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Scaling Business and Strengthening Resilience of Indonesian Migrant Women in Malaysia

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Abstract

Purpose: This community service program aims to strengthen the entrepreneurial capacity, psychological resilience, and digital business capabilities of Indonesian migrant women in Malaysia to support their economic reintegration and sustainable livelihoods.

Method: A participatory, needs-based approach was implemented with 20 Indonesian migrant women in Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, over three meetings held on 15–19 January 2026. Most participants were aged 25–45 years and had worked in Malaysia for 2–15 years. Participants were employed in factories, domestic work, service sectors, and the informal sector, and some already ran small businesses. Most originated from East Java, Central Java, West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), and Lampung, and all expressed interest in starting a business after returning to Indonesia. The program comprised entrepreneurship training, mentoring, focus group discussions (FGDs), and digital entrepreneurship activities, covering business opportunity identification, human resource empowerment, and digital marketing.

Practical Applications: All participants developed a business plan as the main program output, reflecting improved entrepreneurial knowledge, practical skills, and business readiness. FGDs identified three persistent challenges: economic uncertainty, limited business resources, and psychological stress. These findings highlight the need to integrate entrepreneurial, psychological, and digital support in migrant women empowerment programs.

Conclusion: An integrated empowerment approach combining entrepreneurial capacity building, psychological strengthening, and digital business capability can support economic reintegration and sustainable livelihood development among migrant women. The program contributes to poverty reduction, gender equality, and inclusive economic growth.

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Introduction

High unemployment and poverty remain critical challenges for social and economic development in Indonesia. As a country that has remained in the middle-income category for the past 29 years, Indonesia has experienced relatively modest economic growth of 5% (Maryanti et al., 2023). This condition is further compounded by the open unemployment rate, which reached 5.75% for women and 5.93% for men out of a labor force of 143.72 million people in August 2022, based on the National Labor Force Survei (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2022) . Limited domestic employment opportunities have driven many Indonesians to seek work abroad as an alternative means of securing economic livelihoods. International migration is often perceived as a viable strategy to obtain higher income and improve living standards, particularly when domestic labor markets are unable to absorb the growing workforce. This increasing trend of labor migration has been accompanied by a rising number of women seeking better economic opportunities through overseas employment.

International labor migration has become an important economic strategy for many Indonesian households, particularly amid limited employment opportunities in domestic labor markets. These constraints have encouraged individuals, especially women, to seek employment abroad as a means of improving household welfare and securing more stable livelihoods. Migrant workers contribute significantly to both national and local economies through remittances sent to their families, which often serve as a critical source of income and poverty reduction.

Migration to countries such as Malaysia has sbecome a prominent feature of global labor mobility dynamics. Malaysia remains one of the main destination countries for Indonesian migrant workers due to its geographical proximity, relatively affordable migration costs, and wage levels that are generally higher than those available in Indonesia. According to data from the Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Agency, Malaysia ranked among the top destination countries for Indonesian migrant workers and was the second-largest destination after Taiwan in late 2025, with 4,976 Indonesian migrant workers placed during the reporting period (Antara News, 2025). This trend reflects the continued attractiveness of overseas employment, particularly for migrant women seeking greater economic opportunities and improved family resilience.

Women migrant workers have become a significant phenomenon in many countries, including Indonesia. One of the primary reasons women choose to engage in labor migration is urgent economic necessity. Previous studies suggest that migration can serve as a pathway to improve living standards, particularly in contexts of local economic uncertainty (Raharto, 2017). This is often driven by high unemployment in local regions, which limits access to decent and adequately paid work. Research also shows that remittances sent by migrant workers, especially women, make a significant contribution to household welfare and the economies of their communities of origin (Harsya & Lubis, 2023). Beyond economic pressures, another motivation for Indonesian women to become migrant workers is the opportunity to acquire better skills abroad. They often perceive overseas employment as providing access to new knowledge and competencies that may be difficult to obtain domestically (Sutiani et al., 2025). For many women, working abroad therefore represents not only a strategy for economic advancement but also an avenue for improving social mobility and expanding future opportunities.

