

Legal Awareness Campaign on Family Rights and Responsibilities for Indonesian Migrant Workers

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ABSTRACT This community service initiative aimed to empower Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) by providing legal education on family-building during a hybrid program spanning one semester. Collaborating with the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, PPI UPSI Malaysia, and 115 universities, the program incorporated workshops, webinars, and counseling sessions conducted by legal experts. Results indicate active participation from over 190 PMI, leading to increased awareness of legal rights and responsibilities in the context of family-building. Insights gained encompassed the significance of pre-departure legal counseling and the implications of decisions on family dynamics. The initiative not only addressed challenges such as limited access to legal information and cultural differences but also facilitated networking, fostering a supportive PMI community. The discussions delved into the vulnerability of PMI in a foreign country, emphasizing informed decision-making in crucial aspects of life. The success of the program underscores the potential for similar initiatives to empower migrant workers and calls for continued efforts, collaboration, and adaptation to evolving needs.

Keywords: Indonesian Migrant Workers, legal education, family-building, hybrid program, empowerment.

1. INTRODUCTION

The increasing global phenomenon of labor migration has become a defining aspect of the contemporary workforce, with millions of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) seeking employment opportunities beyond their homeland. The allure of better economic prospects both for the host and home countries has led to a substantial surge in the migration of labor. However, amidst the economic contributions, these migrant workers encounter a myriad of challenges, particularly in upholding their rights and responsibilities within the complex context of family life. This initiative, a collaborative effort between non-governmental organization LSM SHARING, the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, the Indonesian Student Association at Sultan Idris Education University (PPI UPSI) in Malaysia, and 115 universities across Indonesia and Malaysia, addresses the crucial

need for legal education among PMI. It places a specific emphasis on enlightening them about their roles as spouses in the formation and sustenance of an Islamic family.

The decision to migrate for employment opportunities brings forth a multitude of socio-cultural, economic, and legal challenges for Indonesian Migrant Workers. Often separated from their families for prolonged periods, PMI grapple with the complexities of assimilating into foreign societies while preserving their cultural and familial ties. The challenges further intensify when it comes to understanding and navigating legal intricacies related to marriage, family planning, and financial responsibilities. In many instances, a lack of awareness leaves PMI vulnerable to exploitation, misunderstandings, and legal complications. Moreover, the uniqueness of the Islamic family structure necessitates a tailored approach to legal education, acknowledging the specific cultural and religious considerations of PMI.

The primary objective are: (1) to equip PMI with comprehensive knowledge of their legal rights and responsibilities, especially within the context of family life, this encompasses understanding the legal implications of decisions related to marriage, family planning, and financial matters; (2) Fostering Cultural Sensitivity: Recognizing the diverse cultural backgrounds of PMI, the initiative seeks to foster cultural sensitivity and competence, aiding in the integration process and promoting harmonious family relations; (3) empowering spouses by focusing on the role of PMI as spouses, the initiative aims to empower them in making informed decisions that contribute to the establishment and maintenance of strong Islamic families; (4) facilitating networking opportunities among PMI, the initiative aims to create a supportive community that can share experiences, insights, and guidance, fostering a sense of belonging and resilience; (5) beyond immediate awareness, the initiative aspires to create a lasting impact by influencing policies related to the protection and well-being of PMI, both at the national and international levels.

In summary, the initiative responds to the evolving challenges faced by PMI in foreign lands by providing targeted legal education. By concentrating on their roles within the family structure, it aims to empower them to navigate the complexities of marriage and family life in a foreign context, contributing to their overall well-being and societal integration.

2. METHOD

The methodology employed for this community service program was meticulously designed to create a comprehensive and impactful learning experience for Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI). The initiative embraced a hybrid approach, seamlessly blending online and offline activities throughout the course of one semester.

1. Hybrid Approach:

The decision to adopt a hybrid approach was driven by the need to cater to the diverse circumstances and locations of PMI. Recognizing the limitations imposed by geographical distances and varying schedules, the program aimed to provide flexibility through a mix of online and offline activities. This approach ensured that a broader spectrum of PMI could actively participate and benefit from the initiative.

2. Diverse Learning Platforms:

The initiative employed a diverse range of learning platforms to cater to different learning styles and preferences. Workshops, conducted by legal experts and scholars, offered an interactive environment for in-depth discussions. Webinars served as a dynamic medium to disseminate information, featuring presentations, panel discussions, and Q&A sessions. One-on-one counseling sessions provided personalized support for PMI to address specific concerns.

3. Collaborative Efforts:

The success of the program was rooted in collaborative efforts with key stakeholders. The Indonesian Embassy played a pivotal role in facilitating the initiative, providing logistical support and a platform for direct engagement with PMI. Collaboration with PPI UPSI and 115 universities across Indonesia and Malaysia ensured a far-reaching impact, tapping into the extensive networks of educational institutions.

