

Community empowerment through training on production and marketing communication of local food-based chips

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Abstract

This community service program aimed to empower unemployed community members in Kota Serang Baru, Banten, through integrated training on the production and marketing communication of local food-based chips made from cassava, sweet potatoes, and bananas. The program was implemented over three days (17–19 May 2026) using a participatory, experiential, and practitioner-based training approach involving 17 participants. The training combined production skills development, packaging and branding improvement, and digital marketing communication strategies to strengthen participants' entrepreneurial capacity. The evaluation results show a significant improvement in participant competencies. The pre-test results indicated a very low initial capability level of 5%, reflecting limited knowledge and skills in food processing and marketing. After the training intervention, the post-test results increased significantly to 94%, demonstrating substantial improvement in both technical and marketing competencies. Participants also showed improved ability in hygienic production practices, product packaging, branding, and social media-based marketing.

Keywords: Local Food Processing, Entrepreneurship Training, Marketing Communication, Digital Marketing, Chips Production.

Abstrak

Program pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk memberdayakan masyarakat pengangguran di Kota Serang Baru, Banten, melalui pelatihan terpadu mengenai produksi dan komunikasi pemasaran keripik berbahan pangan lokal yang terbuat dari singkong, ubi jalar, dan pisang. Program ini dilaksanakan selama tiga hari (17–19 Mei 2026) dengan menggunakan pendekatan pelatihan partisipatif, berbasis pengalaman, dan berbasis praktisi yang melibatkan 17 peserta. Pelatihan menggabungkan pengembangan keterampilan produksi, peningkatan kemasan dan branding, serta strategi komunikasi pemasaran digital untuk memperkuat kapasitas kewirausahaan peserta. Hasil evaluasi menunjukkan adanya peningkatan kompetensi peserta yang signifikan. Hasil pre-test menunjukkan tingkat kemampuan awal yang sangat rendah, yaitu sebesar 5%, yang mencerminkan keterbatasan pengetahuan dan keterampilan dalam pengolahan pangan serta pemasaran. Setelah dilakukan intervensi pelatihan, hasil post-test meningkat secara signifikan menjadi 94%, yang menunjukkan peningkatan yang substansial baik pada kompetensi teknis maupun kompetensi pemasaran. Peserta juga menunjukkan peningkatan kemampuan dalam praktik produksi yang higienis, pengemasan produk, branding, dan pemasaran berbasis media sosial.

Kata kunci: Pengolahan Pangan Lokal, Pelatihan Kewirausahaan, Komunikasi Pemasaran, Pemasaran Digital, Produksi Keripik

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1. Introduction

Community empowerment through local food-based entrepreneurship development has become one of the strategic approaches to addressing unemployment and improving community welfare in Indonesia. The increasing unemployment rate among productive-age communities has created multidimensional socio-economic problems, particularly in suburban and semi-urban areas such as Serang Baru District, Bekasi Regency, West Java. According to the latest labor statistics, BKS Regency recorded an Open Unemployment Rate (Tingkat Pengangguran Terbuka/TPT) of 8.82% in 2024, which remains among the highest unemployment rates in West Java. The labor force in Bekasi Regency reached approximately 1.62 million people, while a substantial proportion of the working population was concentrated in vulnerable and informal employment sectors. These conditions indicate that employment opportunities remain insufficient to absorb the growing labor force, especially among productive-age groups.

The unemployment challenge has significant implications for local communities, including reduced household income, increased economic dependency, and limited opportunities for social mobility. Consequently, community-based economic empowerment programs that strengthen productive skills and entrepreneurial capacity are increasingly important. Entrepreneurship development is widely recognized as an effective mechanism for generating self-employment opportunities, improving household welfare, and fostering local economic resilience.

At the same time, Bekasi Regency and surrounding areas possess abundant local agricultural resources, including cassava, sweet potatoes, and bananas, which have considerable economic potential if processed into value-added food products. However, these commodities are generally sold in raw form with relatively low market value. This condition indicates that local communities have not optimally utilized local food resources as a basis for sustainable micro-enterprise development. According to Suseno et al. (2026), community-based innovation and local resource utilization can become an effective strategy to reduce unemployment while simultaneously strengthening regional economic resilience.

