

Upaya Peningkatan Nasionalisme Anak-anak Pekerja Migran Indonesia di Malaysia: International Community Engagement di ICC Muar

Initiatives to Enhance Nationalism among Indonesian Migrant Workers Children in Malaysia: International Community Engagement at ICC Muar

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ABSTRAK. Program pengabdian masyarakat internasional yang diselenggarakan oleh mahasiswa UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya di Indonesia Community Centre (ICC) Muar, Malaysia, bertujuan untuk meningkatkan wawasan kebangsaan dan rasa nasionalisme pada anak-anak Pekerja Migran Indonesia (PMI). Anak-anak ini menghadapi krisis identitas kebangsaan karena tumbuh dalam lingkungan budaya Malaysia dengan akses terbatas terhadap pendidikan formal Indonesia. Program ini mencakup berbagai inisiatif, antara lain penyusunan buku ajar bertema nasionalisme yang memperkenalkan tokoh sejarah, budaya etnis, dan destinasi wisata Indonesia. Buku tersebut juga dilengkapi dengan kuis dan tugas sebagai alat ukur pemahaman siswa. Selain itu, diselenggarakan pula lokakarya Tari Sinanggar Tulo serta lomba kuis kebangsaan untuk menanamkan kebanggaan terhadap budaya Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pengumpulan data melalui survei, lokakarya, dan diskusi kelompok. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan dalam pemahaman terhadap budaya dan sejarah Indonesia, serta penguatan identitas kebangsaan pada anak-anak PMI. Program ini menjadi model penting bagi inisiatif serupa dalam konteks migrasi, dengan menekankan pentingnya pendidikan dan budaya sebagai sarana pelestarian nasionalisme.

Kata Kunci: Nasionalisme; pekerja migran Indonesia; pengabdian masyarakat internasional; pendidikan budaya; identitas kebangsaan; anak migran.

ABSTRACT. *The international community service program organized by UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya students at the Indonesia Community Centre (ICC) Muar, Malaysia, aims to improve national insight and nationalism among children of Indonesian migrant workers (PMI). These children face a national identity crisis because they grow up in a Malaysian environment with limited access to formal Indonesian education. The program includes several initiatives, such as creating nationalism-themed textbooks that introduce historical figures, ethnic cultures, and Indonesian tourist destinations, and are equipped with quizzes and assignments to measure students' understanding. In addition, a Sinanggar Tulo Dance workshop and a nationalism quiz competition were held to instill pride in Indonesian culture. This study used qualitative methods, collecting data through surveys, workshops, and group discussions. The results showed a significant increase in understanding Indonesian culture and history and strengthening national identity among PMI children. This program serves as an essential model for similar initiatives in the context of migration, focusing on maintaining nationalism through education and culture.*

Keywords: *Nationalism; Indonesian migrant workers; international community service; cultural education; national identity; migrant children.*

INTRODUCTION

A community engagement program is a collaboration program that involves many people or communities that affiliate because it has everyday geographies, interests, needs, and situations. It also aims to solve society's problems and create society's welfare. Another definition of Community Engagement cited from Preece is a collaboration between education institutions and the community on a local, national, or global scale, which has the goal of exchanging knowledge and resources with mutual benefit (Ansori et al., 2021).

UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya has an International Community Engagement program for its students who are placed in various countries, one of which is in Muar, Johor, Malaysia. In this activity, collaborate with the Indonesia Community Centre (ICC) Muar, a community for Indonesians in Muar, which has a non-formal school for Indonesian children. Children who attend ICC Muar have different backgrounds. The majority of them are children of Indonesian Migrant Workers who were born and raised in Muar, with limited documents and residence permits, making it impossible to attend formal schools like other children (Lasmi et al., 2022). Some of them have never even had the opportunity to return to Indonesia as their country of origin. These Indonesian children are also more fluent in Malay than Indonesian as their native language. This causes PMI children in Muar to have the problem of identity and nationality crisis due to a lack of knowledge related to culture and Indonesianness. Limited access to formal education also makes it difficult for them to learn more about the Indonesian nation's history and culture (Siagian et al., 2024). This is one of the problems that must be a concern because, after all, they are Indonesian children who will return to Indonesia to continue their lives and get access to proper formal education.

