

## Preserving the Archipelago's Heritage: Indonesian Cultural Program for Children of Indonesian Migrant Workers in Malaysia

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### Abstract

*This community service activity explores how education by introducing Indonesian culture in Malaysia strengthens their cultural identity. With globalization threatening local identities, children of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) often struggle to balance their home culture with their new environment. This community service activity found that integrating arts and culture into learning can deepen children's connection to their heritage. Traditional songs effectively taught cultural values and fostered pride in Indonesian identity. This community service activity emphasizes the importance of culture-based education in preserving the identity of marginalized children in a foreign country.*

**Keywords:** Cultural Education, Children of Migrant Workers, Indonesian Heritage

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The problem in the learning center regarding the introduction of Indonesian culture in Malaysia is that many children do not know about their own culture, even though they are Indonesian citizens. A lack of access to information can cause this, as can the influence of the surrounding environment, which is more dominant in local Malaysian culture, and the lack of educational programs that touch on aspects of Indonesian culture (Azizah et al. 2024). As a result, children lose their cultural identity and have no sense of pride in their heritage. Cultural introduction programs are critical to overcome this problem and help them reconnect with their cultural roots (Maulana et al. 2025).

This problem can also be exacerbated by busy working migrant parents, who often do not have the time or opportunity to teach their children Indonesian culture. In an environment surrounded by foreign cultures, children tend to be more influenced by local norms and practices, moving them further from understanding Indonesia's cultural heritage. Without adequate exposure to their culture of origin, this young generation risks losing the values and traditions they should inherit (Azizah et al. 2023).

In addition, the lack of support from the government and related organizations in developing cultural education programs in learning centers is also a challenge. Without this support, the centers have difficulty presenting enjoyable and educational activities about Indonesian culture, such as art, dance, or language. This results in low interest in children to be involved in cultural activities, making introducing Indonesian culture less effective. With a more structured program and firm support, children can learn about their culture in a fun and interactive way, helping them build a sense of identity and pride as Indonesians (Nursafirayanti and Azizah 2024; Rohmatika et al. 2024).

It is important to introduce Indonesian culture to the children of Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia because they are the next generation of the nation who need to understand

and preserve their cultural heritage. Knowing and appreciating one's culture is the first step to building a strong identity and a sense of pride as an Indonesian. Culture is identity, and with proper introduction, children can develop a sense of love for the traditions and values of their nation (Putri et al. 2024).

The challenges of the increasingly developing era significantly impact the sustainability of culture. Globalization and the influence of foreign cultures threaten many local cultures with loss or erosion. Therefore, introducing culture into the environment of migrant workers' children is very important to ensure that they not only recognize but also preserve and pass on Indonesia's cultural heritage to the next generation. By understanding culture, they can contribute to maintaining Indonesia's cultural diversity amidst rapid changes in the era (Nabila et al. 2025).

Moreover, cultural introduction also serves as a tool to strengthen the sense of community among the children of migrant workers. In a context that often makes them feel isolated, understanding Indonesian culture can give them a sense of connection to their original identity. Cultural activities that involve them can create a sense of unity and solidarity so that they feel more accepted and have a place in the broader community, even in a foreign country (Gymnastiar et al. 2024).

Cultural immersion programs can also help migrant workers' children develop social and emotional skills. By participating in cultural activities, they can learn the values of cooperation, empathy, and respect for differences. This is important for their personal development and will equip them to interact better in a multicultural environment like Malaysia while still maintaining their rich Indonesian identity (Agusman et al. 2024; Monica et al. 2024).

My team initiated the program to introduce Indonesian culture to the children of migrant workers in Malaysia, with the aim of providing an opportunity for them to know and appreciate their cultural heritage. We use engaging and interactive methods, such as board games and cards, that depict the diversity and plurality of cultures in Indonesia. In this way, children can learn while playing, which makes the learning process more fun and memorable (Novia 2023).

Specially designed board games can highlight Indonesian cultural themes, such as dances, songs, food, and traditions from various regions. Each game can create a healthy competitive atmosphere and encourage cooperation between participants. In addition, cards about Indonesia's cultural diversity can provide brief but informative information about the various tribes, languages, and customs in the country. In this way, children learn about their own culture and the richness and uniqueness of the various groups in Indonesia (Kodriati et al. 2023).

