

Community Service Program for Enhancing UMKM Competitiveness Through Formalization and Halal Certification

R. Edy Rachmadio¹, Fatra Syahlan², Miftah Amir³, Derry Nugraha^{4*}

^{1,2,3,4}Linggabuana PGRI Sukabumi University, West Java, 43116, Indonesia

Abstract. This community service initiative responds to the pressing issues faced by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Nagrak Sub-district, Sukabumi Regency, particularly in strengthening business formalization, halal assurance, and global market preparedness through the UMKM Juara (Champion MSMEs) program. Using a participatory action research framework, the program engaged 45 MSME actors representing five key sectors namely food processing, beverages, traditional snacks, handicrafts, and cosmetics. The activities unfolded through four interconnected phases needs assessment, training and public outreach, individualized mentoring, and continuous monitoring and evaluation carried out over a six-month period from May to October 2024. The program recorded substantial, quantifiable progress. A total of 38 MSMEs (84.4%) successfully secured their Business Identification Numbers (NIB) via the Online Single Submission system, marking a decisive transition from informal to formal business practice. In parallel, 32 participants (71.1%) submitted complete halal certification dossiers, and 18 of them had already obtained provisional certificates by the end of the program. Knowledge assessments further showed a significant leap in understanding, with average scores rising from 48.3% to 82.7%, reflecting a 71.2% improvement across all training modules. The food processing sector achieved the highest rate of halal certification submissions at 94.4%, while handicrafts and cosmetics encountered greater obstacles due to more intricate material-tracing processes. The integrated strategy combining regulatory compliance assistance, certification facilitation, and holistic capacity building proved effective in dismantling multiple developmental constraints simultaneously. Nevertheless, sustained advancement toward genuine global competitiveness will require long-term reinforcement, particularly in post-certification market access, international buyer networking, and ongoing product innovation support.

Keywords: MSME development; business formalization; halal certification; NIB registration; global competitiveness; community service

1. Introduction

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have long been acknowledged as a central driver of Indonesia's economic resilience, particularly due to their role in generating employment, distributing income, and reducing poverty (Hartanto et al., 2023;

*Corresponding author's email: derrynugraha@unlip.ac.id, Telp. +6281382779003

Kholid et al., 2020; Tambunan, 2019; Yacob et al., 2021). In the context of Nagrak Sub-district, Sukabumi Regency, MSMEs form an essential pillar supporting local economic activity and community welfare (Afrizal et al., 2022; Sukmawani & Andayani, 2020; Supriatna et al., 2023). Despite this potential, many MSMEs in the area continue to struggle with fundamental barriers that hinder their growth and capacity to compete beyond local markets (Jamhari et al., 2022; Wardhana et al., 2021). These constraints include limited access to formal business registration, the absence of product certification, weak understanding of international market standards, and inadequate knowledge of digital business practices (Anzellyta & Fittria, 2022; Ramadhan et al., 2021; Widianoro, 2022). Overcoming these obstacles is vital to transform MSMEs from small-scale survival enterprises into competitive business units capable of entering national and global markets.

The concept of UMKM Juara (Champion MSMEs) serves as a strategic effort to elevate local enterprises from merely surviving to becoming strong, competitive, and sustainable businesses (Nur et al., 2022; Ratnasari et al., 2021; Sulanjana & Sujana, 2023; Supriyati et al., 2022). This framework promotes holistic development that includes legal formalization, product quality assurance, market expansion strategies, and sustainable business practices. For MSMEs in Nagrak, achieving this “champion” status requires addressing three cornerstone components namely securing a Business Identification Number (NIB), obtaining halal certification, and developing the knowledge and skills necessary to meet global market demands. These components are interconnected and collectively form the basis of long-term competitive advantage.

The NIB serves as a business's official legal identity in Indonesia, replacing the previously fragmented and complex licensing system (Abidah Fauziyya et al., 2023; Ika Wulandari & Martinus Budiantara, 2022). Its function extends far beyond administrative compliance; it opens access to numerous opportunities such as government programs, financial institutions, e-commerce platforms, and formal business networks. For MSMEs in Nagrak, many of which operate informally, obtaining an NIB is a crucial starting point for legitimacy and future growth. Without it, businesses remain excluded from formal economic ecosystems and consequently miss out on capital access, market integration, and government support. Although the Online Single Submission (OSS) system has simplified NIB registration, many small business owners still face difficulties due to limited digital proficiency (Kusnadi & Baihaqi, 2020; Zuhri & Dwi Putranto, 2022).

