

STRENGTHENING DIGITAL LITERACY AND BRANDING IN THE MSME AND DISABILITY COMMUNITY IN CIMAREME VILLAGE

Anisa Salma¹, Lulu Ulfa Nizami², Anton Mote³, Rama Chandra Jaya⁴, Ahmad Taufiq Maulana Ramdan⁵, Syam Gunawan⁶, Detya Wiryany⁷

^{1,2,5,7}Communication Study Program, Universitas Indonesia Membangun, Bandung, Indonesia

^{3,4}Management Study Program, Universitas Indonesia Membangun, Bandung, Indonesia

⁶Information System Study Program, Universitas Indonesia Membangun, Bandung, Indonesia

¹anisasalma@student.inaba.ac.id, ²lululfani@student.inaba.ac.id,

³antonmote@student.inaba.ac.id, ⁴rama.chandra@inaba.ac.id, ⁵ahmad.taufiq@inaba.ac.id,

⁶syam.gunawan@inaba.ac.id, ⁷detya.wiryany@inaba.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This community service program aims to strengthen the digital communication, marketing, and microfinance management skills of MSME actors and people with disabilities in Cimareme Village, West Bandung. Although digital technology offers wide opportunities for business development, local entrepreneurs particularly the VirageAwie community still face limitations in digital literacy, branding, public communication, and simple financial recording. Using a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) method with a participatory approach, the program identified partners' needs and designed thematic training covering digital marketing strategies, branding and public speaking, and digital market access. All sessions utilized experiential learning to promote hands-on practice in creating digital promotional content, delivering product presentations. The program also assisted in developing the VirageAwie website as a digital branding tool to expand market reach. The results show improvements in participants' understanding of digital communication strategies, confidence in marketing interactions, ability to utilize social media. This empowerment initiative demonstrates the effectiveness of participatory communication and practical training in enhancing the independence and competitiveness of local entrepreneurs. Follow-up programs are recommended to ensure sustainable development, including SEO optimization, cross-cultural communication.

Keywords: MSME empowerment; digital marketing; branding

INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology has changed human communication patterns, including in business and marketing activities. In

this context, digital marketing communication has become the main means of reaching consumers widely through online platforms. According to (Kotler & Keller, 2021), marketing

communication is a way for organizations to inform, persuade, and remind consumers about the products and brands they offer.

Cimareme Village, Ngamprah District, West Bandung Regency, is an area with considerable community entrepreneurship potential, including a community of MSME actors and people with disabilities such as the VirageAwie community. This community produces various creative bamboo-based products and handicrafts, but still faces obstacles in communication, promotion, and digital marketing strategies.

Initial observations show that partners still face several fundamental problems in running their business activities. Their understanding of digital marketing strategies and branding concepts is still relatively low, so product promotions have not been able to attract widespread consumer attention. In addition, their public communication skills in presenting and selling products are still limited, which has an impact on their low confidence when interacting with potential buyers. Another significant problem is the lack of content or articles on the website that

serve to introduce VirageAwie and its products to foreign markets, so that the potential for global expansion cannot be maximized.

In line with the concept of communication empowerment (Servaes, 2002), improving digital communication capacity is key to enabling the community to actively participate in modern economic activities. Furthermore, branding is a crucial element in increasing the visibility and competitiveness of MSMEs through digital marketing strategies and visual communication within the Community Service Program (PKM). In this context, digital marketing and product branding training has been shown to help MSMEs understand the use of social media and modern marketing strategies to expand their market and strengthen their business identity (Sabila et al., 2025). Furthermore, digital branding for MSMEs through visual communication has been shown to improve the quality of promotional content used by business actors, thereby establishing a more consistent brand identity across digital platforms such as Instagram and e-commerce (Wulan et al., 2023).

Furthermore, mentoring MSMEs

through the development of branding guidelines and the implementation of digital marketing has also increased business visibility and expanded market reach through optimizing social media and online stores (Kristianto et al., 2025). Therefore, this PKM activity focuses on improving digital communication, branding, and simple marketing skills so that local entrepreneurs and MSMEs can develop their business independently and sustainably.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

The method used in this community service activity is Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with a participatory approach, where the entire implementation process involves active participation from partners, students, and accompanying lecturers. This approach was chosen because it was considered capable of exploring issues in depth through open dialogue, as well as encouraging the emergence of solutions that are relevant and appropriate to the needs of the target community.

The first stage was initial observation and problem analysis. This activity was carried out to identify the social conditions, business

characteristics, and main needs of partners consisting of MSME actors and people with disabilities in Cimareme Village. The observation process was carried out directly at the activity location using a participatory approach, where the team of lecturers and students interacted with members of the VirageAwie Community to explore existing problems and potential.



