



# Implementation of women's empowerment program in improving family welfare in Batu Bara Regency

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## ABSTRACT

Ladies enjoy different benefits and fluctuated jobs, remembering for instruction and vocations. The issues of ladies from low monetary gatherings, particularly connected with orientation, need regard for increment their social and financial support. Ladies' strengthening, particularly among unfortunate families, shows the requirement for substantial activities in reinforcing social and monetary viewpoints. This study means to examine the execution of the Ladies' Strengthening Project in Further developing Family Government assistance in Tanah Itam Ulu Ranch Town, Datuk Lima Puluh Locale, Batubara Rule. This sort of examination is subjective exploration utilizing Spellbinding strategy. Not entirely settled by purposive testing, information assortment methods were done by perception, interview and documentation. Information legitimacy test in this review is source triangulation. Information investigation strategies use information decrease stages, information show, and end drawing. The consequences of the review show that there is a ladies' strengthening program, yet it has not had the option to make a huge commitment in further developing family government assistance through the Deqoupage create program. There are impediments in the execution of this strengthening program, chiefly because of the low level of ladies' cooperation. This low interest can be brought about by a few things, like the absence of socialization, the absence of preparing given by the public authority, and the degree of instruction.

### Kata Kunci

Kesejahteraan keluarga

Pemberdayaan

Perempuan

**Implementasi program pemberdayaan perempuan dalam meningkatkan kesejahteraan keluarga di Kabupaten Batu Bara.** Wanita menikmati manfaat berbeda dan berganti pekerjaan, mengingat pendidikan dan profesi. Permasalahan perempuan dari kelompok ekonomi rendah, khususnya yang terkait dengan orientasi, perlu mendapat perhatian untuk meningkatkan kepentingan sosial dan keuangan mereka. Perempuan pemberdayaan, khususnya di kalangan keluarga kurang mampu, menunjukkan perlunya aktivitas besar dalam memperkuat perspektif sosial dan moneter. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk membedah pelaksanaan Sistem Penguatan Perempuan dalam Mengembangkan Lebih Lanjut Bantuan Pemerintahan Keluarga di Kota Perkebunan Tanah Itam Ulu, Daerah Datuk Limapuluh, Kabupaten Batu Bara. Eksplorasi semacam ini merupakan pemeriksaan subjektif dengan menggunakan teknik pencerahan. Sumber diselesaikan dengan menggunakan pengujian purposif. Prosedur pengumpulan informasi dilakukan dengan memanfaatkan persepsi, pertemuan dan dokumentasi. Uji legitimasi informasi dalam pemeriksaan ini adalah triangulasi sumber. Prosedur pemeriksaan informasi menggunakan tahap penurunan informasi, menampilkan informasi, dan menggambar akhir. Hasil peninjauan menunjukkan adanya program penguatan perempuan, namun belum mempunyai komitmen besar untuk mengembangkan lebih lanjut bantuan pemerintah keluarga melalui program pembuatan Deqoupage. Ada kendala dalam pelaksanaan program penguatan ini, terutama karena dukungan terhadap perempuan masih rendah. Rendahnya investasi ini dapat disebabkan oleh beberapa hal, seperti tidak adanya sosialisasi, tidak adanya pelatihan yang diberikan oleh pemerintah, dan rendahnya tingkat pendidikan perempuan.

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## INTRODUCTION

Women are creatures that have many advantages, making them interesting subjects to discuss in various topics (Aprianti & Yunita, 2023). The roles of women today are very diverse, ranging from educators to pursuing careers. Today, many women serve as the backbone of the family, similar to traditional roles usually carried out by men. Limited income provided by family officials (spouses), encourages women to take part effectively in increasing family financial salaries. Seeing the extraordinary potential that women have, women must be empowered to help themselves and others. As role models and family support, women should be given full opportunities to develop (Kusumahadi, 2012).

Providing low-income women with the right financial tools to save and borrow money, make and receive payments, and manage risk is essential for women's empowerment, and also for poverty alleviation, especially since women are a disproportionately poverty-stricken group (Hendriks, 2019). The importance of empowering women, especially in poor families, from lower socio-economic positions, especially (Ortigoza et al., 2023) shows the need for concrete steps in the socio-economic field. One of the steps that can be taken to empower all levels of society is through concrete efforts in empowering women (Ulpa & Fatmariza, 2020). Therefore, empowerment is not an end point, but rather a journey characterized by negotiation and compromise with uncertain outcomes due to its uncertain nature (Indarti et al., 2019).

