

# Analysis of Dakwah Approaches in the “Dekat Di Hati Anak Malaysia” Program at Kampung Pahu Sarayo, Ranau, Sabah

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the dakwah approaches and the impact of implementing the Dekat di Hati “Anak Malaysia” 2023 program, which was conducted through the Kursus Amali Dakwah (MPU 2613) by students of the Institut Pengajian Islam dan Dakwah Sabah (IPDAS). The program was implemented over a two-week period in Kampung Pahu Sarayo, Ranau, Sabah, focusing on community-based dakwah activities encompassing religious enrichment, community engagement, and human development. This study employed a qualitative approach through direct observation, participant involvement, and informal feedback from the villagers throughout the program. The findings indicate that the dakwah approaches applied particularly through high-impact activities such as the Halal Skills Course, Tahsin Ibadah (Funeral Management), Sports Carnival, Islamic Festival, and Tausiyah Air Mata Palestin positively influenced the strengthening of social relations, increased community participation, and enhanced basic religious understanding among the villagers. Additionally, the program successfully improved students’ soft skills, including effective communication, leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving. However, the study also identified several key challenges, such as limited understanding of fiqh and the Qur’an, confusion regarding certain muamalat issues, low mosque attendance, language barriers, and logistical constraints. Overall, the findings demonstrate that systematically planned and contextually implemented community based dakwah programs can provide mutual benefits for both students and the community. Therefore, programs of this nature should be sustained and strengthened as a platform for field dakwah training and as a medium for the continuous development of the Muslim community.

**Keywords:** Community-based dakwah, community development, field dakwah, IPDAS, soft skills

## INTRODUCTION

The Kursus Amali Dakwah (MPU 2613) is a core course required for all Semester 6 students at the Institut Pengajian Islam dan Dakwah Sabah (IPDAS) as a graduation requirement. This course is designed to integrate both theoretical and practical elements of dakwah directly in the field, in line with the objectives of Islamic education, which emphasize the holistic development of a preacher’s understanding, skills, and character. Through this course, students are evaluated not only academically but also in their ability to plan, implement, and assess the effectiveness of dakwah activities in real community contexts.

For this session, the theme of the Kursus Amali Dakwah program was the Dekat di Hati Anak Malaysia 2023 program. The program aims to provide students with direct exposure to the planning and implementation of community-based dakwah activities. Additionally, the course serves to train students in understanding the social realities, cultural context, and backgrounds of the local communities while developing communication skills, leadership, teamwork, and sensitivity to the needs of the *mad’u* (dakwah recipients). This approach aligns with

the concept of dakwah bil-hal, which emphasizes conveying Islamic messages through actions, character, and effective social interaction (Ismail, 2015; Yusof & Ahmad, 2018).

In general, the Dekat di Hati Anak Malaysia 2023 program was conducted over 14 days, from 5 November to 18 November 2023. The program involved several villages in the West Coast region of Sabah, namely Kampung Cinta Mata, Kundasang; Kampung Sumalang, Ranau; Kampung Pahu Sarayo, Ranau; and Kampung Sosondoton, Ranau, Sabah. Each village was assigned a group of 19 Semester 6 students to ensure the planning and implementation of dakwah activities were organized and focused. For this session, Group 4 was tasked with implementing the dakwah program in Kampung Pahu Sarayo, Ranau, Sabah.

The selection of Kampung Pahu Sarayo as the location for the Program Amali Dakwah was based on several significant factors. The village is a rural area with high potential as a continuous dakwah field, particularly in terms of developing understanding and the internalization of Islamic teachings among the local community. Although the majority of Kampung Pahu Sarayo's residents are Muslim, they still require more comprehensive exposure to aspects of aqidah (creed), worship, and the application of Islamic values in daily life. Moreover, the program aims to build and strengthen Islamic solidarity (*ukhwah Islamiyah*) and community relations between the village residents and IPDAS, fostering harmonious cooperation between the Islamic educational institution and the local community. Community-based dakwah approaches like this are seen as effective in delivering Islamic messages because they are conducted in a close, friendly, and contextually relevant environment (Aziz, 2017; Rahman, 2020a).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In the context of higher education, practical dakwah programs such as the Kursus Amali Dakwah (MPU 2613) at the Institut Pengajian Islam dan Dakwah Sabah (IPDAS) serve as a crucial platform for students to apply dakwah theories in real-life situations. Previous studies have shown that student involvement in community activities enhances soft skills, including interpersonal communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and leadership skills (Aziz, 2017). Activities such as the Halal Slaughtering Course (Seni Halal), Funeral Management, Sports Carnival, and Islamic Festival emphasize a holistic approach to dakwah, integrating both theoretical and practical learning, while fostering harmonious relationships between students, the community, and governmental or non-governmental agencies (Rahman, 2020). However, the effectiveness of field dakwah programs is often limited by several challenges, including language barriers, limited understanding of Fiqh and the Qur'an, and logistical issues such as lack of equipment and transportation (Yusof & Ahmad, 2018). Ismail (2015) argues that systematic management of resources and placement is critical for ensuring the smooth implementation of dakwah programs. Furthermore, the community's understanding of specific issues, such as gambling and funeral management, needs to be enhanced through approaches tailored to the local cultural and linguistic context (Abdullah, 2016).

The implementation of community-based dakwah programs has long been recognized as an effective medium for spreading Islamic values in a practical and comprehensive manner (Ismail, 2015). Systematically planned field dakwah not only exposes the community to religious knowledge but also plays a crucial role in shaping students' soft skills through practical experience (Rahman, 2020; Yusof & Ahmad, 2018). This concept aligns with the "learning by doing" approach in Islamic education, which emphasizes field experience as an effective learning medium for building leadership, communication, and social skills (Abdullah, 2016). While numerous studies on dakwah have been written and discussed by scholars, the implementation of dakwah through the Dekat di Hati 'Anak Malaysia' program in Kampung Pahu Sarayo, Ranau, Sabah has not yet been explored.

