

FROM CHARITY TO CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: REFRAMING ZAKAT AS A CITIZENSHIP PHILANTHROPY MOVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the role of zakat as a form of philanthropic citizenship in Indonesia, examining how it can move beyond traditional charity to foster civic awareness, social solidarity, and participatory community development. The study seeks to highlight zakat's potential in empowering citizens as co-actors in achieving social justice and sustainable welfare. The study employs a qualitative approach, combining literature review, document analysis, and examination of zakat institutional practices in Indonesia. Data were analyzed thematically to identify the mechanisms through which zakat promotes civic participation, community empowerment, and inclusive social development. Findings indicate that zakat has evolved into a participatory, civic-oriented practice that engages both donors and recipients as active contributors to societal development. Digitalization and community-based programs enhance transparency, participation, and social capital, while challenges such as limited literacy, institutional capacity gaps, and unequal engagement remain. The study is limited to the Indonesian context and primarily relies on secondary data and institutional reports. Future research is recommended to empirically test the philanthropic citizenship model in various local settings, and to assess its impact on social cohesion, economic empowerment, and civic engagement. The study suggests that zakat institutions should adopt participatory governance, co-creation programs with beneficiaries, and digital platforms to strengthen transparency, accountability, and active civic involvement. Policies supporting collaborative zakat initiatives can enhance the effectiveness of social welfare interventions. By promoting civic engagement, social responsibility, and inclusive community development, zakat can contribute to broader social cohesion, empowerment of marginalized groups, and the cultivation of an active, responsible citizenry. This study offers a novel perspective on zakat as a civic-oriented philanthropic tool, shifting the discourse from individual religious obligation to collective social action, and providing insights into integrating faith-based giving with civic development strategies

Keywords: Zakat; Philanthropic Citizenship; Civic Engagement; Zakat Digitalization; Public Participation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past several decades, the world has faced increasingly complex social dynamics, ranging from global economic inequality and rising levels of extreme poverty to recurring humanitarian crises triggered by conflict, pandemics, and climate-related disasters (UNDP, 2025). Various international development reports indicate that formal social protection mechanisms in many countries have not been fully able to respond to these pressures, thereby necessitating a stronger role for non-state actors, including philanthropic communities and religious organizations (WINGS, 2018). In Muslim societies, zakat occupies a strategic position as a wealth-redistribution instrument that carries theological, social, and moral legitimacy. In many countries, zakat is understood not only as an individual religious obligation but also as a social practice capable of strengthening community resilience, reducing welfare gaps, and promoting inclusive development (Jaya et al., 2023; Judijanto, 2024; Nurrahman et al., 2024).

In Indonesia, the potential of zakat continues to grow in line with the expansion of the Muslim middle class and the development of digital innovations in philanthropy. Since the enactment of Law Number 23 of 2011 on Zakat Management, the zakat ecosystem has demonstrated significant institutional progress. According to the latest report by the National Zakat Agency (BAZNAS) (2025), in the first semester of 2025, there were 736 registered zakat management institutions across the country, with a reporting compliance rate of 89.6%. During the same period, the collection of Zakat, Infak/Alms, and Other Religious Social Funds (ZIS-DSKL) reached nearly IDR 27 trillion, although this figure represented a slight decline compared to the previous semester. The number of muzakki also showed a notable decrease, both among individual payers (-14.26%) and corporate payers (-16.54%). Meanwhile, zakat distribution amounted to IDR 26.147 trillion, experiencing a minor decrease of 0.78%, despite specific sectors such as education experiencing a 17.99% increase. Asnaf distribution also revealed compelling dynamics, including a significant surge in the allocation for muallaf, which rose by more than 200%. These fluctuations do not necessarily indicate weakened performance, considering differences in data-collection periods and ongoing reporting processes. Nonetheless, the decline in muzakki and mustahik numbers, alongside shifting distribution patterns, suggests that public participation in zakat still faces important challenges. This condition underscores the urgency of reframing zakat not merely as a charitable mechanism but as a form of civic engagement capable of expanding social participation and strengthening collective solidarity within Indonesian society.

Although zakat holds significant potential as an instrument of social empowerment, its practice in Indonesia remains largely dominated by charitable patterns oriented toward short-term needs, such as consumptive assistance and rapid responses to emergency situations (Latief, 2012; Oktapiani, 2025). While such approaches are important for alleviating the burdens of mustahik, especially during times of crisis, they have not yet been fully effective in promoting long-term social transformation. Charitable practices tend to position impoverished communities as passive recipients, leaving limited space for the development of critical awareness, social participation, or their active contribution to development processes (Isnaini, 2023; Rini et al.,

2020). As a result, zakat often remains at the level of financial transactions and fails to evolve into a form of social relation capable of strengthening citizen participation or building more sustainable empowerment structures.

This tendency is largely influenced by the public's interpretation of zakat, which remains centered on individual obligations and spiritual values rather than its function as an instrument of development and civic engagement. Many muzakki view zakat as an expression of personal generosity rather than a contribution to collective efforts aimed at strengthening communities or advancing social justice (Ridwan & Hidayati, 2023; Sucipto et al., 2025). This cultural orientation consequently gives rise to a transactional model of philanthropy, in which the relationship between giver and recipient does not evolve into forms of deliberative or collaborative citizen participation. The decline in the number of muzakki in the first semester of 2025 can also be read as an indication that public commitment to zakat has not yet been fully established as a strong form of civic consciousness. This gap underscores the urgency of introducing a new approach that reframes zakat as a citizenship-based philanthropic movement, one that encourages social participation, public solidarity, and citizen involvement in collectively addressing structural issues.