Women's empowerment has a very important role in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in efforts to achieve gender equality, women's empowerment, and inclusive and sustainable economic development. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of sustainable development goals and indicators that were universally agreed upon in September 2015, replacing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by combining development and environmental agendas (Bexell & Jönsson, 2017). SDGs are global commitments accepted by world leaders, including Indonesia, to end poverty, reduce inequality, and protect the environment, with 17 Goals and 169 Targets expected to be achieved by 2030.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to which all UN members have committed, includes SDGs dedicated to achieving gender equality, with a single target aimed at ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in politics, economics, and public life (Besnier, 2023).

The statement highlighted the urgency of gender equality in sustainable development, which is recognized as an important element in the 2030 Agenda. The focus on women's participation in political, economic, and public life decision-making demonstrates efforts to address longstanding gender gaps. The specific goal of providing equal opportunities for women in leadership confirms the importance of their active role in the decision-making process. However, the challenge of turning these commitments into concrete actions demonstrates the complexity of implementing gender equality policies. It highlights the importance of cross-sectoral cooperation and engagement of all relevant parties to achieve the gender equality goals set out in the 2030 Agenda.

Women's empowerment is a crucial aspect to achieve sustainable growth. To advance sustainable development, it is important to give every woman the opportunity to recognize her rights (Martín-Bellido & Gonzalez-Sanz, 2024) and encourage them to achieve achievements (Yoshioka Vargas et al., 2023) Women's empowerment in various fields, including politics, economy, health, and social, has the potential to provide significant benefits for women themselves as well as is an important goal for society (Abrar ul Haq et al., 2019).

Through empowerment programs, women's participation in the economic sector can be increased, including involving them in designing programs that focus on women's empowerment. The program aims to create opportunities for women to develop their skills, focusing on establishing businesses that can enhance their role in the economy.

The Women's Empowerment Program is an initiative that aims to overcome the problem of poverty, especially among women. This program is structured with the aim of increasing business activities for women involved in it, with the hope that they can create a more prosperous family life through participation in the program (Indarto et al., 2019). This activity is in accordance with the provisions in QS. Ar-ra'd verse 11: It means: "Surely God will not change the condition of a people until they change their own situation. And if God desires evil in a people, then no one will be able to resist it, and there is no protector for them but Him. (QS. Ar-Ra'd[13]:11) (MoA, n.d.).

This repetition underscores that God will not change what is happening or the economic well-being of the general public unless they personally make changes. People are encouraged to strive sincerely and work according to their capacity to change destiny. The message of this refrain also encourages the autonomous spirit in the eyes of the public. Reinforcement is aimed at helping individuals and networks to be able to change their own destiny and work on the basis of government assistance and their way of life. The underlying phase of reinforcement is attention and the longing for change. Without the comfort of creating, individuals will face challenges in achieving their personal satisfaction (Sany, 2019).

Meanwhile, explained by Ibn Abi Hatim, from Ibrahim, he said, "Allah Almighty has sent down to one of the Prophets of the Children of Israel, that, "tell your people truly the inhabitants of the city and its cultivators." whatever house obeys Allah, then if they shun it and practice disobedience, then Allah Almighty will drive them from what they like to something they despise, ”.

Overall, this section focuses on examining the changes that occur in a group, from the word *يُغَيِّرُ* has a very broad meaning, it can be in the form of monetary, social, etc. changes, but reinforced by the word *قُوْمًا*, so that the

development here is more aimed at changes of a cultural nature, or social changes. People who have a large share in the development that occurs in humans, in this temple there are two variables, namely the effort made by a group to do good for others, and the will of Allah SWT. who have the power and solidarity to change the individual's situation (Dwi Fajri & Saepudin, 2022).

Some past research has shown that women's empowerment can contribute to economic improvement and family welfare. Previous research conducted by Jabbar and Zaza highlighted that providing women with skills through vocational training programs, such as cooking, sewing, and beauty skills, can produce positive impacts (Jabbar & Zaza, 2016). The results of the study showed an economic improvement which in turn improved family welfare. Another study by Purnamasari et al., found that empowering women through decoupage skills training and marketing strategies can increase their income, which contributes to improving family welfare (Purnamasari et al., 2020).

