Empowering Housewife Communities in Dasawisma II Mangunsari Asri, Semarang City through a Creative Economy "Waiki Rajut"

Kuncoro Bayu Prasetyo¹, Arief Yulianto², Dwi Endah Kusumaningtyas³, Ela Nur Aini¹, and Himmatul Aliyah¹

¹Dept of Sociology and Anthropology, FIS Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia
²Dept. of Management, FE Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia
³Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

Abstract
Dasawisma is an association of housewives in rural and urban communities in Indonesia. In general, the activities of dasawisma are limited to members’ social gatherings, the promotion of household products, and the objects of government programs. However, there is a great potential for economic independence driving from dasawisma activities if they are well managed. This study is based upon a mentoring activity for housewives of the Dasawisma II Mangunsari Asri Housing Gunungpati Semarang City which sought to empower members of the dasawisma through creative economic ventures such as knitting sandal crafts. The method of implementing the activity is through a partnership and participatory empowerment approach. Several empowerment activities are carried out systematically, including: developing entrepreneurial motivation; training of skills in producing knitting sandals, managing work organizations; managing finance; promoting and marketing products; introducing online marketing methods; and maintaining the stability of creative economic activities. These activities resulted in the establishment of a creative economic business unit managed directly by Dasawisma II members under the name Waiki Rajut (Knitting Waiki). The existence of Waiki Rajut is both an arena for the productivity of women and and allows makes housewives to feel more resourceful and responsible since they have activities and skills.

Keywords: Creative Economy, Dasawisma, Empowerment, Housewife, Knitting Sandal

1. Introduction

In many developing countries, gender construction regarding the role of men and women in productive economic activities places men more as the party who is obliged to work in the public sector to provide for their families, while women are more placed in domestic obligations and the realm of consumption economy [1]. Thus, the existence of women as housewives is considered a natural thing that should be done. Some media reported that in the first quarter of 2016, the number of Indonesia's workforce fell to 127.67 million people, from 128.3 million people in the first quarter of 2015.
decrease in the number of the workforce was due to the transition from working women to housewives taking care of the household [2].

Transformation of the status and role of women in general is caused by the development of society and the region in the neighborhood where they live [3]. Elizabeth further explained that in all strata, it was indicated that the role and status of women in taking care of household survival was higher than men as heads of households. Economically, many housewives are seen by the community as unproductive people. They are always connoted as domestic workers (homemakers) with stereotypes attached cannot contribute actively outside the home so that their inherent role is not more than just activities to take care in the house [4].

However, in the current era, the stereotype that housewives are economically unproductive should be deconstructed because it is not in accordance with the changing times and gender equality rights. In the current development of industrial and digital era, the economic potential of housewives is very likely to be optimized without having to leave domestic work. These should be happened due to equal rights between man and woman, and rationality on working must be divides production into gender aspects and environment [5]. One opportunity that can be used by housewives to contribute to the economy is through the creative economy.

Based on BPS 2013 data in Nandini [5], it was explained that the trend of the development of creative economy ventures from 2012 to 2013 experienced a significant increase. The creative economy has contributed to the nation with its success in 2002 to 2008. The creative economy was ranked 6th out of 10 industrial sub-sectors which absorbed 11.8 million workers from 10.72% of the total workforce in 2013 [6]. A source from Republika.co.id media written by Prayogi [7] in 2018 also explained that the contribution of the creative economy in 2016 to GDP reached an increase from the previous years of 4.41% and in 2017 amounted to 4.95 %. Even in some countries, creative industries play a significant role in contributing to national income [8]. Khoirul Umam (2017) in potentialbisnis.id, stated that there are several creative business potentials, including the following: culinary business, handicrafts, writers, opening private lessons, typing service businesses, top up credit, fashion, and so forth. This potential if seriously optimized and pursued can increase the income of housewives without leaving their domestic work [9].

During this time, the potentials have not been realized by many housewives. Assistance and empowerment efforts are needed to support and develop the potential of housewives in social and economic terms. Therefore, a community empowerment activity is designed for housewives with clear goals that must be achieved. Every
community empowerment activity needs to be based on a specific work strategy in order to achieve the desired goals [11]. In addition, social capital among industrial relation are created social bonding among societies which created by kinship and neighborhood system, then, strengthening cooperation between employee, employer, labor, supplier, consumer and government for supporting each other due to local commodity [12]. Assistance in the empowerment of housewives builds their economic independence meaning that they do not rely on the income of their husband who works in public sector.

The importance of empowering housewives in optimizing their potential and creating independence in their status and position without forgetting domestic work is necessary. The housewife empowerment is carried out through existing groups such as Dasawisma. Dasawisma is an organization of housewives which can be found in urban as well as rural society. Dasawisma is part of families who are classified as the coaching object of the PKK (organization aiming at empowering women in the development) [11]. During this time, the existence of PKK is closely associated to a place for social gathering, promotion and demonstration of household appliances products as well as targets for various government programs.

