

# Youth Empowerment Through Papaya Cultivation with Agribusiness Innovation for Economic Independence

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**Abstract:** This community service activity aims to empower the youth of Tanjung Aman Village, Darul Hasanah District, Southeast Aceh Regency through papaya cultivation as an agribusiness innovation that supports economic independence. This topic was chosen due to the low participation of youth in the agricultural sector due to a lack of understanding of the promising potential of agribusiness. The methods used included counselling, hands-on training, and assistance in managing papaya cultivation. Evaluation was conducted quantitatively and qualitatively to measure improvements in knowledge, skills, and youth participation. The results showed an 80% increase in understanding of cultivation techniques, 75% increase in practical application on personal land, and 25% increase in land productivity. This activity also encouraged economic independence with 60% of participants having developed agribusiness business plans. These results show that the practice-based training approach is effective in improving youth competence in agriculture, so it can be a sustainable empowerment model in rural areas.

**Keywords:** Agronomy; Agribusiness; Economic Independence; Youth Empowerment

## 1. Introduction

Agriculture is a sector that has a strategic role in rural economic development. However, youth participation in agriculture is declining due to lack of interest and limited knowledge about promising agribusiness opportunities. Papaya cultivation is a horticultural commodity that has broad market prospects both at the local and export levels (Putra et al., 2021). Therefore, youth empowerment efforts are needed so that they can understand and utilise this opportunity to improve their welfare. Empowerment programmes through papaya agribusiness training have been conducted in several areas and proven effective in improving the skills and economic independence of the community [2]. In a previous study, hands-on training and continuous mentoring were able to increase agricultural yields by up to 40% compared to conventional methods [3]. This shows that systematic and local needs-based training activities can have a positive impact on increasing youth participation in the agricultural sector.

Based on these problems, this service activity aims to improve the knowledge and skills of the youth of Tanjung Aman Village in papaya cultivation through training,

counselling, and field practice approaches. With this activity, it is expected that youth can have qualified agribusiness skills and be able to develop agricultural businesses independently and sustainably.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The methods used in this activity included community education and training aimed at improving the understanding and skills of youth in papaya agribusiness. The activity began with counselling on the opportunities and benefits of papaya cultivation as a sustainable source of livelihood. Participants were educated on various technical aspects of papaya cultivation, including land preparation, selection of superior seeds, planting techniques, fertilisation, and pest and disease control. In addition, the training was conducted using a hands-on approach on demonstration plots so that participants could apply the theory they had learnt. Technical demonstrations were also conducted to ensure participants' understanding of all stages of cultivation. With this method, it is expected that village youth can master agribusiness skills thoroughly and be able to apply them independently.

## 3. Results and Discussion

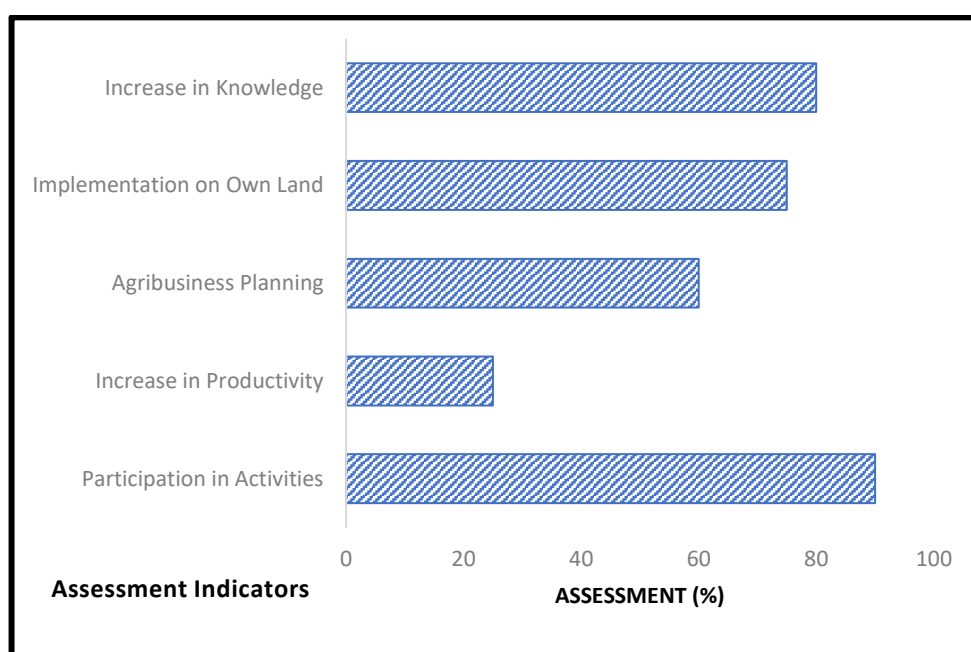


Figure 1. Percentage of Respondents' Assessment of Papaya Agronomy

The results of this service were analysed quantitatively based on the evaluation conducted on the participants (Figure 1). Of the total participants who participated in the activity, 80% showed an increased understanding of papaya cultivation techniques, compared to the initial level of understanding before the activity began. In addition, 75% of the participants had started implementing the cultivation practices on their own land, indicating a high adoption of the materials presented. In terms of business planning, around 60% of participants have developed a business strategy based on papaya agribusiness, reflecting an increased interest and readiness in developing an independent business. The activity also had an impact on land productivity, where there was a 25% increase in average yield compared to the previous cultivation methods used by the local community. These findings confirm that a practice-based training approach has a significant impact in improving youth skills and readiness for entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector.

According to research by Yusuf, a practice-based training approach can significantly increase agricultural yields compared to conventional methods [3]. This is reinforced by Rahman & Sari's (2019) study, which found that hands-on practice-oriented training programmes can improve young farmers' skills and economic independence by up to 40%. In addition, Putra stated that papaya agribusiness has great potential in improving the welfare of rural communities if managed properly through sustainable training [4]. Thus, the results of this service are in line with various previous studies that emphasise the importance of education and hands-on practice in improving the quality of human resources in agriculture.

This activity succeeded in improving the knowledge and skills of youth in papaya cultivation, with 80% of participants understanding cultivation techniques, 75% applying them on their own land, and 60% planning an agribusiness venture. Empowerment through hands-on training has proven to be effective, in line with studies that show agribusiness training improves youth entrepreneurial attitudes and self-efficacy towards agricultural enterprises [5, 6, 7], as well as improving agribusiness performance in Nigeria [8] and Latin America [9].



Figure 2. Group Photo with Participants

## 5. Conclusions

This service programme succeeded in increasing the knowledge, skills, and interest of the youth of Tanjung Aman Village in papaya cultivation, with an increase in understanding by 80%, practical application on personal land by 75%, and contribution to land productivity which increased by 25%..

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