Amid the dominance of a charitable paradigm, there remains a significant opportunity to reposition zakat as a movement of philanthropic citizenship capable of fostering more active and sustained citizen engagement. This shift is becoming increasingly relevant as the need for public participation intensifies in addressing complex social challenges, ranging from structural poverty to unequal access to basic services. In this context, the notion of philanthropic citizenship provides a framework that positions muzakki, mustahik, and the broader community as empowered social actors in solving public problems. Rather than remaining at the level of financial redistribution, zakat has the potential to function as a medium for citizen participation aimed at building solidarity, strengthening social cohesion, and fostering community collaboration in the development process.

This potential for transformation is further strengthened by the rapid digitalization of the zakat ecosystem. Various digital payment channels developed by BAZNAS, from online bank transfers and QRIS to mobile applications and partnerships with e-commerce platforms, have enhanced accessibility, transparency, and the proximity of muzakki to social programs (Indriani et al., 2024; Kasri & Sosianti, 2023). Digitalization not only expands the reach of fundraising but also creates space for new forms of participation, including digital volunteering, donor communities, public discussion forums, and citizen involvement in program monitoring and evaluation (Aini et al., 2025; Hartono, 2022). Younger generations, particularly millennials and Gen Z, show a strong inclination toward technology-driven social participation and values of social justice, positioning them as potential key drivers of zakat-based philanthropic citizenship (Fuad et al., 2025). In this context, zakat holds significant potential to evolve from traditional charitable practices into a more inclusive, collaborative, and transformational model of civic engagement.

Given these opportunities for transformation, it becomes essential to formulate several key questions that can guide the direction of this study, particularly regarding how the paradigm of zakat can be reframed from a charitable practice into a more participatory form of philanthropic citizenship. These questions intersect with other equally significant issues, such as which civic values can strengthen the role of zakat in fostering social solidarity, the extent to which digitalization can expand forms of civic engagement, and what kind of conceptual model can illustrate zakat as a practice of philanthropic citizenship. In addressing these questions, this research aims to analyze the concept of philanthropic citizenship within the context of zakat in Indonesia, describe how civic values are integrated into zakat-based philanthropic practices, identify digitalization opportunities for citizen engagement, and formulate a conceptual model that positions zakat as a catalyst for more active and collaborative social participation. Theoretically, this study contributes to strengthening the discourse on citizenship within Islamic philanthropy as well as the broader literature on civic engagement and zakat governance. Practically, it offers recommendations for BAZNAS and LAZ to enhance public participation. At the policy level, this research reinforces the role of zakat as an integral component of social protection systems and community empowerment.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Zakat and Islamic Philanthropy

Zakat is an Islamic financial instrument that carries both spiritual and social functions, aimed, according to Islamic law, at purifying wealth, fostering solidarity, and creating economic balance through distributive mechanisms that prioritize eligible beneficiaries (*mustahik*) (Mubarak, 2025). Historically, Islamic philanthropy has evolved from a charitable model focused on consumptive assistance, to community-development approaches, and ultimately toward an empowerment paradigm that emphasizes economic self-reliance through training, business capital, and strengthened social capacity (A. Sari et al., 2025). In the context of social development, zakat institutions play a crucial role as intermediary actors that not only manage zakat, *infaq*, and *sadaqah* funds but also design empowerment programs, map social problems, and build collaborations with government and community stakeholders to strengthen collective welfare (Ramadhani et al., 2024). However, contemporary zakat management faces significant challenges, particularly low public literacy regarding zakat obligations and mechanisms, increasing demands for institutional transparency and accountability, and suboptimal public participation resulting from preferences for direct distribution and limited trust in formal institutions (Meytriana et al., 2025). Therefore, enhancing literacy, service innovation, and robust governance are key to transforming Islamic philanthropy in the modern era.

B. Civic Engagement in Citizenship Studies

Civic engagement in Citizenship Studies is understood as the active involvement of citizens in public life to realize the common good, whether through political participation, social activities, or community-based collective contributions (Lynggaard

& Boje, 2025). This concept encompasses four main dimensions: civic participation, which refers to citizens' concrete actions in public activities; civic responsibility, which emphasizes awareness of moral and social obligations in maintaining order and societal well-being; social solidarity, which reflects empathetic bonds and reciprocal support among citizens; and community problem-solving, which highlights the capacity and willingness of communities to address social issues through collaboration and deliberation (Lynggaard & Boje, 2025; Zaff et al., 2011). These four dimensions position civic engagement as a strategic element in strengthening social welfare, as active citizen involvement fosters adaptive social networks, enhances the effectiveness of community programs, and cultivates a participatory culture that reinforces community-driven development. Thus, civic engagement becomes an essential foundation for the realization of an inclusive, resilient, and empowered society capable of addressing contemporary social challenges.

C. The Concept of Philanthropic Citizenship

The concept of philanthropic citizenship emerges from critiques of short-term, charity-based philanthropy and shifts toward the understanding that acts of giving should be embedded within citizenship practices oriented toward long-term social change. This transformation positions philanthropy not merely as an emotional response to poverty, but as a form of citizen participation in addressing public issues through support for empowerment programs, advocacy, and community development initiatives (Body, 2024; Body & Lacny, 2023). These characteristics are not intended as a fixed theoretical framework but rather as general patterns observed in studies examining the shift from charitable giving to citizenship-oriented philanthropic action. With such an orientation, philanthropic citizenship is understood as distinct from charity-based philanthropy or passive donors who only participate through financial contributions; instead, this model emphasizes active participation, long-term commitment, and a substantive focus on social transformation.