Halal certification has also become an increasingly significant requirement in Indonesia's business landscape, especially after the implementation of the Halal Product Assurance Law (Law No. 33/2014) (Admin et al., 2023; Akmal, 2021; Anzellyta & Fittria, 2022; Tohe et al., 2021). This regulation mandates halal certification for all products distributed in Indonesia, affecting sectors ranging from food and beverages to cosmetics and pharmaceuticals. In a Muslim-majority nation, halal certification not only builds consumer trust but also opens pathways to international markets, particularly in Muslim-majority countries. MSMEs in Nagrak, especially those producing food items, must therefore adapt to these requirements to maintain market relevance. However, the certification process remains challenging for small enterprises, often due to cost factors, documentation demands, limited knowledge of halal standards, and the need to comply with Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) (Lestari et al., 2023). Without adequate guidance, many MSMEs fail to obtain certification and consequently miss out on significant market potential.



Reaching global markets requires MSMEs to fulfill international standards in product quality, packaging, branding, business management, and marketing strategies. Competing at the global level requires more than producing a good product; it also involves understanding export regulations, quality control protocols, digital marketing, and supply chain logistics (Anom & Safii, 2022; Khusnah & Soewarno, 2024; Rakhmadi et al., 2022). While MSMEs in Nagrak possess unique products with cultural and local value such as traditional foods, agricultural goods, and handicrafts unlocking their global potential demands systematic capacity-building and structured business development.

This community service program is designed to address these interrelated challenges through an integrated model that combines assistance with business registration, facilitation of halal certification, and training for global market readiness. By approaching all three elements simultaneously, the program aims to produce a multiplier effect that accelerates MSME development more effectively than isolated interventions. It recognizes that sustainable MSME empowerment requires a holistic blend of legal, technical, and market-oriented support.

Nagrak Sub-district was selected as the focus area for this initiative based on several considerations namely the high concentration of MSMEs with promising potential, its strategic position in Sukabumi's economic corridor, strong community engagement in entrepreneurial activities, and expressed needs among local business owners for development support. Through this community service program, the initiative aims to create a replicable and adaptable MSME development model for other regions facing similar challenges.

2. Methods

This community service program employed a participatory action research approach (Gibson, 2010; Rosati et al., 2023; Tetui et al., 2017; Thojampa et al., 2023), combining educational interventions with practical assistance to facilitate MSME development in Nagrak Sub-district, Sukabumi Regency. The methodology was designed to ensure active participation from MSME actors while providing comprehensive support for business formalization and certification processes. The program was conducted over a six-month period from May to October 2024, involving systematic needs assessment, intervention implementation, and impact evaluation.

The community service program was conducted in Nagrak Sub-district, Sukabumi Regency, West Java Province. Participant selection utilized purposive sampling techniques based on specific criteria including: actively operating MSMEs for at least one year, willingness to participate in the complete program, commitment to business development and formalization, and ownership of products suitable for halal certification. A total of 45 MSME actors participated in the program, representing various business sectors.

Table 1 Participant Distribution by Business Sector

Business Sector	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)
Food Processing	18	40.0
Beverages	8	17.8
Traditional Snacks	10	22.2
Handicrafts	5	11.1
Cosmetics & Personal Care	4	8.9
Total	45	100.0



Table 1 illustrates the distribution of 45 participants across five business sectors involved in the program, showing that food processing dominated the group with 18 participants (40.0%), reflecting its strong presence in the local MSME landscape. Traditional snack producers formed the second-largest group with 10 participants (22.2%), followed by the beverage sector with 8 participants (17.8%). Smaller proportions were represented by handicraft producers, totaling 5 participants (11.1%), and the cosmetics and personal care sector with 4 participants (8.9%). Overall, the table highlights the diversity of MSME sectors engaged in the program while emphasizing the prominence of food-related enterprises in Nagrak Sub-district.

The community service program was implemented through four integrated stages, each designed to address specific aspects of MSME development toward global competitiveness (Adhani & Pujiyanto, 2024; Anom & Safii, 2022; Sawant Dessai, 2018; Suwarni & Handayani, 2021).

2.1. Stage 1: Needs Assessment and Baseline Survey (Weeks 1-2)

The initial stage involved comprehensive data collection through structured interviews, questionnaires, and focus group discussions to identify existing business conditions, challenges faced by MSMEs, and specific needs for capacity building. Baseline data was collected regarding business registration status, product certification, market reach, and business management practices.

