

Workshop and International Company Visit: Export Opportunities for Aceh's Creative Economy Products

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ABSTRACT

Collaboration with Faculty of Economics and Business Lecturers, Research Center for Communication Marketing, Tourism & Creative Economy at Syiah Kuala University, Business Indonesia Singapore Association (BISA), and Cloud Retail PTE Ltd aims to overcome constraints in international market access, global understanding, and building robust business networks. Through training at Syiah Kuala University and a company visit to Cloud Retail PTE Ltd in Singapore, participants gain profound insights into product packaging, export licensing procedures, and distribution channels. The holistic training method, combining theory and practical experience, empowers participants to optimize their business potential in the creative economy and access the global market. Evaluation indicates enhanced participant understanding and readiness, with recommendations for strengthened collaboration, ongoing training, business network development, monitoring and evaluation, and advanced program development.

INTRODUCTION

The creative economy is an essential pillar in the development of a region, producing unique products and services and having the potential to increase economic growth (Ginting et al., 2018; Purnomo, 2016; Syahsudarmi, 2019). As an integral part of Indonesia, Aceh has cultural riches and abundant creative resources. However, the right strategy is needed to optimize this potential to increase competitiveness and explore export opportunities in the global market. Phenomena related to this problem include obstacles to international market access, a lack of understanding of global demands, and challenges in building strong business networks (Handayani & Sari, 2020; Netrawati et al., 2019). Therefore, workshops and visits by international companies are critical in opening the doors of opportunity for Aceh's creative economy players.

Cross-border collaboration between Lecturers at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Syiah Kuala University, Marketing Communication, Tourism & Creative Economy Research Center, Syiah Kuala University, Business Indonesia Singapore Association (BISA), and CloudRetail PTE Ltd marks a potential breakthrough in overcoming these obstacles. An in-depth partner situation analysis will provide a better understanding of the condition of Aceh's creative economy. The latest data and facts will provide a clear picture of existing potential, obstacles faced, and opportunities that may still need to be fully explored. For example, it can be found that creative economy actors in Aceh need to understand changes in global trends entirely or are still limited in accessing the resources needed to improve the quality and competitiveness of their products.

Second, international partners, such as the Business Indonesia Singapore Association (BISA) and CloudRetail PTE Ltd, bring valuable experience and knowledge in international business expansion. This collaboration is a bridge for access to global markets and a source of inspiration and learning for Aceh's creative economy players. By understanding this condition, this community service activity can be a concrete and effective solution, opening the door to broader export opportunities and stimulating sustainable growth in Aceh's creative economy sector.

IMPLEMENTATION AND METHODS

The method of implementing this service activity is based on a time and location that has been carefully determined. Training and mentoring were carried out at Syiah Kuala University on 13-14 June 2023, involving students from the USK Faculty of Economics and Business who have businesses in the creative economy sector and creative economy entrepreneurs from the general public. Meanwhile, the company visited CloudRetail PTE Ltd. at TripleOne Somerset, Singapore, scheduled for June 21, 2023, and facilitated by the Business Indonesia Singapore Association (BISA). The number of company visit participants reached 30 people, consisting of 10 lecturers, 15 students doing business in the creative economy sector, and 5 creative economy entrepreneurs from the general public.

The training methods used include a variety of approaches to ensure a holistic understanding. Lectures convey material about product packaging, export licensing, and distribution channels. Interactive discussions provide space for participants to share experiences and ideas, while the Project Based Learning (PjBL) and Case Method approaches enable the integration of theory with practical experience. In addition, individual counseling and mentoring sessions are provided to provide more personalized guidance.

The training material focuses on critical aspects, including product packaging design, export licensing procedures, and understanding the various distribution channels that creative economy actors can use. On the other hand, the company visit focused on two main aspects: how the Business Indonesia Singapore Association (BISA) facilitates Indonesian products to be sold in Singapore and the presentation of CloudRetail PTE Ltd services in the vending machine sector, as an alternative for selling Indonesian products on the international market. Thus, this method is expected to provide a unique combination of theoretical understanding and practical experience. It will empower participants to optimize their business potential in the creative economy and access global markets.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of service activities includes a series of detailed steps to ensure the success of the process. Training at Syiah Kuala University on 13-15 June 2023 covers product packaging materials, export licensing procedures, and distribution channels. Company visit to CloudRetail PTE Ltd. at TripleOne Somerset, Singapore, on June 21, 2023, involving teams from the Business Indonesia Singapore Association (BISA) and CloudRetail PTE Ltd.

1) Training and Assistance on Product Packaging

In the product packaging session, participants were introduced to the history of packaging development, the protective role of packaging in the food supply chain, the value of packaging to society, and the basic definition and function. The material also covers packaging strategy, packaging design and development, packaging design and development framework, and packaging specifications and standards (Figure 1). These materials were presented to increase participants' awareness and knowledge of product packaging (Herudiansyah et al., 2019; Muljani et al., 2020; Sufaidah et al., 2022).