Beyond the attractive economic opportunities associated with migration, the living conditions of migrant workers, particularly in Malaysia, and the challenges they face upon returning home have become important concerns. Return migration is often not accompanied by adequate preparation for post-return economic activities. Migrant workers are generally bound by fixed-term employment contracts in destination countries, requiring them to return to their country of origin once their contracts end. After working abroad, many experience difficulties reintegrating into Indonesia's social and economic environment. Previous studies indicate that although overseas employment often generates economic benefits through

remittances, it may also lead to psychological and social challenges upon return. Key issues commonly faced include poverty, loss of social identity, and social stigma within their communities (Nuryananda et al., 2022) . Other studies show that many return migrants struggle to secure decent employment after coming back to Indonesia and are often forced into precarious or inadequate work that does not meet their economic needs (Basrowi, 2019). These conditions signal an urgent need to design sustainable empowerment programs for returned migrant women. Such programs should take a proactive approach by equipping them with adaptive skills, financial literacy, and entrepreneurial support networks, enabling their migration experience to become a foundation for economic self-reliance and long-term well-being.

From a human resource development perspective, this situation highlights the importance of a more comprehensive empowerment strategy. Such an approach should address not only technical and entrepreneurial skills, but also psychological empowerment aimed at strengthening self-confidence, motivation, and mental resilience in facing post-return challenges. In this context, entrepreneurial empowerment represents a strategic approach to foster economic self-reliance among return migrant women.

Training programs that can be provided include microenterprise development, local food processing, and community-based business initiatives, all of which can help migrant women achieve financial independence and acquire the skills needed to actively participate in local economic activities. Achieving this objective requires support from multiple stakeholders in expanding access to training, business mentoring, and market networks that enable migrant women to develop sustainable enterprises.

As an effort to prepare Indonesian migrant women workers to become resilient and independent women entrepreneurs, a series of comprehensive training and empowerment programs were implemented. These programs aim to equip migrant women with the skills and readiness needed to establish independent businesses upon returning to Indonesia. As shown in Figure 1, the program encompassed four main components. First, capacity building in identifying business opportunities in Indonesia, enabling participants to recognize locally based entrepreneurial opportunities and formulate product development strategies aligned with market needs. Second, human resource strengthening, which includes skills development, psychological strengthening, entrepreneurial motivation, and enhanced self-confidence to help participants compete and adapt in the business environment. Third, business financial management, through which participants were provided with practical knowledge related to bookkeeping, budgeting, and simple financial reporting as a basis for business decision-making and evaluation. Fourth, participants were taught how to prepare a business plan. Through the synergy of these four components, participants are expected to build sustainable businesses and contribute as drivers of local economic development.

By integrating entrepreneurship training, psychological strengthening, and institutional support, returned migrant women have significant potential to become resilient actors in local economic development. Therefore, it is essential to design comprehensive and sustainable empowerment programs to ensure that their migration experience becomes a foundation for long-term self-reliance and well-being.

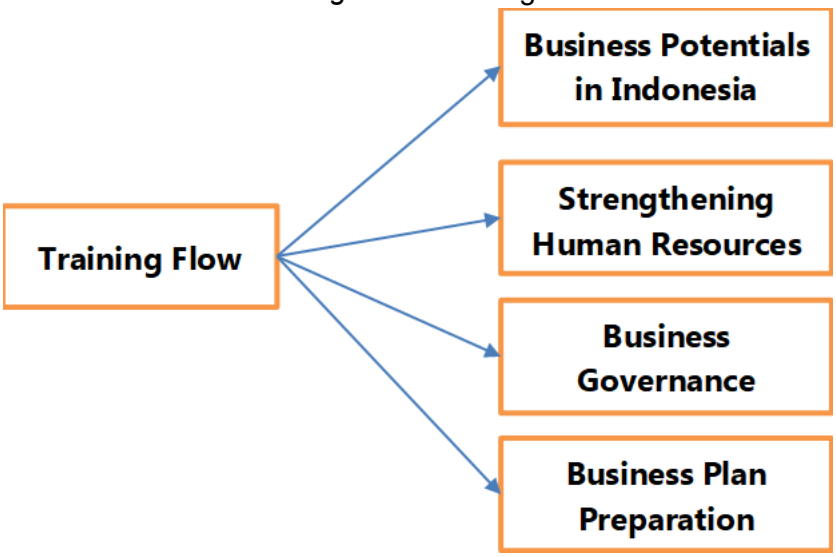
Entrepreneurial empowerment has been widely recognized as an effective strategy for enhancing women's economic resilience (Dewi et al., 2022; Muhammad et al., 2021). Entrepreneurship training programs can help women develop business competencies, strengthen self-confidence, and improve decision-making abilities. Previous studies have demonstrated that entrepreneurship education and training contribute significantly to women's economic empowerment and the development of sustainable livelihoods (Ahmed et al., 2025; Essien & Adelekan, 2021)