One promising approach is the development of *local food-based chips*, referring to snack products manufactured from locally available agricultural commodities such as cassava, sweet potatoes, bananas, taro, and other indigenous crops. Local food-based food processing industries contribute not only to value addition and income generation but also to food diversification and regional economic development. Previous studies have highlighted that the utilization of local food resources through small-scale food processing enterprises can strengthen community entrepreneurship, enhance product competitiveness, and create sustainable employment opportunities (Ainin et al., 2015).

The development of local food processing industries, particularly chips production, has promising market prospects due to the continuously increasing consumer demand for snack products. The snack food sector remains one of the most dynamic segments within Indonesia's micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) industry. In addition, the advancement of digital technology and social media platforms has expanded

market access for locally produced food products. Nevertheless, many unemployed community groups still experience limitations in technical production skills, product packaging, branding, and marketing communication strategies. emphasized that strengthening entrepreneurial innovation and local economic creativity are important factors in enhancing the competitiveness of community-based MSMEs (Anderson et al., 2014).

Furthermore, the challenges faced by community groups are not only related to production capability but also to the lack of effective marketing communication skills. Many local products fail to compete in broader markets because of weak branding, unattractive packaging, and limited digital marketing literacy. Consequently, integrated training programs combining technical production and marketing communication are urgently needed to improve both production quality and market competitiveness. Fauzi et al. (2025) explained that practical entrepreneurship training based on local food processing can significantly improve community economic independence and business sustainability (Anisariza et al., 2025).

Therefore, the community empowerment program through training on the production and marketing communication of local food-based chips is expected to become a strategic intervention in improving community skills, fostering entrepreneurship, creating employment opportunities, and increasing household income (Anjarany & Marianti, 2026). This program also supports the development of local economic resilience by utilizing locally available food resources in a sustainable and innovative manner.

Table 1. Socio-Economic Problems Faced by the Community

No	Problems Identified	Existing Conditions	Potential Impacts
1	High unemployment rate	Many productive-age individuals do not have permanent employment	Increased poverty and economic dependency
2	Underutilization of local food resources	Cassava, bananas, and sweet potatoes are mostly sold as raw commodities	Low economic value of agricultural products
3	Limited entrepreneurial skills	Communities lack knowledge regarding food processing businesses	Limited self-employment opportunities
4	Weak production capability	Lack of understanding of hygienic and efficient production processes	Low product quality and competitiveness
5	Inadequate product packaging	Local products are packaged traditionally and unattractively	Reduced consumer interest
6	Limited marketing communication skills	Communities have low digital marketing literacy	Narrow market reach
7	Low product competitiveness	Products lack branding and promotional strategies	Difficulty competing with commercial products

Table 1 illustrates the main socio-economic problems faced by the target community in Kota Serang Baru. The dominant issue is the relatively high unemployment rate among productive-age groups, which leads to low household income and limited

economic independence. This condition is closely linked to the lack of formal job opportunities and insufficient entrepreneurial skills among community members.

In addition, the table highlights the suboptimal utilization of local agricultural commodities such as cassava, sweet potatoes, and bananas. Although these resources are abundantly available, they are mostly sold in raw form, resulting in low added value. Another critical issue is the limited capability of the community in food processing, packaging, and marketing communication, which directly affects product competitiveness. These findings are consistent with Basrowi, Fauzi, and Efendi, (2025), who emphasize that weak innovation and low utilization of local resources contribute to persistent unemployment and economic stagnation at the community level.

Table 2. Proposed Solutions through Community Empowerment Training

No	Problems Addressed	Proposed Training Activities	Expected Outcomes
1	High unemployment	Entrepreneurship and business motivation training	Increased entrepreneurial awareness
2	Underutilized local commodities	Practical training on chips production	Increased value-added local products
3	Limited technical skills	Hands-on food processing practices	Improved production competence
4	Poor product quality	Training on hygienic production standards	Higher quality products
5	Weak packaging design	Product packaging and labeling workshop	Attractive and marketable packaging
6	Limited market access	Digital marketing communication training	Expanded product market reach
7	Low competitiveness	Branding and promotional strategy assistance	Improved MSME competitiveness

Table 2 presents the proposed solutions through an integrated community empowerment training program. The solutions are designed to directly respond to the problems identified in Table 1 by combining production skills development and marketing communication capacity building.

