

From Local Tradition to Student Start-Up: Innovating Tabba-Tabba Dessert through the WMK Program

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Abstract. This paper presents our collective experience in transforming Tabba-tabba, a traditional Bugis snack made from bananas and eggs, into a student start-up dessert business called Dessert Mood Lift through the 2024 Wirausaha Merdeka (WMK) Program. WMK is a government-supported initiative promoting student entrepreneurship through industry immersion and mentorship with local enterprises. We innovated Tabba-tabba into a healthier dessert box without added sugar, emphasizing locally sourced ingredients. Using a qualitative descriptive and reflective approach, we describe three program phases: pre-immersion workshops on business fundamentals, immersion mentoring at PT. Lontara Jaya Nusantara to observe SME practices, and post-immersion bootcamps to refine our business model and prototype. Collaboration with mentors and suppliers enhanced our pricing, packaging, and marketing strategies, strengthening our value proposition. On Demo Day, we sold twenty-three boxes and received positive feedback, validating its market potential. This experiential process demonstrates how cultural heritage and modern innovation can shape viable student-led ventures

Keywords: Collaborative Entrepreneurship, Dessert Moodlift, Local Culinary Innovation, *Tabba-tabba*, WMK Program.