

# Business Incubation for Inclusive Economy: Implementation of Empower Academy Program in Empowering Disabled MSMEs in Malang City

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## Abstract

Empowering people with disabilities through inclusive entrepreneurship is a strategic issue in building an equitable and competitive society. This research was conducted to analyze the role of young sociopreneurs in supporting inclusive entrepreneurship through collaborative business incubation programs in Malang City. The role of young sociopreneurs is considered crucial in overcoming socio-economic challenges faced by people with disabilities, particularly in accessing economic opportunities and achieving social integration. Unlike previous studies that mainly focused on general empowerment models or government-led initiatives, this research highlights the innovative contribution of young sociopreneurs as active facilitators in bridging resources, skills training, and business assistance. By employing a qualitative approach with in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, this study involved sociopreneurs, government representatives, and beneficiaries with disabilities. The findings show that multi-stakeholder collaboration is the key to the success of business incubation programs. Young sociopreneurs not only foster economic independence but also enhance public awareness of the importance of social inclusion. This study contributes new insights by demonstrating how youth-driven sociopreneurship can be institutionalized into local development policies and ecosystem building. The results emphasize the potential of sustainable empowerment models that integrate social and economic inclusion of people with disabilities effectively into community-based development.

## Article Info

### Keywords:

Sociopreneur;  
Inclusive Entrepreneurship;  
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## 1. Introduction

People with disabilities around the world, especially in developing countries, often experience limited access to various services in aspects of education, training, and decent work (Annur et al., 2023). In Indonesia, based on data from the 2020 National Economic Survey (Susenas), the number of people with disabilities reached 28.05 million or 10.38 percent of the national population, making Indonesia the country with the highest prevalence of disability in Southeast Asia (Bappenas, 2023). With these conditions, it is important to build the independence of persons with disabilities through various integrated and sustainable empowerment programs.

Empowering people with disabilities is not only a social issue, but also an economic issue that requires serious attention from various sectors. The government tends to address this issue with a charity approach, such as the distribution of social assistance, which consumes a large budget. Law No. 8/2016 on Persons with Disabilities Part Four Article 53 has mandated a quota of 2% of workers with disabilities in government agencies and SOEs, as well as 1% in private companies. However, the implementation of this policy has not been optimal (Zora, 2023). This is also actually contrary to the laws and regulations in the field of labor, Law Number 13 of 2003 jo. Law No. 6 of 2023 needs attention from all parties to ensure the implementation of these norms and working conditions as a constitutional mandate to be

fulfilled.

Based on current data, the working-age population (PUK) with disabilities amounts to 5.17 million people. Meanwhile, the number of disabled laborers is 1.04 million people. (Kementerian Ketenagakerjaan, 2024). On the other hand, the Labor Force Participation Rate (TPAK) for people with disabilities has only reached 20.14 percent, while the Open Unemployment Rate (TPT) for people with disabilities has reached 10.8 percent (Nilawaty, 2025). This data indicates that the participation rate of people with disabilities in the world of work is still very low, despite the large number of PUK with disabilities. This condition reflects the need for more serious policy interventions to create an employment system that is responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities, both through increasing accessibility, vocational training, and strengthening inclusive employment regulations. This is intended as a form of improving the quality of life.

In the current era of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is important to pay more attention to the empowerment of vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, as part of the commitment to 'leave no one behind'. One way to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities is to encourage their participation in the business world. The development of the digital era has also opened up new opportunities by providing easy access to information, networks, and business platforms that can be utilized by persons with disabilities for entrepreneurship. The participation of people with disabilities in the business world not only provides opportunities to increase economic independence but also contributes to inclusive development that strengthens overall economic growth (Lasiyono et al., 2024). One effective program to encourage this participation is the development of business incubation programs.

A business incubation program is an initiative designed to support the development of new or small businesses by providing facilities, services, and resources needed to enhance business success (Ulfa et al., 2024). Business incubation programs can be a strategic platform to provide assistance, training, and access to resources needed by people with disabilities in starting and managing a business. Through business incubation, people with disabilities not only gain technical and managerial skills, but are also supported to build business networks, increase self-confidence, and utilize technology in developing businesses (Foster, 2018). In addition, collaboration between the government, Young *Sociopreneurs*, and social communities can ensure the sustainability of the program and expand its reach, thus creating more inclusive and sustainable business opportunities.

