

## EMPOWERING UNDERPRIVILEGED FAMILIES THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CRACKERS VILLAGE IN SIRNASARI VILLAGE

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### ABSTRACT

Empowering underprivileged families is a strategic effort to improve community welfare by strengthening the local economy. This study aims to develop the *Kampung Kerupuk* (Crackers Village) as an economic empowerment model for underprivileged families in Sirnasari Village. The methods used in this program include identifying village potential, providing training in production and business management, marketing assistance, and evaluating the economic impact on the community. The results indicate that empowerment through the cracker business has enhanced community production skills, expanded market access through digital marketing, and encouraged the formation of joint business groups. Additionally, support from stakeholders such as the village government, local SMEs, and cooperatives has contributed to the program's sustainability. With a participatory and community-based approach, the development of *Kampung Kerupuk* in Sirnasari Village has proven to be an effective solution for increasing the income of underprivileged families and creating a sustainable economic ecosystem.

**Keywords:** *empowerment, underprivileged families, local economy*

### INTRODUCTION

A prosperous life is the aspiration of every individual in fulfilling their economic needs. In Kampung Pangsor, Sirnasari Village, many women, particularly housewives, engage in home-based businesses as a means of livelihood. As homemakers, they work tirelessly to improve their living standards, striving to strengthen their family's economy by supporting their husbands, most of whom work as daily laborers, while some households lack a head of family altogether.

Women play a dominant role in the economic sector of Kampung Pangsor, Sirnasari Village, particularly by engaging in home-based cracker packaging businesses managed traditionally. Despite the potential of these products to be recognized as valuable culinary commodities, as they are rooted in local wisdom and passed down through generations, these women lack marketing expertise and receive no facilitation from the local village government.

Empowering women in rural areas is a key factor in poverty alleviation, food security enhancement, and sustainable development. According to data from Indonesia's Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) in 2023, approximately 43.3% of Indonesia's population resides in rural areas, where women play a crucial role in both the economic and domestic sectors. A 2023 study by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KPPPA) revealed that rural women often face barriers in accessing economic resources such as capital and entrepreneurship training. Furthermore, a report from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) states that if rural women had equal access to productive inputs as men, home-based industries could increase by 20-30%, potentially reducing global hunger by 100-150 million people.

Moreover, women's empowerment programs have been proven to have a significant impact on household welfare. A 2023 report by UN Women highlights that empowerment programs targeting rural women can increase household income by 20-30% while also improving access to healthcare and education. The urgency of such initiatives is further emphasized by a 2023 World Bank report, which indicates that gender equality in economic access could boost the GDP of developing countries by up to 7% over the next decade. In the Indonesian context, investing in rural women's empowerment significantly contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 1 (poverty eradication) and Goal 5 (gender equality).

Similarly, the women of Kampung Pangsor, Sirnasari Village, serve as the backbone of their families, living in modest conditions that qualify them as recipients of social assistance under the Ministry of Social Affairs' Family Hope Program (PKH). Despite their productivity, their businesses remain untouched by technological advancements. These women, part of the PKH beneficiary group in RW 03, work daily packaging large sacks of crackers into smaller plastic packs sourced from local factories, earning meager wages of only IDR 15,000-25,000 per day (Ministry of Social Affairs, 2024).

This local potential could be enhanced by transforming their business model—starting from purchasing bulk crackers directly from the factory, followed by processing, packaging, obtaining production licenses, and expanding market reach. By doing so, these crackers could evolve from being mere meal accompaniments into widely sought-after products.

Thus, there is a pressing need to provide mentorship and strategic entrepreneurial training for the women of Kampung Pangsor, guiding them towards better product processing, packaging, and digital marketing. Adapting to modern technological advancements is crucial to ensuring their local products gain wider accessibility. A 2020 survey by BPS found that four out of five business owners who utilized the internet and digital marketing experienced a positive impact on sales. Therefore, it is essential to maximize women's economic potential, particularly in the SME sector, by leveraging digital tools that enhance their business competence and enable them to reap the benefits of digitalization.

This background forms the foundation for our community service initiative, which focuses on assisting home industry entrepreneurs who lack the skills to manage, package, and market their products digitally. Our team aims to provide training that will transform low-value crackers into high-value products, ultimately positioning Kampung Pangsor as the future "Cracker Village" icon. Through this mentoring program, underprivileged women in Kampung Pangsor, Sirnasari Village, are expected to achieve economic advancement and expand their local products through broader, technology-driven marketing strategies. To measure the impact, it is important to consider specific economic indicators, such as increased sales figures resulting from digital marketing efforts.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE METHOD

The strategy implemented in this community service program adopts the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method. Our team acts as facilitators for the community, as this method fundamentally encourages societal change through the emergence of individuals with strong leadership and expertise in their respective fields. The expectation is that, even after the facilitators leave, the agreed-upon and planned program will continue until meaningful change occurs (Afandi et al., 2017).