Furthermore, research conducted by Julianingsih et al., highlighted women's empowerment through moringa stick making training. This training provides knowledge and insight to women in the field of entrepreneurship, which ultimately helps improve family welfare (Julianingsih et al., 2023). Despite differences in objects and subjects and research focus, these studies show that empowering women through skills training can be one of the important strategies in improving family welfare.

Based on initial observations obtained by Itam Ulu Land Plantation Village, Datuk Fifpuluh District, Batu Bara Regency shows that this village is actively implementing women's empowerment programs through the Decoupage Craft Program. The majority of women in this village rely on economic income from their husbands, but this is not enough to meet the needs of life. With a female population of 492 people (51.25%), which is higher than the number of men of 468 people (48.75%), out of a total population of 960 people, it can be seen that there is great potential for women to be developed. However, there are still a number of heads of families at the pre-prosperous level as many as 75 families (28.6%), while the heads of prosperous families number 187 families (71.3%), so that the total heads of families in Tanah Itam Ulu Plantation Village reach 262 families.

The Women's Empowerment Program through decoupage crafts provides benefits for women, the majority of whom occupy positions as housewives and are at the underprivileged level. However, women's participation in this program is still limited due to shortcomings in training, socialization, and coaching support from the government or management groups. This situation results in the program being less likely to be active. In addition, the results of the product have not been able to improve family welfare, especially with the low level of education of women which results in limited knowledge in starting a business. Other obstacles include the lack of potential Human Resources (HR), which hinders the ability to innovate on products.

Decoupage, which comes from the French word *découper* meaning to cut, is a type of craftsmanship or art that involves pieces of material (mostly paper) connected to an object, then covered with several layers of stains or clean (Nurlaila & Yulastri, 2017). The advantage of decoupage craft is that it can help housewives in increasing their salaries because it has a high imagination value, so that the goods sent have a large offering value to help further develop family government assistance by providing additional income (Trisniawati & Wahyu Setya Ratri, 2020).

Based on the foundation and findings of previous explorations on Women's Empowerment, it can be seen that with the presence of women's empowerment programs, women can potentially uphold family needs. However, the level of government assistance is still not ideal. This study aims to determine the implementation of women's strengthening programs, women's cooperation in women's strengthening programs, and the impact of women's strengthening programs. Therefore, further examination is expected to find out outside and inside that point of view.

## METHOD

The examination strategy used is subjective exploration with an elucidation approach. Subjective exploration plans to plunge deeply into the peculiarities experienced by the research subjects, such as ways of behaving, insights, inspiration and overall activity (Adhimah, 2020). This exploration was completed in Tanah Itam Ulu Plantation, Datuk Lima Puluh District, Batu Bara Government which is associated with strengthening women in further developing family government assistance carried out by the City Government (Figure 1).

Tanah Itam Ulu Plantation Village is located in Datuk Lima Puluh District, Batu Bara Regency. Geographically, this village is bordered by Lubuk Cuik Village to the North, Four Countries Village to the South, Lubuk Besar Village to the East, and Perk of Tanah Gambus Village to the West. With an area of 3,005.00 Ha, this village is divided into 5 Hamlets. Its territory includes plantations, rice fields, and residential areas. In addition, Tanah Itam Ulu Plantation Village is also known to have oil palm plantations that have historical value in the history of oil palm plantations in Indonesia. The majority of these villagers work as employees, reflecting the main livelihood there.



Figure 1. Map of Tanah Itam Ulu Plantation

In this examination, scientists use purposive testing methods to determine witnesses. Purposive testing is an information checking technique equipped with special contemplation (Subagja, 2018). The resource persons in this examination were 6 people, including Mr. Ahmad Syukri as Village Head, Mrs. Ninda as City Secretary, Mrs. Fitri as Head of the Puteri Strengthening Project, Mrs. Nining as Puteri Strengthening System Manager, Mrs. Niar as the Beneficiary Area of the Women's Strengthening System, and Mrs. Indah as the Beneficiary Area of the Women's Strengthening Project. The selection of 6 respondents in this study was based on the superior quality of information possessed by those who had experience or deeper knowledge of the topic under study. It is expected that the data obtained from such respondents will be more accurate and relevant. In the context of qualitative research, the quality of respondents' information is a crucial factor to ensure the validity of research results (Leung, 2015).