This literature review will analyze previous studies related to this topic, including studies on dakwah approaches, contemporary dakwah, and the importance of dakwah knowledge. Research on the implementation of dakwah among various ethnic groups has also been conducted. Monib et al. (2025) examined the challenges and strategies of dakwah implementation faced by participants of the IPDAS Amali Dakwah Program 2024 in the Beaufort District, Sabah. Their findings highlighted major challenges, such as communication barriers between ethnic groups, resource and facility shortages, and the need for contextual cultural understanding. Nonetheless, approaches such as dakwah Bil Hal, dakwah Fardiyyah, dakwah Bil Lisan, and direct community engagement were successful in enhancing community understanding and acceptance of Islamic messages.

Shukri et al. (2025a) aimed to analyze the dakwah approaches used and their effectiveness in delivering Islamic messages with wisdom and strategy. The findings showed that dakwah approaches based on wisdom, empathy, and understanding of local knowledge played a vital role in increasing the effectiveness of the program. Hence, the dakwah approach in the IPDAS Amali Dakwah Program is seen as a platform with the potential to strengthen the role of Islamic educational institutions in community development and the deepening of Islam within local communities in Sabah. Shukri et al. (2025b) further aimed to identify suitable dakwah approaches for practical dakwah programs, examine challenges faced during their implementation, and suggest improvements for future programs in Kampung Mesilou, Kundasang. Their study identified five appropriate forms of dakwah implementation, including the Funeral Management Course, Halal Slaughtering Course, Jom Mengaji Program, Smart Islamic Arts Program, and Kem Bestari Solat (Series I & II). The challenges faced in implementing dakwah included low adherence to ethical practices, limited equipment and services, unsuitable scheduling, the modernization of the village population, and the geographical challenges of the village.

Studies on the ethnic communities in Sabah have also been conducted by scholars. Mokhtar et al. (2021a) aimed to explore the lifestyle of the Sungai ethnic group, their reaction to Islamic teachings, the factors that led the Sungai ethnic group to embrace Islam, and the appropriate dakwah implementation for the Sungai ethnic group in Sabah. Their findings indicated that the dakwah approach towards the Sungai community, using methods such as wisdom, mujadalah, dakwah Bil Lisan, and dakwah Am, was effective in attracting the Sungai ethnic group to explore Islam more deeply. Furthermore, Mokhtar et al. (2025a) sought to identify appropriate dakwah strategies for the Murut ethnic group in Sabah. The study showed that effective dakwah approaches for the Murut community included building social relationships, understanding community psychology, effective communication, a non-confrontational approach to religious issues, and providing basic infrastructure. This study also identified seven major challenges in the implementation of dakwah for the Murut community in Sabah. For the Bugis community, Mokhtar et al. (2025b) examined suitable dakwah strategies for the Bugis community in Sabah, who continue to hold on to their ancestral customs and rituals. The study identified several dakwah methods appropriate for the Bugis community, such as using approaches based on wisdom, mujadalah, ta'aruf, dakwah Bil Hal, dakwah Bil Lisan, and the dakwah practitioner as a counselor. The appropriate dakwah approach tailored to the recipients' needs and expectations is a key indicator of success in Islamic dakwah activities.

Research on the prospects and challenges of implementing dakwah through contemporary media was also conducted by Mokhtar et al. (2021b). This study aimed to analyze the prospects and challenges of implementing dakwah through contemporary media as a measure of success for modern dakwah. The high dependency on mass media has posed significant challenges for dakwah practitioners in spreading authentic messages and combating the spread of false information, particularly concerning Islam. The findings highlighted various prospects and challenges faced by contemporary dakwah practitioners, including the need to equip themselves with knowledge and skills in information technology, counteracting the rise of pseudo (ustaz and ustazah), and managing the overwhelming flow of information on religious issues. This study aims to serve as a guide for contemporary dakwah practitioners in preparing themselves before engaging in dakwah through modern media.

In Mokhtar's (2014) study, the focus was on identifying dakwah strategies implemented by JHEAINS (Islamic Religious Affairs Department of Sabah), analyzing the Spiritual Module used in Malaysian Prisons, and evaluating the dakwah approaches in Sandakan Prison. The study revealed that JAKIM (Department of Islamic Development Malaysia) was more directly involved in implementing dakwah in prisons, while JHEAINS and USIA (Islamic Organization of Sabah) acted as policy implementers. The study also showed that the Spiritual Module used in prisons required restructuring to align with the potential and abilities of inmates. The dakwah approaches used in Sandakan Prison, including dakwah bi al-Nafs, dakwah Fardiyyah, dakwah Bil Hal, dakwah al-cĀm, and dakwah Bil Risalah, had significant implications for prison officers and dakwah practitioners in spreading Islamic teachings (Mokhtar et al., 2019).

The study by Mokhtar et al. (2025d) examined the da'wah policies and strategies implemented by religious institutions for prisoners in Sabah. It also explored the collaborative roles of the Sabah State Islamic Religious Affairs Department (JHEAINS), the All-Sabah Islamic Organisation (USIA), and the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) in delivering da'wah to inmates across the state. The findings indicate that the

core mission of these institutions revolves around community-based da'wah outreach, targeting both Muslims and non-Muslims. Nevertheless, the primary responsibility for prison-based da'wah has been entrusted to JAKIM as the government-designated agency. Despite this division of responsibilities, all three institutions actively collaborate to uphold and promote the values of human civilization in Sabah.

Additionally, the study by Mokhtar et al. (2023a) aims to explore the priority of dakwah bi al-Nafs as a catalyst for spreading the virus of negative traits in one's self-leadership. The findings of this study highlight two main aspects that serve as indicators for the spread of these negative traits: general worship (ibadah), and specific worship (ibadah Khas). Both forms of worship must be performed sincerely and with the intention of pleasing Allah SWT, rather than seeking praise from others. To create a civilized society based on noble values, we should apply dakwah bi al-Nafs in our lives so that the virus of negative traits does not easily approach the hearts of the children of Adam.

As for studies related to dakwah Bil Akhlak, Mokhtar et al. (2021c) sought to examine how contemporary dakwah Bil Akhlak practiced by entrepreneurs aligns with the concept of Islamic entrepreneurship and the ethical traits required by Islam for entrepreneurs. The findings show that the contemporary dakwah Bil Akhlak approach positively impacts Islamic entrepreneurship by applying noble ethics such as honesty, truthfulness, trustworthiness, responsibility, sincerity, keeping promises, patience, fairness, knowledge, gratitude, optimism, and reliance on Allah SWT, as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Through the implementation of contemporary dakwah Bil Akhlak, an entrepreneur becomes approachable, trustworthy, and visited by customers, thus enabling them to expand their business further.