This gap is difficult to close from within Indonesia alone, because migrant women are still based in Malaysia when they need to begin preparing for their return. In response, Universitas Brawijaya (UB) contributed expertise in entrepreneurship, human resource development, and business management, while Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) helped

coordinate participant identification and the training location. Together, the two institutions implemented a community empowerment program aimed at strengthening the entrepreneurial capacity of Indonesian migrant women in Malaysia. The program focuses on business skills development, financial literacy training, and digital entrepreneurship as strategic efforts to prepare migrant women for successful economic reintegration upon returning to Indonesia.

Based on these objectives, the program was expected to generate three concrete changes. At the individual level, the expected change was behavioral: participants moving from viewing overseas work solely as wage employment toward planning an independent enterprise, evidenced by a written business plan, stronger entrepreneurial motivation, and greater psychological readiness for return. At the community level, the expected change was the formation of initial peer and partner networks among participants that could serve as informal channels of support and information after the program. At the institutional level, the expected change was a continuing collaboration between Universitas Brawijaya and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia that could sustain mentoring and serve as a basis for future pre-return empowerment programs for migrant women.

Figure 1. Training Flow



Source: Author's Work, 2026.

Method

This community service program was designed using a participatory and need-based approach, focusing on entrepreneurial empowerment for Indonesian migrant women in Malaysia. This approach was selected to ensure that the program functions not merely as a knowledge transfer initiative, but also as a responsive intervention addressing participants' actual needs through contextual and practical mentoring processes. Methodologically, the program was structured into three main stages namely preparation, implementation, and evaluation which were systematically designed to ensure effective program delivery and the sustainability of its impact.

Participants and Location

The program was implemented in Johor Bahru, Malaysia, in collaboration with Universiti Teknologi Malaysia and local partners, from 15 to 19 January 2026. A total of 20 Indonesian migrant women participated. Participants were recruited through coordination between the implementing team, UTM, and local partners, using purposive sampling where the criteria included Indonesian women currently working in Malaysia who were interested in entrepreneurship. Most participants were aged 25–45 years and had worked in Malaysia for between 2 and 15 years. They worked as factory workers, domestic workers, service workers, and informal-sector workers, and several already operated small businesses. Most

participants originated from East Java, Central Java, West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), and Lampung, and all expressed interest in starting a business after returning to Indonesia.

Preparation Stage

The preparation stage aimed to ensure the program's conceptual, technical, and operational readiness, thereby creating alignment between the implementation team and partner institutions throughout the program. This stage began with a process of consolidation and coordination between the community service team from Universitas Brawijaya and the collaborating partner Universiti Teknologi Malaysia through a series of online and in-person meetings. This coordination process focused on clarifying the roles of each party, developing the activity schedule, determining the training location, and identifying the characteristics and target participants of the program.

At this stage, a training need assessment was also conducted as an initial step to understand participants' socioeconomic conditions, entrepreneurial knowledge, key challenges, and psychological readiness for economic reintegration upon returning to Indonesia. The needs assessment employed a participatory approach through preliminary interviews, observations, and focus group discussions (FGDs). The instruments used included semi-structured interview guides, observation sheets, and discussion protocols focused on three main dimensions: business development needs, human resource strengthening, and business management capacity.

Based on the findings of the needs assessment, the team developed training materials tailored to participants' needs. The training content was structured around four main topics: (1) identification of business potential and entrepreneurial opportunities based on Indonesia's local resources, (2) human resource capacity strengthening, including motivation, entrepreneurial mindset, and psychological readiness, (3) basic business governance and financial management, and (4) business plan development as an initial guide for participants in establishing independent enterprises.