After this training and mentoring, participants gain a deeper understanding of the history and development of product packaging and its strategic value in protecting products and influencing consumer perceptions. They also gain skills in developing attractive and practical packaging. Participants can change their approach to product presentation, emphasizing packaging as a powerful marketing tool. That is expected to increase the attractiveness of their products in local and international markets. Participants can immediately implement the packaging design concepts they learn in this activity, ensuring their products appear attractive and competitive in the global market.



Figure 1. Training and Assistance on Product Packaging

2) Training and Assistance on Export Licensing Procedures

As in Figure 2, the export licensing procedures session discusses export guidelines, Indonesia and free trade, basic export guidelines, the Harmonized System Code, a list of export-related service contacts, and export financing. This information is essential to ensure participants understand the steps and requirements to meet when exporting.

From this training and mentoring, participants gain a comprehensive view of export licensing procedures, ensuring they can navigate smoothly through any administrative challenges. Participants can better understand export guidelines, the Harmonized System Code, and export financing. That allows them to take advantage of the benefits of free trade agreements that can support international business expansion. With the knowledge gained, participants become more confident in facing export challenges and can make smarter decisions regarding international market development.



Figure 2. Training and Assistance on Export Licensing Procedures

3) Distribution Channel Training and Assistance

Material on distribution channels provides in-depth insight into researching to collect the necessary information, stimulate sales through product information, establish contacts with potential buyers, adapt products to foreign market requirements, and organize the movement of goods (transportation and storage). It also involves understanding the risks associated with distribution channel operations.

The outcomes of this training and mentoring include: Participants can understand in more depth how to design and manage effective distribution channels, including research, marketing, and related risk management. Participants gain practical skills in managing supply chains, from planning to moving goods. That allows them to design more efficient distribution strategies. Participants learn to identify and manage risks in distribution channels, including adapting products to suit the demands of foreign markets. That increases their business resilience in global competition.



Figure 3. Visit CloudRetail PTE Ltd Singapore

4) Company Visit Activities

During the company visit (Figure 3), the Business Indonesia Singapore Association (BISA) team provided an understanding of the facilities and requirements if products from Indonesia were to be exported to Singapore. Additionally, the team from CloudRetail PTE Ltd. explains the company profile, including its products related to vending machines designed to sell high-value products, such as jewelry, cosmetics, and electronic goods. The team also discussed the opportunity to use CloudRetail vending machines as a means of marketing Aceh's superior products.



Figure 4. Presentasi fitur vending machine oleh tim CloudRetail PTE Ltd

From this visit, participants gained direct insight into the facilities and requirements needed if their products were exported to Singapore through the Business Indonesia Singapore Association (BISA) team. Additionally, a presentation from the CloudRetail PTE Ltd team. (Figure 4), participants understand the profile of companies focusing on vending machines for high-value products. That opens up new opportunities to market Aceh's superior products through this platform. Company visits create opportunities to establish connections and potential collaboration with the companies involved, opening the door for sustainable collaboration.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This community service activity achieved its goal of increasing the understanding and readiness of Aceh's creative economy actors for export opportunities. By delivering comprehensive material and direct experience from company visits, participants gained significant insight into product packaging strategies, export licensing procedures, and the importance of distribution channels in expanding their business to international markets.

Various training methods, such as lectures, interactive discussions, and project-based learning, allow participants to understand and apply these concepts practically. That has been confirmed in previous service implementations (Bambang Haryadi, 2023; BZ et al., 2019; Devianti et al., 2022; Hanafiah et al., 2018; Nasrulloh et al., 2022; Pandanwangi et al., 2023a, 2023b; Retnani et al., 2022; Wahyuningsih, 2019). Counseling and mentoring sessions also provide personalized support, reinforcing the positive impact of these activities on participants' understanding and readiness.

Based on the results of this service activity, several recommendations can be taken to strengthen its positive impact:

1. **Strengthening Collaboration:** Encourage collaboration between educational institutions, government and business associations. Close collaboration can create an environment that supports the growth of the creative economy and accelerates the application of concepts obtained through community service activities.
2. **Ongoing Training:** Provide ongoing and in-depth training on export strategies, licensing, and distribution channel management. That can help participants continue to improve their abilities and knowledge in facing dynamic changes in the global market.
3. **Business Network Development:** Encourage participants to build business networks not only at the national but also at the international level. By increasing connections and collaboration, Aceh's creative economy players can more effectively market their products globally.
4. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Conduct regular monitoring and evaluation of the long-term impact of this activity on participant businesses. That will help assess the sustainability and effectiveness of implementing the concepts taught.

5. Advanced Program Development: Develop advanced training programs that are more specific and in-depth, accommodating needs that may arise as the global market develops. That can include aspects such as international digital marketing and export risk management.

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