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## Improving the Added Value of Mairo Fish through Training in Making Pempek as a Leading Processed Product of Corawali Village, Barru Regency

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### Abstract

The implementation of training on processing Mairo Fish (*Stolephorus spp.*) into Pempek in Corawali Village aims to increase the value of local commodities that have only been marketed as fresh fish at low prices. Through an approach that directly involves the community, participants are trained in production techniques, sanitation, and the basics of management and digital marketing. The evaluation results show a significant increase in skills, marked by the ability of all participants to produce pempek according to standards and high compliance with hygiene procedures. These findings confirm that the downstreaming of Mairo Fish has the potential to become a new source of income for coastal households, although the sustainability of the business still requires managerial assistance, strengthening of production institutions, and more mature marketing strategies. Overall, this activity provides an initial foundation for the growth of more independent and competitive village-based businesses utilizing local resources.

**Keywords:** Community Service, Digital Marketing, Mairo Fish, MSMEs, Pempek.

### Introduction

Corawali Village, Tanete Rilau Subdistrict, Barru Regency has abundant fishery potential, especially Mairo Fish (*Stolephorus spp.*), but its utilization is still predominantly in fresh form, resulting in relatively low selling prices. This condition has led to suboptimal incomes for fishing households and micro-businesses, despite the stable availability of raw materials throughout the year. Downstream transformation into value-added processed products is a strategic step to extend shelf life and open up wider market access.

The main obstacles hindering the optimization of this potential lie in two aspects: production capacity and business management. On the production side, processing practices that do not meet sanitation principles, inconsistent formulations, and a lack of simple tools and quality standards limit the scale and

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quality of processed products. On the management side, many actors have not implemented cost recording, collective production management, or modern marketing strategies, including the use of digital platforms and attractive packaging, making it difficult for products to compete in a wider market.

To address these issues, this community service activity provides practical training on making pempek from Mairo Fish, combined with training on sanitation SOPs (GMP/SSOP), basic business management coaching, digital marketing strategies, and the establishment of production institutions such as KUBE. The intervention aims to improve participants' skills in producing consistent and safe products, while strengthening institutional capacity for access to capital and marketing. It is hoped that these efforts will not only increase the added value of local fishery products, but also encourage economic independence and business sustainability at the village level.

## **Materials and methods**

### Time and Place

The activity was held in Corawali Village, Tanete Rilau Subdistrict, Barru Regency, South Sulawesi on August 14, 2025. Activities included a one-day practical training session, summative evaluation on the same day, as well as monitoring and post-training assistance for 3 months.

### Group/Partners selection

The main target group consisted of 30 members of the Corawali Village PKK, who were purposively selected based on their involvement in household food processing and their commitment to participating in the series of activities. Local partners included village officials, fishermen's groups, and community leaders who facilitated recruitment, training venues, and logistical support.

### Implementation Method

A participatory approach (PRA) with hands-on training in making Pempek from Mairo Fish (*Stolephorus* spp.), accompanied by sanitation modules (GMP/SSOP), basic business management training, and an introduction to digital marketing. Activities include partner socialization and mapping, product manufacturing practice, skill observation by trained assessors, formation of initial joint business groups (KUBE), and periodic technical and managerial assistance for 3 months.

## Evaluation

The evaluation was conducted in three stages: formative, summative, and post-activity. Formative evaluation was conducted during the training through direct observation and reflective discussion. Summative evaluation was conducted at the end of the training by assessing the participants' ability to process pempek independently, develop a business plan, and present a marketing strategy.

## Results

This community service activity was carried out to increase the added value of fishery products based on local potential in Corawali Village. Mairo Fish (*Stolephorus* spp.) was chosen because of its abundant availability, but until now it has mostly been marketed fresh, resulting in low selling value and shelf life. Processing into pempek is seen as a practical solution to increase economic value while extending the shelf life of the product.



**Figure 1.** Demonstration of making Pempek using Mairo Fish

The training was conducted using a participatory approach (PRA) and covered pempek production techniques, sanitation and food safety SOPs, as well as an introduction to business management and digital marketing. Formative and summative evaluations showed evidence of achievement: all participants (30/30) were able to independently produce pempek according to the standards taught, and 95% of participants were observed to consistently apply sanitation/food safety SOPs—these results were supported by observation sheets, documentation, and practical tests. Students were also involved as assistants and documenters, ensuring that the skill transfer process was well documented.



