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Financial Management Training for Entrepreneurs: Enhancing Decision Making and Financial Independence at Erawadee Company, Thailand

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Abstrak Kegiatan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat (PKM) ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan manajemen keuangan para pelaku usaha di Erawadee Company, Thailand, agar mampu mengambil keputusan bisnis yang lebih tepat dan mendukung tercapainya kemandirian finansial. Dalam konteks persaingan bisnis yang semakin ketat, khususnya pada sektor usaha herbal, pengelolaan keuangan yang efektif menjadi faktor penting dalam menjaga keberlanjutan usaha. Metode pelaksanaan PKM menggunakan pendekatan partisipatif dan aplikatif yang meliputi sosialisasi, pelatihan pencatatan keuangan sederhana, manajemen biaya, penyusunan anggaran (budgeting), serta pendampingan dan konsultasi individu. Kegiatan dilaksanakan di Erawadee, Pattaya, Chon Buri, Thailand, pada tanggal 4–8 Agustus 2025 dengan melibatkan pemilik usaha, karyawan, dan pelaku UMKM di lingkungan Erawadee Company. Evaluasi kegiatan dilakukan melalui pengukuran pre-test dan post-test terhadap pemahaman peserta pada aspek pencatatan keuangan, pengendalian biaya, penyusunan anggaran, dan pengambilan keputusan berbasis keuangan. Hasil evaluasi menunjukkan adanya peningkatan skor rata-rata pada seluruh aspek yang diukur setelah pelaksanaan kegiatan. Peserta juga mampu menerapkan praktik manajemen keuangan sederhana dalam aktivitas usaha sehari-hari, yang berdampak pada peningkatan efisiensi, transparansi, dan kualitas pengambilan keputusan bisnis. Dengan demikian, kegiatan PKM ini berkontribusi dalam meningkatkan literasi keuangan serta mendukung upaya penguatan kemandirian finansial para pelaku usaha di kawasan Erawadee.

Kata kunci: Erawadee Thailand, kemandirian finansial, manajemen keuangan, pengambilan keputusan, wirausaha.

Abstract This Community Service (PKM) activity aims to improve the financial management skills of business actors at Erawadee Company, Thailand, so they can make more appropriate business decisions and support the achievement of financial independence. In the context of increasingly fierce business competition, especially in the herbal business sector, effective financial management is a crucial factor in maintaining business sustainability. The PKM implementation method uses a participatory and applied approach that includes socialization, training in simple financial recording, cost management, budgeting, and individual mentoring and consultation. The activity was carried out at Erawadee, Pattaya, Chon Buri, Thailand, on August 4–8, 2025, involving business owners, employees, and MSME actors within the Erawadee Company environment. The activity was evaluated through pre-test and post-test measurements of participants' understanding of aspects of financial recording, cost control, budgeting, and financial-based decision-making. The evaluation results showed an increase in the average score in all aspects measured after the implementation of the activity. Participants were also able to apply simple financial management practices to their daily business activities, resulting in increased efficiency, transparency, and the quality of business decision-making. Thus, this PKM activity contributes to improving financial literacy and supporting efforts to strengthen the financial independence of business owners in the Erawadee region.

Keywords: Erawadee Thailand, financial independence, financial management, decision making, entrepreneurship.

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1. INTRODUCTION

For an entrepreneur, the ability to make sound financial decisions is a key factor in determining the direction, performance, and sustainability of a business. According to Gitman (2009), financial management is not only concerned with recording cash flow and preparing financial statements, but also encompasses the decision-making process that involves investment, financing, and dividend decisions, which directly impact the company's value and the well-being of its owners. Therefore, the quality of an entrepreneur's financial decisions will significantly determine the company's long-term resilience and competitiveness.

Furthermore, one of the fundamental goals of financial management is to achieve financial independence. Financial independence, both at the individual entrepreneur and business organization level, reflects the ability to finance operational activities, make investments, and develop a business sustainably without complete dependence on external funding sources. Ross, Westerfield, and Jordan (2010) emphasize that financial independence reflects the firm's ability to sustain operations and growth through internally generated funds, making capital independence a crucial element in maintaining business stability and sustainability. In the context of Erawadee Company, a company operating in the herbal sector in Thailand, the challenges of globalization, market dynamics, and regulatory demands require the implementation of a more structured and adaptive financial management strategy. Although the herbal industry has significant market potential due to increasing public awareness of natural health products, businesses in this sector still face intense competition and fluctuating production and distribution costs.

