



Effectiveness of Gender-Perspective Economic Empowerment Program for Vulnerable Women in Agam Regency in Supporting the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals

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ABSTRACT

The economic empowerment of vulnerable women in Agam Regency is an endeavor aimed at facilitating the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5 focusing on gender equality and women's empowerment. Within Agam Regency, vulnerable women encounter a multitude of obstacles such as violence, divorce, poverty, and the consequences of natural calamities, all of which contribute to their state of helplessness. Spearheaded by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia in partnership with Non-Governmental Organizations (Tabik DC), the empowerment initiative seeks to enhance the capabilities and financial autonomy of vulnerable women through gender-centric entrepreneurship guidance. This research endeavors to evaluate the efficacy of the program and its efficacy in advancing the SDGs. Employing a mixed methods approach, the study encompasses a survey involving 50 vulnerable women from three sub-districts (Baso, Ampek Angkek, Tilatang Kamang). The findings reveal that the program has effectively transformed the mindset of participants while enhancing their entrepreneurial acumen and knowledge in business management. Furthermore, it has played a pivotal role in bolstering self-esteem and financial self-sufficiency among the beneficiaries. By and large, this empowerment scheme significantly contributes to the attainment of the SDGs, notably SDG 5 concerning gender equality and women's empowerment. In conclusion, the economic empowerment program, centered on gender-specific technical guidance in Agam Regency, has triumphed in realizing its objectives of enhancing the capacities and financial autonomy of vulnerable women, thereby aiding in the accomplishment of the SDGs.

Keyword:

Effectiveness, Empowerment
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INTRODUCTION

The enhancement of economic opportunities for marginalized women is a

widespread concern that contributes to the realization of the Sustainable Development

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Goals (SDGs) advocated by the United Nations (UN). Enacted in 2015, the SDGs consist of 17 objectives with 169 targets encompassing diverse dimensions of societal, economic, and environmental progress (Fitri et al., 2023). A particularly pertinent goal in the context of this study is SDG 5: "Attain Gender Parity and Enable the Empowerment of all Women and Girls."

Women who are vulnerable are individuals who face violence, divorce, impoverishment, and the consequences of natural calamities, frequently ensnared in a recurring pattern of economic deprivation and lack of agency (Fatema et al., 2023; Savaş et al., 2023). Their ability to obtain education, economic prospects, and sufficient healthcare is restricted (Jabali et al., 2024; Ziegler & Bozorgmehr, 2023). This circumstance not only exacerbates their state of being, but also obstructs endeavors towards attaining authentic gender parity (Jhonson, 2024).

Based on data obtained from three sub-districts within Agam Regency, specifically Baso, Ampek Angkek, and Tilatang Kamang sub-districts, the predominant educational background of women tends to be secondary education, accompanied by an average monthly income ranging from 500,000 to 1,000,000 rupiah. An analysis of their susceptibility levels reveals that 58% of these individuals are at risk of experiencing various forms of violence, encompassing both physical and verbal abuse, whereas 42% are grappling with the aftermath of the Mount Marapi volcanic eruption.

In the realm of entrepreneurship, women residing in Agam Regency are actively engaged in a variety of sectors, with 34% participating in trade, 34% in service-oriented fields such as garment production, 26% in agriculture, and the remainder involved in other commercial endeavors. Nevertheless, a significant 80% of these women lack a formal business permit and have never undergone any form

of entrepreneurial training. Consequently, an initiative has been implemented by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia, in conjunction with the Non-Governmental Organization known as Taman Belajar Inklusif Development Center (Tabik Dc), to deliver training and support to women in Agam Regency who are deemed vulnerable. The primary objective of this program is to enhance the capabilities and financial autonomy of these vulnerable women, enabling them to achieve greater economic self-sufficiency and reduce their susceptibility to various social risks.

