



PROMOTING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN SOUTH KOREA AT SMK TELEKOMUNIKASI BRAWIJAYA BLITAR

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<p>Info Article</p> <p>Received : 11 Mei 2025</p> <p>Revised : 23 Juni 2025</p> <p>Accepted : 27 Juli 2025</p> <p>Publication : 30 Juli 2025</p>	<p>Abstract: <i>This article discusses a community service initiative implemented by Universitas Madani Indonesia in collaboration with SMK Telekomunikasi Brawijaya Blitar to promote employment opportunities in South Korea. The program responds to increasing global labor mobility and Indonesia's need to prepare vocational school graduates for overseas employment. Using a three-stage model—planning, implementation, and evaluation—the program included a socialization session that introduced students to the Employment Permit System (EPS), job requirements, language training, and cultural adaptation. The initiative successfully engaged students and addressed their concerns about rights, responsibilities, and challenges related to working abroad. The findings emphasize the importance of early preparation, institutional partnerships, and curriculum integration to equip students with global competencies. The program reflects a paradigm shift in vocational education toward international employability and offers a replicable model for future community outreach and workforce development efforts.</i></p>
<p>Keywords: Vocational Education, EPS, Labor Mobility, Community Service Program.</p>	<p><i>The initiative successfully engaged students and addressed their concerns about rights, responsibilities, and challenges related to working abroad. The findings emphasize the importance of early preparation, institutional partnerships, and curriculum integration to equip students with global competencies. The program reflects a paradigm shift in vocational education toward international employability and offers a replicable model for future community outreach and workforce development efforts.</i></p>
<p>Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Vokasi, EPS, Mobilitas Tenaga Kerja, Program Pengabdian Masyarakat</p>	<p>Abstrak: Artikel ini membahas sebuah inisiatif pengabdian kepada masyarakat yang dilaksanakan oleh Universitas Madani Indonesia bekerja sama dengan SMK Telekomunikasi Brawijaya Blitar untuk mempromosikan peluang kerja di Korea Selatan. Program ini merupakan respons terhadap meningkatnya mobilitas tenaga kerja global dan kebutuhan Indonesia untuk menyiapkan lulusan sekolah menengah kejuruan (SMK) agar siap bekerja di luar negeri. Menggunakan model tiga tahap: perencanaan, pelaksanaan, dan evaluasi. Program ini mencakup sesi sosialisasi yang memperkenalkan siswa pada sistem Employment Permit System (EPS), persyaratan kerja, pelatihan bahasa, dan adaptasi budaya. Inisiatif ini berhasil melibatkan siswa secara aktif dan menanggapi kekhawatiran mereka terkait hak, kewajiban, serta tantangan bekerja di luar negeri. Temuan dari program ini menekankan pentingnya persiapan awal, kemitraan antar lembaga, dan integrasi kurikulum untuk membekali siswa dengan kompetensi global. Program ini mencerminkan pergeseran paradigma dalam pendidikan vokasi menuju kesiapan kerja internasional dan menawarkan model yang dapat direplikasi untuk kegiatan pengabdian dan pengembangan tenaga kerja di masa depan.</p>
<p>Licensed Under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License</p> 	<p>Abstrak: Artikel ini membahas sebuah inisiatif pengabdian kepada masyarakat yang dilaksanakan oleh Universitas Madani Indonesia bekerja sama dengan SMK Telekomunikasi Brawijaya Blitar untuk mempromosikan peluang kerja di Korea Selatan. Program ini merupakan respons terhadap meningkatnya mobilitas tenaga kerja global dan kebutuhan Indonesia untuk menyiapkan lulusan sekolah menengah kejuruan (SMK) agar siap bekerja di luar negeri. Menggunakan model tiga tahap: perencanaan, pelaksanaan, dan evaluasi. Program ini mencakup sesi sosialisasi yang memperkenalkan siswa pada sistem Employment Permit System (EPS), persyaratan kerja, pelatihan bahasa, dan adaptasi budaya. Inisiatif ini berhasil melibatkan siswa secara aktif dan menanggapi kekhawatiran mereka terkait hak, kewajiban, serta tantangan bekerja di luar negeri. Temuan dari program ini menekankan pentingnya persiapan awal, kemitraan antar lembaga, dan integrasi kurikulum untuk membekali siswa dengan kompetensi global. Program ini mencerminkan pergeseran paradigma dalam pendidikan vokasi menuju kesiapan kerja internasional dan menawarkan model yang dapat direplikasi untuk kegiatan pengabdian dan pengembangan tenaga kerja di masa depan.</p>

INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving era of globalization, the cross-border mobility of labor has become an increasingly common phenomenon and even a strategic approach adopted by many developing countries, including Indonesia, to reduce unemployment rates (On & Iskandar, 2025). One key strategy in this regard is the creation of overseas employment opportunities for skilled workers, particularly in developed countries such as South Korea. South Korea is known for its high demand for foreign labor across various sectors, including manufacturing, agriculture, fisheries, and services (Kim & Kwon, 2012). Through official programs such as the Employment Permit System (EPS), the South Korean government has established formal cooperation with several countries (Cho et al., 2018)—including Indonesia—to recruit foreign workers with specific qualifications.