Based on the results of the initial survey and field observations prior to the implementation of the community service program, several factual and specific problems were identified in financial management within the Erawadee Company environment. Approximately 80% of staff and business owners had never systematically prepared a cash book, approximately 70% of participants did not understand the concept of budgeting, and a structured and well-documented financial recording system was not yet in place. These conditions limited the ability of business owners to monitor cash flow, control costs, and make business decisions based on accurate financial information.

Based on these problems, this Community Service activity is designed as an empowerment program that focuses on increasing the financial management capacity of business actors at Erawadee Company. The objectives of this community service are: (1) to increase the financial literacy of staff and MSME actors within the Erawadee Company environment, (2) to develop the ability to record financial and budget business preparation in a simple and applicable manner, and (3) to strengthen the financial independence of MSME actors as a foundation for business sustainability. Thus, this service not only has academic relevance in the development of financial management studies for entrepreneurs, but also provides a practical contribution in supporting the strengthening of the capacity and financial independence of business actors in the herbal sector, both at the local and regional levels.

Erawadee Company in Thailand is a growing herbal company leveraging the potential of natural ingredients for health products. The company's success is determined not only by product quality and marketing strategies but also by the management's ability to effectively manage financial resources. Given the high level of competition in the herbal industry, including price competition, fluctuating market demand, and dynamic government regulations, professional and structured financial management is crucial for maintaining business stability and sustainability.

To address these challenges, this Community Service program is designed with a focus on participatory and collaborative approaches as the primary foundation of program implementation. Community participation is realized through the active involvement of participants, who not only serve as recipients of materials but also as key subjects in the empowerment process. Participants are directly involved in the planning stage by designing a financial recording format tailored to the characteristics and needs of their businesses. Furthermore, in the implementation stage, participants directly practice recording transactions and preparing business budgets based on real-life cases. In the evaluation stage, participants provide feedback on the materials and modules used, which is then used to refine and adjust the program to make it more applicable and sustainable.

For an entrepreneur, sound financial decisions impact many aspects, from product pricing and investment strategies to business expansion planning. Therefore, effective financial management can help improve decision-making. Furthermore, financial independence is also a crucial goal in entrepreneurship. Financial independence not only means being able to finance a company's operations without excessive

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dependence on external parties, but also demonstrates the company's ability to create added value, increase profits, and build a sustainable financial foundation.

Erawadee Company, a player in the herbal industry, faces complex dynamics, ranging from the need for product innovation, price competition, and stringent regulatory demands. In such circumstances, sound financial management not only provides clarity in capital management but also strengthens the company's resilience amidst global economic uncertainty. By implementing targeted financial management principles, the company can improve the quality of business decisions, reduce risk, and build a more independent financial structure.



Figure 1. 1 Erawadee Herbal Wind Oil Products (such as No. 51 Inhaler / Roll On)

Research on financial management for entrepreneurs, particularly in the case of Erawadee Company, makes important contributions in two areas. First, academically, this research enriches the study of the relationship between financial management, decision-making, and financial independence in the context of modern entrepreneurship. Second, practically, the results of this study can serve as a valuable reference for other entrepreneurs in developing effective financial strategies to support the sustainability of their businesses. Thus, it can be concluded that good financial management is not merely a technical necessity, but a strategic imperative that determines the success and sustainability of a business. A study of the Erawadee Company in Thailand provides a clear picture of how careful financial management leads to wiser decision-making and the achievement of financial independence, the dream of every entrepreneur. In the context of Erawadee Company, sound financial management practices are expected to support the company's vision of becoming a leader in the herbal industry in Southeast Asia. By implementing financial management principles, the company can allocate capital more wisely, reduce production costs, and optimize marketing strategies. This, in turn, will strengthen the company's market position, increase profitability, and expand its distribution network.

Furthermore, research on financial management for entrepreneurs in the context of herbal companies like Erawadee is important because it can provide a concrete picture of how financial practices influence the quality of business decisions. This research is also relevant to global trends showing that herbal-based small and medium enterprises (SMEs) make a significant contribution to economic growth, job creation, and improving community welfare.

