

Empowerment of Youth with Disabilities through Digital Literacy and Inclusive Food Product-Based Entrepreneurship Training in Palembang City

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ABSTRACT

This community service activity aims to increase the capacity of youth with disabilities through digital literacy and entrepreneurship training based on inclusive food products in Palembang City. The implementation method is carried out with a participatory approach through digital literacy seminars, entrepreneurship training, gluten-free food processing training, and product branding assistance. The participants of the activity amounted to 50 young people with disabilities aged 16-30 years. The implementation of the activity lasted for two months at the Budi Karsa Physical Disability Social Rehabilitation Center in Palembang. The results of the activity showed an increase in participants' understanding of digital marketing, healthy food product packaging, and independent entrepreneurial motivation. This program also encourages an increase in social and economic participation of people with disabilities in an inclusive manner.

INTRODUCTION

Persons with disabilities are part of citizens who have equal rights in obtaining access to education, employment, health, and social life. In the context of national development, the existence of persons with disabilities is no longer seen as an object of mercy, but as a subject of development who has the right to actively participate in various sectors of life. The Government of Indonesia has passed Law Number 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities as a form of commitment to respect, protection, and fulfillment of the rights of persons with disabilities. The law is an important foundation in creating an inclusive and discrimination-free society. However, the implementation of inclusive policies in Indonesia still faces various obstacles. People with disabilities still experience obstacles in obtaining access to education, employment, and proper public services. Many people with disabilities have not received the same opportunities due to social stigma and limited accessibility in the community (Suharto, 2019).

The problems faced by people with disabilities are not only related to physical limitations, but are also influenced by social, economic, and cultural factors. This condition causes some people with disabilities to experience marginalization and difficulty developing their potential optimally. In everyday life, discrimination often appears in the form of restrictions on employment opportunities, low access to education, and lack of social environmental support. Youth groups with disabilities are one of the vulnerable groups that need special attention in social development. Youth have great potential as agents of social change, but limited access to education and skills often makes it difficult for youth with disabilities to compete in the workforce. Therefore, an empowerment program is needed that is able to increase their capacity and independence.

Community empowerment is the process of improving the ability of individuals and groups to be able to be independent and participate in development. According to Chambers (1995), empowerment aims to create a society that has the ability to make life choices and manage resources independently. In the context of disability, empowerment is an important approach to improve the quality of life and social participation of people with disabilities.

One of the forms of empowerment that is relevant today is strengthening digital literacy. Digital literacy is an important need in the era of information technology because almost all social and economic activities have been digital-based. Digital literacy is not only related to the ability to use technological devices, but also the ability to understand, evaluate, and utilize information effectively (Gilster, 1997).

The development of digital technology provides new opportunities for people with disabilities to increase productivity and economic independence. Social media and digital platforms can be used as a means of business promotion, communication, and business network development. The use of digital technology is an alternative solution in reducing mobility limitations that are often experienced by people with disabilities. However, the level of digital literacy of Indonesian people is still relatively low, especially in vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities. Low access to technology education

causes some people with disabilities to be able to utilize digital media optimally. This condition has an impact on limited economic opportunities and their low competitiveness in the digital era. In addition to digital literacy, entrepreneurship is also an important factor in increasing the independence of people with disabilities. Entrepreneurship is able to open up opportunities for independent work and increase people's economic income. According to Drucker (1985), entrepreneurship is the ability to create innovation and take advantage of opportunities to generate new economic value.

Entrepreneurship development for people with disabilities requires an inclusive and community-based approach. Practical skills training is one of the effective strategies to improve the business ability of people with disabilities. Through this training, participants can gain skills in production, packaging, and product marketing independently. In recent years, healthy food products have become one of the business sectors that have considerable market opportunities. Public awareness of a healthy lifestyle has caused the demand for healthy food to increase. Inclusive food products such as gluten-free food and nutrition-based healthy foods are potential business alternatives to be developed by people with disabilities.

Gluten-free food is a food product that does not contain gluten so that it is safe to be consumed by individuals with certain health conditions such as autism and autoimmune. In addition to having health value, these products also have high economic value because the healthy food market continues to grow in Indonesia. Healthy food processing training not only provides production skills, but also increases the creativity and innovation of participants. People with disabilities can use these skills as a source of independent income. In addition, training on food products can also strengthen participants' social participation in community economic activities.

