

Improving Community Economic Value Through Utilization of Oil Palm Leaf Midribs into Export Handicraft Products

Mai Yuliza^{1*}, Mia Muchia Desda², Elondri³, Adriwilza⁴, Nurhamzah⁵, Endarwita⁶, Yurasti⁷, Ria Widhia Sari⁸, Satriadi⁹, Valen Febianni¹⁰, Dini¹¹

¹⁻⁸Institut Teknologi dan Ilmu Sosial Khatulistiwa, Indonesia

⁹STIE Pembangunan Tanjung Pinang, Indonesia

^{10,11}Institut Teknologi dan Ilmu Sosial Khatulistiwa, Indonesia

Email: ¹⁾ mai.yuliza@gmail.com

Received : 10 December - 2024

Accepted : 18 January - 2025

Published online : 22 January - 2025

Abstract

This community service activity aims to increase the economic value of the community through the utilization of oil palm leaf midribs that have been underutilized into export-valued handicraft products. Palm oil is a leading commodity in many regions in Indonesia, but the waste in the form of leaf midribs is often neglected. Through training and mentoring programs, the community is able to produce a variety of innovative new designs, following modern market trends. palm oil leaf midribs handicrafts not only have functional value but also a more attractive aesthetic value. In addition, this activity also includes education on international marketing strategies and export market access. The results of the activities showed an increase in community knowledge and skills in processing oil palm leaf midribs and an increase in economic income through marketing products to international markets. This activity is expected to be sustainable and become a model for local resource-based economic development.

Keywords: Oil Palm Leaf Midribs, Handicraft, Economic Improvement, Export, Community Service.

1. Introduction

Indonesia is one of the largest producers of palm oil in the world. palm oil is a major commodity and plays an important role in the economic resources in Indonesia. Palm oil has commercial value and has good opportunities to be developed so that it can become one of the largest contributing sectors in terms of economic improvement. However, the utilization of oil palm so far has focused more on palm oil as the main commodity, while other parts of the oil palm tree are often neglected (Soloi & Hou, 2019). One such part is oil palm leaf midribs, which are generally considered as plantation waste and have no significant economic value (Susanti, 2020; Wahyuni, 2019). Along with the growing awareness of sustainable economy and creative economy opportunities, palm oil leaf midribs have great potential to be processed into high-value handicraft products (Andriana & Pujayanti, 2022; Nasution et al., 2022). These handicraft products not only have appeal in the local market, but also have great potential to be developed into the export market. Overseas, there is great interest in environmentally friendly and handmade products, which makes oil palm leaf midribs a very potential raw material.

West Pasaman Regency is a producing district for the plantation sector in West Sumatra. The plantation sector is a very important factor for the people of West Pasaman district. The largest commodity in the plantation sector in West Pasaman is oil palm. Thus, West Pasaman



has the opportunity to produce palm oil leaf midribs which will then be processed into handicrafts that have high value (Dumaria et al., 2021; Garnasih, 2020). According to Abidin (2016) all parts of the oil palm plant can be utilized starting from the Fresh Fruit Bunches (FFB) of oil palm is the raw material in making cooking oil. The trunk can be used as a material for building materials. Palm oil leaf midribs can be utilized into handicraft products that are environmentally friendly and export-oriented, so as to provide added economic value to the local community.

Through the Community Service Program (PkM), communities living around oil palm plantations can be empowered to utilize leaf midribs as a new source of income (Rochman et al., 2024; Syahrizal et al., 2023). This program aims to improve the community's skills in processing oil palm leaf midribs into high-value handicraft products, as well as providing access to export markets. Some communities have already utilized these oil palm leaf midribs, namely in Nagari Lubuk Landua, Pasaman District, West Pasaman Regency, West Sumatra. This activity has been carried out since 2020 until now. The products produced are woven as shown below:



Figure 1. Products made from oil palm leaf midribs

Products from processed oil palm leaf midribs in the form of stick plates, fruit baskets from oil palm leaf midribs which are pedestal plates made of oil palm leaf midribs, processed oil palm leaf midribs products have many benefits, oil palm leaf midribs are raw materials and making these leaf midribs plates. With the skills possessed by craftsmen, this palm leaf midribs waste becomes a product that is worth selling. With the production of products from palm leaf midribs, it is necessary to have a strategy for marketing. For marketing products produced by craftsmen only new local and regional areas.



Figure 2. Community Service Program (PKM) Craftsman

With the potential and problems in Lubuak Landua nagari, it is necessary to provide assistance in terms of product marketing so that products from these palm leaf midribs can go global. Thus, the potential in Nagari Lubuak Landua can support the community's economy in the future. Therefore, this PKM activity is expected to increase the economic value of the local community, reduce unemployment, and optimize the use of natural resources that were previously underutilized.

The goal of this program is to create a creativity-based and sustainable economy, while strengthening the position of local craft products in the global market. Thus, the utilization of oil palm leaf midribs can have a positive impact both in terms of social, economic, and environmental aspects.