Thus, the study of "*Financial Management for Entrepreneurs : Improving Decision Making and Financial Independence at Erawadee Company, Thailand*" is expected to provide both academic and practical contributions. Academically, this research will enrich the literature on financial management in the context of entrepreneurship, particularly in the herbal sector. Practically, the results of this study can serve as a reference for other entrepreneurs in developing their businesses

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through more effective financial strategies, thereby improving the quality of decision-making and achieving sustainable financial independence.

2. METHOD

This Community Service (PkM) activity uses the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method combined with a capacity building approach . The PAR method was chosen because it emphasizes the active involvement of partners as the main subjects in all stages of the activity, from problem identification, planning, action implementation, to joint evaluation and reflection. This approach is relevant in the context of community empowerment because it encourages a participatory and continuous learning process (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005; Reason & Bradbury, 2008). In addition, the capacity building approach is used to strengthen the capacity of individual and organizational partners in managing business finances independently and applicably.

Baseline Condition

Prior to the PkM activity, the implementation team conducted an initial survey and field observations at Erawadee Company, Pattaya, Chon Buri, Thailand, to identify the actual conditions of partner financial management. The baseline assessment results indicated that business financial management was still carried out simply and unstructured. Approximately 80% of staff and business owners did not have the habit of preparing cash books regularly, 70% of participants did not understand the basic concepts of budgeting, and there was no documented and standardized financial recording system available. Furthermore, business decisions were still dominated by intuition without adequate financial data support, potentially leading to inefficiencies and errors in financial resource management.

Stages of Activity Implementation

The implementation of PkM activities is carried out through several main stages as follows:

a. **Planning**
   At this stage, participatory discussions are held with partners to identify needs, determine training materials, and design a financial recording format that suits the characteristics of Erawadee Company's herbal business.
b. **Action/Implementation:**
   This stage includes socialization and training in simple financial management, practical training in recording financial transactions, cost management, and business budgeting. Participants are actively involved through simulations and case studies based on real-life business conditions.
c. **Observation and Mentoring (Observation)**
   The PkM Team provides mentoring and individual consultations to monitor the implementation of financial management practices by participants and identify obstacles encountered during implementation.
d. **Evaluation and Reflection:**
   Evaluation is conducted through pre- and post-test measurements to assess changes in participants' understanding and abilities. Additionally, collaborative reflection is conducted to obtain feedback for module refinement and program sustainability.

Place and Time

The Community Service Program (PKM) was implemented at **Erawadee** , an institution specializing in herbal medicine and health, which plays a crucial role in providing traditional medicine-based services and products. Erawadee was chosen as the location for the program based on its suitability to the partners' needs for improving business management capacity, simplifying accounting systems, and developing competitive marketing strategies.

This PKM activity was carried out on:

Day/Date: Monday–Friday, August 4–8, 2025

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Place: Erawadee
Located in: Chon Buri, Thailand
Address: 159/151 N Pattaya Rd, Pattaya City, Bang Lamung District , Chon Buri 20150, Thailand



Figure 1.2 Erawadee Address

The activity was carried out for five days with stages including:

1. Delivery of material regarding business management and simple financial recording.
2. Practical training with partners for application of the material.
3. Intensive discussions and assistance regarding problems faced by partners.
4. Evaluation of activity results and recommendations for improvement.

With structured time planning, it is hoped that this PKM activity can run effectively and provide a real contribution to strengthening the capacity of the herbal business run by Erawadee. The PKM program is planned to be implemented over a three-month period, encompassing preparation, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up. The preparation phase will last two weeks, encompassing site surveys, coordination with Erawadee , and preparation of materials. The implementation phase will last two months, incorporating outreach, training, and direct mentoring for Erawadee managers and staff . The evaluation and follow-up phase will be conducted over the final two weeks to measure the program's effectiveness and provide recommendations for its continued sustainability. By selecting a location at Erawadee and a structured schedule, it is hoped that this program can run optimally, provide real benefits for managers, and improve the quality of financial governance and management of herbal-based businesses in a professional and competitive manner.

