



## **Empowering Single Mothers Group of Jasmine Strand Entrepreneurs Through Marketing and Financial Reporting Training**

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**Abstract:** This community service aims to increase the knowledge and skills of the single mothers in entrepreneurial activity on the Jasmine strand regarding marketing, financial, and administration reporting knowledge. The method stages carried out in this activity were the combination method of interviewing, socializing, discussing, mentoring, and evaluating. The evaluation used a questionnaire, and the results were analyzed using descriptive techniques. The results of this activity showed that the members of this entrepreneurial group understood how to market their product better, conventionally and digitally. These SMEs also now better understand and apply the financial and administration recording matter. The evaluation result shows that most of the audience feels the training is valuable and easy to understand.

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## **Introduction**

Empowering women through entrepreneurship effectively promotes gender equality and economic development (Astuti et al., 2020). Many examples of this matter can be found from the last decade, such as Sara Blakely, who made a women's undergarment company named Spanx in 2000, which has already grown into a billion-dollar business. Another example is Whitney Wolfe Herd, who founded Bumble in 2014, a dating app that puts women in control. These two women prove that economic independence will result in not only gender equality but also economic development for themselves specifically and society generally. Women entrepreneurs are making significant contributions to the global economy and society, and their success stories inspire future generations of women entrepreneurs (Sajjad et al., 2020).

Empowering a woman through entrepreneurship will have more meaning to a woman with a particular issue, such as a single parent and a single woman (Topimin et al., 2022). Single mothers must fulfill their family necessities, so they need the same chance as men to do some work (Indrayanti et al., 2018). Even if they have no kids, single mothers must still fulfill their necessities independently and begin their independence as young as possible (Onileowo, 2021). Awareness of women's economic independence will help them and their society to improve. Thus, a woman entrepreneur is an important aspect to begin with.

In Dukuh Titang, RT 1 RW 3 Desa Pandeyan Kecamatan Tasikmadu, Kabupaten Karanganyar, Central Java Indonesia, we found Mrs. Rini (48), a single parent has initiated a jasmine strand business in her village since 2017. She was motivated by her necessity since she has two children and a mother who needs to be fed. She began her business with a floral



shop near Papahan's big street that sold flowers for various occasions, named "Merlin Florist," which took her first daughter's name, "Merlin." At first, her business was going well, and she managed to feed her family at the store.



**Figure 1. Merlin Florist**

At least until the year, the Covid-19 pandemic came to Indonesia in 2020. She was forced to close down her business since it is a tertiary product business. She barely made it through that year, and it was worsened by the many challenges faced by an ordinary woman entrepreneur in Indonesia. Despite the importance of women's entrepreneurship activity, it still faces many challenges, including lack of access to capital, limited networks, and sociocultural barriers (Xiaohong, 2023). A lot of countries, including Indonesia, still have patriarchal roots in their society, which makes it hard for women entrepreneurs to grow (Raniga, 2022).

Rini's struggling adventure escorts them to a solution from a friend of theirs who was a make-up artist. Her friend told Mrs. Rini they require a jasmine strand vendor close to their work region. A make-up artist usually needs some jasmine strands to decorate their client's hair. Even during the pandemic, the make-up artist service is still needed for brides celebrating their wedding. Mrs. Rini, who already has some networking in the florist area, begins to look for a jasmine flower vendor and learns how to stand it. Then, she braces herself to offer her work to her friend. It works well and grows even more prominent with simple "word of mouth" marketing. Today, Mrs. Rini's new business creates a benefit not only for herself but also for her society. The growing need for his products made him employ homemakers and single women around her to help. She already has ten employees, all of whom are women in need. He deliberately chose women because the job of stringing jasmine requires women's fingers to be soft and tend to be small. Also, the process of making a complete set of Solo bridal jasmine strings takes one or more hours, depending on the level of difficulty of the stringing. So, it will need much patience, and she knows the woman suits it best.





