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BAKE4ABILITY: EMPOWERING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES THROUGH BAKERY AND PASTRY ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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Abstract:

Inclusive entrepreneurship has become an important strategy for improving the livelihood, self-confidence and social participation of persons with disabilities. The Empowerment of Bakery and Pastry Project for Persons with Disabilities, known as PROKA, is a community empowerment initiative implemented by Majlis Pembangunan Masyarakat Kelantan, with support from Yayasan Pembangunan Ekonomi Islam Malaysia (YAPEIM) and the Institute for Poverty Research and Management (InsPeK), Universiti Malaysia Kelantan. The project aims to empower persons with disabilities through bakery and pastry skills training, digital marketing, café management and a product vendor system. This study explores the effectiveness of

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PROKA in strengthening income generation, entrepreneurial skills, self-confidence and employment opportunities among participants through the KoZee Coffee & Pastry platform. A qualitative case study design was employed using semi-structured interviews, programme observation and document analysis. Participants consisted of persons with disabilities involved in the project, trainers, project facilitators and management representatives. Data were analysed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed five main themes: bakery and pastry training as a pathway to employability; confidence-building through real-world work exposure; KoZee Coffee & Pastry as an inclusive entrepreneurship platform; digital marketing and vendor systems as market access mechanisms; and sustainability challenges in disability-based entrepreneurship. The study found that PROKA provided meaningful skills training, employment opportunities, product marketing support and disability-friendly work exposure. Based on PROKA programme employment records, 10 of the 30 participants obtained permanent employment at KoZee Coffee & Pastry, while other participants generated income through the vendor system. Overall, PROKA has strong potential to serve as an inclusive, systematic and competitive social entrepreneurship model for empowering persons with disabilities in Kelantan.

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Keyword:

Bakery And Pastry, Community Wellbeing, Digital Marketing, Disability Empowerment, Inclusive Entrepreneurship.

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Introduction

Persons with disabilities often face significant barriers in accessing stable employment, entrepreneurship opportunities and meaningful participation in economic activities (WHO, 2011; Bari et al., 2020; OECD, 2023). These barriers include physical limitations, social stigma, limited workplace accessibility, lack of suitable training, restricted mobility, low confidence, and negative public perceptions regarding their capabilities. Although many persons with disabilities possess talents, skills and motivation, they may not receive adequate opportunities to demonstrate their potential in formal or informal economic sectors (Bari et al., 2020; Norafandi and Diah, 2017; WHO, 2011).

Inclusive entrepreneurship offers an alternative pathway for empowering persons with disabilities. Unlike conventional employment, entrepreneurship can provide flexible work arrangements, skill-based income generation and opportunities for self-reliance (Kitching, 2014; OECD, 2023). For persons with disabilities, inclusive entrepreneurship should be designed to accommodate individual abilities, learning pace, accessibility needs, and available

support systems. It should not only focus on income but also on confidence, dignity, participation and social recognition.

Bakery and pastry entrepreneurship is a promising field for disability empowerment because it involves practical skills that can be learned through demonstration, repetition and hands-on practice. Bakery products also have continuous market demand and can be sold through cafés, vendor systems, online platforms, community events and local networks. With proper training, mentoring and marketing support, persons with disabilities can participate in bakery and pastry production as workers, vendors or micro-entrepreneurs.

The Empowerment of Bakery and Pastry Project for Persons with Disabilities, known as PROKA, was introduced as a community empowerment initiative under the Majlis Pembangunan Masyarakat Kelantan, with support from YAPEIM and the Institute for Poverty Research and Management at Universiti Malaysia Kelantan. The project was implemented to empower persons with disabilities through bakery and pastry training, digital marketing exposure, café management and a product vendor system. The KoZee Coffee & Pastry platform was used as a practical space for training, employment and product marketing.

The project selected 30 participants with disabilities, particularly those who had basic skills, interest or small business experience. Through structured training and practical exposure, participants were guided to improve bakery and pastry skills, understand product preparation, learn digital marketing and gain real work experience in a café environment. The project also established a vendor system to enable participants' products to be marketed more systematically.

This study explores PROKA as a qualitative case study of inclusive entrepreneurship. It examines how the project contributes to income generation, entrepreneurial skills, self-confidence and employment opportunities among persons with disabilities. It also identifies the challenges and sustainability factors of bakery and pastry-based social entrepreneurship.