Implementation Stage

The implementation stage constituted the core of the community service program and was carried out through training sessions, mentoring, participatory discussions, and business planning practice. The program was conducted from 15–19 January 2026, targeting Indonesian migrant women in Malaysia. Activities were implemented face-to-face through collaboration between the community service team and local partners. The primary method applied at this stage was interactive lectures, aimed at providing conceptual understanding related to entrepreneurship, digital marketing, human resource strengthening, and business management. This method was used not only to introduce key concepts, but also to explain the objectives, mechanisms, and stages of the program to participants.

In addition to lectures, question-and-answer sessions and participatory discussions were employed to foster effective two-way communication between facilitators and participants (Hairunisya et al., 2023). Through this method, participants were encouraged to share their experiences, challenges, and aspirations related to business ideas they intended to develop. Discussions also focused on barriers faced by migrant women in building entrepreneurial motivation, accessing capital and markets, and transforming overseas work experience into social and economic capital.

As part of practical skill strengthening, the program also included business plan mentoring and simple business management simulations. In these sessions, participants were guided to identify business ideas, define market segments, develop marketing strategies, and prepare basic financial plans. In addition, the concept of digital entrepreneurship was introduced, particularly the use of digital media and online platforms for product marketing and business network expansion. The implementation approach emphasized the principle of empowerment, where participants were positioned not merely as beneficiaries, but as active subjects in the learning and business development process. Accordingly, the community service program functioned not only as a mechanism for knowledge transfer, but also as a process of strengthening individual and community capacity.

Evaluation Stage

The evaluation stage was conducted to assess the effectiveness of program implementation and the extent to which the activity objectives were achieved. Evaluation was carried out using both formative and summative approaches. Formative evaluation was undertaken throughout the training process through observation of participant engagement, reflective discussions, and direct feedback regarding both the training materials and implementation methods. Meanwhile, summative evaluation was conducted at the end of the program to assess perceived changes in participants' knowledge, entrepreneurial readiness, and perceptions of the program's benefits.

The evaluation instruments included participant feedback forms, observation notes, group discussion documentation, and assessments of participants' business plan outputs. Program success was measured through several indicators: (1) increased participant understanding of entrepreneurship and business opportunities, (2) improved readiness to design and manage independent businesses, (3) strengthened motivation and psychological resilience in facing economic reintegration, and (4) the establishment of initial networks among participants, the community service team, and partner institutions to support program sustainability. The program did not use a pre-test and post-test design. Changes in knowledge, readiness, and motivation were therefore assessed through participants' self-reported feedback, facilitator observations, and the quality of the business plans they produced, and should be interpreted as perceived rather than statistically measured change.

The evaluation results indicated that the program was implemented as planned, both in terms of timeline and implementation process. This success was supported by strong synergy among the implementing team, the partner institution Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, and the active participation of participants and the migrant community involved. Overall, the training and mentoring activities are expected to enhance migrant women's readiness to establish independent businesses, strengthen their economic resilience, and support productive reintegration upon returning to their home country. Through a structured design encompassing preparation, implementation, and evaluation stages, this program is expected to serve as a replicable model of entrepreneurial empowerment for migrant women communities in other regions.

Result

The community service program was implemented through three main meetings, as shown in Table 1., designed progressively to ensure that the empowerment process was systematic, participatory, and oriented toward strengthening participants' capacities. Each meeting had a distinct focus, beginning with orientation and needs mapping, followed by capacity strengthening through entrepreneurship training, and concluding with evaluation and reflection for program sustainability.

First Meeting: Program Orientation and Planning Consolidation

The first day of implementation began with the introduction of the implementation team to participants and partner representatives as an initial step in building communication, trust, and active engagement among all parties involved in the community service program as shown in Photo 1. At this stage, the team explained the implementation methods, activity guidelines, training flow, as well as the facilities and supporting tools to be used throughout the program. This orientation was intended to help participants understand the program mechanism while building their readiness to engage optimally in the full series of activities.

