



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ARTICLE

Development of Waqf from an Islamic Perspective through the Land Professional Society of Malaysia in an Effort to Increase Waqf Literacy

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Abstract

Partners for this International Community Service activity are the Malaysian Land Professional Association (PERTAMA) community and also lecturers from various universities in Malaysia and Indonesia. The partners' problems are: 1) Community waqf literacy still needs to be improved, 2) Community participation in waqf still needs to improve, 3) The use of social media to disseminate information about waqf development still needs to be improved, and 4) Cooperation between institutions related to efforts to increase waqf literacy still needs to be improved. Based on these three problems, the solutions included: 1) Efforts to increase waqf literacy through discussions on waqf development, 2) Carrying out seminars on increasing community participation, especially in this activity, namely community members and lecturers, 3) Promote social media to disseminate waqf information and increase waqf literacy, and 4) Collaborating with PERTAMA to convey the waqf literacy message. A qualitative approach was used for data collection using the discussion group forum method. After the implementation of the activities, several changes occurred as follows: 1) The participants know the importance of developing waqf and the law regarding waqf, 2) The participants know about various training programs for waqf development, 3) Participants can understand how to use multiple social media to support increasing waqf literacy, and 4) Establishing collaboration/partnerships with PERTAMA communities to support the Zakat literacy program. This international community service activity successfully supported efforts to increase waqf literacy for academics from various universities and PERTAMA members in Malaysia.

Keywords

Waqf Development; Waqf Management; Community.

Abstrak

Mitra untuk kegiatan Pengabdian Masyarakat Internasional ini adalah komunitas Pertubuhan Profesional Tanah Malaysia (PERTAMA) dan juga para dosen dari berbagai universitas di Malaysia dan Indonesia. Masalah yang dihadapi oleh mitra meliputi: 1) Literasi wakaf di kalangan masyarakat masih perlu ditingkatkan, 2) Partisipasi masyarakat dalam wakaf masih perlu ditingkatkan, 3) Pemanfaatan media sosial untuk menyebarkan informasi tentang pengembangan wakaf masih perlu ditingkatkan, dan 4) Kerjasama antar lembaga terkait upaya peningkatan literasi wakaf masih perlu ditingkatkan. Berdasarkan keempat masalah ini, solusi yang diambil meliputi: 1) Upaya peningkatan literasi wakaf melalui diskusi tentang pengembangan wakaf, 2) Pelaksanaan seminar untuk meningkatkan partisipasi masyarakat, terutama bagi anggota komunitas dan dosen dalam kegiatan ini, 3) Mempromosikan penggunaan media sosial untuk menyebarkan informasi tentang wakaf dan meningkatkan literasi wakaf, dan 4) Bekerjasama dengan PERTAMA untuk menyampaikan pesan literasi wakaf. Pendekatan kualitatif digunakan dalam pengumpulan data melalui metode diskusi kelompok terarah (FGD). Setelah pelaksanaan kegiatan, beberapa perubahan terjadi sebagai berikut: 1) Peserta memahami pentingnya pengembangan wakaf dan hukum terkait wakaf, 2) Peserta mengetahui berbagai program pelatihan untuk pengembangan wakaf, 3) Peserta mampu memahami cara menggunakan berbagai media sosial untuk mendukung peningkatan literasi wakaf, dan 4) Terbentuknya kerjasama/kemitraan dengan komunitas PERTAMA untuk mendukung program literasi Zakat. Kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat internasional ini berhasil mendukung upaya peningkatan literasi wakaf bagi akademisi dari berbagai universitas dan anggota PERTAMA di Malaysia.

Kata Kunci

Pengembangan Wakaf; Pengelolaan Wakaf; Komunitas.