Financial Literacy Level

Initial survey results indicate that the financial literacy level of staff and business owners at Erawadee Company remains low to moderate. Approximately 80% of respondents stated they did not adequately understand basic business financial management concepts, such as the differences between cash inflow and outflow, profit and cash flow, and the role of simple financial statements in decision-making. Furthermore, most participants were unfamiliar with using financial information as a basis for evaluating business performance, leading to business decisions being based primarily on experience and intuition.

Financial Recording Practices

Field observations revealed that financial record-keeping practices prior to the program were rudimentary and unsystematic. Transaction recording was generally manual, fragmented, and discontinuous. Approximately 80% of participants lacked a regularly compiled cash book. Furthermore, there was no use of digital record-keeping tools or standardized recording formats for periodically monitoring business financial conditions. This limited accurate financial information and made it difficult to evaluate business performance.

Budgeting and Cost Control Skills

Their budgeting and cost control skills prior to program implementation were also limited. Approximately 70% of participants admitted they had never prepared a formal, planned business budget. Business operational costs were generally incurred without clear planning, potentially leading to waste and inefficiency. Furthermore, participants lacked an understanding of the importance of cost control as a tool for maintaining cash flow stability and increasing business profitability.

Overall, the initial conditions of the partners indicated a strong need for an empowerment program in the field of financial management that is applicable and participatory. These baseline findings served as the

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primary basis for designing materials, methods, and approaches for Community Service activities to improve financial literacy, record-keeping and budgeting skills, and support the strengthening of financial independence among business owners at Erawadee Company.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Community Service Program (PKM) in Erawadee , Pattaya , Chon Buri, Thailand, from August 4–8, 2025, was successfully implemented and in accordance with the previously established plan. This program was designed to provide a tangible contribution to improving the knowledge and skills of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the region, particularly in the aspect of effective financial management strategies.

This initiative was motivated by the needs of MSMEs in Erawadee , Pattaya , who still face various challenges in financial record-keeping, cost management, and business budgeting. Therefore, the PKM team is here to provide mentoring and training to help entrepreneurs improve their financial management skills and enable their businesses to grow sustainably.

The description of the activities carried out during the PKM program is as follows:

1. Program Opening and Socialization

On the first day, the series of PKM activities began with an opening session held at a community facility in the Erawadee area , Pattaya , Chon Buri. The event was attended by representatives of the Erawadee MSME community , local community leaders, and a community service team from Indonesia. The presence of participants, mostly culinary, handicraft, and tourism support service providers, reflected the high enthusiasm of the Erawadee community for this activity. The program socialization was conducted interactively with the aim of providing a clear understanding of the objectives, benefits, and stages of the activities that will be implemented over five days. The PKM team explained that this activity is not only a presentation of theoretical material, but also direct practice relevant to the conditions of MSMEs in Erawadee . This is important considering that many MSMEs in the region still face challenges in financial management, such as inconsistent transaction recording, weak business cost control, and difficulties in preparing budget plans.

Furthermore, the opening session served as an initial platform for building communication and rapport between the PKM team and the MSMEs at Erawadee . In a friendly atmosphere, the team listened to participants' hopes and needs regarding managing their businesses. Several participants shared that although their businesses thrive due to the large number of tourists, they often struggle to maintain a balance between income and expenses, especially during the low tourist season. Thus, the opening of this program was not merely ceremonial, but also a crucial step in adapting the training materials to the local context of Erawadee . The PKM team emphasized that this activity was expected to provide practical solutions that could be immediately implemented by MSMEs in the region. The opening ceremony concluded with an introductory session between participants and the PKM team, further strengthening relationships and creating a collaborative atmosphere that supports the program's success.

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Figure 1.3 Opening and Socialization

2. Training Recording Finance Simple

The activity focused on training in simple financial record-keeping, a crucial foundation for business management. Participants included MSMEs in the Erawadee area , ranging from Pattaya food vendors and souvenir kiosk owners to transportation and laundry service providers serving tourists. Until now, most of them still rely on their own memories or limited records to manage daily transactions, often lacking a clear picture of their business's financial condition.