Palembang City is one of the regions that has an active community in empowering people with disabilities. The Indonesian Disabled Women's Association (HWDI) Palembang is an organization that focuses on strengthening the rights of women and youth with disabilities. The organization is active in social mentoring, skills training, and inclusive policy advocacy.

Based on the results of initial observations, some members of the disability community in Palembang already have basic skills in the production of handicrafts and home food. However, these skills have not been supported by good digital marketing and product packaging skills. As a result, the products produced have not been able to reach a wider market. In addition, there are still families who limit the social activities of children with disabilities due to stigma and economic limitations. This condition causes many youth with disabilities to lose the opportunity to develop and obtain a proper skills education. Therefore, empowerment-based interventions are very important.

This community service program is designed as a form of contribution of universities in supporting inclusive development. Universities have a strategic role in empowering the community through education, research, and community service. Service activities can be a means of transferring knowledge and technology to the community directly.

This service activity is an effort to increase the capacity of youth with disabilities. This activity also aims to create a sustainable empowerment program based on community needs. The collaborative approach is considered effective in strengthening community participation in the social development process (Asteriniah & Hestiriniah, 2023). The empowerment program is carried out through digital literacy seminars, entrepreneurship training, healthy food processing training, and product branding assistance. The activity is designed so that participants not only gain theoretical knowledge, but also practical skills that can be applied directly in daily life.

The digital literacy seminar provides participants with an understanding of the productive and safe use of social media. Participants were introduced to the concept of digital branding, online marketing, and the use of information technology for business development. This material is important because digital media has become the main means of product marketing in the modern era.

Entrepreneurship training is carried out to increase the motivation and mentality of participants' businesses. In this training, participants were given an understanding of small business management, marketing strategies, and the importance of product innovation. A motivational approach is used so that participants have confidence in building an independent business. Meanwhile, inclusive food product training is carried out through the direct practice of making healthy foods such as gluten-free pempek, healthy sausages, and prebiotic tomato sauce. The product was chosen because it has economic value as well as health benefits for the community.

This service activity also provides education about the importance of product hygiene and interesting packaging techniques. Product packaging is an important aspect in increasing the competitiveness of micro businesses. A well-packaged product will be easier to market and have a higher selling value. In addition to the economic aspect, this activity also has a significant social impact. Participants' involvement in group activities helps to increase the confidence and social communication skills of people with disabilities. This program is a positive social interaction space for participants to learn from each other and share experiences.

The participatory approach used in this activity provides an opportunity for participants to be actively involved in each stage of the program. According to Freire (1970), community participation is an important element in the empowerment process because it is able to increase people's critical awareness of the social conditions they face. Social inclusion-based community service activities are also in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially goal 4 on quality education, goal 8 on decent work and economic growth, and goal 10 on reducing social inequality.

Through this program, it is hoped that youth with disabilities will be created who are independent, creative, and able to compete in the digital era. Increasing the capacity of human resources is an important factor in creating an inclusive society with social justice. This empowerment program is also expected to be able to become a model for community development based on the disability community in other regions. The success of the program can be an example of

good practice in strengthening the social and economic capacity of vulnerable groups through educational and collaborative approaches.

Thus, this community service activity is not only oriented towards improving technical skills, but also aims to build social awareness about the importance of inclusivity in community development. Persons with disabilities need to be seen as individuals who have the potential and ability to develop if given equal access and opportunities.

Based on this description, this community service is focused on empowering youth with disabilities through digital literacy and entrepreneurship training based on inclusive food products in Palembang City. This program is expected to be able to increase economic independence, social skills, and active participation of people with disabilities in sustainable community development.

IMPLEMENTATION AND METHODS

Location and Time of Implementation

Community service activities were carried out at the Budi Karsa Social Rehabilitation Center for Persons with Physical Disabilities Palembang, South Sumatra. The program lasted for two months with the stages of field survey, problem identification, implementation coordination, training, and evaluation of activities.

Activity Participants

The participants of the activity amounted to 50 youth with disabilities with an age range of 16-30 years. Participants came from various educational backgrounds and the fostered community of HWDI Palembang.

