

# SREGIP - Zaenab's Story: From Local Vendor to "Princess Rinjani"

## Passing Knowledge and Creating Best Practices

Zaenab stands on the footstep of a big, white house in the village of Bilebante. On a big poster above the front door it says Putri Rinjani. "Welcome to my house", she says with a warm smile while inviting us to enter the building. We are in Dusun Tapon Timur, a small village 15 kilometers east of Mataram. Putri Rinjani is a cooperative for SME holders who produce *Oleh-oleh* - "local snacks which we bring home to our friends and families as souvenirs," Zaenab explains.

She has been producing her own *Oleh-oleh* for four years before she started the cooperative. "I wanted to bring us *Oleh-oleh* producers together, so that we can learn from each other and empower each other," she says. Since the start in 2011, the cooperative has been growing constantly. "We needed more space, so I decided to expand our house," she continues. Today the house serves as training center, *Oleh-oleh* factory and as home for herself, her daughter and her husband, Ahmad.



The cooperative is going well. Putri Rinjani counts a total of 300 members, who are spread all over Central Lombok. SREGIP is a strong supporter of the initiative. "They showed us how to run a good business and they made connections to important people in Lombok," Zaenab describes the cooperation, "Thanks to SREGIP we are selling our products in local supermarkets and hotels now." Whenever she has the time, she drives around and searched for new markets and hotels that might be interested in selling her products.

Throughout the years, Zaenab has gained lots of experience, which enable her to hold her own training sessions: "I invite other SME holders and teach them what I have learned and I encourage them to join local cooperatives." Just before we arrived, a group of *Oleh-oleh* producers from Sumatra had left. The small lady has gained quite some popularity among Indonesian *Oleh-oleh* sellers, so that people are now reaching out for her requesting trainings and advisory services.





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Besides the official trainings Zaenab puts a lot of time and effort in getting especially the women in her neighborhood engaged in her activities or in starting their own businesses.

"The spicy tortilla chips are our best sellers," the business lady explains proudly. Besides that she produces other crackers, salted duck eggs, and the spicy chili paste Sambal. No preservatives, no MSG, only local ingredients – that are the rules the snack makers follow and which distinguish their *Oleh-oleh* from numerous other similar products in Lombok. "We are committed to highest quality," Zaenab explains her business' principles.

That is also the origin of the cooperative's name. Putri Rinjani means Princess Rinjani. "She is the princess," Zaenab's husband Ahmad tells us proudly. Rinjani is the highest mountain in Lombok and one of the highest in Indonesia. "The name indicates that the quality of our products is also better than most of the others," Zaenab adds.

Zaenab enjoys what she is doing: "The best about my job is that I can serve others. I can create jobs here and I can share my experience with other people." Her family supports her strongly. Especially her husband is of great help as an advisor on business matters and financial aspects. "She is a crazy woman. She always comes up with new ideas and she can never sit still," her husband Ahmad explains. Zaenab laughs: "Leading the cooperative and my own factory is a lot of work, but I am very blessed, because I can spend my work time with my family." Her story is an inspiring example that even small businesses can compete in the fast-moving tourism industry if they rely on the close cooperation of the community.



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