

## **Empowering Returns: Social Entrepreneurship and Public Value Creation in the Reintegration of Indonesian Migrant Workers from South Korea**

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Received 5 July 2023; Received in revised form 16 October 2023

Accepted 25 October 2023; Available online 14 December 2023

### **Abstract**

The exponential intensification of international migration has led to amplified return flows back to countries of origin, presenting challenges for sustainable reintegration. From this perspective, social entrepreneurship initiatives supporting returnee empowerment offer promising yet understudied solutions to the challenges of sustainable reintegration. When designed holistically, such initiatives have the potential to generate multidimensional public value across political, economic, and educational domains, facilitating impactful and inclusive reintegration processes. We explore Indonesia's Kampung Korea Program, which leverages social entrepreneurship to empower returning migrant workers through tailored training and collaborative support services. Our qualitative exploration, involving perspectives of migrant returnees and embassy officials, elicits in-depth insights into the role of the program in enabling capacity building, network expansion, and access to opportunities, emphasizing the public value creation that capacitates individuals to drive positive change. We enrich the academic discourse on integrating social entrepreneurship and public value creation in reintegration contexts, enabling meaningful initiatives that empower returning migrants within complex global migration dynamics and promote inclusive, equitable societies.

### **Keywords**

Public value creation, Social entrepreneurship, Indonesian migrant, Migration, Kampung Korea Program

## Introduction

The unprecedented ease of global mobility, afforded by advances in transportation, communication technologies, and interconnectedness between countries, along with increased access to resources and opportunities abroad, has expedited the dramatic rise in international migration. This phenomenon has become a focal point of academic research, with scholars examining its causes and impacts (Kuznetsov & Sabel, 2006; Mahroum, 2000; Williams & Baláž, 2014). According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2021, see the *IOM Annual Report 2021*), the number of individuals residing abroad has nearly tripled to 281 million since the turn of the millennium, up from just 85 million in 2000, a remarkable growth that reflects the increasing acceptance and normalization of migration in the modern era compared to earlier periods.

However, the complex nature of international migration has also called for a careful examination of its many ramifications. Migration is often praised for its economic benefits and the influx of remittances; yet, it is worth noting that migration can unwittingly perpetuate poverty and precarity (Fainim, 2002; Murrugarra et al., 2010). This occurs through a web of intersecting factors, where systemic constraints compel people to migrate in search of better opportunities, only for them to confront heightened vulnerabilities abroad due to discrimination, exploitation, and lack of legal protections or social integration (see Rahman Bhuyan et al., 2001).

Motivations behind migration extend beyond purely economic factors, involving a range of aspects such as family obligations, limited local opportunities, and the desire to escape poverty or conflict (see Fujikura et al., 2023). These factors are also likely to compound the challenges faced by international migrant workers, including contract violations, a lack of legal protections, barriers to healthcare access, and social isolation, all of which can lead to marginalization and precarity abroad. It is within this context that return migration, often associated with acquired skills and resources, can have detrimental outcomes when reintegration fails, resulting in social dislocation, loss of overseas income, employment difficulties, and psychosocial stresses.

In the discourse on migration, return migration has emerged as an important issue, providing opportunities for returnees to contribute their acquired skills, knowledge, and resources to development in their home communities (Cassarino, 2004; Wahba, 2014). However, successful and sustainable reintegration after return migration is further contingent on navigating complex challenges, including mitigating health and safety risks, ensuring equitable access to housing and employment, providing social support, and addressing the needs of vulnerable groups (Arowolo, 2000; Cassarino, 2015).

With recent decades witnessing a surge in emigration from Indonesia, prompted by the lack of decent work and persistent economic inequality that propels citizens to seek better

prospects through overseas employment (Hugo, 2006), there has been a concurrent increase in return flows as migrants come back home, demanding effective reintegration support. Among the initiatives, the Indonesian government has introduced programs such as the Kampung Korea Program launched in 2019 to assist returnees from South Korea with training in motivation, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship. Yet, research remains limited on the role of social entrepreneurship initiatives in reintegration programs, despite recognition of their potential for impactful solutions to social challenges (Zahra et al., 2009).