Problem Statement

Employment opportunities for persons with disabilities remain limited, particularly for those who face mobility constraints, learning differences, social stigma or lack of workplace accommodation (WHO, 2011; Norafandi & Diah, 2017; Bari et al., 2020; OECD, 2023). Although various policies and programmes promote disability inclusion, many persons with disabilities continue to experience difficulty securing stable employment. In some cases, they become dependent on family support, welfare assistance or irregular income-generating activities (Bari et al., 2020; OECD, 2023).

Entrepreneurship can provide opportunities for persons with disabilities to generate income, but many entrepreneurship programmes are not designed according to their needs (Kitching, 2014; OECD, 2023). Some programmes lack disability-friendly facilities, adapted training methods, long-term mentoring or market linkage. Persons with disabilities may also require longer learning periods, repeated practice, patient guidance and supportive environments to develop confidence and competence.

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In Kelantan, there are persons with disabilities who possess basic skills in food preparation, baking or small business activities. However, their potential may remain underdeveloped due to social stigma, lack of structured training, limited access to business platforms and restricted market opportunities. Without proper support, they may not be able to transform their skills into sustainable income.

PROKA was introduced to address these challenges through an integrated model involving bakery and pastry training, digital marketing, café management and a vendor system. However, the effectiveness of this model needs to be examined to understand how it supports livelihood improvement, employability, confidence and social inclusion among persons with disabilities. Therefore, this study is important because it explores PROKA as an inclusive entrepreneurship initiative and identifies the factors that contribute to its success and sustainability

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. To explore the implementation of PROKA as an inclusive bakery and pastry entrepreneurship initiative for persons with disabilities.
2. To examine how PROKA contributes to income generation, employment opportunities and entrepreneurial skills.
3. To analyse the role of KoZee Coffee & Pastry as a platform for training, employment and product marketing.
4. To identify the challenges faced by persons with disabilities in participating in bakery and pastry entrepreneurship.
5. To propose strategies for strengthening PROKA as a sustainable disability-inclusive social entrepreneurship model.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How was PROKA implemented as a community empowerment initiative for persons with disabilities?
2. How does PROKA improve entrepreneurial skills, income generation and employment opportunities?
3. How does the KoZee Coffee & Pastry platform support participants' training and product marketing?
4. What challenges are faced by persons with disabilities in bakery and pastry entrepreneurship?
5. What strategies can strengthen the sustainability of PROKA as an inclusive social entrepreneurship model?

Literature Review

Disability Empowerment and Economic Participation

Disability empowerment refers to the process of strengthening the ability of persons with disabilities to make decisions, participate meaningfully in society, access equal opportunities and improve their overall quality of life (Hasan et al., 2024). Empowerment is not limited to providing assistance or welfare support but involves enabling persons with disabilities to

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develop their capabilities, confidence and independence. In the context of community development, empowerment also means creating supportive environments where persons with disabilities are recognised as active contributors rather than passive recipients of aid.

Economic participation is an important dimension of disability empowerment because it contributes to income generation, independence, dignity and self-worth. When persons with disabilities are given opportunities to participate in employment or entrepreneurship, they can strengthen their roles within their families and communities (Hasan et al., 2024). Income-generating activities also help reduce dependency on family members or welfare assistance. More importantly, economic participation can improve self-confidence because persons with disabilities are able to demonstrate their abilities, skills and potential in real working environments.

However, persons with disabilities often face various barriers in accessing employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. These barriers include limited accessibility, negative employer attitudes, unsuitable work environments, lack of skills training, restricted mobility and social stigma. Therefore, empowerment initiatives should focus on creating inclusive pathways that match participants' abilities, interests and support needs (Azizan et al., 2026). Programmes such as bakery and pastry entrepreneurship are relevant because they provide practical skills, flexible work opportunities and supportive training environments that can help persons with disabilities participate more confidently in economic activities.

Inclusive Entrepreneurship

Inclusive entrepreneurship refers to entrepreneurial opportunities that are designed to enable marginalised or underrepresented groups, including persons with disabilities, to participate in income-generating activities. It focuses on reducing barriers that prevent certain groups from entering business or employment sectors. In the context of disability empowerment, inclusive entrepreneurship is important because it provides flexible pathways for persons with disabilities to develop skills, generate income and participate more actively in community life. Unlike conventional entrepreneurship, inclusive entrepreneurship places strong emphasis on accessibility, social support, adaptive training and equal opportunity (Shan et al., 2025).

