

Empowerment of MSME Activities of the Pallemba Bolangi Community, Gowa Regency

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Abstrak

Kegiatan pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk memberdayakan pelaku Usaha Mikro, Kecil, dan Menengah (UMKM) di Dusun Pallemba Bolangi, Kabupaten Gowa, Sulawesi Selatan, melalui peningkatan kapasitas dalam pengelolaan usaha, pemasaran digital, dan pengemasan produk. Wilayah Pallemba Bolangi memiliki potensi ekonomi lokal yang cukup besar, terutama pada sektor kuliner olahan pangan lokal, kerajinan anyaman, dan hasil pertanian dataran tinggi, namun pengelolaannya masih dilakukan secara tradisional dan belum berorientasi pada pasar yang lebih luas. Metode yang digunakan dalam kegiatan ini adalah pendekatan partisipatif melalui sosialisasi, pelatihan, dan pendampingan langsung yang dilaksanakan selama dua hari, yaitu pada tanggal 26–27 April 2026, dengan melibatkan pemerintah desa, tokoh masyarakat, serta akademisi. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan bahwa peserta mengalami peningkatan pemahaman mengenai strategi pemasaran digital, teknik pengemasan produk yang lebih menarik, dan dasar-dasar pencatatan keuangan usaha. Kegiatan ini juga mendorong tumbuhnya semangat kolaborasi antar pelaku UMKM dalam memasarkan produk unggulan dusun secara bersama-sama. Program ini diharapkan dapat menjadi langkah awal penguatan ekonomi kerakyatan berbasis potensi lokal di Kabupaten Gowa serta mendorong terciptanya UMKM yang lebih mandiri, tertata, dan berdaya saing.

Kata Kunci: UMKM; Pemberdayaan Masyarakat; Pallemba Bolangi; Ekonomi Kreatif; Pemasaran Digital.

Abstract

This community service activity aims to empower Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Pallemba Bolangi Hamlet, Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi, by strengthening business management, digital marketing, and product packaging capacities. The Pallemba Bolangi area has considerable local economic potential, particularly in processed local food, woven handicrafts, and highland agricultural products, yet management practices remain traditional and are not yet oriented toward wider markets. The method used is a

participatory approach through socialization, training, and direct mentoring conducted over two days, on 26–27 April 2026, involving the village government, community leaders, and academics. The results show that participants experienced increased understanding of digital marketing strategies, more attractive product packaging techniques, and basic business financial record-keeping. This activity also encouraged a growing spirit of collaboration among MSME actors in jointly marketing the hamlet's flagship products. This program is expected to be an initial step in strengthening the local economy based on local potential in Gowa Regency and to encourage the emergence of MSMEs that are more independent, well-organized, and competitive.

Keywords: MSMEs; Community Empowerment; Pallemba Bolangi; Creative Economy; Digital Marketing.

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are one of the main pillars of the people's economy in Indonesia, including in rural areas that have the potential for local resources that have not been fully exploited (Badar, Normiyati, et al., 2025; Nurlia et al., 2024). Gowa Regency, as one of the buffer districts of Makassar City, has diverse regional characteristics, ranging from lowlands to highlands, which store the potential of local products that are distinctive in each area (Badwi et al., 2025). One of these areas is Pallemba Bolangi, a hamlet known for having agricultural products, woven crafts, and processed local food that have enough potential to be developed into high-selling products.

Despite having great potential, MSME actors in Pallemba Bolangi are generally still running businesses conventionally. Product promotion still relies on word-of-mouth methods, product packaging has not paid attention to aesthetic and durability aspects, and business financial recording is still carried out simply without a clear separation between personal and business finances. This condition makes it difficult for Pallemba Bolangi's local products to compete with products from other regions that have already taken advantage of digital technology and modern marketing strategies (Peby Selviona, 2024; Teguh et al., 2022).

Based on the results of initial observations conducted by the service team in March 2026, it was found that most of the MSME actors in Pallemba Bolangi are housewives and the younger generation who have an entrepreneurial spirit but are constrained by knowledge and skills in more professional business management. Hilly geographical conditions and limited access to information have also slowed down the adaptation process of business actors to the development of the digital market.

The main problems identified from the initial observations, namely low understanding of digital marketing, uncompetitive product packaging, and unorganized financial records, are the direct basis for the selection of this program solution. Previous studies have shown that digital transformation and online marketing literacy are determining factors for the competitiveness of

MSMEs post-pandemic (Hidayat & Nugroho, 2023), while the quality of packaging of local products has been proven to contribute significantly to increasing the competitiveness of MSMEs in the wider market (Rahmawati & Saputra, 2023). Thus, there is a practice gap between the condition of Pallemba Bolangi MSMEs which are still conventional and the needs of the digital-oriented market, so interventions in the form of digital marketing, packaging, and financial management training are chosen as the most relevant solution to answer the gap.

