

Economic Independence Through Women's Empowerment for Families at Risk of Stunting in Teluk Pandan District

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Abstract. Economic independence in the context of women's empowerment aims to ensure that women contribute to the family economy to realize family prosperity and reduce the risk of stunting. This community service activity aims to provide or transfer knowledge and skills to women to take advantage of various business opportunities. Efforts to empower women can be carried out in multiple ways, one of which is through activities carried out through life skills through skills improvement. The methods used in this activity are training, women's empowerment workshops, entrepreneurship training, stunting education and socialization using a participatory learning model approach. This community service focuses on empowering women, it is that there will be an increase in family welfare, prevention of stunting, and the creation of an environment that supports economic independence.

Keywords: economic independence, empowerment, stunting

1 Introduction

The empowerment program is one of the policies that support the creation of welfare and overcoming poverty and unemployment. Various studies show that this women's empowerment program effectively supports economic independence, especially for women. The implementation of the empowerment principle will create economic opportunities for women so that they will realize economic independence for women. The problem of limited access for women to resources, especially in the financial sector, is due to cultural factors that pay little attention to the role of women. The obstacles to women's opportunities to escape the poverty trap are due to their lack of skills, so the types of work that can be done are limited to informal activities that do not require special skills [1].

Women's empowerment consists of several aspects, one related to economic empowerment to access income that can increase self-confidence and welfare [2]. Improving the economic

conditions of families is related to the involvement of women in empowerment activities [3]. According to Hill [4], women's empowerment is one of the main issues in the development process. The role of women has changed a lot along with the development of the times and the emergence of emancipation, which is related to the equality of women and men in the family. Women often work to support their families, and not a few are the backbone of a family. Productive-age women are one of the village's potentials, and they can be developed by providing skills and knowledge that can be used to support the economic development of the village community. Women who have free time after taking care of the household have capital and opportunities that can be used for productive activities to become a source of income. Through these productive activities, women are not only housewives but can become thousands of economically empowered households. Indicators of economic independence include ownership of a business or work that is managed economically. Economic independence also comes from having the confidence to carry out business activities, such as trading businesses, MSMEs, home industries, and other business management. In addition, economic independence can also be seen from business activities that have been carried out for a relatively long time so that they have the capital strength to grow and develop [5].

Economic independence in the context of empowering women aims for women to take part in helping the family economy so that family welfare can be realized. If a family is economically empowered, it will have an impact on the ability to fulfill needs, both basic needs and other needs [6]. One of the needs that must be met to create a decent life is the need for food. Not only is the need for food sufficient, but the fulfillment of family nutrition must also be considered. The nutritional content of the food consumed needs to be considered starting from the time women prepare for pregnancy, during pregnancy, and after giving birth. This is closely related to creating a healthy and competitive next generation so that the problem of stunting in the future can be reduced or even eliminated. The National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN) noted that during the first semester of 2023, there were 13.1 million families at risk of stunting, although, in the second semester of 2023, this number decreased to 11.3 million families at risk of stunting. Families at risk of stunting have one or more risk factors for stunting. Families that are at risk of stunting are teenagers, prospective brides and grooms, and pregnant women. Children aged 0-23 months who come from low-income families are also at risk of stunting. The causes of stunting risk factors in families include low parental education, which means they do not have adequate income to meet family nutrition, the unavailability of clean drinking water, and poor environmental sanitation [7].

Stunting occurs if a toddler has a height that is not according to age, which is measured from minus two and less than minus three standard deviations of the median of the WHO child growth standard. Chronic nutritional problems in stunted toddlers are caused by various factors such as family socio-economic conditions, maternal nutrition during pregnancy, and lack of nutritional intake in infants [8]. In the future, stunted toddlers will experience difficulties in optimal physical and cognitive development. In 2022, the prevalence of stunting in Lampung Province decreased, although several districts increased compared to 2022. Pesawaran Regency is in the highest category of stunting cases, spreading across several regions. The following is data on the number of stunted toddlers in Pesawaran Regency.