**Figure 2. Rini and Her Employees**

When making jasmine strands, the jasmine flowers strung are selected as still in the bud or almost blooming. When stringing jasmine, workers must be careful not to touch it too much so it does not wilt quickly. Jasmine is also prohibited from being exposed to water and wrapped in plastic. The temperature around jasmine should not be too hot. If you string it with a short tool, string it at the top first so you do not hold the jasmine too long. Meanwhile, if you string jasmine with a long tool, string it from two directions, from the top and the bottom. Finally, when stringing, place the jasmine in a wide container so it is easy to pick it up. To keep the jasmine wreath fresh after being assembled, artisans usually wrap the flowers in banana leaves and store them in the refrigerator. Rini's business produces many types of jasmine strands that need much attention and different details since there are many types of jasmine strands. For example, they have paired on traditional solo brides, including Tiba Dodo, Sintang, Melok, Keket, Bun Cover, Necklace, Keris, and Sumping. Rine sells her jasmine flower strands at various prices, from hundreds of thousands of rupiah to millions, excluding shipping costs. She determined the price of one set from the price of the flower's jasmine on the market.

Empowering single mothers through marketing and financial reporting training is crucial to addressing these entrepreneurs' immediate and long-term needs. This training can help them manage their businesses more effectively, achieve financial stability, and contribute to the overall success of their families and communities (Lipman & Boyle, 2005). Marketing and financial reporting training can provide the necessary tools to address these needs (Onileowo, 2021). Also, the success of single mothers in entrepreneurship can have a ripple effect, improving the overall stability and success of the community by increasing family stability and economic contributions (Indrayanti et al., 2018).

## Method

There are many methods for effective community service, such as counseling using interviews, mentoring, and training methods with a participatory approach, which aims to facilitate the achievement of the objectives in this community service (Setiawati, 2023). There is also another method, such as training, which includes socialization, discussion, and mentoring. This method is already proven to be a resilient method that is used in many community service activities (Martiyanti et al. (2024); Satriani & Pryanti (2024); Wanadiatri et al. (2024); Rahayu et al. (2024); Rochgiyanti et al. (2024); Yendrizar et al. (2020)). This



community service modified these two methods using the interview and training methods that begin with socialization, discussion, and mentoring.

Before the socialization step, an interview was conducted to identify their problem. From the interview result, the community service team discussed and pointed out that their nearest necessity was financial and marketing training. Then, we gave them the socialization regarding the urgency of the finances and marketing for every business entity regardless of size. Some of the community members would share knowledge based on their expertise. After all material was delivered, the next stage was discussing knowledge sharing. In this stage, the team would hear the partner's feedback and questions to measure understanding. Last, practical assistance was provided to the community service partners. Assistance is mainly carried out to help partners understand how to make simple financial records, use simple financial recording applications for relatively young single mothers, teach about segmentation and positioning of their market, and help create digital marketing media such as Instagram.

To measure the level of understanding of community service partners, this activity used a questionnaire as an activity evaluation instrument. The questionnaire was made conventionally, and the SME was accompanied in filling it out. The data obtained were analyzed descriptively to understand the responses of SME partners about the training conducted.

## **Result and Discussion**

When the university team came to observe Mrs. Rini's jasmine strand group in Titang, Mrs. Rini told us their main problem now was competing with the same producer, already achieving a broader market. Since Covid-19 is no longer around the corner, she does not need to limit her market region and make-up artist college. She also emphasizes that since she has more employees, she needs to manage her cash flow better to spend wisely on her employees' salaries. From this problem, our university team plans to train them regarding marketing and administrative problems.

This solution is in the range of academic contribution because of mentoring and skill development on marketing strategies for women-owned businesses (Raniga, 2022). This solution includes building a solid online presence, doing well with an internal administration, and providing excellent customer service (Kanapathipillai et al., 2022). Mentorship and skills development programs can give women the knowledge and resources to start and grow their businesses (Coleman & Robb, 2018). Women-owned businesses can use several successful marketing strategies to promote their products or services, such as social media marketing, influencer marketing, networking, content marketing, etc. (Sumanasiri & Chandrarathna, 2021). By creating engaging content and building a robust online presence, women entrepreneurs can reach a wider audience and build brand awareness (Pueyo, 2020).