The children's enthusiasm for participating in this program can be seen from their active involvement during the games and discussions. The impact is significant because they have become more familiar with and proud of Indonesian culture. This program not only serves as a means of education but also as a platform to build a sense of identity and togetherness among the children of migrant workers so that they feel more connected to their cultural roots even though they are in different countries. Through this initiative, children can grow into individuals who appreciate their culture and can preserve it in the future (Aswan et al. 2023).

## 2. METHOD

Table 1. Program Method

Stages	Description	Result
<b>Education</b>	This is an interactive presentation that explains the origins of culture, such as currency, dance, music, and folklore. It uses videos, images, and props to increase its appeal. The presentation then introduces regional languages by teaching some simple vocabulary from various regions.	Children have a basic understanding of Indonesian culture.
<b>Participating</b>	In the discussion session, Children are asked to share their experiences or knowledge about Indonesian culture. Interactive Q&A allows children to ask questions about the culture that interests them. Then, the mini cultural quiz is a simple game that tests their knowledge from the previous session.	Children feel involved and understand the culture better
<b>Practice</b>	Play traditional games by introducing games such as congklak, stilts, or jump rope. Then, mini performances by children showcasing their learning outcomes, such as dancing, singing, or displaying crafts.	Children gain first-hand experience and emotional connection, and they show pride in Indonesian culture.
<b>Evaluating</b>	Evaluation session with children. Children are asked to share what they have learned and felt.	Children realize the importance of Indonesian culture in their lives.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of implementing the Indonesian cultural introduction program for migrant workers' children in Malaysia show an increase in their understanding of their original culture, namely Indonesian culture. Through systematic steps, such as early education, active participation, direct experience, and reflection, children understand Indonesian cultural values and feel more connected to their original identity. Interactive activities, such as art workshops and traditional games, have increased children's interest in learning about culture.

In addition, the performance and show sessions provided a space for children to showcase their learning outcomes, strengthening their sense of pride in their culture and creating a sense of togetherness among them. However, challenges remain, such as limited facilities and time for their parents, who often work to fulfill the children's daily needs. Further support from the government and local communities is needed to ensure the program can continue sustainably.

Through the evaluation conducted in the reflection session, participants showed enthusiasm for the program, and many of them expressed their desire to continue learning more about Indonesian culture. Facilitators and Parents also gave positive feedback and felt that the program significantly impacted their children.

### Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of Activities

At the cultural exposure stage, the activity began with an interactive presentation about Indonesian culture, including dances, traditional clothing, and folklore. The use of visual media such as videos and images increased children's attention. They were actively involved by asking

questions, indicating their interest in the topic. The main supporting factor at this stage was the availability of interesting and relevant materials. However, the obstacle faced was time constraints because many children wanted a more in-depth explanation.

Next, in the discussion and engagement stage, children are invited to discuss their experiences with Indonesian culture. Interactive Q&A creates a closer atmosphere between the facilitator and participants, and children feel comfortable sharing their personal experiences. The challenge at this stage is the difference in children's background knowledge, most of whom have never had direct experience with Indonesian culture, so a more inclusive approach is needed.

The hands-on experience stage was the most interesting part. The children tried to make handicrafts, such as miniature puppets, and draw simple batik motifs. They also practiced basic regional dance movements, such as Saman and Jaipong. Their enthusiasm was very high, especially when playing traditional games such as congklak and stilts. Supporting factors for this stage were the availability of sufficient tools and materials and fun teaching methods. However, several technical constraints, such as limited space, reduced the smoothness of the *activities*.

As a closing, the mini and reflection stages provided space for children to show their learning outcomes. They performed the dances they had learned and exhibited the handicrafts they had made. The atmosphere of pride was visible on their faces. The parents who attended also expressed great appreciation for this program. In the reflection session, the children expressed their positive impressions and desire to participate in similar activities in the future. The obstacle that arose was the limited time to prepare the performance optimally.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The Indonesian cultural introduction program for migrant workers' children in Malaysia has successfully addressed the problem of their lack of understanding of their culture of origin. With a structured approach, from cultural exposure and discussions to direct experience through creative activities, children can better understand their identity as part of the Indonesian nation. This program not only provides knowledge but also builds a sense of pride in the cultural heritage they have. The participants' enthusiasm and appreciation from parents are indicators of the success of this program. However, implementing the program also faced several obstacles, such as limited time, space, and differences in the children's knowledge background. However, these challenges can be overcome with the support of the local community and engaging methods. This program proves that cultural preservation can be carried out effectively abroad with an approach that involves all parties. For sustainability, further support is needed from various parties, including the government, so that similar programs can continue to have a positive impact.

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