D. The Concept of Social Capital

Social Capital Theory emphasizes that social relations, trust, and norms of cooperation function as collective resources that enable citizens to participate in public action, including in participatory forms of philanthropy (Claridge, 2018). Within social capital scholarship, three primary types are commonly distinguished: bonding social capital, which strengthens solidarity within relatively homogeneous groups; bridging social capital, which connects different groups within broader networks; and linking social capital, which bridges relationships between citizens and formal institutions or authorities (Claridge, 2018; Fine, 2010). These three forms of social capital constitute an essential foundation for the development of philanthropic citizenship, as strong social networks can enhance public trust, expand channels for citizen participation, and strengthen community capacity to mobilize resources for collective problem-solving. In

the context of zakat, social capital facilitates collaboration among muzaki, mustahik, communities, and zakat institutions, enabling philanthropy to function not only as redistribution but also as a citizenship practice that reinforces social cohesion and communal capacity.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach based on literature review and conceptual analysis to explore how zakat can be reconstructed from a charitable practice into a movement of philanthropic citizenship. The analytical process focuses on tracing theories and prior research related to Islamic philanthropy, civic engagement, citizenship, social capital, and digital transformation in zakat practices. Data sources include national and international scholarly journals, academic books, official reports from BAZNAS and LAZ, government regulations and policies, reports on digital philanthropy trends, and other relevant media publications. Sources were selected purposively by considering credibility, relevance, and currency, enabling this research to capture the latest developments in the discourse on Islamic philanthropy and citizen engagement.

Data analysis was conducted through thematic analysis, beginning with a coding process to identify key themes such as charitable paradigms, civic-based philanthropy, citizen participation, zakat governance, and the use of digital technology. These themes were then examined comparatively to identify their interrelations and distinctions, before being integrated into a conceptual model of zakat as a movement of philanthropic citizenship. The model was developed inductively from the synthesis of literature and is intended to provide a new framework that explains the transformation of philanthropic actions into citizenship practices that are more participatory, collaborative, and oriented toward collective well-being.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Reconstructing the Zakat Paradigm: from Charity to Civic Engagement

Figure 1. Distribution Map of Zakat Management Institutions in 2024



Source: National Zakat Management Report, End of Year 2024

Figure 1 illustrates that zakat management institutions are now widely and evenly distributed across Indonesia, encompassing Provincial BAZNAS, Regency/Municipal

BAZNAS, as well as national and regional LAZ organizations. This widespread institutional presence indicates that the zakat ecosystem is no longer dependent on individual charitable practices, but has evolved toward a more democratic, decentralized, and citizen-oriented institutional model. The presence of zakat institutions in nearly every province and regency/municipality opens opportunities for the processes of collection, distribution, and empowerment of mustahik to be carried out through more participatory mechanisms. Zakat practices are no longer understood as a one-way relationship from the “giver” to the “recipient,” but are beginning to develop into a space for citizen involvement as social actors who play roles in decision-making, volunteer activities, community organizing, and collaboration for social development at the local level (Kholidah & Salma, 2020; Musliyani., 2022). This transformation shows that zakat has great potential to serve as an instrument of civic engagement that strengthens social cohesion while increasing the capacity of society in addressing public issues collectively.

The geographical distribution of zakat institutions further shows that the transformation of zakat toward civic engagement is structural and not limited to urban areas. For example, provinces with a high density of zakat institutions such as West Java, East Java, and North Sumatra have great potential to build community-based empowerment ecosystems because of the large number of Regency/Municipal BAZNAS and local LAZ that can serve as facilitators of citizen participation. On the other hand, regions such as Papua, Maluku, and Nusa Tenggara, which have fewer institutions, instead open space for a more inclusive model of participatory zakat governance, as zakat institutions there often play dual roles: not only distributing assistance, but also building civic solidarity through strengthening community networks to address social vulnerabilities (Kunaifi et al., 2021a, 2021b; R. D. Pratiwi, 2022).

This means that the widespread presence of zakat institutions across Indonesia serves as a structural foundation for the paradigm shift of zakat from charity to civic engagement. Zakat institutions are no longer merely agents of aid distribution, but have become platforms for citizens to participate actively through musyarakah mustahik forums, MSME mentoring programs, regional zakat volunteers, and inter-institutional collaborations. Thus, this distribution map not only illustrates the geographical spread of zakat institutions, but also visualizes how zakat has begun to move toward a model that emphasizes citizen participation, community collaboration, and social empowerment as the core of the philanthropic citizenship paradigm (Kholidah & Salma, 2020)

In its traditional practice, zakat is often understood as a charitable activity that positions the muzaki as the giver and the mustahik as the receiver. This pattern produces a vertical relationship: the party who gives is regarded as having a higher status, while the party who receives is placed in a position of dependence. Within a sociological framework, such a charitable pattern creates a patron–client relationship, namely an

unequal form of interaction built upon one-sided assistance without restoring the recipient's capacity (Forrester, 2015; Gough & Scott, 2006).

Criticism of the charity paradigm arises because such practices often “maintain poverty” rather than transform the structures that underlie it. (Lo et al., 2020) argue that relief-based aid models only address problems temporarily, but do not build social or economic self-reliance. In the context of zakat, repetitive charitable practices often trap mustahik in a cycle of passive receipt, without providing space for them to participate or articulate their own needs. In addition, the charity paradigm tends to prioritize short-term distribution rather than structural interventions. Yet the concept of zakat in the Islamic tradition contains not only a dimension of generosity (charity) but also a dimension of social justice, as emphasized by Chapra (1992). Thus, maintaining a charity-based paradigm means neglecting the potential of zakat as an instrument of more substantive social change.

The reconstruction of the zakat paradigm toward civic engagement positions zakat not merely as an act of personal charity, but as a social mechanism that strengthens the role of citizens. This paradigm departs from the idea that issues of poverty, inequality, and social vulnerability cannot be resolved solely through material assistance, but through citizen involvement in decision-making processes and community development (Putnam, 2000). From a citizenship perspective, zakat can serve as a means of empowerment that places mustahik as subjects rather than objects. The active involvement of mustahik in identifying needs, managing programs, and assessing outcomes reflects the notion of participatory citizenship as articulated by Westheimer & Kahne, (2004). When zakat institutions (LAZ/BAZNAS) open participatory spaces for mustahik, such as in planning economic empowerment programs or assessing their impact, the social bonds formed become significantly stronger than those produced through ordinary charitable relationships.