Inclusive economics emphasizes the importance of the participation of all community groups, including persons with disabilities, in economic activities without discrimination or structural barriers. In this context, business incubation programs are strategic instruments that can realize the principles of an inclusive economy by opening equal access to business opportunities. When people with disabilities are empowered through adequate training, mentoring, and policy support, they become not only beneficiaries but also active contributors to economic growth. This approach reinforces the idea that diversity in business is not a burden, but an asset that enriches innovation and overall economic productivity.

Furthermore, the implementation of an inclusive economy through business incubation programs also has the potential to reduce social and economic inequalities that have been faced by people with disabilities. By creating an accessible, adaptive and supportive business ecosystem, the government and various stakeholders can encourage the creation of a disability- friendly business environment. In the long run, these efforts will not only improve the welfare of individuals with disabilities but also strengthen social cohesion and create a more just and inclusive society.

Malang City, as one of the creative cities in Indonesia, has been nominated as one of the world's Creative City Networks by UNESCO, which has various potentials in the field of creative economy (Pemerintah Kota Malang, 2024). The rapid growth of Startups initiated by young people and various non-governmental social organizations has further strengthened Malang City's position as a center of innovation and creative collaboration (Tutuko, 2022). This condition not only encourages the development of entrepreneurial concepts and actors but also creates an ecosystem conducive to the growth of social entrepreneurship or sociopreneurship.

Sociopreneurs are social entrepreneurs who not only focus on financial gain, but also have a positive impact on society, especially marginalized groups, such as people with disabilities (Mahsuni et al., 2024). Theoretically, the concept of sociopreneur is rooted in a social entrepreneurship approach that combines business principles with a social mission to create shared value. Unlike conventional entrepreneurs, sociopreneurs view social problems as innovation opportunities that can be addressed through sustainable business solutions. In the context of people with disabilities, sociopreneurs act as agents of change who not only create inclusive employment but also break down stigma and structural barriers through participatory approaches, community empowerment, and the use of adaptive technology. This approach is in line with social entrepreneurship theory that emphasizes achieving long-term social impact through a self-sustaining and scalable business model.

In implementing this concept, various programs are carried out, one of which is the *Empower Academy*. *Empower Academy* is an innovative business incubation program specifically designed to empower individuals with disabilities and marginalized communities through comprehensive business skills training (Wicaksana, 2024). The program aims not only to improve their capacity in running a business but also to help them achieve sustainable financial independence. The program was designed by youths from *Startup Bangun Bangsa* Company in collaboration with *Ngalup Creative Network*. The activity is also supported by Lingkar Sosial Indonesia (LINKSOS), Malang Creative Center (MCC), and is open to all parties to be able to support and commit in providing opportunities for people with disabilities of productive age to be able to advance with their business.

Collaboration in the implementation of the Business Incubator through *Empower Academy* can be a strategic solution to improve the economic independence of persons with disabilities in Malang City. *Empower Academy*, as an institution that has experience in entrepreneurship education and training, can provide technical support and relevant business training for persons with disabilities. Thus, they not only acquire the necessary skills to start a business, but are also equipped with knowledge on effective business management, marketing, and financial management. Through this collaborative model, it is hoped that an ecosystem that supports the social and economic inclusion of persons with disabilities, reduces existing structural barriers, and increases their access to business opportunities on an equal footing with other community groups can be created.

Although various studies have examined the empowerment of persons with disabilities through government programs or social initiatives, most of them still focus on charitable approaches, general training, or normative employment policies. These studies have not specifically highlighted the role of young sociopreneurs in initiating and managing business incubation programs oriented toward empowering persons with disabilities. This gap is important to address because the involvement of young generations in the social entrepreneurship ecosystem brings a new perspective, namely combining digital innovation, creative networking, and a collaborative spirit. This research seeks to fill that gap by analyzing the role of young sociopreneurs in Malang City in supporting inclusive entrepreneurship through collaborative business incubation programs. Thus, this study not only enriches the literature on disability empowerment but also offers a multi-stakeholder collaboration model that can be replicated in other local contexts.

