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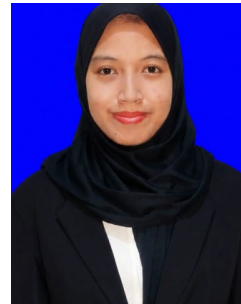
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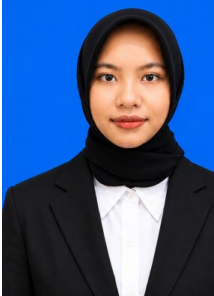




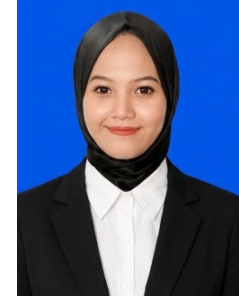
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# INTRODUCTION TO INDONESIAN CULTURE ABROAD THROUGH EDUCATIONAL MEDIA AT THE UGJ INTERNATIONAL KKN PROGRAM IN KAMPUNG TENGAH, KUALA PERLIS, MALAYSIA.

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## Abstract

**Background.** Indonesian culture as a national identity has a huge diversity. However, in the era of globalization, its existence faces serious challenges due to the dominance of foreign cultural influences, especially among the younger generation.

**Methods.** The International Community Service Program (KKN) of Gunung Jati University (UGJ) which was held in Kampung Tengah, Kuala Perlis, Malaysia, was designed as a form of community service as well as cultural diplomacy through interactive educational media.

**Aims.** This activity aims to increase public knowledge and understanding of Indonesian culture, foster a sense of love and pride for the nation's culture, and introduce Indonesian identity in the global arena. Cultural activities are carried out in collaboration with Universiti Utara Malaysia and the Kampung Tengah community with a participatory and educational approach. The series of activities included the introduction of Indonesian culture as a means of cross-cultural interaction.

**Result.** The results of the activity showed that the presentation of cultural exchange received a positive response and high enthusiasm from the local community. Cross-cultural interaction has been proven to be able to strengthen social relations while increasing Malaysians' understanding of Indonesian culture. Thus, the UGJ International KKN program succeeded in introducing Indonesian culture through interactive and participatory activities.

**Implementation.** The program was well received by the community and showed that a participatory approach can strengthen social ties and increase cross-cultural understanding between Indonesian students and Malaysian people.

**Keywords :** International KKN, Indonesian Culture, Cross-Cultural Interaction



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## INTRODUCTION

Culture is the identity of a nation that reflects the values, norms, and character of its society. Indonesia as a country that has a very rich cultural diversity, ranging from language, art, customs, to local traditions, has great potential to be known in the international arena. However, in the era of increasingly rapid globalization, the existence of local culture faces serious challenges due to the entry of foreign culture that is more dominant and easily accessible, especially by the younger generation.

Globalization not only brings a positive impact in terms of technological and information advancements, but also has the potential to shift local cultural values. Therefore, strategic efforts are needed to introduce and preserve Indonesian culture, especially to Indonesian people abroad and the international community. One of the efforts that can be made is through cultural-based educational activities that are packaged in an interesting and interactive way.

The International Community Service Program (KKN) at Gunung Jati University (UGJ) is a form of community service that not only focuses on community empowerment, but also as a means of cultural diplomacy. Through this program, students have the opportunity to interact directly with foreign communities, as well as introduce Indonesian culture as a national identity.

The implementation of UGJ International KKN in Kampung Tengah, Kuala Perlis, Malaysia is one of the tangible manifestations of these efforts. This area is a strategic location because of the Indonesian community and local people who have an interest in foreign culture. In this activity, educational media is used as the main means to convey cultural materials, such as through interactive videos, educational games, hands-on practice, and arts and crafts activities.

The use of educational media is considered effective because it can increase interest in learning and make it easier for participants to understand the material presented. In addition, an interactive and participatory approach also encourages the active involvement of participants, so that the process of cultural introduction is not only theoretical, but also provides a memorable hands-on experience.

Through this activity, it is hoped that it can increase public knowledge and understanding of Indonesian culture, as well as foster a sense of love and pride for the nation's culture, especially for the young generation of Indonesians who are abroad. In addition, this activity is also expected to strengthen relations between nations through positive cultural exchanges.

Thus, the program to introduce Indonesian culture through educational media in the UGJ International KKN not only plays a role as a community service activity, but also as a strategic effort in preserving the nation's culture and introducing Indonesian identity at the global level.

