

## Distributive Justice and Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah in Islamic Disaster Relief: A Comparative Analysis of Beneficiary Targeting in Aceh Tamiang and Batu Busuak Flood Response Programs

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### Abstract

This article examines the distributive justice dimensions of Islamic disaster relief operations through a comparative analysis of two flood response programs in Indonesia: the Aceh Tamiang intervention (November 2025) coordinated by STAI As-Sunnah Deli Serdang, and the Batu Busuak, Padang response (December 2025) implemented through Singapore-Indonesia Islamic philanthropy collaboration. Drawing on empirical data from both case studies, this research investigates how beneficiary targeting mechanisms align with the principles of maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah, particularly ḥifẓ al-nafs (preservation of life) and the Islamic conception of ‘adl (justice). The methodology employs a qualitative comparative approach, extracting and systematizing empirical indicators of targeting accuracy, vulnerability categorization, and dignity preservation from field reports. Findings reveal that both programs employed tiered beneficiary classification systems responsive to damage severity, yet demonstrated divergent approaches to reaching vulnerable subpopulations. The Batu Busuak program explicitly categorized households by damage level (swept away, severely damaged, general recipients), while the Aceh Tamiang response utilized multi-location distribution with adaptive delivery methods. Both cases evidence tension between operational efficiency and individualized need assessment—a challenge with significant implications for shariah governance of humanitarian aid. This article contributes to Islamic economic law scholarship by proposing a maqāṣid-based evaluative framework for assessing distributive justice in disaster philanthropy, offering policy recommendations for enhanced targeting protocols grounded in Islamic legal ethics.

**Keywords:** maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah, distributive justice, disaster relief, Islamic philanthropy, beneficiary targeting, ‘adl

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## Introduction

Natural disasters impose acute distributive challenges upon humanitarian responders, requiring rapid decisions about who receives aid, in what quantity, and through which mechanisms. These decisions carry profound ethical weight, as they determine whether the most vulnerable populations receive proportionate assistance or whether systemic biases channel resources toward more accessible—but potentially less needy—recipients. For Islamic philanthropic organizations engaged in disaster response, these distributive questions acquire additional normative dimensions rooted in shariah principles of justice, equity, and the protection of essential human interests.

Indonesia's geographic vulnerability to hydrometeorological disasters creates recurring contexts in which Islamic institutions must operationalize abstract principles of distributive justice under emergency conditions. The country ranks sixth globally in disaster risk, with floods constituting over thirty-five percent of all natural disaster events.<sup>1</sup> This persistent exposure has generated substantial Islamic philanthropic mobilization, yet scholarly attention to the distributive ethics of such interventions remains underdeveloped. Existing literature on Islamic disaster response tends to emphasize fundraising mechanisms, organizational capacity, or theological motivations, while neglecting systematic analysis of whether aid distribution outcomes satisfy shariah standards of equitable allocation.

This research gap carries significant consequences for Islamic economic law. If Islamic philanthropic disaster response fails to achieve distributive justice—if aid disproportionately reaches accessible populations while bypassing the most vulnerable—then such programs may satisfy procedural requirements of charitable giving while violating substantive principles embedded in *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*. The preservation of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), recognized across all schools of Islamic jurisprudence as a primary objective of the shariah, demands not merely that aid be given but that it reach those whose lives face the gravest threat.

Against this background, this article poses the following research questions: How do Islamic disaster relief programs operationalize beneficiary targeting, and to what extent do observed targeting mechanisms align with *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* principles of distributive justice? What tensions emerge between operational efficiency and individualized vulnerability assessment, and how might shariah governance frameworks address these tensions?

To investigate these questions, this study conducts a comparative analysis of two recent Indonesian flood response programs: the November 2025 intervention in Aceh Tamiang coordinated by STAI As-Sunnah Deli Serdang with volunteer collaboration, and the December 2025 response in Batu Busuak, Padang implemented through partnership between STAI As-Sunnah and Bayaan Association Singapore under the Arrisalah Humanitarian Care Foundation. Both programs generated detailed empirical documentation of beneficiary numbers, damage categorization, distribution methods, and community responses—providing unusually rich data for scholarly analysis of distributive practices.