## 2. Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with a secondary data analysis method to explore in depth the role of young sociopreneurs in supporting inclusive entrepreneurship through business incubation programs in the context of empowering people with disabilities in Malang City. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to examine secondary data that has been documented and is publicly available or limited, to identify the dynamics, strategies, and collaborative practices carried out by various stakeholders, including sociopreneurs, local governments, business incubator institutions, and communities with disabilities. The use of secondary data provides advantages in understanding a broader and longitudinal context, especially in examining trends, sustainability, and social impacts of sociopreneurial interventions.

The types of secondary data used in this research include various official and non-official

documents, including: business incubation program reports organized by young sociopreneur institutions; local government policies related to economic empowerment of persons with disabilities and inclusive entrepreneurship development; local regulation documents; scientific and non-scientific publications; online media articles; activity evaluation reports from development partners; and statistical data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the Social Service, the Office of Cooperatives and SMEs, and the National Commission on Disability (KND). In addition, researchers also accessed research reports and program monitoring results from non-governmental organizations active in disability and social entrepreneurship issues. Data analysis was conducted using a thematic analysis approach by identifying, organizing, and interpreting thematic patterns that emerged from the secondary data reviewed. The analysis steps included an initial categorization process of relevant information, grouping data based on central themes such as business incubation intervention models, empowerment strategies, forms of cross-sector collaboration, the role of digital technology, and the impact on the economic welfare of persons with disabilities. Furthermore, in-depth interpretation was conducted to reveal the relationship between the role of young sociopreneurs and the creation of an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem. To ensure the validity and credibility of the findings, this research applied source triangulation techniques by comparing and confirming information from different types of documents and sources.

Through this approach, the research aims to provide a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the contribution of young sociopreneurs in expanding economic access for people with disabilities, as well as their strategic role in creating entrepreneurial practices that are not only business sustainable but also socially just. The results of this research are expected to serve as a reference in policy development, program planning, and collaborative initiatives that are more effective in building an inclusive economy at the local and national levels.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### Profile and Potential of Persons with Disabilities in Malang City

Persons with disabilities in Malang City amount to 2,035 people, with types of disabilities consisting of Mental, Physical, Intellectual, Sensory and Multiple disabilities. This diversity of disability types requires an integrated and inclusive empowerment approach to meet the specific needs of each group. The government and disabled NGOs have been working to provide services that include access to health, education, and skills training designed to increase the capacity of individuals while preparing them to live independently. In addition, the provision of stimulants in the form of business capital and work equipment is also a strategic step to support economic inclusion for persons with disabilities in Malang City, so that they can actively contribute to society.

**Table 1.** Number of Persons with Disabilities in Malang City in 2023

| No | Type of Disabilities | Total        |
|----|----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Mental;              | 174          |
| 2. | Physical;            | 570          |
| 3. | Intellectual;        | 565          |
| 4. | Visual Sensory;      | 232          |
| 5. | Speech Sensory;      | 59           |
| 6. | Auditory Sensory;    | 159          |
| 7. | Double;              | 276          |
|    | <b>Total</b>         | <b>2.305</b> |

Source: (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2023))

The data above shows that people with disabilities in Malang City are spread across various types of disabilities, with the largest number in the physical disability category (570 people) and intellectual disability (565 people). This indicates an urgent need for empowerment programs that can accommodate the diversity of types of disabilities, both in terms of skills training, access to employment, and inclusive support facilities, especially since more than 60% of persons with disabilities in Malang City are at productive age (Dinata & Prianto, 2023). The condition of persons with disabilities in Malang City shows an empowerment effort that involves collaboration between the government and NGOs. This empowerment is realized through various programs, such as skills training, entrepreneurship, and mentoring, which are accompanied by the provision of capital stimulation, business equipment, and an

understanding of the rights and regulations that protect persons with disabilities (Loren, 2017). In addition, there is also follow-up guidance from relevant institutions or resources to ensure program sustainability and improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities.

