

## STRENGTHENING EARLY LITERACY CULTURE IN EQUIPPING INDONESIAN MIGRANT WORKER (PMI) FAMILIES TO IMPROVE COMPETENCY

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**ABSTRACT** Increasing the competence of Indonesian Migrant Worker (PMI) families is a crucial factor in facing the challenges of globalization and labor market dynamics. This community service activity highlights the importance of strengthening literacy culture from an early age as an effective strategy in equipping families of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI). Through mentoring activities carried out in hibryd (online and on-site) at the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur. The online component is conducted through webinars, virtual workshops, and interactive discussions. The material presented included the delivery of understanding the concept of literacy, strategies for cultivating children's literacy from an early age, and the importance of literacy from an early age. The results of this community service show that a strong literacy culture in the family environment can improve cognitive abilities, communication skills, and technical understanding relevant to the field of work of each family member. In addition, strengthening literacy from an early age also contributes to shaping positive character and work ethic, which supports increased competitiveness in the international job market. The implications of these findings emphasize the need for government programs and community initiatives focused on developing family-based literacy, as well as providing adequate resources to support literacy education among families of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI). Thus, strengthening the culture of literacy from an early age is a strategic asset to create families of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) who are competent and adaptive to global changes.

**Keywords:** *Literacy, Competence, Work Ethic, Global*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Globalization and technological developments have changed the dynamics of job markets around the world. Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) play an important role in the national economy. Migration has become a global phenomenon, bringing with it both opportunities and challenges for individuals seeking better economic prospects. Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) are an important part of this global migration trend, with large numbers of them finding work in countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, and Saudi Arabia. However, of course the challenges faced by Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) are numerous, ranging from cultural adjustment, language mastery for communication, mastery of skills, and of course economic struggles. Recognizing the challenges of these difficulties, the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur has taken proactive steps to meet the needs of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) through community engagement programs that focus on improving their competency, economic, and skillful skills.

One effective approach to face the challenges of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) difficulties in achieving this goal is to strengthen the culture of literacy from an early age in the family. Cultural literacy includes the ability to read, write, and understand information, which is an important foundation in the development of individual skills. Strong literacy allows family members of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) to more easily access and utilize information relevant to their field of work, thus improving the necessary skills and knowledge. Literacy also plays a role in the development of communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills, all of which are indispensable in a dynamic and competitive work environment.

Although the importance of literacy has been widely recognized, many families of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) still face challenges in accessing adequate education and literacy resources. Factors such as limited time, cost, and lack of access to quality reading materials often hinder efforts to increase literacy among families of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI). Therefore, there is a need for a strategic approach that involves various parties, including governments, educational institutions, and communities, to provide the necessary support in building a strong literacy culture.

The challenges faced by PMI are multifaceted and require a nuanced understanding to be addressed effectively. Migration often involves leaving one's comfort zone and adapting to new cultural, social, and economic environments. The Global Slavery Index ranks Indonesia as the top 10 countries with a large number of citizens in a situation of modern slavery (Susilo, 2020) including Indonesian Migrant Workers in case of wanting to be repatriated (Pusat Data dan Informasi Badan Pelindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia (BP2MI), 2023). In addition, many of these undocumented migrant workers fall into the category of those who do not have official documents, have documents that have expired (overstay), have documents that are not in accordance with the provisions of

migrant workers or use false documents as attachments to migrant workers' documents that do not match the identity of the document holder (Wahyudi et al., 2023);(Sefriani, 2013).

Community service programs play an important role in empowering Indonesian migrant workers (PMI). In the realm of cultivating literacy from an early age, it provides good information in preparing children for the future. In addition, community service initiatives foster a sense of solidarity among migrant workers, creating a support network that can be invaluable in times of need. This community service activity is carried out to provide awareness of the importance of literacy skills and how to cultivate them in everyday life (Wicaksana, 2024).

Realizing the importance of early literacy, this community service, especially Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) aims not only to reduce immediate challenges but also to encourage long-term sustainability for migrant workers. As the program continues to evolve into a potential model, other countries face similar challenges in supporting their migrant workforce. It is hoped that this program will contribute to the welfare and empowerment of Indonesian migran (PMI) workers.

## **2. METHOD**

This community service program uses a *hybrid approach*, combining online and on-site activities. Online components include webinars, virtual workshops, and interactive discussions. The on-site activities took place at Hasanuddin Hall at the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur. The topic discussed during the program is cultivating literacy from an early age. This knowledge of literacy is given to the children of the participants later.

### **a) Program Design**

The design of community service activity programs is carried out through online and on-site activities. The program we deliver is related to material about cultivating literacy to children from an early age. Getting children used to literacy from an early age is very important. Especially in the mindset of very open access to information this time. Internet access anywhere and anytime possible. The hope is that later children who have been accustomed to literacy from an early age will not be confused about information disclosure today. This activity collaborates with literacy experts, educators, and related stakeholders to ensure the effectiveness of the program in cultivating early literacy activities for the children of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI).