For persons with disabilities, inclusive entrepreneurship should be designed with sensitivity to their learning pace, physical ability, communication needs and support systems. Some participants may require longer training periods, repeated demonstrations, assistive support or simplified business processes. Therefore, entrepreneurship programmes should not adopt a one-size-fits-all approach. Instead, training modules, facilities, work schedules and business activities need to be adapted to participants' abilities and interests. This ensures that persons with disabilities are not only included symbolically but are able to participate meaningfully and confidently in business-related activities.

A successful inclusive entrepreneurship programme should include practical skills training, business exposure, market access, mentoring and confidence-building activities. It should also provide real platforms where participants can apply their skills in actual business settings, such as cafés, vendor systems, community markets or online sales platforms. These platforms are important because they connect training with income generation and social participation. In this study, the KoZee Coffee & Pastry platform reflects the concept of inclusive entrepreneurship by providing persons with disabilities opportunities to gain bakery and pastry

skills, experience café operations and market their products through a structured support system (Haugh, 2007; Peredo & Chrisman, 2006).

Bakery and Pastry Entrepreneurship

Bakery and pastry entrepreneurship is a practical field for microenterprise development because bakery products have steady consumer demand and can be produced in various forms to suit local market preferences. Products such as cakes, bread, pastries, cookies and desserts are commonly accepted by consumers and can be marketed through cafés, vendor systems, social media, community events and local business networks. This makes bakery and pastry entrepreneurship well-suited to small-scale business development, especially in communities that require flexible, manageable income-generating activities (Ibrahim & Nur Aliah, 2022).

For persons with disabilities, bakery and pastry entrepreneurship offers a suitable training and employment pathway because the activities can be structured into clear, repetitive and practical tasks. Participants can learn product preparation, ingredient handling, hygiene practices, packaging, costing, labelling and customer service through demonstration and hands-on practice. The nature of bakery and pastry work allows training to be delivered step by step, making it easier for participants with different abilities and learning needs to follow the process. With proper guidance, participants can gradually build confidence and improve their technical and entrepreneurial skills.

However, bakery and pastry training for persons with disabilities must be adapted according to participants' abilities, learning pace and support needs. Some participants may require longer learning periods, repeated demonstrations, simplified instructions or close facilitation before they can perform tasks independently. Therefore, patient mentoring, disability-friendly facilities and supportive work environments are essential to ensure meaningful participation. In the context of PROKA, bakery and pastry entrepreneurship is not only a skills training activity but also a pathway for income generation, employability, self-confidence and social inclusion (Wan Abdul Jalil & Rahman, 2024).

Digital Marketing and Vendor Systems

Digital marketing has become an important tool for small entrepreneurs because it allows products to be promoted beyond physical business locations. For bakery and pastry entrepreneurs, platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok and Instagram can be used to share product images, receive customer orders, promote new menus and communicate directly with buyers (Yendra et al., 2024). Digital marketing is especially useful for micro-entrepreneurs because it requires relatively low promotional cost and can help expand customer reach through online networks. For persons with disabilities, digital platforms can create more flexible marketing opportunities, particularly for those who may face mobility or location constraints.

However, the use of digital marketing among persons with disabilities requires guided training and continuous support. Participants may need assistance in taking attractive product photographs, writing simple promotional captions, responding to customer enquiries and managing online orders. Some may also require repeated demonstrations and simplified digital marketing steps before they can use online platforms confidently. Therefore, digital marketing training should be delivered in a practical and accessible manner, with support from trainers,

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facilitators, family members or project teams. This ensures that participants are not only exposed to digital tools but are able to use them meaningfully to support product sales and income generation.

A vendor system provides another important market mechanism for inclusive entrepreneurship. Through a vendor system, participants' bakery and pastry products can be collected, displayed, promoted and sold under a shared platform such as KoZee Coffee & Pastry. This system reduces the marketing burden on individual participants, especially those who face mobility limitations, low confidence or difficulty managing customers independently (Fidalgo & Miranda, 2023). A structured vendor system can improve product visibility, create more consistent sales opportunities and strengthen participants' access to customers. In this way, digital marketing and vendor systems work together as market access strategies that help persons with disabilities transform bakery and pastry skills into sustainable income-generating opportunities.