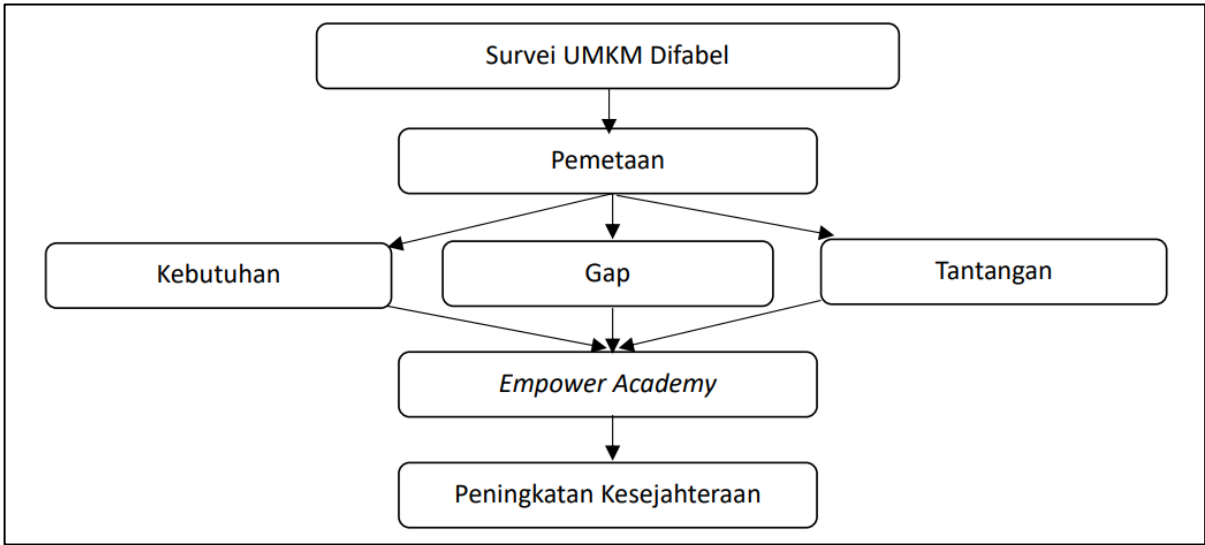
People with disabilities often face significant challenges, especially in accessing employment that suits their abilities. Therefore, innovative efforts involving various parties, such as the government, community organizations, and sociopreneurs, are needed to create inclusive entrepreneurship-based empowerment programs (Hamdan, 2023). The need for more responsive policies to address the social and economic disparities experienced by persons with disabilities. With an integrated and collaborative approach, empowering people with disabilities can not only improve their lives but also contribute to more inclusive and sustainable social development.

**The Role of Business Incubators in Empowering Persons with Disabilities**

Empower Academy is a business incubation program specifically designed to empower people with disabilities and marginalized communities to achieve economic and social independence. The program not only provides basic and advanced skills training, but also offers intensive business mentoring, market access facilitation, as well as the utilization of technology and digitalization as key strategies in business development. Through a holistic approach, Empower Academy acts as an incubator that supports participants from the business idea initiation stage to the scaling-up stage, prioritizing the principles of inclusivity, sustainability, and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Thus, Empower Academy not only creates new entrepreneurs from disability and vulnerable communities, but also helps strengthen a fairer and more equal social entrepreneurship ecosystem. This is in accordance with the following statement from Ngalup.co CEO, Andina Paramitha:

*“This activity is here to help people with disabilities or marginalized communities and individuals to improve their business skills through training and business and digitalization mentoring programs.” (Wicaksana, 2024).*

The above statement shows that *Empower Academy* is committed to supporting the empowerment of people with disabilities and marginalized communities through an integrated approach that includes training, business mentoring, and digitalization. The program is designed to help participants develop relevant and adaptive business skills, so that they can achieve financial independence. This reflects efforts to create inclusive access for marginalized groups to actively engage in economic activities, while leveraging technology as a transformation tool in enhancing the capacity and business opportunities for people with disabilities.