The training method is practical and applicable, starting with an introduction to creating a simple cash book. Participants are taught to record all income from product or service sales, as well as all expenses for business needs, such as raw material purchases, transportation costs, or kiosk rental payments. Case studies are taken directly from participants' businesses, such as recording street food sales in the Erawadee area , which typically caters to tourists at night, or recording the production costs of handicrafts sold at a local Pattaya market. Erawadee MSMEs to clearly understand their businesses' cash inflows and outflows, enabling them to more easily determine business strategies, such as when to increase capital, reduce costs, or expand. With proper record-keeping, MSMEs are also better prepared to access capital assistance or collaborate with external parties, as they have clear and accountable financial administration. Erawadee 's MSMEs not only gain new knowledge but also practical skills they can immediately apply to their respective businesses. This is a crucial first step toward professionalism and business sustainability, particularly in facing the challenges of the highly dynamic tourism sector in the Pattaya region .



Figure 1.4 Training Recording Finance

3. Management Cost and Control Expenditure

The PKM program also focused on training in cost management and expense control, which are crucial for maintaining business continuity, especially for MSMEs in the Erawadee area of Pattaya .

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Many businesses in this area are quite creative in producing and marketing their products, but often still face challenges in controlling costs, resulting in suboptimal profits.

The PKM team began the session by providing an understanding of the concept of costs. Participants were explained the difference between fixed costs (fixed costs) and variable costs (variable costs) . costs) such as kiosk rent, permanent employee salaries, and electricity bills, with variable costs (variable) cost) such as raw food materials, craft materials, packaging costs, and promotional costs. This understanding is important because many MSMEs in Erawadee are not accustomed to grouping costs by category, making it difficult to calculate the cost of production or determine a fair selling price for their products.

To simplify the process, the PKM team used real-life examples from participants' businesses. For example, a food vendor in the Erawadee nightlife district who sells seafood to tourists often fails to factor in the costs of cooking oil, spices, or ice cubes as part of their variable costs. As a result, despite high turnover, profits fall short of expectations because the costs incurred are much higher than anticipated. This discussion encouraged participants to record all expenses in detail, no matter how small, to prevent financial leaks.

The session also featured an interactive discussion, where participants shared their experiences regarding challenges in managing costs. Some participants admitted to frequently struggling with seasonal seafood prices in Pattaya , while others, including souvenir makers , faced challenges due to rising packaging costs. The PKM team then proposed practical solutions, such as establishing simple contracts with suppliers to stabilize prices or finding alternative packaging materials that were less expensive but still attractive to tourists.

Through this training, participants learned that cost management and expense control are not just about saving, but also about allocating funds appropriately to ensure business efficiency without sacrificing product or service quality. With effective cost control, MSMEs in Erawadee are expected to increase net profits, maintain competitiveness in the competitive tourism market, and have cash reserves to anticipate low-traffic periods.

4. Compilation Workshop Budgeting

Activities are focused on budgeting workshops , which are a key focus of the program. Business budgets are seen as a crucial tool for MSMEs in Erawadee to manage cash flow more effectively, anticipate business challenges, and project long-term growth.

The PKM team explained that a budget is not simply a list of estimated income and expenses, but also a strategic guide that can help MSMEs determine business priorities, control costs, and make informed investment decisions. Participants were encouraged to understand that without a budget, businesses tend to drift aimlessly and are vulnerable to financial difficulties, especially in tourist areas like Pattaya, which experience fluctuating visitor numbers.

The training method is delivered in the form of an interactive workshop , where participants not only receive material but also directly practice budgeting based on their respective business circumstances. For example:

a. A culinary trader at Erawadee is directed to prepare a monthly budget that includes raw material requirements, kiosk operational costs, and daily sales targets.
b. Pattaya souvenir artisans are trained to create seasonal budgets, as their sales typically increase during the year-end holidays and decrease during the low tourist season .
c. laundry or transportation service providers are encouraged to create long-term budgets for equipment maintenance, vehicle upgrades, or investment in new equipment.

The PKM team also provided an example of a simple budget structure consisting of:

a. Business income projections (daily, weekly, monthly).
b. Estimated fixed costs (kiosk rent, electricity, water, employee salaries).
c. Estimate variable costs (raw materials, promotion, packaging).
d. Reserve funds for emergencies or investments.

