

Community Empowerment Based on Creative Economy Through Training on Making Siwalan Sticks (Stikland) in Gaji Village, Kerek District, Tuban Regency

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Abstract: Community empowerment is one form of increasing human resource development. In this case, it is related to the creative economy, which is to try to hone community innovation towards better development and to be able to compete in the economic market. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method with field research. Training participants will receive practical learning about traditional siwalan stick-making techniques and an understanding of the business aspects. The results of this program are expected to include improving the skills of participants, the establishment of several small and medium enterprises (UKM) engaged in the production and marketing of siwalan sticks, as well as increasing public interest in creative siwalan stick products as local products with high cultural value. It is hoped that this collaboration program can contribute to improving the welfare of the community in Gaji Village and driving creative economic growth based on local potential in the Kerek District area, Tuban Regency

Introduction

Empowerment Community is a crucial form of effort in improving the welfare and independence of a community. Amid various economic challenges faced by society, especially rural communities. The innovation carried out must be able to give rise to a creative economy to become an effective solution. The creative economy is a combination of creative ideas with creative activities to produce products that have added value (Halil, 2022, p. 102). Creativity is one of the basic patterns of thinking, attitudes, and actions to stimulate innovation and transformation of various aspects of life in self-formation to improve the quality of life (Rahmatullah & Mustari, 2018). One example is the implementation of the creative economy through training in making local products by utilizing regional natural resources such as Stik Siwalan (Stikland) by looking at the supporting market potential.

Gaji Village, located in Kerek District, is one of the villages that has great potential in developing creative economic products. This village is known for its abundant natural resources, one of which is the many siwalan trees (*Borassus Flabellifer*). Siwalan is a palm plant whose fruit can be processed into various fresh food and drink products. However, the use of siwalan in Gaji Village is still less than optimal, so the economy has not been fully explored.

Seeing the potential that exists, training in making Siwalan Sticks (Stikland) has become a positive activity as initiation of one of the strategic steps to develop the creative economy in Gaji Village. Stikland is an ideal product in the form of a snack made from siwalan fruit which is processed in a certain way so that it can produce a unique product with high selling value. This training is expected to increase community creativity, innovation, and skills in managing siwalan fruit into products that are competitive in the world economic market (Cahyo Bagus Setiawan et al., 2021).

Through this community service collaboration, researchers together with the village community are trying to increase the community's knowledge and skills in making siwalan stick snacks. This training is an important step to teach proper production techniques, creative use of local materials, and form marketing strategies to increase product competitiveness (Alimuddin et al., 2023).

This report aims to document, analyze, and evaluate the implementation of community service collaboration in training on making Stik Siwalan (Stikland) snacks as a form of creative economic empowerment in Gaji Village. It is hoped that this report can be an illustration of the potential of the creative economy and can provide input to village communities and stakeholders regarding support in developing entrepreneurship, especially in making siwalan products.

This training aims to teach aspects of business management, marketing, and product packaging so that the products produced can be well received by consumers. The success of this program also depends greatly on the community's willingness to participate actively and commit to the long term. Therefore, it is important to build motivation and provide ongoing support to the community so that they can continue to develop and innovate. Evaluation and monitoring must also be carried out periodically to ensure that the program is running in accordance with the stated objectives.

Training on making Siwalan Sticks (Stikland) is a concrete step in efforts to empower communities based on a creative economy by utilizing local natural resources and improving community skills. It is hoped that this will create quality and highly competitive products, as well as have a positive impact on the welfare of the people of Gaji Village and the surrounding area.

Method

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach with research procedures that produce descriptive data in the form of written and oral submissions from informants as well as the results of observations made. The depiction of objects and events is of course based on the facts found in the field. This research describes its findings by obtaining data from field results. By using two types of data sources, namely primary and secondary, technical data collection is carried out by interviews, observation, and documentation (Aminuddin et al., 2022, 3). Field research is research that requires researchers to go directly into the field to obtain data and information directly.

Result

A creative economy-based community empowerment program through training in making Siwalan Sticks (Stikland) in Gaji Village, Kerek District, Tuban Regency showed very positive results. First, this training succeeded in increasing residents' knowledge and skills in producing siwalan sticks. Training participants who previously had no knowledge about making siwalan sticks are now able to make this product with good quality. Apart from that, this training also encourages product innovation with a variety of flavors and attractive packaging, which increases the attractiveness and selling value of products in the market.

