

## Gender Mainstreaming through Women's Entrepreneurship: Insights from Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office in Tanjungpinang City

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of gender mainstreaming in the implementation of entrepreneurship training programs conducted by the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office in Tanjungpinang City. The program aims to empower women, particularly those from vulnerable backgrounds, by enhancing their skills, fostering self-confidence, and promoting gender equality. This qualitative study utilizes interviews, observations, and documentation as data collection techniques, with training participants and program facilitators serving as primary informants. The findings reveal that the program integrates gender mainstreaming principles by providing practical skill training, such as sewing and baking, alongside knowledge in digital marketing, financial management, and risk management. The initiative has been effective in equipping participants to manage micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), while also enhancing their economic independence and family welfare. However, the study also identifies challenges, such as participants' entrenched patriarchal mindsets and limited support from families or communities. To address these barriers, the program emphasizes community-based approaches and includes follow-up mentoring to ensure sustainability. Overall, this study highlights the significant positive impact of entrepreneurship training on women's empowerment and underscores its strategic role in advancing gender equality and local economic development.

## INTRODUCTION

Women's empowerment has become a global agenda embedded in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), aiming to achieve gender equality and enhance women's contributions to economic development (Masruchiyah & Laratmase, 2023). Locally, gender mainstreaming (*pengarusutamaan gender*) serves as a key strategy to ensure women's active participation across various sectors, including

entrepreneurship. In Tanjungpinang City, entrepreneurship training for women has become one of the primary programs to integrate gender perspectives into efforts to strengthen the local economy.

The Office for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection has initiated gender-focused entrepreneurship training programs targeting vulnerable women, as well as leadership training programs for rural women. These initiatives align with the mandates of the national government, as outlined by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPA, 2021). These programs explicitly promote the importance of leadership and empowerment for women in entrepreneurship, emphasizing their crucial role in economic development.

Literature reviews highlight that empowering women through entrepreneurship training significantly enhances their capacity to manage small businesses. For instance, Taufik et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of gender-sensitive training modules that combine technical skills with a social empowerment approach. Their study demonstrated improved business sustainability for women in the informal sector as a direct outcome of such training. Furthermore, research by Ahmad et al. (2022) also supports the notion that gender-focused entrepreneurial training can foster resilience and adaptability among women entrepreneurs in challenging market conditions.

The potential of gender mainstreaming in entrepreneurship training can be maximized by incorporating inclusivity and sustainability principles at every stage of program development, because entrepreneurship is vital for driving growth and progress in a rapidly changing world (Ratnasari et al., 2021). This approach ensures that women can assume more strategic roles in economic and social development at both local and national levels. In this regard, fostering women's creativity and capacity for innovation through entrepreneurship is pivotal, as it opens opportunities for women to create new solutions for existing challenges (Mutmainah, 2020).

Prasetyo (2020) explains that women exhibited higher entrepreneurial interest compared to men. Additionally, women demonstrated higher levels of creativity, making them more innovative in designing and managing businesses, and positioning them as strong candidates for entrepreneurial success. Similar findings are echoed by Priambodo et al. (2024), who noted that female entrepreneurs often leverage creative problem-solving and adaptive strategies to navigate competitive business environments effectively.

A common phenomenon where women predominantly remain as homemakers, not engaging in formal employment, can still contribute significantly to family finances, a responsibility traditionally placed on men. To support women's empowerment through skill development, governments and other stakeholders

need to design and implement programs that enhance women's roles in improving family economies.

Historically, women had limited opportunities, both in employment and access to education. However, over time, these opportunities have expanded considerably. This shift can be attributed not only to improved access to education but also to government and stakeholder initiatives aimed at empowering women by enhancing their skills. These skills serve as valuable assets for entrepreneurship, providing women with greater opportunities to contribute to the economy and other fields (Arieta et al., 2022).