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With this framework, participants can develop financial plans that are more realistic and appropriate to the scale of their respective businesses. In addition to budget preparation, this workshop also emphasized the importance of budget monitoring and evaluation. Participants were taught how to compare budget plans with actual financial results, identifying waste, underfunding, or opportunities for efficiency improvements. Discussions during the workshop revealed that many Erawadee MSMEs had never previously created a written budget. They typically only verbally estimated needs without detailed calculations. After participating in this activity, they felt more confident in starting to prepare a business budget, recognizing its benefits in providing clearer direction for business development.

Overall, this workshop helped Erawadee's MSMEs become more disciplined, planned, and focused in managing their business finances. With a sound budget, they are expected to maintain business stability amidst fluctuations in the tourism market, while also preparing strategic steps to grow their businesses to the next level.



Figure 1.5 Workshop

5. Mentoring and Consultation / discussion

Following the group training, the PKM activities continued with individual mentoring and consultation sessions designed to focus more specifically on the challenges faced by each MSME in Erawadee . These sessions are considered crucial because each business has different characteristics, challenges, and needs, so not all solutions can be applied universally.

During this mentoring session, participants are given the opportunity to discuss their work directly with the PKM team. Some frequently encountered issues include:

a. Mixing personal and business finances, where many MSMEs admit to still using one source of money for both household needs and business operations.
b. Difficulty in determining the selling price of products, especially for culinary traders and souvenir craftsmen , because they often only adjust to market prices without calculating production costs in detail.
c. Constraints in cash flow management, for example, the laundry service business in Erawadee receives payments irregularly so that it often experiences a shortage of funds in the middle of the month.
d. seafood raw material prices , or transportation service providers who must anticipate vehicle maintenance costs.

The PKM team provided practical solutions tailored to the participants' business context. For example, for culinary vendors, the team recommended using a simple daily cash book to separate

 e- ISSN 2961-9416 , p-ISSN 2962-9160

personal and business funds, and provided a simple formula for calculating the cost of goods manufactured (COGS) for more accurate selling prices. Meanwhile, for souvenir artisans , the team taught them how to calculate packaging costs, labor costs, and a reasonable profit margin. Erawadee's MSMEs to feel more comfortable sharing the challenges they faced. This fostered an awareness that sound financial management is not just theory but must be applied to the real-world situations of their businesses. The results of this individual mentoring and consultation demonstrated that participants gained a better understanding of how to adapt financial management strategies to their business types. With personalized guidance, Erawadee 's MSMEs are expected to implement more disciplined, efficient, and professional financial practices, thereby enhancing their competitiveness in the highly competitive Pattaya tourist area.



Figure 1.6 Consultation Individual

6. Program Evaluation and Closing

On the final day of the PKM program, the series of activities concluded with an evaluation and closing session. A comprehensive evaluation was conducted to assess participants' understanding of the material presented over the five days and their application of new skills in their daily lives.

The evaluation method was implemented through reflective discussions, questions and answers, and direct feedback from MSMEs at Erawadee . Participants were asked to describe their experiences during the program, the new things they learned, and any challenges they might face in implementing the knowledge gained. Furthermore, participants provided positive feedback that the PKM team's methods were easy to understand, as they provided numerous real-life examples relevant to their businesses in Erawadee . For example, culinary vendors found the method helpful in calculating the cost of production, while souvenir artisans felt more confident in setting fair and competitive selling prices. The closing ceremony was held in a friendly atmosphere, attended by participants, community leaders, and representatives of the Erawadee MSME community . The PKM team expressed their hope that the skills and knowledge gained would not stop at the end of the program but would continue to be consistently applied in daily business management. To support sustainability, the team also handed out written training modules that participants could use as practical guidelines after the program concludes.

The closing of this program also serves as a momentum to strengthen collaboration between the PKM team and the Erawadee community , particularly in the area of MSME-based economic empowerment. It is hoped that the skills acquired will enhance the professionalism, efficiency, and competitiveness of Erawadee MSMEs amidst the intense competition in Pattaya's tourism sector. With the end of this activity, PKM at Erawadee not only left knowledge, but also a new spirit for

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MSME actors to be more confident in managing finances and developing their businesses sustainably.



Figure 1.7 Group Photo of MSME Participants and the PKM Team.

