

EMPOWERING INDONESIAN MIGRANT WORKERS IN MALAYSIA: ENHANCING ENTREPRENEURIAL INTEREST THROUGH COMMUNITY-BASED DEVELOPMENT

Daru ASIH^{1*}, Nurul Komara FAJRIN², Dony Ari NUGROHO³, Salsadila Sandra TANZELA⁴, Ardhita Eka PRATIWI⁵, Anees Jancee ALI⁶

^{1,2,3,4,5}*Universitas Mercu Buana, Jakarta, INDONESIA*

⁶*Universiti Sains Malaysia, MALAYSIA*

^{*}*daru_asih@mercubuana.ac.id*

ABSTRACT

This community service initiative aims to empower former Indonesian migrant workers (TKI) in Malaysia by fostering entrepreneurial interest and self-sufficiency through structured community-based development. The program was conducted through a three-phase approach: preparation, implementation, and evaluation. Activities included training modules on entrepreneurship, hands-on practice, and continuous mentoring tailored to the participants' backgrounds and needs. A total of 33 micro-business actors participated in the program, engaging in interactive sessions designed to build entrepreneurial skills and confidence. The results indicate that participants developed a more proactive entrepreneurial mindset and were able to relate their overseas work experience as social capital for future ventures. Furthermore, the program facilitated knowledge transfer, built a core group for community outreach, and encouraged sustainable business growth. To enhance long-term impact, further training is recommended in areas such as digital marketing, financial management, and product development. This initiative demonstrates that targeted empowerment programs can significantly contribute to the economic reintegration of migrant workers in their communities.

Keywords: Community Empowerment, Indonesian Migrant Workers, Entrepreneurship

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is currently ranked as the fourth most populous country in the world, according to the World Population Review (2024). However, this large population is not matched by the availability of job opportunities, resulting in widespread poverty. Based on the World Economic Outlook (2024), 5.2% of Indonesia's 279.96 million residents are unemployed. Consequently, many Indonesians choose to migrate abroad in pursuit of better economic prospects and to improve their family's welfare. The term *Pekerja Migran Indonesia* (PMI) was formally adopted following the enactment of Law Number 18 of 2017 on the protection of Indonesian migrant workers, aligning national policy with the ILO Migrant Workers Convention (BNP2TKI, 2019). This change in terminology also aimed to counteract the negative perceptions commonly held by the public, as migrant workers were often associated with tragic and unfavorable experiences in the past.

Labor migration from Indonesia to other countries dates back to the period before Indonesia's independence. It was initiated by the Dutch East Indies government through the placement of contract workers in Suriname, South America, which was also a Dutch colony at the time. Beginning in 1890, the Dutch government started sending large numbers of contract laborers (known as "coolies") from Java, as well as from Madura, Sunda, and Batak regions, to work on plantations in Suriname. This initiative aimed to replace the labor of African slaves who had been emancipated on July 1, 1863, as part of the abolition of slavery. Following their emancipation, former slaves were free to choose their occupations, leading to labor shortages on the plantations. This shortage severely impacted Suriname's plantation-based economy. The Dutch selected migrant workers from Java due to the region's economic hardship, which was exacerbated by the eruption of Mount Merapi and high population density. The first wave of workers departed from Batavia (now Jakarta) on May 21, 1890, aboard the SS Koningin Emma, and arrived in Suriname on August 9, 1890, after a stop in the Netherlands. This initial group consisted of 94 individuals: 61 adult men, 31 women, and 2 children. Between 1890 and 1939, a total of 32,986 migrant workers were sent to Suriname on 77 ships (BPPMI, 2024).

The establishment of the National Agency for the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Workers (BNP2PMI) marked a significant milestone in labor migration governance. In 2004, Law Number 39 concerning the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Workers Abroad was enacted. Article 94, paragraphs (1) and (2), of

this law mandated the formation of BNP2PMI. This was followed by Presidential Regulation (Perpres) Number 81 of 2006, which formalized the agency's establishment and outlined its operational structure, involving various central government agencies relevant to migrant worker services. These include the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, National Police, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Health, Immigration Office, State Secretariat, and others.

In the same year, the government initiated the Government-to-Government (G to G) placement program for Indonesian migrant workers in South Korea, implemented through the Directorate of Placement and Protection of Overseas Workers (PPTKLN) under the Directorate General of PPTKLN at the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration. In 2007, Moh Jumhur Hidayat was appointed Head of BNP2PMI through Presidential Decree Number 02 of 2007, making the agency directly accountable to the President. Following his appointment, Regulation Number 01 of 2007 was issued concerning BNP2PMI's organizational structure, which integrated related central government elements. These developments were based on Presidential Instruction (Inpres) Number 6 of 2006 regarding the policy to reform the placement and protection system for Indonesian migrant workers.

