

Empowering Karang Taruna Through Handicraft Production and Marketing as a Flagship of the Creative Economy

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ABSTRACT

This community service program aims to empower Karang Taruna RT 26 Sungai Ulin, Banjarbaru, by strengthening skills in producing and marketing handicraft products, particularly beaded bracelets, as part of the creative economy. Despite their potential, members face several obstacles, such as limited technical abilities, lack of entrepreneurial knowledge, restricted market access, and the absence of distinctive products. The program applies a participatory approach, engaging members directly in production training, entrepreneurship workshops, digital marketing strategies, and business management mentoring. The main targets include improving production skills among at least 80% of members, preparing a practical business management plan, and launching digital marketing with an initial goal of 100 bracelet sales within two months. Additional outcomes involve product design innovation, collaboration with local shops and online platforms, and increasing members' income by 30% within six months. Overall, this program seeks to enhance youth economic independence while promoting sustainable, community-based creative economic growth in Sungai Ulin.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Karang Taruna is one of the youth organizations that plays a strategic role in driving community development, particularly in the social and creative economy sectors. This organization serves as a platform for young people to express creativity, build solidarity, and contribute to community welfare. However, its potential has often not been maximized due to limitations in resources, skills, and market access (Firmansyah, Syarif, & Ruyadi, 2021).

Within the context of the creative economy, handicraft products such as beaded bracelets have significant market opportunities. These products not only carry aesthetic value but are also relatively affordable to produce. Unfortunately, the lack of knowledge and skills in both production and marketing has resulted in less competitive products among the members of Karang Taruna RT 26 Sungai Ulin (Wisbandono, 2019).

Observations reveal several problems, including limited production skills, insufficient entrepreneurial knowledge, restricted digital marketing access, and the absence of distinctive flagship products. These challenges hinder the organization from expanding into broader markets. Such conditions indicate the necessity for structured and sustainable empowerment programs (Saputra, 2019).

Youth empowerment through skill training, entrepreneurship workshops, and digital marketing strategies is a strategic solution to these issues. By strengthening individual capacity, Karang Taruna members are expected not only to produce innovative and high-quality products but also to build sustainable businesses that generate economic value for the local community (Widiantari, Hasan, & Effendy, 2020).

This community service program is designed with a participatory approach, involving Karang Taruna members directly in every stage of the activity. Such active participation is expected to foster a sense of ownership, increase motivation, and ensure program sustainability beyond its implementation. Consequently, the benefits can be felt not only in the short term but also in the long-term community impact (Widiantari et al., 2020).

Through this program, improvements in production skills, entrepreneurial knowledge, and market access are expected for members of Karang Taruna RT 26 Sungai Ulin. Furthermore, the program seeks to become a model of youth empowerment based on the creative economy that can be replicated in other areas. With this contribution, youth are expected to become the driving force of community development that is independent, creative, and highly competitive (Firmansyah et al., 2021; Wisbandono, 2019).

2. METHODS

The empowerment of Karang Taruna RT 26 Sungai Ulin still encounters several critical challenges that hinder the optimization of its potential in the creative economy sector. Based on observation and discussion with the community partners, the main problems can be formulated as follows:

1. Limited production skills
among members, particularly in creating innovative and high-quality beaded bracelet designs.
2. Lack of entrepreneurial knowledge,
including business management, financial recording, and pricing strategies.
3. Restricted market access,
especially in digital platforms and modern marketing networks.
4. Absence of flagship products
that could represent the identity and competitiveness of Karang Taruna.
5. Insufficient capital and production equipment,
which affects the quality and quantity of products produced.

These issues indicate that without proper intervention, the youth organization will face difficulties in building sustainable economic activities and contributing to the local creative economy.

This community service program applies a participatory approach, in which members of Karang Taruna are actively involved in each stage of the program. The methodology consists of several steps:

1. Production Skills Training

Conducting workshops on beaded bracelet production techniques, design innovation, and the use of quality raw materials. Local artisans are involved as trainers to ensure practical learning.

2. Entrepreneurship and Business Management Workshops

Providing training on financial management, production planning, cost calculation, and effective pricing strategies to enhance entrepreneurial capacity.

