



**LOCAL
CHAMPION:
THE COMMUNITY-
BASED
YOUNG FARMERS'
MOVEMENT**

**Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Support Services
(YEES) Programme**



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ABBREVIATIONS

BPP	: Balai Penyuluhan Pertanian, Rural Agriculture Extension Center
BDSP	: Business Development Service Provider
DIT	: District Implementation Team
DPA	: Leading Farmers Ambassador (Duta Petani Andalan)
DPM	: Millennial Farmers Ambassador (Duta Petani Milenial)
IFAD	: International Fund for Agricultural Development
NPMU	: National Project Management Unit
PLUT	: Integrated Business Service Center (Pusat Layanan Usaha Terpadu)
P4S	: Farmer Agricultural Rural Training Center (FARTC) (Pusat Pelatihan Pertanian dan Perdesaan Swadaya)
PPIU	: Provincial Project Implementation Unit
RPJMN	: National Medium-Term Development Plan (Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional)
TVET	: Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UMKM	: Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (Usaha Mikro, Kecil, dan Menengah)
YAA	: Young Agricultural Ambassador
YESS	: Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Support Services





Source: BPPSDMP



Welcome Address of the Director General of IAAEHRD



The agricultural sector constitutes one of the main pillars of national economic development. In many countries whose economies are based on natural resources, economic growth generally begins with the success of agricultural development. For Indonesia, agriculture not only provides food for the entire population but also generates employment opportunities and serves as a source of income, particularly for rural communities.

In addition, this sector also plays an important role in supplying raw materials for industry, manufacturing, and export commodities along with their derivative products. On the other hand, while demographic imbalances may threaten the sustainability of the agricultural sector, Indonesia enjoys a demographic bonus, with 24 percent of the total population being youth aged 16–30 years (Bappenas, 2022). The majority of them reside in rural areas but still face limited access to decent work and economic opportunities.

This condition demonstrates a gap between the potential of youth and the needs of the agricultural sector, which, if managed properly, may in fact complement one another. One of the strategic efforts to respond to this challenge is through the Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Support Services (YESS) Programme, an initiative of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Indonesia supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). This program aims to enhance the capacity of rural youth and improve their access to entrepreneurial and employment opportunities in the agricultural sector.

There are two key elements in the implementation of the YESS Programme. First, the YESS Programme equips rural youth through education and training to become agents of agricultural development. Second, it fosters an entrepreneurial spirit for engaging in agribusiness across the entire value chain, from upstream to downstream. Accordingly, they are prepared to compete in the agricultural labor market.

The greatest challenge at present is to encourage the younger generation to engage in agriculture, which is often perceived as less attractive. The presence of the YESS Programme represents one of the efforts to accelerate farmer regeneration by fostering the emergence of successful young entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector who are innovative. Since 2019, the YESS Programme has reached approximately 300,000 beneficiaries who have received entrepreneurship training, business advisory support, access to financing, facilitation of networking and partnerships, and various other forms of support.

The YESS Programme implementation, carried out through diverse activities, has given rise to beneficiaries who are able to demonstrate leadership, drive local initiatives, and provide inspiration for their communities. These individuals are referred to as local champions, namely youth who not only succeed in developing their own enterprises but also play a strategic role as agents of social and economic change in their regions.

The presence of YESS Programme local champions unleashes new strength and energy, and serves as the right solution, as it will drive change, foster collective innovation, and motivate the younger generation to earn income through the development of community-based enterprises in order to create a dynamic and thriving agriculture involving the younger generation.



**Director General of AAEHRD
Idha Widi Arsanti**



Foreword of the Director of Indonesian Center for Agricultural Education



The YESS Programme is a pilot initiative for the development of young generations and farmer regeneration in rural areas through the provision of facilities and guidance to young people to become entrepreneurs or professional workers in the agricultural sector, with funding from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

The main objective of the YESS Programme is to explore the potential and develop the quality of rural youth through the provision of facilities and guidance to become young professional farmers or entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector. The YESS Programme is designed to create a business ecosystem that can support the growth and development of youth enterprises nurtured by the program. The presence of beneficiaries who are ready to develop business models into concrete steps in farming is a key factor that demonstrates the success of the program, which in its progress has produced beneficiaries who excel in entrepreneurship and are able to mobilize other young people to advance together in developing enterprises in the agricultural sector.

The local champion approach in the YESS Programme has become one of the alternatives to mobilize rural youth to bring about change in developing profitable enterprises, because in reality they possess strong credibility within their communities so that they can bridge the process of applying business innovations through their own distinctive language and character.

Through the empowerment of local champions, the process of farmer regeneration will be accelerated, functioning as an extension in the dissemination of technology to communities and the surrounding society in a sustainable manner.

**Director of Indonesian Center for Agricultural Education/
Director of the YESS Programme**

Muhammad Amin



Warm Greetings from the Project Manager of the YESS Programme

Indonesia faces serious challenges in the agricultural sector, namely the low rate of farmer regeneration and the high rate of youth unemployment. These two issues are interrelated and require attention as well as integrated solutions. Based on these challenges, the Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Support Services (YESS) Programme was established as an effort to respond to the threats to food security and the future of Indonesian agriculture.

The YESS Programme is implemented in four provinces, namely South Kalimantan, South Sulawesi, West Java, and East Java Province, consisting of 19 regencies. There are four components of the program, namely: rural youth transition to employment, rural youth entrepreneurship, investment for rural youth in agriculture, and an enabling environment for rural youth.

The development activities of local champions within the YESS Programme were initiated as one of IFAD's recommendations to develop activities for beneficiaries who demonstrate the ability to mobilize other youth to jointly implement pilot entrepreneurial activities. This approach is expected to provide influence and impact on rural youth to adopt knowledge and innovation, as it is based on evidence of success and builds trust and close relationships between local champions and their communities.

The great potential of local champions to bring innovation and new enthusiasm into the agricultural sector has proven that they are capable of developing successful and promising farming enterprises. This can also help ensure the sustainability of the positive impacts of the YESS Programme, considering the role and position of local champions within their communities and societies.

Through this book *Local Champion: Young Farmers' Movement Based on Community*, it is demonstrated that the excellence emerging among young farmers is an important factor in accelerating the process of farmer regeneration. It is expected that through the preparation of this book, the efforts that have been implemented through the YESS Programme will continue to develop and reach more young generations who are interested in becoming involved in the agricultural sector.



Project Manager of YESS
Programme
Miko Harjanti



FOREWORD

Praise and gratitude be extended to the presence of God Almighty, for by His blessings and grace this book entitled “Local Champion: Young Farmers’ Movement Based on Community” has been successfully completed. The preparation of this book is underpinned by the importance of the role of young generations in the development of a competitive and sustainable agricultural sector and comes as a documentation of experiences, good practices, and lessons learned from the implementation of the Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Support Services (YESS) Programme, which has been carried out since 2019.

Amidst the dynamics of rural development, the existence of local champions or young driving figures constitutes a strategic factor capable of integrating individual potential with the strength of communities. Local champions not only demonstrate success in business on a personal level but also perform the function of social leadership in encouraging participation, collaboration, and innovation at the grassroots level.

Through this book, we intend to convey information in a comprehensive manner and present inspirational stories from local champions, rural youth who dare to take roles as young agripreneur sector while simultaneously becoming agents of change in their communities. In addition, this book also contains a roadmap and strategies that may serve as a reference for policymakers and practitioners in developing empowerment approaches for young farmers in rural areas. It is expected that this book can serve as a medium for learning and inspiration towards the realization of a sustainable and competitive regeneration of agriculture in Indonesia.

The preparation of this book cannot be separated from the support of many parties, ranging from the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Indonesia, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), local governments in the programme implementation areas, field facilitators, to the beneficiaries who have shared their stories and experiences. Therefore, the drafting team hereby conveys its highest appreciation and gratitude.

In conclusion, it is our hope that this book may provide benefits, become a source of inspiration, and serve as reference material for stakeholders, development practitioners, and the young generation who wish to contribute to the strengthening of Indonesia’s agricultural sector.





Source: BPPSDMP



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CHAPTER

1

**YOUNG FARMERS,
NEW HOPE FOR
INDONESIAN
AGRICULTURE**



Source: BPPSDMP



The agricultural sector constitutes the main pillar supporting national economic development. In many countries whose economies are based on natural resources, national economic growth generally originates from the success of agricultural development. For Indonesia, the agricultural sector not only serves as a provider of food for the entire population but also as a source of employment and income, particularly for rural communities. In addition, the agricultural sector also supports national economic growth through the provision of raw materials for industry, manufacturing, as well as commodity exports and their derivatives.

As a provider of employment, the agricultural sector constitutes the sector with the highest labor absorption (28.82%) compared to other sectors of the working-age population (Indonesian Bureau of Statistic/BPS, 2023). However, Indonesia is facing an aging farmer phenomenon, whereby the agricultural labor force is dominated by individuals aged 40–60 years. Data from BPS shows that more than 60% of farmers in Indonesia are over 45 years of age, while only around 12% are under 35 years of age.

This demographic disparity raises concerns about the sustainability of the agricultural sector in the future. On the other hand, Indonesia possesses a demographic dividend, namely a condition where the proportion of the productive-age population (15–64 years) is greater than that of the non-productive-age population (under 15 years and over 64 years). This demographic dividend includes approximately 24% of the total population being youth aged 16–30 years (National Development Planning Agency/Bappenas, 2022). The majority of them reside in rural areas and face challenges in terms of limited access to decent employment and economic opportunities.

This condition indicates the existence of a gap between the potential of youth and



Source: BPPSDMP



the needs of the agricultural sector, which, if managed appropriately, can complement one another. One of the strategic efforts to address this challenge is through the Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Support Services (YESS) Program, an initiative of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Indonesia supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). This program aims to enhance the capacity and access of rural youth to business and employment opportunities in the agricultural sector. The Ministry of Agriculture launched the program in 2019. To date, the YESS Programme has been implemented in 19 regencies located in four provinces, namely West Java, East Java, South Kalimantan, and South Sulawesi.

The implementation of the YESS Programme, with its various activities, has successfully reached more than 200,000 beneficiaries. They have received various

interventions such as entrepreneurship training, business advisory support, access to finance, facilitation of networking and partnerships, as well as other interventions. The course of YESS Programme implementation through these activities has given rise to phenomena among the beneficiaries who have received interventions. There are youth who demonstrate leadership capacity, local initiative, and the ability to inspire their communities. These individuals can be categorized as local champions, youth who not only succeed personally in developing farming enterprises but also assume a strategic role as agents of social and economic change in their respective areas.

A. Objectives

This book has been prepared to share experiences and lessons learned from best practices in nurturing local champions among youth in the agricultural sector, by referring to the experience of implementing the YESS Programme, with the objectives to:

01

Identify the characteristics, roles, and challenges faced by young agricultural entrepreneurs who have become or have the potential to become local champions;

Analyze programmatic and policy approaches that are effective in building their capacities and enabling ecosystems; and

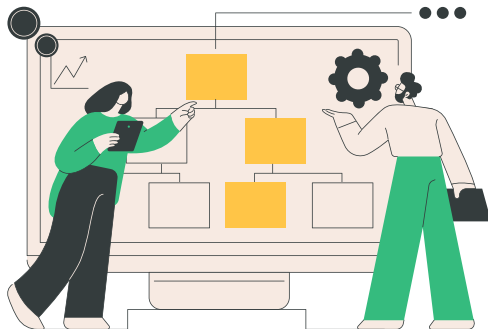
02

Formulate strategic recommendations for policymakers, development practitioners, and institutions involved in strengthening the youth-based agricultural sector.

03



B. Methodology



The methodology for preparing this book involved summarizing lessons learned from the nurturing and development of local champions under the YESS Programme, which were organized into four discussion topics:

1. Youth entrepreneurship and employment challenges in Indonesia;

2. Local champions: from young local farmers to agents of change;
3. Implementation of the nurturing and development of local champions under the YESS Programme;
4. A roadmap for strengthening local champions involves the collaboration of outstanding individuals to create a competitive ecosystem.

The inspirational stories presented in this book are excerpts from the experiences demonstrated by beneficiaries as local champions. However, these do not fully represent all the local champions of the YESS Programme. There remain many other success stories that inspire youth to emerge and contribute to the agricultural sector.



CHAPTER

2

CHALLENGES
OF YOUTH
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
AND EMPLOYMENT
IN INDONESIA



Source: BPPSDMP



A. The Double Challenge: Farmer Regeneration and Employment for Youth in the Agricultural Sector

Indonesia faces serious challenges in the agricultural sector, namely the low regeneration of farmers and the high rate of youth unemployment. These two issues are interrelated and require attention as well as integrated solutions. The age of farmers in Indonesia is increasingly aging, or what is referred to as the phenomenon of aging farmers, dominated by those in the 45–60 age group. Each year, the number of young farmers continues to decline. On the other hand, youth unemployment is increasingly high.

Ironically, the agricultural sector, which is the second-largest absorber of the labor force after trade, is actually lacking interest from the youth. This creates a double challenge, namely farmer regeneration while at the same time opening meaningful employment opportunities for youth in the same sector. Therefore, it is important to seek solutions. The challenges in increasing the contribution of youth in the agricultural sector include the following:

1. The Phenomenon of Aging Farmers

BPS data in 2023 shows that the majority of Indonesian farmers are above 45 years old. Farmers aged 55 years and above reached almost 70% of the total farmers in Indonesia. Conversely, youth farmers under 34 years old are only around 11.5% of the total farmers, a decline from 12.8% a decade earlier. In addition, the number of agricultural business units also decreased, from 31.71 million in 2013 to 29.36 million (2023). Farmers are the backbone for driving the engine of national food production. Therefore, the aging of farmers will result in a lack of competitiveness of human resources to produce sufficient and quality food.