A review of literature regarding current dakwah approaches was also carried out in this study. Mokhtar et al. (2021d) aimed to explore the moral values in the poem *Ke Makam Bonda* from the perspective of language, values, and structure using relevance theory. The study also examined how the relationship between language, values, and structure in the verses of the poem was linked to dakwah elements, ultimately raising awareness among listeners. The findings show that the use of language, the embedding of values, and the systematic arrangement of the structure, especially when adapted into a traditional nasheed song, greatly enhanced the listeners' appreciation of the message conveyed. The impact of this adaptation was positive, making it a calming melody that left an enduring effect of advice and dakwah messages. This clearly demonstrates that the linguistic style used in Usman Awang's poem is very much in tune with societal appreciation, from the past to the present, as it can be easily melodized by anyone.

Furthermore, dakwah through films has also been studied by Gunaish et al. (2024), who aimed to understand the role of documentary films produced by the Malaya Film Unit (MFU) and the National Film Corporation of Malaysia (FNM) as dakwah mediums both in Malaysia and abroad from 1957 to 1970. The study findings show that the MFU and FNM documentaries served as early dakwah mediums in Malaya after independence. It also highlighted that the Federal Government, together with related agencies, was responsible for Islamic affairs during the period specified. Mokhtar et al. (2023b) further aimed to examine the role of digital media in uniting multiracial communities, allowing them to accept each other's views and opinions on various matters. The study also identified the constraints faced by contemporary media in fostering national integration in Malaysia. The results found four key roles of digital media in contemporary dakwah: reaching a wider audience, providing a dual-purpose platform for society, facilitating the exchange of ideas among people from different backgrounds, and making dakwah more accessible to new Muslims. However, the study also identified four main constraints in the use of digital media for dakwah: lack of access to mass media devices, insufficient knowledge of technology usage, overly free video content, and inaccurate religious facts. Therefore, dakwah practitioners must adequately prepare themselves before engaging in dakwah efforts to ensure successful outcomes.

Mokhtar et al. (2022a) also explored the importance of dakwah knowledge for contemporary dakwah practitioners from the perspective of Muhammad al-Ghazali in *Kitab Fiqh al-Sirah*. Their findings identified seven key aspects of dakwah knowledge that modern practitioners should possess: being of noble lineage, having high patience, being intelligent, having sound financial resources, possessing good character, being friendly and sincere, and dedicating time for self-reflection. By applying the methods and approaches recommended by Muhammad al-Ghazali, the dakwah activities of a practitioner will undoubtedly yield the desired results.

Additionally, Mokhtar et al. (2021e) examined dakwah strategies among students at the University of Malaysia Sabah, specifically through the university's general course Ethics and Civilization Appreciation (Penghayatan Etika dan Peradaban), focusing on the acceptance of dakwah and students' comfort in receiving advice and guidance. The study found that many students strongly agreed with the dakwah strategies applied by the lecturers in the course Ethics and Civilization Appreciation. The teaching and learning approach, enriched with dakwah elements, allowed students to absorb knowledge easily and in a relaxed manner, leaving a positive impact on their lives. This study is expected to serve as a benchmark for dakwah implementation in the current era, particularly in engaging university students. Mokhtar et al. (2025c) aimed to explore and develop an effective dakwah intervention model to address academic dropout issues among students in the OK9 Manggatal Zone, Sabah. The study findings highlighted the positive impact of interpersonal dakwah, dakwah bi al-Hikmah, dakwah Tikrar, dakwah Hasanah, and psychological dakwah in improving students' motivation, self-discipline, and school attendance. The results laid the foundation for developing a contextual dakwah intervention model that can be adapted in high-risk areas of academic dropout.

The study by Hajimin et al. (2021) examined the dakwah process and its impact on the change in the Muslim composition in Sabah. The study found that dakwah efforts played a significant role in changing the Muslim population composition in Sabah, especially from 1967 to 1976 under the dakwah movement of the Pertubuhan Islam Seluruh Sabah (USIA) led by Tun Datu Mustapha. The dakwah efforts during this era are recognized as the turning point that increased the Muslim population from 38.7% in 1967 to 53% in 1976. Later, Hajimin et al. (2022) discussed the impact of the migration of religious scholars on the changes in the customs and culture of the Muslim community in Sabah. Their findings showed that the migration of religious scholars brought significant changes to the customs and culture of the Muslim community, reducing the practice of animistic traditions and promoting an Islam-based way of life. This study suggests that the migration of religious scholars had a profound impact on the areas they settled in, and this aspect warrants further exploration in future research. Based on previous literature, programs like Dekat di Hati "Anak Malaysia" 2023 align with the principles of effective community dakwah: emphasizing systematic planning, direct student involvement in practical activities, and strengthening social relationships between the community and educational institutions (Ismail, 2015; Abdullah, 2016). Such approaches also contribute to building holistic graduates who excel not only academically but also possess strong interpersonal skills and leadership abilities.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach grounded in dakwah and Islamic educational perspectives to examine the dakwah methods implemented through the *Dekat di Hati "Anak Malaysia" 2023* program in Kampung Pahu Sarayo, Ranau, Sabah. The qualitative approach was chosen because dakwah activities involve human interaction, values, attitudes, akhlaq, and religious appreciation, which are best understood through in-depth observation and interpretation rather than numerical measurement (Creswell, 2014). In the context of dakwah, qualitative inquiry enables the researcher to understand how Islamic messages are delivered (*uslub dakwah*), received, practiced, and internalized by both students and the community.

This study aims to explore how field-based dakwah programs function as a medium of tarbiah and community engagement, particularly in developing students' soft skills such as leadership, communication, teamwork, and empathy, while simultaneously strengthening *ukhuwah Islamiyyah* and enhancing the community's understanding of practical religious knowledge. The study also examines how dakwah activities contribute to the application of Islamic teachings in daily life (*amali Islami*).