This article contributes to Islamic economic law scholarship in three respects. First, it develops an analytical framework linking *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* to operational indicators of distributive justice in disaster contexts, moving beyond abstract principle articulation toward empirically applicable criteria. Second, it provides the first comparative analysis of targeting mechanisms across multiple Indonesian Islamic disaster relief programs, identifying both common patterns and divergent approaches. Third, it generates policy recommendations for shariah-compliant targeting protocols that balance operational feasibility with fidelity to Islamic distributive ethics.

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## Literature Review

### *Cite: Foundations of Islamic Distributive Ethics*

Islamic legal scholarship has long recognized distributive justice as central to the shariah's social objectives. Classical jurists, from al-Ghazālī to al-Shāṭibī, articulated the maqāṣid al-sharī'ah framework identifying five essential interests (ḍarūriyyāt) that Islamic law exists to protect: religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property.<sup>2</sup> Ibn 'Āshūr's twentieth-century refinement emphasized that these objectives generate positive obligations upon Muslim communities to ensure their fulfillment for all members, not merely negative prohibitions against their violation.<sup>3</sup> In disaster contexts, ḥifẓ al-nafs assumes particular urgency, as communities face immediate threats to survival requiring collective response.

The concept of 'adl (justice) provides the normative foundation for Islamic distributive ethics. Unlike purely procedural conceptions of justice concerned solely with fair process, Islamic 'adl encompasses substantive outcomes—requiring that distributions actually achieve equitable results responsive to differential need. Al-Qaraḍāwī's extensive work on zakāt governance emphasizes that Islamic charitable distribution must prioritize those in greatest need (al-fuqarā' and al-masākīn), with explicit attention to vulnerability categories.<sup>4</sup> This principle extends analogically to ṣadaqah and general humanitarian giving, which share the underlying objective of alleviating human suffering proportionate to its severity.

### *Compare: Secular Humanitarian Targeting Frameworks*

Contemporary humanitarian practice has developed sophisticated targeting methodologies, including means testing, community-based identification, and proxy means testing using observable indicators of vulnerability. The Sphere Standards, widely adopted by international humanitarian organizations, establish minimum requirements for beneficiary identification that prioritize impartiality and proportionality. Research by Van Wassenhove on humanitarian logistics emphasizes that targeting accuracy represents a critical performance indicator distinguishing effective from ineffective disaster response.<sup>5</sup> Kovács and Spens similarly identify beneficiary identification as a fundamental challenge in humanitarian supply chain management, noting the tension between rapid response imperatives and careful needs assessment.<sup>6</sup>

Comparing secular and Islamic frameworks reveals both convergence and distinction. Both traditions emphasize directing resources toward greatest need and avoiding arbitrary exclusions. However, Islamic frameworks embed targeting within a broader theological economy of accountability (amānah), wherein aid administrators bear responsibility before God for ensuring equitable distribution. This accountability dimension intensifies the normative weight of targeting decisions beyond what secular utilitarian frameworks typically acknowledge.

### *Contrast: Targeting in Practice Versus Principle*

Empirical research on humanitarian targeting reveals persistent gaps between principled commitments and operational outcomes. Studies of disaster relief in Asia document systematic biases favoring accessible populations, urban over rural recipients, and households with greater social capital enabling them to navigate aid systems. Benevolenza and DeRose's research on mental health needs among disaster victims notes that vulnerable subpopulations—including elderly

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<sup>2</sup> Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm Al-Dīn*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, n.d.).

<sup>3</sup> Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir Ibn 'Āshūr, *Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'ah Al-Islāmiyyah* (Jordan: Dār al-Nafā'is, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Fiqh Al-Zakāh: Dirāsah Muqararah Li-Aḥkamihā Wa Falsafatihā Fi Daw' Al-Qur'an Wa Al-Sunnah*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1973).

<sup>5</sup> Luk N Van Wassenhove, "Humanitarian Aid Logistics: Supply Chain Management in High Gear," *Journal of the Operational Research Society* 57, no. 5 (2006): 475–89, <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jors.2602125>.

