

Salasika

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Women's Capacity Building of Informal Sector Workers in Rural Areas (Case of "Boiled Corn Seller" In Konawe Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province)

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ABSTRACT

The number of women local workers, most of whom live and work in poverty, in the informal sector increases. One of the common jobs is selling corn on the cob. The women who sell corn on the cob are known as Boiled Corn Seller (BCS) women. These BCS women sell their corn along the provincial axis road in Pondidaha Sub-district of Konawe District, Indonesia. BCS women phenomenon has generated the researcher's interest to conduct a study of the issue. Studying the social condition of BCS women, this study is a case study with qualitative approach. The data collection techniques used were observation methods, in-depth interviews, and FGDs. The results showed that (1) BCS women still had access to capital resources, production facilities and labor, but faced difficulties in production equipment, labor, training and money; (2) the processing, marketing and distribution of corn on the cob were dominated by BCS women; and (3) the conceptual model planned for capacity building was a local food diversification program.

KEYWORDS: *Boiled Corn Seller (BCS) women, capacity building, informal sector workers*

INTRODUCTION

The number of women living and working in poverty who work in informal employment in rural areas and in the informal sector as women local workers are increasing. Labor force survey in Indonesia reported that the informal sector employed between 61% and 70% of the total workforce (Alatas & Newhouse, 2010; Firdausy, 2000). These female workers can provide an opportunity to earn income, but the work is not a decent job for most women who are engaged in it since it is without legal

protection. Therefore, they are invisible to the "*public eye*" because their job is considered to be a regular female occupation, not a 'real' one, even if the work is very important to family income insurance. These female workers have less access to formal employment than men, and they are more likely to work informally.

In addition, rural communities are segmented in the context of the poor. These poor and marginalized segments of the community are particularly vulnerable to side effects

of climate change because they tend to have limited resources. This makes their adaptation and livelihoods depend heavily on climate-sensitive natural resources (FAO, 2011; Dankelman, 2010; Women Watch, 2009). Analysis of trends over time suggests that there is a trend of dilemmas, as to why women are outside the workforce due to family obligations or enter the workforce as unpaid family workers in agricultural or trade sector throughout the year. This trend indicates that women are very vulnerable and comparatively have a weak position in the labor market due to gender-based division of labor within households and the difficulty in shifting from work at home to work outside the home.

From gender perspective, hiring another part-time "housewife" poses a number of normative dilemmas that have been given scant attention (Vollenweider, 2013). Nevertheless, the choice of women to work in the informal sector outside the house is one of the most difficult choices to avoid. Informal sector workers are not guaranteed in any context, because the work of this sector is unorganized, unregulated, and unregistered, even though it is mostly legal. Widodo (2005) states that about 30-70% of the urban workforce in developing countries is working in the informal sector. The informal business sector is a form of business undertaken by uneducated, small-capitalized, lower class society that has neither fixed place of business nor business permit and does not require formal education with special expertise. Most women-owned firms are small-scale, self-financed, low-technology, and labor-intensive operations (Klapper &

Parker, 2011). It is often argued that female entrepreneurs prefer the informal sector due to their family responsibilities, lower level of education, or the type and size of enterprise (World Bank, 2009, p. xiv). The context of today's global restructuring provides a great opportunity for women to enter the workforce context, especially informal work with household workload, lower mobility, education and skills. This needs to be criticized proportionately.

One of informal job types is corn on the cob seller, which is mostly run by women, who will be referred to as *Boiled Corn Seller (BCS) women* throughout this paper. These BCS women sell their corn along the provincial axis road in Pondidaha Sub-district of Konawe District. This road access connects two regencies / municipal government areas, Kendari and Konawe, which are the districts / cities within the country of Indonesia.

The phenomenon of BCS women occupying taverns on the shoulders of the road along ± 2 km has grown in line with the density of transport flows that pass through the highway, which has amounted to about 150 stores / stalls. The context provides an illustration that rural women workers are increasingly showing their difficulties in struggling to survive on the periphery. The issue eventually arises with some information from online media stating that there are hidden transactions behind boiled corn stores serving as the magnet, such as "*hidden prostitution business*". There, the bureaucracy to date corn seller girls is not too complicated. The communication can be done via cell phone. The practice of

prostitution is not too obvious. The women show a little part of their body while removing the lid of the corn pan (JPNN.com, 2016). Although difficult to prove, the solution of this problem will not be simple as it is related to various social variables that are quite vital to the necessities of life, such as job negligence, low income, poor working and living conditions, and lack of access to public or private support services. The reality for most of these workers is that they do not have the capital to invest, have no access to loans and do not have the potential or prospect to develop their corn business into a viable business, and etc.

