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STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S BUSINESSES FOR INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract*. This community engagement program aimed to strengthen the entrepreneurial capacity, business management, product development, and market readiness of women-led business groups participating in the Usaha Peningkatan Pendapatan Keluarga Akseptor (UPPKA) in Kenjeran, Surabaya. Ten business groups took part in a participatory program comprising two socialization sessions, seven stages of training, entrepreneurship incubation, capacity building for UPPKA facilitators, and a product exhibition. Program implementation was reviewed descriptively using activity observations, discussions, mentoring notes, informal interviews, and documentation. The activities created opportunities for participants to discuss business challenges, refine product identity, apply management and marketing concepts, and introduce their products to the public and relevant stakeholders. Photographs and activity records document the training, incubation, and exhibition process. Overall, the program supported efforts to improve business practices, product identity, and promotional readiness while creating opportunities for market and stakeholder engagement. Continued mentoring and periodic monitoring will help sustain these efforts and track progress in production, sales, market reach, and business continuity over time.*

Keywords: *entrepreneurship, inclusive economic development, local economy, women's economic empowerment*

Abstrak Kegiatan pengabdian ini bertujuan memperkuat kapasitas kewirausahaan, pengelolaan usaha, pengembangan produk, dan kesiapan pemasaran kelompok usaha perempuan yang tergabung dalam Usaha Peningkatan Pendapatan Keluarga Akseptor (UPPKA) di Kecamatan Kenjeran, Kota Surabaya. Sebanyak sepuluh kelompok usaha terlibat dalam program partisipatif yang meliputi dua sesi sosialisasi, tujuh tahap pelatihan, inkubasi kewirausahaan, penguatan kapasitas pendamping UPPKA, dan gelar produk. Pelaksanaan program ditelaah secara deskriptif melalui observasi kegiatan, diskusi, catatan pendampingan, wawancara informal, dan dokumentasi. Rangkaian kegiatan memberi ruang bagi peserta untuk membahas kendala usaha, menyempurnakan identitas produk, menerapkan materi pengelolaan dan pemasaran, serta memperkenalkan produk kepada masyarakat dan pemangku kepentingan. Dokumentasi kegiatan merekam pelaksanaan pelatihan, inkubasi, dan gelar produk. Secara keseluruhan, program ini mendukung upaya penguatan pengelolaan usaha, identitas produk, dan kesiapan promosi, sekaligus membuka peluang interaksi dengan pasar dan pemangku kepentingan. Pendampingan lanjutan dan pemantauan berkala diperlukan untuk menjaga kesinambungan upaya tersebut serta menelusuri perkembangan produksi, penjualan, jangkauan pasar, dan kelangsungan usaha.

Kata Kunci: ekonomi lokal, kewirausahaan, pembangunan ekonomi inklusif, pemberdayaan ekonomi perempuan

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INTRODUCTION

Inclusive economic development is not only concerned with economic growth but also with expanding opportunities for communities to participate in productive activities and gain access to resources. Within a community-based approach, communities need to be positioned as active agents who identify local potential, develop business activities, and establish economic networks. Women's groups play a strategic role because their entrepreneurial activities can support household economies while creating opportunities for economic participation at the local level. Setyaningrum et al. (2023) demonstrated that entrepreneurial competencies and the ability to absorb knowledge are associated with the success of women's businesses in Indonesia. Therefore, capacity building is an essential component of the inclusive economic development agenda (Setyaningrum et al., 2023).

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In managing micro and home-based businesses, women continue to face various challenges, including limited managerial capabilities, access to business resources, marketing, market networks, and institutional support. Business sustainability also depends on the ability to manage limited resources effectively. Aripin & Zuhriyah (2025) emphasized the importance of financial literacy and management skills for the sustainability of women's businesses. Meanwhile, Buvinic et al. (2022) demonstrated that the outcomes of women's economic empowerment may develop gradually. Accordingly, training activities need to be accompanied by mentoring and monitoring to ensure that the knowledge acquired can be applied in business practices (Aripin & Zuhriyah, 2025 ; Buvinic et al., 2022).