### **Purpose of Service**

1. To implement the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, especially in the field of community service at the international level.
2. To introduce and promote Indonesian culture to the foreign community through interactive and interesting educational media.
3. To improve students' insights, experience, and ability to adapt to different social and cultural environments.
4. To build good cooperative relationships between universities and international partners.
5. To make a real contribution to community empowerment through educational, social, and cultural activities.
6. To foster a sense of love for the nation's culture and strengthen national identity in the global arena.

### **Research Benefits**

#### **Practical Benefits**

##### **For Participants (Students)**

1. Adding international insight and experience, both in academic and socio-cultural aspects.
2. Improve communication skills, especially in interacting with people across cultures.
3. Develop soft skills such as leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving skills.
4. Fostering confidence and independence in facing challenges in a new environment..

##### **For Field Supervisors (DPL)**

1. Increase experience in guiding students in community service activities at the international level.
2. Expanding the network of academic cooperation with foreign institutions.
3. Supporting the development of science, and global based service practices

#### **For Implementing Universities**

1. Improving the reputation and existence of universities at the international level.
2. Strengthening the implementation of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, especially community service.
3. Build and expand cooperation with institutions or institutions abroad.

#### **For Higher Education Partners**

1. Getting knowledge and cultural exchange from students participating in International KKN.
2. Strengthening cooperative relations between educational institutions.
3. Supporting educational activities that are beneficial to the partner campus environment.

#### **For Community Partners**

1. Increase public knowledge and understanding of Indonesian culture.
2. Gain new experiences through educational and interactive activities carried out.
3. Strengthening social and cultural relations between local communities and International KKN participants.
4. Supporting the development of community potential through the programs implemented.

## **METHODS**

This international Community Work Program (KKN) is implemented through a participatory and educational community work approach. The participatory approach is used to encourage active community involvement in every activity, while the educational approach aims to increase public knowledge and awareness of environmental and health issues, as well as foster

intercultural understanding. This approach is in line with the concept of community service which emphasizes community empowerment through the process of education and active community participation in social activities (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022).

This activity was carried out in collaboration with Universiti Utara Malaysia located in Sintok, and involved the community in Kampung Tengah or what we call Kampung warna-warni as the main location of the community service program. The implementation methodology is designed to integrate educational activities, hands-on practice, and cultural interactions, thereby providing a comprehensive learning experience for students and community members involved.

In general, the methods used in carrying out activities include field observations, outreach or community education sessions, community participation-based activities, and cultural exchange activities. Observations are carried out to understand environmental conditions, community characteristics, and the potential of local villages as a basis for carrying out community service activities. Meanwhile, outreach was carried out by presenting materials to the community about household waste management, the importance of maintaining health, and an introduction to Indonesian culture, which included explanations of currency, traditional clothing, and local dishes from various regions in Indonesia. This socialization activity aims to increase public awareness in protecting the environment and health, which is an important part of sustainable community development (World Health Organization, 2021).

In addition to educational activities, direct practice methods are also applied through creative activities involving the recycling of used bottles as decorative craft materials. In this activity, students and residents work together to decorate used bottles, which are then displayed as decorations throughout the village. These activities aim to increase public awareness of the importance of recycling plastic waste while beautifying the surrounding environment. Community service methods are also implemented through simple health checks, such as free blood pressure checks for local residents, as a form of contribution to increasing awareness of the importance of maintaining health.

In addition, the program includes academic and cultural activities held at the Universiti Utara Malaysia campus, including campus tours to introduce the educational facilities, academic environment, and learning systems implemented at the university. At the closing of the series of

activities, cultural exchanges took place between students and the local community through traditional dance adaptation performances, as a means to introduce and preserve Indonesian culture while strengthening cross-cultural friendships.

Through this implementation methodology, this international KKN program is expected to make a positive contribution in increasing public awareness about environmental and health management, as well as strengthening social ties and cultural exchanges between Indonesian students and the community in Malaysia. This approach also provides a practical and contextual learning experience for students in understanding the social dynamics of society at the international level.

### **Stages of Implementation**

The implementation of the international Community Work Program (KKN) is carried out through several stages that are systematically arranged, starting from the preparation stage to the stage of implementing the program with the community. Each stage is designed to support the achievement of the objectives of the activity and strengthen the interaction between students and the local community.