<sup>6</sup> Gyöngyi Kovács and Karen M Spens, "Humanitarian Logistics in Disaster Relief Operations," *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management* 37, no. 2 (2007): 99–114, <https://doi.org/10.1108/09600030710734820>.

persons, pregnant women, and those with mobility limitations—face compounded barriers to accessing standard distribution mechanisms.<sup>7</sup>

These findings contrast sharply with Islamic legal principles demanding affirmative attention to vulnerability. The Prophet Muhammad's explicit instructions to prioritize orphans, widows, and the infirm in charitable distribution establish precedent for what contemporary discourse terms "vulnerability-responsive targeting." Yet documentation of whether Islamic philanthropic organizations achieve such responsiveness in practice remains sparse, creating the empirical gap this research addresses.

#### *Critique: Limitations of Existing Islamic Disaster Relief Scholarship*

Current scholarship on Islamic disaster response exhibits several limitations relevant to distributive justice analysis. First, most studies focus on fundraising and resource mobilization rather than distribution outcomes, leaving beneficiary experiences understudied. Second, where distribution is examined, analysis tends toward descriptive accounts of activities conducted rather than evaluative assessment against normative standards. Third, the literature lacks comparative frameworks enabling systematic analysis across multiple programs, impeding identification of best practices and common challenges.

Hasan and Yogatama's research on Islamic philanthropy in Indonesia, while valuable for documenting organizational capacity, does not engage directly with targeting mechanisms or distributive outcomes.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, studies of Islamic educational institutions' disaster response—including the community service literature from which this study's primary sources derive—provide operational documentation without sustained normative evaluation against maqāṣid principles.

#### *Connect: Toward Empirically Grounded Maqāṣid Analysis*

This study connects maqāṣid al-sharī'ah scholarship with empirical humanitarian research by developing operational indicators for assessing distributive justice in Islamic disaster relief. Drawing on the theoretical framework articulated below, it subjects two documented programs to systematic analysis, generating findings relevant both to Islamic legal theory and humanitarian practice. This connection responds to calls within Islamic economics for moving beyond abstract principle articulation toward empirically engaged scholarship capable of informing institutional reform.

#### *Theoretical Framework*

This study employs maqāṣid al-sharī'ah as its primary analytical framework, operationalized through four dimensions of distributive justice relevant to disaster relief targeting: (1) proportionality, (2) vulnerability responsiveness, (3) dignity preservation, and (4) procedural fairness.

Proportionality derives from the principle that aid allocation should correspond to need severity. In maqāṣid terms, threats to *ḍarūriyyāt* (essential interests) command priority over threats to *ḥājjiyyāt* (complementary interests) or *taḥsīniyyāt* (embellishments).<sup>9</sup> Applied to disaster targeting, this principle requires differentiated distribution based on damage severity and household capacity, not uniform allocations ignoring differential circumstances.

Vulnerability responsiveness extends proportionality to recognize that certain population categories face compounded risks requiring affirmative targeting attention. Classical fiqh identifies

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<sup>7</sup> Mia Alysha Benevolenza and Jamie DeRose, "Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Disaster Victims: An Overview of Mental Health Relief Efforts in Asia," *International Journal of Emergency Mental Health and Human Resilience* 21, no. 3 (2019): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.4172/1522-4821.1000447>.

<sup>8</sup> Nurdin Hasan and Ahmad Nizar Yogatama, "Islamic Philanthropy and Social Justice: The Role of Islamic CSR in Indonesia," *Kyoto Bulletin of Islamic Area Studies* 6 (2013): 85–105.

<sup>9</sup> Ibn 'Āshūr, *Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'ah Al-Islāmiyyah*.

specific vulnerability categories (orphans, widows, travelers, the ill) as priority recipients of charitable assistance. Contemporary application requires identifying analogous categories in disaster contexts—elderly persons with mobility limitations, households headed by single parents, families with infants or pregnant women, and persons with disabilities.

Dignity preservation (*karāmah*) reflects the Islamic principle that charitable assistance must not demean or humiliate recipients. Al-Ghazālī's discussion in *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* emphasizes that the manner of giving carries spiritual and ethical significance alongside the material transfer.<sup>10</sup> In disaster targeting, dignity preservation requires distribution methods respecting recipient autonomy, privacy, and self-worth—avoiding spectacle, coercion, or stigmatization.