For the implementation stage, we conclude that the problem and the solution we, as academics, made for them as below:

### **1) Marketing Problem**

Mrs. Rini told us that it was hard to compete widely because the other region already had their vendor for the jasmine strand. Nevertheless, Mrs. Rini wishes to grow her business since she wants to help more people. She also believes that expanding her business will help her to be steadier. She believes a broader customer will save her from loss. Thus, the solution we gave is to give the first stage of the method we use, which is socialization about marketing to Merlin, Mrs Rini's daughter, as their representation. We did it at the PUSTAPAKO OFFICE,

UNS. Each member gives their best in knowledge sharing regarding marketing with their respective mastered knowledge.



**Figure 3. Marketing, Financial and Administration Recording Socialization**

## 2) Financial and Administration Recording

As we observe that Mrs. Rini has no proper financial and administration records, we also give them the **socialization** regarding how to make a proper financial and administration recording. Much research has proven that proper financial and administration recording and reporting is essential, even for SMEs (Aryani et al., 2023). For several reasons, financial reporting and recording are crucial for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Budiadnyani et al. (2023) explain that financial reports provide information about the financial position, performance, and change in the financial position of an enterprise that is useful in making business decisions. By arranging a systematic business, SMEs can see and analyze the capital turnover and take corrective steps if there is a deviation from the original plan (Kaligis et al., 2023). Good financial records also will increase the potential for SME competitiveness (Ionescu, 2016). Moreover, Financial transactions arranged in good financial reports can help SMEs increase their understanding of business productivity, simple financial recording and reporting, and business management (Novita Sari., Achmad Hizazi., 2021).

However, SMEs often encounter financial reporting difficulties due to a significant internal weakness in their business (Novita Sari., Achmad Hizazi., 2021). This is due to a lack of educational background, limited knowledge of accounting, and socialization or training from the government or institutions in charge of SMEs, which are still not maximal, so that the understanding of the importance of financial reports is still not understood by SME actors (Kaligis et al., 2023). Therefore, it is essential to provide skills for all SME entrepreneurs in understanding business productivity, making simple financial records and



reporting, and conducting business management (Budiadnyani et al., 2023). Remembering the importance of financial recording and reporting, we decided to give them socialization regarding financial recording.

After each socialization, much feedback from the partner side makes our discussion stage come alive. The audience wonders how much it will cost to focus their marketing, financial, and production matters. Assuring them to see their initial effort as an investment in time and money is vital for this question (Lobo, 2023). Moreover, since it is an investment, they must sacrifice to make their business more valuable (Kozan et al., 2012). The partner also wonders how their older member will follow these changes. Some psychological approaches are used, such as saying humans hate to change (McQuilan, Susan, 2019). Nevertheless, the change is crucial, so the functional fixation will not kill their effort someday (Lobo, 2023). Then, the segmentation that the community service team has already discussed is explained. We plan to make the youngsters of their community do the digital job and the older ones do the conventional job. This is because digital skills are more accessible for young people than the old ones (Hecker et al., 2021).

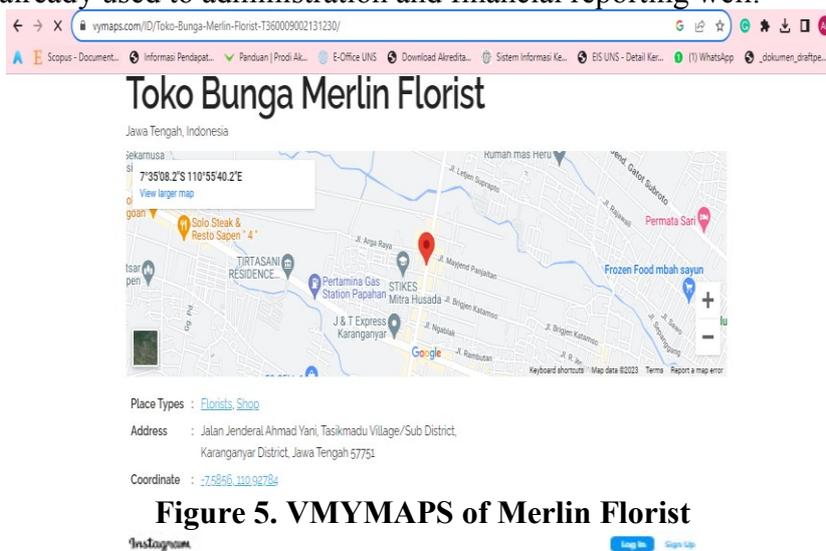
The next stage is the practical mentoring done on 11 August 2023 in Rini's house. The mentoring is being done by dividing them into two groups: relatively young and older. For the young group, the mentoring regarding the marketing, financial, and administration recording uses digital media, such as Instagram, Google Maps, Excel, and Word. For the older group, the mentoring is done conventionally, although they also have to listen when the team tries mentoring the young group. This is the vice versa for the young group. For the evaluation step, we do an internal FGD with our community service members and brainstorm about what we have done for Mrs. Rini's entrepreneurship group and what we should do next. We agreed that we already achieved all of our initial purpose, which was to give them a solution to their closest problem in recent times. From the observation and the interview, we found that their problem is marketing and administration, and we already share some knowledge about that topic.