Adopting a qualitative, migrant-centric approach, we embrace the perspectives of Indonesian migrant workers engaged with the Kampung Korea Program. We examine the nuances of reintegration, focusing specifically on the role of social entrepreneurship and its potential to create public value. Through analysis of factors shaping reintegration experiences, we provide insights informing the design of programs and policies. Although many Indonesian migrant workers repatriate from South Korea, research remains scarce regarding the effectiveness of reintegration initiatives and the capacity of social entrepreneurship to generate public value. We therefore seek to contribute to more impactful programs facilitating successful reintegration, fostering holistic development, and promoting societal well-being.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Social Entrepreneurship and Public Value Creation in Migrant Reintegration***

In the realm of reintegration challenges faced by returning migrant workers, the integration of social entrepreneurship emerges as a catalyst for sustainable, impactful social change, particularly in the context of creating public value. These innovative approaches not only address deep-rooted social and economic disparities but also enhance access to education and healthcare, promote environmental sustainability, and encourage community participation. Aligning with the principles of public value creation and social entrepreneurship (Newland & Tanaka, 2011; Stephan et al., 2015), such programs acknowledge the challenges faced by returning migrant workers and strive to develop solutions that extend beyond mere economic support, fostering sustainable reintegration and positive societal impact.

However, the successful reintegration of returning migrants within the complex web of social networks, community dynamics, and labor market conditions represents a multidimensional process. Scholars such as Arowolo (2000) and Kuschminder and Kuschminder (2017) have pointed out the need to address fundamental challenges related to health and safety risks, equitable access to housing and jobs, and the establishment of robust family support systems. These challenges reinforce the nature of reintegration, emphasizing the necessity for initiatives that embrace both social entrepreneurship and

public value creation principles. Such holistic approaches are projected to create enduring positive impacts on the lives of returning migrant workers and their communities, such as enhanced economic prospects and social integration (Cassarino, 2014; Van Meeteren et al., 2014).

The integration of social entrepreneurship into reintegration programs empowers individuals, transforming them into active agents of change within their lives and communities (Barraket, 2007; Geuijen et al., 2017). It goes beyond offering temporary assistance by equipping returnees with the skills and resources necessary to establish sustainable livelihoods (Ho & Dreher, 2006; Mahuteau et al., 2015). Reintegrating returning migrant workers involves challenges beyond the economic spectrum, with returnees often grappling with rebuilding social connections, addressing psychosocial adjustment issues, and navigating complex family dynamics (Christou, 2011; Van Meeteren et al., 2014). Facilitating sustainable reintegration thus mandates a holistic approach covering economic, social, psychosocial, and cultural dimensions, recognizing the interdependencies across individual, interpersonal, community, and structural levels (Davids & Von Houte, 2008).

Within the evolving social landscape of Indonesia, an exploration of social entrepreneurship and public value creation within reintegration programs becomes imperative. As the nation grapples with the challenges confronting returning migrant workers, an in-depth examination of these innovative approaches becomes not just relevant but essential.

### ***Indonesia's Migration Landscape: Return Migration and Returnees***

Indonesia, as the fourth most populous nation globally, bears the imprint of its diverse and dynamic population, influenced by a rich legacy of migration dating back to its pre-colonial role as a thriving hub of global trade and commerce that forged connections across regions (Lamoureux, 2003; Triandafyllidou, 2018). Over the past few decades, Indonesia has emerged as a major source of migrant labor, with millions venturing abroad in pursuit of employment opportunities and higher wages, driven by a complex interplay of economic and social factors (Hugo, 1995, 2006; Van Lottum & Marks, 2012). This migration trend has accelerated, resulting in a staggering estimate of 7.1 million Indonesian migrant workers as reported by the International Labor Organization (ILO) in 2019 (see World Employment and Social Outlook, 2019).

The perception that cross-border migration confers benefits by providing employment opportunities, especially in the Global South (Jalilian, 2012), has driven efforts by origin and destination countries to attract migrant workers, recognizing the economic boost of remittances for development (Djajić, 1986; Semyonov & Gorodzeisky, 2008). However, along with emigration, Indonesia has seen a significant rise in returnees as migrants opt to come home after stints abroad, motivated by factors such as family ties or

Indonesia's economic expansion in sectors such as infrastructure, manufacturing, and tourism (Bachtiar & Prasetyo, 2014; Missbach & Palmer, 2022). Yet returning poses challenges, including finding employment, cultural readjustment, and reconnecting with families who may have changed during the migrant's absence (Bonifazi & Paparusso, 2019; Brunovskis & Surtees, 2013).