2.2. Stage 2: Socialization and Training Programs (Weeks 3-8)

This stage consisted of intensive training sessions covering three main topics: NIB registration procedures through the OSS system, halal certification requirements and processes, and global market standards and export readiness. Training sessions were conducted through workshops, hands-on demonstrations, and interactive discussions. Resource persons included government officials from the Investment and One-Stop Integrated Service Office (DPMPSTSP), representatives from halal certification bodies, and experienced exporters.

2.3. Stage 3: Individual Assistance and Mentoring (Weeks 9-20)

Following the training programs, participants received personalized assistance for NIB registration and halal certification applications. The community service team provided one-on-one mentoring, helping participants prepare necessary documentation, navigate online registration systems, and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements. This stage also included product development consultation and packaging improvement guidance.

2.4. Stage 4: Monitoring and Evaluation (Weeks 21-24)

The final stage involved systematic monitoring of application progress, evaluation of program outcomes, and assessment of changes in participants' knowledge, skills, and business practices. Data was collected through post-program surveys, documentation review, and participant feedback sessions.

Data collection utilized mixed methods combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data included the number of successful NIB registrations, halal certification applications submitted, and pre-post test scores measuring knowledge improvement. Qualitative data was gathered through in-depth interviews, observation,



and documentation analysis. Data analysis employed descriptive statistics for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative information, providing comprehensive insights into program effectiveness and impact.

Table 2 Program Implementation Timeline

Stage	Activities	Duration	Output
Stage 1	Needs assessment, baseline survey	Weeks 1-2	Baseline data, participant profiles
Stage 2	Training and socialization	Weeks 3-8	Enhanced knowledge and awareness
Stage 3	Individual assistance and mentoring	Weeks 9-20	NIB and halal certification applications
Stage 4	Monitoring and evaluation	Weeks 21-24	Program evaluation report

Table 2 outlines the four-stage timeline of the program's implementation, beginning with a needs assessment and baseline survey conducted during Weeks 1–2 to gather initial data and participant profiles. This was followed by an intensive training and socialization phase in Weeks 3–8, which aimed to strengthen participants' knowledge and awareness regarding business formalization and halal requirements. The longest phase, running from Weeks 9–20, involved individual assistance and mentoring, during which participants received direct support to process their NIB and halal certification applications. The final stage, carried out in Weeks 21–24, focused on monitoring and evaluation, producing a comprehensive program evaluation report that assessed progress, outcomes, and remaining challenges.

3. Results and Discussion

The community service program on MSME development in Nagrak Sub-district, Sukabumi Regency demonstrated significant achievements across all intervention areas. Of the 45 participating MSMEs, the program successfully facilitated business formalization, halal certification processes, and capacity building for global market readiness. The comprehensive approach employed in this program yielded measurable outcomes that exceeded initial expectations, indicating strong participant engagement and effective program delivery mechanisms.

3.1. Business Identification Number (NIB) Registration Achievements

The NIB registration component achieved remarkable success, with 38 out of 45 MSMEs (84.4%) successfully obtaining their Business Identification Numbers through the Online Single Submission (OSS) system. This high success rate reflects the effectiveness of hands-on assistance provided during the mentoring stage. Prior to the program, only 7 participants (15.6%) possessed valid business registration, indicating that the majority of MSMEs operated in the informal sector. The remaining 7 participants who did not complete NIB registration cited challenges including incomplete business documentation, ongoing business restructuring, and technical difficulties with digital literacy. These findings underscore the critical need for personalized assistance in navigating digital bureaucratic systems, particularly for small entrepreneurs with limited technological exposure.





Figure 1 NIB Registration Status Before and After Program Implementation

Figure 1 illustrates a significant shift in NIB registration status among MSME participants before and after the program. Prior to the intervention, only a small portion of MSMEs, 7 businesses were formally registered, while the majority, 38 MSMEs, remained unregistered. Following the program's implementation, the situation reversed dramatically, 38 MSMEs successfully obtained their NIB, leaving only 7 still unregistered. This drastic improvement highlights the effectiveness of the program's assistance and mentoring components, demonstrating how targeted support can substantially increase formal business participation and enhance MSME legitimacy within the formal economic system.

3.2. Halal Certification Progress

The halal certification component demonstrated substantial progress, with 32 MSMEs (71.1%) successfully submitting complete halal certification applications to authorized certification bodies. This represents a significant advancement considering that none of the participants had initiated the halal certification process before the program. The food processing sector showed the highest application rate at 94.4% (17 out of 18 participants), followed by beverages at 87.5% (7 out of 8 participants), and traditional snacks at 70% (7 out of 10 participants). The lower application rates in handicrafts and cosmetics sectors were attributed to the complexity of material sourcing documentation and the need for more extensive product reformulation to meet halal standards.