Procedural fairness encompasses the *amānah* (trust) dimension of aid administration, requiring transparent, accountable, and consistent processes. Recipients and communities should understand targeting criteria, have opportunity to raise concerns, and observe equitable treatment across comparable circumstances. This dimension connects Islamic administrative ethics (principles of *shūrā* and accountability) to operational targeting mechanisms.

Together, these four dimensions generate evaluative criteria against which observed targeting practices may be assessed, enabling systematic analysis rather than impressionistic judgment.

### *Methodology*

#### *Data Sources*

This study draws empirical evidence from two documented disaster relief programs:

Source 1 (Aceh Tamiang): The community service report by Chandra et al. documenting flood response in Aceh Tamiang Regency, November 2025.<sup>11</sup> This program, implemented by STAI As-Sunnah Deli Serdang with 42 personnel (7 lecturers, 5 students, 30 volunteers), distributed aid across five locations reaching 270 households (approximately 855 individuals) with total resources of IDR 138,500,000.<sup>12</sup>

Source 2 (Batu Busuak): The community service report by Riyadi et al. documenting flash flood response in Batu Busuak, Padang, December 2025.<sup>13</sup> This program, implemented through STAI As-Sunnah and Bayaan Association Singapore collaboration under Arrisalah Humanitarian Care Foundation, distributed aid to 150 households across three locations with resources of IDR 57,000,000.<sup>14</sup>

Both sources provide detailed information on beneficiary categorization, distribution methods, aid composition, community responses, and operational challenges—enabling comparative analysis of targeting mechanisms.

#### *Data Extraction Strategy*

From each source, this study extracted the following empirical indicators relevant to distributive justice assessment:

1. Beneficiary categorization systems: How programs classified recipients by need severity
2. Vulnerability-specific provisions: Attention to elderly, disabled, infant, or other vulnerable subpopulations
3. Distribution method selection: Rationale for assembly-point versus door-to-door delivery
4. Community feedback: Reported responses indicating perceived fairness or unfairness

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<sup>10</sup> Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, n.d.).

<sup>11</sup> Dori Chandra et al., "The Collaboration of Academics, Students, and Volunteers in Responding to the Aceh Tamiang Flood Disaster: A Participatory Action Research-Based Aid Distribution Model," *Al-Arkhabiil: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat* 5, no. SI-1 (2025): 2–20.

<sup>12</sup> Chandra et al.

<sup>13</sup> Slamet Riyadi et al., "Humanitarian Aid for Flash Flood Victims in Batu Busuak: An International Collaboration Between STAI As-Sunnah and Bayaan Association Singapore," *Al-Arkhabiil: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat* 5, no. SI-1 (2025): 22–31.

<sup>14</sup> Riyadi et al.

## 5. Operational challenges: Documented barriers to reaching intended beneficiaries

### *Analytical Method*

The analysis proceeds through structured comparison across the four maqāṣid-derived dimensions (proportionality, vulnerability responsiveness, dignity preservation, procedural fairness). For each dimension, evidence from both cases is presented, compared, and evaluated against the theoretical criteria. This approach enables identification of common patterns, divergent practices, and implications for shariah governance of disaster aid targeting.

### **Result and Analysis**

#### *Proportionality: Damage-Based Beneficiary Categorization*

Both programs demonstrated attention to proportionality through damage-based beneficiary categorization, though with differing levels of systematization.

The Batu Busuak program (Source 2) employed explicit three-tier categorization documented in tabular form:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of Households</b>
Houses swept away	11
Severely damaged	46
General recipients	93
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>

This categorization directly linked beneficiary status to objective damage indicators, with the eleven households whose homes were "completely washed away" representing the highest-need tier. The report explicitly identifies these families as having "lost all their belongings and homes, requiring relocation or the construction of new houses." The forty-six severely damaged households constituted a second tier requiring "major repairs before they can be safely and properly reoccupied." The remaining ninety-three households received general assistance without differentiated damage categorization.<sup>15</sup>

The Aceh Tamiang program (Source 1) employed location-based rather than damage-based categorization, distributing across five sites with varying household counts:<sup>16</sup>

<b>Location</b>	<b>Households</b>	<b>Individuals</b>
Landu, Benua Raja	150	450
Buluh Butung Hamlet	120	405
Purwodadi	Not specified	-
Kota Lintang Bawah	Not specified	-
RSUD Aceh Tamiang	Institutional	-

The report indicates that "selection of these locations was based on several considerations: the severity of the flood impact, the urgent needs of the community, accessibility, and recommendations from village officials and local community leaders."<sup>17</sup> However, unlike Batu Busuak, Aceh Tamiang did not document differentiated categorization within locations based on individual household damage severity.