3. Digital Marketing Development

Training members to utilize social media and e-commerce platforms for product promotion and sales, supported by content creation and branding activities.

4. Mentoring and Monitoring

Continuous assistance to ensure the implementation of newly acquired skills and knowledge, combined with periodic evaluation to provide constructive feedback.

5. Partnership and Market Expansion

Facilitating collaboration with local stores and online platforms to expand product distribution networks and ensure market sustainability.

Through this method, the program is expected to not only enhance technical and managerial competencies but also foster youth independence and contribute significantly to community-based creative economic growth.



Gambar 1. Foto bersama dengan karang taruna RT 26 Sungai Ulin Banjarbaru



Gambar 2. Pelatihan produksi, manajemen serta pemasaran kerajinan tangan

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Improvement of Production Skills

The training program successfully enhanced the production skills of Karang Taruna members in designing and producing beaded bracelets. Based on evaluation, approximately 80% of participants were able to create products with better quality and more innovative designs within one month after the training. This outcome shows that skill development through hands-on practice and mentoring is effective in improving product competitiveness.

2. Development of Business Management Capacity

Workshops on entrepreneurship and business management provided knowledge about financial recording, production planning, and pricing strategies. Members who previously lacked understanding of basic business principles were able to prepare a simple financial record and management plan. This indicates that strengthening entrepreneurial knowledge is essential for the sustainability of community-based businesses.

3. Digital Marketing Initiatives

The introduction of social media and e-commerce platforms has expanded market access for the products. Members managed to establish online accounts and began promoting their bracelets through digital content. Within two months, a total of around 100 units were successfully marketed online, which reflects the potential of digital platforms in reaching a wider consumer base.

4. Product Innovation and Market Expansion

One of the significant achievements was the creation of at least five new bracelet designs that combined local cultural elements with modern aesthetics. These innovative designs helped differentiate Karang Taruna products from competitors. Furthermore, partnerships with two local shops were established, broadening distribution channels beyond online sales.

5. Income Growth and Community Impact

As a result of the program, the income of Karang Taruna members increased by approximately 30% within six months. This economic improvement not only benefited individual members but also strengthened the organization's role in supporting local economic development. The success of this initiative demonstrates that youth empowerment, when supported by adequate training and resources, can serve as a model for other community-based creative economy programs.

Discussion

The outcomes of this program align with previous studies emphasizing the importance of youth empowerment in community development (Firmansyah et al., 2021; Wispandono, 2019). The participatory method proved effective in ensuring active involvement and ownership among members, consistent with the findings of Widiantri et al. (2020). Moreover, integrating digital marketing into community-based businesses responded to contemporary market demands and opened opportunities for wider economic participation.

4. CONCLUSION

This community service program demonstrated that empowering Karang Taruna RT 26 Sungai Ulin through participatory methods can effectively enhance both technical and entrepreneurial capacities. Training activities improved members' skills in producing high-quality and innovative

beaded bracelets, while entrepreneurship workshops strengthened their ability to manage small-scale businesses. The integration of digital marketing opened access to wider markets, leading to tangible results such as the sale of 100 products within two months and the introduction of at least five new product designs. Furthermore, members' income increased by around 30% within six months, indicating that the program successfully contributed to local economic development. These results highlight the strategic role of youth organizations in driving the creative economy and underline the importance of continuous mentoring and resource support for sustainability.

Recommendations:

1. Sustainability of Training – Continuous skill development and advanced training should be provided to ensure product innovation and market competitiveness.
2. Strengthening Partnerships – Collaboration with government agencies, local businesses, and digital platforms needs to be expanded to secure broader distribution networks.
1. Financial and Resource Support – Access to funding and modern production equipment should be prioritized to improve efficiency and scale-up production.
2. Replication of the Model – The participatory empowerment model applied in this program can be replicated in other communities to strengthen youth organizations as drivers of the creative economy.
3. Long-Term Monitoring – Periodic evaluation and mentoring should be maintained to ensure the sustainability of the business and to provide adaptive strategies against market dynamics.

Overall, the program proved that youth empowerment through creative economy initiatives not only improves individual capacities but also contributes significantly to community welfare and sustainable local development.

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