Beyond program introduction, the first meeting also focused on planning consolidation through small group discussions involving participants, partners, and the implementation team. These discussions served as an initial platform to identify participants' conditions, business development needs, prior entrepreneurial experiences, and challenges faced by migrant women in preparing for economic independence. Through this forum, participants were encouraged to share experiences, expectations, and potential business ideas they

hoped to develop.

Table 1. Training activity meeting schedule

Meeting 1		
Activities	-	Planning consolidation
	-	Introduction of the implementing group
	-	Introduction of the equipment to be used
	-	Small group discussion
Objectives	-	Introduce the community service program implementation method and introduce the group (implementing team).
	-	Evaluate implementation readiness
Meeting 2		
Activities	-	Material Delivery
	-	Discussion and Q&A
Objectives	-	To provide participants with knowledge about business potential, strengthening the entrepreneurial spirit and human resource potential, governance, and business planning.
Meeting 3		
Activities	-	Providing closing remarks and thanking participants at the final meeting
	-	Distributing souvenirs to participants (provided by partners)
	-	Reciting prayers
	-	Closing.
Objectives	-	To offer farewell thanks to participants and partners and demonstrate the results of the community service program implementation
	-	Evaluating activity results and sustainable development plans, as well as strengthening international cooperation

Source: Author's Work, 2026.

These small group discussions supported the initial learning process, according to facilitator observations, as participants began developing awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities that could be pursued upon returning to Indonesia. The activity also functioned as part of program readiness evaluation, both from participants' and facilitators' perspectives, enabling the subsequent stages of the program to be tailored to participants' actual needs and context. As such, the first meeting became a critical foundation for establishing a participatory and collaborative atmosphere throughout the mentoring process.

Photo 1. Group Discussion and Introduction Activities



Source: Private Documentation, 2026.

Second Meeting: Entrepreneurship Training and Capacity Strengthening

The second meeting constituted the core phase of the program, focusing on training and mentoring through material delivery, group discussions, and interactive question-and-answer sessions., as shown in Photo 2. At this stage, participants received training on identifying business opportunities in Indonesia, strengthening entrepreneurial motivation, human

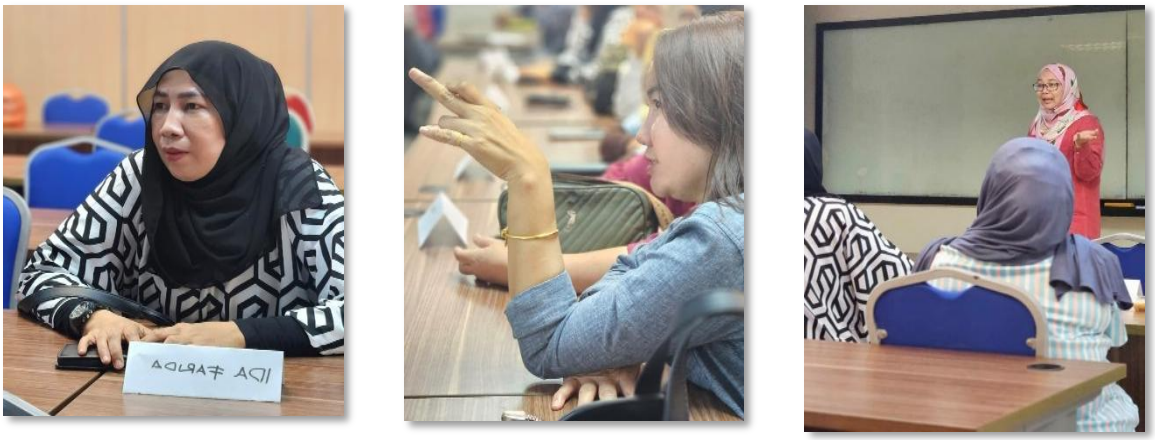
resource development, business management, and preparing simple business plans.

Training delivery employed an interactive and participatory approach so that participants were not merely passive recipients of knowledge, but were able to relate the materials to their real experiences as migrant workers. Sessions on business opportunities focused on helping participants identify enterprises based on local potential, utilize overseas work experience as social capital, and develop realistic and sustainable business ideas.

