



Empowering Female Sewing Communities by Optimizing the Use of Fabric Scraps to Create Economically Valuable Products

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Abstract: This Community Service activity aims to provide training and assistance in empowering the women's sewing community through the optimal utilization of fabric scraps to create products of economic value in Adeng Hamlet. The method used in this community service activity is the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) method. The ABCD method prioritizes the utilization of the potential of a group of people or community around the area. The Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) method has five key steps, including: Discovery, Dream, Design, Define, and Destiny. The achievement of the community service activity can be said to be very good. In addition to receiving a positive response from the community, the participants were also able to produce products from parca fabric with a higher economic value than before. The enthusiasm of the community was also evident from the 100% attendance of the participants who were punctual in attending this activity from the beginning to the end. This assistance activity was then reported and compiled as a form of accountability by the lecturers as facilitators of the activity, which is a manifestation of the Tri Dharma Perguruan Tinggi (Three Pillars of Higher Education) in the field of Community Service.

Keywords: Empowerment, Tailor Community Optimization, Fabric Scrap.

Introduction

The province of West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) is known as one of the provinces that contributes the largest number of Indonesian migrant workers (PMI) in the country. The factors that cause people to choose to become PMI include: the challenge of finding employment, low-level education which limits access to jobs, weak household finances, and various other internal and external factors. The tough economic conditions, particularly for those in rural areas, are evident in the low wages earned. For example, a farmworker earns only Rp 30,000 to Rp 50,000 per day, working from 7 am to 4 pm (Robiyatin et al., 2024).

The phenomenon described above illustrates the high levels of interest among the people of NTB in becoming migrant workers. A different situation can be found in the hamlet of Adeng Jagaraga Kuripan. Residents in this hamlet are not interested in becoming migrant workers. With their sewing skills, they are capable of meeting their daily basic needs. Nearly 80%

of Adeng's residents are skilled in sewing and have made it their livelihood. These sewing skills have been passed down from one person to another and have been practised for three decades. These skills are mastered by adults, teenagers and even children, both boys and girls. However, in terms of the amount of time spent working, sewing is predominantly carried out by the women, as many of the men in this hamlet work as clothing traders.

Tailors buy leftover fabric from garment factories by the sack, at a price range of Rp 35,000–Rp 50,000 per kilo. These fabric scraps are sourced by traders from the islands of Java and Bali. The price differs depending on the quality of the goods purchased. Cheaper goods usually consist of smaller pieces of fabric, which can only be made into trousers for babies or toddlers, whilst more expensive fabric may contain wider pieces that can be made into adult-sized clothing. The selling price of garments made from these fabric scraps is very low; children's trousers are sold for Rp 4,000 per pair. These prices apply only when sold directly at the market.

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However, if sold through middlemen, the prices are significantly lower.

These conditions mean that the living standards of the tailors in Adeng Hamlet show no significant economic improvement. The income and wages from sewing are only enough to meet basic daily needs; there is nothing left over to save. Indeed, to cover other expenses, many residents end up selling the land inherited from their parents, or taking out bank loans.

In response to this problem, there is a pressing need for support initiatives that can optimise the sewing skills possessed by the residents of Adeng. In her article, Aryanti explains that the management of fabric scraps into marketable goods can help support family finances (Maryana et al., 2023). These fabric scraps can also be utilised to create various handicrafts or works of art, such as tablecloths, cushion covers, doormats, brooches, and so on (Dureau, 2013).

It is expected that this mentoring program will help residents improve their skills in turning fabric scraps into a variety of products with a higher market value. These include making souvenirs such as brooches, key rings, tablecloths, fridge covers and other items.

Method

The community service activities employ the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach (Ward, 2023). The ABCD approach prioritises the utilisation of the existing potential of a local community or group of people. The diversity of the community in the Hamlet can be categorised by examining the skills or potential of its members. These skills or potentials are then channelled into a women's community comprising mothers and teenage girls. By harnessing the sewing skills possessed by the majority of women in Adeng Hamlet, Kuripan Sub-district, and utilising 'LEFTOVER FABRIC', it is expected that products of high economic value can be produced. The Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) method comprises five key steps, including: Discovery, Dream, Design, Define, and Destiny.