**Figure 1: Implementation Process of the Empower Academy Program**  
*Source: Olahan Penulis (2024)*

The figure above shows that the Empower Academy program implementation process begins with a survey of MSMEs with disabilities to identify the real conditions, business characteristics, and background of MSMEs with disabilities. Based on the survey results, a mapping of the needs and challenges faced by MSMEs with disabilities was conducted. This mapping aims to identify gaps between the actual conditions and the expected ideal conditions. These gaps include aspects of skills, access to capital, managerial capacity, as well as social and structural barriers that weaken the position of MSMEs with disabilities in the economic ecosystem. Empower Academy comes as a solution to bridge the gap through an approach that synergizes three main elements: meeting specific needs, overcoming actual challenges, and strengthening business capacity in a sustainable manner. With an approach based on real needs and challenges, the Empower Academy program directly contributes to improving the welfare of people with disabilities, both through increasing income, expanding market access, and strengthening overall economic independence.

The program divides participants into two categories, namely the Unbusiness (*Business Creation*) category and the Inbusiness (*Business Scale Up*) category (Malang Creative Center, 2024). This division aims to accommodate the various levels of business experience of the participants, so that the material provided is in accordance with specific needs. This categorization approach allows the learning and mentoring process to be more targeted and effective, because each group of participants receives a curriculum, method, and intensity of training that is tailored to the stage of the business being undertaken.

**Table 2.** Distribution of Empower Academy Training Materials Based on the Category

| Category          | Participant Criteria   | Training Materials  | Goals  |
|-------------------|--|---|--|
| <b>Unbusiness</b> | Participants who do not yet have a business ( <i>early stage</i> ) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Basic Entrepreneurship</li> <li>- Business Idea &amp; Idea Validation</li> <li>- Market Validation</li> <li>- Business Model Canvas</li> <li>- Business Financial</li> <li>- Product Packaging &amp; Design</li> <li>- Digital Marketing &amp; Sales</li> <li>- Legal Aspect &amp; Business Risk</li> <li>- Business Planning</li> </ul>   | Helping participants develop a valid business idea and prepare for the first steps in setting up a business. |
| <b>Inbusiness</b> | Participants who already have a business ( <i>growing stage</i> )  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Business Landscape Update</li> <li>- Evaluate Business Model's</li> <li>- Product Development &amp; Innovation</li> <li>- Supply Chain Management</li> <li>- Effective Marketing &amp; Sales</li> <li>- Market Expansion through Collaboration</li> <li>- Human Resources Development</li> <li>- Maintain Financial Health</li> <li>- Legal &amp; Business Risk Aspect</li> <li>- Business Planning</li> </ul> | Helping participants scale up, improve business models, innovate, and optimize business operations           |

Source: Author's Process (2025)

The table above shows the different training approaches applied in the Empower Academy program based on participants' level of business readiness and experience. The *Unbusiness* category is intended for participants who do not yet have a business. They will receive basic materials such as *Basic Entrepreneurship*, *Business Idea and Idea Validation*, *Market Validation*, *Business Model Canvas*, *Business Financial*, *Product Packaging & Design*, *Digital Marketing & Sales*, *Legal Aspect & Business Risk*, and *Business Planning*. Through this material, participants are expected to be able to develop a valid business idea and prepare the first steps in establishing their business (Kerta, 2024).

Meanwhile, the *Inbusiness* category is intended for participants who already have a business and aim to scale up their business. Materials provided include Business Landscape Update, Evaluate Business Models, Product Development and Innovation, Supply Chain Management, Effective Marketing and Sales, Market Expansion through Collaboration, Human Resources Development, Maintain Financial Health, Legal and Business Risk Aspect, and Business Planning. This approach ensures that businesses can improve their business models, innovate, and optimize business operations to be more competitive.

Empower Academy was designed with careful planning that began with a survey and mapping of the condition of MSMEs with disabilities in Malang Raya. This process provided a

comprehensive overview of the needs, challenges, and gaps faced by disabled business owners. The program was carefully designed to address these challenges, providing positive impacts and long-term benefits for the participants.

During the incubation program period, the 24 selected participants will receive intensive training and mentoring from practitioners and professionals. The main focus of the program is to improve the participants' business skills and digital literacy. The launch of *Empower Academy* at *Malang Creative Center (MCC)* is an important momentum in this initiative. Head of the Malang City Cooperative Office, Eko Sri Yuliadi, affirmed the local government's commitment in supporting the empowerment of MSMEs with disabilities through innovative programs such as this. With a holistic approach, Empower Academy not only improves individual capacity but also strengthens the ecosystem of disabled MSMEs in Malang Raya.