The first stage is the preparation stage, which includes coordination with Universiti Utara Malaysia in Sintok as well as with the community and local authorities in Kampung Tengah as the location of the activity. At this stage, work program planning, preparation of educational materials, and procurement of the necessary tools and equipment, such as recycled materials from used bottles and simple equipment for health examinations are also carried out.

The second stage is the implementation of activities in the campus environment. At this stage, students take part in campus tour activities at Universiti Utara Malaysia to gain an understanding of the campus environment, educational facilities, and the academic system applied. This activity also aims to expand students' horizons related to the higher education system in Malaysia and strengthen academic relations between students from both countries.

The third stage is the implementation of community service activities in Central Village. The activities carried out are educational and participatory, including socialization of household waste management, counseling on the importance of maintaining health, and introduction to Indonesian culture which includes currency, traditional clothing, and typical culinary. In addition,

creative activities were also carried out in the form of the use of used bottles as decorations with the community. The works are then installed in the village environment as an effort to manage waste while beautifying the environment.

The fourth stage is community service activities through simple health checks, namely free blood pressure checks for residents. This activity aims to increase public awareness of the importance of maintaining health and providing access to basic health services.

The fifth stage is a cultural exchange activity that is carried out at night. In this activity, students performed traditional dances as a form of introduction to Indonesian culture to the local community. This activity is a means to strengthen social relations and increase cross-cultural understanding between the two parties.

As the final stage, an evaluation was carried out on the entire series of activities that had been carried out. This evaluation includes an assessment of the level of community participation, the achievement of work programs, and the identification of obstacles during implementation. The results of the evaluation are expected to be material for improvement for the implementation of similar activities in the future.

### **Subject and Location of Implementation**

The participants in this international Community Work Program (KKN) include various parties who are directly involved in the implementation of the program. Participants consisted of KKN students, local communities, and university representatives who supported the implementation of the activity. Students play the role of the main implementer of the program, while the university plays a role in providing academic support and facilitation of activities.

The target community includes people living in villages, including adults and the elderly who participate in counseling activities as well as basic health checks. Community involvement in this activity is participatory, where the community is not only a beneficiary, but also plays an active role in the implementation of various activities. This active participation is expected to increase the sense of belonging to the program that is carried out so that the sustainability of the activity can be maintained.

The location of this international KKN activity is divided into two main locations, namely the Universiti Utara Malaysia campus in Sintok and the Kampung Tengah or Kampung Warna-

Warni community area. Activities carried out in the campus environment include orientation through campus tours which aim to provide insight to students about the academic environment, educational facilities, and the learning system implemented.

Meanwhile, community service activities were carried out in the Central Village area. This location was chosen because it has an active community and an environment that supports the implementation of social and educational activities. In addition, the characteristics of the community that are open to collaborative activities are a supporting factor for the success of the program.

At the location, students carried out various activities, including socialization of household waste management, health education, creative activities in the form of the use of used bottles as decorations, basic health checks, and cultural exchange activities. All activities are designed in an integrated manner to answer the needs of the community while developing students' ability to interact directly with different social environments.

In addition, the implementation of activities also pays attention to aspects of coordination and communication with local community leaders to ensure that each program runs smoothly and in accordance with the needs of the community. This approach is carried out so that the activities carried out are not only temporary, but also have a sustainable impact. With the right selection of participants and location, this KKN program is expected to provide optimal benefits for the community and improve the student learning experience in a cross-cultural context. This activity is also a means to strengthen cooperative relations between educational institutions and the community in the international scope.

### **Data Tools and Sources**

In the implementation of this international Community Work Program (KKN), various tools and data sources are used to support the smooth running of activities and the delivery of educational materials to participants. The tools used are adjusted to the type of activities carried out, both in community outreach activities, creative waste management, and basic health services.

During community outreach activities in Kampung Tengah, the tools used included presentation materials containing educational content about waste management, the importance of maintaining health, and an introduction to Indonesian culture, such as currency, traditional

clothing, and typical foods from various regions. This material is used as a communication medium to facilitate public understanding of the information conveyed.

In creative waste utilization activities, the tools and materials used consist of used plastic bottles as the main materials, along with supporting equipment such as scissors, paint, brushes, and ropes to decorate bottles. The decorated used bottles are then used as decorations for the village environment by hanging them at various points throughout the village. This activity aims to increase public awareness of the importance of waste management through the concept of reduce, reuse, and recycle (3R) in daily life (Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022).