The strategy of collecting information in this exploration uses perception, which is a method of collecting information which includes seeing peculiarities directly without direct intercession from scientists. When reviewing the implementation of women's empowerment programs in Tanah Itam Ulu Plantation, Datuk Lima Puluh District, Batu Bra Regency, perception plays a major role in obtaining direct data on program implementation and member reactions. Questions and answers, especially those that direct questions and answers as well as direct conversations with the city government, especially with parties related to the object of exploration. The exploration led direct meetings from the city and local areas. Documentation includes research into materials compiled from offices related to this exploration, as well as the collection of information and photographs taken during fieldwork.

The data obtained were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman data analysis model in the process researchers used an interactive model consisting of three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and data verification. The data reduction process began with the collection of information from observations, interviews, and documentation with women of Tanah Itam Ulu Plantation Village regarding the implementation of women's empowerment programs through decoupage crafts. Then, researchers filter relevant and significant data for research focus. Furthermore, the data is presented through descriptive descriptions and photographs to illustrate the findings comprehensively. Finally, the data verification process is carried out through drawing conclusions to ensure the validity and consistency of the conclusions produced (Zulfirman, 2022). To test the validity of information, this deepening uses source triangulation which includes checking reality and explaining information obtained from research witnesses and other important information, to examine women's empowerment programs in Tanah Itam Ulu Village, Datuk Lima Puluh District, Batu Bra Regency.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Government Work Plan

The importance of effective governance in the development of a country should not be overlooked. The success of such governance depends on several key aspects, including support for women's empowerment and an emphasis on gender equality in the education system, with a particular focus on girls (Sackey et al., 2023).

The results of the implementation of improvements that emphasize strengthening local areas in rural areas depend largely on what the Village Authority pretends to be. The responsibility of government is to ensure the welfare and

prosperity of citizens, through prudent economic management, support for open labor markets, and provision of quality health services and educational opportunities (Biddle et al, 2024). The city government led by the regional head and assisted by the village authority is the main component in supervising and fostering the area. Regional Heads also play an important role in the cycle of improvement and connectedness of life (Palenewen, 2015). One of the ways that the Government, Tanah Itam Ulu Plantation, Datuk Lima Puluh District, Batu Bara Regency can understand this progress is through efforts to engage city networks.

Based on the results of an interview with Mr. Ahmad Syukri as Village Head, the main motivation of the village government to implement the women's empowerment program through Decoupage craft is because they want to empower women in the Tanah Itam Ulu Plantation Area, Datuk Lima Puluh District, Batu Bara Regency. Mr. Ahmad Syukri believes that empowering women is an important step in advancing the village as a whole. Empowerment can serve as a tool or process to achieve certain goals, as well as being the result of those efforts (Noordink et al., 2023). The empowerment process requires mentoring and coaching aimed at increasing the capacity and competitiveness of individuals or groups. This is done as part of national economic development strategies and efforts to realize the welfare of the community as a whole (Koeswahyono et al., 2022).

Through this program, they hope to give birth to a generation of women who are more resilient, independent, and have a more active role in village development. With this program, it can make Tanah Itam Ulu Plantation village better. This women's empowerment program aims to improve the skills and potential of women in the village. This women's empowerment program focuses on Decoupage craft making training.

Upskilling is a very important prerequisite for the growth of various countries. When young people have the necessary skills, they can be self-reliant and help others find their identity in an ever-evolving world. It is believed that when young people are empowered, they are likely to give impetus to overall national development as well as increase employment opportunities (Olonade et al., 2022).

This step was taken after the village government learned that about more than 100 women in the village held the role of housewives. Inspired by this great potential, the village government targets the participation of as many as 30 participants in this program. By seeing the large number of women in the village, the majority of whom act as housewives, which is around 100 people, the village government feels compelled to provide opportunities and support these women in developing their skills. They hope that this program will provide opportunities for women to improve their skills, so that they can open up new opportunities in the world of work or even create independent businesses that can expand the peace of families and local residents as a whole.

Although there are strong intentions and clear targets that have been set, the reality on the ground is not always in line with expectations. Practical constraints such as limited resources, and daily busyness, caused only 15 people to be able to participate in this program. Despite this, the village government did not despair. They saw the 15 participants who participated as a good start in the process of empowering women in the village. With continuous efforts, they are committed to continuously improving this program and finding solutions to overcome existing obstacles.