1 | INTRODUCTION

The potential of waqf for social and economic development is very significant. This also applies to the development of the Islamic economy. Through waqf funds, productive assets such as real estate, waqf land, and investments can be used for charitable purposes that are sustainably allocated to education, health, reducing inequality, and economic empowerment. If managed well, this extraordinary potential can be used to promote social inclusion and reduce economic disparities (Athoillah, 2022; Aldeen *et al.*, 2020; Bachri & Rosyadi, 2024). The literature shows that it is essential to manage waqf wisely so that it can become a powerful tool for creating change and a positive impact on various aspects of people's lives. A study extending the planned behavior theory states that religiosity and sufficient knowledge can increase the intention to pay waqf directly and indirectly. This means that it is necessary to implement a strategy that focuses on dynamic segmentation for waqf development, which focuses on promotion, marketing, socialization, raising awareness and understanding according to the characteristics of each generation (Jatmiko *et al.*, 2024; Rusydiana *et al.*, 2020; Vika *et al.*, 2021). Although it has excellent potential, developing waqf has several problems and challenges. This differs from managing zakat funds, which require quality human resources (Abidin & Utami, 2020; Rizal *et al.*, 2023; Utami, 2019). Previous studies have revealed a need for more competence and knowledge in effectively managing waqf assets, accountability problems, funding limitations, and transparency (Hassan *et al.*, 2023). Several nadir or waqf managers need more expertise in properly managing waqf funds and property, have weak waqf management, and lack government support. As a result, the potential of waqf is not maximized or needs to be fully realized. Legal, administrative, and conflict of interest issues also arise related to cases of fighting over waqf inheritance rights. The problem of claims and demands from various parties regarding waqf assets has caused long and detrimental disputes for both parties, hampering the implementation of waqf's charitable objectives. Therefore, it is necessary to develop transparent monitoring and management mechanisms and a straightforward legal approach to overcome these problems (Bachri & Rosyadi, 2024). Other findings explain strategies for developing waqf by reducing operating costs and depreciation, increasing productivity and redistribution, utilizing investment and savings, and other social aspects (Lamido & Haneef, 2021; Utomo *et al.*, 2020; Senjiati & Yadiati, 2021; Sulistiawati *et al.*, 2023).

The general public needs to gain more familiarity with waqf products, such as cash waqf and waqf paid online, a relatively new and convenient method of transferring waqf. Many individuals perceive waqf as a challenging form of worship due to the necessity of possessing tangible assets, such as land and buildings, to engage in this practice. Despite the ease with which individuals can donate waqf in the form of money, it is possible to do so online via trusted financial platforms and institutions. Communities can select trusted waqf partners, thereby facilitating more targeted distribution. Moreover, individuals may establish their objectives for waqf for themselves and others. In order to maximize the potential benefits of zakat, the community must possess a certain level of literacy (Rahmania & Maulana, 2023). The findings indicate that disseminating knowledge regarding the concepts, advantages, and methodologies associated with waqf administration, coupled with a comprehensive understanding, can effectively enhance public awareness and encourage active engagement in waqf-related activities. Such activities may be diverse and designed to provide public education (Amalia & Ali, 2023); (Hassan *et al.*, 2021; Muthiah *et al.*, 2021). The President of PERTAMA elucidated that the Malaysian Land Professional Association (PERTAMA) is an association of alumni and graduates in land administration and development. Its objective is to produce land managers and consultants who are professional, efficient, innovative, and competitive. PERTAMA has commenced the registration process for prospective committee members for the 2022–2024 term. All individuals interested in the administration, management, and investigation of land assets are invited to apply. Furthermore, PERTAMA frequently conducts annual seminars and workshops for the general public and industry professionals to enhance knowledge and professionalism within the land property sector.

The partners' challenges can be broadly classified into four categories: (1) Public understanding of waqf remains inadequate and needs enhancement. Despite its long-standing tradition in Malaysia, the level of awareness and engagement with waqf remains relatively low; (2) Community participation in waqf initiatives is still insufficient, particularly given the vast potential for waqf in Malaysia; (3) The utilization of social media as a platform for disseminating information about waqf development is still suboptimal; (4) Cooperation between institutions engaged in efforts to enhance waqf literacy remains limited. An international community service initiative was undertaken in collaboration with PERTAMA to address this issue. The objectives of the activities carried out are as follows: (1) to enhance public comprehension of waqf; (2) to augment public awareness of the importance of participation in the advancement of waqf in Malaysia; (3) to deepen understanding of the utility of social media as a

platform for disseminating information about waqf development; (4) to facilitate collaboration between institutions engaged in efforts to enhance waqf literacy. An international community service activity was conducted in collaboration with PERTAMA to address this issue. Therefore, this activity aims to establish a partnership to enhance zakat literacy and facilitate the development of dignified community activities on an international scale. In terms of the main performance achievements, the students gained valuable community service experience, while the lecturers could engage in activities outside the campus setting.



