



Community Empowerment through Training on Making Various Flavored Cavendish Banana Chips to Improve the Community Economy

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ABSTRACT

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach to examine community empowerment through training in making Cavendish banana chips with various flavors as an effort to improve the community's economy. This research was conducted in Karangsono Village, Wonorejo District, Pasuruan, on July 20 – August 25, 2024. Data was obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation with the main data sources of the village community, especially cadre women and youth groups. The analysis was carried out in a descriptive-qualitative manner using content analysis techniques to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. The results of the study show that this training has succeeded in improving people's skills in processing bananas into high-selling value products and encouraging awareness of innovation and marketing of local products. It is proven that empowerment based on local potential can improve the economic welfare of the community and encourage the sustainability of village MSMEs.

1. INTRODUCTION

The economy of rural communities in Indonesia is still dominated by the agricultural and plantation sectors, which in practice often face challenges in the form of low crop-added value and limited market access. One of the commodities that has the potential to have high economic value is Cavendish bananas, which are widely cultivated in various regions, including in Karangsono Village, Wonorejo District, Pasuruan.[1] However, the lack of innovation in crop processing causes people to only sell bananas in raw form at a relatively low price. This has an impact on the high economic dependence on middlemen and unstable market price fluctuations so that the income of farmers and the surrounding community becomes less optimal.[2]

Under ideal conditions, the village community would not only depend on raw crops but would also be able to process them into products with a higher selling value. One strategy that can be applied is to diversify products based on local potential, such as processing Cavendish bananas into chips with various flavor variants that are more durable and have wider market opportunities. Strengthening people's skills in product production and marketing can be a strategic step to increase income, expand business opportunities, and create a more independent and sustainable economic ecosystem.[3]

Various previous studies have shown that skills training and product innovation can be an effective solutions in improving the economy of rural communities. Ihromi et al. (2020) in their research on economic empowerment through banana processing found that processing crops into ready-to-sell products can increase people's income by up to 30%. [4]A study from Novitasari (2023) also shows that. Training in making processed Cavendish bananas in several villages has succeeded in increasing people's interest in entrepreneurship, especially among housewives and youth groups.[5] Meanwhile, research by Marak et al. (2025)

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Confirms that the success of community empowerment through training is highly dependent on mentoring factors and sustainable marketing access.[6]

In contrast to previous research, this study not only focuses on technical training in the manufacture of Cavendish banana chips but also integrates marketing approaches and product innovation. Thus, this research presents a more comprehensive approach, which is not only improving people's production skills but also providing an understanding of effective marketing strategies so that products can compete in a wider market. This approach is expected to increase the competitiveness of MSMEs based on local potential and create economic independence for village communities.[7]

The main purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of Cavendish banana chip-making training on the economic improvement of the community in Karangsono Village. Specifically, this study aims to identify challenges and opportunities in processing Cavendish bananas into high-selling value products, evaluate the effectiveness of training in improving people's skills and awareness of product innovation, and formulate sustainable empowerment strategies so that local product-based businesses can continue to develop. This research has high urgency considering the importance of strengthening the economy of rural communities in facing global economic challenges. Reliance on the sale of raw materials without processing processes hinders local economic growth and makes communities more vulnerable to market price volatility.[8] With this training, people not only gain technical skills but also insights into entrepreneurship that can increase their economic independence.

In addition, this research also contributes in the academic and practical realms. From the academic side, this research enriches the study of economic empowerment based on local potential and marketing strategies for village products. From a practical perspective, the results of this research are expected to be a reference for village governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and educational institutions in designing more effective and sustainable empowerment programs.

By considering these various aspects, this research is expected to be the first step in creating a stronger and more independent village economic ecosystem. The sustainability of this program is highly dependent on support from various parties, including the government, academics, and local business actors, so that innovations based on regional potential can continue to be developed and provide long-term benefits for the welfare of the community.

2. LITERATURE STUDY

Community Empowerment

Community empowerment is a process that aims to increase the capacity of individuals and groups to manage available resources to achieve economic and social welfare independently. According to Suharto (2022), community empowerment not only includes providing economic assistance, but also strengthening skills, increasing access to business opportunities, and strengthening community networks so that people can manage their businesses sustainably.[9] This approach is based on the principle that communities have potential that can be developed through training, mentoring, and access to a wider market. In the context of village economics, community empowerment is often carried out through the development of businesses based on local potentials, such as agriculture and processing of agricultural products, which can provide added value to the products produced.[10]

Purwanti et al. (2024) emphasized that the success of community empowerment is highly dependent on the active involvement of the community in every stage of the program, from planning to evaluation of results. [11] Empowerment based on community participation tends to be more effective in creating sustainable economic impact compared to top-down programs. Another study from Napitu[pulu et al shows that a community-based approach to empowerment can increase local economic capacity by up to 40%, especially if supported by access to venture capital and sustainable entrepreneurship training.[12] Therefore, community empowerment through local potential-based training is a very important strategy for creating economic independence, especially for rural communities that have abundant natural resources but lack skills in their management.