Various technical guidance programs have been implemented for the purpose of enhancing women's economic empowerment; however, it is imperative to evaluate their efficacy through a gender-focused lens and in relation to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Pramono & Mulia, 2023). The primary objective of this research is to assess how technical guidance, coupled with a gender perspective, can enhance the empowerment of marginalized women and contribute to the realization of SDG 5 (Zahara et al., 2023). Anticipated outcomes of this study include the provision of insights for policymakers, program administrators, and scholars on strategies to enhance the economic empowerment of marginalized women through gender-sensitive technical guidance programs (Puja et al., 2024; Rui & NIE, 2021). Furthermore, this investigation seeks to bolster the achievement of SDGs, particularly SDG 5, by offering suggestions for the development and execution of technical guidance initiatives that are more inclusive and attuned to the specific needs of marginalized women. Specifically focusing on marginalized women engaged in empowerment programs facilitated through technical guidance, this study will involve an assessment of program

effectiveness, the integration of a gender perspective, and its impact on SDG attainment.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research methodology employed in this investigation involves the utilization of a mixed methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative descriptive techniques, to gain a comprehensive insight into the efficacy of gender-focused technical assistance initiatives in enhancing the economic status of marginalized women in Agam Regency and their contribution towards the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Mustaqim, 2016). This study is situated in Agam Regency, encompassing Baso, Ampek Angkek, and Tilatang Kamang Districts, where the target demographic comprises vulnerable women who have partaken in the entrepreneurship technical support program with the collaboration of KEMENPPPA and Tabik DC (NGO). Data was collected through a survey utilizing a questionnaire administered to 50 female program participants. The questionnaire encompassed inquiries pertaining to demographic information, skill enhancement, income variations, program engagement experiences, and the program's impact on their livelihoods.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Women, considered a vulnerable demographic, exhibit a diminished level of influence and negotiation capacity within society owing to their gender. The Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection emphasized that women are classified as vulnerable due to the entrenched patriarchal norms that confine women primarily to domestic roles, despite the matrilineal social structure in West Sumatra. This susceptibility may stem from inadequate ownership of assets, restricted geographical access, cultural gender disparities, and systemic resource control by specific factions (Jhonson, 2024). The statistical data illustrates the extent of women's vulnerability in Agam Regency, where 58% face susceptibility to various forms of violence - financial, physical, and verbal, while 42% grapple with the aftermath of the Mount Marapi volcanic eruption. Research indicates that women's vulnerability arises from multiple factors, encompassing gender inequity, instances of violence, limited educational opportunities, financial constraints, and unequal distribution of household duties. Furthermore, this vulnerability is exacerbated by the repercussions of calamities such as natural disasters and the inadequate provision of public spaces for women's advancement.

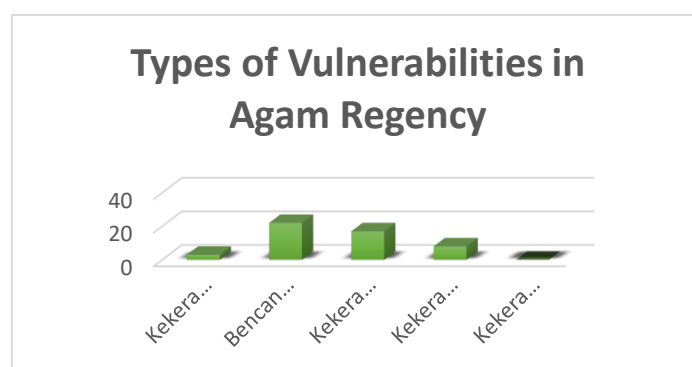


Figure 1. Types of Vulnerabilities in Agam Regency

Causes of Women's Vulnerability

Women are perceived as a vulnerable demographic in society due to

factors associated with the nature and psychology of women. The term "women's nature" encompasses the inherent

characteristics and traits that women possess, both biologically and psychologically (Fitri et al., 2019). It is crucial to comprehend this nature in order to elucidate the reasons behind the frequent categorization of women as a vulnerable group within society. Research indicates that this categorization is influenced by hormonal fluctuations like the menstrual cycle, which have the potential to impact mood and emotions. Consequently, women may become more prone to experiencing conditions such as depression and anxiety. Furthermore, the periods of pregnancy and postpartum can lead to the emergence of issues like baby blues or postpartum depression. Additionally, the transitional phase towards menopause may also instigate mood swings and elevate the likelihood of experiencing depression.

Women, from a psychological standpoint, exhibit the skill of multitasking as they navigate a myriad of tasks within both their personal and professional lives. This capacity for multitasking, often

perceived as a positive trait, can lead to heightened levels of stress especially when compounded by insufficient support from their familial and societal milieu. Additionally, women display a propensity for excessive rumination, a phenomenon known as Overthinking, wherein they find themselves ensnared in intricate problems, thus perpetuating a cycle of pessimistic thoughts that are hard to escape. Consequently, feelings of insecurity manifest among women, characterized by a lack of confidence influenced by unattainable beauty standards and societal benchmarks of success, fostering sentiments of inadequacy and helplessness. The burden of diverse responsibilities and societal expectations contributes to prolonged stress, posing a significant challenge to women's mental well-being. Moreover, hormonal fluctuations and psychological factors render women more susceptible to various forms of violence, whether verbal, physical, or economic in nature.