Entrepreneurship training typically falls into three categories: knowledge-based training, technical skill development, and soft skills enhancement. Key characteristics of effective training include the systematic improvement of specific skills, delivery of targeted content tailored to participants' needs, execution over a defined time period, and the use of hands-on learning methods to instill sustainable habits and competencies (Arifin et al., 2021).

This study aims to explore gender mainstreaming efforts through entrepreneurship skill enhancement programs targeting women at the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office in Tanjungpinang City. The enhancement of entrepreneurial skills is carried out through structured training programs. Such training encompasses learning and empowerment facilitated by trainers or instructors, either individually or in groups.

## **METHODS**

This study employs a qualitative research method, incorporating interviews, observations, and documentation techniques (Fadli, 2021). The qualitative approach aims to provide an in-depth exploration of gender mainstreaming initiatives through entrepreneurship training programs for women at the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office in Tanjungpinang City. This method allows for a detailed understanding of the processes involved in program implementation and their impact on participants.

The research subjects are purposively selected to ensure a comprehensive representation of key stakeholders. The first group of subjects includes staff from Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office, particularly those responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating the entrepreneurship training programs. These staff members also hold roles related to gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. The second group comprises trainers or instructors who directly facilitate the training programs, offering both technical expertise and motivational guidance to participants. The third group includes the participants themselves, women from diverse social and economic backgrounds who have

enrolled in the entrepreneurship training. These participants provide valuable insights into their experiences during the training, their motivations, and the impact the program has had on their lives.

Data analysis in this study is conducted descriptively, focusing on the data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation (Creswell, 2013). The analysis begins by categorizing the data based on the research focus to identify patterns and address the study's objectives. The categorized data is then systematically analyzed to extract key insights regarding gender mainstreaming and the outcomes of the entrepreneurship training. In the final stage, the findings are contextualized within relevant theoretical frameworks to provide a deeper understanding of the phenomena. This structured approach ensures that the analysis captures the nuances of the participants' experiences and highlights the effectiveness of the gender mainstreaming initiatives in the entrepreneurship training programs.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Women's Entrepreneurship**

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) refer to small-scale businesses in terms of assets, turnover, and the number of employees. MSMEs are classified into three main categories: micro, small, and medium enterprises, each with distinct characteristics and criteria as defined by government regulations (Trie et al., 2022). These categories adhere to specific legal frameworks that vary based on national policies. For instance, small enterprises represent one segment within the broader MSME classification. Generally, MSMEs operate independently and on a smaller scale compared to large corporations. A distinguishing feature of MSMEs is their ability to produce goods or services that meet government standards, including limitations on assets, turnover, and workforce size (Candraningrat et al., 2021).

The primary difference between MSMEs and small enterprises lies in their scope. While MSMEs encompass a broad range of businesses, from micro to medium enterprises, small enterprises specifically cater to businesses larger than micro but smaller than medium enterprises. The requirements for being classified as an MSME vary across countries, depending on applicable government policies. To support the development and sustainability of MSMEs, governments often provide various forms of assistance, including loans, training, and market access. For entrepreneurs, possessing adequate knowledge and skills is crucial to achieving self-improvement and remaining competitive in the market (Purnamasari et al., 2023).

In the context of women's entrepreneurship, creating new opportunities requires a combination of skills, capital, time, and consideration of physical and

social risks. The better these resources are managed, the greater the potential for women to achieve both material and non-material rewards, such as personal satisfaction with their business achievements (Taufik et al., 2023). Skill development programs tailored to women, such as training in sewing or fashion design, can significantly enhance their expertise. These programs contribute to the creation of high-quality human resources, enabling women to support themselves while also aiding government efforts in advancing the small-scale industrial sector (Wahyuni et al., 2024).

### **Empowering Women Entrepreneurship Training**

As part of the entrepreneurship training program organized by the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office in Tanjungpinang City, this initiative is supported by strategic policies and measures aimed at holistically empowering women. The training is expected to enhance participants' skills, enabling them to establish micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the future. This support extends beyond skill development, encompassing ongoing efforts to facilitate business growth and sustainability.

The Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office envisions fostering MSME growth in Tanjungpinang by providing non-financial support, primarily through human resource development. This is achieved via entrepreneurship training designed to strengthen participants' skills and encourage product innovation tailored to market demands. The ultimate goal is to ensure that the MSME products generated by participants are highly competitive, capable of penetrating local and regional markets (Rahmadani & Subroto, 2022)

One of the flagship training programs conducted is *Pelatihan Menjahit Dasar (Basic Sewing Training)*, organized by the gender mainstreaming division of the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office in collaboration with LPK Bertuah, a non-governmental organization (NGO) in Tanjungpinang City. The training was attended by 30 women eager to start sewing businesses. As a follow-up, participants who completed the training received sewing machines from the department to help launch their businesses. This initiative not only provides technical skills but also fosters women's economic independence by enabling them to create marketable products and establish businesses that contribute to their family incomes.

The local government of Tanjungpinang, through its relevant departments, continues to promote the growth of small and medium enterprises, creating new job opportunities, especially for women. This support aligns with the broader objective of women's empowerment as a key strategy for achieving gender equality across various aspects of life, including the economic sector.

Women's entrepreneurship training serves as a tangible implementation of the gender mainstreaming program in Tanjungpinang City. The program is designed to enhance women's entrepreneurial management skills, improve economic competitiveness, and open up new employment opportunities. Additionally, the gender-based approach seeks to maximize women's potential as key actors in family and community economics. With the skills and support provided through the training, women are expected to face economic challenges independently while making significant contributions to local social and economic development.

This study evaluates the effectiveness of women's entrepreneurship training in terms of skill improvement, socio-economic impact, and its contribution to gender mainstreaming in Tanjungpinang City. The analysis of this program is also expected to serve as a reference for designing more effective women's empowerment policies in the future.



*Figure 1. Sewing Training attended by Women in Tanjungpinang City (Author, 2024)*

One of the main findings of this study is the increased understanding among training participants about the importance of gender equality in economic activities. Before attending the training, most participants perceived entrepreneurship merely as a supplementary activity to support household income. However, after gaining insights into women's rights in the economic sector and their strategic role in poverty alleviation, a paradigm shift occurred. Participants began to view entrepreneurship as an opportunity to make a more significant contribution to improving the standard of living for their families and the wider community.

The training equipped participants with essential skills such as digital marketing, financial management, and risk management. These skills enable participants to not only manage small businesses more effectively but also confidently plan for business expansion. For example, digital marketing knowledge opens up opportunities for participants to reach broader markets through online platforms, while financial management skills help them to better manage cash flow and business investments.

The entrepreneurship training in Tanjungpinang successfully integrated gender mainstreaming principles. The training modules were specifically designed to address gender disparities and educate participants about women's rights, equitable domestic role distribution, and strategies to confront discrimination. This approach aimed to empower women not only as productive individuals but also as agents of social change within their communities.

However, several challenges were encountered during implementation. One of the main obstacles reported by trainers was the difficulty in shifting participants' entrenched mindsets, which were heavily influenced by patriarchal norms. Some participants still viewed entrepreneurship and women's economic roles as subordinate to their domestic responsibilities. Additionally, a lack of support from families or the surrounding environment hindered participants from applying the knowledge and skills they acquired during the training.

To overcome these challenges, a more inclusive and community-based approach is needed. Strategies may include involving participants' families in the training program to build broader support, as well as community-level educational campaigns to shift normative perceptions about women's roles. Moreover, follow-up training or post-training mentoring programs should be implemented to ensure the sustainability of the changes achieved.

Overall, this training demonstrates that, with the right approach, women can be empowered to play more significant roles in the economic sector while advancing gender mainstreaming efforts at the local level. However, the success of this program requires synergy among the government, communities, and training participants to overcome existing structural barriers and create sustainable change. For example the baking training program, aimed at enhancing women's capacity, was conducted as part of a collaborative effort to empower women and contribute to Indonesia's progress. The training was attended by enthusiastic participants eager to learn the art of baking. The Office for Women's Empowerment facilitated all the necessary equipment for the training, ensuring a smooth and effective learning process.