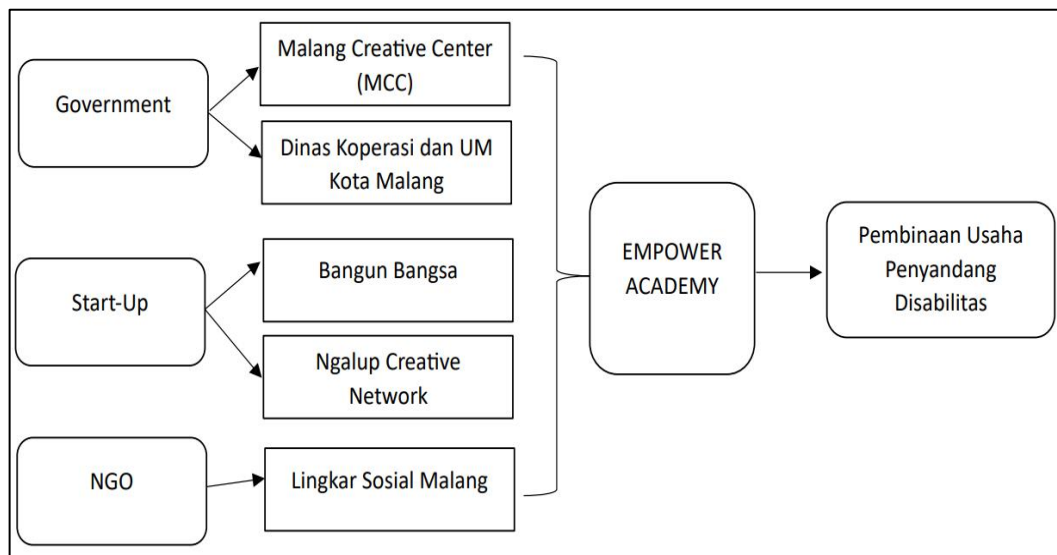
Empower Academy is designed to support the government in creating an inclusive economy by expanding opportunities and access for all levels of society (Laoli, 2024). This is in accordance with the statement from Dian Widyanarti, the person in charge of Bangun Bangsa as follows:

*"We hope that our friends with disabilities can continue to improve their business capacity and skills through various training, mentoring, and hands-on experiences that are relevant to market needs. This will not only enable them to run and develop their businesses more independently and professionally, but also open up opportunities to create original and value-added innovations. Their contributions will not only enrich the dynamics of the organization and the economic sector at large but also help drive social progress, expand the meaning of inclusive justice, and contribute to the development of technology that is adaptive to the diverse needs of society. Thus, the success of friends with disabilities in the business world is not only a reflection of individual independence, but also an important part in building a more just, equal, and sustainable social order."*

The above statement shows that inclusiveness in entrepreneurship not only focuses on providing equal access for people with disabilities, but also encourages them to develop business skills that can make a significant contribution. This reflects efforts to create an ecosystem that empowers people with disabilities to actively participate in social, economic and technological development, while harnessing their unique potential to support the sustainability of organizations and society more broadly. Entrepreneurship-based economic empowerment initiatives have a significant impact on vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, by creating access to training and business assistance (Dinata & Prianto, 2023).

### **Cross-Sector Collaboration for Inclusive Sociopreneurs**

In order to create a more inclusive economy, the program involves strong collaboration between various stakeholders, both from the local government sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and startup businesses. In the business sector, the program partners with Bangun Bangsa and Ngalup Creative Network, which play an important role in providing support and understanding related to business development. From the NGO side, the program is supported by Lingkar Sosial Indonesia (LINKSOS) and Malang Creative Center (MCC), which focus on social empowerment and creating opportunities for people with disabilities. In addition, the Cooperative Office of the Local Government took part in providing technical support and facilities related to financing, which is expected to strengthen the access of persons with disabilities to capital and economic resources.