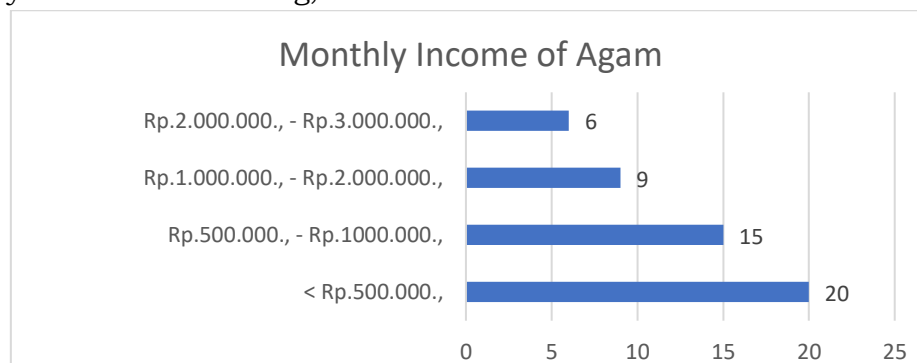


Figure 2. Monthly Income of Agam

In Agam Regency, numerous females serve as the cornerstone of the household. Females assuming this pivotal role bear a significant duty in upholding the economic and emotional welfare of their families. In this context, women are tasked not only with domestic chores but also with contributing substantially to the family income. Many elucidated the reasons why women commonly assume the cornerstone position within the family, highlighting its

repercussions on their vulnerability and empowerment in terms of Economic Factors. Within numerous households, women undertake this crucial role for diverse motives, including the incapacity of their partners; as most men are either incapable or unwilling to work due to health issues, unemployment, or other circumstances. Consequently, women are compelled to shoulder the financial obligations of the family. Another factor

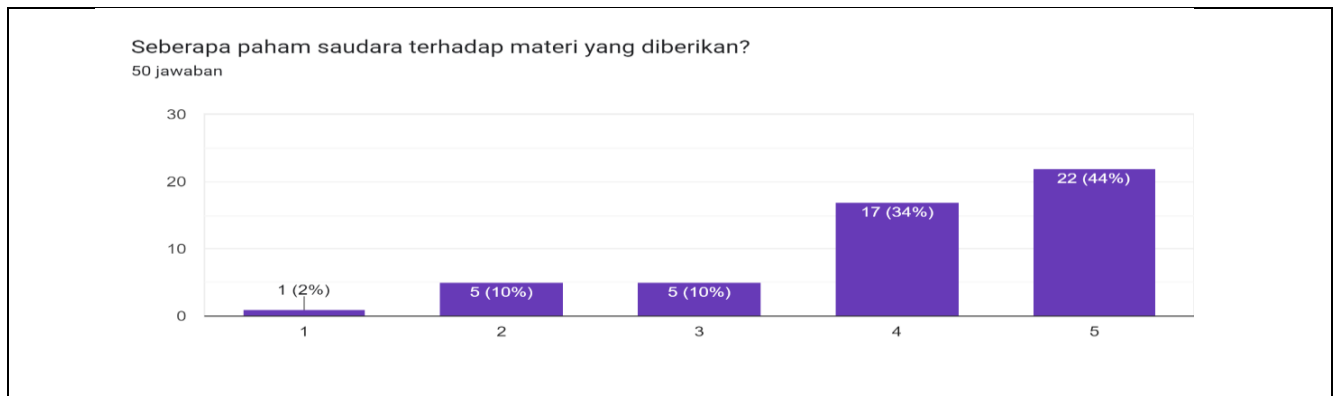
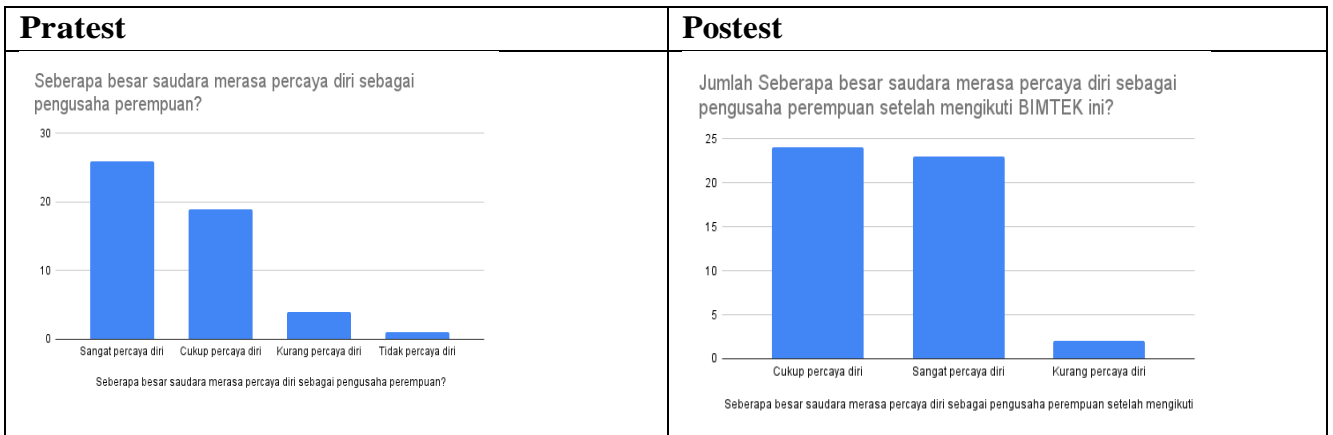
contributing to this phenomenon is when women become sole parents due to divorce or the demise of a partner, thus assuming full responsibility for the economic welfare and needs of their offspring.