Community-based women's groups can serve as a link between community members, knowledge, resources, and development stakeholders. Research by Ameridyani et al. (2025) illustrates that women's groups have the potential to facilitate knowledge and resource exchange while encouraging more participatory development initiatives. At the same time, Theresia et al. (2025) mphasized that strengthening entrepreneurial capacity requires a supportive environment that enables business actors to translate their skills into business performance and sustainability. Therefore, community economic empowerment needs to connect knowledge enhancement with management practices, product development, network strengthening, and market access (Ameridyani et al., 2025 ; Theresia et al., 2025)

These needs were also identified among women's business groups in Kenjeran District, Surabaya City. The program addressed in this community service activity is the Family Income Improvement Program for Family Planning Acceptors (Usaha Peningkatan Pendapatan Keluarga Akseptor/UPPKA), hereafter referred to as UPPKA. The ten partner business groups have diverse product potential in processed foods, beverages, and handicrafts. This diversity represents an initial asset for local economic development; however, it does not automatically guarantee business sustainability. Strengthening business management, product innovation, packaging, product identity, and market reach remains necessary. Indriyani et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of practice-based entrepreneurship training, while Rahmi & Hapsari (2021) emphasized the role of participatory approaches in supporting women's business resilience (Indriyani et al., 2022 ; Rahmi & Hapsari, 2021)

Based on these needs, the program was designed as a series of complementary activities comprising UPPKA socialization, seven stages of training, independent entrepreneurship incubation, capacity building for UPPKA facilitators, and product promotion through an exhibition. This design goes beyond the delivery of theoretical materials by providing opportunities for participants to practice their skills, discuss business challenges, improve their products, and interact with relevant stakeholders. Marketing development, including the utilization of digital media, is also relevant for expanding consumer reach; Sari et al. (2023) discussed the role of training and mentoring in optimizing digital marketing for community-based business activities.

METHOD

The community service activities were implemented through a partnership involving the university community service team, the Surabaya City Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, Population Control and Family Planning (DP3APPKB), and ten UPPKA women's business groups in Kenjeran District, Surabaya City. The series of activities culminated in the 2026 Surabaya City UPPKA Product Exhibition. The activities were conducted from July to September 2026 and involved ten business groups. A participatory approach positioned group members as the main actors in identifying needs, participating in learning activities, practicing skills, developing products, and discussing business-related challenges. Training accompanied by mentoring is consistent with approaches to strengthening the capacity of community-based enterprises (Ariadi et al., 2024; Hanifa et al., 2021). Bakhtiar et al. (2022) also demonstrated the relevance of combining business training and mentoring in improving business practices among women-owned microenterprises.

The program implementation was organized into several interconnected components, namely two UPPKA socialization sessions, seven stages of training, independent entrepreneurship incubation, capacity building for UPPKA facilitators, and a product exhibition. The socialization sessions were conducted to introduce the functions and development opportunities of UPPKA while mapping the existing conditions of each group. The mapping process was carried out through observation, dialogue, discussions, and communication with group members and facilitators. These initial findings served as the basis for determining training needs. The seven training stages covered entrepreneurial mindsets, business management, product development and innovation, packaging and branding, marketing, and business development preparation. Learning methods included material presentations, question-and-answer sessions, interactive discussions, demonstrations, case studies, and practical exercises supported by presentation materials, worksheets, product samples, visual aids, and digital devices. Such practical learning activities are consistent with the entrepreneurship skills education approach discussed by Nastia et al. (2022).

The incubation stage provided opportunities for groups to apply the materials through consultations, discussions, business development exercises, problem identification, and mentoring tailored to the characteristics of their products and the specific needs of each group. Participants were encouraged to review product quality, business management, marketing strategies, and decision-making processes. At the same time, capacity building for UPPKA facilitators was directed toward ensuring that the mentoring process could continue more sustainably after the university community service team's intensive involvement decreased. Ariadi et al. (2024) emphasized the value of continued mentoring following training activities, while Afandi et al. (2023) and Khikmah et al. (2023) discussed the potential of digital marketing to expand the market reach of micro and small enterprises. Furthermore, Bakhtiar et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of mentoring in strengthening the adoption of improved business practices among women entrepreneurs.