#### Implementation of Women's Empowerment Program

Strengthening is an effort made by public authorities to improve information and human capabilities. The Women's Empowerment Project means collaborating with women in expanding their duties in the family climate, so that they can have an equal commitment with men in supporting family government assistance. According to Rizkia (2018) quoted from Ihromi's point of view, the women's empowerment program is an administrative effort that aims to advance the position of women in the public eye and treat them as equal accomplices with men in various fields of life. Women should be seen as free men in a structure of balance, having the same privileges, commitments and valuable opportunities as men to develop their true capacities and enhance their horizons.

The Women's Empowerment System through Decoupage Specialization is a Women's Empowerment Project in Tanah Itam Ulu area, part of Datuk Lima Puluh, Batu Bara Authority. The resulting crafts are in the form of bags and other decorations. Making decoupage crafts goes through several processes, one of the stages is by cutting the tissue as desired, then gluing it to the media that will be pasted tissue, followed by attaching a tissue with pictures to the media you want to paste, and left to dry.

Based on the results of an interview with Mrs. Ninda as Village Secretary, explained that this program is an initiative from the village government to empower the community, especially women, with the aim of increasing their ability and independence. According to Mrs. Ninda, this empowerment program through decoupage art has attracted participation from 15 women in their village. Training there are coaches who are in charge of training women in making handicrafts using decoupage techniques. She emphasized that the village has allocated a special budget to meet all the needs needed in this program.

Mrs. Ninda also explained that all training needs, from tools to materials, were fully funded by the village. This aims to ensure that participants do not experience problems in participating in the training. Training activities are held for 1 month which are regularly held every 2-3 meetings a week, so that participants can continue to hone their skills consistently. Mrs. Ninda emphasized the importance of this program as a concrete step to empower women in their villages. She hopes that through this activity, their members can gain useful knowledge and skills that can contribute to the economic improvement of their families.

Mrs. Fitri as the manager of the women's empowerment program in Tanah Itam Ulu Plantation Village, Datuk Lima Puluh District, Batu Bara Regency she explained that to run decoupage craft making activities smoothly, there are several steps that need to be done, namely:

1. Providing Guidance

The coach must provide guidance or guidance to participants to provide appropriate instructions to ensure the smooth implementation of activities. In addition, coaches are also responsible for providing the necessary equipment to the members who attend the training, so that they have everything needed to begin the process of making decoupage crafts.

2. Delivering Equipment

The village provides the necessary equipment to the participants, such as materials that they want to decoupage. This media can come from various equipment, such as wood, bamboo, and so on. In this training, participants will receive bags made of woven as a decoupage medium. In addition, they are also given other equipment such as scissors, brushes, glue, varnish, and tissues.

3. Conducting Training

Mrs. Fitri will manage this training and be assisted by Ibu Nining as the coach of the women's empowerment program. The purpose of this training is to help improve the skills and independence of mothers in Itam Ulu Land Plantation Village. Also, this activity will be expected to expand their family income. With this training, it is hoped that participants can develop their skills in making decoupage crafts and use it as an additional source of income for their families.

Mrs. Nining hopes that with this training, the participants will be able to develop their skills in making decoupage crafts and make it an additional source of income for their families. He will try his best to provide guidance and support to the participants so that they can optimize their potential.

In the training session, participants learned intensively about the art of decoupage. The instructor guides them patiently through every stage, from selecting the drawings to the application techniques. In Figure 2, the instructor can be seen giving an explanation to participants on how to sew bag handle material in the context of decoupage art. After various training sessions, participants begin to apply the knowledge they have gained. They have experienced significant improvements in their skills and feel proud of the progress that has been made. This is reflected in the decoupage works they create, as seen in Figure 3, which amaze with their beauty and detail.



Figure 2. Decoupage Making Training



Figure 3. Decoupage Crafts

The production of Decoupage bags has increased over time. It can be seen in the Table 1. In the first week, participants successfully made 10 bags, showing initial adaptation to the manufacturing process. In the second week, the production number increased to 15 bags as participants began to understand the technique better. In the third week, there was a significant increase to 20 bags, as participants became more skilled and confident. This was maintained in the fourth week with the re-production of 20 bags. The cause of this change in production can be influenced by various factors, such as the level of expertise of participants, experience, and their level of understanding of the material.