<sup>15</sup> Riyadi et al.

<sup>16</sup> Chandra et al., "The Collaboration of Academics, Students, and Volunteers in Responding to the Aceh Tamiang Flood Disaster: A Participatory Action Research-Based Aid Distribution Model."

<sup>17</sup> Chandra et al.

Comparative Assessment: The Batu Busuak program demonstrates stronger alignment with maqāṣid proportionality through its explicit damage-tier categorization, enabling—at least in principle—differentiated resource allocation responsive to differential need. The Aceh Tamiang approach, while incorporating severity considerations in location selection, applied more uniform within-location distribution, potentially obscuring intra-community need variation. From a ḥifẓ al-nafs perspective, the Batu Busuak model more directly operationalizes the principle that threats to essential survival interests (complete home loss) command priority over less severe impacts.

#### *Vulnerability Responsiveness: Attention to At-Risk Subpopulations*

Both programs acknowledged vulnerable subpopulations, though with different emphases and operational responses.

The Batu Busuak report (Source 2) explicitly identifies vulnerability categories in its psychosocial discussion: "The elderly and pregnant women are the most psychologically vulnerable groups because they have limited ability to adapt to emergency conditions."<sup>18</sup> The program's door-to-door distribution method was specifically designed to reach such populations: distribution was conducted "by visiting residents' homes" for "isolated areas or among victims with mobility difficulties."<sup>19</sup>

The Aceh Tamiang report (Source 1) similarly documents adaptive distribution methods for vulnerable populations: "for isolated areas or recipients with mobility difficulties, such as older adults and people with disabilities, the team conducts door-to-door distribution by visiting residents' homes."<sup>20</sup> Beneficiary testimonials captured in this report highlight ongoing vulnerabilities: one respondent noted that "sleeping equipment was an urgent need for the refugees," while another emphasized that "hygiene is a major challenge in the refugee camp."<sup>21</sup>

Notably, both programs included specific provisions for infant and women's needs. The Aceh Tamiang distribution included "700 pcs of diapers and sanitary napkins," "10 boxes of bottle milk," and clothing "for men's and women's."<sup>22</sup> Similarly, the Batu Busuak program distributed necessities recognizing differential household composition.

Comparative Assessment: Both programs demonstrate vulnerability responsiveness through adaptive distribution methods (door-to-door delivery for mobility-limited recipients) and inclusion of items addressing specific population needs (infant supplies, hygiene products). However, neither program documents systematic vulnerability screening or prioritized targeting based on vulnerability status independent of damage severity. The identification of vulnerable categories appears reactive (adapting delivery methods to observed difficulties) rather than proactive (actively seeking out and prioritizing vulnerable households). This gap suggests room for enhanced maqāṣid alignment through more systematic vulnerability identification protocols.

#### *Dignity Preservation: Distribution Methods and Recipient Experience*

Both programs emphasized dignity preservation in their operational design and reported positive community responses indicating respectful treatment.

The Batu Busuak program (Source 2) explicitly articulated dignity concerns in its ethical considerations: "Photographic documentation is conducted with respect for the dignity and privacy of the victims, and photographs clearly showing individuals' faces are taken with their verbal consent."<sup>23</sup> The implementation team also ensures that the documentation does not exploit the

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<sup>18</sup> Riyadi et al., "Humanitarian Aid for Flash Flood Victims in Batu Busuak: An International Collaboration Between STAI As-Sunnah and Bayaan Association Singapore."

<sup>19</sup> Riyadi et al.

<sup>20</sup> Chandra et al., "The Collaboration of Academics, Students, and Volunteers in Responding to the Aceh Tamiang Flood Disaster: A Participatory Action Research-Based Aid Distribution Model."