The results of product development during the training and incubation stages were presented through the product exhibition. This activity provided the ten groups with opportunities to introduce their products to the public and relevant stakeholders, gain public exposure, and establish potential interactions and market networks. The product exhibition also served as a learning platform because participants were required to explain their products' characteristics and competitive advantages directly to visitors. The involvement of local government representatives and other stakeholders helped connect business groups with the local economic support ecosystem. Marketing development needs to go hand in hand with improvements in production and innovation so that products can reach a wider range of consumers (Khikmah et al., 2023). Similarly, Tran et al. (2024) highlighted the role of digital marketing in improving customer engagement, entrepreneurial skills, and business performance in community-based enterprises.

Because the program is still in its development stage and has not yet reached its final evaluation, the evaluation was conducted gradually, participatively, and continuously. Monitoring at this stage was not intended to measure impact through a pre-test and post-test design but rather to examine the implementation process and the initial progress of the groups. The aspects observed included participant involvement, responses to training materials and practical activities, efforts to improve products and packaging, product identity development, the implementation of marketing strategies, and readiness to present products. Information was collected through field observations, discussions, informal interviews, mentoring records, activity documentation, and regular communication among the community service team, UPPKA facilitators, and DP3APPKB. These records were reviewed descriptively and qualitatively to summarize progress, challenges, capacity-building needs, and follow-up actions. This gradual approach is consistent with the findings of Buvinic et al. (2022), who indicated that the impacts of women's economic empowerment may emerge over time.

RESULT AND DISSCUSION

The strengthening of UPPKA in Kenjeran District was implemented through a series of activities comprising socialization, training, incubation, mentoring, and expanded promotional opportunities. The available process evidence consisted of implementation records, information on the ten business groups, and documentation of training, incubation, and product exhibition activities. This evidence indicates that the program provided learning and promotional opportunities for women's business groups. However, since detailed attendance data and pre- and post-intervention measurements were unavailable, the findings in this section are presented as descriptive intermediate outcomes rather than evidence of a causal increase in income or financial independence (Setyaningrum et al., 2023; Knox et al., 2026; Kamran et al., 2025; World Bank Group, 2018).

Implementation records indicate that the activities began with two socialization sessions to introduce the role of UPPKA while identifying the conditions and needs of the groups, followed by seven stages of training. The materials were delivered through discussions, demonstrations, and practical exercises, allowing participants to relate the topics discussed to the products they produced. The training documentation in Figure 1 illustrates one of the learning activities conducted with the Otak-Otak Bandeng Kemul group. In terms of the implementation process, these activities established a foundation for discussing business management, improving product presentation, and considering more systematic marketing strategies. These findings are consistent with Hanifa et al. (2021), who emphasized entrepreneurship training oriented toward women, and Ariadi et al. (2024), who highlighted the importance of post-training mentoring (Knox et al., 2026; Kamran et al., 2025; World Bank Group, 2018).

Product diversity was one of the identifiable outputs from the ten partner groups. The products recorded in the documentation included Kriya Sarung Bantal Perca (Patchwork Cushion Crafts), Pudding Rose Garden, Otak-Otak Bandeng Kemul (Wrapped Milkfish Cakes), Es Sepal Lemon Bunga Telang (Lemon and Butterfly Pea Flower Drink), Dawet Naga Srey, Risol Ubi Ungu (Purple Sweet Potato Risoles), Abon Ikan Asap (Smoked Fish Floss), Avocado Dalgona, Kriya Ocean Kraft (Ocean Kraft Crafts), and Kroket Kentang Ikan (Fish and Potato Croquettes). These products comprised processed foods, beverages, and handicrafts, demonstrating that UPPKA strengthening was not intended to standardize business types but rather to develop the potential of each group. Product identity and innovation have the potential to serve as foundations for value addition, although changes in product quality, sales, and economic value have not yet been measured using quantitative indicators in the activity records (Knox et al., 2026; Kamran et al., 2025; Purnomo et al., 2025; Pramuki & Kusumawati, 2024).