This community service initiative takes place in Kampung Pangsor, RW 03, Sirnasari Village, Samarang District, Garut Regency, West Java. The primary focus is on recipients of the Family Hope Program (PKH), who are predominantly women in this area. Based on an interview with the village official, Mr. Azmi, Sirnasari Village has significant economic potential, particularly as a cracker-producing hub. The village is known for utilizing local agricultural resources, such as tapioca flour, to support its cracker industry, which has become a prominent local product.

The people of Sirnasari Village operate traditional cracker-processing businesses. The production process is generally carried out by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which serve as the driving force of the local economy. Beyond production, the village also embraces crackers as a symbol of local identity, with several home industries striving to enhance product quality for a broader market reach, including online marketing. This indicates that the village holds vast potential to improve community welfare through innovative snack product development.

The community service activities are designed to empower women as PKH beneficiaries by engaging them in discussions about their business challenges, identifying obstacles, and formulating practical solutions. Through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), issues are analyzed, and strategic plans are developed to address the problems systematically.

The following activities are implemented to assist the target beneficiaries through this community service program:

1. Initial Transect Mapping; Conducting strategic mapping and observations to identify community potentials, existing challenges, and untapped opportunities.
2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD); Facilitating problem analysis to guide participants in identifying solutions and planning actionable steps.
3. Skill Development & Training; Providing training on cracker processing, digital marketing strategies, and attractive product presentation & Assisting participants in creating online stores on their preferred marketplaces, with expert guidance to enhance their digital marketing capabilities.
4. Coordination with Local Government; Ensuring that trained groups receive continuous support from the sub-district and village authorities for further business development.

This approach is expected to empower underprivileged women in Kampung Pangsor by equipping them with the necessary skills to manage, package, and market their cracker products digitally, ultimately fostering economic independence and sustainability.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Community Service Location

Kampung Pangsor, located in Sirnasari Village, Garut Regency, is renowned as a local cracker production hub. This village hosts a cracker factory, which serves as one of the primary economic drivers for the local community. The factory not only produces crackers but also provides employment opportunities, particularly for housewives, who play a significant role in the workforce.

Most women in Kampung Pangsor work as cracker packers, making this job a major source of family income. Their daily routine involves meticulous and efficient packaging of crackers, which are then distributed to various regions, both locally and beyond. The cracker factory in Kampung Pangsor symbolizes local economic progress. Its presence not only creates job opportunities but also

serves as a platform for community empowerment. In addition to the women involved directly in the packaging process, the sector also generates business opportunities in areas such as distribution and raw material processing.

Surrounded by a serene and lush rural environment, Kampung Pangsor offers a comfortable workspace, despite the high production activities. The strong spirit of cooperation and mutual assistance (gotong royong) further enhances the village's working ecosystem. Given its substantial potential in the cracker industry, Kampung Pangsor has great opportunities for growth through; Product innovation, Skill training for the community, and Technology-driven marketing expansion. This village is not only recognized as a cracker production center but also stands as a model for sustainable community empowerment through collaborative economic ventures.

### **Preparation of the Community Service Implementation Plan**

The preparation of the Community Service Program (PKM) implementation plan is carried out systematically through several key stages to ensure the program's effectiveness and success. The following stages have been designed:

1. Observation (Early October 2024). The initial phase of the PKM planning begins with an observation activity at the target location, namely Kampung Pangsor, Sirnasari Village, Garut Regency. The observation aims to identify community needs, existing potential, and issues that need to be addressed. The service team directly visits the field to conduct interviews with community leaders, women beneficiaries of the Family Hope Program (PKH), and managers of the local cracker factory. The data collected from this observation serves as the foundation for designing a relevant and community-based program.
2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Pre-Event Preparation (October 21, 2024). After the observation, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is conducted with relevant stakeholders, including the implementation team, village officials, and community representatives. This activity aims to validate the observation findings, develop a structured work program, and coordinate role distribution. The FGD also discusses technical and logistical requirements for PKM implementation, such as activity schedules, training materials, and necessary tools. The outcomes of the FGD are compiled into an operational guideline for the program's execution.
3. PKM Implementation (November 13, 2024). The Community Service Program is conducted by involving PKH beneficiary women in Kampung Pangsor. The activities include skills training such as cracker processing, joint product management, digital marketing, and business and financial management. The implementation takes place over a full day using a participatory approach, where participants are actively engaged in every session. The program is designed to provide practical knowledge that can be directly applied by the community.
4. PKM Evaluation (November 27, 2024). The evaluation is conducted two weeks after the program implementation to assess its success and impact on the community. This evaluation measures participants' comprehension levels, the application of acquired skills, and collects community feedback. The evaluation process involves interviews, group discussions, and simple surveys. The results are used to compile a final report and provide recommendations for improving future community service programs.