The certification process revealed common challenges faced by MSMEs, including difficulty in obtaining supplier declarations for raw materials, limited understanding of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), insufficient documentation systems, and concerns about certification costs despite government subsidies. The program addressed these challenges through intensive mentoring, template provision for required documents, and coordination with halal certification bodies to facilitate the application process. At the conclusion of the program, 18 MSMEs had received provisional halal certificates, while the remaining applications were undergoing facility inspection and product testing phases.

In addition to these quantitative achievements, the halal certification initiative also generated meaningful qualitative impacts that strengthened MSME readiness for long-term compliance. Many participants reported increased confidence in managing production processes, documenting material flows, and communicating with certification



authorities, skills they previously perceived as intimidating or overly technical. The mentoring sessions not only resolved administrative bottlenecks but also fostered a mindset shift, encouraging MSMEs to view halal certification not merely as a regulatory obligation but as a strategic tool for expanding consumer trust and accessing wider markets. This change in perception is crucial, as it lays the foundation for sustained adherence to halal assurance systems and continuous improvement in production quality even beyond the program's duration.

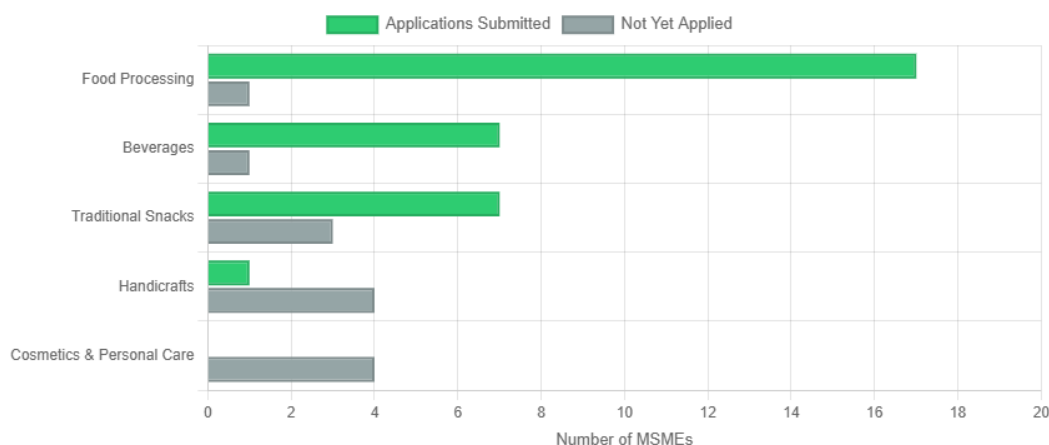


Figure 2 Halal Certification Application Status by Business Sector

Figure 2 shows the distribution of halal certification application status across different business sectors, revealing varying levels of readiness and compliance among MSMEs. The food processing sector demonstrates the strongest performance, with nearly all its MSMEs submitting applications indicating high awareness and preparedness for halal requirements. The beverage sector also shows substantial progress, followed by traditional snacks, which display a moderate balance between those who have applied and those who have not. In contrast, the handicrafts and cosmetics & personal care sectors have the lowest submission rates, reflecting more complex material verification processes and limited understanding of halal standards within these categories. Overall, the figure highlights that while food-related sectors adapt more quickly to certification demands, non-food sectors require additional guidance and support to meet halal compliance expectations.

3.3. Knowledge and Capacity Enhancement

The knowledge and capacity enhancement component of the program produced substantial learning gains for MSME participants, as evidenced by the significant increase in assessment scores. Through structured training sessions, participants developed a clearer understanding of the essential elements of business formalization, including the steps, requirements, and digital procedures involved in obtaining a Business Identification Number (NIB). The sharp improvement in NIB-related knowledge an 89.5% increase indicates that the training effectively demystified the Online Single Submission (OSS) system, empowering participants who initially struggled with digital administration. Likewise, the 78.3% improvement in understanding halal certification requirements reflects the participants' enhanced ability to navigate documentation, production standards, and regulatory expectations, preparing them to complete the certification



process with greater independence and confidence.