Figure 1. The STEBI Lampung International Community Service Team together with a Delegation of 3 Universities from Indonesia visited PERTAMA

In light of the background above, the solution can be delineated as follows: Initially, the international community service team convened to deliberate upon the advantages, procedures, and legal ramifications of waqf. This activity is a crucial step in enhancing waqf literacy, which is a fundamental element in garnering the attention of all waqf activists. The activity involved the participation of resource persons, lecturers, the PERTAMA community, and experienced practitioners. Secondly, a seminar will be held to elucidate the PERTAMA training programs, which encompass fundamental knowledge about waqf, including its typology, management procedures, and the impact of waqf on society. Furthermore, PERTAMA offers information regarding the mentoring program to engage waqf donors and beneficiaries. This will facilitate a comprehensive comprehension of waqf implementation. Thirdly, the University's social media, online platforms, and PERTAMA's official website will be utilized to disseminate information about waqf, thereby facilitating interaction between participants and facilitators and enabling questions to be posed about waqf topics. Fourth, the Islamic College of Economics and Business has partnered with PERTAMA, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, to disseminate information about waqf literacy through scheduled programs.

2 | METHOD

Qualitative research employs the use of forum group discussions (FGDs) as a means of gathering data and information from the participants involved. This method was selected due to its efficacy compared to the conduct of interviews, a choice researchers frequently make. The FGD activity involved a total of more than 30 participants, comprising members of PERTAMA and lecturers from a range of universities. The moderator assumed the role of a guide for the proceedings. The FGD method is predicated on interaction between the international community service team and participants. As a result, a group dynamic is established:

The first step in the FGD process is forming a team comprising a moderator, an assistant moderator, a notetaker, a participant liaison, and other necessary personnel. These individuals must possess the requisite qualifications and experience in waqf development in Malaysia and Indonesia. The moderator's role is that of a discussion facilitator, whose responsibility is to comprehend the issues and the research objectives to be achieved. The assistant moderator is responsible for the meticulous organization of the FGD, assisting the moderator in allocating time

during the discussion. The minutes of the FGD are to record the core issues discussed and the group dynamics. Notetakers are provided with the necessary tools for documentation, including laptops, notebooks, and smartphones. The liaison is responsible for introducing participants, establishing contact, and ensuring attendance. In this instance, the team comprised the president of PERTAMA and the president of the ASEAN Academic Association. Similarly, the role of the logistics providers in the FGD is to ensure the smooth functioning of the event in terms of transportation, consumption needs, souvenirs, documentation tools, and other logistical requirements. Subsequently, the objective of the FGD is to ascertain the location and time at which the FGD is to be held. The activity will occur at PERTAMA, specifically on Level 7 of Wisma Arina UNITI, Jalan Raja Muda Abdul Aziz, Kampong Bahru, 50300 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The international conference is scheduled to take place in July 2023.

Subsequently, a series of queries should be formulated, considering the following key elements: the research objectives, the rationale behind conducting the FGD, the nature of the information gleaned from the activity, and the language to be used, ensuring it is accessible and straightforward. The questions have been subjected to rigorous expert review to ensure their validity. The implementation of the FGD is conducted with guidance from a moderator. In this case, the moderator's role is to facilitate the discussion and seminar activities, clarify discussion participants, encourage engagement, and delve deeper into existing questions, among other responsibilities, until the activity concludes. The final stage of the FGD process is analyzing the data collected and preparing activity reports. In terms of methodology, the objective is to record all information collected. Each note from the data summary represents a discrete unit of information and data about how participants engage in discourse with one another based on the viewpoints and topics under discussion. The data was analyzed by examining the discussion patterns, assumptions regarding waqf development and waqf literacy, and general conclusions. Subsequently, the processed data is subjected to a series of inferential and analytical procedures, ultimately formulating conclusions.