Implementation Method

The method of implementing service uses a participatory and educational approach through the following stages:

1. Digital Literacy Seminar
The material includes the use of digital media, online marketing, product branding, and education on the positive use of social media.
2. Entrepreneurship Training
Participants were given motivation to do independent business and strengthen community-based entrepreneurial skills.
3. Inclusive Food Products Training
The activity is in the form of the practice of making gluten-free frozen food such as pempek and sausages, as well as making prebiotic tomato sauce.
4. Mentoring and Evaluation
Participants were accompanied in product packaging, marketing strategies, and evaluation of training results.

Program Implementation Framework

- Identify participant needs
- Preparation of training materials
- Implementation of seminars and training
- Product processing practices
- Digital marketing assistance

- Evaluation of the results of the activity

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Digital Literacy Seminar

The digital literacy seminar was carried out to increase participants' understanding of the productive use of digital technology. The material provided includes the use of social media as a means of business promotion, product branding, and the introduction of digital marketing. Participants showed high enthusiasm during the activity. Most of the participants previously only used social media for entertainment, but after the training they began to understand the benefits of digital marketing for business development.

Table 1. Digital Literacy Materials

Material	Purpose
Product Branding	Increase the appeal of the product
Social Media	A means of business promotion
Digital Marketing	Expanding the market
Digital Education	Positive internet usage

Youth Entrepreneurship Training for Disabilities

Entrepreneurship training for youth with disabilities is one of the main programs in this community service activity. The program is designed to improve participants' ability to understand the concept of independent business while building economic motivation based on practical skills. This activity is important because most of the participants have never received structured entrepreneurship training before. The implementation of the training is carried out through a participatory approach by actively involving participants in each activity session. This approach was chosen so that participants not only receive material theoretically, but also gain direct experience in the business development process. The participatory method has been proven to be able to increase participant involvement in training activities.

In the initial stage of the activity, the service team identified the needs of participants related to business capabilities and the use of digital technology. The identification results showed that most of the participants had an interest in opening a small business, but experienced limited knowledge about marketing, product packaging, and business management. This condition shows that youth with disabilities actually have considerable economic potential if provided with appropriate assistance. So far, the main obstacles they face are not only physical limitations, but also lack of access to training and low social environmental support for the development of independent businesses.

Entrepreneurship training begins with motivation regarding the importance of economic independence for people with disabilities. The resource person explained that physical limitations are not an obstacle to developing and producing productive works. Motivational material is provided to build participants' confidence to be more optimistic in running a business. Participants looked enthusiastic about participating in the motivation session because the material was delivered with a communicative and inspirational approach. Many participants who previously felt less confident began to show the courage to

discuss and express their opinions about the business idea they wanted to develop.

In this training, participants were introduced to basic concepts of entrepreneurship such as creativity, innovation, courage to take opportunities, and the ability to read market needs. The resource person also explained that entrepreneurship is not only about making profits, but also building business independence and sustainability. The next material discusses business opportunities based on inclusive food products. Inclusive food products are chosen because they have a fairly high market potential and can be produced with relatively affordable capital. In addition, healthy food products are currently increasingly in demand by the public as awareness of a healthy lifestyle increases. Participants were given an understanding of the types of healthy foods that have economic opportunities, such as gluten-free frozen food, healthy sausages, and prebiotic ketchup. These products are considered to be in accordance with the needs of the modern market and have added value from the health aspect.

In the practical session, participants were taught how to process foodstuffs into products that are suitable for sale. The training team provided a direct demonstration of raw material processing techniques, composition mixing, and product packaging processes. Participants were seen actively participating in every stage of the practice carried out. Practical activities are one of the sessions that are most interested in participants because they can learn directly about the healthy food production process. Some participants admitted that it was the first time they had participated in the training on processing gluten-free food products.

In addition to production techniques, participants were also given an understanding of the importance of maintaining the cleanliness and hygiene of food products. This material is very important because the quality of food products is greatly influenced by a clean and safe processing process for consumers. Entrepreneurship training also discusses product marketing strategies in the digital era. Participants were introduced to the use of social media as a means of business promotion. The resource person explained how to create simple promotional content using mobile phones and social media applications. Most of the participants previously only used social media for daily entertainment and communication. After participating in the training, participants began to understand that social media can be used to expand the market and increase product sales.