There is still a number of Indonesian workers seeking for employment abroad, and there is also a high demand for foreign workers in South Korea (Yazid, 2016). Low income and high unemployment being the push factors and high income and low unemployment being the pull factors (Yazid, 2016). Additionally, the globalization of K-POP and Korean dramas attracts people to migrant to South Korea (Maulidita et al., 2024). In Indonesia, the policy of sending workers abroad, especially to South Korea, is not only implemented by the central government through the Indonesian Migrant Workers Protection Agency (BP2MI) but is increasingly supported by educational institutions, particularly vocational high schools (SMKs) (BP2MI, 2021; Kemendikbud, 2021). As vocational institutions, SMKs play a critical role in preparing graduates to be work-ready, such as providing Korean language courses and cultural orientation for students (ILO, 2020). These schools are not only tasked with equipping students with technical skills but also with soft skills, foreign language proficiency, and knowledge of the international job market (Fairman & Voak, 2023).

SMK Telekomunikasi Brawijaya Blitar stands out as one of the vocational schools committed to producing competent graduates ready to compete in the global labor market. With Universitas Madani Indonesia, the school has undertaken various initiatives to enhance the competitiveness of its students, one of which is the implementation of a promotional and socialization program focused on overseas employment, particularly in South Korea. This program not only provides students with information on available job opportunities but also offers Korean language training, insights into Korean workplace culture, and guidance on the legal procedures required for overseas employment.

Such initiatives are particularly relevant and strategic given the growing interest among Indonesian youth in working abroad to gain international experience, earn higher incomes, and pursue broader career development. However, the success of such programs largely depends on the clarity and accessibility of the information provided to students and the institution's ability to build partnerships with relevant stakeholders—both domestically and internationally.

South Korea is one of the most favored destinations for Indonesian workers due to its relatively fair labor system, competitive wages, and well-established legal protections for foreign employees (Piver, 2004). Under the EPS scheme, managed by the Human Resources Development Service of Korea (HRD Korea), prospective workers must undergo a series of assessments, including the EPS-TOPIK (Test of Proficiency in Korean) (Maulidita & Darmanto, 2024), pre-departure training, and various administrative requirements. Therefore, it is essential for schools to provide early and comprehensive preparation to ensure students are well-equipped to meet these challenges.

Nevertheless, promoting overseas employment also presents significant challenges. Among them is the prevailing perception among some segments of society that working abroad equates to engaging in menial labor with limited long-term prospects (Silvey, 2007). Additionally, not all students possess the psychological readiness or cultural adaptability required to live and work in a foreign country (Black et al., 1991). In this context, character education and intercultural competence must be integrated into the vocational education curriculum to adequately prepare students (Raharto, 2007; Deardorff, 2006).

The initiative undertaken by Universitas Madani Indonesia and SMK Telekomunikasi Brawijaya Blitar to promote employment opportunities in South Korea can be seen as an innovative educational practice that integrates global orientation into vocational training. This approach reflects a paradigm shift—education is no longer just about preparing students for the domestic workforce but about equipping them to thrive in a globalized job market (Cheng, 2016). Moreover, such programs foster collaboration between schools, businesses, governments, and international institutions, thereby creating an educational ecosystem responsive to changes in global labor demand. Furthermore, this initiative embodies the principles of the “link and match” policy that aligns education with industry needs. The school not only delivers theoretical and practical learning but also ensures that its graduates have direct access to job markets

aligned with their competencies (Ali et al., 2020). In this regard, overseas employment programs are integral to improving graduate quality and addressing the long-standing mismatch between educational output and labor market demands.

This article provides an analysis of how the employment promotion program for South Korea is implemented at SMK Telekomunikasi Brawijaya Blitar. The findings of this study are expected to underscore the importance of integrating education with international labor mobility in the context of human resource development in Indonesia. In the long term, initiatives like this have the potential to not only improve the global competitiveness of Indonesian workers but also to generate economic benefits through remittances, enhanced workforce skills, and the transfer of knowledge and technology. Therefore, employment promotion programs such as the one conducted by SMK Telekomunikasi Brawijaya Blitar deserve recognition and replication as part of a broader strategy to develop future-oriented vocational education.

METHOD

The method employed in this community service activity was based on the model proposed by Romantica et al. (2025), Pratama et al. (2025) and Dja'wa et al. (2024), which comprises three main stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation. As emphasized by UNESCO (2002), the planning stage is the initial and most critical phase of any community service initiative. This phase involves identifying the target community, analyzing their specific needs, and formulating clear, measurable objectives. Additionally, it includes selecting appropriate delivery methods, designing supporting materials or tools (such as training modules or presentation slides), and organizing logistical aspects, including scheduling, venue selection, and participant coordination.