<sup>21</sup> Chandra et al.

<sup>22</sup> Chandra et al.

<sup>23</sup> Riyadi et al., "Humanitarian Aid for Flash Flood Victims in Batu Busuak: An International Collaboration Between STAI As-Sunnah and Bayaan Association Singapore."

community's difficult circumstances and maintains the dignity of disaster victims." The report describes community response as "very positive," with residents expressing gratitude "not only for the material assistance they received, but also for the attention and concern shown."<sup>24</sup>

The Aceh Tamiang program (Source 1) similarly prioritized dignity through its ethical protocols: "Photographic documentation is carried out with consent and avoids showing faces that could identify individuals specifically without permission."<sup>25</sup> The report emphasizes the psychological significance of aid delivery: "The presence of the implementation team not only brings material aid, but also provides encouragement and a sense of belonging to disaster victims."<sup>26</sup> Community response was described as reflecting "deep gratitude for the concern shown."

Both programs employed systematic beneficiary recording. The Batu Busuak report notes that "each recipient of assistance was systematically recorded in a manual list compiled on-site to ensure accountability and transparency."<sup>27</sup> The Aceh Tamiang program similarly documented that "beneficiary data was recorded in full, including the name of the head of the family, address, and number of family members."<sup>28</sup>

Comparative Assessment: Both programs demonstrate strong dignity preservation through consent-based documentation, respectful interaction, and transparent recording. The assembly-point method employed in both programs—while efficient—potentially raises dignity concerns regarding public identification of recipients, though neither report documents recipient discomfort with this approach. The emphasis on psychosocial support alongside material provision reflects Islamic principles of *muwasat* (comfort) beyond mere resource transfer. The evidence suggests both programs achieved satisfactory dignity preservation, though more systematic recipient feedback would strengthen this assessment.

#### *Procedural Fairness: Transparency and Accountability*

Both programs implemented procedural mechanisms promoting fairness and accountability.

The Batu Busuak program (Source 2) emphasized transparency through visible institutional identification: "A standing banner from STAI As-Sunnah is also displayed at each distribution location for transparency regarding the identity of the activity organisers."<sup>29</sup> The program also employed banners indicating funding sources: "a large banner reading 'From the Indonesian People - Through the Humanities Project' to indicate that the aid funds originate from the Indonesian people through a humanitarian programme rather than from a single source."<sup>30</sup> Coordination with local authorities ensured legitimacy: "Coordination was also conducted with the government of Koto Panjang Ikua Koto Village... before the distribution of aid to ensure that the activity was in accordance with local protocols and needs."<sup>31</sup>

The Aceh Tamiang program (Source 1) similarly documented coordination mechanisms: "The selection of these locations was based on... recommendations from village officials and local community leaders."<sup>32</sup> The program maintained accountability through financial documentation (total resources of IDR 138,500,000) and systematic beneficiary recording.

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<sup>24</sup> Riyadi et al.

<sup>25</sup> Chandra et al., "The Collaboration of Academics, Students, and Volunteers in Responding to the Aceh Tamiang Flood Disaster: A Participatory Action Research-Based Aid Distribution Model."

<sup>26</sup> Chandra et al.

<sup>27</sup> Riyadi et al., "Humanitarian Aid for Flash Flood Victims in Batu Busuak: An International Collaboration Between STAI As-Sunnah and Bayaan Association Singapore."

<sup>28</sup> Chandra et al., "The Collaboration of Academics, Students, and Volunteers in Responding to the Aceh Tamiang Flood Disaster: A Participatory Action Research-Based Aid Distribution Model."

<sup>29</sup> Riyadi et al., "Humanitarian Aid for Flash Flood Victims in Batu Busuak: An International Collaboration Between STAI As-Sunnah and Bayaan Association Singapore."

<sup>30</sup> Riyadi et al.

<sup>31</sup> Riyadi et al.

<sup>32</sup> Chandra et al., "The Collaboration of Academics, Students, and Volunteers in Responding to the Aceh Tamiang Flood Disaster: A Participatory Action Research-Based Aid Distribution Model."