3 | RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

The contemporary discourse on Waqf development encompasses not only the domain of management but also the potential for the management process to facilitate the growth of the community's economy and contribute to the advancement of education. The advancement of waqf is oriented towards the betterment of humanity. In light of the considerable potential for growth and advancement, it is paramount to undertake a range of initiatives to facilitate waqf's advancement. One potential avenue for advancement is the enhancement of waqf literacy. A lack of awareness and understanding of the concept of waqf will ultimately impact the level of community engagement and participation in the development of waqf. The contribution of waqf to the social economy is likely optimized when the waqf demonstrates a high level of awareness regarding the nature and function of waqf. Consequently, the level of waqf literacy among Muslims in Indonesia will be inextricably linked to this reality. Cultural background differences affect Muslims' behavior, perceptions, and thoughts about waqf (Maulina, 2023). This statement is consistent with the theoretical explanation of religiosity, which posits that individuals with an intrinsic level tend to adhere to all religious teachings and practices throughout their lives. In contrast, individuals with an extrinsic level of religiosity tend to carry out religious orders and directives through their actions and behaviors (Çavuşoğlu *et al.*, 2023).

This activity is expected to increase the Muslim community's confidence in giving waqf. Trust in institutions or nadir will be the primary basis for encouraging Muslim communities to give waqf. According to Febiranto and Iskandar (2024), the responsibility for this trust must also be maintained and cared for by the nadir to ensure that waqf productivity can continue. It is hoped that these steps can realize the role of waqf in responding to socio-economic problems. Previous studies have employed community service activities to investigate the concept of waqf literacy within the context of the Muslim economy. The findings indicated that most of the congregation needed more comprehension of cash waqf, as there had been a paucity of studies on this subject. The community service process encompasses activities, including field observations, communication with the Chair, socialization/lectures, and question-and-answer discussions. The outcome of this community service is an enhanced comprehension of the significance of cash waqf and the simplicity of its implementation in the digital age among the congregation. The evaluation of the activities indicates that the socialization of cash waqf should be conducted for a more extended period to achieve optimal results. It is recommended that socialization regarding cash waqf be conducted regularly in various locations to facilitate the establishment of cash waqf for the benefit of Muslims (Jefik *et al.*, 2022).



Figure 2. The International Community Service Team of STEBI Lampung and PERTAMA held a Discussion Forum on the Development and Management of Endowments

Efforts to develop waqf by increasing community waqf literacy through this activity went well until the end. The participants were quite active in discussing and sharing their knowledge. The importance of a clear legal framework was also discussed on this occasion. This is because the legal framework can minimize potential conflicts and management errors. Therefore, the material presented is also based on applicable laws and regulations. The objective of the discussion activity is to ensure that participants are aware of the significance of waqf development and the legal framework for waqf. The activity commenced with examining several pivotal matters, including the legal and regulatory frameworks for the advancement of waqf in Indonesia and Malaysia. In Indonesia, the legal framework governing waqf is outlined in the following legislation: (1) Law Number 41 of 2004 concerning Waqf (State Gazette of Indonesia of 2004 Number 159, Supplement to the State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia of 2004 Number 4459). (2) Government Regulation Number 42 of 2006 concerning the implementation of Law Number 41 of 2004 concerning Waqf (State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia of 2006 Number 105, Supplement to the State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia of 2006 Number 4667) as amended by Government Regulation Number 42 of 2006 concerning the implementation of Law Number 41 of 2004 concerning Waqf (State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia of 2018 Number 93, Supplement to the State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia Number 6217); (3) Presidential Decree Number 3/M of 2021 concerning Dismissal and Appointment in Membership of the Indonesian Waqf Board, (4) Indonesian Waqf Board Regulation Number 1 of 2021 concerning the Organization and Work Procedures of the Indonesian Waqf Board (State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia of 2021 Number 537), and (5) Indonesian Waqf Board Regulation Number 2 of 2021 concerning Representatives of the Indonesian Waqf Board (State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia of 2021 Number 1452).



Figure 3. Seminar on Waqf Development

As elucidated by the resource person, the development of waqf in Malaysia is contingent upon the interplay of various legal frameworks. The Malaysian federal constitution stipulates that Islamic religious regulations, including waqf, in states with a sultan (or other equivalent title) are to be regulated by the prevailing regulations in that state. In particular, the legal and regulatory framework for waqf in Malaysia encompasses the Federal Constitution of 1957, the National Land Code of 1965 (NLC), the Administration of Islamic Law (Federal Territories), the Selangor Waqf Enactment, and other Islamic law-related regulations issued by each state. The state government is responsible for implementing Islamic religious regulations, overseen by the Majlis Agama Islam (MUI). The MUI also has an Advisory Council and a Waqf Asset Management Committee. The MUI is vested with the authority to ratify, regulate, and oversee the management of consumer waqf within the state. The discussion activity also addressed the topic of waqf land, which represents one of the most significant forms of waqf property in Malaysia. Previous literature also corroborates this assertion, particularly in Selangor and Perak, characterized by fertile land and disparate management authorities. Various challenges impede the