The research location was selected based on its relevance to the objectives of dakwah. Kampung Pahu Sarayo is a rural Muslim-majority community with limited access to continuous and structured dakwah initiatives. The community faces practical religious challenges related to *fiqh ibadat*, funeral management (*pengurusan jenazah*), and everyday Islamic practices. This setting provided a meaningful environment for experiential dakwah, allowing students to engage directly with various community groups including children, youth, adults, and village leaders through face-to-face interaction (*dakwah bil hal*).

The study population consisted of two main groups. The first group comprised 18 Semester 6 IPDAS students (7 males and 11 females) involved in the *Program Amali Dakwah*, Group 4. These students acted as *da'i pelatih*,

implementing dakwah activities under supervision. The second group included residents of Kampung Pahu Sarayo who participated in the program activities. Purposive sampling was employed, as participants were selected based on their direct involvement in dakwah activities and their capacity to provide meaningful insights into the effectiveness of the program (Patton, 2015).

Data collection was conducted using multiple qualitative methods aligned with dakwah research. First, participatory observation was used, where the researcher actively participated in activities such as the *Seni Halal Course*, *Funeral Management Course*, *Sports Carnival*, *Islamic Festival*, and *Tausiyah Air Mata Palestin*. This method enabled the researcher to observe *akhlaq da'i*, communication styles, community engagement, and the reception of dakwah messages in natural settings (Patton, 2015). Second, unstructured interviews were conducted with students, lecturers, and village representatives to explore perceptions of dakwah effectiveness, challenges in delivering Islamic messages, and the spiritual and social impacts of the activities. Third, document analysis, including program proposals, activity reports, and daily reflection logs (*muhasabah harian*), was used to evaluate the planning, implementation, and outcomes of dakwah activities (Bowen, 2009).

The research procedure was implemented in several phases. During the planning phase, students conducted needs analysis (*analisis keperluan mad'u*), prepared dakwah modules, and coordinated with village leaders to ensure that activities were aligned with local religious and cultural contexts. The implementation phase was carried out over two weeks, from 5–18 November 2023, at the community hall, Masjid Hidayah Nur Hikmah, and the community field. Key dakwah activities included *Seni Halal*, *pengurusan jenazah*, sports-based engagement, Islamic cultural activities, and tausiyah sessions.

Data analysis employed thematic analysis from an Islamic and dakwah-oriented framework, whereby data were coded and categorized into themes such as *uslub dakwah*, community acceptance (*penerimaan mad'u*), development of students' da'i competencies, strengthening of *ukhuwah*, implementation challenges, and areas for dakwah improvement (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Data triangulation across observations, interviews, and documents was applied to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Ethical considerations were strictly observed in accordance with Islamic research ethics (*etika penyelidikan Islam*), including obtaining informed consent, safeguarding participants' dignity and confidentiality, respecting local customs (*'urf*), and ensuring that all dakwah activities adhered to Shariah principles. Through this approach, the study provides a holistic understanding of the effectiveness of the *Dekat di Hati "Anak Malaysia" 2023* program as a platform for experiential dakwah, student tarbiah, and community religious empowerment.

## RESULT AND DISSCUSSION

### Program Planning And Implementation Concept

Group 4 consisted of 18 members, comprising 7 male students and 11 female students. The group was led by Muhammad Syahmi Husaini bin Salamat as the group leader, assisted by Noorafdhalizawati binti Yusop as deputy leader, along with 16 other committee members. The formation of this organizational structure aimed to ensure that every aspect of program planning and implementation could be managed systematically, orderly, and effectively. Clear role allocation was also essential to prevent task overlap and enhance accountability among group members, in line with the principles of effective dakwah organizational management (Abdullah, 2016).

Preparations for the *Dekat di Hati Anak Malaysia 2023* program began several days prior to field implementation. Initially, the group developed a full schedule of planned activities for the two-week placement in Kampung Pahu Sarayo. This planning encompassed religious, community, and educational activities, as well as efforts to strengthen social ties with residents. According to Yusof and Ahmad (2018), meticulous early planning is a critical element in ensuring that a dakwah program achieves its objectives and is implemented in accordance with the needs of its target audience (*mad'u*).

During the planning phase, continuous discussions and meetings were conducted among group members to allow for the exchange of ideas, perspectives, and suggestions for improving planned activities. This process also involved assigning specific tasks to each group member based on individual skills and capabilities, such as

logistics management, documentation, program content, protocol, and community engagement. This approach not only enhanced program implementation effectiveness but also provided students with practical training in leadership, teamwork, and dakwah program management (Ismail, 2015).

In addition, Group 4 placed significant emphasis on preparing program materials before departing for Kampung Pahu Sarayo. Preparations included sports equipment, ceremonial and community activity gifts, presentation materials, and other necessary support equipment for the duration of the program. Early preparation aimed to ensure smooth program execution without technical disruptions or logistical constraints, reflecting the group's professionalism and commitment to their dakwah responsibilities (Aziz, 2017).

Upon arrival at Kampung Pahu Sarayo, Group 4 conducted a schedule alignment session and initial discussions with the village head representative to ensure that the planned activities were aligned with local needs, cultural appropriateness, and daily routines of residents. As a result of these discussions, various dakwah activities were organized and implemented according to the age and background of the *mad'u*, including children, adolescents, and adults. This inclusive and contextual approach to dakwah is believed to have a deeper and more lasting impact on the community, as the dakwah message is delivered wisely, progressively, and in consideration of the realities of the target audience's daily life (Rahman, 2020b).

Overall, the planning and implementation concept of the *Dekat di Hati Anak Malaysia 2023* program by Group 4 was grounded in systematic dakwah principles, focused on community needs, and emphasized human relationships and community involvement. This approach not only benefited the residents of Kampung Pahu Sarayo but also served as an effective training platform for IPDAS students in developing themselves as knowledgeable, skilled, and ethical dakwah practitioners.

### High-Impact Activities

The implementation of the *Dekat di Hati Anak Malaysia 2023* program in Kampung Pahu Sarayo, Ranau, was designed with an emphasis on high-impact activities that not only provide immediate benefits to the local community but also have the potential to produce long-term effects in terms of religious understanding, adherence to Shariah, social cohesion, and human development. The activities carried out were based on a comprehensive dakwah approach, encompassing *dakwah bil-lisan* (verbal), *bil-hal* (through action), and *bil-hikmah* (with wisdom), tailored to the needs and background of the *mad'u* (Ismail, 2015; Rahman, 2020).