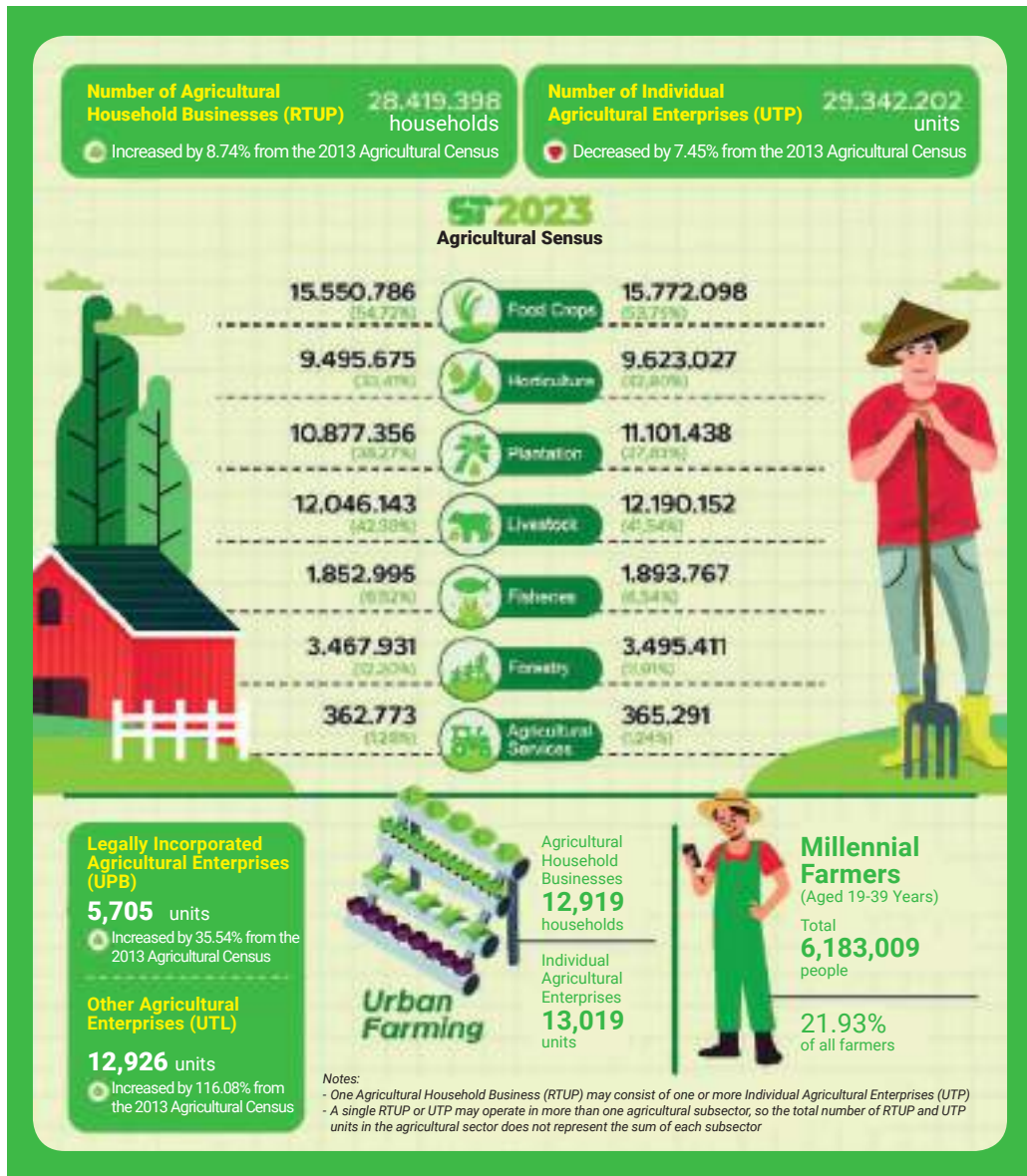


Figure 1. Condition of the Number of Farming Actors and Millennial Farmers

Source: BPS, 2023

2. Low Youth Participation in Agriculture

Although the agricultural sector absorbs around 28.21% of the total Indonesian workforce (BPS, 2023), many youth are reluctant to engage in it. This is due to the perception that agriculture is not promising in terms of income and welfare. In addition,

dependence on weather, market price fluctuations, and lack of access to modern technology are other inhibiting factors.

3. Youth Unemployment

At the same time, the open unemployment rate for youth, particularly in rural areas, reached 8.14% (BPS, 2023). The number

of unemployed reached around 8.8 million people. The majority of the unemployed are youth aged 16–24 years. The high unemployment rate indicates a disparity between the number of education graduates and the available job opportunities.

4. Low Productivity of Agricultural Commodities

The productivity of priority commodities tends to stagnate because most farming businesses are fragmented and small-scale with limited access to technology, markets, and financing, resulting in low production which in turn implies that agricultural income is unable to provide adequate livelihood for farm households.

Based on these facts, the phenomenon of the farmer regeneration crisis must receive serious attention not only from the government but also from all parties related to economic development and the empowerment of human resources. Factually,

the current condition of the agricultural sector is still reflected by the majority of farmers operating on a small scale, with low income and high business risks.

In addition, several issues hinder the involvement of youth in agriculture, namely: (1) Limited access to land and business capital; (2) Lack of technical and entrepreneurship training; (3) Absence of sustainable advisory support; (4) Limited market networks and appropriate digital technology; and (5) Lack of role models and youth leadership figures to be emulated.

All of these contribute to building a negative perception of agriculture among the younger generation. When viewed from the perspective of these problems, the dual challenge is both structural and cultural in nature, thus requiring cross-sectoral interventions.

Source: BPPSDMP





B. YESS Programme: Building the Self-Reliance of Rural Youth to Become Agricultural Entrepreneurs

The Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Support Services (YESS) Program is a collaborative program between the Government of Indonesia through the Ministry of Agriculture and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The objective of the program is to encourage the involvement of the young generation in sustainable, modern, and competitive agricultural development. The program targets youth within the age range of 17–39 years living in rural areas.

The YESS Programme is expected to serve as a solution to the challenge of farmer regeneration in Indonesia through an empowerment-based approach that enables

The implementation of the YESS Programme is carried out within the period of 2019–2025, with the target of reaching 320,000 rural youth in four provinces, namely: West Java Province, East Java Province, South Kalimantan Province, and South Sulawesi Province. The program is implemented in 19 regencies with implementing institutions: (1) Agricultural Development Polytechnic (Politeknik Pembangunan Pertanian - Polbangtan) Bogor in West Java Province; (2) Agricultural Development Polytechnic (Polbangtan) Malang in East Java Province; (3) Agricultural Vocational High School (SMK-PP) Banjarbaru in South Kalimantan Province; and (4) Agricultural Development Polytechnic

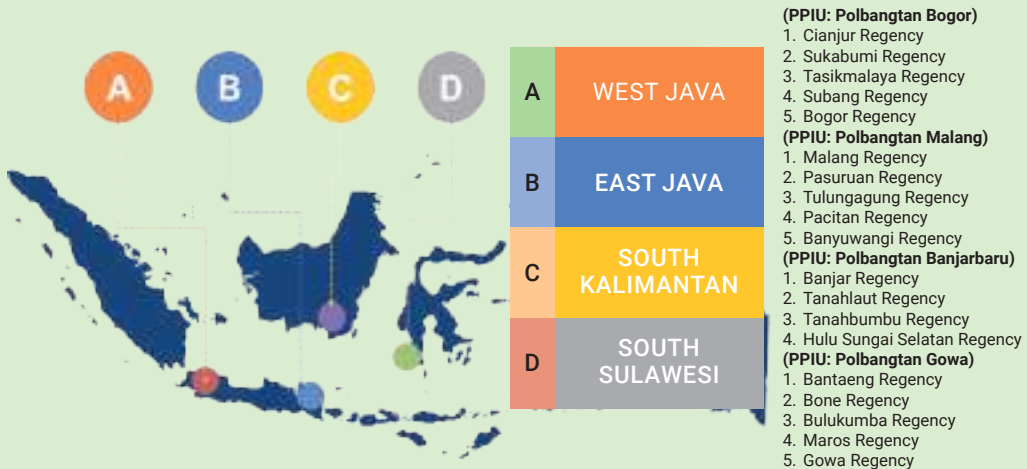


Figure 2 Location of YESS Programme

youth to develop their potential. In addition, the program can enhance entrepreneurial skills as well as create employment opportunities in the agricultural and agribusiness sectors. Thus, the program can create an inclusive and innovative agricultural ecosystem that is attractive to the younger generation.

(Polbangtan) Gowa in South Sulawesi Province.

The YESS Programme is designed to generate young entrepreneurs in rural areas as well as to increase the entry of youth into the labor market in the agricultural sector through a series of activities grouped into

four components, implemented in stages from the beginning of the program until the end of the YESS Programme in 2025. The four components are as follows:

1. COMPONENT 1.

Rural Youth Transition to Work

Component 1 aims to increase opportunities for youth (male and female) to work in the agricultural sector through efforts to (a) strengthen agricultural education, training, or vocational capacity-building institutions to better prepare students and training participants to enter the labor market or develop businesses in rural areas; and (b) complement agricultural education, training, or vocational capacity-building systems with certified apprenticeship programs in the agricultural sector targeting rural youth (male and female). Component 1 consists of two sub-components:

- a. Linking Education and Training to Jobs, with main activities consisting of (1) capacity building of human resources and institutions for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET); and (2) nurturing young agripreneurs.
- b. Developing a Certified Apprenticeship Programme, with main activities consisting of (1) Domestic apprenticeship programs and (2) Overseas apprenticeship programs.

2. COMPONENT 2

Rural Youth Entrepreneurship

Component 2 aims to promote activities and enterprises in the agricultural sector by facilitating young farmers and micro-scale entrepreneurs through various interventions. It is expected that youth will be able to identify business opportunities, gain access to land and modern technology, and build connections with actors and other business service providers that will support them in developing profitable and sustainable enterprises. Efforts to achieve this objective include building partnerships

with the Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises through the Integrated Business Service Center (PLUT) and strengthening Business Development Service Providers (BDSPs), which may include institutions such as BPP, P4S, Vocational Training Centers (Balai Latihan Kerja - BLK), and other business development service providers with the potential to become partners.

Component 2 consists of two sub-components:

- a. Strengthening Institutional and Capacity of Business Development Service Providers (BDSPs), with main activities consisting of (1) Due diligence on human resources and BDSP institutions and (2) Facilitation of BDSP capacity strengthening.
- b. Services to young farmers, entrepreneurs, and SMEs, with main activities consisting of facilitating entrepreneurship development in the agricultural sector through training and the application of empowerment methods to nurture entrepreneurship.

3. COMPONENT 3

Investing for Rural Youth

Component 3 aims to help youth access financial sector services and to expand the financial services available to them, particularly for those who lack access due to limited experience, as well as for migrant youth and their families.

Component 3 complements Component 2 and consists of two sub-components:

- a. Capacity building for banking services/ financial inclusion, with main activities consisting of strengthening youth capacity in financial literacy and business proposal preparation.
- b. Connecting youth to access capital (access to finance), with main activities consisting of: (1) Facilitation of financing through competitive grant schemes and



- (2) Facilitation of access to financing through financial institutions.

4. COMPONENT 4

Enabling Environment for Rural Youth

Component 4 aims to create an environment and institutions that support youth development in rural areas. This objective will be achieved through efforts to: (a) promote partnerships between government, the private sector, and the community to encourage youth engagement in agricultural activities and enterprises in YESS locations; (b) build innovative business models in provinces where YESS is located and (c) prepare policy and regulatory environments prioritized to promote youth engagement in the agricultural sector and strengthen the capacity of youth organizations to participate in policy dialogue.

Since its launch in June 2019, the YESS Programme has sought to provide alternative empowerment opportunities for rural youth in line with its objective, namely to encourage youth, both women and men, to be actively engaged in agriculture and to build profitable enterprises. The intervention of the YESS Programme is not merely a matter of training, but a massive movement to transform the growth of entrepreneurship in accordance with the characteristics of creative and resilient youth.

The YESS Programme establishes criteria for targeting beneficiaries of the programme, namely: (1) rural youth who are poor but have an interest in obtaining a livelihood in the agricultural sector; (2) rural youth who are vulnerable to poverty and have the potential to become entrepreneurs and work in the agricultural sector; (3) youth who are above the poverty line, capable of leading and becoming role models for other farmers and (4) youth who have just started an enterprise in the agricultural sector and whose business quality needs to be improved.

In order to reach the youth with such

criteria, the YESS Programme has prepared methods to motivate youth to be willing to create employment in the agricultural sector through: (1) business management training to enhance knowledge and skills in order to be ready to engage in entrepreneurship; (2) developing networks and business partnerships among young entrepreneurs as well as with business actors along the agribusiness value chain; (3) support to enable access to financial services; and (4) the development of information technology-based and export-oriented enterprises.

At a time when many youth are still seeking employment in urban areas, the YESS Programme has retained more than 80% of its beneficiaries to remain active in the agricultural sector. The programme has helped reduce large-scale youth migration to urban areas and generated more employment opportunities for youth in agriculture. The YESS Project has reached a total of 231,451 beneficiaries, of whom 198,315 have participated in business management training.

The implementation of activities across the four components of the YESS Programme—such as strengthening agricultural entrepreneurship capacities and developing cluster-based agribusiness by creating or expanding businesses along the agricultural value chain—has been able to generate more stable income and better livelihoods. Furthermore, competitive grants serve as a method of business financing facilitation, acting as a bridge for YESS Programme beneficiaries to access formal financing, which enables young entrepreneurs to become bankable and access financial services.

The implementation of YESS interventions has been carried out through training and financial support for beneficiaries. The YESS Project design stipulates that the ultimate outcome is the emergence of new

entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector. In its implementation, the project is supported by advisory support from youth facilitators, mobilizers, and BDSPs, as well as other related activities such as networking meetings among beneficiaries and business matching events. The aim is to foster contract farming relationships between beneficiaries and off-takers or other business actors. From 2021 to June 2025, cumulatively the YESS Programme has generated 78,695 new entrepreneurs, who are expected to develop their enterprises sustainably as part of the prospective successors of agricultural entrepreneurs in the future.

The YESS Programme has successfully nurtured young entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector. The results of the programme's implementation demonstrate

that the approach undertaken by the programme constitutes an effective, holistic, and comprehensive entrepreneurship development model through building collaboration among various stakeholders to support the creation of a rural youth entrepreneurship ecosystem.

a. Initiation of the Development of Local Champions of the YESS Programme

The activity of developing local champions of the YESS Programme was initiated as one of the recommendations of the IFAD Mission during the Midterm Review (MTR) of the Programme conducted in October 2022. The recommendation to develop this activity was based on field findings at the time the IFAD

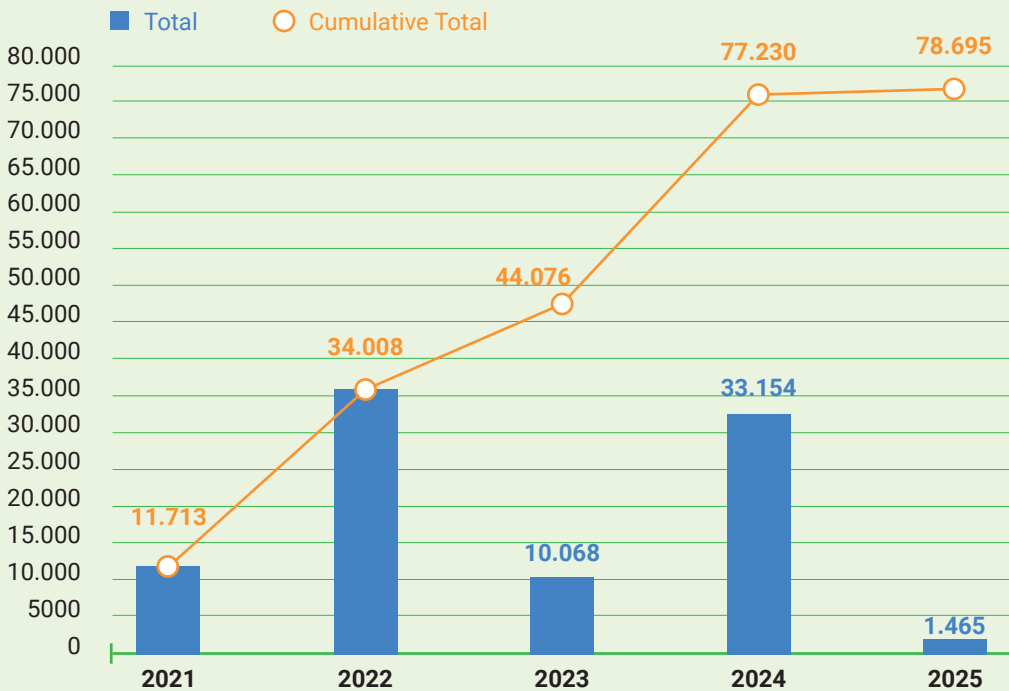


Figure 3. Cumulative number of YESS Programme entrepreneurs



Mission Team met and held dialogue with the beneficiaries of the YESS Programme.