In addition, during basic health service activities, blood pressure measuring devices are used to provide free blood pressure checks to the community. The use of this tool aims to provide basic health services while increasing public awareness of the importance of maintaining good health.

The data sources for this activity were obtained from two types of sources: primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through direct observation during the implementation of activities, interaction with the community, and community participation in each program implemented. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from various supporting references, such as educational materials on waste management, public health, and information about Indonesian culture, which were used as materials in community extension activities. This combination of activity tools and data sources supports the achievement of the goals of the KKN program and facilitates the implementation of effective community service programs

## **DISCUSSION**

The results of the implementation of the activity show that the use of interactive presentation methods and cultural performances makes a positive contribution to increasing public involvement and interest in Indonesian culture. The community's response in the form of warm welcome and enthusiasm, especially on the introduction of currency and traditional clothing, shows that the use of visual media and real objects has an important role in attracting the attention of participants.

The increase in participation seen in interactive sessions compared to the delivery of initial material indicates that a hands-on experience-based approach is more effective in the learning process. This is in line with the experiential learning theory which states that the direct involvement of participants in the learning process can improve understanding and memory of the material presented.

The use of rupiah banknotes as a learning medium provides a concrete visual experience for participants in understanding the Indonesian currency system. Meanwhile, the high interest in traditional clothing shows that visual elements and cultural uniqueness have a strong appeal in the context of cross-cultural learning.

Nusantara dance performances featuring dance variations from various regions, such as Sinanggar Tulo and Soleram from Sumatra, Yamko Rambe Yamko from Papua, and Kicir-Kicir from Jakarta, also make a significant contribution in introducing Indonesia's cultural diversity. The enthusiasm of the community during performances shows that performing arts can be an effective medium of cultural communication, especially in conveying cultural values nonverbally.

The combination of interactive presentation methods and dance performances shows that a multimodal approach, which is a combination of verbal and visual delivery, is able to increase the effectiveness of the cultural learning process. This approach not only provides cognitive understanding, but also a more immersive emotional and visual experience for participants.

However, limitations in quantitative data collection, such as the absence of recording the number of participants, are obstacles in conducting more measurable evaluations. However, based on qualitative observations, this activity has shown a positive impact through increasing public involvement and interest in Indonesian culture.

Overall, the application of interactive methods combined with cultural performances has proven effective in supporting communicative, participatory, and meaningful cultural exchange processes in international contexts.

## **Suggestions**

1. More Intensive Involvement of the Young Generation Considering that one of the goals of the program is to preserve culture among the younger generation, future activities are recommended to target more children and adolescents with a more creative and fun approach.
2. For KKN Implementing Students, students are expected to prepare themselves more thoroughly in mastering Indonesian cultural materials before leaving, including cross-cultural communication skills and the basic language of the destination country, so that the delivery of material can take place more effectively and confidently.
3. For Universities/Institutions Organizing the International KKN Program, it should be equipped with clear implementation standard guidelines (SOPs), including data-based evaluation mechanisms, so that the quality of the program can be maintained and improved from year to year.
4. For the Government and International Partners Support in the form of funding, facilities, and a wider network of partnerships is needed so that cultural diplomacy programs through International KKN can reach more Indonesian countries and communities abroad.
5. For the Target Community, it is hoped that they can continue to maintain the participatory spirit that has been built, as well as continue the good practices that have been introduced — such as 3R-based waste management and health awareness — in daily life independently.
6. For Researchers and Academics, a more in-depth study of the long-term impact of the International Community Service program on cross-cultural understanding and community empowerment is highly recommended, in order to strengthen the scientific foundation for the development of similar programs in the future.

## CONCLUSION

The UGJ International KKN program which was held in Kampung Tengah (Kampung Warna-Warni), Kuala Perlis, Malaysia on February 12-13 has successfully carried out a participatory and educational approach in four main areas, namely cultural introduction, public health, environmental management, and academic exchange.

This activity involved the synergy of three institutions — Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati (UGJ), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), and Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) — which began with online coordination on 7-9 February before going directly into the field. Some of the

programs carried out include joint gymnastics (Fit Fun Day), CSR Lestari Sejahtera (the use of used bottles as village decorations), free blood pressure checks, and presentations on Indonesian cultural exchange.

Overall, this program succeeded in increasing public awareness of the importance of health and environmental management, as well as introducing Indonesian culture through interactive and participatory educational media. Positive public enthusiasm is an indicator of the success of the approach used.

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