domain	Identified Community Needs	Humanitarian Assistance Provided	Intended Function
Basic needs	Limitations in meeting essential daily needs after the disaster	Generators, water tanks, stoves, cooking utensils	Support essential household activities and daily living
Energy access	Limited electricity supply in post-disaster conditions	Generators	Provide electricity for lighting and the use of supporting equipment
Clean water and sanitation	Limited access to water and sanitation facilities	Water tanks and bathroom equipment	Support water storage, hygiene, washing, and sanitation
Household facilities	Damage or loss of household equipment	Stoves and cooking utensils	Enable households to prepare food independently
Temporary living conditions	Limited facilities for rest in temporary shelters or damaged houses	Mats, blankets, and sarongs	Improve comfort and support basic resting needs
Spiritual needs	Need for spiritual support during the recovery period	Qur'an	Support worship and provide spiritual strengthening
Community participation	Need to align assistance with actual local conditions	Field observation, interviews, and community discussions	Establish needs-based priorities and strengthen coordination with local actors

Source: Community service activity data from the 2026 Disaster Scheme in Bengkelang Village, Aceh Tamiang Regency.

The findings in Table 1 show that the humanitarian assistance was developed through a participatory needs-assessment process that connected identified community conditions with specific forms of assistance. Field observations, interviews with village officials, and discussions with affected residents identified needs related to basic necessities, energy, clean water, sanitation, household facilities, temporary living conditions, and spiritual support, which were subsequently translated into the provision of generators, water tanks, stoves, bathroom equipment, mats, blankets, sarongs, cooking utensils, and the Qur'an. This process demonstrates that the intervention was not based on a uniform aid package but on locally identified priorities. The involvement of village officials and residents also supported orderly distribution and enabled the service team to communicate directly with beneficiaries about their circumstances and remaining needs.



Thus, participation functioned not only as a method of collecting information but also as a mechanism for improving the relevance of humanitarian assistance and strengthening coordination between the university and local community actors.

The results therefore indicate that participation functioned as a practical mechanism for improving the relevance of humanitarian assistance. Rather than positioning residents only as recipients, the program created opportunities for them to communicate their conditions and needs. This approach also strengthened coordination between the university and local actors. The contribution of the intervention can consequently be understood not only from the goods delivered, but also from the process through which the priorities of assistance were identified and collectively addressed.

3.2. Supporting the Recovery of Basic Living Conditions

The second finding is related to the contribution of humanitarian assistance to the restoration of everyday living conditions. The provision of generators responded to limitations in electricity availability during emergency and recovery conditions. The presence of electricity supported nighttime lighting and the operation of basic equipment, thereby helping residents resume daily activities. Similarly, the provision of water tanks increased water storage capacity and supported activities such as cooking, washing, and personal hygiene. The program therefore addressed infrastructure-related limitations that directly affected household routines after the disaster.

The provision of stoves and cooking utensils also supported household independence during the recovery period. According to the activity findings, some affected households had experienced damage or loss of household equipment. The availability of replacement cooking equipment enabled residents to prepare food independently and reduced their dependence on ready-to-eat assistance. This indicates that the intervention was relevant not only to immediate emergency conditions but also to the restoration of household functions. Meanwhile, mats, blankets, and sarongs helped improve living and resting conditions for residents staying in temporary shelters or damaged houses.

Taken together, these findings show that humanitarian assistance can contribute to recovery through relatively simple resources that have direct practical functions in everyday life. The value of assistance was therefore reflected in its utilization by the community rather than merely in its distribution. The program addressed several interconnected dimensions of post-disaster needs, including energy, water, cooking, sanitation, and accommodation. This multidimensional character is particularly relevant to community service because it demonstrates how higher education institutions can translate institutional resources into interventions that respond directly to conditions experienced by affected residents.