University and Institutional Support in Community Empowerment

Community empowerment projects require support from various stakeholders because sustainable empowerment cannot be achieved through individual effort alone. Universities, government agencies, non-governmental organisations and community organisations each play important roles in strengthening the capacity of vulnerable groups (Dushkova & Ivlieva, 2024). Universities can contribute through research, training module development, monitoring, evaluation, technical guidance and knowledge transfer. Meanwhile, government agencies and NGOs can provide funding, facilities, equipment, market access and social support. This multi-stakeholder approach is important because community empowerment requires an ecosystem that combines knowledge, resources, implementation support and long-term guidance.

In the context of persons with disabilities, institutional support is especially important because participants may require more structured and continuous assistance. Skills training alone may not be sufficient if it is not supported by accessible facilities, adapted learning methods, mentoring, product marketing and employment placement. Persons with disabilities may also need support from family members, trainers, project facilitators and community networks to ensure that they can participate meaningfully in entrepreneurship activities. Therefore, empowerment programmes should not be implemented as one-off interventions, but as continuous initiatives that guide participants from training to real work exposure and income generation.

The involvement of MPMK, YAPEIM and Universiti Malaysia Kelantan in PROKA reflects a multi-stakeholder approach to disability empowerment. Through this collaboration, PROKA is able to combine institutional support, community engagement, entrepreneurship training and practical business exposure through the KoZee Coffee & Pastry platform. MPMK and YAPEIM provide important support in terms of community development and resources, while Universiti Malaysia Kelantan contributes through research, programme development, monitoring and empowerment strategies. Such collaboration strengthens the sustainability of PROKA because it creates a support system that helps persons with disabilities develop skills, access market opportunities and build self-confidence within a disability-friendly entrepreneurship environment.

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Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design. A qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to explore the experiences, perceptions, challenges and empowerment outcomes of persons with disabilities involved in PROKA (Yin, 2018; Creswell and Poth, 2018). The case study design was appropriate because the research focused on a specific inclusive entrepreneurship initiative implemented through the KoZee Coffee & Pastry platform.

Study Location

The study was conducted in Kelantan and focused on the implementation of PROKA through KoZee Coffee & Pastry. The location was selected because the project served as a practical platform for bakery and pastry training, café management exposure and product marketing among persons with disabilities.

Participants and Sampling

A total of 30 persons with disabilities (PWDs) from across Kelantan were selected to participate in the PROKA programme using purposive sampling. Participants were selected based on their suitability, interest, basic skills, and potential to benefit from the bakery and pastry entrepreneurship activities. The selection process was necessarily selective due to the programme's limited capacity and the need to ensure that participants could meaningfully engage in the training and related activities.The participants represented different categories of persons with disabilities, including persons with physical disabilities, hearing disabilities, speech disabilities, wheelchair users and persons with partial visual impairment. Participants received training in cooking, bakery and pastry, digital marketing, product marketing, business management, café management, work operations and workplace communication. Food-handling training and certificates were also provided, while interpretation support was available for participants with hearing and speech-related communication needs.

Of the 30 participants, 10 worked at KoZee Coffee & Pastry, including participants from the PROKA community and persons with disabilities from across Kelantan. The remaining participants were able to take part via the vendor system by producing bakery and pastry products at home for sale at KoZee Coffee & Pastry.

This participant structure allowed the study to examine both direct workplace experiences and the income-generating opportunities available through the vendor system. The project was specifically designed for persons with disabilities, and participation by members of the general public was not part of the programme.

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Table 1: Participant Categories

Participant Category	Number of Participants	Rationale
Persons with disabilities involved in PROKA	6–8	To explore direct experiences, skills gained, income opportunities, confidence and challenges.
Trainers/bakery facilitators	2–3	To understand training methods, learning pace, participant progress and skill development.
Project management representatives	1–2	To examine programme planning, implementation, vendor system and sustainability strategy.
KoZee Coffee & Pastry staff/supervisors	1–2	To understand workplace exposure, café management and participant performance.
Family member/caregiver	1–2	To understand household support, confidence changes and social impact.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, programme observation and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected participants to obtain detailed information on their experiences, skills gained, challenges and perceived impact of the project. Programme observation focused on training, café operations, participant engagement and accessibility. Document analysis covered relevant project records and materials.