### Halal Art (Slaughtering Course)

On 16 November 2023, at the Balai Raya Kampung Pahu Sarayo, a high-impact course, the Halal Art Course (Slaughtering Course), was successfully conducted. The course aimed to provide practical exposure and skills to villagers regarding the proper method of animal slaughter in accordance with Shariah. During the course, ten chickens and one buffalo were slaughtered practically according to Islamic guidelines. The course received an encouraging response, with more than 40 participants, including villagers from Kampung Pahu Sarayo, IPDAS students from Kampung Sosondoton, and several IPDAS lecturers, including Yang Berusaha Puan Hajah Khatijah binti Abd. Rahman, Director of IPDAS, and Yang Berusaha Dr. Baharudin bin Othman, Deputy Director of IPDAS. The presence of management and academic staff enhanced the credibility and effectiveness of the course delivery.

The positive impact of this course was evident through the active participation of villagers who were given the opportunity to perform chicken slaughtering practically. Participation involved various age groups, including youth, adults, and the elderly, with mothers' involvement being particularly notable. This demonstrated the real need within the community for authentic and practical halal slaughtering knowledge. For the buffalo slaughtering session, Associate Professor Dr. Berhanundin bin Abdullah, a member of the IPDAS Academic Advisory Committee, provided direct guidance on proper techniques for restraining the buffalo and conducting slaughter according to Shariah. This hands-on learning approach effectively enhanced community understanding as it involved direct experience and two-way interaction, in line with adult learning principles and *dakwah bil-hal* (Aziz, 2017).

## **Tahsin Ibadah (Funeral Management Course)**

The *Tahsin Ibadah* program, focusing on funeral management, was conducted on 13 November 2023 at Masjid Hidayah Nur Hikmah, Kampung Pahu Sarayo, from 7:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The program was led by Muhamad Azwan bin Mustakim, who acted as the main facilitator in explaining key aspects of Islamic funeral management. The course content included detailed explanations on bathing the deceased, required equipment, shrouding (*kafanan*), and performing the funeral prayer (*Salat al-Janazah*). Instruction was delivered systematically and in an easily comprehensible manner to ensure that participants could apply the knowledge when faced with real-life situations.

Following the briefing, villagers were given the opportunity to perform practical shrouding exercises, divided into male and female groups. Active participation in these practical sessions demonstrated the community's awareness and dedication to learning *fardu kifayah* knowledge. Most participants already had basic skills in funeral management and were able to perform practical tasks competently. A question-and-answer session was also conducted to assess participants' understanding, and responses indicated a satisfactory level of mastery. Several villagers raised specific questions about funeral management, which were addressed clearly by the facilitator. This activity demonstrated the effectiveness of an interactive *dakwah* approach, providing *mad'u* the space to ask questions, understand, and correct existing practices (Yusof & Ahmad, 2018).

## **Pahu Community Sports Carnival**

On 12 November 2023, the Amali *Dakwah* Sports Committee, in collaboration with Group 4 and other *dakwah* groups across the Ranau District, organized the Pahu Community Sports Carnival at Kampung Pahu Sarayo. The carnival aimed to strengthen bonds between host families, program participants, and the local community, while promoting a healthy lifestyle both physically and spiritually. Various sports events were conducted, including volleyball, football, and badminton, with joint participation from villagers and IPDAS students. Throughout the carnival, positive social interactions were observed regardless of age, educational background, or social status.

Key benefits of the carnival included strengthened social ties and the application of the *dakwah bil-hal* concept, delivering Islamic messages through example and action. Amali *dakwah* participants demonstrated modest dress and proper attire in line with Shariah requirements while engaging in sports. This approach indirectly educated the *mad'u* that religious practice extends beyond mosques and includes all aspects of life, including recreation and sports (Ismail, 2015).

## **Islamic Festival**

The Islamic Festival was organized specifically to strengthen bonds with children and adolescents of Kampung Pahu Sarayo while uncovering and nurturing their hidden talents in religious and creative fields. The primary target was children as future leaders of the ummah. The festival was divided into morning and afternoon sessions, with each Group 4 member assigned specific tasks to ensure smooth program execution. Morning activities included coloring and storytelling competitions held in KAFA classrooms, and competitions in Adhan, Iqamah, and Al-Fatihah recitation conducted at Masjid Hidayah Nur Hikmah. These activities not only nurtured talents but also built self-confidence and fostered children's love for Islam from an early age.