The majority of beneficiaries demonstrated the ability to mobilize their fellow youth to initiate business activities based on the results of the YESS Programme interventions such as business management training as well as other supporting activities carried out by the field facilitators of the YESS Programme. The team observed the potential and willingness of the beneficiaries to enhance their entrepreneurial capacity and leadership, and agreed to add a new activity: the development of local champions for selected beneficiaries.

IFAD recommended Procasur, a non-profit organization based in Chile, to work jointly with the National Project Management Unit (NPMU) of the YESS Programme in preparing a strategy for the development of local champions. The objective was to prepare the activity design and share experience in local champion development. Based on Procasur's success in various countries, a similar strategy could also be applied in Indonesia. However, such an approach naturally must be adapted to the conditions, demands, and characteristics of Indonesia and the YESS Programme. In addition, Bina Swadaya, an organization engaged in community empowerment, was also involved as a partner in formulating the local champion development strategy.

Through skills and leadership development, the local champions of the YESS Programme apply learning to facilitate the agricultural communities in their respective environments so as to enhance the local economy. A series of activities, including the review of YESS Programme documents and the advisory support concepts, as well as observation and in-depth interviews with local champion candidates, have been conducted. Therefore, a model for nurturing the local champions of



the YESS Programme was formulated with the following objectives:

1. To develop a local champion approach to support the strengthening of business and entrepreneurship of programme beneficiaries, focused on community-based agribusiness clusters;
2. To strengthen the network of local champions among YESS beneficiaries and other business entities by organizing local champions as business partnership networks;



Source: BPPSDMP

3. To promote and consolidate the community-based business ecosystem in Indonesia by utilizing the local champion approach as a sustainable strategy.

The analysis of the study's results revealed a common perception of local champions, which includes the following points:

1. A local champion is defined as a person with outstanding experience and knowledge and proven success in production, product processing, market access, financing, or social networking. They are leaders of ideas and innovation in their communities.
2. The local champion approach concept is a horizontal approach to extension and advisory services with the local champion serving as the service provider. This approach seeks to complement traditional services with large-scale technology, connecting clusters, markets, sources of knowledge, and communities.
3. Knowledge services that can be provided by local champions include on-site training,

technical assistance, advisory support, consultation, access to information, policy consultation and dialogue, as well as research. Other services include campaigns, product aggregation, and projects.

By understanding the characteristics and ideal traits possessed by local champions, based on the criteria from YESS Programme beneficiaries and its development, the stages required to nurture a millennial farmer into a local champion are as follows:

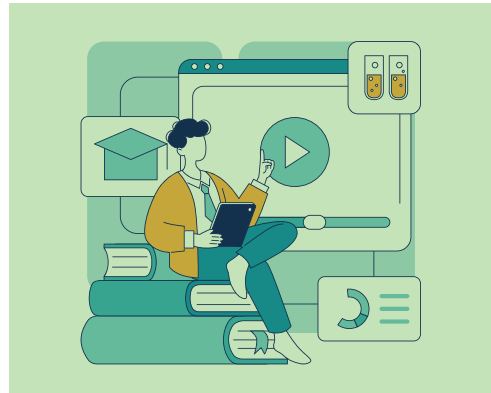


Figure 4. Stages of Nurturing and Developing Local Champions of the YESS Programme

The design for nurturing and developing **local champions** of the **YEES Programme** is complemented with:



01 A capacity-building guideline for local champions



02 A capacity-building learning module for local champions



03 An advisory support guideline for local champions



04 A monitoring and evaluation guideline



CHAPTER

3

**LOCAL CHAMPION:
LOCAL YOUNG
FARMERS TO
BECOME AGENTS OF
CHANGE**



Source: BPPSDMP



The role of the local community is highly important to mobilize, create a collective vision, and determine targets to advance and develop together. Local community mobilizers may be understood as local leaders, or if such leaders possess certain technical capacities and are recognized for their expertise, they are referred to as local champions. The definition of local champion is more commonly found in local economic development, understood as a person who takes initiative in the process of community or institutional change (Ecoplan International, 2005).

Although there are similarities between the role of local community leaders and local champions, a local champion is not always a leader representing the community (Kirchner et al., 2010). Local champions are young figures—farmers or rural entrepreneurs—who succeed in inspiring their surroundings to transform. They are change agents who combine local knowledge with modern technology, and who promote agriculture as an attractive and profitable sector for the younger generation.

An agricultural local champion is a young figure who is able to serve as a driver of change within their environment. Generally, they begin on a small scale—farming on limited land, using simple technologies, and directly selling their products to local markets. Over time, however, they develop their capacities to become informal trainers, mentors, and even advocates at the village or district level.

For the surrounding community, local champions play a dual role. The first role is as a concrete example that farming can be profitable. The second role is as a bridge between the community and external opportunities such as training, financing, and markets. In other words, they bridge the gap between innovation and adoption, and between village potential and development networks.



A. Local Champions and the Transformation towards Modern Agriculture

Studying the role of local champions in rural community empowerment is crucial. This is because the role of local champions must be to establish common goals and to mobilize their communities in order to enable collective action to achieve such goals (Haven-Tang and Jones, 2012). In addition, local champions are required to maintain leader–follower relations, and therefore must be able to act as mediators, facilitators, and mobilizers (Haven-Tang and Jones, 2012; Xu et al., 2017).

As individuals or groups who play a crucial role in driving positive change within communities, local champions are often local leaders or influential individuals who are able to inspire others to adopt new techniques, advocate for better policies, and empower local communities. The combination of roles as mediator, facilitator, and mobilizer is demonstrated as follows:

1. **Motivator and mobilizer:** encouraging young farmers and other community members to adopt new agricultural methods, participate in community projects, and embrace change.
2. **Mediator and facilitator:** helping to bridge the gaps among various stakeholders, such as farmers, government officials, and business actors, in order to ensure smooth collaboration.
3. **Supporter of sustainable practices:** promoting the use of conservation agriculture techniques, diversification of enterprises, and other sustainable agricultural practices.
4. **Knowledge broker:** sharing knowledge and expertise with fellow farmers, assisting in the adoption of new technologies and best practices.
5. **Community leader:** serving as a role model, inspiring others to engage in collective

"local champions serve as one alternative to mobilize communities towards change or to reinforce innovation adoption within specific communities."

initiatives in agricultural endeavors, and contributing to community welfare.

B. Development of the Local Champion Approach

The nurturing and development of local champions constitute a horizontal approach in capacity building as well as in providing technical support relevant to the needs, demands, and specific characteristics of communities. This approach creates influence and impact for beneficiaries to adopt knowledge and innovation, as it is grounded in evidence of success and builds trust-based and close relationships between local champions and their communities. On the other hand, it also has the potential to support the sustainability of positive programme impacts, considering the role and position of local champions at the very center of society and their communities.

Local champions are important for agricultural transformation and youth entrepreneurship development because their

presence carries stronger social credibility compared to external interventions. Therefore, they are able to bridge the trust gap between government programmes and communities, particularly youth communities, through their own distinctive language and character.

In addition, as respected peers among the youth, local champions find it easier to motivate their communities to contribute to enterprise development in the agricultural sector, while also acting as drivers of innovation and connectors to broader agricultural value chain systems, ranging from agro-input sub-systems to marketing and downstream processing of agricultural products.

Based on such considerations, local champions serve as one alternative to mobilize communities towards change or to reinforce innovation adoption within specific communities. Many programmes have

applied the local champion approach across the agriculture, forestry, and environmental sectors, including in the development of tourism based on local wisdom.

The 2021 IFAD study on the evaluation of local champion development through the learning route approach recorded that community-based interventions involving local champions had sustainability levels 2–3 times higher compared to projects implemented solely in a top-down manner. In general, the development of local champions promises programme sustainability. However, this approach also faces several challenges. The 2021 IFAD study also identified a number of constraints faced by local champions, including:

1. Limited advanced capacity

Local champions generally possess specific advantages at the local or community level. In small-scale programme interventions,

Source: BPPSDMP





Source: BPPSDMP



Source: BPPSDMP

they are often very effective in mobilizing other farmers. However, when the scale and scope of interventions are expanded, not all champions have access to continuous capacity strengthening, such as advanced training, resources for enterprise upscaling, or product certification.

2. Over-dependence on individual local champions

The presence of local champions is indeed central to mobilizing communities towards change and agricultural modernization. However, without well-established participatory decision-making and role-sharing processes, communities may become excessively reliant on a single individual. This creates vulnerabilities for sustainability if that champion relocates or faces prolonged impediments.

3. Lack of incentives and formal recognition

Although local champions act as community mobilizers, dedicating much of their time to building motivation and working with their communities. Some local champions obtain support from government programmes to serve as facilitators or to develop specific activities, thereby contributing significantly to the achievement of programme objectives. However, because their activities are rooted at the grassroots level, they are often insufficiently recognized by local government, rarely involved or heard in regional development planning processes, and seldom provided with incentives for their contributions.

The strategy for developing local champions requires a sustainable support ecosystem through policy backing, capacity strengthening, formal recognition, and opportunities to contribute to regional development planning within an inclusive rural development ecosystem. IFAD recognizes that effective solutions do not always come from outside, but may grow

from within the community itself. Therefore, IFAD recommends that the YESS Program adopt the development of local champions so that more youth are able to become drivers of innovation and enterprise in rural areas.

C. Experience in Local Champion Development: Lessons Learned from Local Champion Development

The development of local champions was introduced by IFAD in collaboration with Procasur. The programme constitutes a horizontal, community-based capacity-building approach tailored to the needs, demands, and local characteristics of the communities in which it is applied. This approach is effective because the emergence of local champions generates positive influence in adopting innovations, building networks, and establishing partnerships based on trust and close relationships between local champions and their communities.

At the same time, through the role of local champions, the costs to conduct advisory support—commonly undertaken by facilitators or field mentors recruited from outside the area—can be reduced. Procasur has implemented local champion development in several countries across Latin America, Africa, and Asia-Pacific. The partnership with IFAD was carried out under the learning routes scheme, namely a series of activities aimed at strengthening the capacity of local champions, promoting cross-regional knowledge exchange, and building global agricultural innovation networks. Below are several examples of local champion development carried out by Procasur.

1. Kenya

The Government of Kenya, together with

Procasur and IFAD, developed an initiative known as Jobs Open for Youth (JOY) for the period 2021–2024. The objective of the JOY Programme was to open access to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for youth in the agricultural sector through a hub-based training approach, mentoring by local champions, and the utilization of agricultural technologies. Local champions in Kenya are young farmers who serve as field facilitators, group mentors, and sources of inspiration in their communities.

The strategies undertaken in the JOY Programme were as follows:

- a. Identifying successful local farmers with recognized good practices.
- b. Providing facilitation of training and documentation of successful knowledge.
- c. Designating local champions as facilitators in implementing learning routes for other young farmers.
- d. Developing networks and linking them to markets, cooperatives, and local financial institutions.

Following the implementation of the JOY Programme, local champions became role models and mediators between young farmers and educational institutions, the private sector, and the public sector, serving as:

- a. Technical and social mentors by facilitating practical field training, developing demonstration plots, and guiding farmers in adopting new technologies.
- b. Network connectors by developing networks of young farmers and opening partnerships with financial institutions, the private sector, and local governments.
- c. Initiators of local innovations through the application of agroforestry integration, the use of weather and crop management applications, and the promotion of sustainable farming practices.



d. Peer-to-peer learning facilitators by organizing community-based learning and mutual knowledge exchange.

The JOY Program in Kenya built integration between Procasur, IFAD, local universities, the private sector, and financing institutions to enhance the role of local champions in sharing their knowledge and innovations with other farmers, thereby advancing together and gaining economic benefits that improve

the livelihoods of young rural farmers.

2. Kamboja

The development of local champions in Cambodia was a collaboration between Procasur, IFAD, and the Cambodian Ministry of Agriculture, implemented in several provinces under the Routasia II Programme during 2012–2014. The objective of the Routasia Programme was to foster agribusiness innovation and peer-to-peer approaches by strengthening the role of



Source: BPPSDMP

local champions as field facilitators.

Routasia II is a continuation of the Learning Route Programme. It was designed to strengthen the capacity of rural communities through farmer-to-farmer knowledge exchange, focusing on strengthening local institutions such as farmer groups (common interest groups / CIGs) and group revolving funds, using direct learning and innovative practice replication approaches.

Local champions in this programme were exemplary farmers selected based on their performance, innovations, and networking capacity to share agricultural knowledge in areas such as rice cultivation, cocoa cultivation, agro-input access, and market access. Specifically, the roles carried out by local champions in this programme included:

- a. Field demonstrators and peer-to-peer facilitators, guiding innovative



agricultural practices and mobilizing farmer participation in adopting new technologies.

- b. Knowledge providers, disseminating the knowledge they possessed based on their own experiences, thereby enabling other farmers to learn from practical solutions relevant to local conditions.
- c. Facilitators of sustainability actions, conducting participatory evaluations, replicating technologies, and establishing Community Learning Centers (CLCs).

The implementation of Routasia II demonstrated the central role of local champions in mobilizing farmers in their communities, resulting in achievements including (1) increased adoption of superior rice varieties through organic cultivation; (2) establishment of group-based collective marketing systems; (3) documentation and mapping of local farmer innovations as a learning resource; and (4) development of Community Learning Centers (CLCs) as centers for farmer and local resident training.

3. Peru

Peru became one of the locations for local champion development implemented by Procasur in collaboration with IFAD, in the Andean region of Peru, through facilitation of the establishment of local farmer-based learning centers, including youth and women, by developing an inclusive farming model. Talentos Rurales refers to the engagement of local leaders or community figures who are agricultural experts, willing to share their knowledge, and able to mobilize other farmers.

This programme provided competitive funding known as Procompite as a form of business and learning support. Local champions were given the opportunity to submit proposals in competition with one another. Evaluation was conducted by



expert teams, and those proposals deemed realistic, innovative, and beneficial to many farmers had greater opportunities to be facilitated by this competitive funding.

The learning route approach was used to nurture and develop local champions, namely experienced, innovative farmers who could serve as learning centers and community change agents, through strategies that included:

- a. Identifying and inventorying farmers who applied successful and advanced technologies (farmers with good practices).
- b. Preparing methods and materials for community learning.
- c. Opening up farms or enterprises managed by local champions as



Source: BPPSDMP

learning and farmer visit sites, serving simultaneously as pilot and demonstration locations for technological innovations.

The implementation of the learning route approach in Peru successfully created local champions with a variety of capabilities, including:

a. Specialists or experts in specific technologies

Some local champions specialized in livestock breeding and became partners of universities or research institutions in producing high-quality breeding stock.

b. Post-harvest management experts

Local champions pioneered post-harvest agricultural product development, such as expertise in animal butchering

techniques, packaging, and the production of high-value ready-to-consume products.

c. Institutional innovation and market access

Local champions initiated farmer networks for consolidation and collective action, and these networks also established the Coopredescuy farmer cooperative managed by young farmers.