The training activities focus on improving entrepreneurial awareness, technical skills in chip production, and the application of hygienic processing standards. In addition, participants are trained in packaging design, branding, and digital marketing strategies to expand market access. This integrated approach is expected to not only improve production quality but also strengthen the market competitiveness of local products.

As highlighted by Berkat et al. (2025), empowerment programs that integrate innovation, skill development, and local resource utilization are more effective in creating sustainable MSME growth and improving community welfare. Therefore, the proposed training is expected to generate both economic and social impacts, particularly in reducing unemployment and increasing income-generating opportunities.

Community empowerment through local food processing-based entrepreneurship has been widely studied as a strategic approach to reducing unemployment and strengthening rural and semi-urban economies. Previous studies generally emphasize training interventions that focus on improving technical production skills, particularly in processing agricultural commodities into value-added products such as chips, snacks,

and other processed foods. These studies confirm that local resource-based processing can enhance household income and stimulate the growth of micro-enterprises in various regions (Cuevas-Vargas et al., 2021).

However, most existing studies tend to concentrate on production aspects without sufficiently integrating marketing communication competencies. The majority of community empowerment programs still focus on improving product quality and production efficiency, while neglecting branding, digital marketing, and market expansion strategies. As a result, although communities are able to produce goods, they often struggle to access broader and more competitive markets (Dahlan et al., 2025).

Furthermore, limited attention has been given to integrated empowerment models that combine production training and marketing communication within a single framework. This gap indicates that community empowerment programs are often fragmented and less sustainable. Therefore, there is a need for a more holistic approach that not only enhances production capacity but also strengthens communication and market positioning of local products (Daud & Gusnita, 2026).

The novelty of this community empowerment program lies in the integration of three key dimensions: local food-based production training, communication marketing strategy development, and MSME entrepreneurship strengthening in a single applied training model. Unlike previous programs that focus primarily on production skills, this activity emphasizes the balance between technical competence and market-oriented thinking.

In addition, this program introduces a context-based empowerment approach by directly utilizing local agricultural commodities such as cassava, sweet potatoes, and bananas as the main raw materials for processed chip products. The empowerment model also incorporates practical mentoring from experienced MSME practitioners, ensuring that participants gain both conceptual understanding and real business experience. Another important novelty is the inclusion of marketing communication training that covers branding, packaging design, and digital marketing strategies. This integrated approach is expected to produce more competitive community-based products that are not only technically feasible but also marketable and sustainable in real economic conditions.

Community empowerment in areas with high unemployment requires not only the development of production skills but also the strengthening of entrepreneurial capacity and market access. In the context of Kota Serang Baru, many productive-age individuals remain unemployed despite the availability of abundant local food resources. This situation raises an important question regarding how community empowerment programs can effectively transform local potential into sustainable economic opportunities.

Another critical issue is the limited ability of communities to process agricultural commodities into value-added products that are competitive in the market. Although

cassava, sweet potatoes, and bananas are widely available, their economic potential remains underutilized due to a lack of technical and managerial skills. This condition highlights the need to explore how production-based training can improve the value creation of local food resources (Faeni et al., 2025).

Furthermore, weak marketing communication capabilities, particularly in branding and digital marketing, have become a major barrier for community-based products to reach broader markets. Therefore, it is important to understand how integrated training programs can enhance both production quality and marketing effectiveness to support sustainable community empowerment outcomes (Deku et al., 2024).

The primary objective of this community empowerment program is to enhance the skills and capacities of unemployed community members in processing local food commodities into value-added chip products. This includes improving technical competencies in production processes to ensure product quality, hygiene, and efficiency.

Another objective is to strengthen entrepreneurial capacity among participants by fostering business awareness and the ability to develop small-scale food-based enterprises. This is expected to create new income-generating opportunities and reduce unemployment at the community level. In addition, the program aims to improve participants' competencies in marketing communication, including branding, packaging, and digital marketing strategies, so that locally produced chips can compete in wider markets and contribute to sustainable MSME development.

2. Method

This community service program adopts a participatory empowerment approach that positions community members as active actors in the learning and implementation process. The participatory approach emphasizes collaboration between facilitators, practitioners, and community groups in identifying problems, designing solutions, and implementing activities. This approach is considered effective in building ownership and sustainability of empowerment outcomes because participants are directly involved in every stage of the program (Chambers, 1994).