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Manufacturing Training

Manufacturing training is one of the main strategies in the community empowerment program which aims to improve technical skills in processing raw materials into products that have a higher selling value. According to Arsyad et al (2024), effective training not only focuses on the technical aspects of production, but also includes product innovation, marketing strategies, and simple financial management so that trainees have holistic skills in developing businesses.[13] Practice-based training is more effective in improving skills compared to theory-based training alone, as it allows participants to be directly involved in every stage of production. This training also serves as a means to introduce simple technologies that can improve production efficiency and quality, so that the products produced are more competitive in the market.[14]

A study conducted by Wilson et al. (2023) shows that training programs equipped with post-training assistance have a higher success rate compared to only one-off training programs.[15] Continuous training allows participants to continuously develop their skills and get solutions to the obstacles that arise in the production process. In addition, training involving local communities and cadres is also more effective in building a strong business ecosystem, as participants can share experiences and support each other in developing their businesses. Therefore, a training approach that combines technical skills with business strategy is a key factor in improving the sustainability of community-based businesses.

Cavendish Banana Chips

Cavendish banana chips are one of the agricultural-based processed products that have a high selling value and a longer shelf life than fresh bananas. Cavendish bananas themselves are a superior variety that is widely cultivated in Indonesia because it has a soft texture, sweet taste, and good nutritional content. However, one of the main challenges in marketing Cavendish bananas is their short shelf life when sold in fresh form, so processing them into processed products such as chips is the right solution to increase their added value. Hidayat & Rahayu (2023) stated that innovations in Cavendish banana processing can open up new business opportunities, especially in the home industry sector and MSMEs based on local products.

In addition to increasing the selling value, the processing of Cavendish bananas into chips can also expand market share, both domestically and at the export level. According to the Central Statistics Agency (2023), the banana-based snack industry sector has grown by 15% in the last five years, showing that the demand for this product continues to increase. Research conducted by Siti & Zuhdia (2024) also confirms that innovation in flavor and packaging variants has an important role in increasing product competitiveness in the modern market. With the right marketing strategy, Cavendish banana chips can not only be sold in traditional markets but can also be marketed through digital and e-commerce platforms, thus opening up opportunities for village communities to expand their product range to a wider level.[16]

Economic Improvement

Economic improvement in the context of community empowerment refers to efforts to improve welfare through the use of local resources that are managed productively and sustainably. According to Kasim (2024), success in improving the community's economy is highly dependent on three main factors, namely product innovation, market access, and policy support that support the growth of small and medium enterprises.[17] In the context of processing agricultural products, innovation in the production process and marketing strategies are key factors in creating wider economic opportunities for the community. Therefore, improving people's skills in processing agricultural products into processed products with a higher selling value is a strategic step in supporting economic growth at the community level.[18]

Junaedi (2023) found that the MSME sector based on processed agricultural products has increased its contribution to the regional economy by up to 25% in recent years.[19] This shows that with the right training, people can significantly increase their income through local product-based businesses. In addition, the sustainability of training and economic empowerment

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programs also requires support from various parties, including the government, academics, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), so that the community can access business capital, production technology, and marketing strategies more effectively. With a comprehensive approach to improving the economy based on local potential, it is hoped that the community can be more financially independent and able to create sustainable businesses in the long term.

3. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach to examine community empowerment through training in making Cavendish banana chips as an effort to improve the community's economy. This approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of the phenomena that occur in the field, including how training contributes to improving the skills and economic well-being of rural communities.[20] The data in this study is sourced from direct observations, interviews with training participants, and village officials, and documentation during the activity. The main data source involves village cadres, youth groups, and small business actors who have the potential to develop processed banana products. This research was carried out in Karangsono Village, Wonorejo District, Pasuruan, in the period from July 20 to August 25, 2024, coinciding with the implementation of the Real Work Lecture (KKN) program.