Therefore, the UINSA International Community Engagement Program in Muar, Malaysia, focuses on developing children's national insight and Nationalism. *National insight* is a perspective not based on unequal ethnicities, cultures, religions, descents, regions, and customs. This perspective is expected to foster a mindset and attitude that does not dichotomize existing differences, so forming a life with mutual respect and appreciation also creates the unity of the nation (Anis, 2017). Meanwhile, Nationalism is an attitude of pride and love for the homeland or a concept related to the identity and identity owned by a country (Septiano et al., 2022). National insight and the spirit of Nationalism are essential to be introduced to children far from their homeland, especially considering that Indonesia is a country rich in differences so that they will not feel alien to their nation and have a sense of love and pride for their homeland.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach to evaluate the effectiveness of various initiatives to enhance nationalism among Indonesian migrant workers' children in Malaysia, conducted during the UINSA International Community Engagement at the Indonesian Community Centre (ICC) in Muar. One of the primary initiatives involved the development of a nationalism-themed teaching book. This process was a collaborative effort with local educators and community members to create a comprehensive resource that integrates cultural content and values. The goal was to foster a sense of identity and pride among students. Feedback was gathered through workshops and focus group discussions with educators to ensure the book's relevance and effectiveness.

In addition to the teaching book, a series of dance workshops were conducted to introduce and promote Indonesian culture through the Sinanggar Tulo dance. Children from the community participated actively, learning both the dance steps and their cultural significance. To assess the effectiveness of this initiative, pre- and post-workshop surveys were administered to measure participants' knowledge and appreciation of Indonesian culture, highlighting the impact of cultural engagement on fostering national identity.

Furthermore, a national quiz competition was organized to teach students about Indonesia's history, culture, and values. Participants were evaluated based on their performance and understanding of the material covered in the nationalism-themed teaching book. Surveys were conducted before and after the competition to gauge changes in students' attitudes towards nationalism.

Qualitative data from workshops, surveys, and feedback sessions were then analyzed thematically to identify key themes related to enhancing nationalism among the children. The

findings of this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of how community engagement initiatives can effectively foster a sense of national identity within migrant contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Nationalism Edition Textbook

The 'Nationalism Edition Textbook program aimed to increase ICC Muar students' knowledge about Indonesia, strengthen a sense of pride, increase national insight, and bring out a sense of love for the homeland. The short-term goal of this program is for ICC Muar students to gain a basic understanding of Indonesian historical figures, especially those depicted in Indonesian currency. Then, there is also the opportunity to get to know several tribes in Indonesia more closely, including clothing, regional songs, and typical foods of the tribe.

The textbook provided critical national insights for ICC Muar students, especially about Indonesian historical figures in rupiah currency, the cultural diversity of Indonesian tribes, and exciting tourist destinations.

The creation of textbooks with main introductions to Indonesian art and culture to increase love and pride in the homeland and nationalism is one of the flagship work programs that we have prepared. There are three parts in this book, namely, the introduction to: 1) Hero figures in Rupiah currency, 2) introduction to Indonesia's culture, 3) an introduction to beautiful places in Indonesia (wonderful Indonesia). This book was prepared before the implementation of UICE activities so that the printed edition of the textbook could be brought to Malaysia.

This book also introduces attractive destinations that describe the beauty of the country. After learning this book, it is hoped that they will be able to form a sense of pride and restore their identity as Indonesian citizens. So, ICC Muar students are interested in returning to their homeland after graduating from elementary school and continuing their education and career in Indonesia.

This textbook is made with an attractive appearance so that students are interested and enthusiastic about learning about Indonesian culture. The textbook also has photos and animated drawings so students can visualize their reading. UICE participants who act as teachers make textbooks one of the additional materials taught to ICC Muar students and other mandatory subjects. An assignment or quiz is framed attractively at the end of each of the parts studied so that the teacher can determine the student's understanding of the material that has been taught. In addition, pre-tests and post-tests were carried out to estimate the effectiveness of textbooks in increasing students' nationalism and students' progress shortly before and after learning using the Nationalism edition of the textbook.



Figure 1. Nationalism Edition Textbook for ICC Muar Students



Figure 2. The First Section of the Textbook about Historical Figures



Figure 3. The Second Section of The Textbook about Tribes in Indonesia



Figure 4. The Third Section of The Textbook about Wonderful Indonesia



Figure 5. Example of The Assessment in The Textbook

Sinanggar Tulo Dance Practice

In order to introduce Indonesian culture, students introduced the Sinanggar Tulo dance from the Batak tribe. This dance was chosen because its movements are pretty simple, so it is easy to teach ICC Muar children who are still relatively young. The dance learning guide videos were selected before departure to Malaysia so that this dance could be taught in the first week of implementation. The first step was to introduce all the dance movements to the students and then align the dance movements between students with the song. The Sinanggar Tulo dance will be performed on the final day as the closing event of UICE 2024 at ICC Muar.