Multi-stakeholder collaboration is also a key pillar in the civic engagement paradigm. Zakat institutions can collaborate with local governments, communities, and educational institutions to build a sustainable philanthropic ecosystem. Models such as community-based zakat management are considered capable of strengthening the sense of ownership while expanding networks of citizen participation (Nurdin, 2021) Thus, the citizenship paradigm does not position zakat merely as a material transfer, but as a process that strengthens social capital, expands spaces for citizen deliberation, and builds more democratic social institutions. Reframing zakat as a movement of philanthropic citizenship carries both epistemological and practical implications for the positions of muzaki and mustahik. They are no longer viewed as “donors” and “recipients,” but as fellow citizens connected through social responsibility. Within the co-citizenship approach, muzaki are understood as citizens who have ethical and social responsibilities to contribute to public welfare. Meanwhile, mustahik are seen as citizens who have the right to receive systemic support in order to achieve self-reliance. This aligns with

Marshall, (1950) idea that citizenship encompasses social rights that enable individuals to live with dignity and empowerment.

The co-citizenship paradigm shifts the focus of the muzaki–mustahik relationship from a hierarchical relation to a horizontal one based on equality. In this context, zakat programs not only provide consumptive assistance but also create space to build the capacity of mustahik through training, entrepreneurship, social advocacy, and participation in community decision-making. These actions represent forms of citizenship practice that affirm that mustahik are not a burden, but part of the social strength that can contribute to community development. Thus, zakat is no longer merely a mechanism of wealth redistribution but becomes an ecosystem that enables citizens to strengthen one another within an inclusive social structure. This model encourages the development of active and transformational solidarity, rather than mere charity.

B. Integration of Citizenship Values in the Zakat Ecosystem



Figure 2. Citizenship Values in the Zakat Ecosystem

Source: Processed by the author, 2025

Zakat has a social function that extends far beyond an economic transaction between muzaki and mustahik. From a social perspective, zakat is a mechanism that strengthens social cohesion because it encourages interconnected relationships within the community. Saha, (2001) explains that social solidarity is created when members of society feel mutually dependent and share a moral commitment to collective well-being. In this context, zakat is not merely a ritual obligation but becomes a medium that maintains social ties between economically capable groups and vulnerable groups. Various studies on Islamic philanthropy show that the distribution of zakat can reduce the potential for social fragmentation, especially in urban communities that experience sharp class differentiation (Dwiaryanti et al., 2024; Kunaifi et al., 2021b; Malik & Syafaruddin, 2023; Qomari, 2017). Through credible and transparent zakat institutions, the social interactions produced are collective rather than individual. This fosters what Putnam, (2000) calls *bridging social capital*, a type of social capital that connects different groups and strengthens social trust.

In a social perspective, zakat is not only understood as an instrument of economic distribution but also as a mechanism that strengthens social cohesion because it creates

interconnected relationships within the community. Fitriyani & Supartiningsih, (2017); Saha, (2001) emphasize that social solidarity emerges when members of society feel mutually dependent and share a moral commitment to collective well-being. The relationship between *muzaki* and *mustahik* becomes a tangible form of that solidarity: groups with economic advantages consciously share resources to strengthen vulnerable groups. Thus, zakat functions as a social norm that maintains social integration, especially amid rising economic inequality.

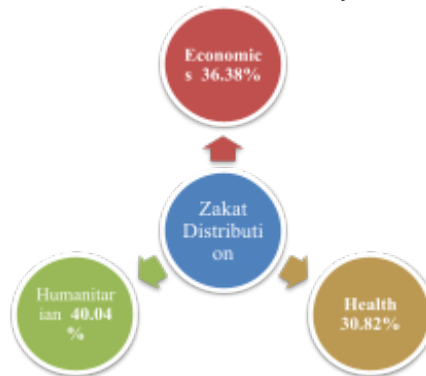
In the modern context, zakat institutions play an important role in transforming the *muzaki*–*mustahik* relationship, which was initially personal and vertical, into a social relationship that is collective and equal. As explained by (Putnam, 2000), this process produces *bridging social capital*, namely social capital that builds bridges between different groups, thereby creating social trust and cooperation across social classes. When zakat is collected and distributed through credible and transparent institutions, the interaction between *muzaki* and *mustahik* is no longer merely a charitable giver–recipient relationship, but becomes a mechanism for fostering civic solidarity. The *muzaki* not only “helps” the *mustahik*, but also participates in maintaining a more just social order; meanwhile, the *mustahik* is not positioned as a passive party, but as a member of the community who has the right to collective well-being.

National data reinforce this argument. In 2024, the total national zakat distribution reached Rp39.508 trillion, an increase of 26.30% from the previous year. Significant growth occurred in the humanitarian sector (40.04%), the economic sector (36.38%), and the health sector (30.82%), indicating that zakat has become an instrument of social solidarity that is responsive to community vulnerabilities. Growth in these three sectors reflects a pattern of *muzaki* participation that is increasingly oriented toward actual social needs, while also showing that *mustahik* are not only viewed as beneficiaries but as citizens entitled to access social safety nets. The sharp increase in the economic sector, despite a decrease in the number of *mustahik*, indicates that productive zakat programs—particularly MSME empowerment and capacity building for low-income families—are becoming priorities. This demonstrates a more advanced form of solidarity, namely solidarity that not only helps but also enhances capacity. Meanwhile, the rising number of *mustahik* in the humanitarian and health sectors reflects the high level of civic solidarity among the public in responding to national emergencies and inequalities in access to public services. The sectors with the highest growth are as follows:

Table 1. Growth of National Zakat Distribution and Utilization in 2024 Based on Program Sectors

No	Program Sector	Distribution Amount (Rp)		Growth
		2023	2024	
1.	Humanitarian	2,240,005,451,406	3,136,977,109,051	40.04%
2.	Health	370,933,581,895	485,250,923,610	30.82%
3.	Education	1,085,301,597,156	1,288,866,026,512	18.76%
4.	Economic	450,776,755,895	614,764,892,346	36.38%
5.	Da‘wah–Advocacy	1,484,698,302,078	1,729,506,410,002	16.49%
6.	Amil Operational	748,432,086,613	723,541,256,807	-3.33%
Total		6,380,147,775,043	7,978,906,618,328	25.06%

Source: SIMBA Data as of 11 February 2025.

