

Empowerment of Young Entrepreneurs Based on Majelis Ta'lim in Neroktog Village Through Design, Screen Printing, and Digital Marketing Training

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Abstract

Purpose: This community service program aims to empower young people by promoting entrepreneurship and enhancing their skills, particularly in response to high unemployment and the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal is to produce young entrepreneurs who can drive local economic growth.

Method: The program includes seminars, workshops, and mentorship in digital marketing, product branding, and entrepreneurial management. It follows a structured process from planning to evaluation, with pre- and post-assessments to measure participant progress.

Practical Applications: The program equips participants with skills to leverage digital platforms for business growth, helping them address unemployment and social issues by becoming self-reliant entrepreneurs.

Conclusion: The program shows that building entrepreneurial and digital marketing skills boosts young people's productivity and economic potential, contributing to local development and addressing social challenges.



Introduction

The demographic bonus presents both challenges and opportunities for Indonesia in

the coming years, considering that the number of the productive population will peak in 2030 with a significant amount, it is crucial to optimize this demographic bonus to contribute to the nation's progress, especially in developing the potential of the younger generation (Falikhah, 2017; Setyoningrum & Astuti, 2020). Data from BPS shows that in 2020, the workforce or the productive population reached 140 million people out of Indonesia's total population of 270.20 million (Azizah & Dzakkiyah, 2021; Khurniawan et al., 2019).

(Noor, 2015) mentions population development policies and the demographic bonus, where the basic assumption for understanding the demographic bonus is that the composition of the productive age population (15-64 years) is greater than that of the non-productive population (under 15 and over 65) within a certain timeframe. Furthermore, it emphasizes the need for policymakers to recognize the importance of implementing policies that can support the utilization of the demographic bonus so that the potentials of the productive-age population can be optimized (Fauzi, 2019). The hope is for a growing awareness of the strategic role of the productive-age population, especially the youth, as the "driving force" of the nation.

The younger generation possesses creativity, adaptability, and is more technologically literate; however, they also face various issues, including unemployment, free association, and even the potential for criminal activities (Jamil, 2023). Therefore, various efforts need to be made to maximize their potential.

Additionally, the younger generation is relatively tech-savvy and skilled in digital communication and information (Wardaningsih et al., 2022). This ecosystem provides significant space and opportunities for young people to feel more confident in living independently, especially in the context of work, being more oriented toward flexibility in job searching, and inclined to seek new knowledge (Muhammad et al., 2023; Satino et al., 2023).

The vast opportunities available to the younger generation simultaneously pose challenges, as job opportunities in the digital era allow individuals to determine their career fields according to their passions, interests, and ideals, ultimately leading to a personal perspective on what is considered an ideal job (Wahid, 2023; Wicaksono et al., 2023). Careers are no longer defined solely by loyalty to a company, holding a high position, and achieving stability; instead, the younger generation prefers jobs that offer modern or more flexible working patterns (Lowira & Himaladin, 2023; Prahesti, 2019).

Majelis Ta'lim (Islamic study groups) serve as a platform for the younger generation to develop positive character (Alwi et al., 2024). Therefore, the existence of Majelis Ta'lim can also be synergized as a means of empowering the community, particularly the youth, so they can maximize their potential and channel their creativity through various productive activities (Mariyanti et al., 2022). As such, Remaja Masjid (youth mosque groups), which serve as a means to strengthen social bonds both among teenagers and with the broader community (Pangestu, 2011), are also a space for gathering and guiding young people to engage in positive, religious activities within the community, which is one of the best solutions to achieve these goals.

Neroktog Village has potential, considering the number of places of worship and the active involvement of mosque youth in various activities, including religious, social, and community events. With such activity and engagement, it is hoped that these youth groups can be nurtured and directed to provide solutions to common problems faced by teenagers, such as unemployment, criminality, and free association.

This initiative will involve mosque youth ranging from students to university level. Mosque-based youth development is considered one of the most effective and realistic approaches, as these youth groups not only participate in positive activities but also have a social conscience (Usman et al., 2023). This enables them to improve their entrepreneurial skills in the digital industry while simultaneously helping the community.