The implementation stage involves executing the planned activities. In the context of educational community service, this may include delivering workshops, conducting training sessions, or facilitating group discussions. During this phase, the service team engages directly with participants, applying the prepared content and instructional strategies. Once the activities have been carried out, the evaluation stage follows to assess the effectiveness and impact of the program. Evaluation methods may include collecting participant feedback, administering surveys, conducting reflections, or using performance-based assessments. This stage is essential not only for measuring outcomes but also for identifying areas of improvement and generating insights to enhance future community service initiatives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Planning Stage

During the planning stage, the community service team conducted a site visit to SMK Telekomunikasi Brawijaya Blitar on May 7, 2025, and met with the school principal, Drs. Sudarmadiono, M.Pd. The purpose of the visit was to engage in discussions with the principal and teaching staff to identify the students' needs, particularly regarding employment opportunities after graduation. Following the meeting with school leadership, a follow-up discussion was held with a group of students to gather their perspectives and expectations. Based on the outcomes of these discussions, it was mutually agreed to organize a socialization session on employment opportunities in South Korea for vocational school graduates.



Figure 1. Meeting with the principal (Primary data, 2024)

This planning stage was crucial in ensuring that the program would be relevant, targeted, and responsive to the actual needs of the students. By involving both educators and students in the initial discussions, the community service team was able to gather accurate insights into the challenges faced by vocational school graduates in accessing job opportunities, especially those abroad. The decision to focus on employment opportunities in South Korea aligns with the growing interest among students in overseas work and the availability of government-supported programs such as the Employment Permit System (EPS). Early engagement with stakeholders also helped build trust and

collaboration, laying a strong foundation for the successful implementation of the planned activities.

Implementation Stage

This stage was conducted in a single day, specifically on May 9, 2025. The activity began with an opening speech by the principal, who provided students with an overview of the event. Following this, the main material on job opportunities in South Korea was presented by Mohammad Alfian Radita Pradana. Yeny Septi Nengrum assisted by managing and operating the PowerPoint presentation, while the rest of the team supported the students as needed.



Figure 2. The Presenter Delivers The Material (Primary Data, 2025)

The presentation started with an overview of employment opportunities in South Korea, followed by an explanation of government programs, particularly the Employment Permit System (EPS). Additional topics included the qualifications required for prospective workers, the registration and placement process, and the necessary preparatory training, all of which were clearly conveyed to the students.



Figure 3. Students listening to the Presentation (Primary data, 2025)

Evaluation Stage

After the implementation stage was completed, the activity proceeded to the evaluation stage, which included a question-and-answer session with student participants. During this session, several questions were raised regarding the rights and responsibilities of migrant workers, particularly related to working hours and wage systems, insurance and legal protection, as well as housing facilities and allowances provided by employers in South Korea.



Figure 3. Group Photo At The End Of The Socialization Session (Primary Data, 2025)

Participants also expressed concerns about the challenges and risks of working abroad, such as how to adapt to the work culture in Korea, effective methods for learning

the Korean language, and the differences in climate and lifestyle between South Korea and Indonesia. In addition, there were inquiries about the EPS-TOPIK examination, including the structure of the test and the estimated time needed to master the basic Korean language required to pass it.

The session concluded with the dissemination of important information to the students. They were informed that Universitas Madani Indonesia offers Korean language training through its Language Center, which provides both basic and intermediate-level Korean language and cultural programs for those interested in preparing for work or study opportunities in South Korea. This opportunity was introduced as a valuable resource to support students in building the linguistic and cultural competence necessary for international employment.

CONCLUSION

In response to the increasing demand for international labor mobility, particularly to South Korea, the collaboration between Universitas Madani Indonesia and SMK Telekomunikasi Brawijaya Blitar represents a strategic educational initiative. This program not only addresses the practical needs of students who aspire to work abroad but also aligns with national efforts to reduce unemployment through overseas employment. By focusing on employment opportunities under the Employment Permit System (EPS), the initiative highlights how vocational institutions can play a pivotal role in preparing work-ready graduates equipped with technical, linguistic, and cultural competencies.

The implementation of the socialization program—delivered through structured stages of planning, execution, and evaluation—demonstrates the value of community-based educational outreach. The participatory approach involving school leaders, students, and external presenters ensured that the program was both relevant and impactful. The interactive Q&A session further revealed genuine interest among students and their awareness of the practical and psychological challenges of working in a foreign country. Their active engagement affirmed the importance of early preparation, especially in mastering the Korean language and understanding the socio-cultural dynamics of life and work in South Korea.

Ultimately, this initiative reflects a broader paradigm shift in vocational education—one that moves beyond preparing students for the local job market and instead equips them to thrive in a globalized workforce. Programs like this offer a replicable model that integrates education, government policy, and international

collaboration to build pathways for global employment. As Indonesia continues to position its human resources for global competitiveness, the role of SMKs and higher education institutions in facilitating international labor mobility will become increasingly crucial. Thus, integrating overseas employment promotion into the education system should be recognized not only as an opportunity, but as a necessity for the future of vocational education in Indonesia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to express their gratitude to the principal of SMK Telekomunikasi Brawijaya Blitar for granting permission to carry out this community service activity. Special thanks are also extended to the teachers who provided support throughout the implementation of the program. The authors sincerely thank all students who actively participated in the activity. The authors also extend their appreciation to the Korean Language Department at Universitas Madani Indonesia for their support in this community service initiative.

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