The development of local champions in Peru demonstrated that community-based technological and institutional innovations under the Talentos Rurales model are highly applicable in rural areas to accelerate local economic transformation.



CHAPTER

4

IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE NURTURING
AND DEVELOPMENT
OF LOCAL
CHAMPIONS OF THE
YESS PROGRAMME



Source: BPPSDMP



A. Strategy for the Nurturing and Development of Local Champions in the YESS Program

The YESS Programme has been running since 2019 and has produced beneficiaries who are able to carry out agribusiness independently. In addition, from the policy and program perspective, the Ministry of Agriculture has also encouraged the development of millennial farmers through the establishment of Millennial Farmer Ambassadors (Duta Petani Milenial – DPM) or Leading Farmer Ambassadors (Duta Petani Andalan – DPA). Unfortunately, the success of this program has remained at the individual level by encouraging the capacity of individuals in agribusiness development and has not yet fully established collaborative synergy within their communities.

The YESS Programme is designed to create a business ecosystem that can support the growth and development of youth enterprises being fostered. The availability of actors for the development of business models and supply chains is a key factor, and a targeted number of businesses will be supported by the program during the project period. The increase in the number of YESS beneficiaries demonstrates the ratio of new businesses that emerge among youth in the program locations.

If we don't create new business areas to prevent overcrowding, this business development space could become dense and potentially lead to unhealthy competition among businesses. The success of individual beneficiaries alone is insufficient. It is expected that they can influence their surrounding communities, especially youth, to build profitable enterprises. The impact of economic improvement should not only be enjoyed at the individual level, but also at the community level.



Based on the concept of farmer-to-farmer learning, information originating from farmers can be more effectively absorbed by fellow farmers compared to actors of different backgrounds. The potential of YESS beneficiaries to act as drivers in their local communities is very significant, to position those who are successful and possess leadership abilities as prospective local champions who are able to mobilize their communities.

Prospective local champions originating from YESS beneficiaries still require programs that support their capacity to mobilize local youth. Furthermore, the YESS Programme

also ensures that their enterprises continue to grow. The YESS Programme recognizes that the program design has not yet included the necessary support for nurturing and developing local champions.

On the other hand, informally, successful beneficiaries have begun to demonstrate their abilities as local champions, but they still encounter difficulties in mobilizing their local communities. Therefore, a strategy is required to facilitate the coaching of both prospective and existing beneficiaries who become local champions, in order to enhance their ability to mobilize other young farmers, including building enterprise scale-up efforts

Table 4. Theory of Change for the Development of Local Champions

Theory of Change Local Champion Approach						
Impact						
1			2			
Rural communities with increased income from higher productivity and enhanced knowledge.			Inclusion of farmers in sustainable knowledge networks.			
Medium-Term Outcomes						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Facilitated rural youth in access to adequate, relevant, high-quality, and sustainable training and technical assistance services.	Increased adoption of agricultural technology innovations by the community.	The creation of knowledge networks between Local Champions and their communities.	The establishment of an Entrepreneurship Ecosystem.	The realization of youth inclusion in rural activities.	Increased number of Local Champions holding competency and product certificates.	The application of the Local Champion approach as one of the community empowerment methods.
Short-Term Outcomes						
1	2	3	4	5		
More Local Champions trained with more experience to share knowledge with other young farmers.	The existence of incentives for Local Champion services to youth in their communities, which may take the form of additional income, enhancement of knowledge, and strengthening of networks.	Increased access of youth in the community to training and Local Champions services that are driven by specific and relevant business development needs.	The growth of an entrepreneurship ecosystem driven by Local Champions.	The establishment of Local Champion Platforms at various levels.		

Teori Perubahan Pendekatan <i>Local Champion</i>				
Strategy				
1	2	3	4	
Development of Local Champions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Diagnosis and Identification of Training 2. Facilitation of Input for Service Implementation 3. Strengthening of LC Organization 4. Evaluation 	Strengthening of Communities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Diagnosis 2. Identification of Needs 3. Tracking of Adoption 	Development of Ecosystems: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthening of Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Connectivity 2. Engagement in Forums at Various Levels 3. Development of Alliances and Transfer of Capacities 4. Engagement in Promotional and Exhibition Activities 	Institutional Development: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitation of the Establishment of Formal Business Institutions 2. Linking LC with Various Formal Institutional Platforms 3. Certification of Competence and Products 	
Local Champion Approach				
1	2	3	4	5
Providers of new technology services with extensive knowledge and proven success.	Lower costs of advisory support and opportunities for business collaboration incentives.	Service objectives aligned with the demands of regions, markets, and farmers.	Offering solutions relevant to the demands and rural areas.	Sustainability depends on incentives from the outcomes of participation and collaboration in joint business development and not on income from consulting services.
Cause				
1	2		3	
Training, technical assistance, and consulting services are inadequate and not always relevant as well as not always driven by the business needs of youth.	Technical support is suboptimal and unsustainable due to budget reductions, the involvement of multiple actors, and the diversity of activities without coordination among them.		Limited providers of information services and business activities in rural areas.	
Issues				
1	2	3		
Low productivity, innovation, market access, and investment due to limited access of youth to information and knowledge in agricultural enterprises.	Limited participation of youth in rural development activities.	Young farmers with superior technical skills, experience, and success in rural areas lack sufficient incentives to share and innovate their knowledge.		

that emphasize the nurturing of a business ecosystem in rural areas.

The strategy for nurturing and developing local champions consists of support for the development of farmer networks, market development, building partnerships with universities and research institutions. Downstream partnerships are developed through the strengthening of investment channels for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and other business actors to reinforce the enterprises of local champions. In addition, the ability of local

champions to establish business agreements/Memoranda of Understanding in marketing and business negotiations is strengthened.

Based on these considerations, the YESS Programme introduces additional activities targeted at outstanding beneficiaries to become local champions. It is expected that these activities will enhance the quality of program achievements, not only by enabling beneficiaries to engage in the agricultural sector, but also by enabling them to mobilize their communities to advance and prosper together.



The YESS Programme Local Champion Approach has a series of steps tailored to the context and needs in youth entrepreneurship development. These steps are arranged into five main stages:

1. Preparation: diagnosis, determination of criteria and profile of local champions, identification, and due diligence.
2. Training, consisting of curriculum and training method preparation, and the implementation of training.
3. Mentoring and development of their services to youth in rural areas.
4. Consolidation of services and institutional strengthening of enterprises.
5. Evaluation, conducted to ascertain the outcomes and impacts on local champions, communities, and other related stakeholders.

a. Selection of Prospective Local Champions of the YESS Programme

The existence of local champions in the rural economy is highly important due to their role as catalysts for agricultural communities' participation in villages. The capacity development programme for local champions under the YESS Programme aims strengthen the community-based agricultural entrepreneurship leadership capacity of young entrepreneurs so that they may acquire basic skills, self-confidence, and expand their networks, thereby enabling local champions to grow and become actively involved in their local communities.

The expected long-term impact is the improvement of the economy both at the individual level (community members) as well as the establishment of commodity clusters as one of the means to develop the local economy. Such clusters are expected to penetrate national and export markets.

Through the development of leadership



skills, local champions will apply the learning to facilitate agricultural communities in their surroundings to enhance the economy. Therefore, a process of selection and a model for fostering local champions are required. The selection of prospective local champions is carried out in three stages, namely (1) fulfillment of the criteria for prospective local champions; (2) inventory of supporting data for enterprise development; and (3) implementation of due diligence.

1. Fulfillment of Criteria for Prospective Local Champions

The criteria for prospective local champions are generally the same as the criteria for beneficiaries of the YESS Programme, namely within the age range of 17–39 years, and having attended at least two trainings organized by the YESS Programme. Prospective local champions must also have an agricultural enterprise that is successful and be willing to share

Source: BPPSDMP



knowledge with the community, especially youth, by building networks within their community.

Prospective local champions may originate from DPM/DPA, Young Agricultural Ambassadors, competitive grant recipients of the YESS Programme, or successful millennial farmers domiciled in the regencies where the YESS Programme is implemented. Prospective local champions must have an active social media account. This is intended so that the initiatives and activities of prospective local champions can be disseminated to other farmers in other regions quickly and effectively.

2. Inventory of Supporting Data of Local Champion Enterprises

In accordance with the title of local champion to be carried, it is necessary to ascertain the track record of the prospective local champion in enterprise development and their potential to mobilize youth in their community.

For this reason, the collection of supporting data is carried out, consisting of:

- a. Inventory of land potential and ownership;
- b. Inventory of market opportunities;
- c. Technical capacity in agricultural enterprises;
- d. Conditions of enterprise development;
- e. Impacts of enterprise activities on the environment; and
- f. Enterprise development involving the community.

3. Implementation of Due Diligence

Due diligence is a process of in-depth examination and assessment of prospective local champions in order to identify and evaluate risks, potential problems, and opportunities before participating in a series of activities as local champions. The due diligence activity is carried out through an in-depth review of the established parameters. Furthermore, due diligence also concerns the business activities undertaken, such as financial reports, evidence of serving as a resource person, evidence of conducting advisory support, or community development, as well as considerations from BDSP and the District Implementation Team (DIT). Not all proposed beneficiaries, after undergoing due diligence, will become prospective local champions. The results of the due diligence constitute the basis for nomination as training participants.

b. Training Materials and Implementation of Capacity Strengthening for Local Champions of the YESS Programme

The capacity development of prospective local champions is not sufficient with agricultural technical training alone. They also require soft skills, an entrepreneurial mindset, and organizational management capacity. The YESS Programme has implemented various approaches to capacity strengthening, including:



1. Tiered training: beginning from basic (production, enterprise management), advanced (digital marketing, finance), up to community leadership training;
2. Experiential learning models: such as internships in successful farming enterprises, field visits, and inter-regional comparative studies;
3. Engagement of practitioner mentors from the agribusiness sector, cooperatives, or local entrepreneurs as guides and inspirators.

Training or capacity strengthening for local champions is designed with curricula developed jointly by Procasur, Bina Swadaya, and the YESS Programme. The training materials prepared are the result of a training needs analysis, namely an assessment of the capacity development requirements for local champions to develop and provide mentoring

for community enterprises and commodity clusters, with the following materials:

1. Agricultural development and farmer regeneration policies, to provide insights on agricultural policies in general and the importance of farmer regeneration to support the achievement of agricultural development targets.
2. The role of local champions in the development of the youth entrepreneurship ecosystem, which provides awareness to prospective local champions regarding their role and contribution to the growth of the youth entrepreneurship ecosystem in the agricultural sector.
3. Cluster planning (cluster plan), given that the approach to the growth of the youth entrepreneurship ecosystem is implemented on a cluster basis. This material aims for participants to

Source: BPPSDMP



understand the objectives of clusters, organize activities and community consolidation to be undertaken, as well as to identify the aspects that must be understood in developing commodity clusters.

4. Knowledge mapping and planning (knowledge plan), with the objective of assisting local champions in systematizing and mapping knowledge and experiences in accordance with the needs of the community, while at the same time developing community learning and farmer networks. Through this material, a list of the skills of local champions will be obtained, which will subsequently serve as the basis for cluster strengthening.
5. Market planning (market plan), aimed at planning better market strategies in terms of bargaining power for the best prices,



Source: BPPSDMP



Source: BPPSDMP



Source: BPPSDMP



efficiency, long-term cooperation, as well as identifying various types of markets that may serve as alternatives in marketing the products of local champions together with their communities.

6. Business networking planning (network plan), assisting local champions in planning the expansion of networks, both among farmers and with various parties that may facilitate access to technical information, marketing, technology, and investment.
7. Financial planning (financial plan), to plan the development of enterprise financing through banking schemes, cooperation, and/or investment.
8. Digital platform planning (digital plan), to plan development and access to digital platforms in an effort to enhance branding through social media and digital marketing.
9. Development of farmer enterprises/ corporate institutions, the direction of institutional development driven by local champions, namely fostering formal enterprise institutions either in the form of cooperatives or other formal business entities. In this material, local champions are provided with insights on the procedures for fostering enterprise institutions as well as the requirements necessary to establish such institutions.
10. Sharing of experiences or success stories of local champions, which are expected and intended to provide motivation based on the experiences and achievements of existing local champions and may be utilized to build joint business networks.

The training activities are conducted over five days and may be modified or further developed in accordance with the results of the training needs analysis that are specifically required in the development of local champions in the region, for example in leadership and participatory community activity planning.

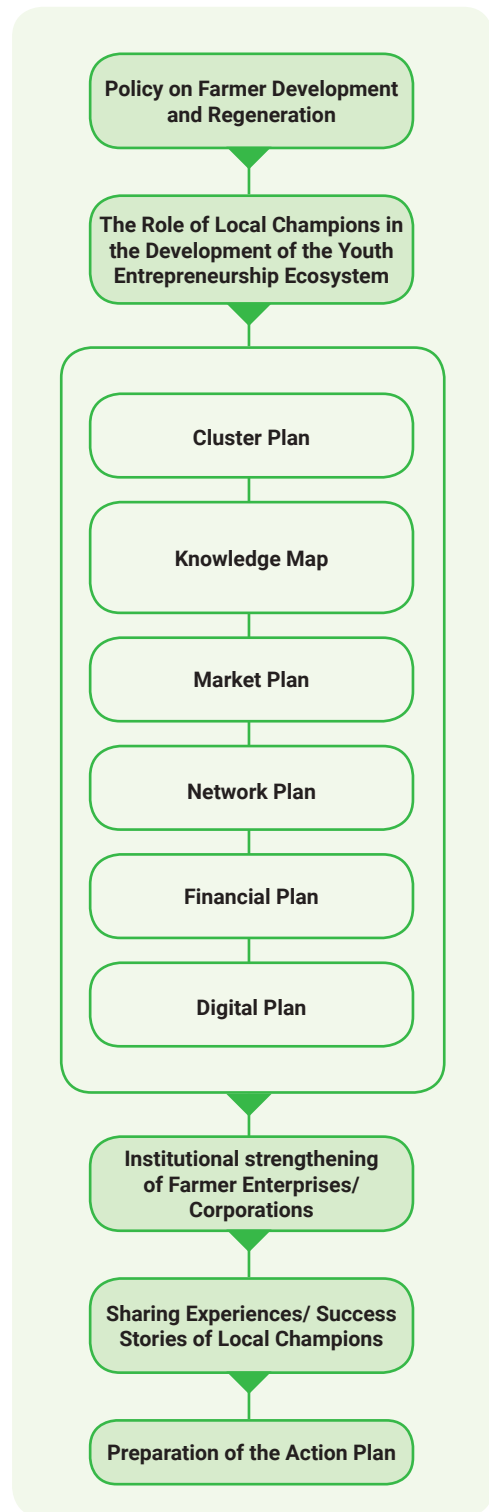


Figure 5. Flow of Implementation of Local Champion Training

c. Continuous Advisory Support as the Key to Recognition of Local Champions in the Community

Local champions are individuals who grow and develop together with their communities. They ensure the preservation of motivation, enthusiasm, and consistency in creating and developing innovative enterprises in the agricultural sector. In addition, they still require continuous support from various stakeholders. After the beneficiaries are selected and participate in the local champion training, it is necessary to carry out continuous advisory support. This is due to the fact that many young entrepreneurs fail to grow not because of a lack of ideas or capital, but because of insufficient post-training advisory support, causing local champions to feel that they are moving forward on their own.