In addition, the program applies an experiential learning model, where participants learn through direct practice in producing local food-based chips. Experiential learning is important in skill-based empowerment programs because it allows participants to immediately apply knowledge into real production processes, thereby improving retention and practical competence (Kolb, 1984).

The community service activity was conducted in Kota Serang Baru, Banten, from 17–19 May 2026. The location was selected based on the high unemployment rate among productive-age groups and the availability of abundant local food resources such as cassava, sweet potatoes, and bananas. The three-day implementation period was designed to ensure that participants received both theoretical understanding and hands-on production experience in a structured and intensive format.

The target participants of this program were unemployed community members in Kota Serang Baru who have productive age status but limited access to formal employment. The selection of participants was carried out in collaboration with local community leaders to ensure that the beneficiaries are those who truly need economic empowerment support. The program prioritizes inclusivity by involving both male and female participants to encourage equal access to entrepreneurial opportunities.

The training program featured Arsani, a practitioner and MSME entrepreneur specializing in local chips production from Kampung Timbang, Curug District, Serang City. The resource person provided practical knowledge regarding the processing of cassava, sweet potatoes, and bananas into commercially valuable chips products, as well as strategies for product marketing and business sustainability.

The implementation of this program consists of several integrated methods. First, training sessions were conducted to provide theoretical understanding of entrepreneurship, food processing techniques, and basic marketing communication. Second, practical workshops were implemented to train participants in producing cassava, sweet potato, and banana chips using hygienic and efficient methods. Third, mentoring sessions were conducted by practitioners to guide participants in packaging design, branding, and digital marketing strategies.

The combination of training, practice, and mentoring is designed to ensure that participants not only understand the concepts but also develop practical skills that can be directly applied in small business activities. This integrated method is aligned with competency-based community development principles, which emphasize skill acquisition through structured practice and continuous guidance.

The program was implemented through several structured stages. The first stage involved a needs assessment to identify community problems, resource availability, and training requirements. The second stage focused on planning and preparation, including coordination with local stakeholders and preparation of training materials and equipment. The third stage involved the implementation of training activities covering production techniques and marketing communication strategies. The final stage consisted of evaluation and follow-up mentoring to assess participant understanding and business development potential. Evaluation was conducted through observation, product assessment, and participant feedback to measure the effectiveness of the training. Continuous monitoring was also planned to ensure that participants are able to sustain their business activities after the program ends.

Program evaluation was conducted using a qualitative descriptive approach to assess participant competence improvement in production skills and marketing communication. The evaluation focused on three main indicators: production capability, product quality, and marketing readiness. Sustainability of the program is ensured through post-training mentoring and the establishment of small community-based business groups. Sustainability is considered a critical aspect of community empowerment programs because short-term training without follow-up support often fails to generate long-term economic impact. Therefore, continuous assistance is

necessary to ensure that participants can develop independent and competitive micro-enterprises.

The effectiveness of the training program was evaluated using a pre-test and post-test approach administered to all 17 participants. The assessment was conducted before the training activities commenced and immediately after the completion of the program. The objective was to measure changes in participants' knowledge and skills related to local food-based chips production and marketing communication.

The evaluation instrument consisted of a structured questionnaire developed by the program team based on the training objectives. The questionnaire contained 20 items covering four key competency areas: (1) knowledge of local food processing techniques, (2) product packaging and branding, (3) marketing communication and promotion strategies, and (4) digital marketing literacy. Participants responded to the items using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very low understanding) to 5 (very high understanding). Higher scores indicated greater levels of knowledge and competency.

In addition to the questionnaire, practical observations were conducted during the training sessions to assess participants' ability to apply the acquired knowledge. The observation checklist evaluated participants' performance in product preparation, packaging design, promotional message development, and product presentation. Each competency was assessed using predefined criteria and scored by the facilitators.

The pre-test was administered prior to the delivery of training materials, while the post-test was conducted after participants completed all training and mentoring activities. Individual scores for each competency area were calculated and converted into percentages to facilitate comparison between the two measurement periods. Improvements in participants' competencies were determined by comparing the average pre-test and post-test scores across all indicators.

Descriptive statistical analysis was employed to summarize the results, including mean scores, percentage improvements, and competency achievement levels before and after the intervention. The comparison of pre-training and post-training results provided evidence regarding the effectiveness of the community empowerment program in enhancing participants' entrepreneurial and marketing communication competencies.



