

# Strengthening Community-Based Entrepreneurship: The Significance of Community Capacity Building and Enabling Ecosystem

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**Subject Area:** *Entrepreneurship, Education*

## **Abstract**

Currently, community-based entrepreneurship is regarded as an alternative solution to recover community's economic condition from crisis. Even more, it can be potential business venture to open more employment, alleviate poverty, reduce urbanization and increase community's life quality. Despite its enormous benefits, the development of rural community-based entrepreneurs is still inhibited by some major barriers. Those barriers range from physical, hard, infrastructure to soft, human, capacity aspects. To increase its productivity, respond to more competitive business market and be sustainable, today's community entrepreneurs need to develop more skills, persist positive business attitude and strong mentality. The study aims to explore roles of capacity building and supportive environment in promoting community-based entrepreneurship. The study adopts qualitative research method. The data are gathered and extracted from a community service program. This program aims to increase community entrepreneurs' capacity of several small and medium scale enterprises at Lumajang. The study finds that the local entrepreneurs need more knowledges and skills on marketing and online promotion to increase their productivity and become more competitive in digital era. The study also indicates that the growth of local entrepreneurs needs to be supported by innovative and openness, networking and partnership.

**Keywords:** *community-based entrepreneurship, partnership, community education, entrepreneurship ecosystem*

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## **INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

The need for people to be able to generate their own jobs has been signalled by the increasingly competitive labour market in today's Indonesia. Significant differences, particularly between the wealthy and the poor communities, may result from the overpopulation and unequal economic distribution. The wealthy social classes may have

access to privileged education, wealth, and position. Additionally, the disparity in employment chances is strengthened by this difference. High social class individuals with strong educations may have access to well-paying career possibilities. Meanwhile, underprivileged individuals may suffer because they cannot find suitable employment that may guarantee a better quality of life.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Community-Based Entrepreneurship and Growing Challenges

Recently, community-based entrepreneurship has been increasingly popular in discussions about entrepreneurship, particularly in rural and underserved communities. Community-based entrepreneurship highlights the emergence of entrepreneurs who build their ventures rooted at the existing social structure (Mandrysz, 2020). Community-based entrepreneurship is led by the pursuit of community economic and social objectives (Mandrysz, 2020). Community-based entrepreneurship can be an alternative business growth to empower traditional ventures (Wanniarachchi et al., 2018). Peredo and Chrisman (2006) also emphasize one of the principal characteristics of community-based entrepreneurship as a method for developing entrepreneurs who open and operate enterprises within community's existing social and cultural circumstances. Community-based entrepreneurship is also regarded as an option of social-based enterprise (Sarreal, 2013). Similarly, Hertel (2018, p. 12) defines community-based enterprises as ventures which are developed, owned and run by local community members and are embedded within community. Furthermore, it aims to generate social, environmental and economic advantages (Hertel, 2018, p. 12). Relevant to the previous studies, LCN (n.d.) confirms that entrepreneurship can be possible alternative answer for increasing economic community by growing successful local entrepreneurs. Furthermore, Mandrysz (2020) informs that community-based social economy may exist in variety of forms, including joint

organizations, cooperations, associations and foundations.

Community-based entrepreneurship is one of entrepreneurship varieties, which emerges from local community need to thrive by using their local resources, local knowledge, finance. Frequently, the local community entrepreneurs are still facing skill shortage. The dynamic of entrepreneurship is revealed by Hindle (2010), who identifies entrepreneurship as dynamic, multi-faceted and naturally diverse actions. The dynamics of entrepreneurship rely on four main elements: human agent, specific object, the intermediate environment and macro environmental context which is beyond human control (Hindle, 2010). How entrepreneurs grow is also dynamic. As mentioned by Davidsson (2003, 2004), entrepreneurship may develop because of innovative-based process (which is revealed by emerging perspective) and through opportunities (which indicates that entrepreneurship emerges from discovery and evaluation). Community-based entrepreneurship relates to social and business process of how community members behave corporately to be entrepreneurs to achieve common objectives (Peredo & Chrisman, 2006). Because it emerges within community environment, community-based entrepreneurs are attached to the community condition, orienting to community life, being self-support, having various or multiple goals and encouraging collective development (Hertel, 2018, p. 12). Community-based entrepreneurship is based on process, collective action, chances development, evaluation and contribution within social and local scopes (Hertel, 2018). Since rooted from community context, community-based entrepreneurship tends to be

collective based. Community entrepreneurs are different from autonomous entrepreneurs as autonomous entrepreneurs tend to pursue personal advantage, while community entrepreneurs are more socially based (Hindle, 2010).