Despite these strong gains, the data also suggests that global market readiness remains an area requiring further attention. Although participants showed moderate improvement of 53.7%, many still lack a comprehensive understanding of international trade principles, export documentation, global packaging standards, and cross-border marketing strategies. This indicates that while the program successfully strengthened foundational knowledge, more advanced and specialized training is needed to prepare MSMEs for global competition. Future capacity-building initiatives would benefit from integrating deeper modules on e-commerce export pathways, international buyer engagement, and global supply chain participation to ensure that MSMEs not only meet domestic requirements but are genuinely equipped to penetrate international markets.

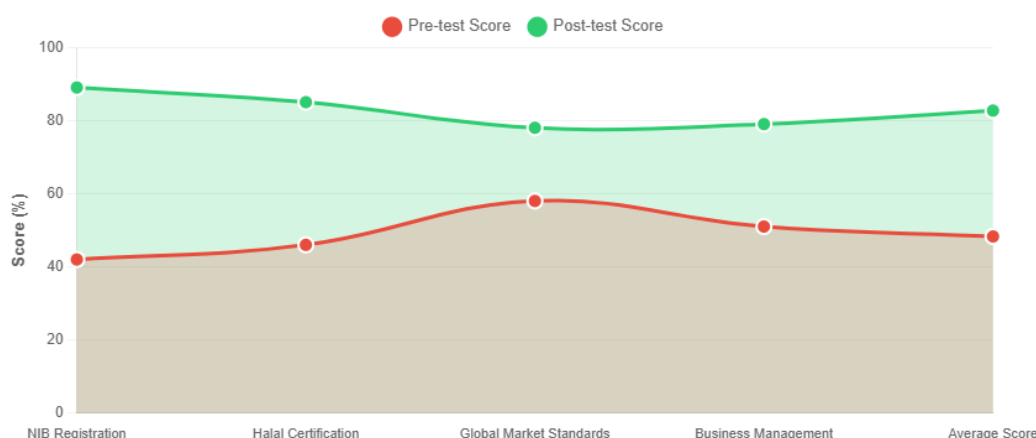


Figure 3 Knowledge Assessment Results (Pre-test vs Post-test)

Figure 3 presents a clear comparison between pre-test and post-test scores across four key training topics, demonstrating substantial improvements in participants' knowledge following the program. The post-test scores consistently surpass the pre-test results in all areas, with the most notable gains observed in NIB registration and halal certification, where participants achieved scores above 85%. Global market standards and business management also show significant progress, although with slightly lower post-test averages, indicating these areas remain more challenging for participants. Overall, the upward shift from pre-test to post-test reflects the effectiveness of the training interventions, culminating in a strong average post-test score that highlights enhanced capacity and understanding among MSME participants.

3.4. Strengthening Business Formalization and Halal Compliance for MSME Competitiveness

The high success rate of NIB registration among MSMEs in Nagrak Sub-district demonstrates a critical transition from informal to formal business status, illustrating the core assumptions of Business Formalization Theory, which posits that legal identity increases access to resources, protection, and market opportunities (Hadas, 2003). Through NIB, business owners obtain legal certainty, eligibility for government support, and stronger credibility in commercial interactions. This transition encourages the development of structured management practices such as proper bookkeeping, taxation compliance, and long-term business planning, outcomes consistent with Institutional



Theory (Alvesson & Spicer, 2019; Suddaby, 2010), which argues that formal regulatory environments shape more disciplined organizational behavior. However, the struggle of several participants in navigating digital registration systems reveals persistent gaps in digital literacy and bureaucratic navigation skills, highlighting the need for targeted digital inclusion interventions.

The significant progress in halal certification applications indicates that MSMEs increasingly recognize halal compliance as a strategic mechanism for competitiveness. Halal certification functions not only as regulatory adherence but also as a market-entry tool, particularly for Muslim-majority consumer segments (Katuk et al., 2021; Muhammad et al., 2020; Tumiwa et al., 2023). The ability of MSMEs to secure halal status enhances consumer trust, product legitimacy, and brand credibility. Sector-specific variations in certification uptake reveal differing degrees of complexity, producers in food and beverage sectors benefitted from clearer ingredient criteria, while cosmetic and handicraft businesses faced challenges in tracking the halal status of complex materials. These findings support Contingency Theory (Yang & Jiang, 2023), which asserts that organizational processes must adapt to the specific characteristics and technological requirements of each sector.