With smooth implementation and active participation from MSMEs, the PKM program is expected to have a long-term impact in the form of improved performance and sustainability of small businesses in the Erawadee area of Pattaya , Chon Buri, Thailand. Furthermore, this activity also strengthens international cooperation in education, research, and community service .

Discussion of PKM Results

1. Low Understanding of Modern and Scientifically Based Herbal Management

Prior to the implementation of the Community Service (PKM) program, field conditions indicated that most herbalists in Erawadee still used traditional approaches to herbal management and utilization. While these practices are rooted in traditional customs, they often lack adequate scientific methods. For example, there is a lack of standardization in raw material selection, systematic recording of production results, and a lack of understanding of modern safety and health aspects of herbal use. This has the potential to reduce effectiveness and pose risks if use is not properly measured.

Through the implementation of the PKM program, various planned and structured activities have provided real results, including:

a. Increasing the knowledge of herbalists and Erawadee staff regarding scientific research-based herbal management.

Before the PKM program, most herbalists in Erawadee relied on traditional, inherited knowledge without a clear scientific basis. This potentially led to inconsistencies in the quality of herbal products, from raw material selection and processing to the safety of dosages provided to consumers. Through the training program, participants are equipped with scientific research-based knowledge that covers several important aspects, including:

1) Selection of Herbal Raw Materials
   Participants are taught the importance of selecting raw materials that meet specific quality criteria, such as plant freshness, freedom from pesticide contamination, and an introduction to plants with scientifically proven medicinal properties. This way, participants will not rely solely on intuition or experience but will also be able to select materials based on measurable quality standards.
2) Proper Storage Techniques
   One of the main topics covered herbal storage procedures to maintain their quality. Participants were introduced to drying methods, airtight packaging, and temperature and humidity control

 e- ISSN 2961-9416 , p-ISSN 2962-9160

in storage rooms. This knowledge ensures that the active ingredients in herbal plants don't deteriorate quickly, maintaining their optimal efficacy when used.

3) Dosage Settings
   The training emphasized the importance of standard dosages in herbal use. This was done to ensure that herbalists don't make dosage recommendations based solely on custom or tradition, but rather on scientific literature and relevant health guidelines. By knowing the correct dosage, the risk of side effects can be minimized and the effectiveness of herbal use can be increased.
4) Security and Standardization Aspects
   Participants gained an understanding of safety standards for herbal use, including potential interactions with modern medicines, potential side effects, and the need for simple laboratory tests to ensure product quality. This standardization makes herbal management practices more academically and medically accountable.
5) Change of Mindset
   Erawadee's herbalists and staff , from traditional practices to modern, science-based practices. They have begun to realize that herbal medicine is not only a part of tradition but can also be integrated into a globally recognized preventive and curative healthcare system.

Erawadee's herbalists and staff have gained not only technical skills but also a strong scientific foundation to support their activities. This is crucial for improving service quality, public trust, and the sustainability of herbal-based businesses in the modern era.

b. The formation of internal training modules as practice guides.

One of the strategic achievements of this PKM activity was the development of an internal training module that serves as a practical guide to herbal management based on scientific standards. This module not only contains theory but also includes systematic technical steps that are easy to follow for both herbalists and Erawadee staff . The module content covers several important aspects, including:

1) Raw Material Selection Standards – provides guidance on the criteria for quality herbal ingredients, how to identify good ingredients, and simple inspection methods to ensure ingredients are free from contaminants.
2) Herbal Processing Process – explains the correct processing stages from cleaning, drying, grinding, to storage, with an emphasis on the importance of maintaining cleanliness and hygiene .
3) Storage and Packaging – provides instructions for storing herbs to maintain the active ingredient content, including recommendations for appropriate container types, temperature and humidity conditions.
4) Dosage and Safety Regulations – contains guidelines regarding standard dosages, consumption limits, and potential side effects that must be considered.
5) Recording and Documentation – provides a simple format for recording processing results, material stock, and usage records as a form of accountability and quality control.

This module provides herbal practitioners with a structured, written reference source, making it easier to apply the knowledge gained from the training. Furthermore, this module supports the program's sustainability by allowing it to be used to train the next generation without having to start the process from scratch.

c. Increasing awareness about herbal-based preventive health.