Figure 1. Initial Discussion And Observation With MSME Actors And People With Disabilities In The Virageawie Community, Cimareme Village, As The Initial Stage Of Collecting Partner Needs Data

The observations revealed that most partners still had limitations in terms of digital literacy, understanding of business communication strategies, and the ability to manage business disabilities, students, and lecturers from Universitas Indonesia

Membangun (INABA). This FGD served as the main forum for participants to convey their problems, experiences, and expectations regarding the development of their businesses in the digital era. The discussion focused on identifying communication barriers in marketing, training needs that support the improvement of digital communication competencies and formulating more effective product promotion strategies through social media and other online platforms.

Based on the results of the FGD, the implementation team then designed training and mentoring activities that were carried out in several thematic sessions. To support the effectiveness of the activities, all training materials were compiled in the form of a structured and systematic activity rundown. This rundown included the schedule, duration, training materials, and competent resource persons in the fields of communication, digital business and branding. The details of the training activities are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Training Activity Schedule

Time	Subject
12:45 PM – 1:45	Digital Skills: 1. Marketing Strategies Media Social Media 2. <i>E-Commerce</i> : Building an Online Store and Increasing Sales through Online Marketing
1:30 p.m. – 2:30	Business Skills: 1. Branding and Product Marketing Strategies 2. Public Speaking Training to Increase Sales
2:30 p.m. – 3:30	Market Access Training: 1. Entering the Digital Market 2. Building a Strong Business Network

All training activities use the experiential learning method, which is a learning approach based on direct experience. Through this method, participants not only gain theoretical knowledge, but are also trained in practice through activities such as creating digital promotional content, simulating speaking in front of potential buyers.

As part of the digital training implementation, website creation and management activities were also carried out, facilitated by INABA lecturers and students. Participants were trained to understand how to create, manage, and update content on the website, including articles and information that serve to introduce the VirageAwie community and their local products to the wider community, especially the international

market. This website is expected to be a strategic tool for branding, business communication, and sustainable digital marketing network development. The final stage is the evaluation and monitoring of the implementation of activities. The evaluation is carried out through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and group reflection to assess the extent of improvement in the participants' engagement, understanding, and communication. After participating in the entire series of activities. The data obtained is then analyzed descriptively and qualitatively to assess the effectiveness of the program.

Overall, the FGD method with a participatory approach proved effective in facilitating an interactive learning process, increasing ownership of the program, and strengthening the communication, digital marketing, capacities of the participants, especially people with disabilities and MSME actors in Cimareme Village.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of community service activities through the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) approach produced a number of

important findings that formed the basis for the design of training and mentoring programs. Based on the results of the FGD involving MSME actors and people with disabilities in Cimareme Village, it was found that most participants still had limitations in understanding integrated digital communication strategies. Although some participants had utilized social media as a means of promotion, its use was still simple without a systematic communication strategy. They also did not understand the importance of brand image building and message consistency across various digital platforms.

The main need that emerged from the discussion was practical and applicable training on social media management and effective digital communication to increase product sales. Participants acknowledged that social media has enormous potential to expand the market, but limited technical capabilities and communication planning have prevented promotional efforts from reaching their full potential. On the other hand, participants' motivation to expand their markets internationally is very high, but they are still hampered by a lack of digital infrastructure and minimal ability to create foreign-language promotional content that can introduce their products

globally.

In terms of platform usage, the discussion indicated that Instagram was the primary social media platform used by MSME actors to promote Virageawie products. Instagram was mainly utilized to reach local, regional, and national markets due to its visual-based features, which are suitable for showcasing bamboo handicrafts and musical instruments. However, its use was still limited to basic content posting without optimal utilization of features such as audience targeting, content planning, and consistent branding strategies.

For international market outreach, participants expressed the need for an independently managed website as a digital platform to introduce Virageawie products more comprehensively to a global audience. The website is expected to function not only as a product catalog, but also as a medium for brand storytelling, providing detailed information about the uniqueness of bamboo-based musical instruments, production processes, and the cultural value behind the products. Despite this potential, the lack of technical skills in website management and foreign-

language content development remains a major challenge.

In terms of targeted market segments, Virageawie products are aimed at music enthusiasts and consumers who appreciate unique bamboo handicrafts. This includes individuals interested in traditional and contemporary musical instruments as well as audiences who value environmentally friendly and culturally based products. Nevertheless, digital marketing activities have not yet been designed based on clear audience segmentation, resulting in the absence of specific digital marketing objectives such as increasing brand awareness among music communities, expanding engagement with creative art audiences, or driving online purchase intentions.

To address these challenges, the organizing team designed a series of training activities covering four main areas, namely digital skills, business skills, market access, and branding. Each activity was carried out in a structured manner with the involvement of professional speakers from Universitas Indonesia Membangun (INABA), using an experiential learning approach, which is learning based on direct experience that allows participants to learn through

practice, simulation, and two-way interaction.