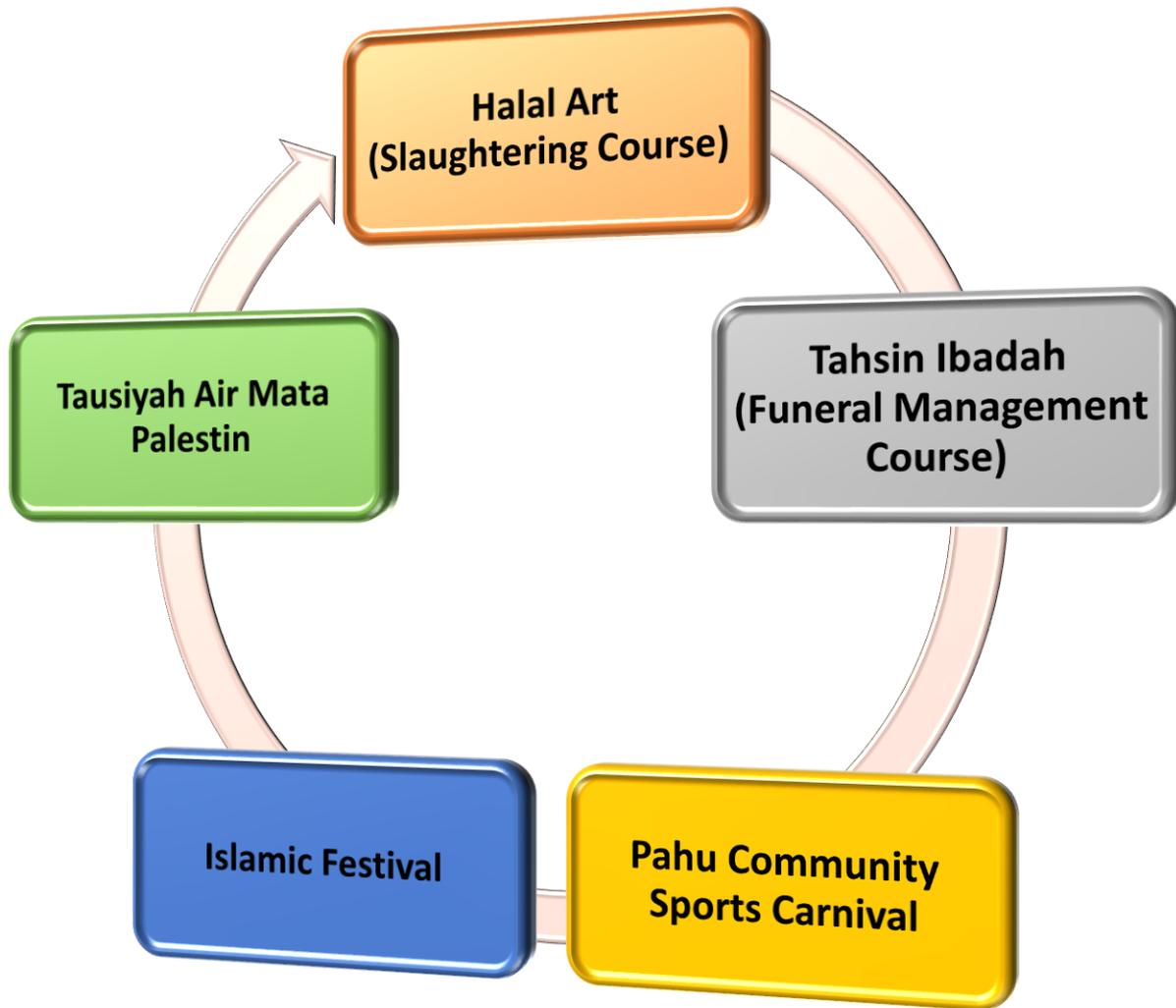
Afternoon sessions involved various children's sports activities at the village field, with active participation from all group members. Prizes for sports activities were awarded on the same day, while prizes for other competitions were presented during the *Tausiyah Air Mata Palestin* program. This approach demonstrated the integration of educational, enjoyable, and phased *dakwah* activities, in line with Islamic *tarbiah* principles (Aziz, 2017).

## **Tausiyah Air Mata Palestin**

The *Tausiyah Air Mata Palestin* program was organized on 14 November 2023 by Group 4 as an expression of concern for global humanitarian issues and to instill values of unity, empathy, and solidarity within the community. The program also served as a *dakwah* platform to raise awareness of the plight of the Palestinian people. The lecture was delivered by Ustaz Mohamad Hakimi bin Abdul Mutalib, a lecturer at the Institut Pengajian Islam dan *Dakwah* Sabah (IPDAS). The event began with a welcome speech by the JPKK

representative, Tuan Jamili bin Satimin @ Jali, followed by a lecture addressing the history of Bani Israel, the Palestinian conflict, and the responsibilities of Muslims regarding global humanitarian issues. The program concluded with the recitation of Qunut Nazilah and a group photo session with villagers. This program successfully touched participants' emotions and strengthened communal awareness that dakwah encompasses not only ritual worship but also humanitarian action, justice, and global solidarity (Rahman, 2020b).

The summary of the discussion on high-impact activities is presented in the following diagram.



**Figure 1: High-Impact Activities**

Source: Research Study 2026

### Main Challenges

The implementation of the *Dekat di Hati Anak Malaysia 2023* program in Kampung Pahu Sarayo, Ranau, was not without various challenges that required a wise, flexible, and continuous dakwah approach. These challenges stemmed from factors such as geography, religious education levels, socioeconomic background, and cultural and language differences within the local community. Understanding these challenges is crucial to ensure that the dakwah approach is effective and relevant to the needs of the *mad'u* (Ismail, 2015; Rahman, 2020b).

### Level of Understanding in Fiqh and the Qur'an

One of the main challenges identified was the limited understanding of fiqh and the Qur'an among the villagers. This was largely due to Kampung Pahu Sarayo's remote location, which restricts access to religious classes, qualified instructors, and continuous Islamic enrichment programs. Consequently, some villagers practice Islam

based on tradition and custom without a deep understanding of the evidence and wisdom behind the rulings. Nevertheless, the villagers demonstrated openness and enthusiasm, providing suggestions to implement activities that could enhance religious understanding in their community. Challenges arose, however, because the delivery of knowledge needed to be slower, clearer, and more gradual, as some *mad'u* required basic guidance before understanding more advanced discussions. This required IPDAS students to adjust their teaching methods to match the community's comprehension level, in line with the principle of *dakwah bil-hikmah* (Aziz, 2017).

### **Confusion Regarding the Concept of Gambling**

Another challenge was the villagers' misunderstanding of gambling in Islam. It was found that some villagers engaged in buying lottery tickets without realizing that this practice falls under the category of prohibited gambling. Lottery draws involve wagering property for uncertain rewards, thus fulfilling the elements of *gharar* (uncertainty) and *maysir* (gambling), which are prohibited in Islam. This lack of understanding highlights the urgent need for *fiqh muamalat* education in the community, particularly regarding everyday transactions that are often seen as trivial or customary. In response, IPDAS students took the initiative to gradually educate villagers about the concept of gambling, its types, and the legal implications in Islam, using simple language and examples relevant to their daily lives. This approach was important so that villagers did not feel blamed but instead understood the wisdom behind the prohibition and were motivated to abandon practices that conflict with Shariah (Ismail, 2015; Yusof & Ahmad, 2018).

### **Lack of Knowledge in Funeral Management**

In addition, insufficient knowledge in funeral management was identified as a major challenge in Kampung Pahu Sarayo. Villagers reported that only two individuals were truly skilled in managing funerals, while others relied entirely on them. This situation is concerning because funeral management is a *fardu kifayah* obligation that should be collectively understood and practiced by the Muslim community. To address this challenge, IPDAS students conducted a Funeral Management Course that included both theoretical explanations and practical training, such as bathing and shrouding the deceased. The program received an enthusiastic response and successfully increased villagers' confidence, particularly adults and youth, to actively participate in funeral management in the future. This combination of theory and practice proved effective in ensuring clearer and more lasting understanding, in line with experience-based learning approaches (Aziz, 2017).