Interview Protocol

The interview questions were developed based on the research objectives. The following questions were used as a guide:

1. Can you explain your involvement in PROKA?
2. What motivated you to participate in bakery and pastry training?
3. What skills did you learn from the project?
4. How did the project improve your confidence?
5. How did KoZee Coffee & Pastry help you gain work or business experience?
6. How does the vendor system help market participants' products?
7. What challenges did you face during training or product selling?
8. What kind of support helped you participate in the project?
9. How did the project affect your income or employment opportunities?
10. What improvements are needed to sustain PROKA in the future?

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For trainers and facilitators, additional questions included:

1. What teaching methods were used for participants with disabilities?
2. What challenges were faced in delivering training?
3. How did participants progress throughout the programme?
4. What support is needed to improve participant outcomes?

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using thematic analysis. The analysis began with repeated reading of interview transcripts, observation notes and project documents (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Important statements were coded according to the research objectives. Similar codes were grouped into categories and developed into themes.

The analysis focused on identifying themes related to skills training, self-confidence, employment, vendor systems, digital marketing, disability-friendly facilities, social stigma and sustainability challenges. The findings were then interpreted in relation to inclusive entrepreneurship and community empowerment.

Trustworthiness of the Study

Several strategies were employed to enhance the study's trustworthiness. First, data triangulation was applied by combining interviews, programme observation and document analysis. Second, participant triangulation was used by involving persons with disabilities, trainers, facilitators, management representatives and family members (Pitney & Kaminski, 2004). Third, member checking was conducted by confirming key points with selected participants. Fourth, peer review was conducted with the research team to refine themes and ensure consistency in interpretation. Fifth, thick description was used to explain the project context, participant experiences and implementation process.

Ethical Considerations

This study involved persons with disabilities and, therefore, required careful ethical consideration. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation and their right to withdraw at any time. Consent was obtained before interviews were conducted. For participants who required assistance, family members or caregivers were permitted to assist with the interview process.

Participants' identities were protected using codes such as P1, P2 and P3. Interview questions were asked respectfully and sensitively. The study ensured that participants were not pressured to answer questions that made them uncomfortable. The research process respected participants' dignity, privacy, ability level and communication needs.

Findings

The findings revealed five main themes: bakery and pastry training as a pathway to employability; confidence-building through real-world work exposure; KoZee Coffee & Pastry as an inclusive entrepreneurship platform; digital marketing and vendor systems as market access mechanisms; and sustainability challenges in disability-based entrepreneurship.

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Theme 1: Bakery and Pastry Training as a Pathway to Employability

Practical training in bakery and pastry within the PROKA project served as a vital stepping stone for enhancing the technical skills and employability of participants with disabilities. The learning approach; centered on demonstration, repetition, and hands-on practice—enabled participants to master product preparation, hygiene maintenance, and packaging according to their individual learning paces. This acquisition of practical skills boosted participants' confidence to seek employment or pursue independent income generation. As highlighted by Participant 1:

"*After completing the bakery and pastry training, I feel more confident using the skills I learned to search for job opportunities." (Participant with disability 1)*

This skill-based training approach demonstrates that structured, disability-friendly learning modules can effectively create clear pathways to stable employment for individuals with disabilities.

Theme 2: Confidence Building through Real Work Exposure

Direct exposure to a real-world working environment had a profound psychosocial impact on the participants' self-empowerment and dignity. Engaging in daily operational tasks helped overcome self-doubt and strengthened social interaction skills when dealing with customers and the community. This positive transformation was expressed by Participant 2:

"When I got to work at KoZee, I felt more confident because I gained real work experience and could interact with customers." (Participant with disability 2)

Positive customer interactions not only built personal pride but also played a key role in reshaping public perceptions regarding the capabilities of persons with disabilities.