With the establishment of BNP2PMI, all matters related to the placement and protection of Indonesian migrant workers (PMI) became the agency's responsibility. While coordinated by the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, BNP2PMI operated under the direct authority of the President. Consequently, the Directorate General of PPTKLN and its supporting directorates were dissolved, with their functions fully transferred to BNP2PMI. The Government-to-Government (G to G) placement program for PMI in South Korea was continued under BNP2PMI's oversight and later expanded to include collaboration with the Japanese government in 2008 for the placement of PMI nurses in hospitals and elderly care facilities.

In 2017, Law Number 18 on the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers was enacted, followed by Presidential Regulation Number 90 of 2019, which formally transformed BNP2PMI into the Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Agency (BP2MI). As an institution, BP2MI is mandated to implement integrated policies and services for the protection of Indonesian migrant workers. In its new mandate, BP2MI emphasizes the eradication of non-procedural PMI syndicates as a central theme. Its strategic objectives include enhancing the protection and welfare of PMI and their families, and promoting good governance. The ultimate goal is to ensure the placement of skilled and professional migrant workers who contribute as national assets, while fostering institutional governance that is efficient, effective, and accountable.

2. METHOD

To address the challenges faced by the partner community, as previously outlined, this community service program proposes several strategic approaches to help resolve the identified issues. These approaches include training and mentoring activities aimed at empowering Indonesian migrant workers by enhancing their entrepreneurial interest and skills. The implementation of the program is structured into three phases: Preparation, Implementation, and Monitoring. The details of each phase are described below:

1. Preparation Phase

The preparation phase takes place prior to the implementation of activities and will be communicated to the partner group. This phase includes the following components:

- a. **Development of Training and Outreach Program**
This component involves designing a detailed work plan to guide both training and outreach activities. It includes technical, managerial, and scheduling aspects.
- b. **Development of Training Modules**
The training modules will cover management techniques, continuous mentoring, and operational handling. They are designed to support skill development and foster entrepreneurial understanding.
- c. **Preparation of Training Infrastructure and Facilities**
This involves organizing the necessary infrastructure and facilities to support the training and outreach programs, including the provision of appropriate venues.
- d. **Field Coordination**
Field coordination will be conducted by the implementation team to ensure the smooth execution of activities throughout the program.

e. **Program Socialization**

Socialization will be conducted at the activity location, with a focus on fostering community understanding and alignment with the program's objectives. Two sessions will be held to ensure a shared vision and mutual agreement between the implementing team and the partner community.

2. **Implementation Phase**

The second phase focuses on the execution of training and outreach activities. It includes the following components:

- **Stage 1:** Mapping and collecting baseline data on partner conditions.
- **Stage 2:** Conducting discussions with partners to prepare for implementation, determine timelines, identify involved members, and finalize service topics.
- **Stage 3:** Providing training and empowering workers with a differentiated learning approach focused on productivity improvement.
- **Stage 4:** Assisting in the implementation of the differentiated learning model to ensure its effectiveness.
- **Stage 5:** Monitoring and evaluating all partner activities to assess progress.
- **Stage 6:** Conducting follow-up actions to sustain and improve program outcomes.

3. **Entrepreneurship Socialization**

The second socialization session will provide a more in-depth discussion of the goals and benefits of entrepreneurship. This session aims to shift participants' mindsets by introducing and explaining the training materials. Training modules will be distributed, and the session will be attended by Dr. Anees Jane Ali, representatives from the Community Service Team of Universitas Mercu Buana, and participating migrant workers (PMI).

a. **Entrepreneurship Project Training**

This training serves as a continuation of the socialization session, enabling participants to apply the theories they have learned in practical settings. Hands-on training will be conducted by qualified instructors, and participants will be directly involved in entrepreneurial exercises. The objective is to ensure that participants comprehend and master the materials, both individually and collaboratively. This cohort will form the core group for future outreach and training efforts within their community.

b. **Evaluation Phase**

The final phase focuses on monitoring and evaluating the program's implementation. The implementation team will conduct ongoing monitoring to ensure that all activities align with the intended objectives. Evaluation will occur concurrently with monitoring, allowing for real-time problem-solving when challenges arise. Each stage of the program will include evaluations based on predefined criteria, performance indicators, and benchmarks to assess the effectiveness and outcomes of the activities.