Mitigating the potential adverse outcomes of international migration, including exploitation, discrimination, and the lack of protections for migrant workers abroad, becomes imperative to cultivate a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the integral role of return migration within the broader context of sustainable development. Moreover, return migration acts as a catalyst for transferring cutting-edge technology, innovative ideas, and global best practices that returnees have been exposed to in destination countries and bring back to their home communities. The knowledge, skills, and networks returnees bring back have the capacity to facilitate the establishment of robust relationships and interconnected systems across borders (Barraket, 2007; Geuijen et al., 2017) that can drive sustained economic growth and foster holistic human development (Chacko, 2007). Returnees often return with higher education, advanced technical skills, global perspectives, and financial resources that can be invested into entrepreneurial activities with social impact.

Our contribution to the existing body of international migration literature, with a specific focus on return migration and reintegration within the Indonesian context, enriches the discourse surrounding migrant reintegration by examining the effectiveness of reintegration programs. We place particular emphasis on the understudied Kampung Korea Program. In addressing this research gap, we aim to evaluate the impact of this specific reintegration program and explore the potential of social entrepreneurship in facilitating the successful reintegration of returnees while creating public value. Our research seeks to shed light on the mechanisms and strategies that can maximize the societal benefits of return migration through social entrepreneurship initiatives within reintegration programs. We anticipate that our findings will not only contribute to academic discussions but also provide guidance for the development of more effective strategies and policies that leverage social entrepreneurship for reintegration. In doing so, we aim to foster holistic development, promote societal well-being, and generate public value.

## **Research Methods**

Employing a qualitative, descriptive case study approach, our research seeks to enhance our understanding of the experiences and challenges faced by returning Indonesian migrant workers in South Korea. We do this by analyzing the textual context of this social phenomenon to uncover the underlying causes and motivations shaping their reintegration process (see Clarke & Braun, 2013). The case study approach is particularly relevant in this context as it allows us to delve into the individualized and specific experiences and

circumstances of returning migrant workers. This approach provides in-depth insights into their reintegration process, pinpointing the many factors that influence their successful transition back into their home communities (Creswell & Clark, 2004; Creswell & Poth, 2016).

We leveraged the strategic location of the renowned Indonesian Embassy in Seoul, South Korea, a significant destination for Indonesian migrant workers seeking employment opportunities abroad. The city's advanced economy and appealing prospects for foreign workers make it an ideal setting to gain insights into the experiences and challenges faced by returning migrant workers. Our study includes a total of 15 participants, categorized into three main groups: ex-migrant workers who have returned to Indonesia after working in South Korea, current migrant workers who are still living and working in South Korea, and embassy officials based at the Indonesian Embassy in Seoul. Ex-migrant workers offer insights into the complete experience of working abroad and then returning home, including the challenges of reintegration. Current migrant workers provide an on-the-ground viewpoint of the migrant experience in South Korea, and embassy officials offer an institutional perspective on policies and programs aimed at supporting migrant workers (see Appendix 1).

Among the participants, 10 were male and 5 were female, ranging in age from 26 to 40 years old. Additionally, three embassy officials participated in the interviews, including representatives with leadership roles such as the Counsellor/Coordinator for Investment and Trade Economic Function, the Coordinator for Protocol and Consular Function, and the Labor Attaché. While our primary focus centers on capturing the experiences of migrant workers, interviews with embassy officials provide relevant insights into the existing policies and programs that support these individuals. Integrating the perspectives of both migrant workers and officials allows us to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement within the support system, ensuring an understanding that facilitates informed recommendations to enhance the support provided to migrant workers.

To ensure a representative sample, we employed purposeful sampling techniques, including the snowballing method and targeted selection, which involve leveraging existing contacts and referrals, as well as selecting individuals with specific characteristics relevant to our research objectives (Vargas-Silva, 2012). We initially established contact with the Embassy, which served as a gateway, providing relevant support in connecting us with migrant workers and facilitating our access to their experiences and perspectives. Moreover, during the course of our research, migrant workers themselves played an active role in recommending additional interviews with their peers and former participants in the Kampung Korea Program. This input enriched our research by allowing us to explore specific challenges, successes, and the effectiveness of existing programs and policies through the experiences of a wider range of individuals involved in the reintegration process.