Theme 3: KoZee Coffee & Pastry as an Inclusive Entrepreneurship Platform

KoZee Coffee & Pastry functioned as an inclusive social entrepreneurship hub that bridged theoretical knowledge with practical café management experience. The disability-friendly environment allowed participants to practice customer service, order fulfillment, and counter management in a safe space free from social discrimination. According to Participant 3:

"KoZee provided a very disability-friendly space for us to learn the ins and outs of café management and customer service in a practical way." (Participant 3)

Having a dedicated physical platform minimized the gap between classroom training and actual business operations, ensuring that acquired skills were meaningfully applied.

Theme 4: Digital Marketing and Vendor Systems as Market Access Mechanisms

Market access mechanisms, such as the vendor system and digital marketing exposure, proved highly effective in addressing participants' physical and mobility limitations. The vendor system enabled participants who could not work on-site full-time to bake at home and market their products through a shared platform. As noted by Participant 4:

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"Through the vendor system, I can still produce goods from home and sell them even though I don't work full-time at the shop." (Trainer 2)

This collaborative sales mechanism alleviated individual marketing burdens and broadened market reach, securing more consistent income streams for participants.

Theme 5: Sustainability Challenges in Disability-Based Entrepreneurship

The findings also revealed critical sustainability challenges faced by participants in maintaining long-term business activities. Key issues included lingering societal stigma, transportation and logistics constraints, extended learning curves, and the need for ongoing mentorship. This sentiment was emphasized by Participant 5:

"*This project is very good, but we still need continuous mentoring so that our businesses do not stop halfway." (Trainer 3)*

Sustained institutional support and continuous guidance remain crucial to ensuring that disability-inclusive social entrepreneurship models remain viable and impactful over time.

Discussion

The findings indicate that PROKA has strong potential as an inclusive social entrepreneurship model for persons with disabilities in Kelantan. The project successfully combined skills training, employment exposure, café-based learning, digital marketing and vendor support. This integrated approach makes PROKA stronger than conventional short-term training programmes.

First, bakery and pastry training provided practical and marketable skills. The participants learned skills that could support employment or microenterprise activities. This is important because persons with disabilities need training that leads to real economic opportunities (Mahmood et al., 2022).

Second, PROKA contributed to self-confidence and dignity. Real work exposure allowed participants to experience achievement and social recognition. Certificates, work experience and product sales strengthened participants' belief in their own capabilities.

Third, KoZee Coffee & Pastry served as an important inclusive platform. It provided a real business environment where participants could apply their skills. This is significant because entrepreneurship training becomes more meaningful when participants have access to actual production and marketing spaces.

Fourth, the vendor system supported market access. Many persons with disabilities may face difficulty managing individual businesses due to mobility, confidence or resource constraints. A vendor system reduces this burden by providing collective marketing support.

Fifth, sustainability depends on long-term support. Disability-based entrepreneurship requires continuous mentoring, adapted training, accessible facilities, family support and public awareness. Without these elements, participants may struggle to continue after the initial project period.

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Overall, PROKA demonstrates that inclusive entrepreneurship can transform public perceptions of persons with disabilities by showing their ability to work, produce and contribute economically.

Implications of the Study

This study provides several implications for disability empowerment and community development. Entrepreneurship programmes for persons with disabilities should be designed with clear practical outcomes such as employment, income generation or vendor placement. Training should not only focus on skill exposure but must be connected to real economic opportunities that allow participants to apply what they have learned. In addition, training activities need to be adapted to participants' learning pace and ability level. Repetition, demonstration, hands-on practice and patient mentoring are important to ensure that persons with disabilities can participate meaningfully and build confidence throughout the learning process.

The findings also imply that inclusive platforms such as KoZee Coffee & Pastry are important in connecting training with real market experience. Such platforms provide participants with opportunities to experience café operations, product display, customer interaction and sales activities in a supportive environment. Vendor systems can further help persons with disabilities overcome individual marketing challenges by providing shared product promotion and sales channels. At the same time, disability-friendly facilities and supportive environments are essential to ensure meaningful participation. Public awareness should also be strengthened to reduce stigma and increase acceptance of products made by persons with disabilities, thereby supporting a more inclusive community entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed to strengthen the sustainability and impact of the Bake4Ability initiative. First, a structured Bake4Ability training module should be developed to guide participants systematically in bakery, pastry, hygiene, packaging, costing, digital marketing and customer service. The module should be designed according to different ability levels and learning speeds so that persons with disabilities can learn through demonstration, repetition, hands-on practice and continuous guidance. This approach is important because participants may require different forms of support before they can perform tasks independently and confidently.