Result and Discussion

Result

Stages of this activity include:

Observation

This community service activity began with a field observation carried out on Sunday, 27 November 2022. This was done to gain a clearer understanding of the beneficiaries' circumstances on the ground, ensuring that the community service activities carried out would

be targeted effectively and truly beneficial to them. During this initial observation, the community service team visited tailors in Adeng Village, Jagaraga Village, Kuripan Sub-district, West Lombok Regency. From this observation, it was found that the tailors in this village sewed using scrap fabric that they purchased by the sack. The types of products they could produce from these fabric scraps were very limited, and the prices were extremely low. The products they produced were baby and children's trousers, sold for Rp 4,000 per pair. This price could be significantly lower if they sold them through a middleman. Based on this visit, the volunteers subsequently decided to organise a community service activity aimed at increasing the income of the tailors through training, as almost all the tailors in the hamlet lack the specialised skills required to produce products with high economic value. Patchwork fabric has its own characteristics and distinctive features that set it apart from other fabrics. For further clarification, let us examine some of the characteristics of patchwork fabric (Gabriella Krisnugtya Putri & Arina Haq, 2024).

Preparations for Implementation

The next step taken by the community service team was to prepare for the implementation of the community service activities, which included scheduling the activities, publicising them, and coordinating with the parties involved. Before carrying out the training activities, the team held a preparatory meeting to draw up the programme, prepare invitations, and so on.



Figure 1. Team Meeting

This community service activity is scheduled to be held from December 3, 2022, to December 18, 2022, and consists of several key stages: training, initial mentoring, monitoring, second mentoring, and evaluation, as well as marketing training for the products resulting from the training.

After finalising the programme schedule, the community service team then carried out socialisation and coordination with prospective participants and relevant parties, such as the hamlet head and the local neighbourhood association chairperson. These socialisation and coordination activities are vital to ensure the participants' readiness and clarify what they need to prepare, as well as to provide an overview of the community service activities to be undertaken, so that the programme can run efficiently and provide significant benefits to the participants.

Implementation of Activities

The community service activities were carried out in several stages, including: a workshop, followed by mentoring sessions 1 and 2. The final stage was an evaluation activity, which also included training for participants on how to market the products developed through the mentoring programme. The details are shown in the following:

a. Training

Adeng Hamlet is a hamlet located in Kuripan Village, where some of the residents possess sewing skills. However, the sewing skills of Kuripan's residents are a tradition passed down from their parents. Furthermore, the tailors' skills are not based on sewing theory or knowledge, meaning the products produced lack good quality. The aim of this training and mentoring programme is to train the tailors to understand sewing theory and pattern drafting. Materials that were initially useless can be transformed into something more functional, useful, varied, and certainly, have a high selling price in the right hands (Febianti et al., 2025). In this activity, the volunteers invited three experts in their respective fields.

Speaker 1, Mrs Sri Wahyuni, is a designer, seamstress, entrepreneur, and advocate for the creative economy, as well as an expert in knitting. She is also the owner of a boutique selling various knitted crafts and woven fabrics. During the training, participants were taught how to create patterns for handmade crafts using scrap fabric, ensuring the resulting works are of high quality and possess significant economic value. These included patterns for making tissue holders, unique tablecloths in various designs, high-quality doormats and so on. In the hands of the right person, these fabric scraps can be turned into something more functional, useful, varied, and, of course, with a high selling price (Hasmia et al., 2023). As shown in the following image:



Figure 2. Training Programme

b. First mentoring session

The first mentoring session took place on 4 December 2022. This activity was a continuation of the previous training session. Whilst the training focused on teaching participants how to create proper, high-quality patterns, this mentoring session allowed participants to learn and practise making products directly. The process of creating crafts from fabric scraps requires several sewing techniques. At this stage, participants were also mentored by the first expert.