**Figure 3.** Significant Increase in the Three Main Sectors

Source: National Zakat Management Report, End of Year 2024

Data from the 2024 National Zakat Report shows a significant increase in the three main sectors of zakat utilization, humanitarian rising by 40.04%, economic by 36.38%, and health by 30.82%, which marks the transformation of zakat from merely a charitable mechanism into a robust instrument of civic solidarity. The substantial rise in the humanitarian and health sectors reflects the strengthening of civic solidarity, namely social solidarity that encourages citizens to respond to issues of disasters, conflicts, and vulnerabilities through collective philanthropic action (Fadila & Marwan, 2020; Kholidah & Salma, 2020; D. P. Sari et al., 2023). This increase not only demonstrates rising public

concern but also highlights the function of zakat as a citizen-based social safety net that complements the role of the state in protecting vulnerable groups. Meanwhile, the growth of the economic sector indicates an expansion of public support for mustahik empowerment programs and MSME development, allowing zakat to shift from a consumptive pattern to a productive one that positions mustahik as subjects of development. Overall, the increase in these three sectors proves that zakat has now become an instrument of social cohesion that unites society across religious, class, and regional identities, and strengthens citizen participation in maintaining collective welfare through a citizenship-based philanthropic movement that is increasingly mature and oriented toward long-term empowerment.

The paradigm of citizenship-based philanthropy views zakat not only as a financial obligation but also as a form of active citizen participation in strengthening social welfare. Paying zakat is indeed the starting point, but citizen involvement in empowerment programs, micro-enterprise assistance, scholarship initiatives, or economic literacy activities represents an expression of civic responsibility. This idea aligns with Dahl, (1998) view of participatory democracy, which asserts that every citizen has a moral obligation to participate in social processes in order to build a more just public life. When citizens serve as mentors for zakat-supported MSMEs, facilitators of training programs, community volunteers, or designers of empowerment initiatives, zakat is no longer understood merely as a donation mechanism but transforms into a social movement that cultivates collective awareness and concern about contributing to the public good. In this way, zakat provides a civic learning space that cultivates citizens who are caring, responsible, and actively engaged in building shared prosperity.

The shift toward citizenship-based philanthropy is reflected in the 2024 national zakat payer (muzaki) data. The report shows an increase of 2.07% in individual muzaki, from 27,591,839 in 2023 to 28,162,797 in 2024, while corporate muzaki grew much more significantly, by 62.73%, from 182,276 to 296,620 over the same period. The surge in corporate muzaki indicates that zakat is increasingly understood as an institutional responsibility in supporting public welfare. Meanwhile, the growth of individual muzaki signifies rising civic awareness that zakat is not merely a private religious practice, but a social contribution that impacts justice and public well-being. Theoretically, this development is consistent with the concept of civic-driven philanthropy, which emphasizes that citizens and institutions together take an active role in addressing social issues (Rafzan et al., 2024; Sirem & Çatal, 2023). Thus, the 2024 data show that zakat participation in Indonesia has shifted from a ritualistic pattern to a participatory one, affirming that zakat has increasingly become a space for articulating social concern and mature civic engagement.

Citizen participation in decision-making is the core of the civic engagement approach. In the context of zakat, this participation can be realized through the presence of zakat volunteers, community forums, and even the *Kampung Zakat* model that is jointly managed by zakat institutions, local governments, and the community (TribunPriangan,

2023). Zakat volunteers play a strategic role as a bridge between zakat institutions and grassroots communities: they not only deliver assistance but also identify local problems, map mustahik, gather community aspirations, and facilitate community-based planning. This aligns with the framework of A'yun et al., (2022) who emphasize that authentic participation only occurs when citizens are given space to express opinions and influence decisions, rather than merely being included in processes that are symbolic (tokenism).

Citizen involvement becomes even more relevant when linked to the empirical data from BAZNAS 2024. The report shows that the number of mustahik in the humanitarian sector reached 25,300,422 people, an increase of 29.09% from the previous year, while mustahik in the economic sector reached 634,282 people, despite experiencing a 17.77% decrease compared to 2023. The surge in humanitarian mustahik reflects the substantial needs of vulnerable citizens amid disasters and social crises, whereas the decline in economic mustahik, amid a 36.38% increase in the value of zakat disbursed for economic programs, indicates that economic programs are becoming more selective and empowerment-oriented. These two data points demonstrate that effective zakat programs require close identification of problems, intensive mentoring, and citizen-based planning, all of which can only be achieved if community participation is genuinely integrated into zakat governance (Ipmawati & Widiastuti, 2020; Jalaluddin & Jannah, 2022; Zunaidi & Maghfiroh, 2022).

Concrete examples can be found in the implementation of various Zakat Villages (Kampung Zakat) in Indonesia, such as in Aceh Besar, East Lombok, Makassar City, and Banyuwangi. In Aceh Besar, village deliberations determine priority needs ranging from sanitation, women's empowerment, to strengthening local MSMEs. In East Lombok, zakat volunteers become key actors in facilitating post-disaster recovery, identifying vulnerable families, and formulating joint business plans for mustahik groups. Meanwhile, the Zakat Village in Makassar implements a citizen-based monitoring model through monthly forums to evaluate the effectiveness of distribution and business learning. These practices demonstrate that when citizens are given space and trust to design, supervise, and evaluate programs, the outcomes of empowerment become more targeted, contextual, and sustainable (Lubis, 2024; N. Pratiwi et al., 2024; Yasir, 2023).