2. Methods

To achieve the goal of increasing the economic value of the community through the utilization of oil palm leaf midribs into export craft products, the method of implementing this community service program is carried out through several stages as follows:

a) Identification of Partners and Target Areas

The initial step in implementing the program is to identify oil palm producing areas and select communities that will become program partners. The main criteria include location around oil palm plantations and the community's willingness to participate in skills training.

b) Program Socialization

After the community was selected, a socialization was conducted regarding the economic benefits of using palm oil leaf midribs, as well as an overview of the types of craft products that could be produced. This socialization aims to increase community understanding and enthusiasm for the program.

c) Product Design and Innovation Training

The community was given training on product design and innovation. This is important so that the craft products have a high aesthetic value and are in accordance with market tastes, both local and international.

d) Use of Tools and Materials

In this training, the community is introduced to a variety of modern tools and techniques that can facilitate the handicraft making process without reducing product quality.

e) Mentoring and Production Capacity Building

After the training is completed, the service team will provide regular assistance to the community. This assistance aims to ensure the smooth running of the production process and help overcome technical obstacles that may arise in the field. Increasing Production Capacity is provided through additional training related to production management so that the community is able to increase production capacity efficiently. The community is taught how to manage raw material stocks, organize production time, and plan product distribution in a timely manner.

f) Marketing and Export Market Access

To compete in the international market, palm leaf midribs handicraft products need attractive branding and packaging. The community received specialized training emphasizing the importance of branding and packaging design that aligns with global market standards.

g) Marketing Platform and Distribution Network

The service team helped the community to access the market through e-commerce platforms, product exhibitions, as well as establishing cooperation with exporters who are interested in environmentally friendly handicraft products. In addition, the community was also provided with information related to the export process, including regulations and required documentation (Daming & Arnama, 2022).

h) Evaluation and Monitoring

Periodic evaluations are conducted to assess the development of community skills and the economic impact of the program. Indicators of success include the increase in community income, the number of products produced, and the level of consumer satisfaction with the products.

i) Post Program Monitoring

Monitoring continues after the program ends to ensure the sustainability of the palm leaf midribs craft business. This includes monitoring marketing progress and whether the community continues to scale up production and expand their market reach.

j) Government and Private Partnerships

Collaboration with local government to encourage collaboration with local governments to support the development of palm leaf midribs crafts as a local creative industry. The government can provide support through policies, business financing, or facilitation in promotional activities at the national and international levels.

k) Cooperation with the Private Sector

Involving the private sector, such as exporting companies or e-commerce platforms, will be helpful in expanding market reach and accelerating product penetration into the global market.

This implementation method is designed to provide technical skills to the community in producing palm leaf midribs handicrafts, while opening up access to export markets through appropriate marketing strategies. The comprehensive approach of training, production capacity building, and market access support is believed to be able to increase the economic

value of local communities and make palm leaf midribs handicraft products a competitive export commodity.

3. Results and Discussion

The results and discussion of this activity include several main aspects that show a positive impact on the community, both in terms of skills, economy, and market access, as follows:

- a) **Product Design Innovation:** Partners produce a variety of innovative new designs, following modern market trends. Palm leaf midribs crafts not only have functional value but also more attractive aesthetic value.
- b) **Increased Community Income:** One of the significant outcomes of this program is the increase in community income. Palm oil leaf midribs are only considered as waste that has no selling value. After the implementation of the program, the community was able to utilize the leaf midribs into craft products with competitive selling prices.
- c) **Product Diversification and Source of Income:** Through this program, the community is no longer solely dependent on the oil palm agriculture sector as their main source of income, but also earns additional income from the sale of handicraft products. This helps increase the community's economic resilience, especially when palm oil prices in the global market fluctuate.
- d) **Market Access and Export Potential:** The results of this program show that the handicraft products made from palm oil leaf midribs are successfully marketed in the local market, mainly through cooperation with handicraft shops, local exhibitions, as well as through social media. This local marketing helps to increase public awareness of natural and environmentally friendly products.
- e) **Export Market Access:** One of the most significant outcomes of this program is the opening up of export opportunities to various countries that have shown interest in handmade and natural-based craft products. Through partnerships with exporters, it is expected that products made from palm leaf midribs will begin to be exported in small quantities, and these results form the basis for expanding the scale of production and exports in the future.
- f) **Use of E-commerce Platforms:** The program has also successfully helped communities access global e-commerce platforms such as Shopee, which focuses on unique products and handicrafts. The use of these digital platforms expands market reach and simplifies the transaction process, although there is still a need to improve the community's understanding of digital marketing strategies.
- g) **Environmental and Social Impact: Plantation Waste Reduction** by utilizing oil palm leaf midribs that were previously considered as waste, this program contributes significantly to the reduction of plantation waste. Waste that was previously burnt or thrown away is now utilized for craft production, which has a positive impact on the environment.
- h) **Challenges Faced: Production Capacity Constraints,** while the program has successfully improved the skills of the community, the main challenge faced is the limited production capacity. The community still needs more modern equipment and a more efficient production system to be able to meet greater market demand, especially for export.
- i) **Export Regulations:** One of the other challenges faced is the export regulations and product certification process. Although palm leaf midribs handicraft products have great potential in the international market, there are several barriers related to export regulations and product quality that must meet international standards.

