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Enhancing Occupational Health Capacity for Indonesian Migrant Workers in the Domestic Sector in Hong Kong

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Abstract
Indonesian migrant workers (PMI) in Hong Kong's domestic sector face various occupational health and safety risks, as well as limited understanding regarding social protection. This community service initiative aims to enhance the health-related capacity of these workers through education on occupational health and employment-related social protection programs. A participatory approach was employed, comprising preparation, implementation, and evaluation phases. The activities included educational presentations, discussions, and Q&A sessions covering occupational health, the prevention of diseases and workplace accidents, stress management, healthy lifestyle practices, and an understanding of employment social security programs in both Indonesia and the host country. The results indicate that participants engaged actively and enthusiastically throughout the program, gaining increased knowledge regarding the importance of occupational health protection, workplace safety, and employment-related social protection. This initiative is expected to improve occupational health literacy and encourage the utilization of social protection programs, thereby enhancing the health, safety, and productivity of Indonesian migrant workers while employed abroad.

Keywords: *digital financial literacy, financial education, income management, indonesian migrant workers, remittances*

INTRODUCTION

Migration is influenced by push factors from the area of origin, such as declining job opportunities, political instability, conflict, and natural disasters, as well as pull factors from the destination area, such as the prospect of better opportunities, a high standard of living, a comfortable environment and better education (Prajanti et al., 2024). In many regions of Indonesia, migration patterns are determined by factors such as poverty, education levels, unemployment rates and the Human Development Index (Lova & Aisyah, 2024). Indonesia's steadily rising population has created an imbalance between job availability and the size of the workforce; this, compounded by regional disparities in technological capabilities and education levels, drives some individuals to seek employment abroad as Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) (Firlana & Tando, 2022).

Migrant workers are individuals who live and work in a place where they do not hold citizenship (Anderson et al., 2024). Under Law Number 18 of 2017 concerning the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers, an Indonesian Migrant Worker is an Indonesian citizen who is working, has worked, or intends to work abroad (Shaleh, 2022). Data on the placement and complaints of Indonesian migrant workers for 2024 shows 297,434 placements, a 0.11% increase compared to the previous year with the highest numbers recorded in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, Japan and Singapore; the five most common roles were housemaid, caregiver, general worker, plantation worker and domestic worker (BP2MI, 2025). Bank Indonesia reported that in 2023, foreign exchange inflows, specifically remittances sent by Indonesian migrant workers from abroad totaled IDR 227 trillion, marking a 42.2% increase from 2019 to 2023 (BP2MI, 2024). Labour migration is an important economic activity

for both receiving and sending countries; however, migrants face numerous vulnerabilities, such as physical and mental abuse, unpaid wages, human trafficking and others (Safitri & Wibisono, 2023). Migrant workers also face health risks such as fatigue, muscle pain, stress, skin diseases, and disorders resulting from dietary habits and the climate of the destination country (Kurnia et al., 2024).

Data on complaints from Indonesian migrant workers in 2024 shows a total of 1,500 complaints, covering issues such as death, illness, abuse by employers and even depression or mental health disorders (BP2MI, 2025). Under Article 1 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189) of 2011, a domestic worker is defined as any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship (ILO, 2011). The domestic sector is characterized by working conditions such as: domestic work often being informal and performed in private spaces (employers' homes), long working hours, limited supervision and difficult access to healthcare services or social assistance (Parella et al., 2024). Domestic workers face significant risks, such as low wages, exploitation, long working hours with limited breaks, and physical and psychological abuse (Labadie-Jackson, 2008). In destination countries, many Indonesian migrant workers face problems such as being treated unfairly by their employers (Ndarujati, 2021). In August 2021, a migrant worker named Yuni suffered physical abuse including beatings, having her head shaved, and being stabbed with a fork at the hands of her employer in Baghdad, Iraq (BP2MI, 2011). Another case involved Reni in Taiwan between 2021 and 2022; she was a victim of severe abuse by her employer (BP2MI, 2024). In 2025, Elvy, a migrant domestic worker, fell victim to violence at the hands of an agency in Malaysia (BP2MI, 2025). Furthermore, there was the fatal accident involving Siti Purwaningsih on October 6, 2025, an Indonesian migrant worker who was struck by a car while walking with her employer (Rahman & Susanti, 2025).