In addition, the entrepreneurial mindset strengthening sessions emphasized motivation, opportunity recognition, risk-taking courage, and psychological resilience as essential foundations of women's entrepreneurship. Discussions during this session revealed concerns related to psychological barriers, limited capital, and uncertainty regarding business sustainability after returning to Indonesia. These exchanges became a reflective space reinforcing the idea that entrepreneurship is not solely about business creation, but also about empowerment and self-reliance.

Business governance and business planning also formed an important part of this meeting. Participants were introduced to practical concepts related to business planning, basic financial management, marketing, and growth strategies. Through interactive discussions, participants actively consulted on business ideas they had initiated or intended to develop in Malaysia, including opportunities for migrant community-based microenterprises. As part of the empowerment strategy, the training integrated the use of simple and practical technologies relevant to participants' capacities, particularly for small business management and digital entrepreneurship. Participants were introduced to basic digital financial applications for bookkeeping and budgeting, followed by hands-on simulations to strengthen practical understanding of business financial management. The program also incorporated social media marketing training, equipping participants with foundational skills to utilize platforms such as WhatsApp Business, Instagram, and Facebook for business promotion, customer communication, and market expansion. This component represents an important innovation in the program, as it combined entrepreneurial empowerment with digital capability strengthening, enabling participants not only to improve business readiness but also to adapt to contemporary market opportunities. Through mentoring and independent practice, participants were encouraged to apply these skills through online business simulations, reinforcing the practical and sustainable orientation of the empowerment model.

Photo 2. Training Session



Source: Private Documentation, 2026.

The implementation of the second meeting demonstrated strong participant enthusiasm, particularly in discussions concerning business strategies aligned with their capacities and available resources. Based on facilitator observations and participant feedback, the activities appeared to increase entrepreneurial knowledge, business readiness, and the emergence of an entrepreneurial spirit among participants, although these changes were not measured with standardized tests. Beyond knowledge transfer, this session also strengthened two-way

communication between facilitators and participants, which became a key element in the empowerment-based mentoring process.

Third Meeting: Evaluation, Reflection, and Strengthening Program Sustainability

The third meeting served as the closing stage of the program and focused on evaluating program outcomes, collective reflection, and strengthening plans for sustainability. The session began with expressions of appreciation and gratitude to all participants and partner representatives for their active involvement throughout the program. At this stage, souvenirs from the partner institution were also distributed as a gesture of recognition for participants' engagement in the community service activities, as shown in Photo 3.

Beyond its ceremonial function, this meeting also served as an evaluation forum to reflect on program implementation and outcomes. The implementation team and participants discussed the benefits gained, changes in participants' understanding of entrepreneurship, and opportunities for follow-up initiatives that could sustain the program's impact. The evaluation, based on participant feedback and facilitator observations, indicated that participants not only reported additional knowledge, but also appeared to show increased psychological readiness and stronger motivation to pursue independent business initiatives.

Discussions during this stage also generated valuable input regarding the need for continued mentoring, broader access to market networks, and sustained institutional support to strengthen migrant women's enterprises after returning home. Therefore, the third meeting functioned not merely as a closing session, but also as a platform for formulating future program development directions.

Another important achievement emerging from this meeting was the strengthening of international collaboration between the implementation team and partner institution, which opened opportunities for continued cooperation in developing empowerment models for migrant women workers. The activity concluded with a joint prayer and formal closing ceremony, symbolizing both the completion of the community service program and a shared commitment to sustaining its long-term impact.

Overall, the three meetings suggest that a structured training and mentoring approach can enhance participants' entrepreneurial readiness, strengthen economic resilience, and foster collective awareness of the importance of empowering migrant women as part of broader community economic development. The program also indicates that synergy among training, mentoring, and strategic partnerships can serve as a promising empowerment model with potential for replication in other migrant worker communities.

Photo 3. Closing Ceremony and Reflection Session



Source: Private Documentation, 2026.

Discussion

The results of this community service program indicate that an empowerment approach based on training and mentoring contributed to strengthening the entrepreneurial capacity of Indonesian migrant women in Malaysia. This discussion is organized according to the sequence of program implementation, beginning with orientation and needs mapping, followed by training and mentoring activities, and concluding with evaluation and sustainability reflection.