Based on the described reality, it is necessary to have an effort to revitalize and redefine the existence of Dasawisma (as part of PKK) in order to become a media and arena for social and economic empowerment of women. Empowerment in a PKK group including dasawisma is expected to improve the quality of human resources [12]. As is the case in Dasawisma II, Mangunasari Village, Gunungpati Subdistrict, Semarang City, so far, it has begun to take the initiative to carry out economic activities in groups. The current creation is in the form of making knitting sandals. However, the craft of knitting sandals on Dasawisma II has not been carried out optimally and continuously. So far, the members of Dasawisma II carry out activities of knitting sandals only as a routine to fill the dasawisma activities without having an economic development orientation. Further, this article aims to explain the efforts to raise critical awareness of the potentials of the housewives of Dasawisma II, as well as to provide assistance and empowerment for them so that they can make knitting sandals as a forum for creative economic development that can bring added value socially and economically.

2. Method of Implementation

The strategy of implementing the mentoring program for Dasawisma II group Mangunasari was carried out in participatory community empowerment. Empowerment that is a
participation is empowerment that is very potential in realizing economic, social, and cultural transformation [13]. The participation referred to in empowerment according to Hoofsteede was mentioned as "The taking part in one more phase of the process" [14]. The statement means that participation in empowerment is represented by taking part in a stage or process of an empowerment. So, the group can move actively in each of its activities. Participatory empowerment assistance in this context was carried out in the Dasawisma II group, Mangunsari Asri Housing, Gunungpati, Semarang City. In addition, empowerment is carried out by involving the participation of members of the dasawisma most of whom are housewives.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Overview of Dasawisma II Mangunsari Asri Housing

Mangunsari Asri Housing is located in Mangunsari Village, Gunungpati Subdistrict, Semarang City, Central Java Province. Geographically, Mangunsari Asri is 20 km from the center of Semarang in the south and is not far from the slopes of Mount Ungaran. Compared to the city center of Semarang which tends to be hot, Mangunsari area is classified as cooler. Gunungpati Subdistrict located in the highlands is one of the ecological buffer cities of Semarang so that there is still a lot of green land spread out. Mangunsari Asri Housing was established in 2009 and currently has a population of 98 households.

Dasawisma II is one of the 5 dasawisma in Mangunsari Asri Housing. There are 22 households registered as members of Dasawisma II. Compared to other Dasawisma in Mangunsari Asri, Dasawisma II is classified as having a high level of activeness. Some of Dasawisma II’s routine activities are monthly meetings, savings and credit gathering, picket taking care of the family medicine park (TOGA), monitoring mosquito larvae once a week, and garbage bank every month. Besides, Dasawisma II also has several incidental activities in the social and harmony field.

One of the interesting activities of Dasawisma II is the initiative of several members whose hobby is knitting to try to develop the hobby in the form of a joint venture to make knitting sandals. The effort was originally an activity carried out to give added value to the monthly meeting activities. The potential of the knitting sandals is quite well. It is proven by the fact that the sandals produced are always sold by people in the housing environment and in the work places of working mothers of Dasawisma II. But unfortunately, this potential is only done casually so that the production process is
not carried out continuously. Therefore, assistance and empowerment activities were carried out by the Semarang State University community service team in hopes that the potential of knitting sandals of Dasawisma II members could be optimized socially and economically.

3.2. The Forms of Assistance and Empowerment of "Waiki Rajut Program"

The aim of assistance in the empowerment of the Dasawisma II group is to accompany the initiative process and actions taken by the Dasawisma II group without any intervention from outside parties. This assistance planning paradigm involves active community participation rather than centralization. In this assistance and empowerment, several forms have been developed which include physical, social, and human capital. Widjajanti [15] said that physical capital is a facility, or an asset that is used as a tool and the main support of the implementation of a business or activity to achieve the goal. While social capital is a norm or value that has been established and understood by the community. Human capital is an asset related to the ability to carry out certain activities.