The high level of safety risks faced by Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) necessitates government-provided social protection to guarantee their right to social security, ensure equal treatment, and expand coverage to workers who remain unprotected (Prajanti et al., 2024). A 2022 report by the National Social Security Council indicates that 67.7% of Indonesian migrant workers abroad are not yet registered with the Social Security Agency for Employment *(BPJS Ketenagakerjaan)* program (Shalihah & Alviah, 2023). Insurance is a vital form of social protection for Indonesian migrant workers; however, many remain unprotected due to limited access, high costs, a lack of understanding regarding benefits and concerns about the difficulty of filing claims (Yulianti et al., 2023). Indonesian migrant workers' understanding of social protection programs—both in Indonesia and in their countries of employment—remains very limited and uneven. Many of them are unaware of the types of insurance or social security coverage they possess (Yusup, 2023). Migrant workers face various obstacles in claiming social security, including a lack of knowledge regarding claim procedures, limited understanding of their rights and incomplete documentation required for the claims process (Berlianti et al., 2024). Therefore, capacity-building initiatives for Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) need to be comprehensively designed to strengthen worker protection and professionalism, encompassing two key aspects: enhancing understanding and reinforcing skills (Widowati et al., 2025).

An analysis of Indonesian migrant workers reveals persistent challenges regarding capacity building and labour protection. Identified issues show that Indonesian migrant workers in the domestic sector frequently encounter serious problems in their destination countries, ranging from violence and exploitation to workplace accidents. Beyond the risks of violence and accidents, these workers face obstacles regarding social protection specifically concerning participation in and utilization of employment insurance programs. Migrant workers' understanding of social security systems both in Indonesia and in their host countries remains limited and uneven. Furthermore, they encounter various hurdles when attempting to claim the social security benefits to which they are entitled. These obstacles include a lack of knowledge regarding claim procedures, insufficient understanding of labour protection rights and incomplete administrative documentation, which is a primary requirement for the claims process. Indonesian migrant workers (PMI) in the domestic sector, who are vulnerable to violence, exploitation and barriers in accessing social protection require capacity-building efforts to ensure they understand employment-based social security. Solutions to these issues are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Problem and Solution

ASPECT	PROBLEM	SOLUTION	TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENTS
Knowledge of Indonesian Migrant Workers in the Domestic Sector.	Lack of knowledge among Indonesian migrant workers in the domestic sector regarding the benefits and procedures of participation in employment social security.	Providing training and outreach to Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) regarding employment social security.	Increased understanding and awareness among Indonesian migrant workers in the domestic sector regarding the importance of employment social security.

METHOD

The methods and implementation stages for the community service activity titled "Enhancing Occupational Health Capacity for Indonesian Migrant Workers in the Domestic Sector in Hong Kong" include the following: 1) Training method: Providing education, understanding and knowledge to Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) in the domestic sector regarding employment social security; 2) Participatory method: Providing training and skills to Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) in the domestic sector to ensure they fully understand the administrative processes regarding participation in the employment social security program, while also equipping them with practical skills such as filing social security claims so that they can independently secure optimal work protection rights in accordance with applicable regulations; 3) Implementation stages. The implementation process consists of three stages: a) Preparation stage: This stage involves conducting a needs analysis and coordinating with partners regarding the activity plan details, such as the schedule, venue and necessary facilities. Simultaneously, internal coordination within the community service team is carried out to prepare educational materials and media b) Implementation stage: This stage involves capacity-building training for Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) to enhance their knowledge and skills. The training encompasses outreach sessions, group discussions and practical simulations regarding registration for, utilization of, and claims processing for employment social security. The training aims to improve the workers' knowledge; c) Evaluation stage: This community service initiative integrates interventions across several simultaneous areas—one of which is occupational health, the focus of this article—resulting in a relatively short timeframe for the activity. Consequently, the only feasible evaluation method was through discussions and Q&A sessions with the Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) regarding the training provided, in order to gauge their level of enthusiasm and their understanding of the importance of social security coverage for employment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Capacity-building activities regarding occupational health for Indonesian migrant workers in the domestic sector in Hong Kong were conducted through the educational presentations, discussions, and Q&A sessions. The topics covered included occupational health, the prevention of work-related illnesses and accidents, the importance of maintaining physical and mental well-being while working abroad, healthy lifestyle practices, the identification of workplace health risks, measures to prevent work-related injuries and illnesses and simple strategies for managing work-related stress. Additionally, participants received information on employment social security programs, a form of social protection available in both Indonesia and the host country covering membership benefits, workers' rights, registration procedure and claim mechanisms in the event of workplace accidents or other work-related risks (Supriyadi, 2026).