Both programs secured institutional authorization—Batu Busuak through STAI As-Sunnah's Centre for Research and Community Service (PPPM),<sup>33</sup> Aceh Tamiang through STAI As-Sunnah's Centre for Research and Community Service (PPPM).<sup>34</sup>

**Comparative Assessment:** Both programs demonstrate procedural fairness through institutional authorization, local coordination, transparent identification, and systematic documentation. The involvement of village officials and community leaders in both programs reflects Islamic consultation (*shūrā*) principles, embedding targeting decisions within community-validated processes rather than purely external determinations. However, neither report documents formal appeals mechanisms or community feedback procedures enabling recipients to raise targeting concerns—a gap relevant to comprehensive procedural fairness.

## Discussion

### *Implications for Maqāṣid-Based Disaster Aid Governance*

The comparative analysis reveals that both programs achieved substantial—though not complete—alignment with *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* principles of distributive justice. The Batu Busuak program's explicit damage-tier categorization represents a best practice for proportionality, directly linking beneficiary classification to objective need indicators. Both programs' adaptive distribution methods (door-to-door delivery for mobility-limited recipients) demonstrate operational responsiveness to vulnerability, while dignity preservation and procedural fairness were consistently emphasized.

However, the analysis also identifies systematic gaps warranting attention in shariah governance frameworks. Neither program implemented proactive vulnerability screening that would identify at-risk subpopulations (elderly persons living alone, households with disabled members, pregnant women) independent of general damage assessment. The reliance on community leaders for beneficiary identification, while valuable for local legitimacy, potentially reproduces existing social hierarchies that may disadvantage marginalized households with weaker community standing.

From a *maqāṣid* perspective, these gaps carry normative weight. If *ḥifẓ al-nafs* demands prioritizing those facing greatest threat to life, and if certain vulnerability categories face compounded risks even within disaster-affected populations, then targeting mechanisms that do not affirmatively identify and prioritize such populations fall short of full *maqāṣid* compliance.<sup>35</sup> The principle is not merely that vulnerable populations should not be excluded, but that they should be actively sought and proportionately served.

### *The Efficiency-Equity Tension*

Both programs operated under significant time and resource constraints, distributing substantial aid volumes across multiple locations within days of disaster events. The Aceh Tamiang program distributed to 270 households across five locations in two days; the Batu Busuak program served 150 households across three locations in four days. These operational achievements required efficiency-oriented decisions—assembly-point distribution, reliance on community leaders for identification, standardized aid packages—that potentially traded individualized need assessment for speed and coverage.

This efficiency-equity tension represents a recurring challenge for shariah governance of disaster aid. Classical Islamic jurisprudence, developed in pre-modern contexts of smaller-scale and more personalized charitable distribution, assumed direct assessment of recipient circumstances.<sup>36</sup> Contemporary disaster response, operating at scale under emergency timelines, cannot replicate

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<sup>33</sup> Chandra et al.

<sup>34</sup> Riyadi et al., “Humanitarian Aid for Flash Flood Victims in Batu Busuak: An International Collaboration Between STAI As-Sunnah and Bayaan Association Singapore.”

<sup>35</sup> Ibn ʿAshūr, *Maqāṣid Al-Sharīʿah Al-Islamiyyah*.

<sup>36</sup> Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlum Al-Dīn*.

such individualization without sacrificing speed that itself serves *ḥifẓ al-nafs* by preventing mortality from delayed assistance.

The resolution to this tension lies not in abandoning efficiency considerations—which themselves serve legitimate *maqāṣid* objectives—but in developing targeting protocols that embed equity considerations within efficient systems. Practical mechanisms might include:

1. Pre-positioned vulnerability checklists enabling rapid identification of at-risk households during community-leader consultations
2. Tiered distribution schedules serving highest-need and highest-vulnerability households first
3. Post-distribution verification identifying households missed in initial distributions
4. Feedback mechanisms enabling communities to report targeting gaps in real-time