The first session focused on strengthening digital skills, presented by Ridho Riadi Akbar and Rama Chandra Jaya, from 12:45 to 1:45 p.m. The material discussed social media marketing strategies and e-commerce development as a means of increasing sales. Participants were given an in-depth understanding of the importance of building a consistent digital identity, optimizing business features on platforms such as Instagram and Shopee, and implementing content strategies that are attractive and relevant to the target market. In the practical session, participants received guidance on how to create a business account on Shopee, compile a content calendar, and upload promotional material with a more professional visual appearance. Participants were also taught how to utilize AI technology to create more attractive product images before uploading them to Shopee. Through this activity, participants understood that visual communication plays an important role in shaping consumer perceptions of the products they offer.



Figure 2. "Digital Skills" Training Session With Ridho Riadi Akbar, SE., MBA., CDMP And Rama Chandra Jaya, S.Kom., M.M., Discussing Social Media Marketing And E-Commerce Strategies

Following that, the activity continued with business skills enhancement from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. with speakers Dr. Ida Farida Oesma, and Ridma Meltareza. This material focused on branding strategies, product storytelling, and public speaking training to improve sales skills. Participants were guided to understand the concept of brand identity as a crucial factor in building consumer trust. Through product presentation simulations, participants learn to use persuasive language, convincing intonation, and body language that supports sales. This approach is in line with interpersonal communication, which states that the effectiveness of a message is influenced by the communicator's expertise, the trust they have earned, and their attractiveness, in addition to the clarity of the message delivery (Zalvi muhammad,

2025).



Figure 3. "Business Skills" Training Session By Dr. Ida Farida Oesman, SE., M.Si And Ridma Meltareza, S.I.Kom., M.I.Kom., CICS On Branding And Public Speaking Strategies For Sales

Research shows that communicators who have high credibility and deliver messages straightforwardly and on target have a greater chance of effectively influencing audience behavior (Nadiya et al., 2023).

The third session, which began at 2:30–3:30 p.m., discussed digital market access training, led by Ahmad Taufiq Maulana Ramdan. In this session, participants were introduced to the concept of *digital marketplaces* and strategies for building strong

business networks.

This material emphasized the importance of cross-community collaboration and the use of digital networks as social capital in expanding market reach. This approach is in line with (Rogers, 2003) Theory of Innovation Diffusion, which explains that the adoption of innovation in society depends on the process of communication, perception of benefits, and the readiness of the social environment to accept change.



Figure 4. Training Session On "Digital Market Access" With Ahmad Taufiq Maulana Ramdan, S.I.Kom., M.I.Kom., CRM On Market Expansion Strategies And Digital Business Network Development

In addition to the training, the implementation team also assisted participants in creating and managing the VirageAwie community website as the final outcome of the activity. This website was developed collaboratively by INABA students and lecturers, with the aim of expanding the reach of

promotion and increasing product credibility in the digital market. Through this training, participants learned how to update content, write promotional articles, and add product photos independently. The website <https://virageawie.com/> is now a strategic tool for introducing products made by people with disabilities to the national and international markets, as well as serving as an example of integrated digital communication practices.

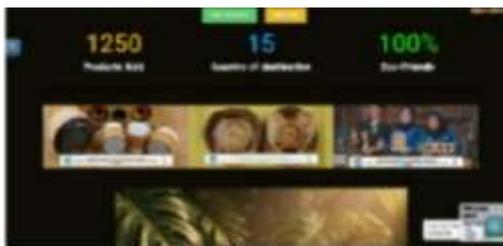


Figure 5. Initial Display Of The Virageawie.Com Website As A Result Of The Mentoring Of INABA Students And Lecturers In The 2025 PKM Activity

The implementation of the entire training series had a significant impact. People with disabilities who previously lacked confidence in selling products now show positive behavioral changes. They have become more active in communicating, participating in local economic activities, and daring to present products directly to buyers. The experience-based and two-way

communication training process has improved their interpersonal skills, confidence, and motivation to develop their businesses independently.

Overall, this community service activity has not only resulted in improved technical skills in digital marketing and branding but also strengthened participatory communication capacity at the community level. The application of communication theories has proven to be able to encourage changes in communication behavior, expand social networks, and open up new economic opportunities for people with disabilities in Cimareme Village.

CONCLUSION

This community service activity has succeeded in improving digital communication capacity, marketing skills, and branding for entrepreneurs and people with disabilities in Cimareme Village. Through a focus group discussion (FGD) approach and practice-based training in communication, participants were able to develop digital skills, build brand identity, and expand their market network to the global level.

The website created by VirageAwie is a strategic solution to expand promotional reach and increase the competitiveness of local products.

This success shows that participatory and collaborative communication between academics and the community can be a driving force for digital-based economic empowerment and microfinance.

Moving forward, follow-up programs are needed in the form of cross-cultural communication training, search engine optimization (SEO), so that the results of empowerment can be sustainable and inclusive for people with disabilities.

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