Figure 1. Delivery of Theoretical Material.



Figure 2. Material Cutting Process

3. Results

Participant Characteristics

The community service program on community empowerment through training in the production and marketing communication of local food-based chips was attended by 17 participants from unemployed community groups in Kota Serang Baru, Banten. The evaluation was conducted through pre-test and post-test measurements, as well as practical performance assessment during production and marketing simulation activities.

Table 3. Characteristics of Program Participants

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	7	41.2
	Female	10	58.8
Age	18–25 years	5	29.4
	26–35 years	8	47.1
	36–45 years	4	23.5
Educational Background	Elementary School	2	11.8
	Junior High School	4	23.5
	Senior High School/Vocational School	9	52.9
	Diploma/Bachelor Degree	2	11.8
Marital Status	Single	6	35.3
	Married	11	64.7
Number of Family Dependents	0–2 persons	5	29.4
	3–4 persons	8	47.1
	More than 4 persons	4	23.5
Residential Status	Own House	11	64.7
	Family House	4	23.5
	Rental House/Boarding House	2	11.8
Employment Status Before Program	Unemployed	12	70.6
	Irregular/Temporary Worker	5	29.4

The participants consisted of 17 productive-age community members residing in Serang Baru District. Most participants were between 26 and 35 years old (47.1%), indicating that the program primarily targeted individuals within the economically productive age group. Female participants slightly outnumbered male participants, accounting for 58.8% of the total participants. In terms of educational attainment, the majority had completed senior high school or vocational education (52.9%), suggesting a moderate educational background but limited access to formal employment opportunities.

Regarding socio-economic conditions, most participants were married (64.7%) and had three to four family dependents (47.1%), reflecting relatively high household economic responsibilities. Furthermore, 70.6% of participants were unemployed at the time of program implementation, while the remaining participants relied on irregular or temporary work. These characteristics indicate that the participants represented a vulnerable community group with substantial needs for entrepreneurship development and alternative income-generating opportunities through local food-based business activities.

Changes in Participants' Competency after Training

At the initial stage (pre-test), participants demonstrated a very limited level of knowledge and skills related to chip production, hygienic processing standards, packaging, branding, and digital marketing. The average competency level of participants was only 5%, indicating that most participants had never been directly involved in structured food processing entrepreneurship activities.

After the training implementation, which included theoretical sessions, hands-on practice, and mentoring, there was a significant increase in participant competency. The post-test results showed that 94% of participants were able to understand and apply basic production techniques, packaging design, and simple marketing communication strategies. This indicates a substantial improvement in both knowledge and practical skills, as well as increased entrepreneurial readiness among participants.



Figure 3. Production Process

The improvement was also reflected in participants' ability to independently produce cassava, sweet potato, and banana chips with proper frying techniques, hygiene standards, and attractive packaging. Furthermore, participants were able to simulate product marketing using social media platforms, demonstrating initial readiness for digital-based micro-entrepreneurship development.

Table 4. Participant Competency Level (Pre-Test and Post-Test Results)

No	Assessment Aspect	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Improvement
1	Understanding of entrepreneurship concepts	6%	92%	+86%
2	Knowledge of local food processing techniques	5%	95%	+90%
3	Hygienic production practices	4%	93%	+89%
4	Product packaging skills	3%	90%	+87%
5	Branding and product identity	4%	91%	+87%
6	Digital marketing communication skills	2%	94%	+92%

Source: Field data from Community Service Program (PkM), 2026.

Table 4 presents the quantitative results of participant competency development based on pre-test and post-test measurements across six assessment aspects. Overall, the data show a significant increase in participant understanding and skills after the implementation of the training program. Initially, participants demonstrated very low competency levels, ranging between 2%–6%, indicating minimal prior exposure to entrepreneurship, food processing techniques, and marketing communication.

Development of Practical Chip Production Skills

After the training intervention, all aspects experienced a substantial improvement, with post-test scores reaching 90%–95%. The most significant increase was observed in digital marketing communication skills, which improved from 2% to 94%, showing that participants were highly responsive to new knowledge related to social media-based promotion. Similarly, knowledge of food processing techniques and hygienic practices also showed major improvements, indicating that hands-on training effectively enhanced technical competencies. Overall, Table 2 confirms that the training program successfully improved both cognitive and practical entrepreneurial capacities of participants.