Based on the available data, numerous women within this region engage in informal sector activities such as trading, providing services like sewing in garment factories, and working in agriculture to support their families. Nevertheless, the income earned by women remains notably insufficient. As illustrated in the accompanying Figure, their mean monthly earnings fall within the range of IDR 500,000 to IDR 1,000,000, a factor influenced by their level of education and skills. Despite the increasing access to education among women, many still encounter obstacles in acquiring education and skills due to the lack of government initiatives providing them with training, mentorship, and support. Consequently, a holistic gender-focused approach is essential for the empowerment of women, involving continuous technical guidance and support programs to mitigate vulnerabilities and enhance their well-being. This would enable them to achieve greater economic autonomy and make more substantial contributions to family welfare and the realization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5 concerning gender equality, thus safeguarding themselves against violence, exploitation, and other forms of mistreatment. Through the empowerment of women, society can harness a broader range of human resources, propelling advancements across diverse sectors such

as the economy, technology, and social spheres.

Impact of Empowerment Program

Gender-focused economic empowerment initiatives exert a significantly positive influence on transforming the mindsets of women. By boosting their self-assurance through educational sessions and guidance, women gradually uncover their latent potential and capabilities. Equipped with newfound knowledge, women exhibit greater boldness in exploring novel opportunities, fostering an understanding of their entitlements and parity, thus enabling them to play a more proactive role in shaping decisions that impact their households and communities. The instructional schemes impart practical acumen concerning entrepreneurial commencement and administration, encompassing proficiencies in marketing strategies, financial oversight, and product enhancement. This empowerment initiative establishes a network or collective wherein women can exchange insights, confront obstacles, and devise resolutions alongside their counterparts. Through this interconnected framework, women also secure avenues to supplementary resources like business funding, incentive schemes, and market insights. In the Agam Regency, initiatives promoting gender-based entrepreneurship training have yielded noteworthy results among female participants, particularly in enhancing their self-confidence. The augmentation of self-assurance is evident in the progression from the preliminary stages to the conclusion of the technical instruction.



This evidence illustrates that the empowerment initiative has exerted a substantially beneficial influence on the transformation of women's mindsets. Through enhanced self-efficacy, heightened awareness of their entitlements, and principles of equality, alongside the acquisition of new knowledge and competencies, women have evolved into more proactive and autonomous participants within society. Such initiatives have facilitated women's navigation of vulnerabilities and have made a considerable impact on familial well-being and the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The initiative for the economic empowerment of marginalized women was meticulously formulated to equip participants with the requisite knowledge, skills, and support essential for achieving financial autonomy. By implementing a well-defined curriculum, structured training sessions, systematic mentoring, and continuous monitoring and

evaluation, this initiative has effectively transformed women's cognitive frameworks and augmented their capabilities. Furthermore, through strategic partnerships and collaborative efforts, the initiative aspires to engender a more extensive and sustainable impact within the community.