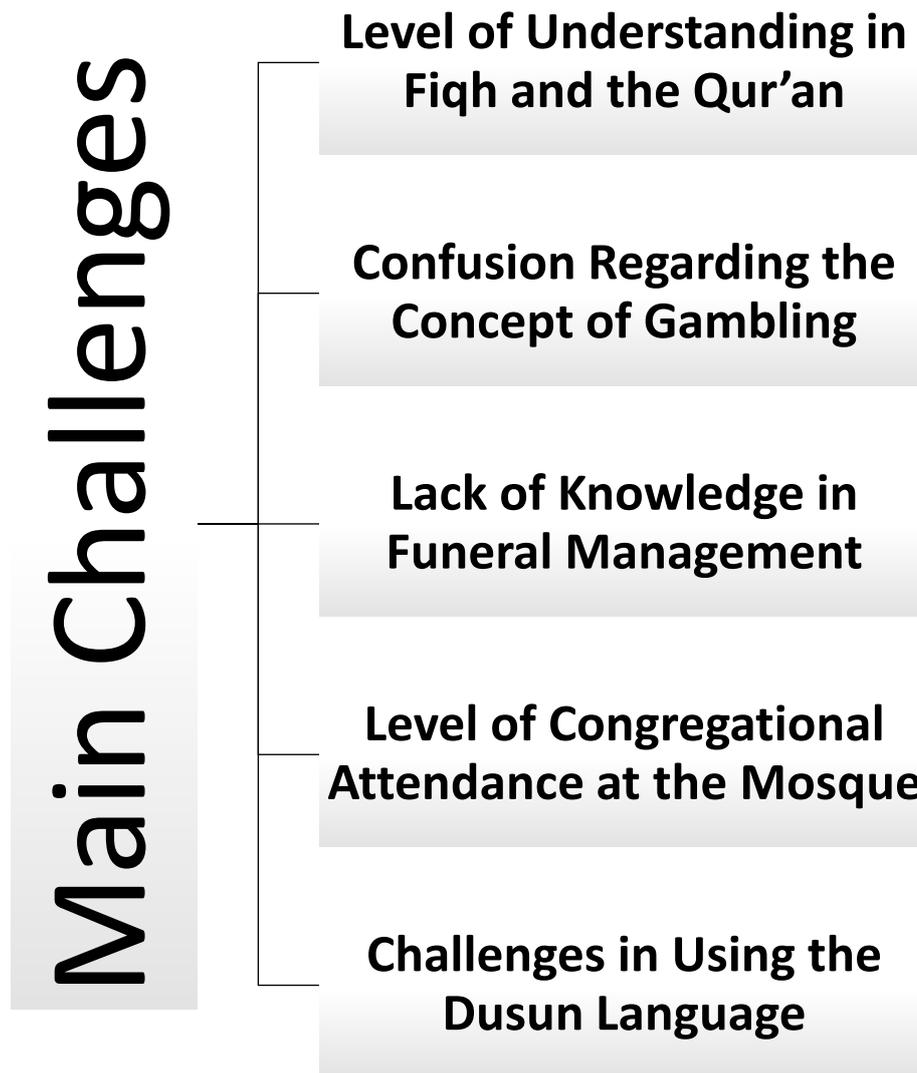
### **Level of Congregational Attendance at the Mosque**

Another challenge faced was the low attendance of villagers for congregational prayers, especially for Subuh and Maghrib prayers. A main factor was that many villagers worked in farms located far from the village and left early in the morning, making it difficult to attend the mosque. Additionally, young people were often involved in sports activities in the evening and finished after the Maghrib call to prayer, causing them to miss congregational prayers. This is a significant challenge because the mosque functions not only as a place of worship but also as a center for community unity, knowledge dissemination, and character building among Muslims. Continuous efforts are therefore required to encourage community participation in the mosque through creative approaches, such as providing activities relevant to the community's needs and community-based programs centered around the mosque (Rahman, 2020).

### **Challenges in Using the Dusun Language**

Language is a crucial element in ensuring the effectiveness of *dakwah* delivery. In Kampung Pahu Sarayo, many villagers communicate in Dusun in their daily interactions. One challenge faced by IPDAS students was the difficulty in communicating in Dusun, which slightly hindered smooth social interaction and relaxed *dakwah* delivery. Although villagers used Malay when communicating with IPDAS students, proficiency in Dusun was seen as an advantage that could enhance closeness, trust, and comfort in social relationships. Understanding the local language and culture not only facilitates the *dakwah* process but also reflects respect for the target community's identity, in line with the principles of contextual and culturally sensitive *dakwah* (Ismail, 2015; Aziz, 2017).

The summary of the discussion on main challenges is presented in the following diagram.



**Figure 2: Main Challenges**

Source: Research Study 2026

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings of this study were obtained through direct observation, participant observation with the community, and informal feedback from the residents of Kampung Pahu Sarayo throughout the implementation of the *Dekat di Hati Anak Malaysia 2023* program. Overall, the findings indicate that the program had a positive impact on social relations, community participation, and the improvement of basic Qur'an reading skills among the residents.

### Social Relations

Initial observations revealed that social interactions between the residents of Kampung Pahu Sarayo and the assigned IPDAS students were somewhat awkward and cautious. This is common in community programs that involve outsiders entering a local community, especially in remote areas that rarely receive consistent visits from external institutions. Differences in background, age, and limited initial interaction contributed to this situation. However, the implementation of the *Tausiyah Air Mata Palestin* program became a key catalyst in bridging the social gap between the two parties. The program not only attracted local participation but also fostered a sense of togetherness, empathy, and concern for global humanitarian issues. As a result, the bond between IPDAS students and villagers strengthened, while enhancing camaraderie among the villagers themselves.

In addition, the villagers demonstrated high enthusiasm and engagement in programs focused on knowledge and *tausiyah* sessions. They paid close attention to the speakers and actively participated in discussions and Q&A sessions. This shows that inclusive dakwah programs that address emotional and spiritual needs can build positive and lasting social relations. According to Rahman (2020), strengthening social relations is a key indicator of the success of community-based dakwah.