Thus, participatory zakat governance not only strengthens transparency and accountability but also builds social ownership, a sense of belonging to the program that serves as an important form of social capital in community-based development. When citizens take part in determining priority needs, monitoring the use of funds, and designing indicators of success, zakat becomes an arena for practicing public democracy. Zakat no longer stops at being a redistribution mechanism, but becomes a means of shaping citizens who are active, caring, and responsible for collective well-being. At this point, zakat truly functions as a movement of civic philanthropy: a social practice that integrates religious values, public responsibility, and democratic participation in building a just and empowered society (Maripatul Uula, 2022; Syed Yusuf et al., 2024; Wahyuni-TD et al., 2021)

Next, the pillar of social justice is one of the fundamental goals of zakat management, because zakat is essentially designed to bring about a fair and equitable distribution of welfare for all members of society. In the perspective of Islamic economics, the principles of *al-'adl* (justice) and *al-ihsan* (benevolence) serve as normative foundations

that require a clear orientation toward supporting the weak and vulnerable groups, rather than merely providing formalistic assistance (Abdulsalam Ahmed Sawmar, 2021; Santoso et al., 2024). At the level of the modern state, zakat functions as a social safety net that complements the government's social security system, especially in sectors that still have protection gaps, such as basic health services, educational assistance, women's economic empowerment, and humanitarian emergency aid. Handoko et al., (2022); Khalifah et al., (2024) show that zakat has a social stabilization function because it can reduce poverty levels, increase the purchasing power of vulnerable groups, and strengthen the economic resilience of poor families. When zakat is allocated productively through business capital, skills training, MSME capacity building, or women's group organizing, zakat not only mitigates short-term vulnerability but also creates a sustainable foundation for long-term self-reliance (Kholidah & Salma, 2020).

Within the framework of citizenship philanthropy, the function of zakat as a social safety net affirms that public welfare is not solely the responsibility of the state, but rather the result of collective action by citizens who care for one another. Zakat becomes a participatory mechanism that enables citizens, zakat institutions, local communities, and social organizations to work together in maintaining communal well-being. Through empowerment-oriented interventions, zakat promotes the creation of shared prosperity, collective welfare that not only reduces structural poverty but also strengthens the foundations of substantive social justice at the community level. Thus, zakat functions not only as an instrument of economic distribution but also as an ethical and social foundation that drives solidarity, empowerment, and justice within society (Arianty & Indrawati, 2024; Aspiranti et al., 2023; Caciatori Junior & Cherobim, 2020).

Zakat plays a central role as an instrument of economic redistribution that works alongside state mechanisms in reducing social inequality (Adiwijaya et al., 2024; Adiwijaya & Suprianto, 2020; Alshater et al., 2021; Amalia, 2018). Data from BAZNAS 2024 shows that the largest number of mustahik is found in humanitarian programs, totaling 25,300,422 people with a growth rate of 29.09%. This large proportion indicates that socio-economic vulnerability remains high among groups experiencing extreme poverty, making zakat continue to function as a social safety net. On the other hand, the number of mustahik in economic programs actually decreased from 771,322 to 634,282 people, or a decline of 17.77%. Although this decline may be interpreted as an indication of the success of several empowerment programs, the data simultaneously shows that the redistribution of zakat in the economic sector is still not optimally reaching a broad beneficiary base. Meanwhile, in terms of distribution value, zakat disbursement in economic programs reached Rp614.7 billion and grew by 36.38% compared to the previous year.

The imbalance between the significant growth of funds and the decline in the number of mustahik shows that productive zakat remains concentrated in certain groups and has not yet been evenly distributed in creating inclusive economic transformation. It is at this point that the four-pillar approach to zakat governance in your article finds its relevance. The pillar of citizen participation ensures that local communities can identify which economic sectors most need intervention; the governance pillar promotes accountability and transparency in distribution so that funds are not absorbed solely into charitable programs; the empowerment pillar emphasizes the importance of sustainable models of training, microfinancing, and business support; and the social justice pillar ensures that

the redistribution of zakat does not stop at consumption, but functions to promote social mobility and the economic independence of mustahik. Thus, zakat as an instrument of economic redistribution not only channels funds to the poor, but also creates new structures that enable them to escape poverty traps sustainably.

C. The Role of Digitalization in Promoting the Citizenship Philanthropy Movement

Table 2. Average National Collection in 2024 by Type of Zakat Management Institution.

No	Type of Zakat Management Institution	Number of PZ	Collection Amount (Rp)		Growth
			2023	2024	
1.	BAZNAS	1	880,268,547,049	1,129,733,837,481	28.34%
2.	Provincial BAZNAS	34	853,989,485,640	925,076,124,372	8.32%
3.	District/City BAZNAS	514	2,021,728,155,557	2,176,987,785,735	7.68%
4.	National BAZNAS	47	5,972,642,158,136	6,142,328,062,482	2.84%
5.	Provincial LAZ	40	406,979,461,826	363,010,435,724	-10.80%
6.	District/City LAZ	86	199,621,451,909	216,971,067,179	8.69%
Total		722	10,335,229,260,117	10,954,107,312,973	5.99%

Source: SIMBA Data as of 11 February 2025.