Action Program for Economic Empowerment of Vulnerable Women in Agam Regency

The efficacy of the economic empowerment initiative aimed at vulnerable women through gender-sensitive entrepreneurship within the Agam Regency can be assessed via the Action Program. An action program constitutes a sequence of systematically organized activities or measures devised to attain distinct objectives within a project framework. These programs frequently encompass specifics regarding the methodology for achieving the objectives, the individuals accountable for each phase, and the timelines established for the

completion of each component of the program. The primary goals and objectives are to enhance the knowledge and skills of vulnerable women while fostering a transformation in their mindset towards greater economic autonomy. The employed strategy is characterized by a participatory, inclusive, and community-oriented approach, with non-governmental organizations tasked with the program's implementation and a designated timeframe of four months. The Action Program encompasses:

Identification and Data Collection of Vulnerable Women

Field investigations were executed to discern and catalog women in precarious situations within the designated regions, specifically in the districts of Baso, Ampek Angkek, and Tiliatang Kamang. The process of data acquisition was facilitated through the utilization of questionnaires disseminated via Google Forms, encompassing personal information and the degree of willingness to engage in training, interviews, and direct observations. The amassed data was employed to construct comprehensive profiles of at-risk women, incorporating demographic details, educational qualifications, economic circumstances, and conditions of vulnerability. This information was methodically processed and archived within a structured database, which functions as a reference for program execution and subsequent monitoring. The identification of women in vulnerable situations constitutes an essential phase to guarantee that the technical assistance provided effectively meets the requirements of the target demographic. With well-defined profiles and established criteria of vulnerability, the program can be adeptly implemented, maximizing benefits and facilitating the economic empowerment of at-risk women within Agam Regency.

Training Curriculum Development

Following the processes of identification and data acquisition, the subsequent phase involved the formulation of a training curriculum tailored to the needs delineated from the survey findings. The instructional materials encompass domains such as entrepreneurship, business administration, financial literacy, and gender equity. The curriculum is meticulously crafted employing adult learning principles, wherein participants are encouraged to incorporate their life experiences into the educational framework. The training resources ought to synthesize the experiences of participants, irrespective of whether they are derived from personal endeavors, occupational contexts, or quotidian life.

Training Implementation

The training program designed for at-risk women, grounded in gender-sensitive technical guidance, was executed with meticulous attention to critical elements to guarantee efficacy and the attainment of objectives. The training was systematically structured and meticulously organized to facilitate the coherent delivery of material, ensuring comprehension among the participants. Each training encounter included a precise roadmap, which detailed explicit aims to accomplish. A cooperative learning framework was embraced, which truly engaged participants in the educational process, encouraging interaction and dialogue amongst participants and leaders, as well as between the participants, to establish a united and constructive learning atmosphere. Facilitators with substantial expertise in entrepreneurship, gender issues, and economic empowerment were recruited for this initiative.

Moreover, facilitators needed to possess a comprehensive understanding of the local context and the particular needs of vulnerable women residing in the Agam Regency. Routine training events were arranged to furnish participants with the

chance to exercise the knowledge and skills they had developed. The training materials were meticulously tailored to align with the needs and life circumstances of the participants, encompassing subjects such as financial management, thereby empowering vulnerable women to distinguish between personal and business finances to prevent conflation. The instructional methodologies employed encompassed lectures, group discussions, case studies, and practical exercises. The approach was both inclusive and responsive to the distinct requirements of participants, including the provision of additional assistance for individuals facing learning challenges or physical disabilities.

This initiative delivers an extensive program of entrepreneurship education tailored for at-risk women. The curriculum encompasses various components, including strategies for vulnerable women to develop their individual and organizational vision and mission, promote cooperation and networking, comprehend gender sensitivity to establish intelligent business models (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound), and acquire financial management skills, whereby participants are anticipated to uphold accurate financial documentation and distinguish personal finances from business finances subsequent to the completion of the program.