Figure 3. Mentoring for Product Creation

c. Second Mentoring Session

Unlike the first mentoring session, the second mentoring session, held on 11 December 2022, was conducted solely by the volunteer team together with all participants, without the presence of an expert. During this second session, all training participants were present, each bringing the products they had produced. Meanwhile, products of economic value are defined as items that initially had no value or only a low selling price, but which become highly valuable after undergoing a high degree of creative intervention (Tjiptono, 2008). At this stage, the service team assessed the progress made by the participants by comparing the products they had produced during the first mentoring session with those they brought to the second session.



Figure 4. Work Results Collection

d. Evaluation and marketing training for products resulting from the mentoring programme

To maximise the outcomes of the community service activities for the tailors in Adeng Hamlet, Jagaraga Village, Kuripan Sub-district, West Lombok Regency, the final stage of this initiative was designed as an evaluation and marketing training session for the products resulting from the training. This activity was designed to evaluate the entire process or the stages of the previous community service activities. The evaluation session was attended by the entire service team and the training participants.

The results of the evaluation indicate that the programme achieved 90% of its objectives. This is evident from several factors, including:

- The extraordinary enthusiasm of the Adeng community, evident from the 100% attendance of participants at every activity
- 95% of the tasks assigned by the community service team were carried out successfully.
- As a result of this activity, the participants were able to produce items made from patchwork fabric.

Furthermore, to prepare the participants for the sales stage of the products they had produced, this final activity was combined with training on marketing the products resulting from the training. This training was delivered by two guest speakers. The first speaker was a successful entrepreneur specializing in Lombok-style souvenirs. The second speaker was a skilled motivational speaker, expected to inspire the participants to continue innovating and producing high-value products using scrap fabric.

In addition to conducting an evaluation, at this stage the participants were also provided with material on how to sell products to maximize their economic value. In her article, Rahmanita explains that empowerment activities can foster creativity among housewives and out-of-school teenage girls to produce commodities with high market value (Rahmanita, 2020). Septiani also describes the production and marketing of caricature-painted patchwork cushions as a promising business venture (Septiawati et al., 2019). In this context, the programme also featured a guest speaker who is a successful entrepreneur and owner of a souvenir shop in Lombok. The guest speaker not only provided guidance on packaging but also explained how goods can be sold online. For example, via Facebook (Marketplace), Instagram, and other platforms.



Figure 5. Evaluation and marketing strategy workshop following the mentoring programme

The aim of the packaging training is to improve product quality in terms of appearance. A product with an attractive appearance will command a higher selling price. Product packaging that is appealing in terms of colour, design and overall presentation is favoured by consumers (Ramadhan & Septiana Sari, 2024).

Discussion

Community service activities are carried out with the aim of improving the welfare and quality of life of the community. The empowerment support provided to the community of female tailors in Adeng hamlet, West Lombok, is an effort to further improve the community's economy based on their potential.

Conclusion

The community service activity themed "Empowerment of the Women's Tailoring Community Through the Optimisation of Scrap Fabric Utilisation into Economically Valuable Products in Adeng Hamlet, Jagaraga Village, Kuripan Sub-district, West Lombok Regency" proceeded smoothly. The achievement of the community service activity can be considered very good. This is not only because it received a positive response from the community, but also because the participants were able to produce products from scrap fabric with a higher economic value than before. The community's enthusiasm was also evident from the fact that 100% of the participants attended punctually throughout the activity, from start to finish. This mentoring activity was subsequently reported and compiled as a form of accountability by the lecturer as the activity facilitator, fulfilling the Tri Dharma of Higher Education in the field of Community Service. It is, of course, fully recognised that the implementation of the training and mentoring still has many shortcomings and is far from perfect; therefore, feedback for future improvements is greatly appreciated.

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