3.3. Strengthening Social and Spiritual Resilience Through Collaboration

The third finding concerns the social and spiritual dimensions of recovery. In addition to providing material assistance, the program involved direct interaction between the service team and residents during the distribution process. These interactions created opportunities for the team to understand the conditions experienced by the community while also providing moral support. The provision of the Qur'an further expanded the scope of the intervention by addressing a spiritual dimension that the community identified as relevant to post-disaster life.



The findings indicate that spiritual support was understood as part of the community's recovery needs rather than as an additional activity separate from humanitarian assistance. The Qur'an was intended not only as an object of worship but also as a source of spiritual strengthening. In the context of this community service activity, material and spiritual assistance were therefore integrated into a broader effort to support residents during the recovery period. The article's findings suggest that a recovery intervention addressing both dimensions can create a more comprehensive form of community support.

Another important result was the strengthening of collaboration among Universitas Terbuka, the village government, community leaders, and local residents. The village government's involvement facilitated the implementation and distribution process, while community participation supported the identification of needs and evaluation of program benefits. The activity consequently strengthened social solidarity between the university and the community. This collaborative dimension is significant because post-disaster recovery requires interaction among actors with different resources and responsibilities. The experience in Bengkelang Village demonstrates that university-led humanitarian programs can serve simultaneously as mechanisms of assistance and as spaces for building institutional and community collaboration.



Figure 1. a. Discussion and Picture with Villagers, b. Distribution of Assistance to Bengkelang Villagers

Figures 1(a) and 1(b) document the implementation of the community service activities in Bengkelang Village, Aceh Tamiang Regency. Figure 1(a), Discussion and Picture with Villagers, shows the interaction between the community service team and local residents during the discussion and field coordination process, which provided an opportunity to identify community conditions, needs, and priorities following the disaster. Meanwhile, Figure 1(b), Distribution of Assistance to Bengkelang Villagers, illustrates the process of distributing humanitarian assistance to affected residents as part of the post-disaster recovery program. The two figures demonstrate the participatory and collaborative nature of the activity, in which communication with residents was followed by the provision of assistance based on the needs identified during the assessment process.

3.4. Participatory Humanitarian Assistance as a Pathway to Community Resilience

The findings from Bengkelang Village indicate that needs-based humanitarian assistance can function as more than a mechanism for distributing post-disaster relief; it can also become an entry point for strengthening community resilience. The use of field observation, interviews, and discussions with village officials and affected residents



enabled the service team to identify priorities based on the community's actual conditions. This approach is consistent with the Sendai Framework, which emphasizes understanding disaster risk, strengthening disaster risk governance, investing in resilience, and supporting recovery through a Build Back Better approach (Kousky, 2019; Landaeta & Richman, 2023). In its more recent strategic framework, Horn et al. (2026) also emphasizes locally led disaster risk reduction and recovery readiness, including the participation and leadership of people most affected by disaster. Thus, the experience in Bengkelang demonstrates the practical importance of placing community needs and local knowledge at the center of post-disaster intervention.

The participatory assessment undertaken in Bengkelang also demonstrates that the relevance of humanitarian assistance depends on the extent to which affected residents are involved in identifying their priorities. The provision of generators, water tanks, cooking equipment, sanitation facilities, mats, blankets, sarongs, and Qur'ans reflected different dimensions of household needs rather than a standardized relief package. This finding can be understood through the concept of community resilience proposed by Norris et al. (2008), who identify social capital, economic development, information and communication, and community competence as interconnected adaptive capacities that enable communities to respond and adapt following disasters. In this context, communication between the university team, village government, and residents was not merely administrative, but became part of the adaptive capacity through which available resources were connected with concrete community needs.

The restoration of basic household functions further illustrates how relatively simple forms of assistance can contribute to the recovery process. Generators helped address electricity limitations, water tanks supported household water needs, while stoves and cooking utensils enabled residents to resume food preparation independently. Mats, blankets, and sarongs similarly supported basic living conditions during the recovery period. These findings reinforce Aldrich & Meyer (2015) argument that disaster resilience should not be understood exclusively in terms of physical infrastructure because social capital and community networks also play an important role in survival and recovery. In the Bengkelang context, material assistance and social interaction operated simultaneously, the goods addressed immediate functional needs, while coordination among actors facilitated access to those resources and supported the continuation of everyday community life.