The high rate of unemployment among the productive-age population and cases of drug abuse makes it increasingly important to develop programs that foster entrepreneurial

interests and potential. The younger generation needs to be equipped with entrepreneurial knowledge. Furthermore, entrepreneurship activities are expected to enhance productivity both economically and socially, especially in the digital era, where most young people are active social media users. This becomes a strength that can be maximized to develop the village through community empowerment activities in entrepreneurship. To realize this program, knowledge and in-depth training are needed, particularly related to digital marketing and entrepreneurship management. It is hoped that through the mentoring activities, young people's skills, particularly in the creative industry entrepreneurship in the digital era, can be improved.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also had a significant impact, especially in increasing unemployment among the productive-age population. To address these issues, the government and other parties need to find solutions so that the youth in Neroktog Village, who are of productive age, can maximize their potential. Therefore, the younger generation needs to be facilitated and provided with training and mentoring to develop entrepreneurial skills, enabling them to earn income economically and engage in positive and productive activities. The pandemic conditions in Indonesia have the potential to increase unemployment rates. In addition, the slowdown in the education and government service sectors has led to layoffs (PHK) and the temporary termination of contract/honorary workers.

Digital entrepreneurship training has been chosen as part of the effort to address challenges and seize opportunities in the digital era, focusing on improving hard skills in areas such as design, screen printing, and digital marketing to encourage the role of young people as drivers of the village economy through the creative industry sector, which is currently experiencing significant growth by utilizing digital technology.

To support a sustainable community empowerment program, the involvement of other parties is needed to provide stimulus and support in program development so that it can be recognized in the long term. This activity will also involve various community components, such as government officials, particularly at the village level through community empowerment agencies, youth leaders, religious figures, business communities, and society, to create an ecosystem that promotes micro-enterprises at the village level.

Method

To achieve the goal through the concept of sustainable empowerment, this activity is designed in several stages. The process begins with mapping the issues and potential of the partners, followed by providing entrepreneurship training in both hard and soft skills. The final stage includes mentoring to collaborate with various stakeholders in developing entrepreneurial potential among the youth.

The first stage of observation was conducted over a month starting in August 2022. The second stage, training, was conducted over two weeks from September 24 to October 4, 2022, at the Baiturrahman Musholah Hall. The third stage, mentoring, took place over four months from August to November.

The following are the stages of the implementation of this activity.

- a. Mapping Stage The mapping was carried out by identifying the potential of youth from mosques, musholah, or religious study groups (majelis ta'lim) who have an interest and basic skills in digital design and marketing. These individuals were then provided with hard skill training in their fields of interest.
- b. Training Activity Stage The training program was implemented in two schemes. On the first day, participants were provided with conceptual knowledge, followed by practical activities on the second day.
- c. Mentoring Activities The mentoring program was conducted in three stages. The pre-production stage involved discussing digital entrepreneurship ideas and concepts with participants. In the second stage, participants engaged in production activities such as designing, screen printing, and digital marketing. The third and final stage focused on post-production, including sales, financial management, and evaluation.

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- d. Facilities and Equipment Used The facilities used included a venue for delivering materials and discussions, as well as spaces for practical activities in design and digital marketing. The secretariat hall of IKRAMAH was used for these activities, while screen printing was done in the courtyard of the musholah. The technical equipment used included a projector, laptop, and sound system for presentations. Participants used smartphones, laptops, and screen-printing tools such as t-shirts, ink, printing boards, and steam irons.

Result

This activity was carried out over several months, including mapping and mentoring activities that began in August. The workshop was held in September, followed by monitoring, evaluation, and mentoring, which continued until November 2020. The activity involved 20 young people from a religious study group (majelis ta'lim) in the Neroktog district, who, based on field observations and mapping, were identified as having the potential for coaching and mentoring to become young entrepreneurs.

- a. Understanding of Design and Screen-Printing Knowledge and Skills

The results from the pre-production, production, and post-production stages showed improvements, especially in the participants' hard skills in designing, screen printing, and digital marketing. However, challenges remained, particularly related to the limited availability of necessary facilities and infrastructure, such as computers, laptops, and design software. Furthermore, there were no offline venues for screen printing and selling products, which hindered product display. Additionally, limited funding for screen printing activities, such as buying ink, tools, and materials, posed obstacles to business development, as the funds came only from donors and the religious study group's fund.

- b. Understanding of Digital Marketing

To build participants' understanding, seminars and hands-on mentoring in digital marketing management were conducted. This allowed participants to directly apply the materials presented by the speakers. As a result, participants gained knowledge and were able to implement digital marketing strategies. However, there were psychological challenges, as the young participants exhibited high levels of inconsistency, which hampered their business development efforts.