## **B. Roles of Community-Based Entrepreneurship in Local Development**

Many previous studies acknowledge the potential benefits of community-based entrepreneurship, particularly for strengthening local economy, community, place development and social well-being (Fortunato & Alter, 2015). Community-based entrepreneurship may improve community's life quality, reach better health conditions, provide capacity building and empowerment (Sarreal, 2013). Community-based entrepreneurship may reduce poverty and improve community's economic income (Linna, 2011), increase potential capacity of deprived and marginalized community (Parwez, 2017; Sarreal, 2013). Community-based entrepreneurship aims to minimize poverty, develop business which open job employment to uplift community's social, economic condition (Mkhize et al., 2020), increase community's life quality (Welsch & Kuhns, 2001) and their livelihoods (Sarreal, 2013). This indicates that community enterprises bring about positive impacts on social sustainability (Raskin, 2000), as if it is managed well, it will fulfil community's needs for long and short periods (Peredo & Chrisman, 2006). The community entrepreneurs can be agents of change who inspire and promote others' entrepreneurship process (Hindle, 2010). It also can be beneficial for fulfilling the need gaps of community (Welsch & Kuhns, 2001) and recovering

community from social and economic crisis (Hindle, 2010). Moreover, local ventures are not only benefiting community by alleviating poverty and creating more job opportunities, but also growing innovative culture and creating more values for community business (Wanniarachchi et al., 2018). This is confirmed by Fortunato and Alter (2015), who find that community-based entrepreneurship may benefit community even beyond economic advantages.

The significance of community-based entrepreneurship stimulates researchers to explore some enabling and inhibiting aspects. Purusottama et al. (2018) argue that the success of community-based entrepreneurship relies on its internal factors, including individuals' attitude, confidence to build business, commitment and social perception of being entrepreneurs because individuals may perceive entrepreneurs are not common profession. Moreover, Purusottama et al. (2018) consider individuals' education age and gender as influential factors. Meanwhile, other studies highlight the roles of infrastructure and supporting facilities. As mentioned by Sarreal (2013), community entrepreneurship needs to be supported by sufficient social and physical infrastructures, including banking, market, technology, young generation inclusion, health support, schools and roads. Community-based entrepreneurship needs access to essential facilities, including water, electricity and market access (Linna, 2011). Relevant to previous studies which support infrastructure and facilities roles, Parwez (2017) also illuminates the significant function of technical and funding.

Some other studies underline the importance of community environment, this environment provides context to develop. Context

may influence process (Hindle, 2010). Thus, how the community culture, how they behave socially and how they build collective business can influence the development and sustainability of community-based entrepreneurship. As argued by Mandrysz (2020), community-based entrepreneurship requires strong-tied community who has mutual trust, bond, shared norms and collective control. This indicates that community social or collective capital is significant for community-based entrepreneurship growth. Some of those social capitals are community resources, community engagement and sense of ownership (Linna, 2011), reciprocal trust, group effective functioning, social motivation and social institution (Parwez, 2017). Meanwhile, some existing studies emphasize on the importance of community entrepreneurial competences. Wanniarachchi et al. (2018) recommend some skills needed to open community business, such as operational, marketing, teamworking abilities which are supported by adequate capital and infrastructure. Other studies highlight the significance of some entrepreneurial competences, such as leadership, management, internal issue identification and analysis and gaining supports gain (Suresh et al., cited in Parwez, 2017, p. 3), marketing, packaging and strengthening business mentality (Saraswati, 2017), opportunity identification and analysis, persistence in building business (Welsch & Kuhns, 2001), communal networking, finance and education through training and mentoring (Ivan, 2009), strengthening human resources capacities, networking and building positive community beliefs and attitudes (Ivan, 2009). The success of community-based entrepreneurship is not only influenced by human competences, but also rural culture and environment, such as the isolation of

rural location from markets, other businesses, service providers and limited chances for partnerships, mentoring assistance and insufficient enabling infrastructure and capital (Ivan, 2009). Differently, Rahajeng and Suprpto (2019) argue that the key success of community-based entrepreneurship is the management of *BumDes*.

## METHODOLOGY

The research method used in this study is qualitative. It seeks to investigate several supportive elements of expanding rural community-based entrepreneurship. It focuses on the need to enhance the capacity of community entrepreneurs and an investigation of the supportive environment.

The study was taken from the Rogotunan, Lumajang community service project, "Marketing and Packaging Design Development for Small and Middle Scale Community Enterprises." The data are gathered from a variety of sources, including program materials, activities, reports, films, images, and conversations with the program coordinator.