Our research, while focusing on a seemingly small number of 15 informants, is primarily driven by the specialized nature of our exploration, which demands an in-depth exploration of each participant's experiences and perspectives – something feasibly achieved through a smaller yet highly focused and relevant sample size. We delve into the unique intersection of experiences of returning Indonesian migrant workers participating in the Kampung Korea Program, a specific facet of the overall migration phenomenon, which warrants a concentrated and deeply engaged analysis. This initiative caters to a select group of returning migrants whose specific and individualized experiences, influenced by the program, distinguish them from the broader migrant worker population, and our research is tailored to comprehend these nuanced intersections. Thus, it does not aim to encapsulate the broader migrant worker population, but rather zeros in on this particular cohort – a unique focus that lends further justification to our sample size.

Between December 2021 and June 2022, we conducted face-to-face interviews with returning Indonesian migrant workers in South Korea, following an ethical protocol and obtaining verbal informed consent from the participants. Data collection through in-depth interviews lasted over a 6-month timeframe from December 2021 to June 2022. Interviews with embassy officials, who could provide big-picture policy insights, were concentrated in the latter portion of data collection in May and June 2022. Interviews with ex-migrant workers, who had completed the full cycle of working abroad and returning, and current migrant workers still abroad, were conducted throughout the full duration from December 2021 to June 2022 to capture a range of on-the-ground experiences. With the questions designed to elicit detailed accounts of their personal stories, perceptions, and recommendations, we aimed to deeply explore the participants' experiences as migrant workers in South Korea, the challenges they faced, their motivations for returning home (for ex-migrant workers), and their perspectives on existing reintegration programs such as the Kampung Korea Program, along with their suggestions for improving support systems and services for returning migrants. Importantly, to maintain accuracy, we recorded the interviews and transcribed them verbatim, preserving the participants' narratives in their own words.

Using open and axial coding techniques inspired by grounded theory (Saldaña, 2021), we immersed ourselves in the interview transcripts. During open coding, we identified themes such as “access to training programs”, “entrepreneurial aspirations”, “peer support and networking”, “business knowledge”, and “collaborations with stakeholders” that emerged from the participants' accounts. These initial codes captured salient aspects related to the Kampung Korea Program's implementation, training approach, and impacts on participants. Axial coding then enabled focused analysis to uncover connections between codes including the relationship between “peer support” and “sense of community” in facilitating learning. This iterative coding provided preliminary understanding of factors shaping the program's impacts,

while targeted axial coding uncovered motivations and dynamics influencing participants' experiences of training, reintegration, and empowerment through the program.

To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of our study, we implemented a series of rigorous strategies. We deeply engaged with the data, immersing ourselves in the narratives shared by participants, which allowed us to develop a deep understanding of their experiences. We then conducted another round of analysis, delving into the nuances of each participant's account, gaining meaningful insights into various aspects of their reintegration process. Seeking external perspectives, we also sought feedback from colleagues not directly involved in the study, challenging our interpretations and assumptions, leading to a more robust analysis and refining our conclusions based on sound reasoning. Additionally, through member checking, we engaged participants, sharing our preliminary analysis and findings to validate, correct, and gather additional insights from their experiences. We further employed triangulation, using multiple data sources such as interviews and documents to cross-verify our findings, enhancing the reliability and validity of our research outcomes regarding the reintegration experiences of returning Indonesian migrant workers in South Korea. Through the careful application of these strategies, our study maintained its trustworthiness, ensuring an authentic exploration of the reintegration journeys of returning migrant workers.

## **Results**

### ***Contextualizing the Kampung Korea Program***

The Kampung Korea Program, known as "*Kami Mantap Pulang dari Korea*" ("We are Solid Returning from Korea"), is a developmental initiative that empowers migrant workers nearing the end of their contracts to establish sustainable lives in Indonesia and prevent further migration abroad. The program includes various activities, including entrepreneurship motivation, financial management, entrepreneurship training, and a business model competition with cash prizes awarded at its conclusion. According to the Indonesian Ambassador to South Korea, the Kampung Korea Program is a collaborative effort aimed at facilitating the repatriation of migrant workers back to Indonesia, with the Indonesian Embassy in Seoul collaborating with financial, investment, and business incubation experts, as well as community leaders from both Indonesia and South Korea, to empower Indonesian migrant workers in South Korea and drive economic development in their hometowns.