Table 1. Number of Decoupage bags produced each week

Weeks	Number of Bags Produced
Week 1	10
Week 2	15
Week 3	20
Week 4	20

#### Women's Participation in Women's Empowerment Programs

Development success can not only be achieved by certain individuals or groups in society, but must be done collaboratively and synergistically. This is because the success of development is not only assessed from the physical aspect, but also must provide sustainable benefits that can be felt as a whole. Thus, development will not be in vain, which is only used and felt by a small part of the community (Gerokgak, 2019). Community involvement in the development process has the potential to empower previously marginalized and disadvantaged individuals. Direct access to resources and active participation in decision-making are key to meaningful engagement in development processes (Namoog & Agyekum, 2024).

The efforts of Tanah Itam Ulu Plantation Village to expand cooperation and sensitivity of residents in Tanah Itam Land Plantation Village are carried out through empowering women to overcome various problems such as lack of social situation, lack of cooperation, and lack of sensitivity of individuals, especially women, to regional development. Ray's (2020) view of community participation in development refers to their involvement in the development process, including participation in development activities and the benefits and outcomes of development they enjoy. According to Jim Ife, one of the 22 principles of community development is the principle of participation, which aims to achieve maximum involvement of all individual participants in all exercises and cycles lived in them (Na, 2020).

Based on the results of the study, that the women's empowerment program through decoupage crafts faced several factors that caused the lack of women's participation in these activities. The researchers found that women there face a double burden, where they have to handle domestic tasks and work outside the home environment. They are expected to do a balanced division of time between caring for the family, including children and husbands, and carrying out household tasks such as cleaning, washing, and completing other household chores, while running side jobs. This is due to the view that women should not depend entirely on their husbands, in the hope of increasing women's independence.

Traditional roles tend to give men more financially valued jobs, while women are often directed to unpaid work that is disproportionate in number; it also hinders their access to assets, economic capital, and markets, which can ultimately reduce

women's self-confidence (Beriso et al., 2023). Assuming a woman does a variety of jobs is not uncommon. Additional skills or more knowledge are expected to support the implementation of these tasks. If a woman has a desire to support collaborative work, then at that time she must have skills relevant to the task she will perform. Women who carry many roles may have difficulty managing the time to complete each task compared to women who only focus on one job.

There are 70% of women living in conditions of poverty in developing countries. It also includes disproportionate ratios between women and men in the job market as well as in leadership positions, low levels of education among women, and low socio-economic status among them (Kuma & Godana, 2023). Lack of access to formal education, such as not completing primary education, causes them to have difficulty in reading and writing. This kind of challenge is a real problem in rural areas, which hinders the progress of women or housewives in contributing to government assistance for their families (Rizkia, 2018). Women's empowerment is a process by which they acquire supporting resources, such as education, that can enhance women's agency, that is, the ability to make life choices in an evolving social context (Samari, 2019). This is believed to increase women's self-esteem and confidence and enable them to exercise their rights (Etea et al., 2023).

The broad consensus is that women allocate most of their income to investments in household welfare through education and health. This is supported by research by Domenech and Ringle and Van den Bold which shows that women's involvement in income has a greater impact on improving well-being in households. Women play a role in protecting household welfare by managing assets, so that greater women's economic empowerment is expected to improve overall household welfare (Belete & Melak, 2020). In this context, empowerment measures are very important, and both public institutions and NGOs have prioritized empowerment activities to improve women's status and opportunities, and achieve gender equality (Doneys et al., 2020).

Increasing women's incomes, which is one of the main goals of empowerment efforts, is often seen as a way to give women a stronger voice in their households. However, this can cause tension in the family, especially if the woman's income exceeds the husband's, which is likely to cause conflict between the wife, husband, and other family members (Völker & Doneys, 2021). However, there are still couples who refuse to give permission to their wives to work outside the home because they consider it unnecessary to focus on household tasks, which is one of the factors in women's low support for empowerment efforts. In addition, some women who have early childhood children have difficulty in attending training because they have to care for their children.

According to Panda (2023), strengthening women is a system to increase their contribution to urban development, especially in efforts to improve living standards and family government assistance. The idea of empowering women includes their dynamic work in navigation and access to resources necessary in everyday life. But the fact is that in the field there are still women who are reluctant to work because they are faced with the problem of concurrently working as helpers and laborers. Maintaining harmony between family and work responsibilities is difficult, especially if the choice of partner is seen as a top priority.