Table 1. Data on the Number of Stunting Toddlers in Pesawaran Regency in 2023

No	Subdistrict Name	Name of Health Centre	Number of Toddlers measured	Number of Stunting Toddlers
1	Punduh Pidada	Pedada	904	51
2	Padang Cermin	Padang Cermin	927	12
3	Kedondong	Kedondong	2.252	124
4	Way Lima	Kota Dalam	1.843	75
5	Gedong Tataan	Gedong Tataan	2.783	69
		Bernung	2.541	12
6	Negeri Katon	Roworejo	1.443	33
		Kalirejo	1.840	27
7	Tegineneng	Tegineneng	658	17
		Trimulyo	1.191	35
8	Teluk Pandan	Hanura	2.117	69
9	Marga Punduh	Maja	650	39
10	Way Ratai	Bunut	2.540	13
11	Way Khilau	Gunung Sari	1.075	8
Regency			22.847	584

Source: Pesawaran District Health Office, 2023

Based on Table 1, four sub-districts have the largest number of stunted toddlers who are the locus of stunting in Pesawaran Regency in 2023, namely Kedondong District, Way Lima District, Gedong Tataan District, and Teluk Pandan District. Teluk Pandan District is the only sub-district located in the coastal area of Pesawaran Regency that is the locus of stunting in 2023. One of the villages in Teluk Pandan District is Sidodadi Village. The area of Sidodadi Village is 563.25 ha. In 2021, the population of Sidodadi Village was 1,065 men and 1,172 women. Most of the Sidodadi community work as farm laborers, with about 1,044 people, 623 men and 421 women. There is potential for small and medium businesses owned by Sidodadi Village, such as banana, *melinjo*, and coconut crackers.

This community service activity aims to provide or transfer knowledge and skills to women to take advantage of various business opportunities. Efforts to empower women can be made in various ways, one of which is through activities carried out through life skills and skill improvement. Skills exist in everyone and can develop according to the individual's wishes. A person's skills can create and then produce something through ideas and concepts carried out through skills training. One form of skill held in this community service activity is knitting training. Knitting skills are one of the life skills education. Life skills education provides personal, social, intellectual, and work skills for independent businesses. Empowering women through knitting training is expected to help the community develop their potential related to the economy and education so that women can get additional income for their families. Women can have a role and value in the family and society with the skills they acquire and can develop their potential to help the family economy.

Implementing knitting activities can provide various benefits because it utilizes raw yarn materials that are easily available and affordable. In addition to adding new skills, knitting activities also open up opportunities for women who are housewives to develop their economic potential more widely. Knitting crafts are products produced through a manual process; the uniqueness of knitting crafts is in the design precision and perseverance of the products produced. The value of these knitted products is higher because the manufacturing process is manual, and the time to make them is longer, so knitted products have a higher value and competitive prices. Knitted craft results include bags, key chains, wallets, brooches, stationery holders, etc. If carried out diligently, knitting activities can develop potential and self-discipline, train patience, and relax the mind. The advantage of knitting skills is that they can be done anytime and anywhere if there is free time. This community service activity not only aims to transfer knitting skills but also provides entrepreneurial insight to activity participants.

The Community Service Team is initiating community service activities to empower women to achieve economic independence, meet their families' nutritional needs, and reduce the risk of stunting. One effective approach to this empowerment is through entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship involves taking action to fulfill life's needs by utilizing one's skills, knowledge, and potential. By harnessing these abilities, individuals can create new products or services with added value and generate profit.