**Figure 2. Cross-Sector Collaboration in Empower Academy Program**

*Source: Author's Process(2025)*

Gambar 2 menunjukkan kolaborasi lintas sektor dalam Program Empower Academy yang Figure 2 shows the cross-sector collaboration in the Empower Academy Program that aims to create inclusive economic equality through business coaching for people with disabilities. The program involves various stakeholders from the government sector, startup businesses, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). From the government sector, Malang Creative Center (MCC) and Malang City Cooperative and UM Office play an important role. MCC focuses on social empowerment and the creation of business opportunities, while the Cooperative Office provides technical support as well as financing-related facilities to strengthen PWDs' access to capital and economic resources. In the startup business sector, Bangun Bangsa and Ngalup Creative Network contributed by providing training and business development support. Meanwhile, from the NGO sector, Lingkar Sosial Malang (LINKSOS) supports social empowerment and economic inclusion. All these parties collaborate through Empower Academy as the program implementation center to organize sustainable business coaching. This program is expected to improve the economic capabilities of persons with disabilities through access to training, capital, and wider market opportunities.

This cross-sector collaboration is expected to create an inclusive and sustainable ecosystem, with the aim of improving the welfare of persons with disabilities through economic and social empowerment. This initiative is open to all parties who wish to support and commit to the empowerment of persons with disabilities. This is in accordance with the statement of Dian Widyanarti, the person in charge of Bangun Bangsa as follows:

*“Empower Academy will also provide a special mentoring scheme designed to assist participants in accessing capital sources from various financial institutions, both conventional and non-conventional, such as cooperatives, microfinance institutions, and digital financing platforms (fintech). This assistance includes preparing business proposals, financial planning, and business presentation simulations so that participants have the readiness and confidence to establish partnerships with capital providers. In addition, the program is also committed to creating a distribution space for goods and services produced by participants, both through online channels such as marketplaces and social media, as well as offline through exhibition events, community bazaars, and collaboration with local retail partners. With this comprehensive support, Empower Academy seeks to encourage disabled entrepreneurs to not only survive, but also be able to compete and develop sustainably in an economic ecosystem that is inclusive and adaptive to changing times”.*

This collaborative approach is expected to be a catalyst in building an inclusive and sustainable sociopreneur ecosystem. By involving various stakeholders, this program not only helps individuals to develop, but also encourages systemic transformation in the creation of equal



economic opportunities for all groups, especially people with disabilities. This cross-sector collaboration is the best model in realizing the vision of inclusive economic equality, where every individual has an equal opportunity to contribute and develop (Pellu, 2024). This is in accordance with the statement of Dian Widyanarti, the person in charge of Bangun Bangsa as follows:

*"We also actively invite all stakeholders, from the government, private sector, education, civil society, and media, to collaborate in creating a more equitable, equal and inclusive economic development ecosystem. This cross-sector collaboration is key in expanding the impact of empowerment programs, especially for groups of people who have been marginalized, including people with disabilities. This effort is in line with the spirit and universal values contained in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly the principle of "no one left behind", which emphasizes the importance of ensuring that every individual, without exception, has equal opportunities to grow, develop, and contribute to social and economic life. By building strong synergies between development actors, we believe that creating a more inclusive economic equality is not just an ideal vision, but something that is real and can be realized together".*

It states that a collaborative approach across sectors is a strategic step to create a more inclusive economic equality, in accordance with the "no one left behind" principle of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This emphasizes the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement in supporting people with disabilities through a sustainable sociopreneur ecosystem, so that every individual has equal opportunities to participate and contribute to economic and social development (Teowarang & Kusumowidagdo, 2023). This approach also reflects a commitment to ensuring that no group is marginalized in efforts to achieve inclusivity.

### **Impact and Implication of Inclusive Sociopreneurs**

The inclusive sociopreneur program designed through Empower Academy has had a significant and multidimensional impact on empowering people with disabilities as well as strengthening the inclusive economic ecosystem in the Greater Malang area. This program not only functions as a forum for business training and mentoring, but also as a means of social transformation that empowers individuals with disabilities to become independent, innovative, and adaptive business actors to market dynamics. One of the main impacts that can be observed is the increase in the capacity of individual participants, especially in the aspects of technical entrepreneurial skills, micro business management, as well as digital literacy which is increasingly relevant in today's digital economy era. Through a series of structured and sustainable training and mentoring, Empower Academy participants not only gained new knowledge and insights, but also experienced significant changes in terms of mindset and mental attitude. They began to show an increase in self-confidence, courage in making business decisions, and the ability to manage and develop their business in a more professional, planned, and competitive manner. This confirms that Empower Academy not only creates economic impact, but also encourages the realization of sustainable social inclusion for the disability community.