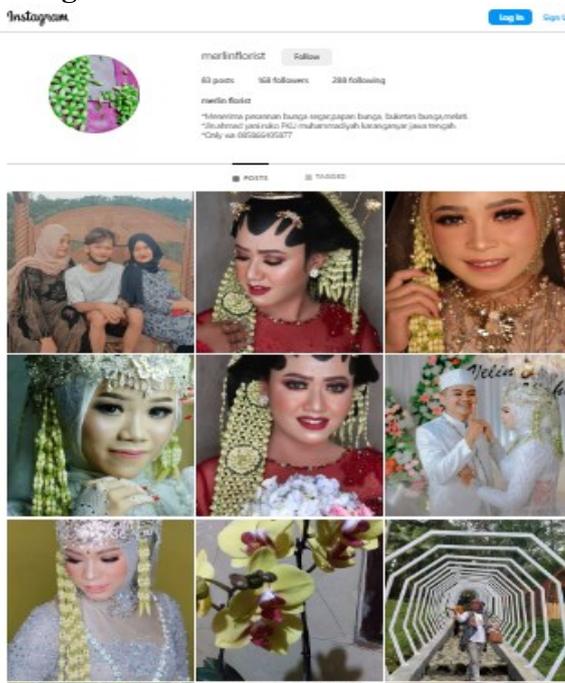
**Figure 4. Marketing, Financial, and Administration's Recording Mentoring**



The achievement is explained as follows. The solution to the first problem is to increase knowledge related to sustainable marketing strategies to reach a broader market. The solution to the second problem is related to business management and financial administration. The material presented covers financial planning, production planning, and marketing strategies through the targeted use of social media to expand market reach. When we follow up with their SMEs later, they already have a social media platform to market their business. They register Merlin Florist's location on Vymaps and have Instagram to show their product work. They are also already used to administration and financial reporting well.



**Figure 5. VMYMAPS of Merlin Florist**



**Figure 6. Instagram of Merlin Florist**

As an evaluation of the service activities, the instructors conducted feedback to determine the level of understanding of the socialization and training conducted. Feedback on partner understanding and subsequent efforts was conducted through a questionnaire. Based on the evaluation results, it is known that 85% of participants understand the financial and marketing topics provided. Most of the participants who answered that they understood very



well were young. The participants who answered very well expressed interest in a more organized financial arrangement and a marketing process using media that is more attractive to consumers. Meanwhile, 15% only answered that they understood and mentioned that they might be too busy to apply the financial and marketing training results, especially the digital ones, in their next business life. However, they realized the urgency of this training and stated that they would reorganize all of their financial records, even though conventionally, first.

### Conclusion

Merlin Florist has the knowledge and skills to manage marketing activities, financial records, and digital and conventional administration. This partner now understands the steps to attract and increase the number of customers in conventional ways, such as word of mouth, and digital ways, such as adding information to Google Maps and VMYMAPS, connecting it to Instagram, creating Instagram content, and making Merlin Florist visible when on Google or entered into other search engines. This partner can also compile income and expenditure records related to their business in writing and using e-mails.

### Recommendation

The community service team suggests creating a website and using an *e-marketplace* to expand the scope of market segmentation of Merlin Florist products. This step can be done by creating a website using a free domain and an e-marketplace account. In addition, Merlin Florist also needs to learn to manage the appearance of their Instagram so that it is more attractive to look at and increases potential customer visits.

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