Figure 6. Picture with Sinanggar Tulo Dance Team in a Final Day

The Sinanggar Tulo dance performance prepared during the program and trained by KKN students showed satisfactory results. The children performed confidently and enthusiastically, demonstrating their learned skills and engaging the audience with an energetic and lively performance. This dance performance helped introduce and preserve Indonesian culture and gave ICC Muar children, especially female students, the opportunity to experience the satisfaction of a public performance. It also strengthened the students' cultural identity and built pride in Indonesian cultural heritage.

Smart Competition

Brilliant competition is an activity in the form of a competition that is one of the agendas included in the roadmap toward Final Day or before all of the UINSA International Community Engagement programs are completed. This Smart Competition involved students from grades four to six, totalling 11 students. Although there are different grade levels, the questions have been adjusted to the abilities of all students. Questions we made contain daily school learning materials, such as mathematics, English, and science, and also questions about nationality and nationalism insights taken from the Nationalism edition of the textbook we taught students in the previous weeks. This Smart Competition consists of 3 rounds, including:

1. Preliminary Round

In the preliminary round, all participants will answer 15 questions with a limited time. The six participants with the best scores can continue the competition to the next round.

2. Quarter-Final Round

In the quarter-final round, participants will be divided into three pairs and into sessions to answer spontaneous questions with a quick answer method. Three children from each pair who have the most quick and accurate answer points can qualify for the semi-finals.

3. Semi-Finals Round

In the semi-final round, three people were left with the same method as the quarter-final round: the quick answer method. One person with the lowest score will withdraw, and the other two will advance to the final round.

4. Final Round

In the final round, still using the quick answer method, both will compete to answer questions quickly and accurately until the participant with the highest accumulated points can be determined as the winner.

This innovative competition is not only aimed at testing numeracy skills and general knowledge but also to discover the extent of increasing national and material insight to Indonesian children after learning to use the Nationalism edition of the textbook. The questions concerned culture, currency, heroes, ethnicity, typical foods, iconic places in Indonesia, and regional songs. With this intelligent competition, it is hoped to foster students' motivation to continue learning and further deepen their knowledge about Indonesian so that it can foster a sense of nationalism in the soul of every child.



Figure 7. The Process During Preliminary Round



Figure 8. The Process During Quarter-Final Round



Figure 9. The Process During Semi-Finals Round



Figure 10. Picture with The Winner While Giving The Present

CONCLUSION

This journal discusses an international community service program organized by UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya students at the Indonesia Community Centre (ICC) Muar, Malaysia, which aims to increase nationalism among children of Indonesian migrant workers (PMI). These children face challenges in national identity because they grow up in a Malaysian environment with limited access to formal Indonesian education. The program designed

several initiatives to overcome these challenges, including creating nationalism-themed textbooks that introduce historical figures, ethnic cultures, and Indonesian tourist destinations, with attractive designs and interactive tasks to measure students' understanding.

In addition, the program held a Sinanggar Tulo Dance workshop, which was chosen because its movements are simple and can arouse a sense of pride in Indonesian culture. Other activities include a nationalism quiz competition covering daily lessons and national insight to assess the increase in students' understanding and sense of nationalism. The qualitative research methods used in this program involved surveys, workshops, and group discussions, which increased students' knowledge of Indonesian history and culture and strengthened their national identity. Hopefully, This program will broaden the national insight of PMI children and encourage them to return to Indonesia, continue their education, and contribute to the country's development. This program is an essential model for developing community service initiatives, especially regarding migrant children and the national identity crisis.

Based on the international community service program's results, several suggestions exist for further development:

1. There is a need to increase collaboration between educational institutions, the government, and Indonesian communities abroad so that more children of Indonesian migrant workers (PMI) can benefit.
2. Learning methods can be varied, such as utilizing digital technology to attract the younger generation's interest. The program should also be designed to be sustainable with regular evaluation and long-term mentoring.
3. The government is expected to provide more inclusive educational facilities, such as accredited informal schools.
4. Further research is needed to understand the long-term impact of the program and find effective strategies for instilling a sense of nationalism in migrant children.

These suggestions are expected to increase the effectiveness and sustainability of the program in the future.

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