

Building Hope of Women in Eastern Indonesia

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Veronica Ena Murti Andani (37) is one among 30 women from Timor Tengah Utara regency that produce food from fish. Divided into 4 groups, the women from districts of Insana Utara, Biboki Anleu, and Biboki Monleu now are independent women who make their livelihoods thanks to the women empowerment programme that is sustainable in East Nusa Tenggara. The project was initiated by lecturers from Faculty of Agriculture UGM since 2015 under the Community Resilience and Economic Development (CaRED) UGM programme.

Programme chairperson, Dr. Siti Ari Budhiyanti, said Timor Tengah Utara regency is a coastal area that has abundant fishery resource. At certain times, fish supplies are very high. In 2013 the figure reached as high as 708.69 tonnes. Unfortunately, these are still untapped by the local community.

Such condition prompted her and three colleagues, Dr. Eko Setyobudi, Anes Dwi Jayanti, M.Sc., and Wahdan Fitriya, M.Sc., to train the local residents on post-harvest fish processing. The project also tries to improve productivity and welfare of the people.

Siti said of all 121,198 women, 65,200 were of productive age with 52 percent of them only had primary education. This encouraged the lecturers to do empowerment based on small and medium scale endeavours to increase woman's participation in family welfare improvement.



The programme themed Women Empowerment through Sustainable Fisheries Product Development in Border Area of East Nusa Tenggara-Indonesia and Timor Leste has been funded by UGM and New Zealand government in the framework of community empowerment programme of Eastern Indonesia.

Eko Setyobudi added they trained the women from Insana Utara, Biboki Anleu, and Biboki Monleu districts on post-harvest fish processing and fish product diversification, as well as enhancement of micro-economy, promotion and marketing.

“The diversification of fish products has been marketed not only locally, but also to Timor Leste,” he said, adding that it proved to be able to improve family welfare and reduce unemployment rate.

“By processing the fish into many products, we can increase the economy by two times folds,” he said.

Veronica said she had been much assisted by the CaRED UGM programme. Before the programme, they could only make fish products that last only for a week, but after the programme, they had better food production.

“The fish products that we make can now last for six months,” she added.

The CaRED UGM programme is seen by Veronica as able to empower the women and improve their economy. She hoped the programme to run sustainably.

“Going forward, we hope there will be a storage for processed fish so that our products would be more marketable,” she expressed her hope.

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