The data collection method is carried out through participatory observation, where the researcher directly observes the training process and community participation in this program. In addition, semi-structural interviews were conducted to explore the community's experiences and views related to training, business opportunities, and challenges they face in developing processed banana products. Documentation in the form of photos, videos, and field records is also used as supporting data to provide a more comprehensive picture. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive-qualitative techniques with a content analysis approach, which aims to identify patterns, trends, and relationships between training, skill improvement, and their impact on the community's economy. The analysis was carried out by comparing conditions before and after the training to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and formulate a more sustainable empowerment strategy.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Processing of Banana Chips with a Variety of Flavors

Cavendish's banana chip processing training program aims to improve the skills and creativity of millennial mothers in entrepreneurship. This training not only introduces the techniques of making banana chips with various flavors but also provides insight into marketing strategies and business opportunities based on local potential. By utilizing the abundant Cavendish banana plantations, this program is expected to encourage village women to be more independent and innovative in creating superior products.[21]

In addition to improving individual skills, this program also contributes to the development of village MSMEs. The resulting banana chips can be an additional superior product with a high selling value so that it has the potential to improve the economy of the local community. The success of the program is not only measured by the number of participants who attend the training but also by the implementation of the skills they acquire in daily life, especially in building small businesses based on local resources.[22]

Results of the Cavendish Banana Chips Making Training

The training on making Cavendish banana chips which was carried out in Karangsono Village received a positive response from the community, especially the village cadres who were present as the main participants. This activity aims to teach basic techniques in processing Cavendish bananas into products with a higher selling value with various flavor variants. This training includes the selection of quality raw materials, proper processing techniques to produce crispy chips, and attractive packaging strategies to increase market appeal.[23]

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Based on observations during the training, participants showed high enthusiasm in participating in each session, especially in the hands-on practice of making chips. One of the indicators of the success of this activity is the increasing skills of participants in processing bananas into products that are ready to be sold. Some participants even expressed interest in making banana chips as a home-based business opportunity. In addition, the involvement of village officials in supporting this program shows the potential for sustainability if further assistance is provided.[24]

The Impact of Training on the Community Economy

The results of this training show that with the skills acquired, people have a greater opportunity to increase income through local product-based businesses. Before the training, people generally only sold bananas in raw form at low prices and depending on market fluctuations. However, after participating in the training, they gained insight that processed products such as banana chips have a higher and more stable selling value than selling bananas in fresh conditions.[25]

With innovations in flavor variants such as chocolate, cheese, and sweet spicy, the resulting banana chips have a higher appeal to consumers. This opens up opportunities for participants to start marketing their products, either directly in traditional markets or through social media and community networks. However, the challenges still faced are limited initial capital for larger-scale production as well as a lack of effective marketing strategies.[26] Therefore, support in access to capital and marketing assistance are important aspects that need to be considered in the future.

Obstacles in Program Implementation

Although this training had a positive impact, there were several obstacles faced during the implementation. One of the main obstacles is the limited implementation time, so participants do not have enough time to master all production techniques optimally. In addition, the interest of the community that is still varied is also a challenge, where not all participants have the same seriousness in applying the skills acquired.[27] Some cadre mothers admitted that their daily busyness made it difficult for them to start a business immediately.

In addition to individual factors, another obstacle faced was the limitation of production equipment, where most of the participants still relied on simple, less efficient cookware for large quantities of production. In addition, limited market access is also a factor that hinders the development of small businesses that have begun to be pioneered by some participants. Without a strong marketing strategy, the resulting banana chips risk being less well-known to the wider market.[28]

Program Sustainability Strategy

For this program to run sustainably and provide long-term economic benefits, there needs to be follow-up in the form of business assistance and increased market access. One of the strategies that can be done is to form a joint business group consisting of training participants to produce banana chips collectively. This allows them to share resources, such as production equipment and raw materials, and more easily get support from the village government and related agencies.[29]

In addition, digital marketing is a solution that can be applied to expand market reach. The use of social media and e-commerce can help people promote their products without having to rely solely on the local market. [30] Therefore, advanced training that includes digital marketing strategies and business financial management is indispensable so that participants can run their businesses more effectively. With the continued support from various parties, local potential-based businesses such as Cavendish banana chip processing have a great opportunity to develop and have a wider economic impact on the people of Karangsono Village.

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5. CONCLUSION

The Cavendish banana chips processing training program with various flavors has had a positive impact on millennial mothers in Karangsono Village. With this training, the participants gained new skills in processing local agricultural products into products of economic value that have the potential to improve family welfare and develop village MSMEs. In addition, this program also builds the spirit of independence and creativity in entrepreneurship, although there are still challenges in its implementation. The success of this program shows that the utilization of local potential accompanied by appropriate training and assistance can be a strategic step in encouraging sustainable community economic empowerment.

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