Several SMEs in Lumajang are participating in this community service program to improve their product branding and marketing abilities. The community service team tries to deal with the marketing and branding problems faced by those SMEs. This is because the growth of SMEs in Lumajang may be hampered by a lack of marketing and branding expertise. The local business owners are unsure on how to sell their goods online and where to market their goods. As a result, they are unable to boost their product sales. Thus, the program's focus is on educating or mentoring a number of SMEs in Lumajang so they can market and sell their goods online or through social media. The program is developed over the course of several

major stages, including group brainstorming and discussion, selecting potential SMEs, carrying out pre-observation, coaching the entrepreneurs to

improve their product package in an inventive way, coaching them to promote their product using online media, monitoring, and evaluation



Figure 1. Formal meeting to prepare the program and interview with one of entrepreneur-participant

Direct observation, program materials, program activities, and communication with the program coordinator are the key ways that the data are collected. Inductive-thematic analysis is used to analyse the collected data. Through data classification, certain key themes are identified. By analysing the data and assessing its significance in relation to previous research, the classed data are provided.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study of the gathered data reveals two key themes. The need for community entrepreneurs to

strengthen their capacity building is the first subject. Individual or micro size operations are typical for this theme. The second theme is related to the larger ecosystem that fosters the macroscale growth of community entrepreneurs.

### A. Entrepreneurship Education

According to the data, local business owners express a desire to increase their knowledge and expertise in managing their enterprises. The needs of various community entrepreneurs for specific capacities are shown in the accompanying table (Table 1).

Table 1. Ground Needs of The Entrepreneurs-Participants

No	SMEs	Business area	Required Capacity building
1	Bu Nur Laili	Jamu (Javanese Herbal drink)	Online marketing strategies
2	Tohami	Food catering	Offline and online marketing strategies
3	Hamila	Warung (traditional food stand), producing traditional chips	Marketing and Financial management
4	Umi Hanik	Culinary	Food Processing

Source / Ket: Author Version

The table above details the basic requirements of certain local business owners. The first business owner mentions her desire to receive training in web marketing. Similar to the first entrepreneur, the second admits that he needs expertise in both offline and internet marketing.

The third entrepreneur mentions the necessity to learn how to handle her company's finances in addition to marketing expertise. The final businessperson indicates a desire to increase her knowledge of how to produce or process a wider variety of food. The table also shows that the majority of the entrepreneurs who took part express a need to understand how to sell their goods via online media.

The community service team determines to meet the needs of the entrepreneurs' capacity building after identifying and analysing the needs of the participants who are entrepreneurs. This includes developing product labels, packages, and internet marketing techniques. This entails the important contributions of education in the capacity-building of community entrepreneurs. Therefore, increasing the output of local businesses may be achieved through entrepreneurship education, particularly through coaching. This also implies the importance of education in community development (Saraswati, 2017), including for rural community (Sarreal, 2013).

The table above (Table 1) also illustrates a number of significant new concerns in the expanding community-based entrepreneurship. Building the skills of community entrepreneurs in areas like education, operational management, and marketing falls under this category. As mentioned by Parwez (2017), community-based entrepreneurship is usually challenged by various problems, ranging from societal to market issues.

The findings support earlier research that identified entrepreneurship education as a barrier to community-based entrepreneurship. As stated by Sarreal (2013), one of many barriers of rural community-based entrepreneurship is low level of education and insufficient skills. The insufficient skills of community entrepreneurs are shown by small or limited number or quantity of local entrepreneurs, small size or scale, product quality and successful probability of new ventures (Sarreal, 2013). The other barriers are accessibility for marketing community products, networking and communication (Wanniarachchi et al., 2018). Furthermore, Sarreal (2013) reports that insufficient experienced local entrepreneurs can restrict the rural capacity to develop community-based entrepreneurship as the rural community is lacking expert members who are willing to share skills, inspire and model their business to other community members. Thus, it is significant to support potential individuals as they can thrive into community entrepreneurs who can create jobs for others (Fortunato & Alter, 2015). Moreover, they can be agents of change who bring about social mission to change community (Mandrysz, 2020).

The study also suggests that increasing local community entrepreneurship can be achieved in part through education. This finding confirms and strengthens the findings of earlier research. As suggested by Fortunato and Alter (2015), community as entrepreneurs can be grown through education, implementing strategic program which includes local community, establishing local-based financial institutions to support community financial capital and fostering supportive local culture. Some other supportive aspects are supportive policy, community education and adequate physical-social infrastructure (Sarreal,

2013). These previous research also demonstrate that education is not a solitary, stand-alone remedy. It must instead work in tandem with other approaches.