In the first meeting, the orientation activities, small group discussions, and needs mapping revealed that participants' needs extended beyond business skills to include psychological strengthening, access to business information, and readiness for economic reintegration after returning to Indonesia. This finding suggests that the challenges faced by migrant women are not merely economic, but also relate to adaptive capacities in rebuilding livelihoods after migration. From a community engagement perspective, this needs identification stage was crucial because it ensured that the intervention was grounded in the real problems of the target community. This finding aligns with the work of (Suryono et al., 2023), who emphasize that effective empowerment initiatives should begin with participatory approaches so that interventions remain contextual and sustainable.

Discussions at this initial stage also revealed that some participants had informal economic experience but had not yet recognized it as entrepreneurial potential that could be further developed. This indicates that the orientation process functioned not only as a program introduction but also as a process of building entrepreneurial awareness. One important early impact of this stage was the emergence of active participation and greater openness among participants in discussing both challenges and business opportunities. From an innovation perspective, the integration of needs assessment and participatory discussion offers a responsive model for designing migrant empowerment programs.

In the second meeting, participant feedback and facilitator observations indicated increased participant understanding regarding business opportunity identification, entrepreneurial mindset strengthening, business management, and basic business planning. These findings suggest that entrepreneurship training served not merely as knowledge transfer, but also as a mechanism for economic capacity building and mindset transformation. This result supports findings by Nur et al. (2025) that structured entrepreneurship training contributes significantly to enhancing women's business capabilities in empowerment groups.

One important observation at this stage was an apparent increase in entrepreneurial motivation and participants' confidence to begin planning businesses more seriously. This indicates that the program's impact extended beyond cognitive outcomes into participants' psychological dimensions. This finding is consistent with studies by Digan et al. (2018), which demonstrate that psychological empowerment, self-efficacy, and resilience are closely associated with women's entrepreneurial success. Accordingly, this program suggests that entrepreneurial strengthening and psychological strengthening should be positioned as integrated components in migrant women empowerment models.

Discussions and question-and-answer sessions during training also highlighted participants' strong need for dialogic spaces to discuss business barriers, market access, capital constraints, and strategies for leveraging migration experiences as entrepreneurial resources. This finding reinforces the argument that effective empowerment cannot rely solely on one-way training but requires dialogic mentoring processes. In this context, the training approach contributed not only to increased knowledge but also to strengthening participants' entrepreneurial agency such as their willingness and confidence to make independent economic decisions.

In addition, introducing digital business concepts emerged as an important innovation within the program. Strengthening digital entrepreneurship literacy reflects the evolution of contemporary empowerment models that move beyond conventional business approaches. This finding supports studies by Jabbouri et al. (2024) showing that entrepreneurial empowerment grounded in local initiatives and adaptive to technological developments can generate broader socio-economic impacts. In community service practice, integrating digital entrepreneurship can therefore be seen as an innovative component with replication potential in other migrant communities.

In the third meeting, evaluation and reflection indicated that participants not only experienced increased knowledge but also developed stronger readiness to view entrepreneurship as a strategic alternative after migration. The impact of this stage was

reflected in participants' growing optimism about establishing independent businesses and in expressed demand for continued mentoring support. This is significant because it suggests that the success of community service initiatives should not be measured solely by short-term knowledge transfer, but also by the emergence of sustainability-oriented outcomes among participants.

In terms of benefits, the program generated impacts at three levels. At the individual level, it improved participants' knowledge, motivation, and business readiness. At the community level, it encouraged the development of social networks and collective spirit for strengthening migrant women's economic resilience. At the institutional level, it strengthened international collaboration between universities and partners as a model of cross-border community engagement synergy. These multidimensional impacts illustrate that community service can function not only as dissemination of knowledge, but also as a platform for social innovation.

The findings also demonstrate the program's contribution to developing a more holistic model of community service. While many empowerment initiatives focus only on partial economic skill training, this program integrated three components simultaneously: entrepreneurial strengthening, psychological empowerment, and institutional support. This integration represents an innovative contribution because it offers a more comprehensive empowerment model compared with conventional training approaches.

