

# Strong Women to Strengthen Rural Creative Economy

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## ABSTRACT

The mentoring and socialization activities in Jombok Village, Ngantang District, Malang Regency, aim to empower village women in developing the local creative economy. The main objective of this program is to improve women's skills and knowledge in production, marketing, and business management, so that they can optimize local potential and improve their family's welfare. The methods used include planning, implementation, and evaluation. This activity is carried out through socialization and mentoring, with a participatory approach that actively involves participants. The results of the activity show that participants have significantly improved their skills, especially in digital marketing and small business management. The implementation of this activity has succeeded in encouraging several participants to apply new marketing strategies, which has an impact on increasing sales of their products. Important findings from this activity are the identification of the need for further training and access to better business capital, as well as the importance of infrastructure and technology support for the sustainability of creative businesses.

**Keywords:** Creative Economy, Marketing, Mentoring, Small Business Management, Socialization

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia today, the role of women has undergone a significant transformation and is no longer limited to the household sphere alone (Manasikana & Noviani, 2021). Indonesian women are now increasingly actively participating in various economic sectors, including entrepreneurship, in response to economic demands and their personal aspirations for development (Afrizal & Lelah, 2021). The government and various non-governmental organizations have provided support through training, access to capital, and empowerment to encourage more women to enter the business world (Thousani & Afgani, 2023). These initiatives are expected to increase women's economic independence and make a significant contribution to national economic growth. Thus, Indonesian women now play a role not only as household managers, but also as innovative and dynamic economic actors, able to bring positive changes to society and the country.

In various regions in Indonesia, strong women have shown courage and resilience in entrepreneurship (Nirmala & Wijayanto, 2021), make significant contributions to local economies and community development (Judijanto et al., 2024). In Yogyakarta, for example, many women lead creative industries, from handicrafts to fashion, combining cultural heritage with modern innovation. In Bali, women play a key role in the tourism and local crafts sectors, promoting Bali's unique culture to the global market. In West Sumatra, Minangkabau women, known for their matrilineal system, play a key role in managing culinary and trade businesses that reach overseas. Meanwhile, in Sulawesi, Bugis-Makassar women are involved in the fishing and trade industries, utilizing marine resources to strengthen their family's economy. The tenacity and creativity of

women in these areas not only strengthen local economic resilience but also inspire the younger generation to take an active role in the development of the country.

Jombok Village, Ngantang District, Malang Regency, East Java Province, has great potential for the development of rural creative economy compared to other regions in Indonesia because of its strategic location and the wealth of natural resources and culture it has. This village is located in a fertile area and has access to local and regional markets, so that the creative products produced can be easily marketed. In addition, the community in this village has rich local traditions and wisdom, which can be processed into high-value creative products. With assistance and socialization, this potential can be optimized, so that Jombok village can be a successful example for other villages in Indonesia in terms of sustainable creative economy development.

Mentoring and socialization activities in Jombok Village, Ngantang District, Malang Regency, East Java Province, are very important to strengthen the rural creative economy, especially for strong women who are the backbone of the family. Through this initiative, women in the village are given relevant knowledge and skills to develop their creative businesses, so that they can increase family income and the welfare of the community as a whole. This mentoring also opens access to a wider marketing network and introduces innovations that can improve the quality of local products. Thus, women in rural areas can be more economically independent, which will ultimately contribute to sustainable village economic growth. The purpose of the mentoring and socialization activities in Jombok Village is to empower village women by improving skills and knowledge in the creative economy, so that they can develop sustainable businesses and improve family welfare. The benefits of this activity include increasing individual capacity in managing creative businesses, opening access to wider markets, and introducing relevant innovations and technologies. In addition, this activity also aims to strengthen local community networks, encourage collaboration, and create new jobs based on local potential, so that it has a positive impact on overall village economic growth.

## 2. METHODS

The implementation method for mentoring and socialization activities in Jombok Village includes three main stages (Sopannah et al., 2023; Sulistyan et al., 2023), namely planning, implementation, and evaluation. The planning stage includes identifying community needs, determining participant targets, and preparing training materials that are relevant to local potential. In the implementation stage, a series of socialization and group discussions are carried out to improve participants' skills and knowledge, as well as direct assistance to help implement their creative ideas. The evaluation stage involves measuring activity results through satisfaction surveys, assessing participant capacity building, and analyzing local economic impacts, to ensure program sustainability and identify areas that need to be improved or enhanced for future activities. This activity was carried out from January to April 2024. The participants were 15 women who had small-scale home businesses.