From an economic perspective, this program has a real impact on increasing people's income. Some of the training participants started producing and selling siwalan sticks independently, thereby providing additional income for their families. The formation of a joint business group in Gaji Village also strengthens the creative economic aspect of the village, with a focus on the production and marketing of siwalan sticks. In addition, the success of this program motivates other communities to participate in creative economy empowerment and development activities.

Further discussion shows that the training method used is very effective in providing comprehensive understanding to participants. Support from the village government and local community leaders also plays an important role in the success of this program. However, to ensure the sustainability of the program, further assistance is needed, especially in business management and product marketing. Challenges such as limited capital and limited market access can be overcome by collaborating with cooperatives or microfinance institutions, as well as utilizing social media and e-commerce platforms to expand market reach.

This training provides *insight-insight* new by understanding the technical skills in

making Siwalan Sticks (Stikland) from the process of sorting materials, managing materials, production techniques, and up to the product finishing stage. By having the skills to make Siwalan Sticks (Stikland), village communities become more economically independent. They can produce products of high economic value from local natural resources, namely siwalan. So it can increase family income and livelihood. The results of the output and outcome of the training in making Stik Siwalan (Stikland) are a new transformation in the management of natural resources so that they are not wasted. It is hoped that this activity can provide real benefits in efforts to empower the creative economy based on local potential in Gaji Village, Kerek District, Tuban Regency.

Discussion

Community Empowerment Based on Creative Economy

Empowerment according to the KBBI is defined as a process, method, or action of empowering. In terms of empowerment, it is an effort to empower something. This concept in detail places empowerment in terms of individual or group forms (M. Bangsawan, 2017, 382). According to Winarni, there are three types of empowerment stages, namely: development, strengthening potential, and creating independence. The three points above are the basis for every society in developing its potential. Empowerment is a form of effort to build power by motivating and raising people's awareness of their potential and being able to continue to strive for development towards better change.

Community empowerment is a participatory process that provides the influence of trust, opportunities, and opportunities for the community to examine the main challenges in development and propose various forms of activities that can overcome these problems (Mardikanto & Soebiato, 2015, 61-62). Empowerment is a paradigm in human development, namely human-centered (*people-centered*), participatory (*participatory*), empowering (*empowering*), and sustainable (*sustainable*) (Alfiti, 2011, 21).

Empowerment is basically to prepare the community to be able and willing to participate actively in every form of development program and activity that has an impact on improving the quality of life or well-being in terms of economic, social, cultural, physical and spiritual aspects (Halil, 2022, 103). One form of strategy that can be implemented to strengthen society is creative and innovative-based economic development. So that this community can assess its own needs in terms of maintaining its quality of life.

Community empowerment is seen as part of programs and processes. Empowerment in terms of this process is defined as stages of activities to achieve predetermined goals which usually have a set time period. Meanwhile, empowerment

from a process perspective is defined as a continuous stage of activity (ongoing) as long as the community wants to continue making changes and improvements, not just monotonous programs (Adi, 2008, 13).

In community empowerment, the most important element is the community itself which is the determining factor in development. Community inspiration becomes the basis for local, and regional development activities and even becomes the starting point for national programs in their development. Communities get facilities to examine needs, problems, and prospects in developing their own lives. Apart from that, they also have to find and recognize good and appropriate solutions in accessing the resources needed, both internal and external resources.

The stages in community empowerment consist of three important stages that must be understood, including:

1. Reliance by shaping behavior towards behavior that is aware of the need to increase one's abilities or potential capacity. The community as an empowerment actor must try to create the preconditions so that it can provide facilities that are useful for the continuity of an effective and efficient empowerment process.
2. Transformation through the form of knowledge, abilities, and skills so that society has basic abilities so that it can take a role in nation-building. In the learning process about knowledge and skills to suit the demands of society.
3. Intellectual increase in creativity and new innovations in creating things so that they can lead to a more prosperous and independent society. This independence gives birth to creations and innovations in the surrounding environment.

The creative economy is an economic concept that adapts the type of information and creativity by generating various ideas, thoughts, and knowledge from human resources as a production factor (Arjana, 2016). The creative economy is people who want to utilize their potential with ideas which are then used to think about finding something to overcome economic limitations and can revive the process of economic independence in society. The creative economy is a new breakthrough in empowering the community's economy with the home industry sector whether carried out by each individual, group, or with related parties such as BUM Desa which has had quite a lot of success in implementing the creative economy sector (Hasan, 2018).