### Community Response to the Program

The study also revealed that the initial response of villagers to programs organized by Group 4 was lower than expected. For instance, attendance at short *tazkirah* sessions between Maghrib and Isha prayers initially involved only around 15 participants. This was influenced by daily routines, time constraints, and insufficient early promotion. However, after several improvement initiatives such as distributing notification memos, verbal announcements, and direct engagement with villagers, attendance increased significantly to 30–40 participants. This indicates that appropriate and phased communication strategies play a crucial role in increasing community participation in dakwah activities (Yusof & Ahmad, 2018).

Overall, the program successfully attracted participation from all age groups, including children, youth, adults, and the elderly. Feedback from the villagers was highly encouraging, and they also offered suggestions for future improvements. This reflects the community's positive reception of IPDAS students and their willingness to collaborate in ensuring the continued success of dakwah activities.

### Qur'an Recitation Classes

The findings also showed that prior to the implementation of the Qur'an recitation classes, some children, youth, and parents in Kampung Pahu Sarayo had difficulties in reading and pronouncing the Arabic letters, particularly in *Surah al-Fatihah*, *Iqra'*, and the Qur'an. Identified weaknesses included unclear articulation of letters and difficulty pronouncing certain letters, such as *Dād* (ض), which required continuous training and guidance. Some mothers and children also struggled with proper tongue placement when pronouncing letters correctly. In response, Group 4 took the initiative to reintroduce the fundamentals of Arabic letters and correct pronunciation techniques based on *makhraj* (articulation points) and letter characteristics. The approach was gradual, relaxed, and focused on practical exercises to ensure participants did not feel pressured or embarrassed. Active participation and enthusiasm among participants resulted in significant improvement in letter pronunciation and smoother recitation of *Iqra'* and the Qur'an.

The villagers' commitment to attending the recitation classes benefited them personally and provided valuable experience for IPDAS students in managing basic Qur'an study classes. This aligns with the concept of two-way learning, where dakwah not only impacts the *mad'u* but also shapes the skills and character of the dakwah practitioners themselves (Ismail, 2015; Aziz, 2017).

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Based on observations during the implementation of the *Dekat di Hati Anak Malaysia 2023* program in Kampung Pahu Sarayo, Ranau, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness and smooth execution of future *Amali Dakwah* programs. These suggestions cover early planning, logistics, and transportation management, which are critical elements in implementing high-impact field dakwah programs systematically.

### Early Determination and Assessment of Program Placement

It is recommended that responsible parties determine and finalize the placement location for each group well before students begin program planning. Early determination allows students to develop a more structured and realistic program plan based on the community's needs and background. It also enables students to contact key stakeholders such as guest speakers or program officiants early, avoiding time constraints and scheduling conflicts. If program placement planning is conducted in a short period, it may negatively impact overall program management, including delays in preparing the schedule, difficulties in securing experts, and stress on students to plan programs within limited time. Therefore, it is suggested that a preliminary survey be conducted for each village placement to identify potential, needs, and internal issues that may affect smooth program

implementation. This aligns with strategic planning principles in dakwah management, emphasizing contextual analysis before implementing interventions (Ismail, 2015; Rahman, 2020b).

### **Improvement and Addition of Program Equipment**

Equipment is also identified as a key factor influencing the effectiveness of *Amali Dakwah* programs. Authorities are advised to upgrade and increase the quantity of essential equipment for each group, such as microphones, speakers, LCD projectors, laptops, printers, and other supporting tools. Insufficient equipment forced some groups to reschedule activities to avoid overlapping usage, affecting the smooth execution of planned programs. For programs involving five groups simultaneously, the existing equipment, which only suffices for two or three groups, is inadequate. This sometimes requires students to borrow equipment from villagers, which may affect the perceived professionalism of the program organizers. Providing sufficient equipment ensures smooth technical operations and gives the community a positive impression that the dakwah program is organized, systematic, and fully prepared. According to Abdullah (2016), efficient logistics management is crucial for the success of dakwah and community activities.

### **Transportation Management and Provision**

Transportation management is another critical aspect that requires serious attention in *Amali Dakwah* programs. IPDAS is advised to provide at least one bus or official vehicle for each group assigned to different villages. Adequate transportation is essential for facilitating students' movement, especially for purchasing necessities, accessing healthcare, and conducting program activities at different locations. During the program at Kampung Pahu Sarayo, insufficient vehicles caused difficulties as one bus had to serve several groups in different locations. This led to long waiting times and postponed planning due to traveling distance from town to the village. Therefore, systematic and sufficient transportation planning is essential to ensure smooth student mobility without disrupting the program schedule. Good logistical planning not only enhances implementation efficiency but also ensures students' welfare and safety while in the field (Aziz, 2017; Yusof & Ahmad, 2018).

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the implementation of the *Dekat di Hati "Anak Malaysia" 2023* program over a two-week period demonstrated a significant and positive impact on the development of soft skills among university students. The findings of this study clearly indicate that the objectives of the study were successfully achieved, particularly in examining the effectiveness of field-based dakwah activities in enhancing students' communication skills, leadership qualities, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities through direct engagement with the local community of Kampung Pahu Sarayo, Ranau. The program also provided meaningful experiential learning for students in managing and implementing a systematic, well-planned, and community-oriented dakwah program, enabling them to apply theoretical knowledge of dakwah in real-life contexts. Continuous interaction between students, the local community, as well as collaboration with government and non-government agencies contributed significantly to strengthening *ukhuwah Islamiyyah*, fostering mutual respect, and promoting a harmonious social environment grounded in Islamic values.

Based on these findings, this study hopes that field-based dakwah programs such as *Dekat di Hati "Anak Malaysia"* will continue to be sustained and further enhanced by the Sabah Institute of Islamic Studies and Dakwah (IPDAS). It is also hoped that future programs will expand their scope, duration, and community involvement to further strengthen the role of dakwah as a medium of tarbiah, community empowerment, and holistic student development. Ultimately, this study aspires to contribute to the development of graduates who are not only academically competent but also possess strong Islamic character, social responsibility, and the ability to serve the needs of the ummah effectively.

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