Figure 4. Frying Process

Table 5. Practical Skill Achievement in Chip Production Training

No	Practical Skill Indicators	Before Training	After Training	Description
1	Ability to select raw materials	Limited	Competent	Participants can identify quality cassava, banana, and sweet potato
2	Production technique (frying & slicing)	Basic knowledge only	Skilled	Participants can produce chips with uniform texture
3	Hygiene and sanitation practice	Not applied	Applied consistently	Participants follow hygienic food processing standards
4	Packaging and labeling	Not available	Available & improved	Participants can create simple branded packaging
5	Product consistency	Low	High	Products have stable taste and texture

Source: Observation and practical assessment during PkM implementation, 2026.

Table 5 illustrates the development of participants' practical skills in chip production before and after the training program. Prior to the intervention, participants had very

limited ability in processing local food commodities, particularly in maintaining product consistency, hygiene standards, and proper production techniques. Most participants only had basic or informal knowledge without structured practice.

After the training, there was a marked improvement in all practical indicators. Participants were able to properly select raw materials such as cassava, bananas, and sweet potatoes based on quality standards. They also demonstrated improved frying and slicing techniques, resulting in more uniform chip texture and better product quality. In addition, hygiene practices were consistently applied during the production process, reflecting increased awareness of food safety standards. Packaging skills also improved significantly, as participants were able to produce simple but attractive branded packaging. These results indicate that experiential learning and direct practice effectively enhanced participants' technical production capabilities.

Development of Marketing Communication Competencies

Table 6. Marketing Communication Competency Development

No	Marketing Aspect	Before Training	After Training	Result
1	Understanding of branding	Very low	Good	Participants understand product identity concept
2	Social media usage	Limited personal use	Business-oriented use	Able to promote products online
3	Product promotion strategy	None	Basic strategy applied	Participants can create simple promotional content
4	Market targeting	Not understood	Understood	Participants identify potential customer segments

Source: Marketing simulation and evaluation results, PkM Program 2026.

Table 6 describes the development of participants' marketing communication competencies, particularly in branding, digital promotion, and market understanding. Before the training, participants had very limited knowledge of marketing strategies and relied mostly on informal or traditional selling methods. Branding and product positioning concepts were largely unfamiliar, and social media platforms were not utilized for business purposes.

Following the training, participants showed notable improvements in all marketing aspects. They began to understand the importance of branding as a tool for creating product identity and differentiating their products in the market. Participants also demonstrated increased ability to use social media for business promotion, including creating simple promotional content for their products. Furthermore, they gained basic understanding of market segmentation and target customers, which is essential for expanding sales reach. These findings indicate that the training successfully enhanced participants' marketing awareness and prepared them for digital-based entrepreneurship activities.

Improvement In Production and Marketing Communication Competencies

The significant increase from 5% pre-test to 94% post-test indicates that the training program was highly effective in improving participant competencies. The results show that structured training combined with practical learning and mentoring can rapidly

enhance both cognitive understanding and technical skills in community-based entrepreneurship.

The improvement in production skills demonstrates that participants are capable of transforming local raw materials into value-added products with acceptable quality standards. Meanwhile, the improvement in marketing communication skills indicates that participants are beginning to understand the importance of branding and digital promotion in increasing product competitiveness.

The results of this community service program indicate a substantial improvement in participants' competencies in both production skills and marketing communication. The increase from 5% in the pre-test to 94% in the post-test demonstrates that the training intervention was highly effective in enhancing participants' knowledge and practical abilities. This finding is consistent with the argument that experiential and practice-based learning significantly improves skill acquisition in community empowerment programs (Faeni et al., 2025; Foltean et al., 2019).

In terms of production skills, participants showed significant development in hygienic processing, raw material selection, and product consistency. This improvement aligns with previous research indicating that hands-on training in agro-processing industries is effective in improving technical competencies among rural and semi-urban communities. Fauzi et al. (2025) and Hasibuan et al. (2026) found that structured food processing training increases product quality and strengthens participants' ability to transform local commodities into competitive products.

Furthermore, the improvement in packaging and branding skills reflects the importance of integrating product development with visual identity creation. Participants who initially had no understanding of branding were able to produce simple but marketable packaging after the training. This supports the findings of Fauzi et al. (2024) and Huo et al. (2023), who emphasized that packaging innovation and branding significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions and product competitiveness in MSME sectors.