In the context of the YESS Programme, the advisory support is carried out by (1) Youth Facilitators, who assist beneficiaries from the beginning and throughout the initial phase of their enterprise; (2) Extension Officers in the Agricultural Extension Agency (BPP) and facilitators of the Self-Sufficient Agricultural and Rural Training Centre (P4S), as enterprise service providers within the BDSP institutions, who are expected to assist in business planning, market access, financing, and technology that supports productivity; and (3) Mobilisers, who provide assistance in the formulation of enterprise strategies as well as provide support for synergy with various business actors in the regency areas.

In addition, advisory support is also expected from private sector business partners and various stakeholders who will provide support for the development of enterprises managed by local champions together with their communities. The continuity of local champion advisory support



Source: BPPSDMP

is directed towards enhancing leadership and expertise to manage enterprises within the agricultural commodity value chain as an integrated business scale. This is why the approach is no longer conventional, relying entirely on agricultural extension officers or technical officers within agricultural agencies. Herein lies the importance of understanding advisory support not merely as a technical activity, but as a long-term social investment.

In general, local champions demonstrate excellence and contribution in the development of communities and cluster-based enterprises. The results of discussions and monitoring carried out by the YESS Programme state that continuous advisory support is very much needed so that they consistently obtain updated knowledge and skills. The proposed advanced materials for advisory support, as expected by the local champions, include, among others, the following:



Individual Credibility

01

- a. Participatory Leadership
- b. Conflict Management
- c. Communication and Building Self-Confidence
- d. Digital Literacy



Technical and Managerial Skills

02

- a. Production techniques in applying appropriate technology and innovations
- b. Climate change adaptation and mitigation
- c. Preparation of business plans and feasibility studies
- d. Supply chain management and preparation of SOPs
- e. Enterprise management and microfinance management
- f. Digital marketing
- g. Export development



Community Strengthening

03

- a. Community organization and management
- b. Development of inter-community collaboration
- c. Motivation and participation
- d. Development of community plans and activities
- e. Business networking and partnerships



Recognition and Advocacy

04

- a. Formulation of participatory policies and planning
- b. Methods of dissemination and promotion
- c. Knowledge of organizational and business legality

Continuous advisory support will provide benefits to enhance the quality of local champions. This will make them increasingly known and accepted by their communities. The greater the number of stakeholders who interact and provide support, the more it will enhance the capacities of local champions. In addition, since they also engage in the learning process, it will sharpen their communication skills and self-confidence, including their involvement in various forums and farmers' organizations.

An example is Erliana, who did not participate in the local champion training. However, with continuous advisory support, she demonstrated her capacity as the manager of the Brigade Pangan as well as the chairperson of Koperasi Merah Putih in Kurau, South Kalimantan. Erliana's mentors came from various stakeholders such as field facilitators of the YESS Programme and extension officers at BPP.

Recognition is a natural process that acknowledges the existence and achievements of local champions, resulting from competencies recognized both formally and informally. This emerges from the outcomes of collaboration between the capacities of local champions and appropriate advisory support. Therefore, continuous advisory support will strengthen:

1. The credibility of local champions and the trust of their communities;
2. The affection or sensitivity of local champions towards the dynamics occurring in their communities;
3. The development and sustainability of innovations, which are processed based on empirical experience.

The YESS Programme, together with Procasur and Bina Swadaya, formulated the advisory support guidelines for local champions in their communities as a continuation of the advisory support carried out for themselves.

The process consists of four stages, beginning with the mapping of community conditions and enterprises, the advisory support provided by local champions, as well as monitoring and

evaluation that can be carried out to support the continuity of learning.



1

Mapping of the business conditions of community members:

- Classification of community members' enterprises and their characteristics



2

Assistance by Local Champions to community members:

- Emphasis of assistance materials based on the classification and characteristics of enterprises.



3

Monitoring tools and monitoring of the business development of community members:

- Indicators of success in the development of community members' enterprises and the timing of monitoring.



4

Evaluation and recommendations for the development of community members' enterprises:

- Success and driving factors of success; failure and its causes. Recommendations for subsequent replication.

Source: Local Champion Advisory Support Guideline of the YECS Programme, 2023

Proper advisory support has enabled local champions to transform from being program beneficiaries into change leaders in their communities. They are not merely participants in a series of trainings conducted by the program, but are able to serve as

facilitators for other farmers, role models for accelerating farmer regeneration, and, most pragmatically, as primary inspirators in the development of community-based enterprises.



B. Performance of Local Champions of the YESS Programme

The implementation of the local champion approach enables youth to have greater access to knowledge and technical assistance in building community-based enterprises. Access to knowledge is particularly important in remote areas, where the arrival of experts is very rare and incurs high costs. Having a local champion in such areas is highly advantageous because they can serve as an extension in the dissemination of technology for the community and the surrounding society.

The development of local champions is an approach that is relevant to reality because they are observed and followed by people who understand their background and struggles in achieving success, and are perceived as genuinely supportive because they are willing to share their experiences and knowledge. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), through the Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Support Services (YESS), applies this approach to reverse the paradigm of development.

The institution transforms external interventions gradually into the community itself. The impact is the creation of a balance of roles in the empowerment process, the creation of change agents, the strengthening of community capacity, the expansion of local knowledge, and the building of sustainable business networks. The relevance of the services provided by local champions is particularly evident because they offer precise solutions tailored to the characteristics of the areas and people within their communities.

As an example, Syarif Hidayat, a local champion of the YESS Programme from Cianjur Regency, West Java, succeeded

in developing hydroponics by mobilizing youth in his village despite being located far from urban areas. However, through his determination, he was able to secure support from Bank Indonesia for the development of smart farming. Another example is Malik from Bantaeng Regency, South Sulawesi, who developed coffee under the brand Kopi Santung. This development was carried out through agroforestry activities under a village forest management permit, thereby becoming a local identity and protected by geographical indication.

Since the initiation of local champion development activities in 2023, changes have occurred among the beneficiaries of the YESS Programme. They are no longer merely training participants but have become facilitators for other farmers within their communities, and even have been invited to training held outside their villages. In addition, they have also become drivers of agribusiness in rural areas, as in the same

"The impact is the creation of a balance of roles in the empowerment process, the creation of change agents, the strengthening of community capacity, the expansion of local knowledge, and the building of sustainable business networks."

year the YESS Programme also initiated the development of priority commodity clusters.

The capacity building for local champions was carried out twice with a total of 330 participants. In 2023, it was conducted by the National Project Management Unit (NPMU) in collaboration with Bina Swadaya, and in 2024 it was conducted by each Provincial Project Implementation Unit (PPIU), with the following composition.

Table 5.1 Number and Composition of Capacity Building for Local Champions

Province	2023		2024		Total
	Men	Women	Men	Women	
West Java	24	6	36	14	80
East Java	22	8	26	10	66
South Kalimantan	26	4	28	22	80
South Sulawesi	22	8	29	18	77

The performance of local champions in terms of the proportion between women and men shows that 70% are men and the remaining 30% are women. This condition requires attention, considering that the YESS Programme provides considerable opportunities for women to obtain access within various program interventions, meaning that stronger efforts are still required so that women may participate in

training as well as in activities in order for more women to become local champions.

The types of enterprises of the local champions are of particular interest to be linked with their roles in providing advisory support or in partnering with various parties. The horticulture subsector is the type of enterprise most commonly undertaken by local champions. A total of 121 local champions have enterprises in the

field of horticulture, whether in vegetable cultivation, fruit cultivation, or vegetable cultivation using hydroponic techniques. Furthermore, the type of enterprise most frequently undertaken by local champions is livestock, with as many as 89 persons engaged in enterprises such as poultry/duck farming, sheep farming, or cattle farming.

The selection of commodities cultivated by the local champions

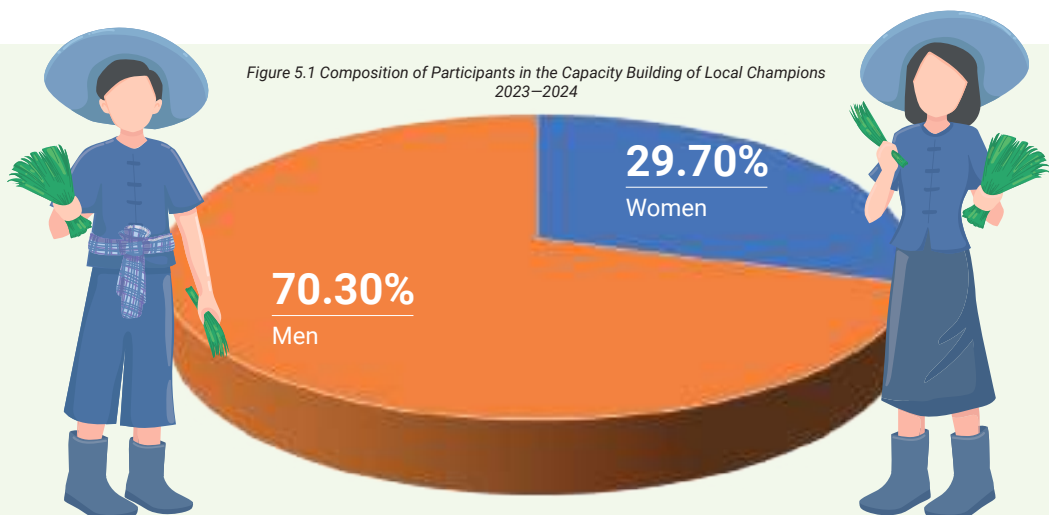
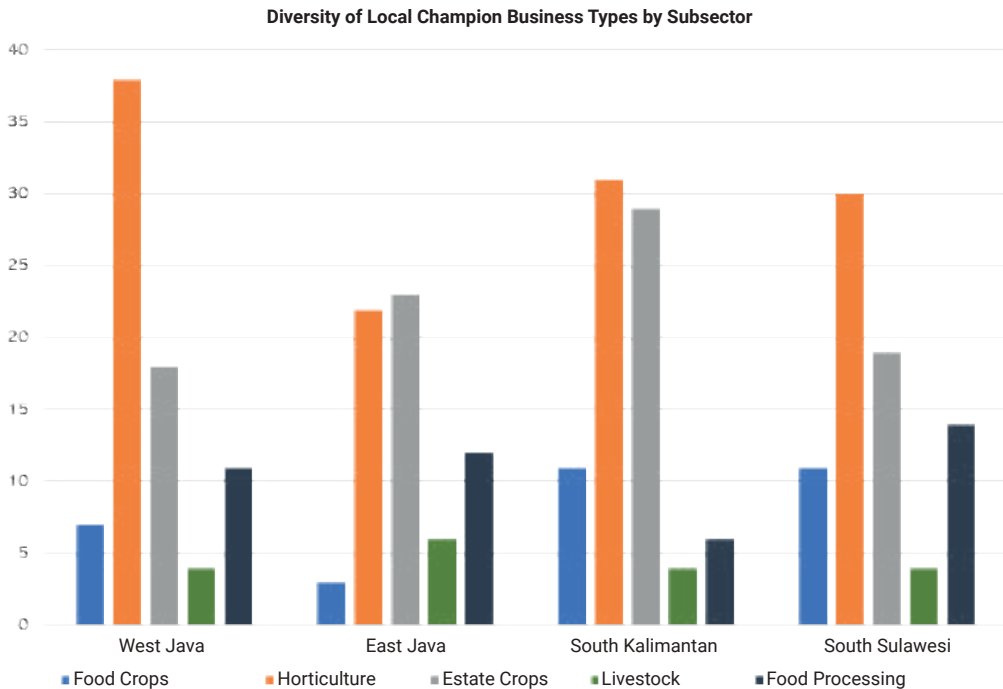




Figure 5.2 Performance of Types of Enterprises of Local Champions of the YESS Programme



generally demonstrates that they consider commodities with high economic value, such as hydroponic vegetable or melon farming which can be sold at prices corresponding to the quality of the products. Livestock enterprises, although requiring a longer period of time to manage, have a more stable selling value.

Monitoring was conducted on the local champions in 2023 and 2024 by examining several aspects related to their roles and support for the development of community-based enterprises. The aspects monitored were as follows:

1. Advisory support to farmers and their communities;
2. Advisory support material provided;
3. Marketing facilitation;
4. Support for access to financing;
5. Partnership with off-takers and other business actors;
6. Involvement in various formal forums.

Based on the monitoring results, the following findings were obtained:

1. All local champions monitored provided advisory support to farmers in their communities, particularly in technical aspects of cultivation or production techniques. This was carried out on a scheduled basis with content tailored to the problems faced by the farmers or advisory support in enterprise development. This aspect is highly relevant to the role of a local champion, since usually a local champion possesses advantages in production or cultivation practices prior to acquiring competencies in other aspects.

The number of community members consisted of young farmers who frequently interacted with the local champions, who regularly organized meetings to discuss activities related to enterprise undertakings, such as provision of

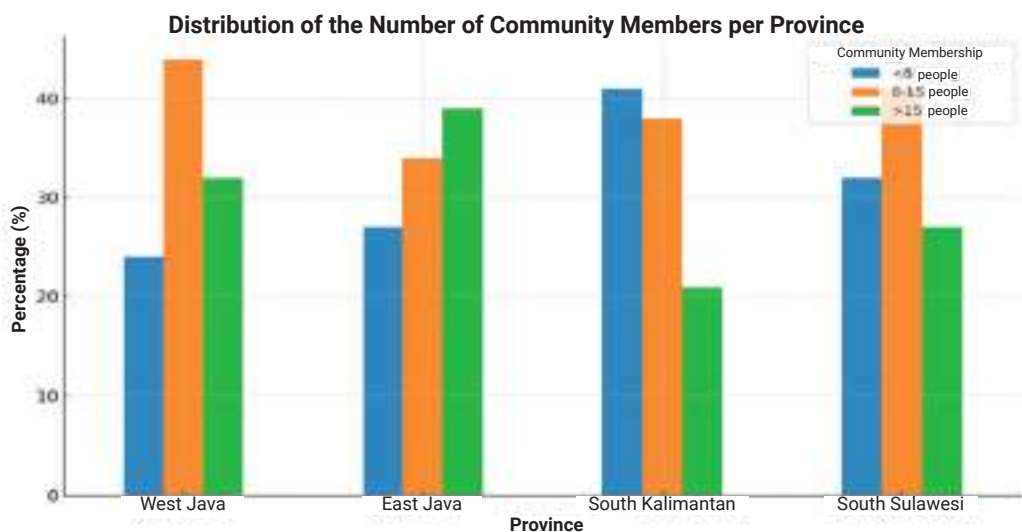


Source: BPPSDMP

production inputs, cultivation processes, as well as plans for institutional development whenever a more formal organization was required.

2. Marketing facilitation constitutes a capability possessed by the local champions and is utilized as a means to consolidate farmers in their communities.

Figure 5.3. Performance of Community Members of Local Champions by Province





Source: BPPSDMP



Source: BPPSDMP

All local champions monitored provided marketing support for the products produced either by farmers individually or within clusters or communities. The marketing support provided was not only by connecting with buyers but also by developing various digital marketing platforms. All local champions maintained social media accounts, including Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, which were used both as communication media and simultaneously as marketing media for products.