The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which BCS women are able to develop their capacity. In detail, the study aims to (1) explain gender role distribution of households, (2) explain the extent of BCS women access to and control of capital and skill resources, (3) explain the effect of gender inequality on capacity building, and (4) develop a capacity building strategy through a development model of capacity building. The benefit of this research is to help BCS women understand the capacity of gender inequalities in their households. In addition, it also helps formulate strategies for improving their welfare through efforts to develop business capacity and individual capacity.

Capacity building is an abstract and multidimensional concept. This concept is related to the process of intervention and change. For example, Enemark & Ahene (2002) define capacity building as the development of human resources (knowledge, skills, individual and

group attitudes) for the purpose of developing and managing certain areas in society. OECD has also defined Capacity Development as the process by which individuals, groups, organizations, institutions and societies increase their abilities to (i) perform core functions, solve problems, define and achieve objectives; and (ii) understand and deal with their development needs in a broad context and in a sustainable manner (Enemark, & Williamson, 2004, p. 640). Brown, LaFond & Macintyre (2001) offer some definitions from International NGO Training and Research Center. The approach has been named capacity development, which is defined by Lavergne (2004) as the process where individuals, groups, organizations and societies enhance their capacities in terms of human, organizational, institutional and social capital.

As an abstract and multidimensional concept, intervention process of capacity building needs to be given indicators. Typically, capacity-building interventions focus on organizational level or human resource / personnel and literature, and their measurements are approached with those areas. The measurement approach is usually derived more from field experience than from theoretical literature (Brown, LaFond & Macintyre, 2001). A summary by Merinoa & Carmenado (2012) of the indicators presented by several experts can be seen in the table below.

Table 1
Organization capacity characteristics

Level	Competence & authors	Level	Competence & authors
Individual capacity	Leadership ^(2,3,4,5,8,9,10,11,14,15,16,17)	Social capacity	Participation and cooperation ^(2,9,10,12,15,17)
	Entrepreneurship ^(2,7,11)		Commitment ^(4,12,17)
	Financial skills-Economic literacy ^(2,3,5,12,14,6,17)		Trust ^(2,4,7,10,12)
	Technology skills ^(2,14)		Communication ^(5,7,8,9,11,14,15,17)
	Political skills : (Communication; Organizational; Electoral) ^(2,5)		Network building ^(1,3,4,5,6,8,9,10,11,12,14,15)
	Planning skills ^(2,9,10,12,14,17)		Entrepreneurship ^(2,7)
	Management skills, changes management ^(9,12,14,16,17)		Norms ^(9,12,17)
			Team work ^(7,9,11,17)
			Group process skills (Problem/ conflict-solving skills; consensus building, decision-making) ^(1,2,4,9,10,14,17)
			Sense of community, shared values ^(3,4,9,10,12,14,15)
	Vision and Strategy ^(8,9,13,16,17)		

Note. ¹Armstrong et al. (2002); ²Aspen Institute (1996); ³Brown et al. (2001); ⁴Chaskin (2001); ⁵Cheers et al. (2005); ⁶Coleman (1988); ⁷Diallo (2005); ⁸Flora et al. (1999); ⁹Foster-Fishman et al (2001); ¹⁰Goodman et al. (1998); ¹¹Innes & Booher (2003); ¹²Kwan et al. (2003); ¹³Liou (2004); ¹⁴Lusthaus (1995); ¹⁵Maclellan-Wright et al. (2007); ¹⁶UNDP (1998); ¹⁷WRI (2008)

Merinoa & Carmenado (2012) further mention that some of the above experts, such as Brown, LaFond & Macintyre (2001) have described four components to analyze capacity at different levels: inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes. The inputs represent resources that are required for producing capacity at each level that transform resources into capacity outputs and outcomes. Maclellan-Wright et al. (2007), also focusing on health, develop an instrument with 9 domains and 29 items that provide

quantitative and qualitative information on community capacity within the context and scope of community-based funding programs. They are participation, leadership, community structures, asking why, resource mobilization, links with others, role of external supports, skills, knowledge and learning, and sense of community. WRI (2008) proposes a set of dimensions for assessing the strength of local organizations and their potential to drive local development, namely vision and

strategy, leadership, inclusiveness and gender balance, physical participation, process participation, internal processes, technical capacity, administrative capacity, financial control, and funding. Kwan et al. (2003) also conceptualize community capacity as knowledge and skills, public participation, functional organizations, community infrastructure, and collaboration.