From the perspective of future community engagement development, these findings open possibilities for replicating this model among other migrant worker communities, whether in different destination countries or among returned migrant workers in Indonesia. The model can also be further developed through business incubation, post-training mentoring, and integration with microenterprise ecosystems and digital entrepreneurship initiatives. Thus, the contribution of this program is not only practical for participants, but also offers an innovative approach for broader community-based empowerment programs.

Several limitations and challenges should be acknowledged. First, the program involved only 20 participants at a single location and was delivered over five days (15–19 January 2026), which limited the depth of follow-up mentoring and the generalizability of the findings. Second, because the program did not use a pre-test and post-test design, changes in knowledge, motivation, and readiness were captured through participant feedback, facilitator observations, and business plan outputs, and therefore reflect perceived rather than statistically measured change. Third, the evaluation did not follow participants after the program, so it remains unknown how many business plans will be put into practice after participants return to Indonesia. To anticipate these constraints, the team grounded the training content in the preliminary needs assessment, relied on simple and widely used tools such as WhatsApp Business, Instagram, Facebook, and basic digital financial applications rather than complex software, and used small-group discussions and hands-on simulations so that participants with different levels of experience could take part. These limitations point to the need for larger samples, pre-test and post-test measurement, and post-program follow-up in future implementations.

In Sum, entrepreneurship training and mentoring for migrant women workers can produce tangible impacts in strengthening economic capacity, enhancing resilience, and building a stronger foundation for sustainable entrepreneurship. More importantly, the program demonstrates that community service can become a strategic instrument for transforming migration experiences into productive capital while contributing to the development of inclusive and sustainable socio-economic empowerment innovations.

Conclusion

The entrepreneurial empowerment program for Indonesian migrant women in Malaysia has demonstrated its potential to strengthen participants' business capacity, financial literacy, and self-confidence. The program contributes significantly to supporting migrant women's

economic self-reliance while also reinforcing local economic resilience upon their return to Indonesia. The training and mentoring activities implemented through this program represent a strategic effort to enhance both entrepreneurial capacity and business resilience among migrant women workers. The program successfully provided participants with a stronger understanding of entrepreneurial spirit, empowerment, stress management, and resilience concepts that are highly relevant to the needs and realities faced by migrant women. Through these activities, participants became better prepared to face challenges related to economic sustainability and post-return livelihood reintegration. The program also created a dialogic space for participants to discuss specific challenges they encounter, such as limited business capital, uncertainty in planning post-migration livelihoods, psychological stress, and restricted access to market information and support networks. The solutions introduced were practical and tailored to participants' needs, including the utilization of local business opportunities, simple financial planning, digital marketing tools, and community-based entrepreneurial networks as strategic resources for business development. Through an interactive and practice-oriented approach, this initiative is expected not only to strengthen entrepreneurial orientation and human resilience, but also to generate broader positive impacts on the welfare of migrant women workers and their families. More broadly, this program offers a replicable empowerment model that integrates entrepreneurship development, psychological strengthening, and community support as a foundation for sustainable migrant women empowerment.

Recommendations

1. Expanding Program Reach: Future programs should broaden their outreach to involve a larger number of participants, including Indonesian migrant workers in other regions or destination countries. This expansion can be strengthened through collaboration with migrant worker communities, diaspora networks, and relevant institutions to increase program accessibility and impact.
2. Developing Sustainable Training Modules: Training materials should be continuously updated and refined to remain responsive to developments in human resource empowerment, entrepreneurship, and migrant workers' evolving needs. Sustainable and adaptive training modules will help ensure the long-term relevance and effectiveness of empowerment interventions.
3. Strengthening Follow-Up Monitoring and Evaluation: The program should be complemented by a continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanism to assess its long-term impact on participants' behavioral change, entrepreneurial development, and economic resilience. This can be implemented through periodic surveys, follow-up discussions, or post-program mentoring to support sustainability and generate evidence for future program improvement. Future implementations should also administer pre-test and post-test instruments to measure changes in knowledge and entrepreneurial readiness, and track how many business plans are put into practice after participants return to Indonesia.

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