In addition, KoZee Coffee & Pastry should be strengthened as a permanent inclusive entrepreneurship hub that provides real work exposure, café management experience and product marketing opportunities. The vendor system should also be expanded to include schools, offices, cafés, cooperatives and community events so that participants' products can reach wider markets. This can help increase product visibility, improve sales consistency and provide more stable income-generating opportunities for participants. At the same time, product branding, packaging, and labeling should be improved to increase customer confidence and enhance the competitiveness of bakery and pastry products produced by persons with disabilities.

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Continuous mentoring should also be provided after participants complete their training. Mentoring is important to monitor skills progress, business confidence, income generation and employment outcomes. Participants should also be supported with accessible transport or location-based training where needed, particularly for those who face mobility or location constraints. Family members and caregivers should be involved as support partners because they can assist participants in maintaining motivation, managing work routines and sustaining participation in entrepreneurship activities.

Finally, digital marketing support should be strengthened through training in social media content, product photography, online order systems and customer communication. Partnerships with local businesses should also be developed to create more employment opportunities, vendor placements and product distribution channels. Public awareness campaigns should be organised to promote products made by persons with disabilities and to transform community perceptions of their capabilities. These efforts can help position Bake4Ability as a sustainable, inclusive and socially impactful entrepreneurship model for persons with disabilities.

Proposed Bake4Ability Inclusive Entrepreneurship Model

Based on the findings, this study proposes the Bake4Ability Inclusive Entrepreneurship Model. The model consists of five components:



Figure 1 Illustrates That the Proposed

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Bake4Ability Inclusive Entrepreneurship Model consists of five interconnected components that support the empowerment of persons with disabilities through bakery and pastry entrepreneurship. The model begins with inclusive participant selection, where participants are identified based on their interest, ability, basic skills and support needs. This is followed by adaptive skills training, which emphasises demonstration, repetition, hands-on practice and flexible learning pace to ensure that the training process is suitable for participants with different abilities. The third component, real work exposure, highlights the role of KoZee Coffee & Pastry as a practical platform for café management exposure, customer service experience and workplace learning.

The model further shows that market access support is essential in helping participants sell their products and generate income through digital marketing and the vendor system. These components lead to empowerment outcomes, including employment opportunities, income generation, improved self-confidence, reduced dependency, enhanced social participation and transformed public perception towards the capabilities of persons with disabilities (May et al., 2025). Overall, the model suggests that disability-based entrepreneurship becomes more effective when skills training is connected to real work exposure, market support and continuous empowerment mechanisms.

Conclusion

This study explored PROKA, or the Empowerment of Bakery and Pastry Project for Persons with Disabilities, as an inclusive social entrepreneurship initiative in Kelantan. The findings show that PROKA contributed to income generation, employability, entrepreneurial skills and self-confidence among persons with disabilities. Through KoZee Coffee & Pastry, participants gained real work exposure, product marketing opportunities and access to disability-friendly facilities.

According to PROKA programme employment records, 10 of the 30 participants obtained permanent employment at KoZee Coffee & Pastry, while other participants continued to generate income through the vendor system by producing and marketing bakery and pastry products. These outcomes demonstrate PROKA's potential to provide multiple pathways for economic participation, ranging from formal employment to supported micro-entrepreneurship.

However, the study also found that sustainability requires continuous support. Challenges such as social stigma, longer learning periods, location constraints, mobility issues, market competition and production consistency must be addressed. PROKA should therefore be strengthened through adaptive training, continuous mentoring, vendor expansion, digital marketing support and stakeholder collaboration (Setyaningsih et al., 2024).

Overall, Bake4Ability demonstrates that bakery and pastry entrepreneurship can serve as an inclusive, systematic and competitive model for empowering persons with disabilities. The initiative not only improves livelihood and self-confidence but also helps transform public perceptions of the capabilities of persons with disabilities. With sustained support, PROKA can become a model for disability-inclusive community entrepreneurship and social wellbeing.

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Ethics Statement: This study was conducted in accordance with ethical research standards. All procedures involving human participants were reviewed and approved in accordance with institutional ethical practices. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity through code identifiers (e.g., P1, P2). Assistance from family members or caregivers was permitted where needed, and data collected were used solely for academic purposes.

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