By focusing on particular educational components, some recent studies highlight the significance of entrepreneurial education. For instance, entrepreneurship education and training need to be supplemented with entrepreneurship modules (Sarreal, 2013). Furthermore, Sarreal (2013) mentions that entrepreneurship education is urgently needed by areas with high population but weak entrepreneurship culture. It is also worthwhile to target specific entrepreneurship education or entrepreneurship education for specific purposes, such as business training, financial and innovation management, to effectively respond to community entrepreneurs' necessity (Sarreal, 2013). Different from those studies, Bhandari et al. (2021) argue that education alone cannot effectively support the community entrepreneurs' business. Instead, it needs to be combined with appropriate technology (Bhandari et al., 2021).

According to the data, the entrepreneurs who took part in the program were really eager to learn and participate in educational activities. This shows that entrepreneurship education for community entrepreneurs has the ability to develop the entrepreneurial mindset as well as maximize The table above details the basic requirements of certain local business owners. The first business owner mentions her desire to receive training in web marketing. Similar to the first entrepreneur,

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### **A. Environmental Support**

The study reveals that an encouraging atmosphere plays a key influence in the development of community entrepreneurs in addition to emphasizing the significance of education. This also means that community entrepreneurs' ability to expand successfully is frequently influenced by how their environment responds to and supports them.

The study demonstrates that external stakeholders, such as the government (The Ministry of Social Affairs of Republic Indonesia), which works with the local government of Lumajang (Social agency), as well as higher education institutions, support the growth of SMEs that are based on local resources and locality. For instance, the government works with Pelindo and higher education institutions on the ProKus Program. Together, they offer mentoring that starts with on-the-ground research. This grassroots investigation seeks to discover the true state of SMEs in Lumajang and pinpoint the major problems.



Figure 2. The discussion and brainstorming process with Lumajang Social Agency and the cake making process performed by an entrepreneur-participant

This community service program continues the prior program's main objective (Marketing and Packaging Design Development for Small and Middle Scale Community Enterprises at Rogotunan, Lumajang). These initiatives are anticipated to boost community entrepreneurs' motivation, carry out sustainable actions, have greater and more lasting effects, and improve their knowledge and abilities. Furthermore, a creative and inventive entrepreneurial village or *kampung* may eventually be created as a result of the entrepreneurs' success inspiring other members of the community to follow in their footsteps. This suggests that encouragement and assistance may enable entrepreneurs to grow. This also entails a concern on how to provide growing entrepreneurship climate. An entrepreneurial aspect which is frequently underdiscussed is how to grow local entrepreneurs and how to create supporting climate for them to grow (LCN, n.d.).

The study also highlights the value of cooperation. To develop SMEs, there must be internal and cross-stakeholder collaborations. The internal cooperation demonstrates the entrepreneurs' and the community's readiness to cooperate and share. This may indicate a healthy environment. As mentioned by Fortunato and Alter

(2015), healthy community's collaborating culture will encourage neighbours to take same opportunities without competing.

Since community-based entrepreneurs arise from communities, the context or setting of the community is a crucial component. Some existing studies identify dimensions of the context which may determine entrepreneurs' success. Hindle (2010), for instance, mentions that the development of community-based entrepreneurship is affected by its intermediate surrounding environment, which can be encouraging or hostile. Community-based entrepreneurship is also influenced by several community factors or sense of community, including membership, collaboration, shared emotion or emotional attachment (Mcmillan & Chavis, 1986). The other encouraging factor is the community sense of belonging (Mkhize et al., 2020). This sense of belonging is influenced by several elements, including trust, identity, time and effort and membership (Blanchard & Markus, 2004). This sense of community may assist the creation of healthy ecosystem. Furthermore, this healthy ecosystem will alleviate daily conflict, pessimism and divisiveness (Fortunato & Alter, 2015). Hindle (2010) believes that community context influences community-based



entrepreneurship through three aspects: human resources, physical assets and property rights. As a result, community-based entrepreneurship is influenced by community culture as well as the infrastructure and services that are already in place.

The community service team does a ground need analysis and inquiry before beginning mentoring to investigate and pinpoint some of the most pressing problems that need to be resolved. This serves as pre-mentoring. Since the teaching or mentorship addresses pressing problems encountered by numerous SMEs in Lumajang, it is anticipated that it will be effective. Mandrysz (2020) mentions that it is an urgent need to diagnose the community social capital to support the growth of community-based social economy. Some other studies also highlight the importance of identifying community potentials, such as examining community entrepreneurial talents, identifying entrepreneurial type-fittingness, exploring current resources and supporting systems (LCN, n.d.). Furthermore, LNC (n.d.) illuminates the need to diagnose potential environment for local entrepreneurship to grow in addition to other steps (coordinating entrepreneurs' activities, increasing support and heightening community awareness). The study also recommends combining the analysis of community social capital with a look at local ground issues.