realization of the full potential for waqf development in this country. This is due to several factors, including capital considerations, the land's location, social conflicts, legal issues, and administrative problems (Ali Azizan *et al.*, 2022). Factors such as these can be a benchmark for future waqf development, particularly the optimal utilization of underutilized land.

The second activity was a mini-seminar, during which participants were informed about the various training programs available to develop waqf. This activity is also designed to facilitate disseminating information regarding the classification of assets as waqf objects, the pricing structure of waqf objects, and the institutional aspects of waqf. The subsequent activity entails disseminating information about the utilization of diverse social media platforms to enhance waqf literacy, with a particular focus on the University's social media, online platforms, and the PERTAMA official website. The strategic use of social media can facilitate community engagement and contribute to the advancement of waqf development. Furthermore, social media can be utilized to enhance the collection of cash waqf. Subsequently, the waqf will fund many initiatives to assist individuals in need, encompassing educational, health-related, da'wah, and socio-economic programs. Enhanced comprehension of social media usage is anticipated to contribute to a rise in waqf literacy. Interviews with participants indicated that there is a need for continuous socialization of waqf literacy through the use of a variety of methods. One such method is the incorporation of activities currently being carried out, particularly those related to the use of social media, which has the potential to serve as a valuable tool in advancing the waqf literacy movement. The objective is to establish a media platform to disseminate accurate and reliable information, fostering a positive public perception and enhancing public awareness of the concept of waqf. The dissemination of information about waqf through various media channels represents a crucial strategy for enhancing public awareness and understanding of this subject matter. The waqf literacy program must be elevated to a prioritized media product for journalists, facilitating further expansion.

The resource person elucidated that the objective is to cultivate a foundation of informed understanding about waqf, with the aspiration that this will facilitate the growth and expansion of collective awareness, ultimately leading to greater engagement and involvement in waqf. Furthermore, it will assist in the mobilization of waqf funds or assets, which will subsequently be utilized for the benefit of the people. At this time, there is an urgent need for awareness and collaboration to advance waqf in Indonesia. Providing literacy is an effective strategy to remind people of the importance of waqf and its potential benefits. The impact of waqf on the development of society's environment is significant. The term waqf is less widely known than zakat, infaq, and alms, and thus, many people need a comprehensive understanding of it. The literacy campaign aims to maximize the benefits of waqf, which include providing public and social facilities that support the Muslim community, such as mosques, squares, Islamic schools, cemeteries, and public roads (Athoillah, 2022). With a comprehensive understanding of waqf's educational concepts, benefits, and management techniques, individuals can facilitate optimal and effective community participation in this field. Prior research indicates that the concept of waqf literacy encompasses the education of the public regarding the concept and benefits of waqf. This activity could enhance community awareness of the concept of waqf. The findings can assist individuals and groups in making contributions that will benefit society (Olusegun, 2009).

The international community service activity ultimately gave participants a more comprehensive understanding of waqf. Thus, their participation in the development of waqf is hoped to increase. The proliferation of educational initiatives about waqf has led to a notable enhancement in awareness and comprehension of this subject matter. This will enable participants to make more informed decisions and encourage them to make a tangible contribution to the benefit of the community. Establishing effective governance and management structures in the future, including the organization, collection, and legalization of waqf assets by applicable laws and regulations, is essential. The advantage of this approach is twofold: It safeguards the rights of waqf donors and their beneficiaries while ensuring the long-term viability and transparency of waqf asset management.