3. **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Results

The community service activity was conducted on April 27, 2025, in Penang, Malaysia, with 33 participants consisting of micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) actors. The activity employed a presentation method, with materials delivered by lecturers from the Faculty of Economics and Business, Management Study Program, Universitas Mercu Buana. Each speaker presented content aligned with their respective themes. PPT materials available [here](#).

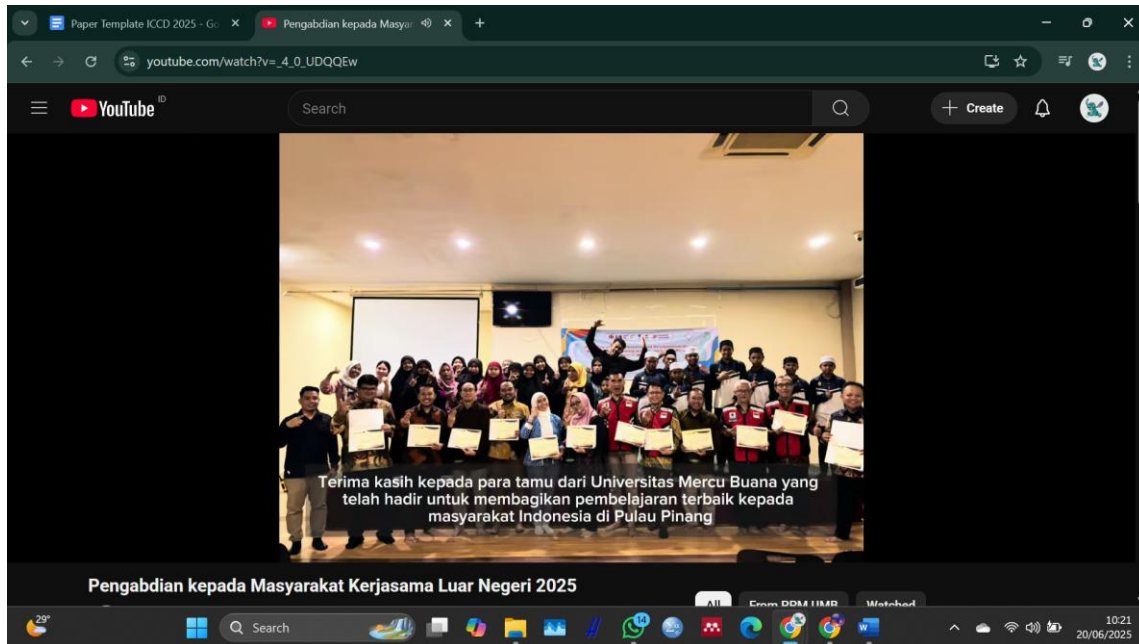
Following the presentations, a question-and-answer session and interactive discussion were held, actively engaging the participants. This interaction was crucial for fostering a professional mindset within the community and enhancing their understanding of the importance of mentoring in ensuring business sustainability. The team also observed that participants had diverse educational backgrounds; therefore, the material was delivered using simplified language to enhance comprehension. Efforts were also made to create a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, enabling participants to feel comfortable and more receptive to the information provided.

The outputs of this community service initiative include video documentation uploaded to YouTube and coverage in various online media platforms. Additionally, the results will be presented at an international community service seminar organized annually by the ICCD. The outcomes will also be published in a community service journal and registered under Intellectual Property Rights (HAKI).

Activities Documentation, 2025



Implementation Video Highlights channel Youtube PPM:



Source: https://youtu.be/_4_0_UDQQEw?si=CbPjfU0vEtGeAzfR

Mass Media Publications:



Source: <https://infobanua.co.id/2025/04/27/universitas-mercu-buana-jakarta-gelar-program-pengabdian-kepada-masyarakat-di-pulau-pinang-malaysia/>



Source: https://mediaindonesia.com/humaniora/774422/universitas-mercubuana-gelar-program-pemberdayaan-pekerja-migran-indonesia-di-malaysia#google_vignette

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusions

This community service activity has successfully had a positive impact on former Indonesian Migrant Workers (TKI) by fostering an entrepreneurial mindset and spirit. Through the training and mentoring provided, participants have begun to understand the importance of developing an independent, creative, and resilient entrepreneurial mentality. They were not only equipped with knowledge on how to start and manage a business but were also encouraged to explore their potential and leverage their overseas work experience as social capital and valuable skills. The results of this program indicate that former TKI have significant potential to contribute to local economic development when provided with appropriate guidance. Therefore, the program should be continued through further training, improved access to capital, and strengthened business networks to ensure the sustainable growth of the businesses they have initiated.