Digital transformation is one of the most decisive factors in improving the performance of zakat philanthropy in Indonesia, as reflected in the growth of all types of Zakat Management Institutions (PZ) in 2023–2024. The data show that institutions adopting non-cash payments, online zakat applications, dashboard-based reporting systems, and digital fundraising have experienced significant performance increases; BAZNAS Central, for example, grew by 28.34%, from Rp880.2 billion to Rp1.129 trillion, a rise closely correlated with the use of the BAZNAS Digital Platform, the integration of the national zakat QRIS, and multichannel digital campaigns. A similar

growth is seen in district/city LAZ, which increased by 8.69%, indicating that digitalization is no longer centralized at the national level but has reached grassroots bases through micro-donations, Instagram and TikTok campaigns, and local digital payment channels. Meanwhile, provincial and district/city BAZNAS experienced an average increase of 7–8%, indicating that the implementation of digital reporting applications such as SIMBA at the regional level enhances the effectiveness of zakat collection in areas that previously relied on manual mechanisms. Nationally, total zakat collection increased by 5.99%, from Rp10.33 trillion to Rp10.95 trillion, confirming that digitalization serves as a catalyst for the expansion of zakat philanthropy. Digitalization also enhances transparency and accountability; through digital dashboards and real-time reports, the public can monitor fund flows, fund categories, sectoral distribution, mustahik achievements, and program locations, thereby strengthening muzaki trust in zakat management institutions (BAZNAS, 2024).

On the other hand, digitalization opens new spaces of participation for millennials and Gen Z, who have now become active donors, digital volunteers, social campaign curators, and drivers of micro-fundraising, because application-based philanthropy allows donations that are fast, easy, and trackable. Digital collaborative spaces have also expanded rapidly through WhatsApp and Telegram communities, OJK-regulated crowdfunding platforms, and content-creator collaborations, all of which have broadened the reach of zakat campaigns to non-urban areas, as reflected in the significant growth of district/city LAZ. Beyond strengthening collection, digitalization also expands mustahik inclusion through poverty big data, e-mustahik IDs, and geo-mapping, which make data collection more accurate, distribution more targeted, and vulnerability responses faster, especially for persons with disabilities, widows, the elderly, and informal workers (BAZNAS, 2024). When linked to the agenda of citizenship-philanthropy, these developments demonstrate transformation on three levels: at the muzaki level, digitalization expands civic participation, particularly through small donations and fund-tracking mechanisms; at the mustahik level, digitalization enables objective validation and the connection of mustahik to digital MSME empowerment programs; and at the institutional level, highly digitalized institutions such as BAZNAS Central have become pioneers of participatory governance with stronger accountability standards. Thus, the 2024 data do not merely record technical growth, but confirm that digitalization has become a structural force driving zakat from a charity-based model toward civic engagement, positioning citizens as participatory donors, digital volunteers, public overseers, and drivers of social solidarity within Indonesia's philanthropic ecosystem (Abdul Rahman, 1998; Adiwijaya et al., 2024; Ahmad Baehaqi et al., 2025).

Digital transformation has changed the way zakat institutions manage fundraising, shifting from a closed traditional model to a more transparent system of reporting. Digital payment platforms, online zakat applications, and real-time reporting dashboards allow the public to clearly see how funds are collected, managed, and distributed. This transparency strengthens public trust while reducing the potential for fund misuse. In addition, digitalization enables zakat institutions to implement more professional governance standards through online audits, integrated financial systems, and accurate data-based monitoring. Furthermore, information openness allows muzaki to directly monitor the impact of the programs they support. Many zakat institutions now provide video-based reports, field documentation, and impact dashboards that display social

changes resulting from fund distribution. Open access to information creates stronger accountability, making the relationship between society and zakat institutions more equal and mutually supervisory. Thus, digitalization not only accelerates fundraising but also strengthens the ethical foundation of the citizenship-philanthropy movement.

Young generations use digital technology to participate in philanthropic activities in more creative and inclusive ways. For them, philanthropy is not merely a moral obligation but an expression of identity and social awareness. Through social media, Gen Z and millennials can spread donation campaigns, raise humanitarian issues, and build cross-community solidarity through visual narratives and storytelling. Their involvement has transformed the face of philanthropy from a formal, institutional activity into a dynamic social movement that aligns with digital culture. On the other hand, zakat institutions have begun to respond to the creative energy of young people by involving them in campaign design, content production, and the management of digital-based social movements. This role positions young generations not only as passive donors but as drivers of change who influence public opinion and encourage broader participation. With strong digital capacities, they have become key actors in expanding the reach of zakat movements and cultivating a culture of civic engagement that is more adaptive to contemporary developments (Luntajo & Hasan, 2023; Meli Saputri, 2024).

The digital ecosystem has given rise to new forms of collaboration that strengthen the movement of civic philanthropy. Crowdfunding platforms allow the public to raise funds for specific issues, ranging from educational and health assistance to economic empowerment programs. This process enables citizens to initiate social movements without having to rely on formal institutions. In addition, crowdfunding creates a broad space for participation because everyone, regardless of the size of their contribution, has the opportunity to engage in acts of solidarity. Digital social communities and online volunteerism movements add new dimensions to citizen collaboration. Through community platforms, volunteers can connect, coordinate, and take action even when they are in different locations. The forms of contribution have also become increasingly diverse, from serving as content volunteers, online MSME mentors, and social campaign designers, to facilitators of webinar-based training. This collaborative pattern affirms that digital technology not only promotes donations but also opens up space for active participation, virtual mutual assistance, and fast, adaptive community organizing (Luntajo & Hasan, 2023; Meli Saputri, 2024; Wahyuni-TD et al., 2021).

Digitalization also expands the reach of zakat services to vulnerable communities that were previously difficult to access through traditional mechanisms. Through digital profiling and technology-based data mapping, zakat institutions can identify mustahik more accurately and responsively. The process of applying for assistance can now be done through applications, text messages, or social service platforms, enabling the poor, persons with disabilities, and marginalized groups to access aid without lengthy bureaucratic barriers. In addition to improving access to assistance, digitalization also opens empowerment opportunities for mustahik. Digital entrepreneurship training, online business mentoring, and financial education through webinars allow vulnerable groups to develop their capacities independently. These programs create new social mobility for mustahik because they are not only beneficiaries but also active participants in the empowerment process. Thus, digital zakat plays an important role in building a more inclusive, egalitarian, and socially just philanthropic ecosystem.