Entrepreneurship incubation and capacity building for facilitators served as a link between learning activities and their practical application in business operations (Buvinic et al., 2022; World Bank Group, 2018). At this stage, groups were provided with opportunities to discuss challenges, seek feedback, improve their products, and consider development strategies suited to their respective conditions. The needs of the groups were not entirely identical because their product types, production capacities, marketing readiness, and managerial challenges varied. Figure 2 documents the incubation activities as part of the practical learning and consultation process. Strengthening facilitators' capacities was also important to ensure that the mentoring process would not stop when the intensive involvement of the community service team ended. Thus, the outcomes of the incubation activities that can be reported at this stage include the availability of consultation and problem-solving processes, while their long-term effects on business performance still require further monitoring (Ariadi et al., 2024; Knox et al., 2026; Kamran et al., 2025; World Bank Group, 2018).

The product exhibition provided an opportunity for the groups to present their development outcomes to the public and relevant stakeholders. This activity had the potential to increase product visibility while creating opportunities for interaction with potential consumers and supporting business networks. Figure 3 documents the first-place award for the best product at the 2026 Surabaya City UPPKA Product Exhibition. Therefore, the product exhibition can be considered an output of promotional and market-learning activities rather than direct evidence

that all groups have achieved increased sales. Continuous marketing development remains necessary, as discussed by Khikmah et al. (2023) and Afandi et al. (2023), particularly in relation to the contribution of digital adoption to business performance and sales growth (Affandi et al., 2024; Pramuki & Kusumawati, 2024; Oktaviah & Sari, 2024).

Up to the product exhibition stage, the outcomes that can be demonstrated include the implementation of the capacity-building activities, documentation of product diversity, the implementation of the incubation process, and the availability of opportunities to introduce products to the public. These achievements cannot yet be interpreted as measurable increases in household income or business independence. The program has not yet reached its final evaluation stage, while baseline and follow-up data on turnover, production volume, market reach, and household income are not available in the reviewed documentation. Therefore, a proportionate conclusion is that the program has provided a foundation and opportunities for strengthening business capabilities; impact assessment requires further monitoring and measurable indicators. This emphasis is consistent with Buvinic et al. (2022), who highlighted that the outcomes of economic empowerment may develop gradually, as also reflected in the evidence synthesis of women's entrepreneurship programs by Knox et al. (2026; Kamran et al., 2025; World Bank Group, 2018).

Overall, the program was designed to extend beyond one-time training activities by connecting socialization, seven stages of training, incubation, facilitator capacity building, and product promotion. This structure provides opportunities for participants to progress from identifying needs to learning, practicing, improving products, and interacting with the market. Theresia et al. (2025) emphasized the relationship between entrepreneurial capacity, the supporting environment, and business performance. In the context of UPPKA, interinstitutional support and the internal capabilities of the groups need to develop simultaneously. Nevertheless, the sustainability of this model needs to be confirmed through consistent follow-up records rather than being assessed solely based on the initial implementation activities (Knox et al., 2026; Kamran et al., 2025; World Bank Group, 2018).