Building Networks

This network encompasses a multitude of stakeholders who are integral to facilitating access to the essential resources requisite for women to initiate and cultivate their entrepreneurial ventures. The initiative is underpinned by governmental support, with financial resources allocated through Type III self-management mechanisms from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia, wherein the procurement processes are conducted by civil society

organizations (CSOs) or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), specifically the Inclusive Learning Park Foundation (TABIK DC) in this instance. This association, which aims to uplift women's empowerment, entrepreneurship, and community welfare, holds a significant position in rendering technical support and emotional assistance to program attendees. The execution of this initiative also necessitates collaboration with local governmental bodies, exemplified by the engagement of the DP3AP2KB Office of West Sumatra Province and the Dalduk KBPP and PA Office of Agam Regency, with the objective of acquiring policy and regulatory endorsements from local authorities that bolster women's economic empowerment. Through access to governmental initiatives that offer capital assistance, entrepreneurship training, and additional supportive resources, the program is positioned to establish a robust foundation for marginalized women to advance their business endeavors sustainably. The collective support from diverse stakeholders is crucial in addressing the obstacles that women encounter in entrepreneurship while enhancing their capacity to contribute to the local economy and the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Mentoring and Supervision

Mentoring and supervision constitute essential elements in the efficacy of the economic empowerment initiative designed for marginalized women. By employing a holistic strategy that encompasses counseling sessions, mentorship, and continuous capacity-building efforts, the program not only imparts technical competencies but also extends emotional and psychological support to the participants. Through systematic monitoring and evaluation aimed at appraising the knowledge acquired from the training and its influence on the economic circumstances of the

participants, feedback is solicited from participants regarding the efficacy of the training and mentorship provided. This feedback is utilized to implement modifications and enhancements to the program in order to better align with the participants' requirements and contextual realities.

Activity Reporting

The efficacy of the economic empowerment initiative aimed at marginalized women is significantly contingent upon the presence of a robust monitoring and evaluation framework. Systematic progress reports and conclusive reports are critical instruments to ascertain that the initiative is advancing as planned, fulfilling its established objectives, and generating meaningful positive outcomes for the participants. With a deliberate and orderly strategy, this endeavor can notably advance women's empowerment and help in fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The effectiveness of the Empowerment Program for Vulnerable Women Through Gender-Sensitive Entrepreneurship is evidenced by its success metrics within the Progress Reports, which are devised to track and evaluate the advancement of participants throughout the initiative. These reports further aid in implementing timely modifications to the program and ensuring that its aims are accomplished in a timely manner. Subsequent to the submission of the Progress Reports, a Final Report is generated to encapsulate a comprehensive overview of the program's outcomes and effects upon its conclusion. This report encompasses a synthesis of participants' accomplishments throughout the initiative, an assessment of success in realizing SDG objectives, particularly SDG 5 (Gender Equality), a detailed examination of the economic ramifications for participants, including enhanced income and financial autonomy, a review of the sustainability of enterprises established by

participants, and suggestions for future enhancements to the program. The final report acts as a vital reference for policymakers and other stakeholders in evaluating the program's efficacy and determining subsequent actions.

CONCLUSION

This research elucidates that the economic empowerment initiative targeted at at-risk women in Agam Regency, facilitated by gender-responsive technical guidance, has yielded a markedly favorable outcome. The initiative effectively augmented entrepreneurial competencies and business management understanding among the participants, addressing critical components such as marketing, financial oversight, and product innovation, which have significantly fostered the advancement of their enterprises. In addition, the project strengthened the self-confidence and economic freedom of countless women, allowing them to take actions that favorably impact their lives and their households, all the while enhancing their involvement in economic and social pursuits. From an economic standpoint, the initiative resulted in a substantial elevation in the income levels of participants, with many women observing pronounced enhancements in their financial circumstances. The scheme also initiated a joint support structure that integrates multiple stakeholders, including non-governmental entities, local governmental organizations, and the community, facilitating access to critical resources like financial backing for businesses and market research. This network significantly bolstered the viability of the participants' enterprises. Clearly, the endeavor made a substantial impact on fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5, which is centered on gender equality and the empowerment of women, by decreasing women's exposure to violence through

upgraded skills and economic autonomy. Given these conclusions, it is prudent to widen the initiative's focus and increase access to training and support for disadvantaged women. An inclusive, community-oriented strategy is imperative for ensuring the ongoing efficacy and sustainability of the initiative. In summary, the economic empowerment initiative in Agam Regency has successfully fulfilled its objectives, significantly augmenting the capabilities and economic self-sufficiency of at-risk women while concurrently supporting the attainment of the SDGs.

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