Participants were provided with recipe sheets detailing the preparation of potato cheese bread, the focus of the training session. Chef Fadia led the session,



delivering hands on instruction and demonstrating the techniques step-by-step. The practical approach allowed participants to immediately apply what they learned under expert guidance. During the training, the Office for Women's Empowerment actively participated alongside the attendees, fostering an inclusive and supportive environment. This collaboration not only enhanced the learning experience but also strengthened the connection between the facilitators and the participants.



*Figure 2. Cake Making Training (Author, 2024)*

By the end of the training, participants successfully baked potato cheese bread following the recipe and techniques taught during the session. This achievement reflects the effectiveness of the program in equipping women with new culinary skills, contributing to their personal growth and potential for economic empowerment.

### **Gender Mainstreaming through Entrepreneurship Training**

Women's empowerment is a critical aspect of achieving gender equality (Dadah et al., 2024). One effective approach to empower women is through entrepreneurship training programs that focus on capacity building and confidence enhancement. In Tanjungpinang City, gender mainstreaming initiatives through entrepreneurship training provide women with opportunities to actively participate in economic, social, and political activities. This article examines the role of women's empowerment within entrepreneurship training programs that integrate gender mainstreaming principles, the challenges encountered, and the impact on women and the broader community.



Entrepreneurship training programs for women in Tanjungpinang play a vital role in promoting women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming. These programs have successfully enhanced participants' capacities, economic independence, and gender awareness, though structural challenges persist and need to be addressed.

Gender mainstreaming is a global strategy to integrate gender perspectives into all policies, programs, and development activities. Its primary goal is to reduce gender disparities by ensuring that women and men have equal opportunities across various life domains. In the context of entrepreneurship training, PUG serves as an approach to expand women's access to training, financing, and markets, enabling them to play a more active role in the economy.

Field findings indicate that empowering women in entrepreneurship involves efforts to enhance their skills, knowledge, and attitudes so they can contribute independently to the economy. This empowerment process encompasses three main dimensions. First, individual capability building that strengthening women's skills and knowledge to enable them to manage and grow businesses effectively. Second, social network reinforcement, that fostering connections and support systems among women entrepreneurs to facilitate collaboration and shared learning. Third, structural transformation that creating societal changes that allow women to engage more actively in decision-making processes at various levels.

By addressing these dimensions, entrepreneurship training programs in Tanjungpinang not only empower individual women but also contribute to broader social and economic development. However, the success of these initiatives requires ongoing efforts to overcome structural barriers and ensure that gender equality becomes a reality in all aspects of life.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office in Tanjungpinang City, through its Gender Mainstreaming Division, has successfully implemented programs aimed at empowering women. One of the key initiatives is the entrepreneurship training program, which seeks to enhance women's resources to become resilient, competitive, and capable of contributing to gender equality, particularly in the micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME) sector. As a result of this initiative, many women have successfully managed their MSME ventures independently, contributing to increased household income and local economic growth. This program exemplifies the government's commitment to fostering women's participation in the economic sector and reducing gender disparities. Overall, the entrepreneurship training program has demonstrated significant positive impacts,

both on the individual participants and the broader community. It represents a strategic step toward achieving sustainable gender equality by empowering women to play a more active and productive role in economic development.

Future research could focus on expanding the scope of gender mainstreaming initiatives by exploring innovative approaches to address persistent structural and cultural barriers that hinder women's empowerment. Studies could also assess the long-term impacts of such programs on broader societal transformation, including shifts in gender norms and increased representation of women in leadership roles. By delving into these aspects, future research can provide valuable insights to refine existing programs and develop more inclusive and effective strategies for achieving gender equality in diverse contexts.

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