

Empowering Indonesian Migrant Workers: Initial Steps in Building Post-Employment Ventures

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ABSTRACT This collaborative community engagement initiative aimed at addressing the challenges faced by Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) and empowering them with the knowledge and skills required to establish businesses upon their return to Indonesia. The program, conducted over one semester from October to December 2023 in Kuala Lumpur, involves a partnership between the NGO SHARING, the Indonesian Embassy, the Indonesian Student Association at Sultan Idris University (PPI UPSI) in Malaysia, and 115 universities in Indonesia and Malaysia. Following an academic structure, this article covers the background, methodology, results and discussion, conclusions and recommendations, and references. The program's methodology encompasses a needs assessment, curriculum development, hybrid learning, expert facilitation, mentoring, continuous evaluation, and stakeholder collaboration. Preliminary results indicate a significant enhancement in participants' entrepreneurial knowledge and skills, highlighting the program's effectiveness. The mentoring component, in particular, has received positive feedback, emphasizing the value of personalized guidance. Continuous evaluation and stakeholder collaboration ensure the program's adaptability and relevance, addressing the evolving needs of PMIs. The implications of the program for socio-economic reintegration are discussed, emphasizing the positive outcomes observed and potential areas for future research. Overall, this initiative represents a holistic approach to empowering PMIs, contributing to their resilience and success in post-employment ventures.

Keywords: *Indonesian Migrant Workers; Community Engagement; Post-Employment Ventures; Empowerment; Hybrid Program*

INTRODUCTION

The struggles encountered by PMIs during their employment abroad and the subsequent difficulties in reintegration upon return have been well-documented in the literature. Previous studies, such as the work of Wijaya et al. (2020), emphasize the significance of post-employment support for PMIs, noting the challenges they face in reintegrating into society due to a lack of comprehensive assistance. Setiawan's research (2019) reinforces the need for skill development and

entrepreneurial education for returning PMIs, indicating that such initiatives can contribute significantly to their sustainable socio-economic reintegration.

In addition to the academic discourse, the community engagement program draws inspiration from the positive outcomes observed in community-based initiatives for migrant workers. The study conducted by Smith and Brown (2018) demonstrates that such programs can significantly enhance the well-being and resilience of migrant communities. These insights from the literature underscore the necessity of tailored interventions to address the specific challenges faced by PMIs and pave the way for their successful reintegration into society.

The primary goal of this collaborative initiative is to equip PMIs, particularly those confronting challenges, with the knowledge and skills essential for establishing businesses upon their return to Indonesia. By offering a hybrid program, combining virtual and face-to-face interactions, the initiative seeks to maximize participation and effectiveness. Workshops covering entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and business planning, alongside mentoring sessions facilitated by experienced entrepreneurs, form the core components of the program.

The subsequent sections of this article will delve into the methodology employed in implementing the community engagement program, present the results and discussions based on the initiative's outcomes, draw conclusions, and provide recommendations for future endeavors.

2. METHOD

The community engagement program for Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) adopts a streamlined approach, blending online and offline elements for maximum impact. The methodology consists of needs assessment, curriculum development, hybrid learning, expert facilitation, mentoring, continuous evaluation, and stakeholder collaboration.

A preliminary needs assessment gauges the specific challenges and aspirations of PMIs, shaping a customized curriculum. Leveraging a hybrid learning platform, the program combines virtual workshops with in-person sessions at the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, providing flexibility and community engagement.

Expert facilitators, including educators and industry professionals, deliver tailored content, while one-on-one mentoring sessions offer personalized guidance. Continuous evaluation through feedback and assessments ensures adaptability, and active collaboration with stakeholders sustains a supportive network beyond the program. This concise methodology aims to empower PMIs with practical skills, fostering entrepreneurship and socio-economic resilience upon their return to Indonesia.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The community engagement program for Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) yielded promising results, indicating a positive impact on participants' knowledge, skills, and confidence in establishing post-employment ventures. This section discusses the outcomes across various program components and delves into the implications for the socio-economic reintegration of PMIs.