Other authors have established a distinction between micro, meso and macro level analysis (Enemark & Williamson, 2004; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Liou, 2004). The micro level is related to individuals and families and their skills, education, job training and social cares. The success or viability of a capacity initiative is invariably linked to the capacity of leadership and management. The entity/organizational level is also called the meso level (Liou, 2004). The dimensions considered within this level are mission and strategy, effective leadership, relationships, and vision to transform individual interests into a dynamic collective force, culture/structure and competencies, processes, human resources, financial resources, information resources, and infrastructure (Liou, 2004; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001). The macro level is the highest level within which capacity initiatives may be considered and it refers to action environment (socio-political, government/public, economic/technological, and physical sectors).

Some of the results of interventions carried out in capacity building show that the capacity building evaluation process is

analyzing the specific capabilities required for the effective functioning of individuals, organizations, or systems that are based on certain intervention logics entailing their internal components and links with the context (DRN, 2012; ECORYS, 2011; Huyse et al., 2012).

The study is a case study with qualitative approach. Through case studies, researchers can maintain holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events. The adoption of gender perspective also involves a feminist approach to methodological designs and this usually results in a preference for qualitative and participatory methods. A case study strategy with a qualitative approach allowed researchers to obtain an empirical and objective picture of BCS women's social condition in Pondidaha Sub-district of Konawe District. In this way, the problems faced by BCS women to increase their capacity can be known holistically. Strategies in the design and modification of the program could be conducted in a participatory and gendered manner involving stakeholders related to the program, such as the husbands of BCS women, community leaders, village government, and others who were thought to be related to the context of the problem.

The location of the study was at the center of corn sales in Pondidaha District of Konawe Regency. The focus of the study was BCS women. The data collection techniques used were observation methods, in-depth interviews, and FGDs. The researcher developed an interview

guide based on prior needs assessment (Gwede et al., 2010) and revised it based on recent literature review. The analysis tools used were Harvard framework and SWOT framework. The Harvard framework was used to analyze the division of gender roles and access to and control over resources and benefits. SWOT framework was used to assist BCS women in understanding the strengths, weaknesses, potentials, and threats they had in capacity building efforts.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Research respondents indicated that boiled corn sellers had common rural area characteristics. In the context of educational level, most of the respondents were in high school or below, while the age of boiled corn sellers varied from 17-50 years old. In detail, the data are presented below.

Table 2
Characteristics of respondents

Age grouping	%	Educational Level		Starting year		Ownership of a location permit	
			%		%		%
5-20	30	Dipl	5	2002	5	Yes	0
21-25	25	Senior High School	30	2005	10	No	100
26-30	10	Junior High School	30	2008	15	Total	100
31-35	10	Elementary School	30	2010	15		
36-40	10	No Graduation Elemt. School	5	2014	15		
41-45	10	Total	100	2015	15		
46-50	5			2016	20		
total	100			2017	5		
				Total	100		

The data shows that sellers of boiled corn along Kendari-Kolaka axis road in Konawe District were untouched by government service system that was capable of improving their capacity. One indication is the absence of location permit (known as surat izin tempat usaha) ownership as one of the requirements for business establishment even though this business started in 2002. The problem became a constraint because, according to the seller, the location permit was difficult to obtain since the business place was on the land prohibited for business, namely the land along the roadside of Kendari-Kolaka. The logical

consequence was that there was no financial institution (bank) that could provide financial assistance under these conditions. In relation to this, the initial funds owned by boiled corn sellers came mostly from self-financing and family loans (75%) while others came from *koperasi* (cooperative) loans (25%).

Capacity of Boiled Corn Seller (BCS) women

Selling boiled corn is an effort in the informal sector with various characteristics. In essence, this business is described as a business with a very small scale. The results showed that the income profile (revenue) obtained by boiled corn

sellers ranged from 4 to 12 million rupiah. The amount of income (revenue) was highly dependent on transport flow density that crosses this region. It can be assumed that the more the flow of transport is, the more customers who stop to rest while enjoying corn on the cob.

Typically, the sellers had bus driver customers who would park their vehicles in front of each stall. The average distribution of income (revenue per month) is presented in the following table.

Table 3
Average revenue per month, labor and source of capital

Revenue per month (million rupiah)	labor (people)				Source of capital	
	0	1	2	3	owner s	loans (family and koperasi)
4 - 6	10	35	10	0	10	0
7 - 9	0	0	25	0	0	70
10 - 12	0	0	0	20	5	15
Total	10	35	35	20	15	85
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)

Table 4
The distribution of the reason for selling corn on the cob based on revenue

Revenue per month (million rupiah)	The reason to sell corn on the cob					Total
	Providing a job	Continuing family business	Fulfilling the cost of daily living	Willingness to own a business		
4 - 6	10	10	35	0		55
7 - 9	0	0	20	5		25
10 - 12	0	0	20	0		20
Total	10 (%)	10 (%)	75 (%)	5 (%)		100%

BCS women tended to have multiple barriers in capacity building. In addition to the low level of education, access to capacity building efforts was not developed. In terms of access to capital and raw material resources, the corn seller women could deal with them because the daily business management was done by them. Another thing that usually affected the women's capacity development was their underlying reasons of doing the business. The following

table gives an overview of the linkage.