- j) Sustainability and Further Development: To ensure the sustainability of the palm leaf midribs handicraft business, the community is encouraged to form a joint business group (KUB) that can serve as a platform to collectively produce and market products. This will strengthen the competitiveness and stability of the business in the future.
- k) New Product Development: Going forward, this program can be further developed by introducing more product variations that suit international market tastes, such as accessories, light furniture, or wall hangings. This product diversification is important to continue to attract consumer attention and expand the market.

This service activity shows that the utilization of palm leaf midribs for export craft products not only increases the economic value of the community, but also has a positive environmental and social impact. With open market access, the community is expected to be able to utilize previously unutilized local resources into high-value products. Although there are still challenges such as production capacity and export regulations, this program has great potential to continue to be developed and become a model of sustainable economic empowerment in oil palm producing areas.

4. Conclusion

The utilization of oil palm leaf midribs that were previously considered as waste are now transformed into high-value handicraft products, which have great potential to be marketed both domestically and in the international market. Palm oil leaf midribs that were previously considered as waste are now being utilized into products with economic value, so this program also supports the reduction of plantation waste and contributes positively to the environment. This export potential provides greater opportunities for communities to scale up their businesses. The program opens up opportunities for sustainability by encouraging the formation of joint business groups (KUB) as collective production platforms. In addition, there is potential to develop more product variations that can meet global market demands and expand business opportunities in the future.

Although some challenges remain, such as limited production capacity and export regulations, this program demonstrates that the utilization of oil palm leaf midribs as export craft products is an effective solution to increase the economic value of the community, while supporting environmentally sustainable economic development.

5. References

- Abidin, Z. (2016). Manfaat Lidi Kelapa sawit.
- Andriana, A. N., & Pujayanti, A. F. (2022). Peningkatan Kesejahteraan Masyarakat Melalui Pemanfaatan Lidi Sawit Menjadi Produk Kerajinan Tangan. *Jurnal Masyarakat Mandiri*. JMM (Jurnal Masyarakat Mandiri).
- Daming, A. S., & Arnama, I. N. (2022). Pemanfaatan E-Commerce Dan Media Sosial Untuk Meningkatkan Pemasaran Produk Usaha Azzahra Craft Di Desa Puty Kecamatan Bua. *Portal Riset Dan Inovasi Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 1(2), 39–44. <https://doi.org/10.55047/prima.v1i2.181>
- Dumaria, D., Adrian, B., Dandi, D., Ananda, I., Canda, P., Kanida, S., & Soehardi, F. (2021). Pemanfaatan limbah lidi kelapa sawit menjadi inovasi kerajinan bernilai jual. *SENKIM: Seminar Nasional Karya Ilmiah Multidisiplin*, 1(1), 351–355.
- Garnasih, R. L. (2020). Pemanfaatan Limbah Lidi Kelapa Sawit Menjadi Produk Bernilai Ekonomis. *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Multidisiplin*, 3(2), 96–102.

- Nasution, D. A., Lubis, A. Z., & Nasution, J. (2022). Analisis Pemanfaatan Lidi Kelapa Sawit Dalam Meningkatkan Pendapatan Dan Ketidakseimbangan Ekonomi Masyarakat (Studi Kasus: Berkah Lidi Di Desa Sei Rumbia Kec. Kota Pinang Kab. Labuhanbatu Selatan). *Ekonomi Bisnis Manajemen Dan Akuntansi (EBMA)*, 3(2), 902–910.
- Rochman, F., Waris S., A., Utomo, H., & Santoso, E. B. (2024). Peningkatan Pemasaran Produk Umkm Kerajinan Tangan Papillon's Sisters Melalui Pelatihan Optimalisasi Media Sosial. *Portal Riset Dan Inovasi Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 3(4), 202–212. <https://doi.org/10.55047/prima.v3i4.1456>
- Soloi, S., & Hou, E. K. Z. (2019). The Potential of Oil Palm Leaf Fibre in Paper-making Industry. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, 1358(1). <https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1358/1/012005>
- Susanti, D. (2020). Pengembangan Produk Kerajinan Tangan dari Lidi Kelapa Sawit. *Jurnal Pemberdayaan Masyarakat*, 5(2).
- Syahrizal, S., Pujakesuma, A., & Prayesy, P. A. (2023). Peningkatan Perekonomian Rumah Tangga Melalui Limbah Lidi Sawit Di Kecamatan Banyuasin I. *Jurnal Pengabdian Magister Pendidikan IPA*, 6(3), 579–584.
- Wahyuni, A. (2019). Ekonomi Kreatif Berbasis Sumber Daya Alam Lokal. *Jurnal Ekonomi*, 3(1).