



GEMAS (Independent and Prosperous Golden Generation) Program Based on Digital Entrepreneurship Towards an Independent and Competent

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ABSTRACT

The GEMAS (Independent and Prosperous Golden Generation) program was implemented in Nagari Salareh Aia Utara, Agam Regency, West Sumatra, to empower teenagers through training in digital entrepreneurship, soft skills, and digital literacy. The aim of this program is to improve the competence of teenagers in utilizing technology to develop businesses based on local potential, such as agriculture and handicrafts, in order to support their economic independence. The program was implemented using a participatory approach involving five stages of activities: socialization, training, technology application, mentoring, and sustainability. A total of 30 teenagers from the Syuhada mosque participated in training that focused on communication skills, leadership, teamwork, time management, and the use of information technology for financial record-keeping and product marketing. The program results showed an increase in participants' understanding and skills in using digital technology for local business development.

This program has succeeded in raising awareness of the importance of digital literacy and soft skills, which support participants to become financially independent and contribute to regional economic growth. This program is in line with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4 (Quality Education) and SDGs 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and it is hoped that it can be continued with the strengthening of facilities and ongoing training.

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Introduction

The village of Salareh Aia Utara, located in Palembayan District, Agam Regency, West Sumatra, has rich natural potential, especially in the food agriculture and plantation sectors (Central Statistics Agency, 2023). However, the majority of the population depends on the agricultural sector, which is still managed traditionally and has not been optimally utilized to promote sustainable economic growth (Ministry of Communication and Information Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, 2023). The level of education and skills of the community, especially among young people, is still low, with limited access to relevant skills training to improve financial independence (West Sumatra Education Office, 2023; Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration, 2022).



One of the major challenges in this region is the low level of digital literacy and soft skills among adolescents, which is a major obstacle in accessing better job opportunities. (Moeins, Alhempri, & Lukas, 2024) noted that although digital technology has been introduced, its use among adolescents is still limited to social media and entertainment, without optimization for skills development or economic improvement.

Based on data from the local Education Office, around 60% of youth in Nagari Salareh Aia Utara do not yet have adequate technical and digital skills to work in the industrial sector or start their own businesses. Demographically, the majority of youth in Nagari Salareh Aia Utara are aged 15–18 years old and are still students at the high school level or equivalent (Ariani, 2020).

The nagari's geographical location, far from the city center, limits access to information and modern technology, and although transportation access is quite good, inadequate technology-based educational infrastructure and internet networks are obstacles to digital skills development. The gap between abundant natural resource potential and limited human resource capacity needs to be addressed immediately (Berglund, Lindgren, & Packendorff, 2017). Systematic efforts are needed to improve the skills of young people through training in soft skills, digital skills, and digital literacy relevant to the needs of modern industry (Cikka, Ismail, Zaifullah, Kahar, & Idris, 2024). This is not only aimed at increasing the competitiveness of young people in the world of work, but also at encouraging economic independence through technology-based entrepreneurial opportunities. The youth skills empowerment program in Nagari Salareh Aia Utara also supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). In addition, this program contributes to increasing labor force participation and skills development and training, in accordance with Asta Cita Nagari, especially Asta Cita 3 (Improving the Quality of Education) and Asta Cita 5 (Realizing Economic Independence).

With targeted digital skills and soft skills training, it is hoped that the youth of Nagari Salareh Aia Utara can optimally utilize local potential, become financially independent, and contribute to regional economic growth (Felix et al., 2025) (Gunawan, 2020). Community empowerment through youth skills development has been the focus of various community service programs. The development of skills such as soft skills and digital skills is crucial in the era of globalization and digital transformation. Various studies show that training in these skills has a positive impact on individual financial independence and can create new business opportunities that support the local economy (Hamzah & Othman, 2023).

Digitalization is an important element in economic empowerment, where the use of information and communication technology (ICT) can increase the productivity and efficiency of small businesses (Irwan, Machmud, & Lubis, 2024). On the other hand, low digital literacy among youth is one of the main challenges in preparing them for the increasingly digital modern world of work (Kumari, 2021). Research by (Moeins et al., 2024) shows that digital skills, such as the use of financial management

software and online marketing, are essential in improving individual competitiveness, especially in rural areas that still depend on the traditional agricultural sector.