### **b) Online Components**

The online component consists of: 1) Webinars: Host online webinars featuring experts in the field of literacy. The topics include understanding the concept of literacy, strategies for cultivating children's literacy from an early age, and the importance of literacy from an early age; 2) Virtual

Workshops: Virtual workshop activities that allow participants to engage in hands-on activities related to understanding literacy concepts, strategies for cultivating children's literacy from an early age, and the importance of early literacy; 3) Interactive Discussions: Facilitating online forums and discussion boards to encourage participants to share experiences, ask questions, and interact with experts and fellow migrant workers. The discussions aimed to create a virtual community that supported, encouraged collaborative learning, and exchanged literacy experiences that they had ever had.

c) On-site activities

Conducting on-site activities at Hasanuddin Hall at the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, providing physical space for Indonesian migrant workers to gather, learn, and network. The on-site component aims to complement virtual activities by offering a face-to-face learning environment and fostering a sense of community.

d) Additional Program Implementation

The implementation of additional programs is carried out through the development of strategies for understanding literacy concepts, strategies for cultivating children's literacy from an early age, and the importance of early literacy through easily accessible social media platforms. Utilizing social media, community networks, and collaboration with Indonesian migrant workers' organizations (PMI) to raise awareness and encourage active participation.

e) Feedback mechanism

Establish feedback mechanisms throughout the program, encouraging participants to provide insight into the effectiveness of online and on-site components. Use feedback to make real-time adjustments, ensuring the program remains relevant and responsive to attendee needs.

f) Assessment and Evaluation

Apply pre- and post-program assessments to measure the impact of hybrid approaches on participants' knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards management of understanding literacy concepts, strategies for cultivating children's literacy from an early age, and the importance of early literacy. Evaluate the effectiveness of online and on-site activities in achieving program objectives.

g) Documentation and Reporting

Document the entire program, including methodology, implementation details, participant feedback, and assessment results. Compile the information into comprehensive articles that adhere to academic standards, highlighting the importance of understanding the concept of literacy, strategies for cultivating children's literacy from an early age, and the importance of early literacy and the

success of a hybrid approach in empowering Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI).

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The participants are actively involved in the hybrid program, showing a strong interest in acquiring new skills and knowledge. Virtual sessions facilitate seamless communication, while on-site activities provide a hands-on experience. This program resulted in increased financial literacy, increased awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities, and increased vocational skills among migrant workers. The success of the hybrid program, "The Importance of Understanding Financial Management for Migrant Workers," is evident in the active engagement and positive results observed among the participants. The integration of online and on-site activities has proven effective in addressing the diverse needs of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) and fostering a comprehensive approach to financial empowerment.



**Figure 1.** Participants PKM Activities in Aula Hasanuddin KBRI Kuala Lumpur

Based on Figure 1, it can be seen that PKM activities at the Hasanudin Hall of the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur participants were very enthusiastic. The enthusiasm of the participants was seen in the hybrid program which showed their commitment to improve their skills and knowledge about cultivating early literacy for families. The utilization of webinars, virtual workshops, and interactive discussions in the online component allows for convenient and accessible learning. The virtual delivery of material in these community service activities facilitates seamless communication, overcomes geographical barriers, and allows for wider audience participation. On-site activities at Hasanuddin Hall at the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur provide a physical space for face-to-face interaction, creating a sense of togetherness between participants.

The active involvement of participants is in line with previous Community Service programs that emphasize the importance of interactive and participatory approaches in adult education, especially when dealing with diverse and dynamic groups such as migrant workers (Merriam, S. B., Caffarella, R. S., & Baumgartner, 2007). The hybrid nature of the program accommodates a variety of different learning models, thus ensuring that participants can benefit from a mix of virtual and face-to-face experiences.

The program's emphasis on cultivating literacy material from an early age provides a clear and real picture to community service participants about literacy. The delivery of material virtually is invisible. The boundaries of different spaces and places. Even though the material was delivered virtually, participants were able to accept well what was conveyed by the resource persons (Sanusi & Prasetyo, 2019).

This hybrid program has succeeded in fostering a sense of community among Indonesian Migrant Participants (PMI). Virtual discussions and on-site activities facilitate opportunities to build mutually beneficial networks of Cooperation. This activity can maximize participants to share experiences, challenges, and success stories. The establishment of this cooperation network as an alternative to maintain the impact of this community service program. Building networks of community cooperation is in line with social model theory, which emphasizes the value of social relationships and networks in achieving individual and collective goals (Rozak et al., 2021). The hybrid program aims not only to provide knowledge and skills but also to create a community that supports Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) who can continue to learn from and encourage each other in facing various challenges.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

This community service program focuses on strengthening the culture of early literacy in the family of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) has shown a significant impact in improving competencies according to the field of work of each family member. This literacy program that is applied from an early age provides experience to develop in each family member. Strengthening literacy culture also plays a role in building character and positive work ethic. Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) involved in this community service program tend to have discipline, responsibility, and high motivation to study and work. These values are critical in supporting their success in the competitive global job market.

Recommendations for Program Sustainability required ongoing efforts from all parties involved. Increased investment in literacy programs, provision of adequate educational resources, and collaboration between governments, educational institutions, and communities are essential. In

addition, periodic evaluations are needed to measure the effectiveness of the program and identify environments that require improvement. Overall, strengthening the culture of literacy from an early age is a strategic step in equipping families of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) with the competencies needed in the global job market. Through joint efforts, the program can continue to provide long-term benefits for family welfare and contribution to national development.

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