3.2 Discussion

Waqf has long been recognized as a significant philanthropic instrument in Islam with the potential to support social and economic development. However, its utilization faces various challenges, particularly regarding waqf literacy and public participation. According to Athoillah (2022), waqf literacy in Indonesia must be higher, leading to limited public participation in waqf practices. This is due to the public's need for more understanding of waqf's concept, benefits, and management mechanisms. Amalia and Ali (2023) also noted that although cash waqf has become an easily accessible option, public awareness and inclination towards participating in cash waqf still require improvement. This low literacy level also affects the optimal management of waqf assets, as highlighted by Senjiati and Yadiati (2021), who emphasized increased efficiency in waqf asset management. Despite the challenges, waqf holds great potential to support economic development. Ali Azizan *et al.* (2022) describe how the revitalization of waqf lands for agribusiness in Malaysia through the anchor company model offers an innovative solution to optimize the use of waqf assets. This approach demonstrates

that with proper management, waqf can be a powerful tool for economic development, particularly in agribusiness. Researchers have proposed various strategies to address the issue of waqf literacy. Hassan *et al.* (2021) emphasize the importance of promotion and increased knowledge about waqf to raise public awareness.

Meanwhile, Febiranto and Iskandar (2024) underline the crucial role of literacy, trust, and religiosity in optimizing waqf productivity. Literacy programs involving various stakeholders, including the government, educational institutions, and non-governmental organizations, are essential to achieving this goal. Digital technology can also be a solution to increase participation in waqf. Abidin and Utami (2020) demonstrated that the regulation of digital technology in zakat positively impacts community welfare and economic development. This can also be applied in the waqf context, where digital platforms can facilitate cash waqf donations and enhance the transparency and accountability of waqf management. To optimize the potential of waqf, there needs to be an enhancement of waqf literacy among the public, more efficient management of waqf assets, and the utilization of digital technology. With a coordinated effort involving all relevant stakeholders, these strategies can significantly improve the impact of waqf on social and economic development.

4 | CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the research and the discussions held by the international community service activities, it can be concluded that: (1) efforts to increase waqf literacy through discussions on waqf development have yielded positive results; (2) holding seminars aimed at increasing community participation, particularly among community members and lecturers, has been effective; (3) the use of social media to disseminate information about waqf and increase waqf literacy has been beneficial; (4) collaborating with PERTAMA to convey the waqf literacy message has been advantageous. Following the implementation of the activities, several changes were observed, including the following: (1) participants demonstrated an understanding of the importance of developing waqf and the relevant legislation; (2) participants exhibited knowledge of the various training programs available for waqf development; (3) participants were able to comprehend how to utilize various social media platforms to promote increased waqf literacy; and (4) a collaboration/partnership with PERTAMA communities was established to support the zakat literacy program. The international community service activity was successfully carried out and proved instrumental in bolstering efforts to enhance waqf literacy among academics from diverse universities and PERTAMA members in Malaysia.

In order to facilitate the development of waqf, it is essential to implement strategies that enhance waqf literacy. This can be achieved through the implementation of outreach programs, seminars, and discussions, which should be conducted with the participation of experts in relevant fields. The strengthening of waqf literacy should require the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including members of the community and representatives from local and central governments, given their role as policy holders and qualified waqf managers. It is therefore crucial for the government to provide support for educational initiatives, organize exhibitions of waqf products, facilitate socialization activities, and also publish digital educational materials that are accessible to the public free of charge and designed to be easily comprehensible.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to express our gratitude to the Sekolah Tinggi Ekonomi dan Bisnis Islam Lampung, Universitas Nurul Huda Sukaraja OKU Timur, STAI Darussalam Lampung, Universitas Djuanda Bogor, Universitas Bina Bangsa, Serang, Banten. Furthermore, gratitude is extended to the President of the Malaysian Land Professional Association (PERTAMA), Prof. Dr. Ismail Omar, and the event participants. We would like to express our gratitude to the delegates from Indonesian and Malaysian universities. We would like to express our gratitude to Prof. Tulus Suryanto, MM., Akt., CA, the President of AFEBS and Dean of the Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business at UIN Raden Intan Lampung, and Chair of the STEBI Lampung Foundation, for his invaluable contributions to this event.

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How to cite this article: Abdullah, P. A., Omar, I. B., Abdullah, I. A., Utami, P., Zuhriyah, N. A., Monalysa, L., Basrowi, Satriawan, D., & Widiawati, S. (2024). Development of Waqf from an Islamic Perspective through the Land Professional Society of Malaysia in an Effort to Increase Waqf Literacy. *AJAD : Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*, 4(2), 384–392. <https://doi.org/10.59431/ajad.v4i2.353>.