Pre-program surveys indicated a significant gap in entrepreneurial knowledge and financial literacy among PMIs. Post-program assessments revealed a substantial improvement in these areas, with participants demonstrating a deeper understanding of business planning, financial management, and practical entrepreneurial skills. The tailored curriculum and expert facilitation played pivotal roles in bridging these knowledge gaps, empowering PMIs with the tools needed for successful venture establishment.

The hybrid learning platform proved effective, accommodating diverse learning styles and geographical locations. Virtual workshops facilitated broader participation, while in-person sessions at the Indonesian Embassy provided a supportive environment for hands-on activities and networking opportunities. The combination of these approaches contributed to a well-rounded learning experience.

One of the program's highlights was the one-on-one mentoring sessions, where participants received personalized guidance from experienced mentors. These sessions not only enhanced participants' understanding of entrepreneurship but also provided practical insights tailored to individual circumstances. Mentees reported increased confidence in translating theoretical knowledge into actionable plans, underscoring the significance of mentorship in the entrepreneurial journey.

The program's continuous evaluation mechanism, including participant feedback, pre and post-program assessments, and participant observations, played a crucial role in refining and adapting the curriculum. Regular feedback loops allowed organizers to identify areas for improvement, leading to timely adjustments. This iterative process ensured that the program remained responsive to the evolving needs of PMIs, enhancing its relevance and effectiveness.

The adaptability of the program was particularly evident in addressing the unique challenges faced by PMIs, such as language barriers, cultural nuances, and varying levels of educational backgrounds. The hybrid model allowed for flexibility, enabling participants to engage with the content at their own pace while still benefitting from in-person interactions.

Active collaboration with stakeholders, including the Indonesian Embassy, SHARING, PPI UPSI, and supporting universities, proved instrumental in creating a supportive ecosystem for PMIs. The program leveraged existing networks and resources, enhancing its reach and impact.

Stakeholder engagement also facilitated access to additional resources, including information on legal considerations, market trends, and funding opportunities, augmenting the program's comprehensive approach.

The collaboration extended beyond the program's duration, with stakeholders expressing commitment to sustaining support networks for returning PMIs. This ongoing collaboration is vital for ensuring that the knowledge and skills acquired during the program translate into tangible outcomes, contributing to the long-term socio-economic reintegration of PMIs.

The positive outcomes observed in the program hold significant implications for the socio-economic reintegration of PMIs. Empowered with enhanced entrepreneurial knowledge and skills, participants are better positioned to establish and manage their businesses upon returning to Indonesia. The program's focus on practical, applicable skills equips PMIs with the tools necessary to navigate the challenges of entrepreneurship and contribute to their communities.

Moreover, the networking opportunities created through the program, both virtually and in-person, fostered a sense of community among PMIs. Building a supportive network is crucial for returning migrants, as it provides not only business-related guidance but also emotional and social support. This sense of community contributes to the overall well-being and resilience of PMIs during the reintegration process.



Figure 1. Documentation Activities

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the community engagement program has proven to be a valuable initiative in enhancing the knowledge, skills, and confidence of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) in building post-employment ventures. The program's success lies in its tailored curriculum, hybrid learning model, impactful mentoring sessions, continuous evaluation, and collaboration with stakeholders. These elements collectively contribute to the socio-economic reintegration of PMIs, addressing their unique challenges and fostering a sense of community and empowerment.

The positive outcomes observed in the program highlight the potential for similar initiatives to make a substantial impact on the lives of returning migrants. By providing practical tools, fostering supportive networks, and addressing specific challenges faced by PMIs, community engagement programs can contribute to the resilience and success of individuals seeking to establish businesses upon their return to Indonesia. As we move forward, the lessons learned from this program can inform the development of more inclusive and effective initiatives, ensuring that returning migrants are equipped with the skills and support needed for a successful reintegration journey.

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