By following these well-planned stages, the PKM activities are expected to run smoothly, provide tangible benefits to the community, and support economic empowerment and quality of life improvement for the people of Kampung Pangsor in a sustainable manner.

The initial stage of planning the Community Service Program (PKM) begins with conducting an observation at the target location—Kampung Pangsor, Sirnasari Village, Garut Regency. This observation aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the social, economic, and community needs. The observation is carried out using a participatory approach, in which the service team directly interacts with the community. The team consists of lecturers and students involved in this service program. They visit residents' homes, public facilities, and the cracker factory, which serves as one of the central economic activities in Kampung Pangsor.

The findings from this observation serve as the foundation for designing a community-based PKM program, including training in cracker production, digital technology introduction, and collaborative product management. With this approach, the service program is expected to provide real and sustainable solutions for the Kampung Pangsor community.



Figure 1. Observation Agenda with Community Leaders of RW 03, Kampung Pangsor, Sirnasari

After conducting observations in Kampung Pangsor, Desa Sirnasari, the next activity was the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and pre-event preparation, which took place on October 21, 2024. This FGD served as a crucial stage in formulating an action plan for the Community Service Program (PKM) to ensure its accuracy and alignment with real community needs.

All inputs and decisions from the FGD were compiled into an operational guideline document for PKM implementation. This guideline serves as a reference for the implementation team to properly prepare the event and ensure that all activity elements proceed as planned. The FGD also acted as a strategic moment to foster collaboration between the implementation team and the community while enhancing both technical and mental readiness before executing the PKM. With well-coordinated planning, the PKM activities are expected to run smoothly and achieve the desired goals.





Figure 2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the Sirnasari Village Officials

Pada tanggal 13 November 2024, kegiatan Program Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat (PKM) dilaksanakan di Kampung Pangsor, Desa Sirnasari, Kabupaten Garut. Program ini melibatkan ibu-ibu penerima manfaat Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH) di kampung tersebut, dengan tujuan untuk meningkatkan keterampilan dan pengetahuan mereka dalam berbagai aspek yang dapat mendukung ekonomi keluarga.

Pelaksanaan PKM ini menggunakan pendekatan partisipatif, di mana peserta tidak hanya menjadi pendengar pasif, tetapi aktif terlibat dalam setiap sesi pelatihan. Setiap peserta diberikan kesempatan untuk bertanya, berdiskusi, dan langsung mempraktikkan materi yang disampaikan. Hal ini bertujuan agar pengetahuan yang diperoleh dapat dipahami dengan baik dan langsung diterapkan di kehidupan sehari-hari mereka. Dengan adanya program ini, diharapkan ibu-ibu penerima manfaat PKH di Kampung Pangsor dapat memperoleh keterampilan baru yang dapat meningkatkan pendapatan keluarga mereka, khususnya melalui peningkatan kualitas dan pemasaran produk kerupuk, serta pengelolaan usaha yang lebih efisien dan efektif. Program ini juga diharapkan dapat memberikan dampak jangka panjang bagi pemberdayaan ekonomi masyarakat setempat.



Gambar 3. Pelaksanaan Kegiatan Pengabdian Bersama Penerima Manfaat Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH)

On November 27, 2024, an evaluation of the Community Service Program (PKM) was conducted, two weeks after the main activity took place on November 13, 2024. This evaluation aimed to assess the extent to which the PKM program had benefited the community, particularly the women beneficiaries of the Family Hope Program (PKH) in Kampung Pangsor, Sirnasari Village, Garut Regency. The evaluation process also aimed to measure the program's success and its impact on improving participants' skills and well-being.

Based on the evaluation results, which were gathered through interviews, group discussions, and surveys, several key findings emerged; a) Most participants reported that they had started applying new, more efficient techniques in kerupuk processing, resulting in higher-quality products. b) Some women successfully utilized social media to market their kerupuk products, although some still required further guidance in digital marketing. c) In terms of business management, most participants stated that they had started recording their income and expenses more systematically. However, some still faced challenges in financial planning and production cost control.