The second impact is the creation of an inclusive business ecosystem involving various stakeholders through cross-sector collaboration, the program encourages active participation from the government, community organizations, and the private sector to support the sustainability of businesses of persons with disabilities. This collaboration strengthens social and economic networks, which in turn creates new opportunities for business actors with disabilities (Ilham et al., 2024).

The long-term implications of the Empower Academy program reflect its great potential in driving fundamental social change, especially regarding society's perception of people with disabilities. Through the active involvement of people with disabilities in entrepreneurship, the program demonstrates that they have the capacity to be productive, innovative and independent economic actors. This representation is important in breaking down old stereotypes that often associate disability with dependency or incapacity (Aini, 2023). Thus, the success of the participants in establishing and developing businesses contributed to reducing social stigma and strengthening the narrative that inclusion is not just an ideal, but a reality that can be achieved

through the right approach.

Furthermore, Empower Academy has also inspired similar initiatives in other regions by local governments, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions and the private sector. This program has opened space for replication and adaptation of inclusive sociopreneur models in different local contexts, while still promoting the principles of empowerment, justice and equal access. In the context of national development, this step has the potential to create a domino effect that significantly expands the scope of socio-economic impact, while strengthening the empowerment network of people with disabilities at the national level. With all these impacts and implications, it is clear that the inclusive sociopreneur approach is not only effective as an individual empowerment strategy, but also relevant within the framework of sustainable economic equity policies. The program not only provides economic benefits in the form of increased income and financial independence, but also reinforces social values such as inclusion, equality and solidarity. By bringing together the economic and social dimensions in an integrated manner, Empower Academy is clear evidence that inclusive development is not just a discourse, but a concrete path towards a more just and empowered society.

## 4. Conclusion

The importance of empowering people with disabilities through business incubation-based programs as a strategic solution to overcome limited access to various opportunities, one of which is entrepreneurship. *Empower Academy*, as a business incubation program, has demonstrated its effectiveness in increasing the financial independence and capacity of people with disabilities through training, mentoring, and digitalization. Cross-sector collaboration between the government, young sociopreneurs, and social organizations is an important catalyst in creating an inclusive, empowering, and sustainable business ecosystem. With this approach, people with disabilities not only gain access to economic opportunities, but also contribute to broader social and economic development. To expand the impact of empowering people with disabilities, it is important to expand the reach of programs like Empower Academy to other regions, so that more individuals can benefit from this inclusive empowerment model. Government support also needs to be strengthened through affirmative policies, special budget allocations, and easier access to capital for people with disabilities, to support their efforts in economic development. In addition, the integration of technology in training and business management is essential for people with disabilities to compete effectively in the digital economy ecosystem. Public awareness campaigns also need to be strengthened to reduce social stigma against people with disabilities and increase their inclusion in various sectors. To ensure the success and sustainability of the program, an ongoing monitoring and evaluation system needs to be put in place, in order to document lessons learned that can be replicated. Finally, collaboration between various parties, including educational institutions, financial institutions and the private sector, is essential to create a more inclusive and sustainable empowerment model. This integrated and collaborative approach is expected to be an effective model in creating economic equity for people with disabilities and promoting more inclusive development at the social and economic levels.

The findings of this study have several practical implications, particularly for policymakers and practitioners. Concretely, the integration of sociopreneurs into disability empowerment programs can be adopted as a model for inclusive local development policies, while educational and financial institutions can design tailored training and financing schemes for people with disabilities. Nevertheless, this research has limitations, especially in terms of its qualitative scope and the limited number of participants involved, which may not fully capture the diversity of experiences of people with disabilities in different regions of Indonesia. Therefore, future studies are recommended to adopt a mixed-methods approach with a larger and more diverse sample, including comparative studies across regions, in order to provide broader generalization. Further research could also explore the long-term impact of business incubation programs by incorporating longitudinal studies and analyzing the scalability of youth-driven sociopreneurship models.

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