2 Literature Review

Women's Empowerment Concept

Etymologically, empowerment comes from the root word "daya" which means strength or ability. Empowerment is defined as the process of obtaining power, strength, or ability and/or providing power, strength, or ability from those who have power to those who lack or do not yet have power. Women's empowerment is an effort to enable women to gain access and control over resources, economic, political, social, and cultural so that women can regulate themselves and increase their self-confidence to be able to play a role and participate actively in solving problems so that they can build their abilities and self-concept [9].

a. Economic Independence

Independence can be defined as the ability to think, feel, and do something on their own. Independence consists of four aspects [10] namely: 1) Intellectual aspect (ability to think to solve one's problems), 2) Social aspect (ability to actively build a network of relationships), 3) Emotional aspect (ability to manage or manage one's own emotions) 4) Aspect (ability to regulate, manage and manage the economy independently). The term independence can also be interpreted as a state of an individual who can stand alone and does not depend on others. Overall, independence is self-preparation and a person's ability to stand alone, described by the courage to step forward, being firm in making decisions, and consistently trying to take care of problems without asking for help from others [11].

3 Implementation Method

This activity uses training, women's empowerment workshops, and entrepreneurship training with a participatory learning model approach. Participatory learning is a type of learning in

which all participants are actively involved in all learning processes. The participatory learning process in this activity is carried out through lectures, discussions, and mentoring.

The implementation of this activity includes several stages as follows:

a. Stage 1 Activity Planning

Coordinate with the Sidodadi Village government to conduct observations and documentation studies regarding partners' conditions and design plans and schedules for implementing activities.

b. Stage 2 Observation

Identification of people who have been recorded and have the desire and time. Furthermore, recruitment is carried out to select participants involved in this activity through the Sidodadi Village government, then sending the names of participants to the training activity committee.

c. Activity Implementation Stage

Prepare facilities and infrastructure, training materials, aids, and supporting materials for activities, such as printouts of materials. In this phase, knitting training was conducted at the Sidodadi Village Hall, which was attended by mothers who had been registered as participants, with the aim that they could explore and develop creativity in the art of knitting

d. Evaluation and Monitoring Stage

Evaluation of activities was carried out by looking at the sustainability of the program through the activities of the community who had participated in the training.

4 Analysis and Discussion

This community service focuses on economic independence through women's empowerment and has various benefits, especially for families at risk of stunting in Teluk Pandan District. By improving knitting skills, participants can learn new skills that allow them to create products that can be sold. Marketing opportunities for the output produced can be marketed both locally and online, providing access to a wider market. Participants' self-confidence is built, by mastering new skills can increase women's self-confidence, which is important for empowering them in other aspects of life. Therefore, cooperation between various parties, such as local governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and local communities, is crucial to creating an effective strategy. With cooperation, knitting training can be adjusted to the needs and potential of participants, one of which is by identifying market trends that are currently in demand. This approach also allows for the development of a wider network so that the products produced can be marketed more easily.

Knitting training not only functions as a hobby but also to create business opportunities. With knitting skills, women can produce products that can be sold, such as clothing, accessories, or other handicrafts. This program provides encouragement for women to become entrepreneurs, so that they can contribute economically to their families and increase purchasing power, which in turn can support the fulfilment of children's nutrition and reduce the risk of stunting.

Entrepreneurship Education can provide knowledge about the basics of doing business, including financial management, marketing, and product development. Entrepreneurship can also increase independence because by having entrepreneurial insight, women are expected to be able to start small businesses that can increase family income.

Knitting crafts can be a significant source of income if managed properly. With support from the government or non-governmental organizations, women can be taught how to market their products, both online and offline. The formation of work groups or cooperatives can also help in the development of marketing networks. By opening these economic opportunities, women can contribute to the local economy and improve family welfare, which has a positive impact on children's health.

Based on the results of the pre-test and post-test questionnaires, the initial question was about confidence in using daily life skills.