One significant outcome of this program was a shift in participants' mindsets regarding herbal medicine, from a more traditional and intuitive perspective to a more systematic and preventative approach. Through the training materials, participants were encouraged to understand that herbs are not only used after an illness has appeared, but can also be used as a preventative measure to maintain bodily balance, increase endurance, and minimize the risk of degenerative diseases. This awareness was reinforced by explanations of the scientific evidence for a number of academically

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researched herbal plants, further strengthening participants' confidence in their effectiveness. For example, herbs that function as antioxidants, immunomodulators, and adaptogens were explained along with their scientific mechanisms, allowing them to understand them not simply as "traditional herbs" but as an integral part of a healthy lifestyle. In addition, participants are trained to recognize the importance of a holistic lifestyle that combines herbal use with a healthy diet, regular physical activity, and stress management. Thus, the program not only enhances technical knowledge but also builds comprehensive awareness of herbal-based preventive health practices relevant to modern health challenges.

Thus, the PKM program not only enhances the technical skills of herbalists at Erawadee but also establishes a new paradigm regarding the importance of collaboration between local wisdom and modern science. The result is a more professional, safe, and sustainable herbal management system.

2. Lack of Financial Literacy and Financial Management in the Erawadee Environment

One of the main obstacles facing Erawadee is the staff's weak ability to manage the business's financial aspects, particularly regarding transaction recording, budgeting, and long-term financial planning. This lack of understanding of basic financial management results in a lack of systematic recording of income and expenses. Consequently, financial transparency is lacking and the herbal business's potential profits are not maximized.

Another problem faced is the staff's weak ability to manage business finances, budget planning, and systematically record transactions. As a result, the herbal business's profit potential is not being maximized.

3. Real Impact on Partners (Erawadee)

In addition to solving the main problems that have been formulated, this PKM program also provides real impacts that are directly felt by partners, namely as follows:

1) Human Resource Capacity Building in Herbal Medicine and Financial Management: Erawadee staff now not only have a better understanding of the scientific and preventative uses of herbs but also have acquired new skills in business financial management. This strengthens their ability to manage their business units more independently, professionally, and sustainably.
2) Creating a Culture of Documentation and Transparency
   By cultivating the habit of systematically recording financial transactions, Erawadee has begun to build a documentation culture that previously lacked optimal performance. Financial reports and herbal business development are now more organized, facilitating evaluation and decision-making, and enhancing the institution's accountability.
3) Strengthening Erawadee's Position as a Center for Modern Herbal-Based Healthcare Services
   With increased human resource capacity, more transparent financial management, and the development of herbal products with a scientific approach, Erawadee's position as a center for herbal-based healthcare services has been strengthened. Erawadee is no longer known solely as a center for traditional medicine, but is beginning to be recognized as an institution that combines local wisdom with modern management and a science-based approach.

Thus, the results of this program demonstrate that the problems of low understanding of scientific herbal management and weak financial management can be addressed through educational approaches, training, and mentoring. Furthermore, the program's success also opens up opportunities for sustainable herbal business development in Erawadee with the support of sound financial governance.

4. CONCLUSION

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The Community Service Program (PKM) implemented at Erawadee Company, Thailand, demonstrated a positive contribution to improving the financial management capacity of the business owners and staff involved. Evaluation results, conducted through pre- and post-tests, indicated an increase in participants' understanding of financial transaction recording, cost control, business budgeting, and informed financial decision-making. This improvement reflects the participatory and applied training and mentoring approach, which improved financial literacy and practical skills in managing business finances in a more structured manner.

In addition to individual improvements, this PKM activity also contributed to strengthening financial governance at the Erawadee Company institutional level. Participants began implementing simple financial record-keeping practices, developing cash books and business budgets, and understanding the importance of transparency and accountability in financial management. These skills serve as a crucial foundation for Erawadee to improve operational efficiency, support more rational managerial decision-making, and strengthen the business's financial independence amidst the increasingly competitive and dynamic herbal industry.

5. THANK-YOU NOTE

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Finally, the author hope results and experience from this PKM activity can give benefit sustainable for Erawadee as well as become inspiration for implementation of community service programs similar in the future .

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