The data above show that daily needs fulfillment was the main reason for BCS women to do this business. This illustrates that BCS women were working to fulfill their daily needs. This condition is quite ironic when compared to the assumption that wives are working to take care of the husbands and children, not focusing on the issue of family livelihood. This context cannot be separated from the working

conditions of the husbands who generally work as farmers and rough laborers. This also causes the corn seller women to have a high bargaining position in running the business. The flexibility and authority in decision-making over access to and control of resources is considerable. The data gathered showed that most boiled corn sellers (75%) had power in decision-making over access to and control over resources and benefits they had, while the remaining (25%) were done jointly with the husbands.

No corn seller women were involved in the process of capacity building through skill upgrading (training). This was because the production process did not need to have its own expertise and did not involve high technology. The sellers only maintained the quality of the product, and it did not require special treatment that required expertise.

GENDER ROLES DISTRIBUTION ANALYSIS

The division of roles referred to in this analysis is the division of productive roles and reproductive roles between BCS women and their husbands or other household members. The productive role undertaken by BCS women ranged from preparing venture capital, raw materials, production process, marketing and business promotion. Meanwhile, the reproductive role consisted of parenting, preparing meals, washing, ironing, cleaning the house, and shopping for everyday needs. Research data showed that most BCS women had a productive role and a dominant reproductive role within the community and outside the community. Pattern of daily activity profile can be seen in the following table.

Table 5
Daily activity profile patterns of all respondents in relation to productive and reproductive roles

No.	Type of daily activity	Activity Profile				Location
		Activity Actors		Time (hours)		
		wife	husband	wife	husband	
1	Productive					
	Venture capital	√	√	14	6	Inside / Outside the Community
	Raw material	√	√			
	Production process	√	-			
	Marketing	√	-			
Promotion	√	-				
2	Reproductive					
	Parenting	√	-	10	2	Inside / Outside the Community
	Preparing meals	√	-			
	Washing	√	-			
	Ironing	√	-			
	Cleaning the house	√	√			
Shopping for everyday needs	√	-				

From the table above, it is seen that all corn seller women had a dominant role in productive or reproductive roles. This dominance is due to several things, such as the absence of someone else in the household who can be invited to share a productive role and feeling that this effort is a must do effort to improve the welfare and continuation of family life, especially children. When the husband as the heads of households are unable to earn income to support their households, women are taking over this role. In this context, many studies posit that the informal sector is well-tailored to the needs of female entrepreneurs because it provides greater flexibility in terms of working hours, pace of work, and proximity of the job to one's home (Bahramitash & Salehi Esfahani, 2011; Chen, 2001)

The dominant role of BCS women in performing productive roles was also accompanied by the dominance of their role in performing biological, labor, and social reproductive roles. In some cases, there were some respondents who performed their own reproductive roles, as if the role could not be substituted by others. They assumed that the reproductive role of labor was the nature of a woman and had become the risk of a wife. This condition is also closely related to the cultural structures of ethnic that inhabit the research area, most of which are Tolaki ethnicity. In this context, Tolaki women still highly appreciate the duties of a wife in the household so that all household chores are still done outside the home.

The visible condition indicated that the largest proportion was the

productive role. Viewed from time aspect, the biggest time spent was on the production and marketing process in each stall. On average, women corn sellers managed the business from 5 am to 9 pm, so that, sometimes, productive and reproductive roles were done simultaneously in the stall.

ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OF BCS WOMEN OVER RESOURCES

Access (opportunity) is an opportunity to use the resources or the results without having the authority to make decisions on how to use them. The control (mastery) is the full authority to make decisions on the use and results of resources. The Harvard framework can be used to view access to and control profiles of resources and benefits. The access to and control profiles of resources and benefits can be seen in the following table

Table 6
Description of access to and control patterns of BCS women over resources and benefits

No.	Component	Access		Control		
		women	men	in women domination	equal	in man domination
1	Resource					
	Capital	√	√	√		
	Production tools	√	√		√	
	Labor	√	√		√	
	Cash / Money	√	√	√		
	Savings	√	√	√		
2	Benefits					
	Assets of Ownership	√	√	√		
	Education	√	√		√	
	Basic needs	√	√	√		