The program was officially inaugurated on 10 February 2019 by the Indonesian Ambassador to the Republic of Korea, attracting the attendance of migrant workers residing in Seoul and surrounding areas, as well as embassy staff and representatives from organizations such as the Korea Foreign Workers Development Service, Korea Foreign Workers Protection Centre,

Korea Immigration Service, Bank Rakyat Indonesia, Bank Negara Indonesia, Garuda Indonesia, and the Indonesian Student Association in Korea. The Kampung Korea Program is implemented annually and lasts for a duration of 3-5 months, offering monthly training sessions in a combined or separate classroom format. Initially conducted exclusively face-to-face in 2019, the program transitioned to online training sessions via Zoom from 2020 to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing social distancing measures in South Korea. Remarkably, the online format witnessed an increase in participation, with the total number of participants in the program rising from 69 in 2020 to 432 in 2021. Of those 432 participants, 100 were considered active, meaning they attended at least 75% of the program sessions.

In the section that follows, we present our empirical findings, delving into the nuances and complexities of the reintegration process for Indonesian migrant workers, as experienced through the Kampung Korea Program.

### ***Institutional Legitimation and Organizational Support***

During the discussion, several participants shared their perspectives on the benefits of having the Law No. 18/2017, which mandates the provision of training programs for Indonesian migrant workers upon arrival in South Korea. These programs not only equip the workers with essential skills but also act as a foundation for their smooth reintegration into the Indonesian workforce upon their return, acting as a stepping stone towards their success. However, the participants also recognized the values of the Kampung Korea Program's provision of post-contract debriefings on business concepts, which has helped them gain the necessary knowledge and skills to launch their own businesses upon returning to Indonesia, allowing them to capitalize on their entrepreneurial aspirations.

One of the success factors for the Kampung Korea Program was the presence of Indonesian business professionals and former migrant workers. These individuals were willing to share their insights and expertise, offering significant guidance and mentorship to the participants. The exchange of experiences and knowledge among program participants facilitated by these experts helped to create a supportive community and fostered a sense of unity among the migrant workers, enabling them to build strong networks and overcome challenges together. In fact, one participant specifically mentioned feeling a sense of solidarity and camaraderie after hearing the experiences of a fellow former migrant worker, pointing out the impact of peer support and networking in promoting a sense of belonging and community among migrant workers.

*I am excited about the Kampung Korea Program because it is a chance for me to learn from successful entrepreneurs and explore my own business ideas. I have been working as a migrant worker for many years,*

*and I have always dreamed of starting my own business. I am hopeful that this program will help me become a successful entrepreneur and make a meaningful contribution to my community. (Participant 3, Migrant Worker)*

Indeed, the Kampung Korea Program has received positive feedback from participants who applaud its commitment to empowering migrant workers through the provision of essential skills, knowledge, and inspiration. Participants express their satisfaction with the program's incorporation of accomplished individuals from diverse industries such as fish farming and trading, whose success stories serve as sources of guidance and motivation. This varied range of voices within the program enables participants to gain a better understanding of a variety of industries and markets, facilitating their pursuit of entrepreneurial aspirations with a well-rounded perspective.

*I think the Kampung Korea Program is a great way for people from marginalized communities to improve their lives. It helps migrant workers learn the skills they need to start their own businesses, and it brings in mentors from different industries to inspire and guide them. This gives migrant workers a better understanding of what it takes to succeed in their chosen fields. (Participant 14, Embassy Official, Coordinator for Protocol and Consular Function)*

Likewise, the representative from the Indonesian Embassy in Seoul highlighted the program's extensive and comprehensive approach, mentioning the considerable investment of time and resources required to achieve its goal. Participants receive an array of training in essential entrepreneurship skills, coupled with encouragement to take the initiative in launching their own businesses. More importantly, the program extends beyond initial training, providing ongoing guidance in financial management and record-keeping, ensuring continuous support even after participants return to their home country. Positive feedback from participants reinforces the program's efficacy in equipping them with the essential skills and tools needed to flourish as entrepreneurs, pointing to its commitment to their long-term success.