In connection with the condition of the Dasawisma II group, the form of assistance that was carried out was also related to the three capitals. Physical capital in the Dasawisma group is done by providing capital in the form of facilities and infrastructure for knitting sandals production activities. The majority of Dasawisma II groups already have skills in making knitting sandals, although they are still fairly simple and have not been developed yet. Therefore, the provision of physical capital can facilitate productivity to the marketing of knitting sandals. While the social capital owned by Dasawisma II group in the form of social relations established by Dasawisma II mothers is quite extensive. Thus, with extensive social networks, the marketing efforts of Dasawisma II group products can be easily accepted and sold in the market. Mahendra [16] said that social capital can encourage the economic life of a person or group of people even, social capital can also improve every other social aspect. The human capital owned by Dasawisma II group has the potential if it is developed in an effort to empower. Human capital owned by Dasawisma II group is the ability to establish relationships, and the level of education (the majority has graduated from college). Thus, these three capitals are important to review in order to see appropriate assistance in empowering the Dasawisma II group. In more detail, to achieve participatory empowerment and in accordance with the main goal of empowering the Dasawisma II group, the following stages are carried out:

2. Training of skills and creativity in knitting sandals production.

3. Assistance on Organizing Work Organization and Human Resources.


5. Financial Management Assistance

6. Promotion and Marketing Management Assistance

7. Technical Introduction to Online Marketing Methods

8. Assistance for sustainability, continuity and development of production and business marketing.

3.3. Assistance and Empowerment Processes

Overall, the economic empowerment activities through knitting sandal crafts in Dasawisma II ran for 5 months from April to September 2019. The activity was carried out in a participatory manner with Dasawisma II members. The community service team was tasked with facilitating activities and connecting with the speakers (related experts) needed for business strengthening. Some of the activities that have been carried out are:

1. Program socialization. It was carried out on 7 April 2019 in a Dasawisma routine meeting at the home of one of the residents. In this activity the community service team provided preliminary information about the Community Partnership Program to members of Dasawisma II Mangunsari Asri Housing, Gunungpati Semarang. The members of Dasawisma II enthusiastically welcomed the program and were ready to actively participate.

2. Motivational training and product review. This training was held on the night of 15 April 2019 which aims to motivate the members of Dasawisma II in their knitwear entrepreneurial activities. To increase the enthusiasm and motivation of Dasawisma II members, a speaker having competence in the field of creative economy namely Wandah Wibawanto, M.Ds. who is a lecturer in the design and visual communication study program as well as a team of assistants in creative economic activities in Central Java Province was invited. The results of the motivational training and product review activities are the birth of the brand name WAIKI and
the design of the relevant WAIKI brand logos. So, the program does not only give motivation, but also provide ideas on some important aspects to introduce WAIKI brand in the market.

3. Benchmarking and Study Visit to Pondok Rajut Yogyakarta. Benchmarking was carried out on 1 May 2019 as an effort to open horizons and insights of the members of Dasawisma II regarding similar activities that have been carried out by many women’s groups. This benchmarking also motivates Dasawisma II members to have a connection and enthusiasm in running the production of knitting sandals. Initially, the Dasawisma II group felt that their ability of knitting so far was only to fill the Dasawisma gathering activities, not as a professional activity, so that the products they make were considered to be poor and unsold in the market. This feeling of insecurity made the Dasawisma II group reluctant to promote the products through the media and online stores. Through this Benchmarking activity and comparative study, Dasawisma II members became optimistic and enthusiastic to seriously produce knitting sandals.

4. Training on Marketing Management and Product Promotion. The training was held on 12 May 2019. This training presented guest speaker Ms. Rahina Nugraheni, S.Sn., M.Ds. a Lecturer of Visual Communication Design and Communication Study Program at Faculty of Language and Arts UNNES. The outcome of this activity is in the form of an explanation of what actions should be exposed from a product, procedures for exposing a product, and also aesthetic photography training to promote a product, in this case is Waiki product. It was also explained properties or additional materials to support the process of shooting. Not only that, this training also includes the introduction of online marketing through Instagram, Tokopedia, Shoppee, and Open Stall. Thus, the marketing offered is becoming increasingly diverse not only offline but also online. This can add to the advantage of introducing Waiki in a wider market share. Thus, Waiki products can be a branding and expansion of consumer interest in buying the product.

5. Knitting Sandal Production Trial. The activity was conducted in three production sessions, namely on 25 May, 22 June, 17 July, and 3 August. The production of knitting sandals needs raw materials in the form of flip flops purchased from Tasikmalaya through online methods. In one production, the number of knitting sandals produced is 50-70 pairs, with a total number of sandals that have been produced until August are 260 pairs of knitting sandals. In this sandal production, there is a division of labor that is specified according to their respective duties.
The distribution of task considers the potential owned by each member of the Dasawisma II group. Some specifications related to the division of labor are knitting flowers, knitting Y-Strap or tight strap, and labeling package.