The correlation of the words based and creative economy is defined as an economic practice that is based on creativity and innovation. Creativity itself requires a person to function in the mind as well as possible. So that welding knowledge can be able to create something new and add value. The sources of life on earth must be utilized and managed as well as possible so that humans can enjoy them.

The emergence of the creative economy is the effect of an increasingly advanced world economic movement, where the creative economy is also spreading in every

region. The background to the emergence of this creative economy is, among other things, the following:

1. Consumers want various forms of the desired goods, in this case, a producer is required to continue to innovate.
2. Limited information is still a barrier to economic implementation.

In a broader context, the creative economy is a comprehensive concept relating to complex interactions between culture and technology in facing the development of globalization which is dominated by symbols, texts, inspiration, and imagination. It is stated that there are three main concepts of economic creativity, namely:

1. Economic creativity concerns the process of producing something from nothing.
2. Economic creativity results from collaboration in producing old things using new methods.
3. Economic creativity is the perverse use of creating something simpler or better (Suryana, 2013, 36).

Empowerment of the creative economy refers to a series of efforts and policies aimed at increasing the participation and contribution of the creative economy sector in the economic development of a country or region. The creative economy includes various sectors based on creativity, innovation, and the use of knowledge to create added value. Some sectors of the creative economy include arts and culture (film, music, fine arts, literature), media and entertainment, design, architecture, fashion, video games, information and communication technology (ICT), and other creative industries (G. Bangsawan, 2023).

Empowerment of the creative economy aims to increase the competitiveness, productivity, and income of the creative economy sectors, as well as create new jobs and contribute to overall economic growth (Azizah & Muhfiatun, 2018). This can be done through various means, such as providing training and education to improve the skills of workers in the creative sector, providing financial support and access to markets, strengthening infrastructure, encouraging collaboration between creative economy players, and creating a conducive business environment.

The description above can be concluded that creative economic empowerment is a new era in the economic world by prioritizing information and creativity by relying on the results of ideas, thoughts, and knowledge possessed by human resources as the main production in economic activities. With the creativity carried out by the community, they can produce various products, one of which is Stikland from siwalan as the basic ingredient. This new innovation is based on a simple process but can produce products that have very high buyer interest and are busy with marketing

Training has a crucial role in empowering the creative economy. Here are some reasons why training is very important in this context (Habib, 2021):

1. Improving skills and creativity: Training helps improve the technical skills and creativity of creative economy players. By honing their skills, they can produce work that is more innovative, of higher quality, and has higher added value.
2. Increasing Competitiveness: Training helps increase the competitiveness of the creative economy sector in the global market. Actors who have superior skills have greater opportunities to compete and profit from a competitive market.
3. Supporting Innovation and Research: Training opens the door to more research and experimentation in the creative economy sector. By increasing the understanding and knowledge of actors, the potential for creating innovative products and services also increases.
4. Opening Access to Opportunities: Training opens access to new opportunities in the creative economy sector. This could be access to new markets, collaboration with large companies, or the opportunity to participate in international festivals and cultural events.
5. Improving Product and Service Quality: Through training, the quality of the products and services produced will increase. Better skills have a positive impact on the production, design, and marketing aspects of products.
6. Encouraging Entrepreneurship: Training can also encourage entrepreneurship among creative economy players. With enhanced skills, they become more confident in creating and developing their creative ventures.
7. Facing Technological Change: Training helps creative economy actors to adapt to technological changes. By increasing their knowledge of the latest technological developments, they can utilize them to create work that is relevant and modern.
8. Increased Income and Welfare: Through training, creative economy actors can increase their income. This contributes to improving their welfare and quality of life and drives overall economic growth.
9. Development of Local Creative Industries: By increasing the skills and capacity of local actors, training can contribute to the development of creative industries at the local or regional level.
10. Sustainability of the Creative Economy Sector: Training plays an important role in maintaining the sustainability of the creative economy sector. By developing quality human resources, this sector has the potential to continue to develop and provide a positive impact in the long term (Jusdiana Ahmad et al., 2024).

Community Empowerment Based on Creative Economy Through Training on Making Siwalan Sticks (Stikland) in Gaji Village, Kerek District, Tuban Regency

Creative economy-based community empowerment plays a very important role in the nation's economy, especially in generating income and creating jobs. Therefore, the creative economy can be seen as a form of movement for economic growth and

development of a nation (engine of economic growth and development). The creative economy is a creativity-based concept that can potentially foster economic development in various aspects (Suryana, 2013, 36).