Digital marketing materials are provided simply so that they are easy for participants to understand. The service team explained the importance of product photos, packaging design, and the use of attractive captions in digital promotion. The approach helps participants understand modern marketing concepts in a practical way. In the discussion session, several participants expressed interest in marketing products through digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook. This shows a change in the mindset of participants towards the use of digital technology as an economic opportunity. This training also provides education about product branding. Participants were

taught the importance of building product identity through business names, simple logos, and attractive packaging designs. Branding is considered important to increase the competitiveness of products in the market. Participants looked creative in determining product packaging concepts that suit target consumers. Several groups of participants tried to create a simple label design using a digital application introduced by the trainer team.

In addition to the technical aspects of the business, this activity also provides an entrepreneurial mentality to the participants. People with disabilities often face social stigma that causes low confidence in entrepreneurship. Therefore, mental strengthening is an important part of the empowerment process. Through the training activities, participants began to show a more positive change in attitudes towards their abilities. Many participants who were previously passive became more active in discussing and cooperating with other participants during the activity.

Entrepreneurship training also strengthens participants' social communication skills. Group activities conducted during the training help participants learn to work together, share tasks, and build better social interactions. This social interaction is one of the positive impacts of the activity because some of the previous participants tended to be closed and lacked confidence in the social environment. Through this training, participants gain a safe and inclusive space to develop their abilities.

This service program also shows the importance of collaboration between universities and the disability community in supporting community empowerment. The presence of academics and practitioners provides new experiences for participants in understanding the business world more broadly. HWDI as an activity partner has an important role in helping the participant mentoring process. The organization helps bridge communication between the implementation team and the participants so that activities can run more effectively and inclusively.

During the implementation of the activity, there were several obstacles faced, especially related to the need for companions for some participants with disabilities. Some participants needed help with mobility and communication during the activity. However, these obstacles can be overcome through cooperation between the committee, companions, and other participants. The inclusive atmosphere of the activity helps to create a comfortable learning environment for all participants.

The results of the evaluation of the activity showed that participants experienced an increase in understanding of the concept of entrepreneurship and digital marketing. Most of the participants expressed interest in developing a healthy food business after participating in the training. In addition, participants also experienced an increase in practical skills in food product processing and product packaging. This ability is an important capital in supporting the economic independence of youth with disabilities. This activity not only provides economic benefits, but also has an impact on increasing the motivation and confidence of participants. People with disabilities are beginning to realize that they have potential that can be developed productively.

From the perspective of community empowerment, this program shows that a training and mentoring-based approach is able to increase the social and economic capacity of vulnerable groups. Community service activities are an effective means of encouraging the active participation of persons with disabilities in social development. Entrepreneurship training for youth with disabilities is also in line with the concept of inclusive development that places the entire community as an important part of the development process. Economic empowerment is a strategic step to reduce social dependence and improve the welfare of people with disabilities.

Figure 1.1 Digitalization Seminar with Youth with Disabilities



Inclusive Food Products Training

Training on inclusive food products is carried out through the practice of making gluten-free foods such as pempek and healthy sausages. Participants were also given education about healthy food for autoimmune and autistic people. This activity provides new skills for participants in processing food products that have economic value. In addition, participants were taught hygienic and attractive product packaging techniques so that they could be marketed more widely.

Table 2. Types of Product Training

Product Type	Benefits
Pempek Gluten Free	Healthy food alternatives
Healthy Sausages	Inclusive food products
Prebiotic Tomato Sauce	Supports digestive health

The Impact of the Program on Disability Empowerment

Community service activities have a positive impact on increasing the capacity of participants, especially in social and economic aspects. Youth with disabilities become more active, confident, and have additional skills in the field of entrepreneurship. In addition, this program strengthens collaboration between universities and the disability community in supporting inclusive development. The community participation-based approach has been proven to be able to increase the involvement of participants in every stage of the activity. This empowerment model can be an alternative to social inclusion-based community development programs in other regions.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Community service programs through digital literacy and entrepreneurship training based on inclusive food products have succeeded in improving the understanding and skills of youth with disabilities in Palembang City. This activity has a positive impact on digital marketing capabilities, healthy food product processing, and strengthening independent business motivation. The implementation of the program also shows that a participatory and collaborative approach is able to increase the social involvement of persons with disabilities in productive activities. The recommendations are as follows:

1. Similar programs need to be implemented on an ongoing basis with more intensive business assistance.
2. Local governments need to expand support for inclusive entrepreneurship training for people with disabilities.
3. Universities are expected to continue to play an active role in strengthening digital literacy and economic empowerment of people with disabilities.

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