The data above show that BCS women had access to all capital resources, production equipment, labor, cash and savings. The issue of access was not really considered by the women because the work involved was the one that must be undertaken every day so that they could easily access business components. However, in terms of control, some components, for example the tools of production and labor, must be carried out jointly with men. In capacity building process, such as access to training and information, BCS women were not able to provide an overview because they had not done the process. Access to information that was beneficial to the women's capacity development was very limited. Some women even did not have any access to the information. In terms of benefits, there was generally no gender difference in terms of access to and control over the benefits of resources. BCS

women could access revenue and had controls to utilize the revenue. Most women used their income to maintain business continuity and survival of their families.

Although no training had been conducted, the interviews showed that BCS women had access to and dominant control over skills and training resources. They could decide when they needed new training or skills and where they could get it. The constraint was that when such training or skills must be acquired outside the community, they had limitations of their domestic role, both their productive and reproductive roles. It was quite difficult for BCS women who had small children to leave home in a relatively long time to attend training. This was related to a sense of responsibility for keeping the children and was associated with the economic value that should be sacrificed if they abandoned the business.

THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER INEQUALITY ON CAPACITY BUILDING

Managing business while fulfilling family responsibilities and dealing with gender discrimination are the most frequently highlighted obstacles (Singh, Reynolds, & Muhammad, 2001; Tambunan, 2009). This research also takes such issues in the form of gender inequality. In relation to this, the data indicated dominant division of productive roles in women. In production systems, for example, BCS women held full control over the stages of the production process so that other household chores, such as keeping and watching children, could still be done. Even though it was not uncommon for BCS women to go directly to find raw materials, the provision of raw materials was done by the men because it required big enough energy in the cultivation and was done outside BCS community. This condition is a strategy that must be done in an effort to maintain the business and the survival of the family. The double burden on BCS women can be minimized by substituting some of its role with others. Nevertheless, this gender inequality is sometimes perceived as one of the obstacles for them to develop their capacities.

One of the effects of gender inequality on women entrepreneurs is the low average turnover. Strategies taken to reduce these forms of gender inequality is to substitute some of women's reproductive roles. BCS women who delegated some of the reproductive roles to husbands and others tended to have higher turnover. This indicates that moving some of the reproductive roles to others allows

BCS women to have wider access to and be able to make decisions regarding the use of resources and benefits for capacity building. The existence of gender equality role embodied in gender equality has a significant impact on BCS women capacity building in developing their business capacity.

BCS WOMEN CAPACITY BUILDING STRATEGY

Capacity building strategy is an ongoing process that is based on the problems and potential of BCS women in the research location. Through the SWOT analysis, several things were obtained as the potential to support BCS women, such as the amount of raw materials available throughout the year because the farming communities in this region had agreed to plant corn in turn. In this way, raw materials could be provided throughout the year. The number of consumers increased due to increased transport flow density between districts. On the other hand, **constraints** such as the lack of real activity in their efforts to improve their capacity made BCS women's motivation to develop capacity low. Most of them accepted what had been achieved without any effort to develop capacity in market segment, skill, and network marketing. This could change significantly due to this capacity building program. In this case, network becomes quite important in capacity building because sustainability of the network is powered by leveraging partnership to expand resources, funding and capacity-building efforts (Simmons, V.N. et al., 2015). Women informal workers tend to be over-represented in the more

precarious and less remunerative segments of informal work. They are more likely to work as own-account workers, domestic workers, and unpaid contributing workers in family enterprises than men (Nordensvard, J., 2014). The above potential can be realistically developed through a strategic diversification of local foodstuff made from corn.

CONCLUSION

From the study, it can be concluded that (1) the division of gender roles shows that productive roles such as borrowing capital, processed foodstuffs, and marketing are more dominantly done by women. Men's productive role is in the preparation of food to be brought to the stalls; (2) access to capital resources, means of production, labor, and money were positive because BCS women had no obstacles in dealing with them. However, in the context of training, it was still negative. BCS women had an easy access to the controlling aspect of capital and money resources, but not to production equipment, labor, training and money. This condition is closely related to the characteristics of respondents with low education level and does not have the ability to access required information; (3) gender inequality is seen in the dual roles of productive and reproductive roles. The processing of corn on the cob, the marketing and distribution process were dominated by BCS women. Those women also performed household tasks such as preparing meals and keeping and supervising the children; and (4) the process of women capacity building strategy of BCS women as a

marginalized community has so far provided a conceptual model that is the diversification program of local foodstuffs with corn basic ingredients.

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