4. Workshops and Webinars:

Workshops were designed to delve into legal intricacies concerning marriage, family planning, and financial responsibilities. Legal experts and scholars, well-versed in both Indonesian and Malaysian legal systems, shared their expertise, fostering a deep understanding among PMI. Webinars, accessible to a wider audience, covered broader topics and facilitated cross-cultural discussions.

5. One-on-One Counseling Sessions:

Recognizing the personal and sensitive nature of legal matters, one-on-one counseling sessions provided a platform for PMI to address specific concerns confidentially. Legal experts and counselors offered personalized guidance, ensuring that participants could navigate their individual challenges effectively.

6. Pre-and Post-Assessments:

To gauge the effectiveness of the program, pre-and post-assessments were conducted. These assessments aimed to measure the participants' knowledge levels before and after the initiative, providing valuable insights into the impact of the program on their understanding of legal rights and responsibilities. The data collected allowed for continuous refinement of the program's content and delivery.

7. Feedback Mechanism:

A robust feedback mechanism was incorporated to gather insights from participants. Regular surveys, focus group discussions, and feedback forms were used to understand the strengths and areas for improvement, ensuring that the program remained responsive to the evolving needs of PMI. In essence, the comprehensive methodology of this community service program not only embraced the challenges posed by the diverse circumstances of PMI but also leveraged collaborative efforts and varied learning platforms to create a holistic and impactful educational experience. The inclusion of assessments and feedback mechanisms ensured the continuous improvement and adaptability of the program.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The discourse surrounding the community service program for Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) is rooted in a rich body of scholarly literature, offering insights into the challenges of international migration, gender dynamics, and the imperative role of effective policies. The program's success in engaging 190 PMI and over 300 participants underscores its pertinence within the broader global context of labor migration.

In the realm of migration literature, DeHaas (2010) underscores the necessity of understanding migration dynamics and development, emphasizing the rights and information needs of migrant populations. The alignment of the program's legal counseling with recommendations from the International Organization for Migration Baruah and Cholewinski (2006) reflects a commitment to a rights-based approach, advocating for policies that safeguard the rights of labor migrants.

Cultural disparities, a well-recognized facet of migration experiences, find resonance in Gilmartin and Migge (2016) work on the geographies of belonging. The program's emphasis on fostering cultural sensitivity aligns with argument, aspiring to create an inclusive environment where diverse cultural backgrounds coexist harmoniously within the PMI community.

Addressing the vulnerability of PMI, as echoed in broader migration discourse, aligns with recommendations from the Handbook on Establishing Effective Labour Migration Policies (Baruah & Cholewinski, 2006). The program's focus on pre-departure legal counseling aligns with the imperative of equipping PMI with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate challenges in host countries.

Empowerment through informed decision-making, a recurring theme in migration literature, is highlighted by Suárez-Orozco and Qin (2006). The program's success in enhancing the confidence of PMI resonates with this perspective, contributing to the broader empowerment of migrant individuals within the intricate context of their family lives.

Creating networking opportunities for PMI, in line with recommendations from the International Labour Organization (International Labour Organisation, 2006) and the World Migration Report (McAuliffe & Ruhs, 2017), reflects an understanding of the pivotal role of community support in the well-being and resilience of migrant populations. The program's achievement in establishing a supportive community for PMI reinforces the positive impact of such initiatives on social integration.



Figure 1. Community Service Activities



Figure 2. Flyer of Community Service Activities

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the community service initiative for Indonesian Migrant Workers has not only addressed immediate challenges but also resonates with established academic literature on migration. The program's success in enhancing legal awareness, cultural sensitivity, and empowerment aligns with the broader recommendations provided by scholars and international organizations.

To further amplify the impact of such initiatives, it is crucial to continue drawing from scholarly insights. Future programs can benefit from incorporating more in-depth research on the specific legal challenges faced by PMI in different host countries. Insights from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2009) and the ILO (2006) stress the importance of adapting migration policies to the specific needs of migrant populations. Tailoring programs based on nuanced understanding will contribute to more effective outcomes.

Additionally, continuous collaboration with international organizations, governments, and NGOs remains paramount. The references provided emphasize the significance of multilateral frameworks and collaborative efforts in shaping policies that protect the rights of migrant workers. By aligning initiatives with these broader frameworks, the community service program can contribute to systemic changes that positively impact the lives of PMI.

Strengthening partnerships with academic institutions can further enhance the research-based approach of future initiatives. The Age of Migration (DeHaas et al., 2014) provides a comprehensive overview of international migration trends, offering valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of global migration. Incorporating such research perspectives will not only enrich the content of the programs but also contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by PMI.

In essence, the success of the community service program serves as a testament to the potential impact of grassroots initiatives. By continuously integrating scholarly insights and expanding collaborative networks, future endeavours can contribute to a more informed, empowered, and resilient community of Indonesian Migrant Workers globally.

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