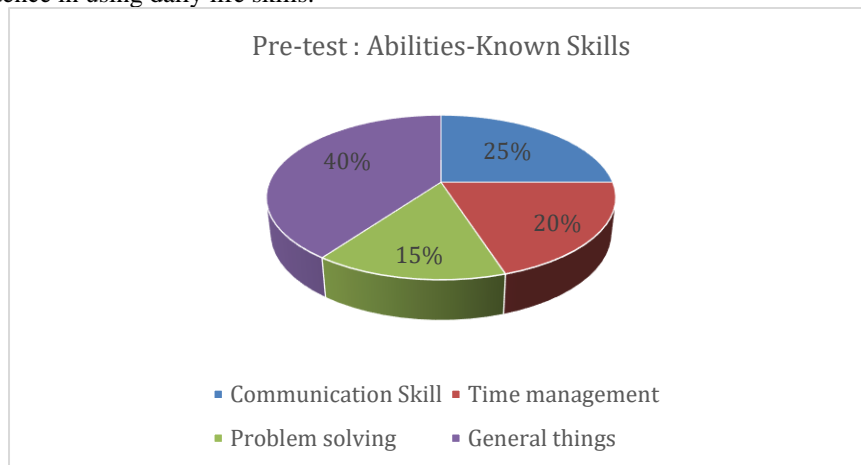


Fig 1. Pre-test Result

Based on the results of the pre-test, the life skills known were 15% communication skills, 25%-time management, 25% problem solving and 40% general matters.

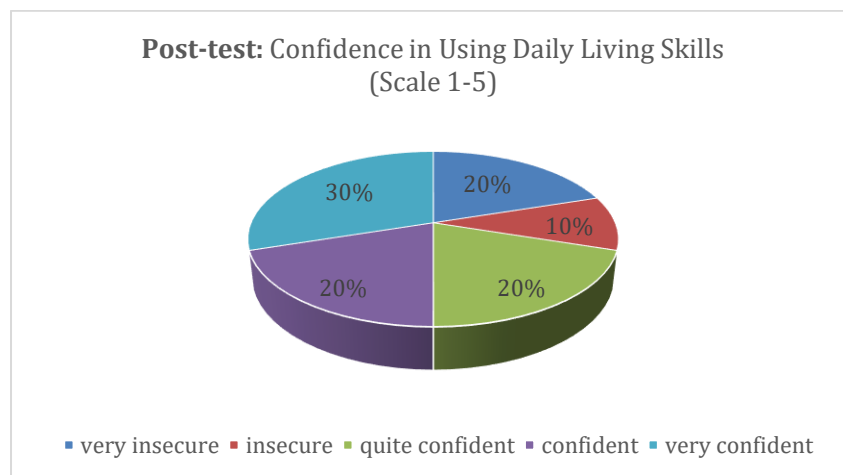


Fig 2. Post-test

Based on the results of the questionnaire, as many as 20% of respondents were very insecure and 30% of participants felt very confident in using daily living skills.



Fig 3. Knitting Training

The goal of this activity is to educate and socialize women and housewives about the importance of nutrition to prevent stunting. Education and socialization about stunting are very important to increase public awareness. Women's empowerment programs should include educational sessions on the importance of balanced nutrition, maternal and child health, and the long-term impacts of stunting. By increasing knowledge about this issue, women are expected to be able to apply good nutrition principles in their families, thereby reducing the risk of stunting in their children.

Based on the results of the questionnaire, regarding the question of knowledge, "Do you think stunting has increased after participating in the activity?" There was an increase in respondent knowledge of 60%. The next question was, "How important is education about stunting, in your opinion, after participating in the program?". Respondents who answered very unimportant answered one person, and respondents who answered very important answered as many as ten. There was an increase of 40% who responded very important from the pre-test and after the post-test.



Fig 4. Group photo of PKM Team and participants

5 Conclusion

Women's empowerment through skills and entrepreneurship programs not only strengthens women's position in society but also contributes to improving children's health and reducing stunting. By providing the right knowledge and skills, women can become agents of change in their families and communities, which ultimately contributes to economic independence and better welfare. This community service focuses on women's empowerment, and it is expected that there will be an increase in family welfare, the prevention of stunting, and the creation of an environment that supports economic independence. Overall, this community service activity went smoothly, and the participants were enthusiastic about participating in the activities.

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