The sustainability of the program depends on regular mentoring and evaluation conducted in collaboration with DP3APPKB of the Surabaya City Government. Subsequent monitoring should record production consistency, product quality and innovation, packaging and brand identity improvements, business management, marketing development, networking, and the groups' ability to solve problems independently. Indicators such as business turnover, production volume, the number or types of markets reached, order frequency, and operational continuity can be used to assess changes over time (Affandi et al., 2024; Purnomo et al., 2025; Pramuki & Kusumawati, 2024). A summary of the implementation stages, activity forms, and intermediate program outcomes is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Program stages, forms of activities, and intermediate outcomes*

Program Stages	Forms of Activities	Intermediate Outcomes
UPPKA Socialization (2 sessions)	Dialogue and needs assessment	Initial understanding established and group needs identified
UPPKA Training (7 stages)	Presentation of materials, discussions, demonstrations, and practical exercises	Basic knowledge of business, management, products, and marketing strengthened
Independent Entrepreneurship Incubation	Consultation, development exercises, and problem-solving	Application of training materials and business challenges discussed collaboratively
Capacity Building for UPPKA Facilitators	Strengthening facilitators' abilities to continue providing guidance	Foundation for ongoing support and mentoring strengthened
Product Exhibition	Promotion, public interaction, and communication with stakeholders	Products gain public exposure and opportunities for market networking
Periodic Participatory Evaluation	Observation, discussions, informal interviews, and documentation	Progress, challenges, and follow-up needs summarized

Figure 1 shows the training activities conducted with one of the partner groups, namely Otak-Otak Bandeng Kemul. This documentation illustrates entrepreneurship learning carried out through interaction, discussion, demonstration, and practical exercises. These activities formed part of the efforts to strengthen participants' understanding of business management and their ability to develop products; this visual documentation supports the description of the implementation process but does not measure changes in participants' skills.



Figure 1. *UPPKA training session*

Figure 2 documents the entrepreneurship incubation stage, which emphasizes the application of training materials through consultation, problem discussion, and business development practices. This stage provides an opportunity for the groups to review their products and consider strategies suited to their business characteristics. The documentation demonstrates that incubation activities were conducted, while the extent to which the outcomes were implemented requires further assessment through mentoring records and development indicators for each group.



Figure 2. *Independent entrepreneurship incubation*

The third photograph shows the product exhibition, which marked the culmination of the various stages of the program development process. The event provided an opportunity for participants to showcase their products to the public and relevant stakeholders, while introducing the diversity and uniqueness of products developed by the UPPKA business groups.



Figure 3. *First-place award for best product at the 2026 Surabaya City UPPKA product exhibition*

During this event, participants showcased their products to the public and relevant stakeholders, thereby gaining exposure and expanding their market networks. The exhibition not only promoted product identity and innovation but also represented the collective achievements of the groups in diversifying their product offerings and increasing their visibility within a broader socio-economic context. During this event, awards were presented to three groups with the best products.

CONCLUSION

The objective of the activity to strengthen entrepreneurial knowledge, business management, product development, and marketing readiness among UPPKA groups has been followed up through a series of learning activities, incubation, mentoring, and product exhibitions. The available evidence shows the existence of ten business groups with various products, as well as the implementation of opportunities to develop and promote their products. Since pre- and post-intervention measurements, individual attendance data, business turnover, and household income data are not available, these achievements are more appropriately stated as process outcomes and a foundation for capacity strengthening, rather than as evidence of measurable income increases. With these limitations, this activity is relevant as an initial effort to empower women's economic participation and develop community-based local economic potential.

The continuation of this program is aimed at ensuring sustainability and achieving business independence among UPPKA groups through continuous mentoring and periodic evaluations conducted collaboratively by the community service team and DP3APPKB of the Surabaya City Government. The subsequent stages should emphasize monitoring production consistency, improving product quality and innovation, strengthening product identity and packaging, developing marketing strategies, expanding networks and market access, and enhancing group capacity in business management and independent decision-making. Regular evaluation is essential to identify the progress and challenges faced by each group so that mentoring can be adjusted to actual needs. In subsequent phases, business development documentation can serve as a measurable evaluation framework, including indicators such as turnover growth, production volume, market reach, business continuity, and household economic outcomes. Continued collaboration among the university, the Surabaya City Government, UPPKA facilitators, and business groups is essential to ensure that empowerment efforts continue beyond program implementation. Such collaboration can develop into a supportive ecosystem for community

enterprises, encourage economic independence, and strengthen UPPKA's contribution to inclusive, community-based economic development.

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