Recommendation

Furthermore, more in-depth training is required, not only limited to the fundamentals of entrepreneurship but also encompassing marketing strategies, financial management, business digitalization, and product development, so that former migrant workers can compete in broader markets.

5. REFERENCES

- Barid, V. B., Kridasakti, S. W., & Wahyuni, P. M. (2022). Legal literacy strengthening for Indonesian migrant worker: Self-help ability to survive the life. *Fiat Justisia: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum*, 16(3), 205–222.
- BNP2TKI Akan Berubah Menjadi Badan Pelindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia. (2019). Kementerian Pelindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia/Badan Pelindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia. <https://bp2mi.go.id/berita-detail/bnp2tki-akan-berubah-menjadi-badan-pelindungan-pekerja-migran-indonesia>
- Farbenblum, B., Nicholson, E. T., & PS, E. (2015). *Akses buruh migran terhadap keadilan di negara asal: Studi kasus Indonesia* (hlm. 49).
- Gambaran Singkat Pembentukan PPID. (2024.). Badan Perlindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia. <https://ppid.bp2mi.go.id/static/profil-sejarah/>
- Gusmiarti, I. (2024, 11 Agustus). *10 besar jenis pekerjaan pekerja migran Indonesia 2023*. GoodStats Data. <https://data.goodstats.id/statistic/10-besar-jenis-pekerjaan-pekerja-migran-indonesia-2023-7X8nN>

- Hartanto, D., Hamid, E. S., & Supraja, M. (2022). Peran UPT-BP2MI DIY dalam pemberdayaan pekerja migran Indonesia purna dan implikasinya terhadap ketahanan ekonomi keluarga. *Jurnal Ketahanan Nasional*, 28(1), 38–50.
- International Monetary Fund. (2024). *Unemployment rate percent*. International Monetary Fund. <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/LUR@WEO/VNM/THA/SGP/PHL/MYS/IDN>
- Kementerian Pelindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia/Badan Pelindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia. (2019, 5 November). *BNP2TKI akan berubah menjadi Badan Pelindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia*. BP2MI. <https://bp2mi.go.id/berita-detail/bnp2tki-akan-berubah-menjadi-badan-pelindungan-pekerja-migran-indonesia>
- Kementerian Pelindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia/Badan Pelindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia. *Profil – Sejarah BP2MI*. Pejabat Pengelola Informasi dan Dokumentasi BP2MI. <https://ppid.bp2mi.go.id/static/profil-sejarah/>
- Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi (LLDIKTI Wilayah XIII). (2024, 31 Oktober). *Sekilas pemahaman indikator kinerja utama perguruan tinggi dalam peningkatan kinerja akademik*. LLDIKTI Wilayah XIII. <https://lldikti13.kemdikbud.go.id/2024/10/31/sekilas-pemahaman-indikator-kinerja-utama-perguruan-tinggi-dalam-peningkatan-kinerja-akademik/>
- Mediana, E. N., Sundari, S., Haetami, H., & Purwanto, S. A. (2023). Upaya pembinaan purna pekerja migran Indonesia untuk mendukung ekonomi pertahanan. *Journal of Innovation Research and Knowledge*, 2(9), 3737–3744
- Sukaris, S., Alkusani, A., Komara, B. D., Kirono, I., Baskoro, H., & Ernawati, E. (2022). PKM sosialisasi berwirausaha berbasis efektivitas pada pekerja migran Indonesia persiapan pasca PMI di Taiwan. *DedikasiMU: Journal of Community Service*, 4(3), 315–323
- Tanan, A. (2021). Entrepreneurship: Menuju PMI mandiri secara ekonomi. *Prosiding FK UC*, 1(1).
- Wulandari, E. R., Handayani, E., Indrasari, M., Wulandari, A. A., & Pamuji, E. (2023). Penguatan paradigma kewirausahaan bagi purna pekerja migran Indonesia di wilayah Jawa Timur dan Nusa Tenggara Barat. *Prapanca: Jurnal Abdimas*, 3(1), 34–42.
- World Population Review. (2024). *Indonesia Population 2024 (Live)*. World Population Review. <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/indonesia-population>