3. The level of cosmopolitanism of the local champions made it easier for them to interact with various parties outside their communities. Community members generally mandated the local champions to interact with external parties, particularly when dealing with off-takers, who were considered more difficult to communicate with in terms of setting prices and obtaining financing facilitation support. All local champions monitored undertook this role, with

partnership-building emerging as a capability of the local champions as part of their responsibility to advance their communities.

4. Although there were still local champions who had not accessed formal financing, in general, they possessed the capacity to establish partnerships with formal financing institutions in order to obtain capital support. This was also due to the fact that most local champions had participated in financial literacy training.
5. After becoming local champions, especially after participating in capacity-building activities for local champions implemented either by NPMU or PPIU, they became more widely recognized. As a result, they were frequently invited to participate in various activities and engaged in various formal forums. Some local champions were even active in national-level forums and became Young Ambassador Agriculture (YAA).

C. Economic and Social Benefits of the Local Champion Approach

Experience has demonstrated that the services and assistance provided by the local champions generated various benefits. In general, the local champions succeeded in enhancing their communities' knowledge in the introduction of new technologies. In addition, several local champions who had established marketing partnerships also received incentives from the quantity of products collected through the local champions.

In general, the presence of local champions provided support for the establishment of institutions or organizations nurtured at the grassroots level. Regular meetings held, either for the purpose of sharing experiences or discussing other matters, generated social

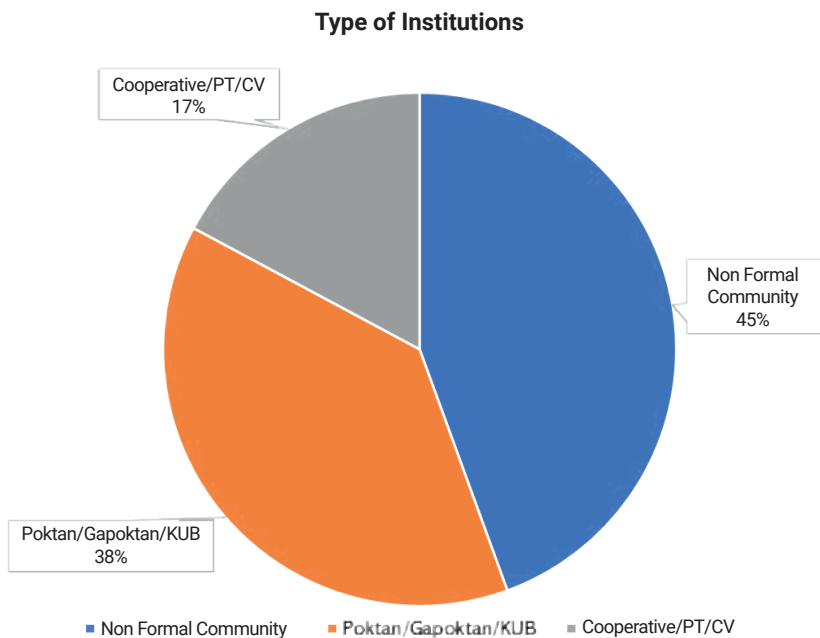


Source: BPPSDMP

benefits both for the local champions as individuals and for other young farmers to consider the most appropriate forms of institutions as vehicles for the development of community-based enterprises.

Local champions are still predominantly engaged in non-formal community-based institutions as they are easy to initiate, relevant to the basic needs of farmers,

Figure 5.4 Types of Institutions Fostered by Local Champions





and easy to mobilize without necessarily requiring clearly established organizational rules. The presence of local champions as farmers is very familiar with the dynamics of work and life in rural areas, which encompass customs, communication patterns, and the language used, thereby facilitating the building of more intensive social interactions.

Institutions such as farmer groups (poktan) or farmer group associations (gapoktan) and Joint Business Groups (KUB) are institutions fostered by local champions who have long been interacting with other young farmers and have intensive interaction with local agricultural extension workers. Local champions usually foster such institutions and invite other young farmers to join.

Meanwhile, formal business institutions remain the least established institutions by local champions, as they require strong organizational support as well as other necessary regulatory instruments. In addition, managerial capacity is required to foster formal business institutions. The diversification of institutions that has begun to emerge indicates that the role of local champions is not only in the production sector but also in the economic and social sectors.

The presence of local champions also generates economic benefits for business partners as demonstrated by reducing service costs and improving efficiency, since, according to business partners, local champions are well-informed about the regional conditions and the value chain of commodities being undertaken in their area. It is sufficient for business partners to communicate their business objectives to local champions, after which the interaction with farmers is carried out by the local champions.



Source: BPPSDMP

Other medium- and long-term economic benefits arising from the development of local champions include the following:

1. Expanding the network of market actors by generating a cycle of network expansion that enables local champions and their surrounding ecosystem to create new business opportunities.
2. Greater access to market information and new knowledge: this approach enables the sharing of knowledge and information with various actors in the same region. At the same time, it can reduce one of the market failures especially experienced in remote rural areas, namely information asymmetry regarding prices, costs,



Source: BPPSDMP

demand, supply, transaction costs, substitutes, and other aspects of rural products and services.

3. Recognition of local champions in the community. This aspect constitutes the greatest benefit for agricultural talents to participate in agricultural development activities in rural areas because they gain trust and recognition for their products and initiatives.



Source: BPPSDMP



Source: BPPSDMP



D. Inspiring Story of a YESS Programme Local Champion



01

PRASTIO KUNTORO

Tanahlaut Regency, South Kalimantan



Hydroponic Melons for the Modern Market

Where will the capital come from?"—this is a common concern for many when starting a business. Prastio Kuntoro faced the same issue when he intended to cultivate melons. However, the resident of Ranggung Village, Takisung District, Tanahlaut Regency, South Kalimantan, sold his car to finance melon farming. Kun—as Prastio Kuntoro is familiarly called—used the proceeds from selling his car as capital for melon cultivation.

Born in Yogyakarta in 1985, he decided to follow in the footsteps of his parents, who were also farmers. Kun chose melon because it does not require extensive land, its price is stable, and it tends to be higher than that of watermelons. In 2021, Kun learned about the YESS—Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Support Services— Programme from an agricultural extension officer. YESS is a program of the Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

This melon farmer registered as a member of the YESS Programme to acquire good cultivation knowledge. In addition, he hoped to obtain solutions when facing cultivation challenges. These expectations

were fulfilled when Kun participated in the YESS Programme. He attended various learning activities, including business proposal training and smart farming training in South Korea.

Kun subsequently submitted a competitive grant proposal to the YESS Programme. After a selection process, the YESS Programme approved his proposal and awarded him a grant of IDR 76 million. Kun utilized the funds to construct a greenhouse for hydroponic melon cultivation. Initially, he cultivated melons conventionally. According to Kun, conventional melon farming requires land preparation after each harvest, which consumes considerable labor, time, and cost.

For this reason, Kun transitioned to the modern hydroponic system. Understandably, the initial investment was relatively large. For illustration, the cost of building one greenhouse reaches IDR 150 million. However, according to Kun, the system is more efficient in terms of time and labor. Moreover, nutrient management is more economical and entails lower risks. This young farmer adopted the hydroponic cultivation system in line with

the YESS Programme's vision of Progressive, Independent, and Modern Farmers.

Kun began developing innovations in melon cultivation at the beginning of 2023. His reason for shifting to the hydroponic system was to improve product quality to penetrate the modern market. In addition to adopting the hydroponic system, Kun also cultivated imported melon varieties from abroad (Japan), such as the Kimochi sky type. He supplied harvested melons to modern markets such as Lotte Mart in South Kalimantan. The contract or sale value was more advantageous than prices offered by local collectors.

According to Kun, the challenges of melon farming include unpredictable weather conditions that may cause crop failure. He experienced two consecutive crop failures due to flooding and disease outbreaks. In addition, two greenhouses were severely damaged by windstorms. Nonetheless, Kun did not give up. He remained determined to continue his melon farming business. Kun stated that his soul is that of a "farmer's soul" and his life is devoted to farming.

This persistence even attracted investors to support greenhouse development. Currently, Kun manages 12 greenhouses for melon cultivation in Ranggung Village. His melon farming enterprise also generates employment and has the potential to develop into agro-tourism. Indeed, he organizes the land and manages the greenhouses neatly, ensuring continuous harvests, and the cultivation site is located near Takisung Beach.

Kun hopes that his business can serve as educational tourism (eduwisata) for youth. His aim is to provide benefits to every visitor who comes to directly harvest melons. What is interesting about his farming enterprise is that Kun shares the harvest of one greenhouse with the surrounding community.

This is his expression of gratitude for the success of his melon cultivation.

According to Kun, participating in the YESS Programme provides many benefits, such as competitive grant support as additional business capital and diverse knowledge, especially smart farming, which he learned in South Korea. In addition, he also gained a network of millennial farmers. Kun is confident in being a farmer, as he believes this is his life's purpose. "As long as humans still need food and drink, the agriculture and livestock sector will always be essential," Kun affirmed.





SYARIP HIDAYAT

Cianjur Regency, West Java



High-Quality Melons from Cidamar

The land owned by Syarip Hidayat is not huge, only 800 m². However, the resident of Cidamar Village, Cidaun District, Cianjur Regency, West Java, cultivates melons intensively. The 40-year-old man chose the Inthanon melon variety, considering it as a premium melon, with sweetness levels of 16–18° Brix, crisp texture, and prominent netting.

Syarip routinely checks the soil pH level and the condition of the planting medium before cultivating this member of the Cucurbitaceae family. After planting, he also monitors plant growth, paying close attention to fertilization and pesticide application. The implementation of good agricultural practices enabled Syarip to harvest grade A quality melons, each weighing an average of 1–1.5 kg, with evenly netted skin and free from pest or disease damage.

The high quality of his harvests cannot be separated from Syarip's involvement in the YESS Programme (Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Support Services). Through this program, he obtained technical knowledge on melon cultivation. Program managers carried out continuous guidance and coordination, including through WhatsApp groups as well as direct visits to the site. In addition, Syarip also obtained

funding from the YESS Programme to construct a greenhouse.

Syarip was able to harvest an average of 700 kilograms of melons per cultivation cycle from his 800 m² plot. His sales turnover reached IDR 18 million. In fact, Syarip cultivates melons an average of three times per year. At present, he has joined the Najaa Farm Berkah Producers' Cooperative, whose flagship products include butternut squash (butternut Jacqueline) and exotic melons of the Inthanon variety.





NABILUL AQLI

Banyuwangi Regency, East Java



Reaping Profits from Chili Farming

Chili and shallots are commodities that often trigger inflation. Chili prices frequently fluctuate. Therefore, farmers must be skillful in strategizing to obtain substantial profits. Nabilul Aqli chose to cultivate bird's eye chili (*Capsicum annuum* var. *frutescens*) and large chili (*Capsicum annuum*) as potential commodities. This farmer in Banyuwangi Regency, East Java, cultivated chili on his own land of 2,500 m².

From that land, Nabilul obtained a turnover of IDR 30 million per cultivation cycle. He once enjoyed prices soaring up to IDR 115,000 per kilogram. However, the average selling price of bird's eye chili was around IDR 15,000 per kilogram. According to Nabilul, the greatest challenge in chili cultivation is weather uncertainty. The dry season, which should have arrived, was still marked by high-intensity rainfall. Such conditions generally increase humidity, which is conducive to the development of plant diseases. Fortunately, most of his land is dry land, thus more resistant to heavy rainfall.

This young farmer sought to expand his land, among other things, by joining the Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Support Services (YESS) Programme in 2024. For Nabilul, joining the YESS

Programme was like "killing two birds with one stone." He had the opportunity to obtain learning on chili cultivation and proper production management organized by the YESS Programme. He participated in at least eight different training sessions.

In addition, the YESS Programme also disbursed funding, which Nabilul used to expand his production land up to 1 hectare. The increase in planting area simultaneously boosted his turnover up to IDR 80 million per planting season. He marketed the fruit vegetables of the Solanaceae family to the Kramat Jati Central Market in East Jakarta and Tanah Tinggi, Tangerang Regency. Selling prices varied between IDR 11,500 and IDR 15,000 per kilogram. He is now also developing his own liquid organic fertilizer (LOF) product branded "Jakabah."





MUCHLIS

Bantaeng Regency, South Sulawesi



The Major Impact of Small-Scale Poultry Farming

Initially, Muchlis harvested only an average of three trays of quail eggs daily since 2019. The turnover of this quail egg farmer in Bantaeng Regency, South Sulawesi Province, was only IDR 90,000 per day, equivalent to IDR 2.7 million per month. However, Muchlis' turnover from his quail egg enterprise soared more than fourfold in 2021, reaching IDR 12.6 million per month.

This significant change was thanks to Muchlis' participation in the Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Support Services (YESS) Programme. After receiving funding of IDR 35 million from the YESS Programme, he increased the population of *Coturnix coturnix* quails to 1,500 birds. Consequently, egg production rose to 14 trays per day, generating IDR 420,000 daily, equivalent to IDR 12.6 million per month.

His progress did not stop there. Muchlis' business continued to grow thanks to the advisory support provided by the YESS Programme. By 2025, the population of these small poultry—members of the Phasianidae family—had reached 5,000 birds, with production of 50 trays per day. Naturally, Muchlis' turnover climbed to IDR 1.5 million per day or IDR 45 million per month. Quail egg production knows no holidays, including Sundays.

Along with the expansion of his quail farming enterprise, Muchlis changed the business name from Rumah Puyuh Pattallassang to PT Phinisi Farm Indonesia. In the Makassarese language, pattallassang means "residence." The transformation in business scale facilitated access and collaboration with the government in the field of village food security, through quail egg farming in partnership with Ara Village Government, Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi.

Muchlis does not only think about his own enterprise. This farmer established a business community engaged in quail egg farming. He involves millennial youth interested in cultivating quail for egg production. Moreover, Muchlis provides periodic advisory support, covering feed supply, seed supply, enterprise management, business feasibility analysis, calculation of production cost of goods sold, problem prevention and handling, and access to market expansion.

Currently, the membership of this business community has reached 20 people, with a cumulative population of 70,000 productive quails. The quail farmers' community has prepared land for business expansion and development. In addition, the community has also procured a vehicle for product distribution to consumers, thereby facilitating mobility and coordination with other partners.



SYAKIFA SITI AKILAH

West Java



The Palm Sugar Business

Engaging in the palm sugar business was not originally Syakifa Siti Akilah's initiative. Her parents had already been engaged in the palm sugar processing business. After completing her education in 2021, she decided to scale up her parents' enterprise. Her consideration was that society increasingly enjoys drinking coffee and the café phenomenon in various regions requires a steady supply of palm sugar.

According to Syakifa, the main challenge in running the palm sugar business is sourcing raw materials. Supply from farmers is sometimes disrupted because they sell to middlemen. Nevertheless, Syakifa did not lose spirit. She overcame this challenge by collaborating and establishing partnerships with several palm farmers. As a result, the supply became more reliable. In addition, Syakifa also entered into partnerships with several cafés to expand her marketing reach.

This young entrepreneur explained that the sustainability of her palm sugar business lies in expanding her enterprise. The objective is to create an impact on farmers' livelihoods and surrounding communities. Syakifa also innovated by producing liquid palm sugar that can last for 4–6 months at room temperature. In addition, she has a production room and several machines for processing high-quality palm sugar.