**Figure 2.** Results: Pempek made with Mairo Fish

In terms of impact, the transformation of local raw materials into processed products opens up opportunities for increased household income and strengthens the role of PKK women in the village economy; these findings are in line with studies on the diversification of fishery products as a strategy for strengthening the local economy. For sustainability, it is recommended to form Joint Business Groups (KUBE), facilitate access to capital and equipment, develop packaging/branding, provide digital marketing assistance, and conduct product quality testing/certification as the next steps. When measured by measurable indicators (100% production, 95% SOP implementation, 100% dissemination readiness), the average success rate of the activities was 98.33%.%



**Figure 3.** Photo with the Community Service Team & Training participants

Furthermore, ongoing assistance is needed in the areas of business management and digital marketing so that Mairo Fish-based pempek products can compete in a wider market. Synergistic collaboration between universities, village governments, and communities is a key factor in transforming these

community service activities into a model for independent and sustainable community-based businesses.

**Table 1.** Targets and achievements

No	Solution	Output Target	Achievement Indicators	Actual Results
1	Production Training	30 Skilled participants making Pempek from Mairo Fish	80% of participants were able to produce Pempek independently	100% (30/30)
2	Hygiene Standards	Implementation of food sanitation and safety SOPs	90% of participants implemented SOPs	95% (reported/observed)
3	Dissemination	National Seminar Proceedings	1 proceeding	Status: materials & documentation ready for proceeding manuscript preparation

## Discussion

The training on making Pempek from Mairo Fish (*Stolephorus* spp.) in Corawali Village successfully improved the practical skills of the participants, as all participants were able to produce pempek according to the standards taught, and the majority consistently applied hygiene procedures. The method, which emphasized hands-on practice and community involvement, with the support of students as assistants, proved effective in accelerating learning and providing supporting evidence through observation and field documentation (Mooney & Edwards, 2001; Stout, 2013).

However, technical capabilities alone do not necessarily lead to increased income. Initial calculations show that pempek has the potential to provide greater margins than fresh fish sales, but to realize this, further steps are needed, such as accurate cost recording, accurate production cost pricing, attractive packaging, and well-planned digital marketing. Therefore, strengthening business management and marketing aspects needs to be prioritized so that profits can be realized and sustained in the long term (Ali et al., 2022; Danang Dwi Prasetyo & Sholikhah, 2024).

To ensure business continuity, the establishment of joint production facilities such as KUBE is highly recommended because it can integrate production processes, facilitate the procurement of materials and equipment, and increase opportunities to obtain capital (Juaris et al., 2023). In addition,

conducting regular quality tests and monitoring compliance with SOPs is important to maintain product quality and consumer trust (Widodo et al., 2024). Intensive mentoring for 3–6 months on business management and marketing aspects will strengthen operational capabilities in a sustainable manner (Radyanto & Prihastono, 2020). This study has limitations, particularly in measuring short-term economic impact as post-training sales data is still limited, and the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies needs to be evaluated over a longer period. Therefore, it is recommended that a structured monitoring and evaluation system with indicators be implemented at months 6 and 12 so that findings can be validated and strategies adjusted. By aligning technical, institutional, and marketing aspects through collaboration between universities, village governments, and communities, this initiative has the potential to develop into a stable, independent, and competitive community enterprise.

## **Conclusions**

Training in processing Mairo Fish into pempek in Corawali Village provides a strong foundation for the development of follow-up programs. The improvement in participants' technical skills shows that local raw materials have great potential when processed using the right approach. However, strengthening managerial, marketing, and institutional aspects is still needed so that the training results truly have a sustainable economic impact.

Recommended follow-up efforts include post-training assistance to monitor product quality consistency and SOP implementation, the formation of joint business groups as a forum for collective production, and the development of digital-based marketing strategies capable of expanding market reach. These steps can be reinforced by improving packaging and product certification so that pempek mairo meets modern market standards and is more competitive.

With this follow-up plan, the activity has the potential to develop from a simple training program into a village business model that effectively utilizes local resources. If the mentoring, institutional, and marketing processes can be carried out in an integrated manner, Mairo Fish pempek has the potential to become the culinary identity of Corawali Village as well as an example of how processing fishery products can improve the welfare of the community.

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