Throughout the event, participants engaged enthusiastically in every session and actively discussed various health issues encountered while working in Hong Kong. The activity aims to enhance the knowledge of Indonesian migrant workers regarding the importance of occupational health as a key asset for maintaining productivity, safety and quality of life while working abroad. Support from the Universitas Terbuka Hong Kong Student Association (PERMA UTHK) contributed significantly to the smooth execution of the event, spanning from the initial needs assessment to the actual implementation of the community service activity. Indonesian migrant workers in Hong Kong's domestic sector are highly vulnerable to occupational risks; because they work in private household settings, oversight regarding the implementation of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) standards is relatively limited, leaving them susceptible to workplace accidents, occupational illnesses, fatigue, health issues, violence, and exploitation, as well as restricted access to adequate social protection (Mutiara & Eddyono, 2023). The implementation of education and training demonstrates that

enhancing occupational health capacity is a crucial step toward improving occupational health literacy, defined as a worker's ability to acquire, understand and apply occupational health information, thereby enabling them to make informed decisions regarding health and safety in the workplace (Friedrich et al., 2023). The results of this activity align with previous research indicating that safety awareness training can enhance the occupational health and safety knowledge of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI). Such training not only fosters an understanding of potential workplace hazards but also equips workers with skills in hazard identification, risk assessment and the determination of control measures, while also clarifying their rights and responsibilities regarding occupational health and safety implementation. Qualitative evaluation results revealed an improvement in participants' understanding during discussions; consequently, periodic training is recommended to continuously enhance safety awareness among migrant workers (Widowati et al., 2025).

Information regarding the employment-based social security program, a form of social protection is a key component of this activity, as it aims to enhance Indonesian Migrant Workers' (PMI) knowledge of their rights to social security, the benefits of participation, and the protection mechanisms available in both Indonesia and their host countries. Such education is crucial given the ongoing challenges in implementing social security programs for PMI in Hong Kong; some workers prefer employer-provided insurance over the state-run *BPJS Ketenagakerjaan*, and access to various insurance schemes remains limited, despite the vital importance of such protection in mitigating risks related to health issues, workplace accidents and death. Consequently, improving understanding of social security, health insurance and employment-related insurance programs is expected to encourage PMI to make more optimal use of available social protection measures (Shalihah & Alviah, 2023; Yulianti et al., 2023). The information on physical and mental health provided during the activities is also relevant to the nature of domestic work performed by Indonesian migrant workers in Hong Kong. These workers often operate under precarious employment conditions and face adverse working environments such as excessive workloads, long hours and various forms of exploitation that can impact their mental health. Poor employment conditions are significantly linked to increased symptoms of anxiety and depression among domestic migrant workers, with stress levels and job satisfaction acting as mediators in this relationship. Consequently, education on stress management is a crucial measure for supporting the mental health and well-being of migrant workers while they are employed abroad (Sumerlin et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

Occupational health capacity-building activities for Indonesian migrant workers (PMI) in the domestic sector in Hong Kong were conducted through educational presentations, discussions, and Q&A sessions addressing Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), workplace accident and occupational illness prevention, healthy lifestyles, stress management, and employment-based social security programs. The activities received enthusiastic participation and are expected to improve occupational health literacy, including awareness of PPE use and social security rights and benefits. Sustainable capacity-building programs involving higher education institutions, the government, BPJS Ketenagakerjaan, the Indonesian Consulate General (KJRI), and migrant worker organizations are needed. Future programs should integrate OSH, labour rights, social security benefits, participation mechanisms, and insurance claim procedures in both Indonesia and the host country. A limitation of this activity was the absence of objective pre- and post-intervention knowledge assessments. Therefore, future programs should incorporate structured evaluations to objectively measure improvements in knowledge and the utilization of social security protections.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI

The authors declare that no generative AI or AI-assisted technologies were used in the writing process of this manuscript.

CONFLICTING INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors states that there is no conflict of interest in the publication of this article.

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