*Many migrant workers send money back home to support their families, but their families often don't use the money wisely. Instead of investing in their future, they spend it on unnecessary things like cars, houses, and electronics. This leaves the migrant workers feeling like they are not really helping their families, and it can also lead to financial problems for the families. Our program is designed to help migrant workers who want to return to Indonesia. We provide them with resources and support to*

*start their own businesses, find jobs, and contribute to the local economy. We believe that this is the best way to break the cycle of poverty and empower migrant workers and their families. (Participant 13, Embassy Official, Counsellor/Coordinator for Investment and Trade Economic Function)*

Another representative from the Embassy also pinpointed the prevailing concern among Indonesian migrant workers regarding the wage disparity between South Korea and Indonesia. The fear of not being able to secure comparable wages in their home country often discourages workers from returning, demanding the necessary need to address this issue and promote a fresh perspective among them. Moreover, the participant stressed the importance of avoiding visa overstays, which could lead to workers being classified as illegal, and instead advocated for exploring entrepreneurial opportunities in Indonesia. As one of the embassy representatives explained, the focus on the benefits of investing in their home country has guided the Embassy in assisting migrant workers to build a more secure and sustainable future for themselves and their families.

*We at the Embassy believe that migrant workers need to change their mindset and not overstay their visas. This can lead to them being considered illegal workers, which can have serious consequences. Instead, we encourage migrant workers to explore entrepreneurial opportunities in Indonesia and invest in their own country. This approach will help migrant workers create a stable and secure future for themselves and their families. (Participant 15, Embassy Official, Labor Attaché)*

It is to be sure that the Kampung Korea Program's success is intrinsically tied to both institutional legitimation and organizational support, calling for the recognition and endorsement of relevant government agencies alongside the active engagement and cooperation of various stakeholders. Through the provision of a range of services, including financial management and entrepreneurial training, the program contributes to the economic and social empowerment of migrant workers, while simultaneously fostering stronger bonds between Indonesia and South Korea. Hence, sustained investment and expansion of initiatives such as the Kampung Korea Program are imperative to ensure that migrant workers can fully capitalize on the available opportunities and resources, facilitating their optimal growth and development.

### ***Operationality: Human Resources, Technology, and Financing***

Former participants of the program have commended the program's responsiveness, with the Embassy playing a leading role as a source of information, support,

and unity among migrant workers, while also providing considerable opportunities for learning and personal growth. The services provided by the Embassy were manifold, ranging from minor aspects such as sharing Zoom links for training sessions and addressing technical issues, to more substantial assistance such as moderating meetings and addressing participant inquiries. While the program's primary focus was on business and entrepreneurship, the Embassy recognized its significance as a platform for expanding participants' knowledge. As a result, when workers expressed a desire for more information on investments, the Embassy proactively accommodated their request, providing a more enriching learning experience.

*We had a great experience with the program, and the Embassy was really supportive. They offered us a lot of helpful services, like easy-to-use Zoom links, knowledgeable moderators, and quick answers to our questions. The program taught us a lot about business and entrepreneurship, and it also helped us develop our mindset. We were even able to get extra information on investments, which made the learning experience even richer. (Participant 9, Migrant Worker)*

Several participants also expressed their motivations for enrolling in the program, sharing their desire to witness the active involvement of other former migrant workers who have successfully established their own businesses. In this, the program has served as a platform for migrant workers to engage with business executives from leading companies, influential business figures, and officials representing the Indonesian government in South Korea. Notably, one participant, speaking on behalf of the Embassy, pointed out the implication of expanding the program's reach through collaborations with migrant worker communities and representatives from the Indonesian government in South Korea, such as the Department of Trade. The involvement of these stakeholders facilitated a more in-depth exploration of business model creation during the training, creating an environment conducive for migrant workers to learn from the experiences of successful entrepreneurs and industry experts.

*The program has been more effective because of its collaborations with migrant worker communities and Korean government institutions, such as the trade department. These partnerships have created a supportive learning environment where migrant workers can learn from each other and from experts. For example, the trade department has provided guidance on business model creation, and successful entrepreneurs and industry experts have shared their insights. These collaborations have equipped migrant workers with the skills and knowledge they need to*

*succeed in business. I hope that these collaborations continue to expand so that more migrant workers can benefit from them. (Participant 15, Embassy Official, Labor Attaché)*

In fact, the program's collaborations with key Indonesian institutions, including an Indonesian bank, the Indonesia Investment Promotion Centre in Seoul, the Indonesia Trade Promotion Centre in Busan, the Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, and the Ministry of Tourism and the Creative Economy, have proven relevant for its success by enabling broader training and support to migrant workers, expanding its reach, and initiating steps to obtain bank financing for businesses, resulting in an enhanced impact. These strategic partnerships have effectively harnessed essential resources and support to provide vital training opportunities that can positively transform the lives of migrant workers, solidifying the program's position as a valued asset.