The art contained in decoupage craft products shows that participating women should have special talents or skills in decoupage making. However, the fact is, there are still women who do not have these interests or skills, so they are less enthusiastic about participating in empowerment programs. Furthermore, the lack of training from women empowerment program managers through decoupage crafts is another factor that affects participation, considering the accuracy needed in the process of making decoupage so that the products produced are of high quality. In addition, the lack of motivation from the government is a factor that causes some women not to feel the need to earn additional income. Furthermore, the lack of training to the community led to a lack of interest and understanding among women there in developing skills to create a decoupage craft. As a result, women's participation in business group activities has become less active.

## **Impact of Women's Empowerment Programs**

### ***Social Impact***

The activity of strengthening women through Decoupage craft in the Itam Ulu Land Plantation Area, Datuk Fifty District, Batu Bara Regency has created a positive social impact. Based on the results of an interview with Ibu Niar, many impacts were felt by the people of Itam Ulu Land Plantation Village such as Women in the village are increasingly actively involved in social activities, especially in the practice of decoupage skills. This not only strengthens social bonds among group members, but also creates greater interaction and involvement of the community as a whole in joint activities. In addition, this program also helps increase women's knowledge and creativity in craft making, as well as strengthen solidarity and caring among them.

Another impact is increased awareness of women's rights and the importance of empowering them. It could change traditional views of women in households and societies, pushing for advanced gender equality. And that, this activity is also able to motivate young women to pursue higher education and careers. They can see examples of success from women who participate in this program, and this can open up new opportunities for them to achieve their dreams and become a positive force in society.

### ***Economic Impact***

The economic impact of the Women's Empowerment Program through Decoupage craft in Tanah Itam Ulu Plantation Village, Datuk Lima Puluh District, Batu Bara Regency has not been fully achieved. Despite progress in skill development and craft production, there are still some obstacles that hinder the economic improvement of women in the village. Women in



Tanah Itam Ulu Plantation Village still face obstacles in optimizing resources and improving product quality. This results in limited revenue generated.

Based on the results of an interview with Mrs. Indah, until now there has not been a significant economic impact from the women's empowerment program. This is because the training provided is more focused on improving skills alone. Even though people's welfare is not only determined by skills alone. In addition, constraints in marketing are also obstacles to reach a wider market and increase revenue significantly. Therefore, efforts must be made to expand skills, develop effective marketing strategies, and improve the management of women's businesses in the village. This is essential to achieve greater and sustainable economic impact on society.

As Nurfadillah (2019) emphasized that to increase the capacity, expertise, and welfare of people with low incomes, it is important to provide opportunities for small business actors to develop business capital and achieve financial independence. In this context, researchers conclude that the emphasis on business capital development aims to increase the capacity, expertise, and welfare of low-income communities. In addition, efforts to encourage women to be independent in running and managing their own businesses are also emphasized. This opportunity is expected to have a positive impact on the financial expansion and peace of women and low-income citizens as a whole.

## CONCLUSION

The women's empowerment program through Deqoupage craft in the Tanah Itam Ulu Plantation Village, Datuk Lima Puluh District, Batu Bara Regency has had a positive social impact. Women in the village became more active in social activities, strengthened social ties, and raised awareness of women's rights. However, there are still several factors that hinder women's participation in this program, such as the double burden in household and work duties, low formal education, and lack of support from the government.

In terms of economy, the women's empowerment program in this village has not shown a significant impact. Although there have been efforts to improve women's skills through this program, there are still obstacles in optimizing available resources and marketing their products effectively. This is due to the program's focus that attaches too much importance to improving skills alone, without paying enough attention to marketing and business management aspects.

This obstacle resulted in the income generated by women in the village still far from expectations. The main challenge faced is the lack of an efficient promotion strategy to reach a wider market. In addition, weaknesses in business management have also exacerbated the situation, so that although skills have improved, they have not presented a significant positive impact on the financial situation of women in the area.

It is expected that the government of Tanah Itam Ulu Plantation Village, Datuk Lima Puluh District, Batu Bara Regency to provide further efforts in improving skills, marketing strategies, and conducting socialization as well as motivation encouragement and more effective training. The Women's Empowerment Program through Deqoupage Crafts makes a positive contribution and requires special attention to overcome challenges and increase effectiveness in order to have a greater impact on the welfare of women and local communities. The government also needs to provide support in the form of a forum for entrepreneurial development and promotion of deqoupage products through exhibitions and competitions, so that these crafts can be seen by citizens.

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