Seeing these conditions, an empowerment program is needed that is able to increase the capacity of MSME actors quickly and on target. This community service activity is designed in the form of socialization and intensive training for two days that focus on three main aspects, namely digital marketing, product packaging, and simple financial management. This activity involves synergy between academics, hamlet/village governments, and local MSME actors as a form of triple helix collaboration in community economic empowerment.

The novelty of this activity lies in the application of a two-day intensive training model that is designed in a concise but applicable manner, with the target that participants can directly practice the material on the same day. This approach is different from other MSME empowerment programs that generally require months of mentoring, so this activity is expected to be an alternative model of empowering MSMEs based on local wisdom that is time-efficient but still has a real impact, especially for areas that have not been touched much by previous service programs such as Pallemba Bolangi. Previous MSME service activities in rural areas were generally designed with a gradual mentoring pattern for several months (Wibowo & Amir, 2022), so that the two-day intensive training model with hands-on practice applied to this activity is an approach that is explicitly different from the rural MSME empowerment pattern that has been widely reported in the literature, as well as a methodological contribution to the development of a more efficient MSME empowerment model time.

METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES

This service activity uses a participatory approach with a qualitative descriptive method. A participatory approach was chosen so that MSME actors can be actively involved in every stage of activities, starting from preparation, implementation, to evaluation. The qualitative descriptive method is used to describe the initial condition of MSME actors, the process of implementing activities, and changes in understanding that occur after the activity takes place (Arba et al., 2026; Petrus et al., 2026; Tinri et al., 2024).

Location and Time of Implementation

The service activity was held in Pallemba Bolangi Hamlet, Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi, on April 26-27, 2026. The selection of the location is based on the large potential of local products that have not been optimally managed and have never been the location of similar service programs before. This activity was attended by 30 MSME actors engaged in local processed food culinary, woven handicrafts, and agricultural products.

Target Audience

The target of this activity is MSME actors in Pallemba Bolangi Hamlet with diverse educational backgrounds and business experiences. Most of the participants were housewives and the younger generation who ran a home business but had not been managed professionally. In addition to MSME actors, this activity also involves village government officials, community leaders, and local PKK groups as implementing partners.

Stages of Implementation of Activities

The implementation of this service activity is carried out through four main stages, namely:

1. Preparation and Need Identification Stage

Before the implementation day, the service team conducted an initial survey and brief interviews with several MSME actors and hamlet officials to identify business conditions, product potential, and training needs. The identification results showed that the main needs of participants were digital marketing training, product packaging, and simple financial record-keeping.

2. Day One: Socialization and Education (April 26, 2026)

The first day's activities were filled with socialization and seminars which were attended by all participants. The material presented included the importance of developing MSMEs based on local potential, digital marketing strategies through social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp Business, as well as basic techniques for product packaging to be more attractive and durable. The speakers came from academics, MSME practitioners, and representatives of the village government.

3. Day Two: Training and Practical Assistance (April 27, 2026)

On the second day, the activity was focused on hands-on practice, including creating simple social media content, practicing product photography using smartphones, and packaging products using environmentally friendly materials that are easy to obtain around the hamlet. The service team also provided direct assistance to each participant and formed a WhatsApp group as a post-activity follow-up consultation medium.

4. Evaluation Stage

The evaluation was carried out at the end of the second day through filling out questionnaires before and after the activity, brief interviews, and group discussions to develop a follow-up plan with the village government. This evaluation is short-term, while the impact on increased visits and business turnover is planned to be further monitored by the service team and the village government in the following months.

Data Collection Techniques

Data was collected through three main methods, namely: (1) pre- and post-activity questionnaires containing 15 questions regarding digital marketing understanding, product packaging, and financial management; (2) brief interviews with several selected participants to explore their experiences and obstacles faced; and (3) visual documentation in the form of photos and videos of activities as evidence of implementation and further analysis materials.

Data Analysis

The data obtained were analyzed in a qualitative descriptive manner by comparing the participants' comprehension conditions before and after the activity based on the results of the questionnaire, then presented in the form of narratives and comparison tables. The interview results were transcribed and grouped by key themes, namely digital marketing, product packaging, and financial management, to strengthen the interpretation of quantitative data from the questionnaire.

Indicators of Activity Success

The success of the activity is determined based on five indicators, namely: (1) understanding digital marketing, (2) business social media account ownership, (3) understanding of product packaging techniques, (4) understanding of simple financial records, and (5) willingness to collaborate between MSME actors. Each indicator was measured through pre- and post-activity questionnaires containing questions with a score of 0-100 for each indicator. A participant is declared to "understand" or "succeed" on an indicator if his answer score on the questionnaire reaches at least 70 out of a scale of 100. The success percentage of each indicator is calculated from the proportion of the number of participants who reach the threshold to a total of 30 participants, and compared between the conditions before and after the activity. The activity is declared successful as a whole if there is a percentage increase in all indicators from the initial condition to the final condition (Badar, Nasir, et al., 2025; Yusuf et al., 2023).

IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSIONS

Results of Implementation of Activities

The socialization and training activities for MSMEs in Pallemba Bolangi Hamlet lasted for two days with the active participation of 30 local MSME actors. The series of activities includes socialization, practical training, and direct mentoring. The results achieved from this activity can be described as follows.

Improved understanding of Digital Marketing

Before the activity, most of the participants (80%) did not understand how to use social media to promote their business products effectively. After participating in socialization and practice on the second day, as many as 83% of participants stated that they had understood the basics of digital marketing, and most of them immediately created or updated their business social media accounts during the training. One of the participants, a bamboo weaving craftsman, said that he only realized the importance of interesting product photos to grow buyers' interest after participating in a product photography practice session.

Improved Product Packaging Quality

Before the training, MSME products such as pastries, processed bananas, and woven products were generally packaged as they were without attractive labels or designs. Through packaging training using simple, eco-friendly materials such as kraft paper and sticker labels, participants began to

understand the importance of packaging as part of a marketing strategy. As many as 77% of participants showed a good understanding of packaging techniques after participating in the practical session, compared to only 17% in the early stages.

Strengthening Collaboration Between MSME Actors

One of the most prominent results of this activity is the growth of the spirit of collaboration between MSME actors. During the activity, participants began to exchange information about raw materials, marketing channels, and the possibility of selling products together in one package of superior hamlet products. This spirit of collaboration is an important social capital for the sustainability of the MSME empowerment program in Pallemba Bolangi in the future.

A comparison of the condition of participants before and after the activity based on the results of the questionnaire is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Comparison of MSME Participants' Understanding Before and After the Activity

Indicator	Before the Program	After the Program
Understanding digital marketing (social media)	20% of participants	83% of participants
Business social media account ownership	23% of participants	70% of participants
Participants understand product packaging techniques	17% of participants	77% of participants
Participants understand simple financial records	13% of participants	67% of participants
Willingness to collaborate between MSME actors	10% of participants	60% of participants

The percentage figure in Table 1 is calculated based on the proportion of participants who achieve a minimum comprehension score of 70 out of a scale of 100 on the questionnaire for each indicator, as described in the Activity Success Indicators section. For example, the number of 83% in the digital marketing indicator was obtained from 25 participants (25/30) who achieved this score in the post-activity questionnaire, the number 77% in the product packaging indicator came from 23 participants (23/30), the figure 67% in the financial recording indicator came from 20 participants (20/30), and the number 60% in the indicator of willingness to collaborate came from 18 participants (18/30) who explicitly expressed their willingness in the questionnaire and post-activity group discussions.

The Role of MSMEs in Hamlet Economic Development. MSMEs have a strategic role in driving the economy at the hamlet level, especially in areas that have not been touched by the large industrial sector. In Pallemba Bolangi, MSMEs

are not only a source of additional income for households, but also have the potential to become a local economic identity if managed and promoted properly. Strengthening the capacity of MSME actors from an early age through activities like this is an important first step in building a sustainable people's economic ecosystem.

The Importance of Digital Literacy for MSMEs. The development of digital technology has changed people's consumption patterns, including in finding and buying local products. MSME actors who do not have adequate digital literacy are at risk of being left behind in market competition. This activity shows that with the right assistance, even MSME actors in rural areas can quickly understand and practice the basics of digital marketing, even though limited internet access at several points in Pallemba Bolangi is still a challenge in itself.

Multistakeholder Collaboration in Community Empowerment. The success of this activity cannot be separated from the synergy between academics, village governments, and the community as the main actors. This triple helix collaboration model allows each party to contribute according to their respective roles, academics provide materials and technical assistance, village governments provide policy support and mobilization of participants, while MSME actors become active subjects who practice the knowledge gained.

Challenges and Obstacles. Although these activities have shown positive results, there are some challenges that need to be addressed in the follow-up program. First, the limited signal and internet access in some areas of Pallemba Bolangi hampered optimal digital marketing practices. Second, the limited implementation time of two days makes some of the material not able to be practiced in depth by all participants. Third, limited business capital is still an obstacle for some MSME actors to develop their production scale. Therefore, a more intensive follow-up assistance program is needed as well as support for access to capital from the government and local financial institutions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the implementation of MSME empowerment activities in Pallemba Bolangi Hamlet, Gowa Regency, it can be concluded that several things are as follows:

1. The two-day socialization and training activities succeeded in increasing MSME actors' understanding of digital marketing, product packaging, and simple financial recording.
2. There has been a significant increase in the ownership and use of social media accounts as a means of promoting MSME products.
3. This activity encourages the growth of the spirit of collaboration between MSME actors in marketing superior products in the hamlet together.
4. There are still challenges in the form of limited internet access, short mentoring time, and limited business capital that need to be followed up in the next program.

5. The sustainability of the program is needed through further assistance, strengthening digital infrastructure, and support for access to capital from the government and financial institutions.

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