Regarding challenges, many participants struggled to access the necessary technological tools for digital marketing, such as adequate smartphones and stable internet connections. Based on the evaluation results, several recommendations for future community service programs include; a) Improving Access to Technology – There is a need for better technological support, such as providing smartphones or additional training on how to use existing devices effectively. b) Ongoing Mentorship – Future PKM programs should include follow-up mentorship sessions to help participants optimize their digital marketing and business management strategies. c) More Intensive Financial Education – Financial management training should be enhanced by providing practical tools, such as simple financial recording applications that mothers can use to track their expenses and income.

Overall, the PKM evaluation on November 27, 2024, demonstrated that the program had a positive impact on PKH beneficiary women in Kampung Pangsor, Sirnasari Village. Although challenges remained in areas such as digital marketing and financial management, participants showed a strong willingness to continue learning and developing the skills they had acquired. This evaluation provided clear insights into areas that need improvement and the necessary steps to ensure more effective community service programs in the future.

The implementation of the Community Service Program (PKM) in Kampung Pangsor, Sirnasari Village, Garut Regency, on November 13, 2024, had a positive impact on the women beneficiaries of the Family Hope Program (PKH). Most participants successfully mastered new, more efficient kerupuk processing techniques, enabling them to produce higher-quality kerupuk ready for the market. The hands-on practice during training allowed them to apply their newly acquired knowledge, which is expected to increase their income. Some participants had also started using social media to market their kerupuk products. Although challenges remained in using technological tools, participants showed enthusiasm for learning and began to understand the importance of online marketing in expanding their market reach.

PKH mothers who participated in business and financial management training reported positive changes in how they managed their business finances. They started recording their income and expenses more systematically and planning their budget more efficiently. Participants also showed progress in collaboratively managing their products, supporting each other in production and marketing. This collaborative approach strengthened social bonds among the women and

enhanced their capacity to face economic challenges. Despite the program's success, several challenges were identified, including:

1. Limited Access to Technology – Some participants struggled to access the necessary technological tools for digital marketing, such as adequate smartphones and stable internet connections.
2. Difficulties in Financial Management – Some participants found it challenging to plan and manage their business finances more comprehensively, particularly in cost control and long-term profit planning.

To ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of this program, several follow-up action plans have been outlined as follows:

- a) Providing Technological Support – To address the issue of limited access to technology, the follow-up plan includes providing additional technological devices, such as smartphones for digital marketing, and conducting further training on using digital applications that support small businesses.
- b) Continued Mentorship in Digital Marketing – Although participants have begun marketing their products online, they still need further guidance to optimize their digital marketing strategies. Therefore, the follow-up plan includes periodic mentorship sessions to help participants manage their online business accounts and gain a deeper understanding of effective digital marketing.
- c) More Intensive Financial Training – Given the ongoing difficulties in financial management, the follow-up plan includes additional training on financial management and more in-depth budget planning. This program will be tailored to the practical needs of PKH mothers by providing tools such as simple financial recording applications to help them monitor their expenses and income.
- d) Strengthening Joint Business Groups – To support more effective joint product management, structured business groups will be formed. These groups will receive further training on task distribution, joint production planning, and more efficient distribution management. Mentorship for these business groups is expected to strengthen social bonds and expand the market for kerupuk products.
- e) Regular Monitoring and Evaluation – Additionally, periodic monitoring and evaluation will be conducted to track progress, identify challenges, and assess the effectiveness of the follow-up actions. These evaluations will serve as a foundation for improving and refining future programs.

With this follow-up plan, it is hoped that PKH beneficiary women in Kampung Pangsor can continue developing their skills and improving their family's economic well-being. This program is expected to have a long-term impact on the empowerment of the local community.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussions from the community service activities in Kampung Pangsor, RW 03, Sirnasari Village, Samarang District, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Kerupuk Processing Training – Participants successfully improved their technical skills, hygiene awareness, and product competitiveness through flavor innovations and standardized production. This training introduced concepts of cleanliness, quality, and product innovation to participants who were previously unfamiliar with such practices.



2. Introduction to Digital Technology – Participants began to understand the importance of digital marketing, utilizing e-commerce platforms, and developing attractive packaging designs. In the short term, this led to increased market reach, while in the long term, participants became more independent in leveraging technology to sustain their businesses.
3. Joint Product Management – The establishment of a local cooperative and the registration of small businesses (UMKM) enhanced efficiency, competitiveness, and market access for kerupuk products. This collaborative management model had a significant impact on increasing members' incomes and strengthening community solidarity.
4. Business and Financial Management Training – This training helped participants understand and apply basic business management and financial recording. They began to develop business plans and recognize the importance of long-term business sustainability.

Although various achievements have been made, some challenges remain, such as differences in participants' levels of understanding, limited access to tools and technology, and difficulties in cooperative management.

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