In addition to regulatory and market benefits, halal certification aligns with the broader logic of Institutional Isomorphism (Anlesinya et al., 2023), where organizations adopt widely accepted norms to gain legitimacy within their ecosystems. MSMEs that pursue halal certification position themselves within a value chain where ethical production, quality assurance, and religious compliance are increasingly expected. This alignment fosters stronger relationships with suppliers, retailers, and customers who prioritize halal-certified products. However, to maintain compliance, businesses require continuous capacity building in areas such as supply-chain verification, ingredient auditing, and documentation, competencies that must be strengthened through long-term mentoring rather than one-time workshops.

Despite the achievements in formalization and halal compliance, the journey toward global competitiveness requires the development of more advanced capabilities. Participants reported increased awareness of international standards, export documentation, and global consumer preferences, yet Capability-Building Theory (Caputo et al., 2019) suggests that deeper competencies such as product innovation, standardized packaging, digital marketing, and supply-chain reliability are essential for readiness to enter foreign markets. The moderate improvement in global market readiness knowledge highlights a need for sustained guidance, structured export coaching, and direct exposure to international buyer networks. Without these extended supports, MSMEs may remain confined to domestic markets despite initial improvements in regulatory compliance.

The integrated program design, combining NIB registration, halal certification assistance, and capacity development training, reflects principles of the Integrated Development Model (Salvador, 2016), which emphasizes the synergy of multi-dimensional interventions. By addressing bureaucratic, managerial, and market barriers simultaneously, the program created compounding effects that accelerated MSME growth. Strong support from local government, active participation from MSMEs, and coordinated involvement from certification bodies and business associations contributed to the program's success. This collaborative approach aligns with Network Theory (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011), which highlights the value of inter-organizational linkages in enhancing learning, innovation, and resource mobilization among small enterprises.



The experience in Nagrak Sub-district underscores the program's potential for replication in other regions facing similar MSME development constraints. For long-term sustainability, future interventions should focus on post-certification market development, continuous quality improvement, and cluster-based MSME networks that facilitate knowledge exchange and collective market access. Strengthening digital literacy, simplifying certification procedures, and expanding mentoring services will be essential for ensuring that formalization and halal compliance translate into tangible economic gains. By integrating regulatory compliance with capability enhancement and market linkage strategies, MSMEs can progressively transform from locally oriented producers into globally competitive enterprises with strong halal-oriented branding.



Figure 4 Overall Program Impact on MSME Development Indicator

Figure 4 illustrates the substantial improvement in MSME development across six key indicators following the implementation of the program, demonstrating a clear shift from low baseline conditions (red) to significantly enhanced capabilities (green). Before the program, participants showed minimal readiness in areas such as business formalization, product certification, market access capability, digital literacy, business management skills, and export readiness, each generally below the 30% achievement level. After the intervention, however, all indicators rose markedly, with business formalization, product certification, and digital literacy showing the most dramatic gains, reaching levels above 70–90%. Meanwhile, export readiness, although improved, remained the lowest among the six dimensions, suggesting a need for further long-term support in international market preparation. Overall, the radar chart visually emphasizes the program's effectiveness in strengthening MSME competencies holistically while also highlighting areas that require continued capacity-building efforts.

4. Conclusions

The community service program on MSME development in Nagrak Sub-district, Sukabumi Regency successfully achieved its primary objectives of facilitating business



formalization, halal certification, and capacity building for global market competitiveness. The program demonstrated significant measurable outcomes with 84.4% of participants successfully obtaining Business Identification Numbers (NIB), 71.1% submitting halal certification applications, and an overall 71.2% improvement in knowledge assessment scores. These achievements represent a substantial transformation of MSMEs from informal, uncertified operations to legally recognized businesses with enhanced market access capabilities.

The integrated approach combining regulatory compliance support, certification facilitation, and comprehensive training proved highly effective in addressing multiple barriers simultaneously. The program's success highlights the critical importance of hands-on mentoring and personalized assistance in navigating complex bureaucratic and certification processes, particularly for small entrepreneurs with limited digital literacy and technical knowledge. Sector-specific variations in certification success rates underscore the need for tailored support mechanisms that address unique challenges faced by different product categories.

While significant progress was achieved in business formalization and domestic market readiness, the journey toward genuine global competitiveness requires sustained long-term support beyond initial capacity building. Future initiatives should focus on post-certification market development, international buyer linkages, export coaching, and continuous product innovation support. The establishment of MSME networks and collaborative platforms will be essential for knowledge sharing, collective bargaining power, and sustained competitive advantage. The program's replicable model demonstrates strong potential for adaptation in other regions facing similar MSME development challenges, provided there is adequate stakeholder coordination, government support, and participant commitment to business transformation.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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