In addition, empowerment programs that involve a participatory approach have also proven to be effective in increasing the success of these programs. Active participation from participants in every stage of the activity, such as socialization, training, and technology implementation, allows the program to be more relevant to local needs and ensures the sustainability of the program (Moeller, Ciuchita, Mahr, Odekerken-Schröder, & Fassnacht, 2013). Therefore, it is important to introduce digital entrepreneurship training that not only teaches technical skills but also soft skills that can strengthen leadership, communication, and teamwork. This will enable young people to start technology-based businesses and contribute to a more independent and sustainable regional economy.

Methods

This community service activity uses the Technology Approach and Application method. This method was chosen because it ensures that the program is implemented in accordance with local needs and contexts, and provides space for participants to actively participate in each stage of the activity. The participatory approach allows the program to be more relevant and sustainable by involving local partners, communities, and youth in planning and implementation (Moeins et al., 2024).

The program implementation consists of five stages (5P), including (1) Socialization, which is carried out at the beginning of the program in Nagari Salareh Aia Utara, involving all community members, especially teenagers, to convey information, the benefits obtained, and how it can help solve their problems; (2) Training, which will focus on skills that can be applied by participants; (3) Technology application, aimed at increasing production efficiency and facilitating financial management and product marketing; (4) Assistance and Evaluation, carried out to ensure that each participant can implement the skills taught in the training; (5) Program Sustainability, which ensures the formation of business groups or cooperatives that can support the continuity of community economic activities (Moeller et al., 2013) (Nu'man, Rachmiatie, Hindersah, Triwardhani, & Sos, n.d.). The program is carried out in 5 meetings each week. The stages of program implementation can be visualized in Diagram 1.



Figure 1. Stages of Program Implementation

Results

The GEMAS (Generasi emas mandiri dan Sejahtera or Independent and Prosperous Golden Generation) community service program was held from July to August and was attended by 30 teenagers from the mosque in Nagari Salareh Aia Utara as the main participants. This activity focused on discussing the skills needed to manage and develop businesses based on local potential, such as agriculture, handicrafts, or products based on natural resources. This was based on the reality that Nagari Salareh Aia Utara has abundant natural resources, but they have not been fully processed and utilized optimally by the younger generation, especially teenagers.



Figures 2 . Training Participants



Figures 3. Training Participants

The GEMAS (Independent and Prosperous Golden Generation) Program Training is systematically designed to improve the skills of adolescents in Nagari Salareh Aia Utara through soft skills training (communication, leadership, teamwork, and time management), digital skills (information technology utilization), and digital literacy (the ability to access, understand, manage, and utilize information effectively) (Pulicherla, Adapa, Ghosh, & Ingle, 2022). Through this approach, the program is expected to equip youth with skills relevant to the needs of modern industry, while increasing their readiness to face economic challenges in the era of globalization and



digital transformation and expanding their opportunities for financial independence. This program will focus on providing skills training relevant to the needs of modern industry, as well as raising awareness of the importance of digital literacy for information access and economic potential development.

This activity is also in line with several of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically providing quality training for youth to improve their skills and knowledge and providing skills that can support youth in starting their own businesses or pursuing careers in technology-based sectors, which will drive economic growth at the local level.

Discussion

The GEMAS program implemented in Nagari Salareh Aia Utara has shown significant results in improving youth skills in digital entrepreneurship, soft skills, and digital literacy. Through a participatory approach involving the local community, the program has successfully equipped 30 youth with practical skills relevant to the needs of modern industry.

This training had a considerable impact, particularly in raising awareness of the importance of digital technology mastery to accelerate the development of businesses based on local potential, such as agriculture, handicrafts, and natural resource-based products.

1. Empowerment through Digital Entrepreneurship

One of the main outcomes of the GEMAS program is the improvement of young people's ability to utilize digital technology for entrepreneurship. Before the program began, the majority of participants only used technology for entertainment, particularly social media, and did not utilize technology for more productive purposes such as product marketing or financial management. However, after receiving training, they began to learn about and use simple applications for financial record-keeping, product promotion, and digital-based marketing. (Putu Yudy, 2023) shows that digitalization is key to economic empowerment, especially in areas with limited access to modern infrastructure. Digital technology can increase the productivity, efficiency, and market reach of small businesses, thereby increasing economic opportunities for young entrepreneurs (Setyawan & Suhendi, 2022).