The study also shows that networking and cross-external teamwork that occurs in partnerships may help community-based entrepreneurship. The data demonstrate that education (mentoring) on product packaging design and internet marketing can inspire and enable the supported SMEs at Lumajang. This shows the pressing necessity for networking and partnership in the development of cooperation. As

stated by Mandrysz (2020), there is also a strong need to establish cooperation between social economic institutions and community. Furthermore, this cooperation needs to operate within shared goals, values by understanding community problems and necessity (Mandrysz, 2020). Even more, some previous studies regard collaboration across multiple different sectors as the pre-requirement of growing community-based entrepreneurs. As mentioned by Bhandari et al. (2021), to develop local entrepreneurs, it is needed collaboration among community, academia and government. This is heightened by strong relationship between social-economy ecosystems and entities (Mandrysz, 2020). Some other requisite skills include planning business, exploring ideas, solving problems, thinking creatively, networking and marketing (Wanniarachchi et al., 2018), risk taking, innovation, strong passion, team building skills and collaboration (LCN, n.d.). The practice of collaboration will also broaden local entrepreneurs' opportunities to increase their business scopes. This is because formerly, community-based entrepreneurs tend to be based on local needs, but today they tend to be global and national economic-based (Seixas & Berkes, 2010).

The study also reveals that relationships can be strengthened through collaboration. Through this relationship capital, further institutional collaboration and capabilities can be formed (Kim & Lim, 2017; Olmedo et al., 2019). This study also reveals that friendship-building can be accomplished through cooperation. For instance, *silaturahmi* is a successful cultural strategy for enhancing a sense of belonging, inclusion, and fraternity. Additionally, it can be a

strategy for accepting, even embracing, differences. Collaboration and acceptance of differences may give creativity a powerful boost. Diversity can be positive for community as it emerges creativity, desire to experiment new things and imagination (Fortunato & Alter, 2015). The emerging diversities may not only increase the creative design of each local entrepreneurship, but also transform their places into creative spaces (Fortunato & Alter, 2015). Besides increasing creativity, collaboration and diversities promotion may also building friendly rivalries (Fortunato & Alter, 2015). In addition to a developing inventive culture, healthy competition, and a creative community, collaboration has the ability to meet the needs of community-based businesses. By meeting their demands, external collaboration might help the neighbourhood business owners or local entrepreneurs to meet their demands. This mainly happens when the (other) business owners or the area in which they live cannot meet their needs. These local needs can be met by diverse broader supporting groups, partnerships and networks (Seixas & Berkes, 2010).

The study also highlights the significance of group sustainable efforts to support local business owners. This is because rural areas are frequently suffering from unemployment and poverty which requires the growth and development of community-based entrepreneurship to solve socio-economic issues (Mkhize et al., 2020), as local entrepreneurship can fulfil local and regional necessity, opening jobs, increasing relational assets and building community bonds (Kim & Lim, 2017). These enterprises are beneficial for saving community's economic, social conditions, even for developing them (Welsch & Kuhns, 2001). These poverty-

elimination programs cannot be solved alone, instead it needs group and collaborative actions (Parwez, 2017).

The study emphasizes two crucial factors that help local entrepreneurs grow: their capacity and a favourable, supportive environment. This ecology might offer advantageous conditions, both physically and emotionally. Additionally, this environment requires the support of relational resources in the form of networking and partnerships. The study confirms Minniti and Bygrave (1999), who propose three aspects which determine individual's decision on becoming entrepreneurs, which include personal motivation, economic and institutional condition and existing degree of community entrepreneurship.

## CONCLUSION

Two key elements in developing and supporting community-based entrepreneurship are highlighted in the study. The first component is enhancing the entrepreneurs' capacities. The local business owners continue to have trouble locating or increasing their markets as well as using online media to promote their products. By giving them mentoring or education in entrepreneurship, their needs can be met. Building capacity may increase local entrepreneurs' knowledge and abilities while also boosting their motivation and sense of self. The second is the establishment of an enabling environment, particularly through internal and external networking and partnership engagements. According to the study, there are several advantages to this collaboration for the growth of community entrepreneurs. Increased relationship assets, friendship and brotherhood-building, and the satisfaction of broader and more varied local

needs are a few of these. The study also emphasizes the necessity for more than just providing individual entrepreneurs with certain skills if community-based entrepreneurs are to flourish and expand. It must be supported and maintained through partnership and networking.

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