Community empowerment aims to help develop weak, elderly, poor communities and groups that are discriminated against or excluded. Empowering this group of people socio-economically so that they can be more independent and fulfill their basic life needs. Community independence is a condition experienced by the community that is characterized by the ability to think, decide, and act when forming the right view of solutions in using the abilities of both cognitive, conative, and psychomotor abilities, effectively by directing the resources owned by the internal community (Sulistiyastuti, 2004).

Creative economy-based community empowerment through training in making Siwalan Sticks (Stikland) in Gaji Village, Kerek District, Tuban Regency is a strategic step to improve the welfare of village residents. This program aims to utilize local potential, namely siwalan fruit, which is abundant in the area. Through this training, the public is taught techniques for making siwalan sticks that are innovative and have high selling value. Apart from improving technical skills, this training also covers aspects of business management, marketing, and product packaging, so that the products produced can compete in a wider market. With this program, it is hoped that the Gaji Village community will not only be able to increase family income, but also create new jobs, encourage local economic growth, and preserve local culture and traditions related to siwalan. This initiative also shows the importance of collaboration between government, academics, and local communities in supporting sustainable and inclusive development

Siwalan trees grow a lot in the Tuban Regency area, especially in Gaji Village, Kerek District. This plant grows in many lowland areas and has various properties and benefits (Ht, 2017). Siwalan trees are also called palm trees, a type of palm that grows widely in Southeast Asia and South Asia. This tree is widely used for its leaves, stems, duah, and flowers in economic activities. Therefore, this research focuses on the creative economy through making Stik Siwalan (Stikland). The training activity for making siwalan sticks is a form of community service collaboration that aims to encourage creative economic empowerment based on local potential in Gaji Village, Kerek District, Tuban Regency. The following is a description of the activity process:

1. Identify Local Potential

Before starting the training, the facilitators identified local potential in Gaji Village. They studied the potential of siwalan trees, including the products that could be produced, such as coconut sugar and palm juice. Apart from that, students also found new opportunities in making siwalan sticks as a unique snack product that has high economic value

2. Planning and Coordination

Facilitators collaborate with related parties in Gaji Village to plan and organize training activities. Planning includes determining training objectives, time, and place for implementation, as well as procuring the required materials and equipment.

3. Collection of Training Materials

The assistant prepares comprehensive training material on making siwalan sticks. The material includes an explanation of the materials used, techniques for making siwalan sticks, production steps, as well as creativity in designing and decorating siwalan sticks.

4. Implementation of Training

Training activities are carried out at a predetermined location in Gaji Village. Companions provide outreach about the aims and benefits of the training to participants, who consist of village communities who are interested in taking part in this training. For several days, students intensively trained participants in making siwalan sticks, from material preparation to the final production process.

5. Mentoring and Evaluation

During the training, the companion provides assistance and guidance to participants in overcoming obstacles that may arise. They also carry out regular evaluations to see the development of participants' skills and ensure that they can produce siwalan sticks well. Introduction to Marketing Aspects.

6. Presentation of Training Results

At the end of the training, a presentation was made of the results of making siwalan sticks that had been produced by the participants. Companions provide appreciation and positive feedback on the products produced by participants as a form of encouragement and motivation to continue their business.

7. Evaluation of Social and Economic Impact

After the exercise is complete, the facilitator evaluates the social and economic impact of this activity. They identified positive changes that occurred among participants and the surrounding community, such as increasing skills, income, and an active role in empowering the creative economy in the village.

The training activity process for making siwalan sticks by the Companion illustrates a collaborative effort to develop local potential and encourage creative economic empowerment in Gaji Village. Through this training, it is hoped that village communities can improve their skills and create unique siwalan-based products that have added value and wider market potential.

Conclusion

Empowerment of the creative economy aims to increase the competitiveness, productivity, and income of the creative economy sectors, as well as create new jobs and contribute to overall economic growth. Community service collaboration in the form of

training in making siwalan sticks has had a positive impact on the people of Gaji Village, Kerek District, Tuban Regency. Through this training, people can improve their skills and knowledge, as well as open up new business opportunities by exploiting local potential in the form of natural Siwalan ingredients. It is hoped that this collaboration can continue and contribute to improving community welfare and developing the creative economy in the research area.

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