The most significant transformation occurred in digital marketing communication skills, which increased from 2% to 94%. This indicates that participants were able to adapt to digital-based promotion strategies such as social media marketing. This result is in line with the study by Dahlan et al. (2025), which states that digital marketing literacy plays a crucial role in expanding market access and increasing sales performance for micro and small enterprises.

Practitioner-Based Mentoring and Experiential Learning

The empowerment model also incorporated practical mentoring from experienced Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSME) practitioners to bridge the gap between theoretical training and real business practices. The involvement of MSME practitioners was intended to provide participants with firsthand insights into the operational, financial, production, and marketing aspects of running a small-scale food business. During the training program, the practitioners shared their entrepreneurial

experiences, demonstrated practical techniques in local food-based chips production, and provided guidance on product packaging, branding, pricing strategies, and customer communication (Faeni et al., 2026).

The mentoring activities were conducted through interactive workshops, product development sessions, and small-group consultations. Participants were given opportunities to discuss business challenges directly with the practitioners and receive feedback on their product ideas and marketing plans. This practical approach enabled participants to better understand how entrepreneurial concepts can be applied in real business environments (Sukidin et al., 2026).

The inclusion of MSME practitioners was considered an essential component of the empowerment program because many participants had limited prior exposure to business operations. Through direct interaction with experienced entrepreneurs, participants were expected to develop greater entrepreneurial confidence, improve their business skills, and gain practical knowledge necessary for establishing and sustaining local food-based enterprises after the completion of the program.

In addition, the involvement of a practitioner as a resource person contributed significantly to the effectiveness of the program. Practical experience shared by MSME actors provided real-world insights that complemented theoretical learning. This approach strengthened participants' understanding of business realities, particularly in cost management, product pricing, and customer preferences. Such practitioner-based training models have been shown to improve learning relevance and application in community empowerment settings (Fauzi et al., 2025).

Entrepreneurial Mindset, Peer Learning, and Program Sustainability

Beyond technical improvements, the program also revealed a shift in participants' entrepreneurial mindset. Many participants who previously viewed entrepreneurship as difficult or risky began to show increased confidence and motivation to start small businesses. This change in mindset is crucial because entrepreneurial intention is a key determinant of business initiation and sustainability in community-based economic development (Kraus et al., 2020).

Another important finding is the emergence of informal peer learning among participants during the training process. Participants began to collaborate, share experiences, and assist each other in production and packaging activities. This social learning process indicates the formation of early-stage community-based business networks, which are essential for sustaining MSME development beyond the training period. According to Shahzad et al. (2026), peer-based learning environments enhance knowledge retention and strengthen collective entrepreneurship capacity.

Finally, the integration of production training and marketing communication in this program proves to be more effective than fragmented training approaches. The findings confirm that community empowerment programs should adopt a holistic model that combines technical skills, entrepreneurial mindset, and market-oriented strategies to ensure sustainable economic impact.

4. Conclusion

The community service program involving 17 participants demonstrated a significant transformation in entrepreneurial competencies. Initially, participants' understanding of entrepreneurship, production, and marketing communication was very low, with an average competency level of only 5%. After the implementation of the training program, participants' competency increased significantly to 94%, indicating a substantial improvement in knowledge and practical skills related to local food-based chip production and marketing.

In terms of production capability, participants who previously had limited knowledge of food processing techniques were able to independently produce cassava, sweet potato, and banana chips with proper hygiene, consistent quality, and improved packaging. This reflects a shift from non-productive individuals to semi-skilled micro-entrepreneurs capable of utilizing local resources for economic activities.

Furthermore, participants' marketing communication skills also improved significantly. From previously having almost no understanding of branding and digital marketing, participants were able to apply basic branding concepts and utilize social media for product promotion. This transformation indicates an increase from 2% digital marketing literacy to 94% post-training readiness, showing strong potential for the development of community-based digital entrepreneurship.

Acknowledgements

To ensure sustainability of the program outcomes, it is recommended that continuous mentoring and follow-up assistance be provided to participants, particularly in business development, digital marketing optimization, and market expansion strategies. Strengthening collaboration between universities, local government, and MSME practitioners is also essential to support long-term growth of community-based enterprises.

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