Another important dimension emerging from the program is the relationship between humanitarian assistance, social solidarity, and spiritual support. Interaction during the distribution process created opportunities for communication between university representatives and residents, while the provision of the Qur'an responded to a spiritual need identified within the community. Although the present activity does not quantitatively measure changes in psychological or spiritual well-being, the finding suggests that post-disaster recovery should be viewed through a multidimensional lens that includes material, social, communicative, and culturally meaningful forms of support. Norris et al. (2008) emphasize that community resilience involves not only material resources but also social capital, communication, community competence, and the capacity to maintain functioning after adversity. Similarly, Aldrich & Meyer (2015) highlight the importance of social networks and social infrastructure in supporting disaster recovery. Therefore, the combination of material and social-spiritual assistance in



Bengkelang can be interpreted as an initial contribution to strengthening the community's adaptive capacity rather than simply as short-term charity.

The collaboration among Universitas Terbuka, the village government, community leaders, and affected residents demonstrates the importance of multi-actor partnerships in post-disaster recovery. Osei-Kyei *et al.* (2024) emphasizes that inclusion and collaboration are critical elements of resilience building, while its stakeholder framework places local authorities, communities, civil society, academia, and other actors within an all-of-society approach to disaster risk reduction. The Bengkelang experience is therefore consistent with the broader disaster-resilience perspective that recovery is strengthened when institutional resources and local capacities are connected through collaboration. For future community service programs, this finding provides a basis for moving from short-term humanitarian assistance toward integrated activities involving disaster preparedness education, community-based risk mapping, psychosocial support, livelihood recovery, and local capacity building. Such continuity would allow immediate relief interventions to become part of a longer-term process of strengthening community resilience.

4. Conclusions

The implementation of the 2026 Disaster Scheme Community Service Program in Bengkelang Village, Aceh Tamiang Regency, demonstrates that university-led humanitarian assistance can contribute to post-disaster community recovery when it is developed through participatory needs identification and collaboration with local stakeholders. The assessment process involving field observation, interviews, and discussions enabled the service team to identify concrete household priorities and align the assistance with the conditions experienced by affected residents.

The program provided practical support for the restoration of basic living conditions through the distribution of generators, water tanks, cooking equipment, sanitation facilities, mats, blankets, sarongs, and Qur'ans. These forms of assistance addressed interconnected needs related to electricity, water, food preparation, hygiene, temporary living conditions, and spiritual support. The findings indicate that the usefulness of humanitarian assistance is closely related to its relevance to the everyday needs of affected households rather than solely to the quantity of resources distributed.

The program strengthened communication and collaboration among Universitas Terbuka, the village government, community leaders, and affected residents. These interactions created opportunities for mutual understanding, coordination, and social solidarity during the recovery period. The integration of material and spiritual assistance also reflects the importance of considering the social and cultural context of affected communities in designing post-disaster interventions. The program demonstrates that community service in disaster-affected areas can extend beyond short-term relief toward an initial contribution to community resilience. However, the intervention represents an early stage of recovery and does not by itself address longer-term disaster vulnerabilities. Future programs should therefore develop continuous activities involving disaster preparedness education, community-based risk reduction, psychosocial support, livelihood recovery, and local capacity building. Such continuity would help transform immediate humanitarian assistance into a more sustainable community resilience-building process.



Acknowledgments

Universitas Terbuka Community Service Team expressed its gratitude to the Bengkelang Village Government, Aceh Tamiang Regency, all beneficiary communities, and all parties who have supported the implementation of the 2026 Disaster Scheme Community Service Program so that activities can run well and provide benefits to communities affected by disasters.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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