D. Conceptual Model: Zakat as a Citizenship Philanthropy Movement



Figure 4. Four Main Pillars of Citizenship Philanthropy

Source: Processed by the Author, 2025

The first pillar emphasizes that civic awareness becomes the foundation for the paradigm shift of zakat. This awareness is not merely about knowing religious obligations, but understanding one's position as a citizen with a social responsibility to help maintain the common good. At this point, zakat is viewed not merely as an individual act of worship, but as a social contribution that strengthens solidarity and public civility. Civic awareness emerges when individuals realize that the welfare of mustahik is not only the concern of zakat institutions, but also part of the moral and social responsibility of every muzaki as a member of the political community. On the other hand, civic awareness also involves understanding social issues such as inequality, structural poverty, the vulnerability of women, and local economic sustainability. Muzaki with critical awareness will see zakat not only as a means to "alleviate poverty" instantly, but as playing a role in driving long-term social transformation. Thus, zakat functions as a medium of civic education (civic learning), nurturing values of empathy, public responsibility, and sensitivity to contemporary social issues (Amilahaq et al., 2021; Azmala et al., 2025)

The second pillar emphasizes the importance of active citizen participation in the zakat philanthropy process. Participation does not stop at the act of paying zakat, but extends to involvement in social programs, program monitoring, fundraising, and volunteer actions in the field. Within this framework, muzaki and other citizens become active subjects who help determine the forms of social intervention, rather than merely objects providing financial obligations. Zakat as a citizenship philanthropy movement encourages citizens to engage in systematic and sustainable social care. Philanthropic participation also transforms through digitalization, where zakat applications, crowdfunding platforms, and volunteering forums facilitate broad public participation. This participation enriches civic practice by enabling more citizens to contribute, even those geographically distant from program locations. This transformation strengthens

inclusive philanthropy, in which every citizen can take a role according to their capacity. Increasingly open participation becomes a key asset for the growth of a democratic philanthropy ecosystem oriented toward long-term social impact (Hurun'in et al., 2024; Suwito et al., 2025).

The third pillar emphasizes that zakat as a civic movement will be effective if built on community collaboration and the strengthening of social capital. Community collaboration creates space for interaction among muzaki, mustahik, zakat institutions, local governments, and civil society organizations. Through this collaboration, zakat does not stand alone but becomes part of a community-based development ecosystem. Programs such as Kampung Zakat, MSME empowerment, and volunteer communities are concrete examples of how community collaboration strengthens program sustainability. In addition, social capital, such as trust, networks, and norms of reciprocity, serves as the main driver of program success. When the community maintains a high level of trust in zakat institutions and fellow citizens, participation increases, and programs become more effective. Strong community collaboration also opens space for social innovation, such as green zakat, environment-based zakat, or financial literacy programs for mustahik (Amilahaq et al., 2021; Azmala et al., 2025; Luntajo & Hasan, 2023; Morrow-Howell et al., 2014; Olmos-Gómez et al., 2023; Tsaani, 2018).

The fourth pillar directs this model toward strengthening participatory, transparent, and accountable zakat governance. Participatory governance transforms the management of zakat from bureaucratic mechanisms to an inclusive approach. Citizens can be involved in program planning, social audits, deliberation forums, and community-based monitoring and evaluation. This approach not only enhances public trust but also strengthens the legitimacy of zakat institutions as public entities serving the common interest. Furthermore, participatory governance emphasizes data transparency, impact reporting, and the involvement of mustahik in the empowerment process. Mustahik are no longer positioned as passive recipients but as co-creators who determine the direction of their business development, education, or welfare improvement programs. When zakat governance is inclusive and dialogical, zakat becomes not only an economic redistribution instrument but also a practice of participatory democracy that strengthens citizens' capacity as development actors (Jalaluddin & Jannah, 2022; D. P. Sari et al., 2023).

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Zakat has the strategic potential to shift from a charity-based paradigm to citizenship-based philanthropy, positioning citizens as the main actors in building social justice and collective well-being. Zakat is no longer understood merely as an individual religious obligation but as a public space to foster civic awareness, social solidarity, and collective citizen participation. Findings indicate that the zakat ecosystem in Indonesia is becoming increasingly inclusive, with the expansion of zakat institutions, growing digital participation, and the development of empowerment programs that emphasize structural change over consumptive aid. This transformation has given rise to a model of philanthropic citizenship in which muzaki (donors) and mustahik (recipients) are positioned as co-citizens who share responsibility in addressing public issues. However, this paradigm shift still faces several challenges, such as low zakat literacy, disparities in institutional capacity, the need for stronger transparency, and limited

citizen participation in program planning and monitoring. On the other hand, the digitization of zakat offers significant opportunities for youth participation, the expansion of philanthropic practices, and the formation of broader social capital through online networks.

Based on this understanding, the author recommends strengthening zakat governance based on public participation, including involving muzaki and mustahik in program planning, community forums, and digital transparency mechanisms. Zakat institutions need to develop empowerment programs using a co-creation approach, so that mustahik become active participants in development rather than mere aid recipients. Zakat digitization should also be directed toward participatory features, such as impact reporting, digital volunteerism, and educational campaigns that enhance youth civic engagement. In addition, multi-stakeholder collaboration between zakat institutions, local governments, universities, local communities, and the private sector should be expanded to build a more inclusive and sustainable philanthropic ecosystem. At the same time, increasing zakat literacy integrated with civic values is a priority to foster awareness that zakat is an instrument of social justice and collective responsibility. Further research is recommended to empirically examine the zakat model as citizenship philanthropy in various local contexts and to assess its impact on social capital, economic empowerment, and community cohesion.

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