With the skills acquired, GEMAS program participants are expected to not only become technology consumers but also producers who can utilize technology to enhance the competitiveness of local products. In this regard, palm frond craft products, such as plates, tissue boxes, and fruit baskets, have considerable market potential, both locally and regionally. This reflects similar results from research by (Srinivasan, 2012), which states that digital entrepreneurship training can increase opportunities for businesses based on local resources, especially in rural areas with limited access to technology.

2. Strengthening Soft Skills in Building Independence

In addition to improving technical skills, the GEMAS program also succeeded in strengthening participants' soft skills, which include communication, leadership, teamwork, and time management. In a discussion facilitated by Prof. Dr. Al Rafni, M.Si., participants were given insights into how these skills are very important in running an independent business, especially in managing teams and communicating with customers or business partners. In line with the theory proposed by (Suryono, Wijaya, Irianto, & Harisudin, 2022), strengthening soft skills is essential to prepare young people to face challenges in an increasingly competitive and technology-based world of work.

The program also involved local community leaders, such as Inyiah Wali Zulkifli, who provided important perspectives on the development of entrepreneurial skills. The participation of the local community in this training has a positive influence, as they can provide direct input on the needs and challenges faced by young



people. This is in line with research by (Wulandari & Hariko, 2024), which emphasizes the importance of community participation in empowerment programs to ensure the relevance and sustainability of activities.

3. Technology Involvement in Business Development

At the technology implementation stage, participants were taught to use e-commerce applications as a medium for product promotion. With limited access to the internet in the area, this training provided new opportunities for youth to expand their market through digital platforms. As explained by (Bharadwaj, El Sawy, Pavlou, & Venkatraman, 2013; Moeller et al., 2013; Senyo, Liu, & Effah, 2019), technologies such as e-commerce platforms enable small businesses to compete in the global market at a lower cost and more efficiently than traditional marketing methods.

In addition, the use of applications for financial recording also provides practical benefits for participants in managing their businesses. This supports research by Burchard (2021), which shows that digital technology can facilitate business management, particularly in terms of more transparent and structured financial recording and management. Thus, the GEMAS program has succeeded in instilling valuable knowledge in teenagers to manage technology-based businesses.

4. Challenges and Obstacles Faced

Although this program has shown positive impacts, there are several challenges that need to be overcome to ensure the sustainability of the activities. One of the main challenges faced by participants is the limitation of existing technological infrastructure, such as inadequate internet networks. Most participants find it difficult to access e-commerce platforms and other applications due to limited internet access in their areas.

According to (Moeller et al., 2013), access to technology is one of the main factors that influence the success of empowerment programs in remote areas. Therefore, further investment is needed to improve technological infrastructure in areas such as Nagari Salareh Aia Utara.

In addition, there is a need to provide further assistance in terms of business management and digital marketing. This program has provided basic training, but to achieve sustainability, participants need ongoing support in the form of direct guidance in managing their businesses. This is in line with the findings revealed by (Setyawan & Suhendi, 2022), which state that the sustainability of digital entrepreneurship programs requires ongoing assistance so that participants can effectively implement the knowledge they have acquired.

5. Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The GEMAS program has successfully supported the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). By providing skills training relevant to market needs, this program not only improves the quality of education for young people but also provides them with skills that can be used to start their own businesses or pursue careers in technology-based sectors.

Conclusion

Overall, the GEMAS program implemented in Nagari Salareh Aia Utara has succeeded in making a real contribution to improving the skills of young people in digital entrepreneurship, soft skills, and digital literacy. Despite challenges related to limited technological infrastructure and the need for ongoing mentoring, the positive impact of this program can be seen in the improvement of participants' skills and the application of the knowledge they have gained in their daily lives. The success of this program shows that empowering the younger generation through digital entrepreneurship training can be a model for community empowerment that is oriented towards sustainability and supports the achievement of SDGs at the local level.



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