Figure 1. Building entrepreneurship awareness among the younger generation through forums and discussions

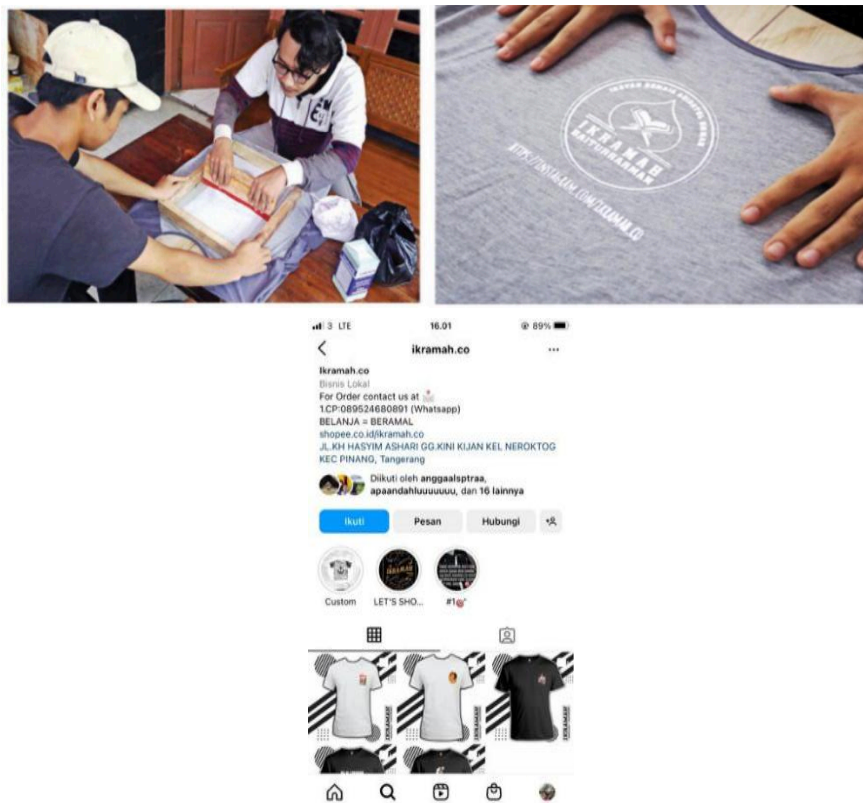


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Figure 2. Seminar on Design Techniques, Screen Printing, and Digital Marketing Strategies



Figure 3. Workshop on Image Design, Screen Printing, and Digital Marketing Strategies on Social Media



Discussion

Based on field observations from the training, it was found that participants gained an understanding of design and screen-printing skills. This was demonstrated through product production activities that were directly carried out by the participants, starting from image design using several design programs available on computers, such as Illustrator, Photoshop, and others. Additionally, the participants were able to independently perform screen printing activities using simple equipment. Previously, they had only been involved in offline and online product marketing and sales.

The training provided participants with knowledge on marketing strategies, particularly how to maximize the use of social media. As a result, participants began to utilize and engage in marketing activities through platforms like Instagram. Observations of the social media accounts used for marketing activities showed a shift toward digital marketing strategies, as reflected in more active, creative, and engaging feeds, product posts, and stories.

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As illustrated above, the PKM (Community Service Program) activities focused on building interest, awareness, and potential in entrepreneurship, particularly in the Clothing Line business, among teenagers in Neroktog Village. We focused on the development of a Clothing Line workshop because our target audience was teenagers. Teenagers generally have a creative nature, are skilled in social media, and tend to be tech-savvy. However, they often lack financial stability. Therefore, the clothing line business, which relies on creativity, is deemed suitable and is expected to have good potential and prospects for the future.

Conclusion

The demographic bonus can be an opportunity to enhance the potential of the economic sector by empowering the younger generation as entrepreneurs. It can also contribute to improving the quality of human resources, particularly within the productive age group, to compete in the era of global competition. Therefore, empowerment efforts need to be initiated within existing community groups. Mosque youth groups are one such productive-age community with significant numbers, making them a suitable target for fostering entrepreneurial interest. One mosque youth group in the Neroktog neighborhood was the focus of a community service project, which demonstrated an increase in their skills and capabilities, particularly in the areas of screen printing, clothing, and digital marketing. These skills can serve as valuable expertise for managing and developing businesses.

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