### *Institutional Implications*

The documented programs illustrate the capacity of Islamic higher education institutions and transnational philanthropy networks to mobilize effective disaster response. The Batu Busuak Singapore-Indonesia collaboration demonstrates that established relationships (through *qurban* and *aqiqah* programs) can be rapidly activated for emergency response—a form of institutional social capital enabling swift mobilization.<sup>37</sup> The Aceh Tamiang program's lecturer-student-volunteer collaboration similarly demonstrates higher education institutions' convening capacity.<sup>38</sup> These institutional strengths carry corresponding responsibilities. If Islamic institutions position themselves as disaster responders drawing on religious legitimacy and donor trust rooted in *shariah* compliance expectations, they bear heightened accountability for ensuring distributive practices actually satisfy *maqāṣid* standards. The *amānah* (trust) dimension of charitable administration, emphasized in classical *fiqh*, intensifies when institutions claim Islamic identity as their operational foundation.

### *Limitations and Future Research*

This study's reliance on program documentation rather than independent field research limits assessment depth. Beneficiary perspectives on targeting fairness, captured only through brief testimonials in the source documents, require more systematic investigation. Additionally, the two cases examined—both implemented by STAI As-Sunnah with similar institutional values—may not represent the full diversity of Islamic disaster response practices in Indonesia.

Future research should pursue independent beneficiary surveys assessing perceived targeting fairness, comparative analysis across a broader range of Islamic philanthropic organizations, and longitudinal studies examining whether initial targeting decisions affect long-term recovery outcomes. The development of standardized *maqāṣid*-based targeting assessment instruments would enable more systematic evaluation across programs.

## **Conclusion and Policy Recommendations**

This comparative analysis of Islamic disaster relief programs in Aceh Tamiang and Batu Busuak demonstrates that contemporary Indonesian Islamic philanthropy achieves substantial alignment with *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* principles of distributive justice while exhibiting systematic gaps warranting governance attention. Both programs implemented damage-responsive beneficiary categorization, adaptive distribution methods for vulnerable populations, dignity-preserving operational protocols, and procedurally fair coordination mechanisms. However, neither program

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<sup>37</sup> Riyadi et al., “Humanitarian Aid for Flash Flood Victims in Batu Busuak: An International Collaboration Between STAI As-Sunnah and Bayaan Association Singapore.”

<sup>38</sup> Chandra et al., “The Collaboration of Academics, Students, and Volunteers in Responding to the Aceh Tamiang Flood Disaster: A Participatory Action Research-Based Aid Distribution Model.”

implemented proactive vulnerability screening that would affirmatively identify and prioritize at-risk subpopulations independent of general damage assessment.

These findings generate the following policy recommendations for shariah-compliant disaster aid governance:

**Recommendation 1: Develop Standardized Vulnerability Identification Protocols.** Islamic disaster relief organizations should develop and consistently apply vulnerability checklists identifying at-risk subpopulations (elderly persons living alone, households with disabled members, single-parent households, families with infants, pregnant women) during initial community consultation. These protocols should be pre-positioned rather than developed ad hoc during emergencies.

**Recommendation 2: Implement Tiered Distribution Prioritization.** Following the Batu Busuak model of damage-tier categorization, organizations should formalize protocols ensuring that highest-need and highest-vulnerability households receive priority service, not merely inclusion in general distribution. This prioritization operationalizes maqāṣid proportionality principles.

**Recommendation 3: Establish Post-Distribution Verification Mechanisms.** Organizations should implement systematic follow-up processes identifying households missed in initial distributions, particularly those with barriers to accessing assembly-point delivery. This mechanism addresses the recognized gap that efficiency-oriented methods may systematically underserve certain populations.

**Recommendation 4: Create Community Feedback Channels.** Targeting decisions should be complemented by accessible feedback mechanisms enabling community members to report perceived gaps or inequities. Such channels honor the Islamic principle of *naṣīḥah* (sincere counsel) and strengthen procedural fairness.

**Recommendation 5: Document and Share Best Practices.** The Indonesian Islamic philanthropic sector should establish mechanisms for documenting and sharing targeting practices across organizations, enabling collective learning and standardization of maqāṣid-compliant approaches. The detailed documentation in both examined programs represents a valuable model for such knowledge-sharing.

Through these measures, Islamic disaster relief can more fully realize its maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah commitments—ensuring that charitable resources reach those whose lives face the gravest threats, administered with justice, dignity, and accountability before both community and Creator.

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