Syakifa joined the Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Support Services (YEES) Programme. According to her, the benefits of participating in the YEES Programme are continuous, with training and consultations directly related to her business.





ERLIANA

Padangluas Village, Kurau District, Tanahlaut Regency



Assistance in 200 Hectares of Rice Fields

Rice farmers in Kurau District, Tanahlaut Regency, South Kalimantan, generally only plant rice once a year. Therefore, Erliana was motivated to implement the IP200 Program or Cropping Index 200. This means farmers plant rice twice and harvest twice within one year. As an agricultural extension worker, Erliana wanted to increase rice productivity. She hope that farmers that farmers' welfare would also improve as productivity rose.

The farmer group members in Kurau numbered 13 people. Initially, they managed 8 hectares of land in 2023. But the cultivated land area grew by 100% in just one year, reaching 16 hectares. The woman, born in Barabai, South Kalimantan, on 13 January 1996, is also active in the Brigade Pangan Tunas Sukses Baimbai—a millennial farmers' group consisting of 15 members.

They manage 200 hectares of land with a modernized agriculture system. Erliana also encouraged them to improve the cropping index. The Ministry of Agriculture, through the Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Support Services (YESS) Programme, facilitated the provision of agricultural machinery from land preparation to harvesting. Nevertheless, Erliana faced various challenges such as the golden apple snail pest (*Pomacea canaliculata*) feeding on young rice stalks.

According to Erliana, other problems include water management, with frequent flooding during the rainy season and drought during the dry season. The numerous irrigation gates result in drainage systems not functioning optimally. At present, farm management still relies on members' self-help funds. Therefore, Erliana often controls the snails with pesticides.

Other strategies include crop pattern management and selection of suitable seed varieties. Meanwhile, to address water-related challenges, she applies early planting and accelerated rice cultivation. Initiatives from members also include applying for KUR (People's Business Credit) loans and seeking investors to finance intensification.



Source: BPPSDMP





CHAPTER

5

**ROADMAP FOR
STRENGTHENING
LOCAL CHAMPIONS**



Source: BPPSDMP



A. The Role of Policy in Transforming the Growth of Young Agricultural Entrepreneurs

Policy plays a strategic role in creating an agricultural ecosystem that is inclusive, sustainable, and attractive to the younger generation. From financial incentives to land access, including capacity building for farmers, regulatory frameworks, and government programmes, all are expected to accelerate the contribution of youth to the agricultural sector. In the context of the YESS Programme, appropriate policies have proven capable of driving the growth of youth entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector.

Given the trend of declining interest among the younger generation in the agricultural sector, there is a need for a legal umbrella in the form of policies that provide space for youth to engage in agriculture, including incentives that are attractive and accessible to them. Entrepreneurship has in fact become a strategic policy adopted by the Government to promote the growth of national entrepreneurs, including in the agricultural sector and among youth groups.

This is enshrined in Presidential Regulation No. 2 of 2022 concerning the National Entrepreneurship Action Plan. This Presidential Regulation is a manifestation of the Government's commitment to increasing the number and quality of national entrepreneurs that are inclusive and competitive. One of the key principles in this action plan is to encourage the growth of new businesses in priority sectors such as agribusiness, food security, and the rural economy. From a policy support perspective, the development of youth entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector has a legal basis for implementation in practice.



National policy through the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2025–2029 establishes farmer regeneration as one of the development priorities. The Government targets the growth of millennial farmers, agribusiness innovation, and modern agriculture as sectors of the future. This policy serves as a guiding direction for ministries, regions, and other stakeholders in supporting the realization of a new generation of Indonesian farmers who are modern and competitive. However, for this policy to benefit the younger generation, programme and activity designs that are implementable are required, thereby supporting the achievement of farmer regeneration optimally.

The YESS Programme seeks to facilitate the formulation of policy initiatives related to farmer regeneration as well as the development of youth entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector. Activities are carried out systematically to prepare support for entrepreneurship and job creation for rural youth in the agricultural sector through multi-stakeholder forums at the national, provincial, and regency levels. Several issues are raised in these multi-stakeholder forums, ranging from policy transformation to adequate facilitation for the development of youth businesses, including the following:

1. Promoting the transformation of affirmative policies for young farmers.

Affirmative policies are needed to refine, clarify, and expand the effect of preferential treatment for young farmers, especially those who are starting agricultural businesses. Facilitation policies for businesses often impose requirements and criteria that are less favorable to micro-scale start-ups, thus making it difficult and reducing the interest of youth to start businesses. The transformation of affirmative policies for youth may take the following forms:

a. Ease of access to land. Young farmers usually conduct their business activities

on land owned by their parents or families. Therefore, if they wish to scale up their businesses, it becomes difficult to access land due to agrarian regulations that still govern the process of ownership or transfer of control over land.

b. Ease of access to formal financing. Thus far, facilitation of formal financing such as credit requires business feasibility as a condition for obtaining financing support. However, this alone is insufficient. Therefore, other supporting documents are still required, which are sometimes difficult for youth to fulfill, such as asset ownership and business legality. Based on this condition, the existence of affirmative policies is expected for start-up entrepreneurs to access financing under more affordable schemes.

c. Integration of cross-sector programmes that target the same group, namely rural youth. This policy formulation is based on synergy between the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Manpower, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and other relevant ministries and institutions to build a solid youth entrepreneurship ecosystem.

d. Decentralization of funding for farmer regeneration. This enables decentralization of funding policies for young farmers in financing programmes and activities for comprehensive farmer regeneration. Such policies include awareness campaigns to cultivate the interest of youth in pursuing careers in the agricultural sector, and even providing adequate business facilitation to generate resilient young agricultural entrepreneurs. The decentralization of farmer regeneration funding may also be proposed as one of the menu schemes under the thematic Special Allocation Fund or other financing schemes aligned with the objectives of farmer regeneration.

2. Building a local support ecosystem that enables local champions to grow with their communities. This is necessary so that the development of local champions becomes an integral part of rural and regional development in a comprehensive manner. This support ecosystem consists of: (1) Regency governments in formulating local regulations, providing supporting budget allocations, and synergizing with similar

programmes; (2) The existence of BPP, P4S, as well as technical service and business institutions functioning as Business Development Service Providers (BDSPs) that provide advisory support and business services according to the needs of rural youth; (3) Local financial institutions that are capable of providing micro-financing services and access to financial service sources, both banking and other non-bank

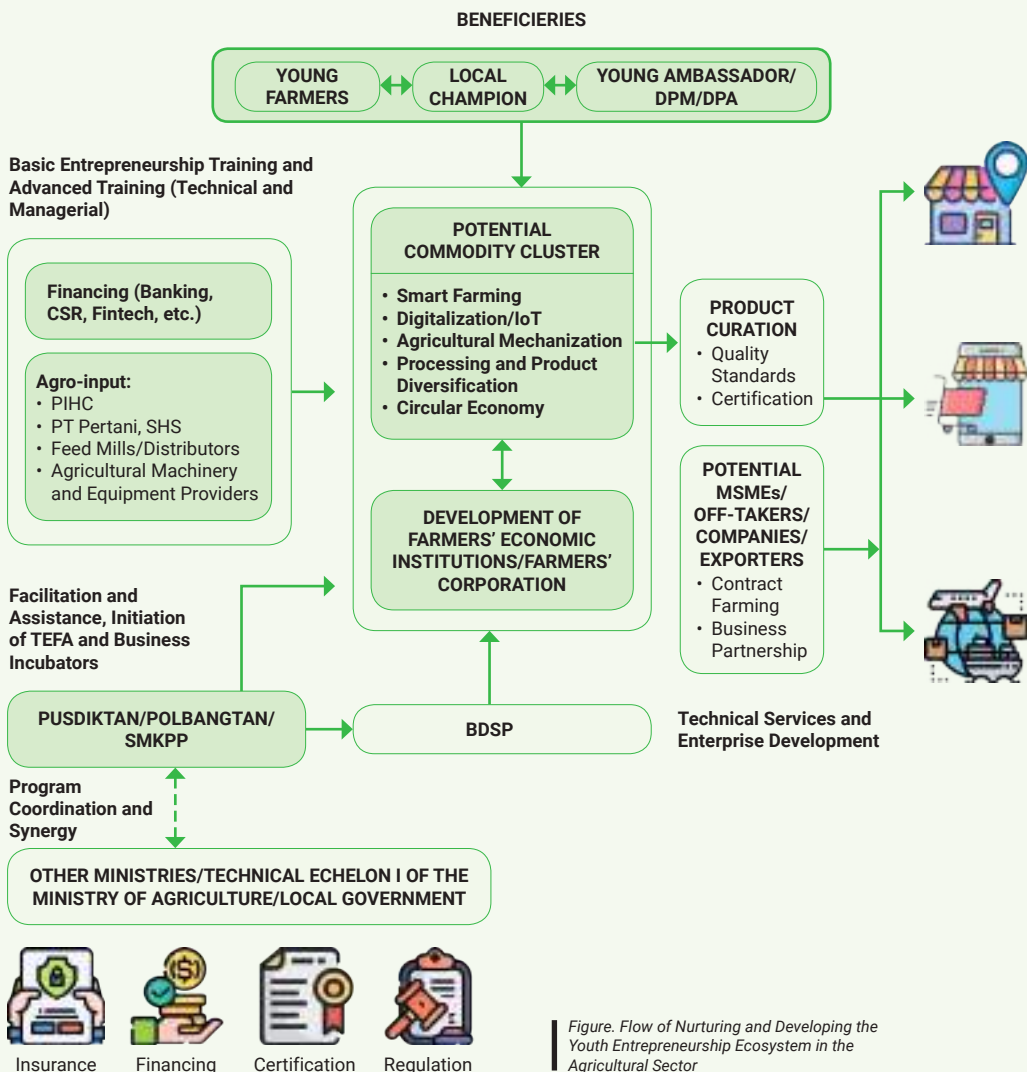


Figure. Flow of Nurturing and Developing the Youth Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in the Agricultural Sector



institutions; and (4) Communities and professional organizations serving as youth networking chains to build social support and strengthen collective spirit.

3. Sustainability of advisory support mentoring with trained and consistent human resources. Local champions must continuously be enhanced in terms of both technical capacity and the ability to mobilize communities, through the adoption of collaborative approaches rather than sectoral ones. The Government, the private sector, and the community must work as one system.
4. Building a national platform for youth in agriculture. Indonesia faces a major challenge in farmer regeneration, namely the low interest of youth in contributing to the agricultural sector. Therefore, the existence of a national platform for youth can provide a vehicle for youth to access information and equitable policies, while at the same time offering opportunities for initiative and networking supported by the appropriate stakeholders.

The existence of youth platforms such as the Millennial Farmer Ambassadors (DPM) and Leading Farmer Ambassadors (DPA) can serve as a catalyst for the growth of broader youth platforms with wider programme outreach. Thus far, DPM/DPA have been operating more in the direction of supporting the development of their members' businesses through network building. However, in the future, DPM/DPA must be able to initiate collaboration with various youth organizations. The objective is to build a platform that can advocate for policy formulation for youth, particularly in the agricultural sector.

Realizing farmer regeneration is a challenge that must be pursued in synergy, both among relevant ministries and institutions at the central and regional levels, through youth-responsive policy support as



well as the building of mutually reinforcing collaboration. The existence of local champions demonstrates that, with inclusive policy support, they are able to mobilize youth communities in their respective areas to bring about positive change.

B. Roadmap for Strengthening Local Champions: From Outstanding Individuals to a Competitive Ecosystem

The strengthening of local champions cannot rely solely on individual success;



Source: BPPSDMP

rather, a systematic and gradual approach is required so that they become the axis of local agricultural transformation. This roadmap presents strategic steps to nurture, expand impact, and institutionalize the role of local champions within the framework of sustainable and regenerative agricultural development.

The presence of local champions is strategic in supporting socio-economic transformation at both local and national levels, in order to promote resilient and adaptive agriculture. At the same time, this ensures that local champions remain committed and forward-looking. For this

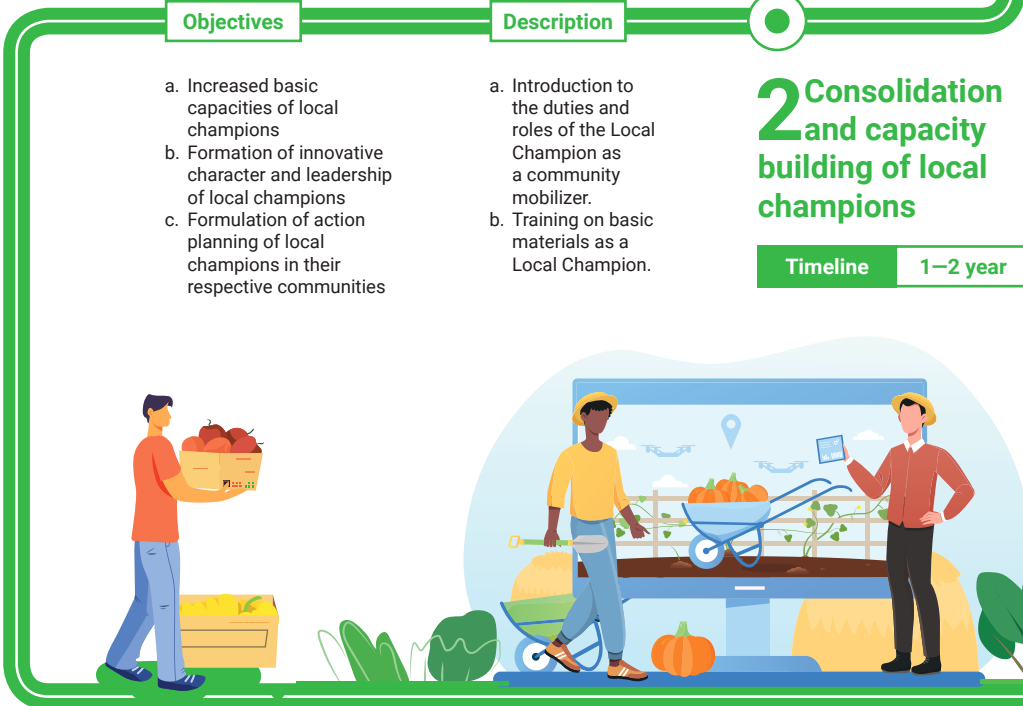
reason, a roadmap is needed to support growth and business development from the individual level to becoming part of the youth entrepreneurship ecosystem in the agricultural sector.

This roadmap is in line with the Theory of Change for Nurturing and Developing Local Champions which has been jointly formulated between Procasur and the YESS Programme. Furthermore, the roadmap has been formulated as a reference for stakeholders who have programmes similar to those carried out by the YESS Programme, as follows.