The data collection method in this activity was carried out qualitatively to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences, views, and needs of women in Jombok Village. Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation during mentoring and socialization activities. In-depth interviews allowed researchers to explore in detail the views and experiences of individual participants, while focus group discussions helped reveal group dynamics and collective perceptions. Participant observation provided direct context regarding the environment and daily interactions of participants. The data collected was analyzed to identify key themes, an understanding of the challenges faced, and the potential and opportunities that can be optimized in developing the creative economy in this village.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Results

The results of the implementation of this activity are described in 3 stages, namely planning, implementation, and evaluation. The results of the activity are as follows:

a. Planning (5-15 January 2024)

In the planning stage, the team conducted a needs analysis through initial discussions with village officials and representatives of the women's community in Jombok Village. Identification of local creative economic potential was carried out by visiting several small businesses and superior village products. After collecting data, the team prepared training materials that were in accordance with the needs and potential of the village. In addition, the activity schedule and list of participants were also determined. Preparation of logistics and training aids such as teaching materials, creative production tools, and other supporting facilities were also carried out during this period.

b. Implementation (1-28 February 2024)

During February, mentoring and socialization activities were carried out intensively. The activities began with an official opening attended by local officials to provide moral support and motivation to participants. This was followed by a series of daily workshops and training covering various topics, such as creative product development, marketing strategies, small business management, and the use of simple technology. Participants were also given the opportunity to practice directly and receive guidance from experts. In addition, field visits were conducted to several successful creative businesses as inspiration and case studies.



**Figure 1.** Implementation of Activities  
Source: Results of Community Service (2024)

c. Evaluation (1-31 March 2024)

The evaluation phase begins with collecting feedback from participants through questionnaires and in-depth interviews to assess their satisfaction and the impact of the training on them. In addition, the team assesses the results of the implementation of participants' creative ideas during the training, such as improving product quality and developing new businesses. Data from observations and interviews are processed to evaluate the success of the program and identify challenges faced. The evaluation results are then compiled into a report that includes recommendations for improvement and steps to sustain the program in the future, which is then submitted to relevant stakeholders.



**Figure 2.** Activity Evaluation  
Source: Results of Community Service (2024)

### 3.2. Discussion

Mentoring and socialization activities in Jombok Village show the importance of women's empowerment in developing the rural creative economy. During the planning process, it was found that many women in the village have basic skills in crafts and food production, but the lack of access to marketing and business management knowledge hinders their potential. Through this activity, participants received intensive training designed to fill this gap, providing them with more focused skills and practical applications to improve the productivity and quality of their products. The results of this activity support the results of activities carried out by Sulistyan (2020) and Anggarani et al. (2022) which shows that the existence of socialization and mentoring programs can improve participants' abilities and skills.

Implementation of activities is carried out through a participatory approach (Lukiana & Sulistyan, 2021) which actively involves participants in every stage of training. At the implementation stage, socialization and mentoring not only provide theory, but also provide opportunities for participants to directly practice what they have learned (Justitia et al., 2021). For example, in the marketing strategy training, participants were taught how to use social media to promote their products, followed by a hands-on session on creating and managing business accounts on social media platforms. Field visits to successful creative businesses also provided practical insights and inspiration for participants on how they could apply similar ideas in their local context.

Evaluations of these activities showed positive results, with many participants reporting significant improvements in knowledge and skills. Some participants began implementing new marketing strategies and saw an increase in sales of their products. The evaluation results also identified areas for improvement, such as the need for further training in financial management and access to business capital. Based on these findings, recommendations for follow-up include organizing further training, providing access to wider business resources and networks, and forming joint business groups to strengthen collaboration and support among participants. Through these steps, the sustainability and long-term impact of these mentoring and outreach activities can continue to be improved, providing greater benefits to the Jombok Village community.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The mentoring and socialization activities in Jombok Village have succeeded in empowering village women in developing the local creative economy. Through a series of trainings and workshops, participants gained new skills in production, marketing, and business management, which have helped improve the quality and sales of their products. The implementation of participatory activities based on local potential showed positive results, with many participants starting to apply new knowledge to develop their creative businesses. Evaluations showed an increase in participants' knowledge and skills as well as a significant economic impact on their families and communities.

Although this activity succeeded in achieving many of its objectives, there were several limitations that need to be considered. One limitation is the limited time available for the training, which meant that some topics could not be discussed in depth. In addition, access to resources and business capital remains a challenge for many participants, which can limit their ability to develop their businesses to their full potential. Limited infrastructure and technology in the village also hinder the implementation of some more sophisticated marketing strategies.

To overcome these limitations, it is recommended that the mentoring and socialization program be continued with a more in-depth advanced training phase, especially in financial management and access to business capital. In addition, efforts need to be made to increase participants' access to technology and supporting infrastructure, such as the internet and modern production equipment. The formation of joint business groups can help overcome capital constraints and strengthen local business networks. The local government and related parties are also expected to provide ongoing support in the form of technical assistance, market access, and funding to ensure the sustainability and growth of the creative economy in Jombok Village.

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