6. Online marketing on social media and online shop platform. Initially, the marketing of knitting sandals was offline only. The sandals were offered to fellow Dasa Wisma II group via Whatsapp, or met directly in forums or activities. But now, the promotion is also done through online media. Some online media besides Whatsapp that are used in Waiki Rajut marketing are Instagram, and online stores such as Tokopedia, Shoppee, and Open Stall. The related links to visit the Instagram and online stores are as follows:

- https://instagram.com/waikirajut?igshid=1xc5fq0oof5g9
- https://tokopedia.link/wqYM4a8QFZ

The price offered adjusts to the type of the knitting sandals. The flat sandals are Rp. 40,000, and the wedges sandals are Rp. 60,000. This price adjusts to the price of raw materials used. So the wedges sandals are more expensive than the flat sandals since the wedges ones need more material. In the marketing strategy and promotion of Waiki, the Dasawisma II group also opened up reseller opportunities to sell goods from Waiki. If sold to a reseller, the price is cut by Rp. 10,000.

7. Product Fairs and Bazaar. This is done to introduce the sandals to the wider community. The product fairs were held on 4 August 2019 and 29 August 2019. Some product bazaars were held in a series of Indonesian independence day celebration in the events of healthy walk and entertainment stage at the Mangunsari housing complex. On 29 August 2019, Waiki successfully represented the Mangunsari village in the product exhibition at the Gunung Pati District level. The exhibition, which was also a place for promoting and introducing Waiki product was enthusiastically welcomed by many people. Some bought directly and some ordered Waiki knitting sandals.

8. Financial Management, Bookkeeping and Accounting Training. The training was held on 4 August 2019 presenting a speaker, Dr. Arief Yulianto, M.M., a lecturer of management in Faculty of Economy UNNES. The training activities include cash bookkeeping, turnover calculation, profit and loss calculation, to production costs.
3.4. The Output of the Assistance and Empowerment of "Waiki Rajut Program"

The utility or use of the knitting sandals for members of the Dasawisma II group is very diverse, not only being able to provide productive activities for housewives but also to increase their income.

The assistance and empowerment carried out with the members of Dasawisma II has shown encouraging results. The impact of the empowerment program can be seen from both economic and social aspects. Economically, Waiki Rajut's handicraft business has become a forum for productive activities of Dasawisma II members, as well as providing additional income for them. The additional income is calculated at 5 thousand rupiahs for 1 pair of knitting rope sandals, and 8-10 thousand rupiah for each knitted flower decoration. The more sandals that can be worked on, the greater the income received. In a busy ordering, a mother is able to knit up to 5 pairs of sandals in a day by utilizing her free time. Besides, the profits from knitting sandals also go to Dasawisma II cash so that the group's assets increase. The following is a record of the amount of production, turnover and profits recorded from May to August 2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Total Production (pairs)</th>
<th>Turnover (Rupiahs)</th>
<th>Profit (Rupiahs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1,138,000</td>
<td>374,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1,978,000</td>
<td>623,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>3,301,000</td>
<td>1,001,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>2,999,000</td>
<td>888,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>260</td>
<td>9,416,000</td>
<td>2,887,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Primary Data)

Based on the table, it can be seen that the sales of knitting sandals show an increase after the assistance and empowerment effort was held. This even impacts on the household economy of members of the dasawisma II group. Women's participation in increasing productivity and economic welfare of the family carried out in the empowerment program of Waiki Rajut sandals is relevant to the gender perspective that focuses on bargaining the position of women which is far below men causing their limited opportunities in working in the formal sector due to their greater burden of domestic tasks [17]. The empowerment program of knitting sandals is an evidence of a productive activity of women which make them exist and at the same time, can redefine the presumption that women's bargaining position is weak. In fact, through the
empowerment, women can continue to work and make money without leaving their domestic affairs.

In addition to the economic impacts, social and psychological impacts have also emerged on the members of Dasawisma II because of the empowerment program. Their involvement in productive economic activities turned out to also make them proud because they were able to generate income independently without being dependent on their husbands. The women of Dasawisma II also said that they now feel more valuable because they have a platform to self-actualize and contribute to their families and environment. Knitting sandals business activities are thus able to provide pride and confidence among the women of Dasawisma II and make them feel useful towards their social environment.

4. Conclusion

The empowerment assistance program of Dasawisma II group got a positive response from the members of Dasawisma II group. The assistance and empowerment process succeeded in building a creative economic business unit that was managed directly by Dasawisma II members under the brand Waiki Rajut. This empowerment has implications for the economic aspects of increasing additional income and improving the family welfare of the Dasawisma II group, as well as the social aspects of the independence of housewives. Thus, the existence of Waiki Rajut besides being an arena for economic productivity of women and bringing prosperity, also makes housewives feel meaningful because they have activities and skills that can be a media for self-actualization.

Acknowledgment

The author would like to express his gratitude and highest appreciation to the Directorate of Research and Community Service (DRPM) of the Ministry of Research and Technology who have supported the funding of community service programs through the scheme of Community Partnership Program (PKM) in the 2019 fiscal year.

References