1 Identification, Mapping, and Selection of Prospective Local Champions

Timeline 1 year



2 Consolidation and capacity building of local champions

Timeline 1–2 year



5 Strengthening the youth entrepreneurship ecosystem and replication of good practices

Timeline

4 years and onwards

Description

- Transfer of knowledge by expanding the impact of local champions to other young farmers through various platforms
- Development of market access, supply chains, inflow of investment, and downstreaming of agricultural products

Objectives

- The establishment of young farmer platforms at every level driven by local champions
- The growth of investment industries and downstreaming of agriculture-based rural products



Objectives

- The establishment of superior commodity clusters in the community
- The establishment of business networks among communities and partnerships with business actors
- The establishment of formal business institutions in the form of cooperatives or other formal business entities

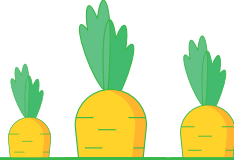
Description

- Advisory support and mentoring in the development of leading commodity clusters
- Strengthening of business networks among communities and building business partnerships with business actors, including facilitation of financing
- Facilitation of the establishment and development of formal business institutions

4 Strengthening networks and collaboration

Timeline

2–4 year



Description

- Advisory support and mentoring in business development and entrepreneurship of the Local Champion
- Implementation of business consolidation and strengthening of business incubation

Objectives

- Enhanced mastery of agricultural technology and innovation
- Improved financial literacy and digitalization
- Initiation of the establishment of commodity clusters

3 Strengthening the capacity and entrepreneurship of local champions

Timeline

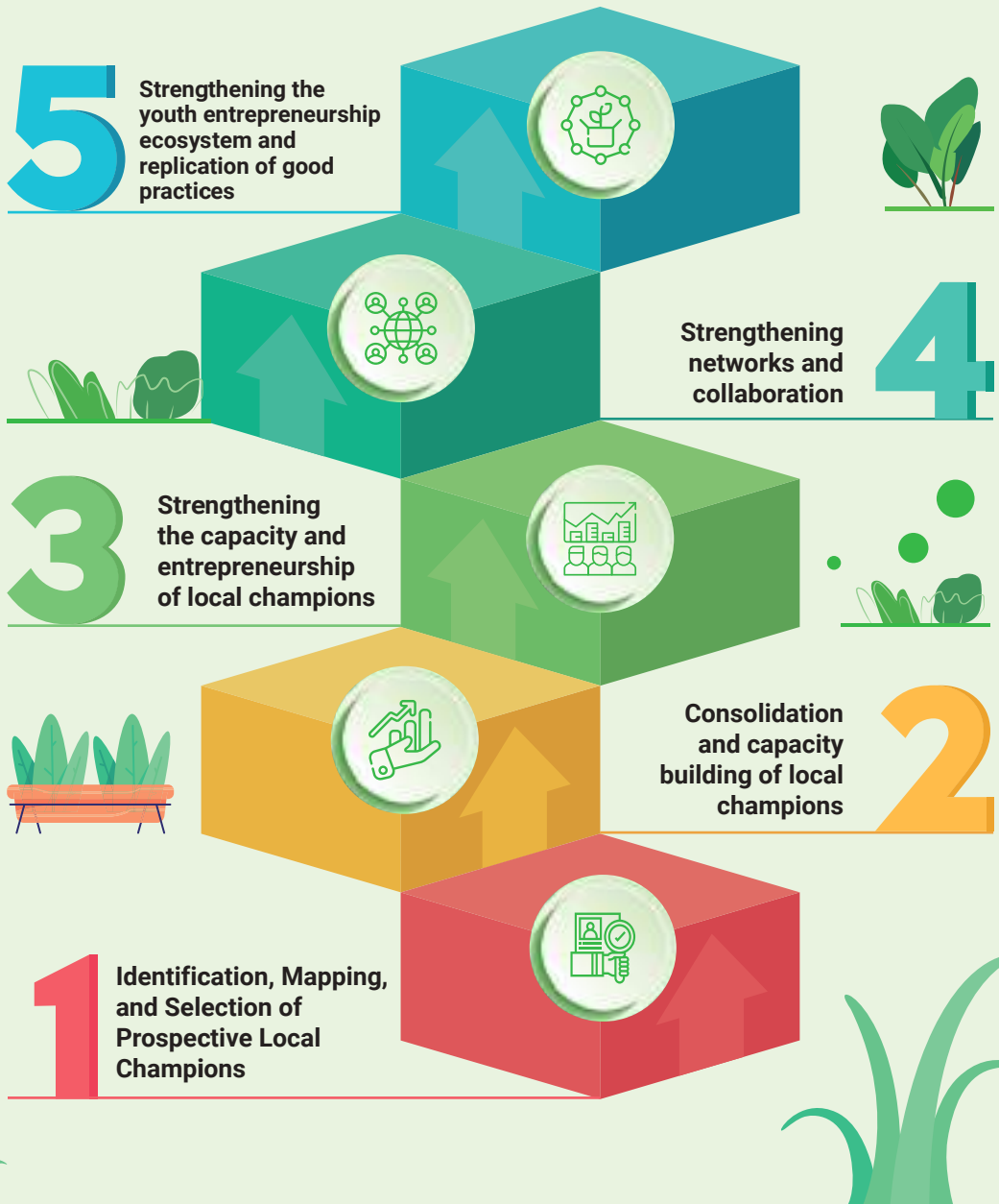
2–3 year





We expect to implement the roadmap for strengthening local champions, transforming them from individually outstanding farmers into drivers of youth dynamics. The objective is to enhance the collective competitiveness

of the community, as demonstrated by the growth of rural agricultural industries based on regional flagship commodities.



Strengthening Local Champions in the Agricultural Sector Requires a Systematic and Sustainable Approach. To that end, the roadmap for strengthening local champions must be supported by a set of complementary strategic pillars. These pillars serve not only as technical supports but also as catalysts for a resilient and inclusive locally based agricultural transformation.

a. Pillars Supporting the Realization of the Local Champion Strengthening Roadmap

Strengthening local champions in the agricultural sector requires a systematic and sustainable approach. Therefore, the strengthening roadmap must be underpinned by a number of complementary strategic pillars. These pillars are not only technical supports but also serve as catalysts for a resilient and inclusive locally based agricultural transformation. There are seven pillars that can serve as the foundation for the successful strengthening of local champions:

1. Leadership and Commitment of Local Government

The key to the successful strengthening of agricultural local champions is the presence of visionary and proactive regional leadership. Local governments are expected to prioritize agriculture within regional development agendas, establish supporting regulations, and allocate budgets for the development of outstanding farmers, technology training, and the strengthening of farmer institutions. This commitment is also demonstrated through the formulation of regional agricultural roadmaps that incorporate the development of local champions as a strategic priority.

Several regencies within the YESS Programme locations have committed to developing programs for young farmers.

For example, Banjar Regency, South Kalimantan Province, with the Batumbang Manis Program—an abbreviation for “Banjar Develops Advanced, Independent, and Religious Farmers.” Batumbang Manis is a program funded through the regional budget, targeting farmer regeneration through youth and millennial farmer empowerment via technical training at BDSP, activity planning, and comprehensive youth entrepreneurship advisory support.

2. Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration and Strategic Partnerships

The agricultural sector is highly complex and cannot be managed by a single party alone. Therefore, collaboration is required among farmers, government, universities, business actors, financial institutions, and farmer organizations. Collaboration encompasses technology transfer, support for applied research, market access, and strengthening farmers’ bargaining power. Agricultural local champions will grow and develop more rapidly when positioned within a supportive and collaborative ecosystem.

3. Strengthening Data and Information Technology

One of the weaknesses among farmers in their agricultural endeavors is the lack of thorough attention to data. Generally, farmers have knowledge and awareness regarding data and information but often in an unsystematic manner, with insufficient analysis of the relationship between observed phenomena and aspects that determine the success of their enterprises. Strengthening local champions must be data-driven, in line with their role as cluster mobilizers in agriculture. Hence, data on flagship commodities, regional potential, farmer profiles, market access, and agroclimatic conditions are crucial to guide cluster development, including human resources. The use of information



technology, such as location-based agricultural information systems or productivity monitoring dashboards, will assist in mapping needs and evaluating the impact of policies accurately.

4. Strengthening Farmer Human Resources and Farmer Institutions

Farmers require not only capital and production tools but also managerial knowledge and skills. Like other farmers, local champions need ongoing training programs, including extension services, digital training, and business incubation. The role of local champions as change agents progresses alongside technological developments and market demands. Additionally, to improve bargaining positions and develop leadership in organizing

communities, local champions must have opportunities to be active and contribute within farmer institutions such as farmer groups and gapoktan. Local champions act as drivers of economic institutions for farmers, including cooperatives and other formal enterprises. Their involvement is expected to serve as a collective instrument in scaling up businesses and market networks.

5. Innovation and Appropriate Technology

Enhancing agricultural productivity and efficiency heavily depends on farmers' ability to adopt innovations and technology. This pillar includes the introduction of modern cultivation technologies, water-saving irrigation, digital farming, post-harvest handling, processing, and

Source: BPPSDMP



downstream agricultural products. Ideally, agricultural local champions become pioneers in applying these technologies while also serving as dissemination agents within their communities.

6. Inclusive Financing and Incentive Schemes

Access to financing is a major challenge in the agricultural sector. Therefore, inclusive financing schemes that are easily accessible to young farmers must be promoted. The Kredit Usaha Rakyat (KUR) for agriculture is a primary source of financing for farmers. However, KUR often cannot reach young farmers due to requirements that are difficult for them to meet, such as the length of business operations and asset ownership, which are typically held by parents or family members. Crowdfunding,

a community-based financing alternative, is starting to gain popularity, but it still needs to undergo an assessment to ensure the security and legality of its providers. Local governments may also provide incentives, such as revolving funds, subsidies for seeds, fertilizers, or agricultural equipment for local champions who demonstrate an impact on agricultural area development.

7. Local Identity and Commodity Branding Strategy

Agricultural local champions gain added value when accompanied by a strong identity and distinctive branding. This strategy highlights local values such as cultural wisdom, commodity uniqueness, and environmentally friendly farming practices. Government support through promotion, halal/organic certification, and development of geographical indications (GI) is crucial for local champions to access broader markets. This approach has been implemented by Malik with Kopi Santung, a specialty coffee from the slopes of Mount Lompobattang in Bantaeng regency, South Sulawesi. Malik has integrated Kopi Santung into local branding, securing its protection as a Geographical Indication (GI) in 2022.



Source: BPPSDMP



b. Recommendations for Strategy and Policy

Local champions have an important task in developing commodity-based community clusters. An equally important role is performing farmer regeneration in their surrounding areas through various efforts and platforms. They are considered to possess adequate technical capacity. However, when providing advisory support, local champions require guidance on applying methods, understanding the basic principles of advisory support, utilizing media effectively, and measuring the success of the advisory support they offer to their communities.

The role of local champions in Indonesian farmer regeneration is extremely important. Indonesia has 8.4 million residents under the age of 18 (youth generation). From that number, 20–30 percent are expected to become the golden generation of farmers by 2045, the centenary of Indonesia's independence. At that time, they will be 40 years old and are expected to become superior, advanced, competitive, and productive human resources, contributing to Indonesia's demographic bonus (2012–2035).

If millennial farmers are able to implement innovations, facilities, and infrastructure properly and correctly, supported by regulations and facilitation that are favorable to strengthening rural agricultural enterprises, then their contribution to sustainable productivity increases for agricultural commodities could reach at least 50 percent.

This book has illustrated that the process of nurturing and developing local champions cannot rely solely on individual initiatives or natural processes. Rather, there is a need for strategies and policies formulated systematically, starting from identification

and advisory support to replication of the impact of local champions' growth in other potential areas.

The YESS Programme, running from 2019 to 2025, has offered opportunities to start businesses and employment in the agricultural sector. Knowledge transfer activities within this program are combined with other approaches, including facilitating financing for young entrepreneurs through competitive grants, as well as strengthening institutions and multi-stakeholder advocacy at all levels. This demonstrates that the program places human resource capacity development as the key to youth success in sustainably developing entrepreneurship through nurturing and developing local champions.

Based on these considerations, strategies and policies are required to strengthen the local champion approach so that it can be implemented more widely and become one of the policy instruments for farmer regeneration, among others:

1. Continuing the integrated approach of nurturing and developing local champions within farmer regeneration programs embedded in institutions handling agricultural education, particularly in the development of youth entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector.
2. Promoting the role of local champions in agribusiness development, enabling them to connect with priority government programs that require acceleration and measurable targets, such as achieving food self-sufficiency, as youth characteristics can create field-level acceleration to build new capacities in technology and innovation implementation.
3. Strengthening the ecosystem and partnerships by facilitating access to agricultural tools and machinery, capital, and appropriate technology for local champions who have the capacity to

organize other young farmers to support the Ministry of Agriculture's priority programs.

4. Establishing local champion networks within youth platforms at each territorial level to build support and advocacy among themselves and collaborate with other youth-based organizations or institutions, such as DPM/DPA and the Indonesian Young Entrepreneurs Association, thereby fostering communication and program synergy that grows from the needs of the youth themselves.
5. Replicating the local champion approach through support from cross-ministerial programs, such as village fund support, food security funds, village cooperative development, or other national program

schemes.

6. Providing opportunities for local champions to voice aspirations and contribute to the formulation of development policies, particularly those related to farmer regeneration at every territorial level.
7. Preparing policies that are favorable to the interests of youth in the agricultural sector through the development of incentive patterns and deregulation of business ease for young or beginner entrepreneurs who are often disadvantaged by regulations that are difficult for them to meet, such as land access and financing facilitation with certain requirements.

Source: BPPSDMP





CHAPTER

6

CONCLUSION



Source: BPPSDMP



Youth are catalysts of change, particularly in rural areas, which are often considered to experience slower transformation compared to urban areas. The local champion approach possesses a “transformative power” to drive the dynamics of rural development, particularly in the agricultural sector. Through this approach, youth emerge as agents of change by offering knowledge and experience that add value to products, reach broader and better markets, and utilize different and contemporary marketing methods based on digital networks.

Another comparative advantage of developing local champions lies in the value of connections through network and partnership development, both among young farmers themselves and with business actors and other stakeholders, in strengthening clusters of leading commodities. Furthermore, networking also occurs through the presence of local champions at forums to voice aspirations for the development of youth farmer entrepreneurship at various territorial levels.

The journey of local champions toward success and accumulating extensive experience requires a relatively long track record. Therefore, the local champion approach needs to be disseminated and integrated with various youth entrepreneurship programs in the agricultural sector.



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Local Champion

Indonesia's agricultural sector is facing the challenge of regeneration: the majority of farmers are of advanced age, while youth involvement remains limited. On the other hand, the demographic bonus presents a significant opportunity for the emergence of a new generation of agricultural actors.

This book is compiled to document good practices from the implementation of the development of local champions under the Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Support Services (YESS) Programme, which has emerged as a response to these challenges. The YESS Programme has reached more than three hundred thousand rural youth through training, mentoring, and enterprise access. Along its course, the YESS Programme has also fostered beneficiaries—outstanding youth who have succeeded in developing their enterprises by applying technological innovations while simultaneously building synergy and collaboration with other young farmers to advance together in entrepreneurship. They are referred to as local champions, namely inspirational youth who are not only successful in developing their farming enterprises but also driving change in their villages.

Through four main topics in this book—The Challenges of Youth Entrepreneurship, The Transformation of Young Farmers to become Agents of Change, The Implementation of Local Champion Development under the YESS Programme, and concluded with The Roadmap for Strengthening Local Champions—this book presents good practices, strategies for building a youth entrepreneurship ecosystem in the agricultural sector, and their inspirational stories as the foundation for a more competitive and sustainable agriculture, while at the same time serving as an eye-opening reading that the future of Indonesia's agriculture lies in the hands of the young generation.