While the training program received a positive reception and was considered beneficial by participants, some participants expressed limitations in fully leveraging its potential due to its virtual delivery through Zoom, necessitated by the pandemic. However, the program's flexibility, inclusivity, and the Embassy's continuous support in troubleshooting technical challenges fostered a favorable learning environment, enabling participants to focus on the program's content without distractions. The program's flexibility, attractive to a significant majority, acted as a strong motivational factor, while its inclusive nature, welcoming anyone with an interest, further added to its appeal. The Embassy's collaborative approach in addressing technical concerns reinforced the notion of an ideal learning environment, where participants could engage with the program's content.

*The program was really helpful, and I am grateful to the embassy for making it so accessible and engaging. They worked hard to overcome the challenges of the virtual setting, which allowed us to participate fully and benefit from the program. I think the Embassy's support was essential to making the program a success. (Participant 4, Ex-Migrant Worker)*

It is likewise important to note that the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has proved its commitment to supporting the program's mission of providing coaching and guidance to Indonesian citizens by providing the necessary financial resources, recognizing the program's impacts in empowering individuals and facilitating their personal and professional growth. This allocation of funds not only grants the program greater autonomy and flexibility in its operations but also reflects the growing interest and support for the program, as shown by occasional sponsorships from the Indonesian bank in Seoul for the winners of the business model contest, which enhance its outreach and impact.

Additionally, the program goes beyond offering free coaching and guidance, as it provides participants with complimentary items, such as winter hoodies. The online format allows for efficient delivery of these items, ensuring smooth communication and logistics between program organizers and participants. In line with their commitment to inclusivity, the Embassy's representatives have confirmed the provision of free vouchers for migrant workers, who often face barriers to accessing education and training, making the program's offerings more accessible and equitable. Furthermore, the program's business model contest, which awards cash prizes to winners, acts as a powerful motivator for participants to apply their newly acquired knowledge and skills in practical situations, fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurial thinking.

Without a doubt, the successful implementation of the Kampung Korea Program can be credited to significant investments in human resources, technology, and financing, prioritizing these components to establish an effective framework. Through thoughtful resource allocation, the program shows its potential for positive change, illuminating how strategic investments can lead to transformative outcomes.

### ***Having Values: Political, Economic, and Educational***

Harnessing a delicate blend of diplomacy and political value cultivation, the Embassy interweaves the participation of migrant workers into the process of deciding on training topics and accentuates their efforts through an intricately designed registration form. This inclusive approach helps these individuals to feel empowered and emphasizes their central role in shaping the contours of the program. To further amplify inclusivity, the Embassy actively courts constructive feedback from participants through different communication pathways, including WhatsApp groups, feedback forms, and open discussions. This dedication illustrates the Embassy's commitment to include the voices of migrant workers, leveraging their collective wisdom and experiences to boost the training program's effectiveness. When sculpting the blueprint for upcoming training topics, the Embassy amalgamates insights from prior reports, surveys, and a profound understanding of the program's foundational principles. This involvement of migrant workers in the decision-making echelons amplifies political values such as transparency, inclusivity, and the democratic tenets emphasizing active participation and openness. Such a strategic initiative allows the training program to adapt to the participants' diverse and evolving needs, paving the way for delivering substantial benefits to Indonesian migrant workers stationed in South Korea.

*As a participant in the program, I was impressed by the Embassy's commitment to engaging participants in shaping the training topics. During the registration process, I was asked about my areas of interest in*

*the business field. I was also invited to join a WhatsApp group where I could share my feedback on the program and recommend materials to include in the upcoming sessions. I felt like my input was valued and that the Embassy was truly committed to providing a program that was relevant and helpful to me. (Participant 7, Migrant Worker)*

Moreover, the Embassy's strategy of integrating migrant workers into the selection process of training topics goes beyond mere involvement, fostering a symbiotic relationship that serves as an important advocacy mechanism for safeguarding the rights and interests of these workers in a foreign land. This inclusive approach not only deepens the ties between the Embassy and the migrant workforce in South Korea but also cultivates an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust, facilitating an open and unrestricted exchange of ideas and recommendations. Such a conducive environment benefits both the Embassy and the workers, aligning harmoniously with democratic principles of participation and transparency.

We prioritize participant engagement and actively seek their input to shape the program. We value their perspectives and suggestions, and we genuinely consider and use them for future webinars. I think it is great that the embassy prioritizes participant engagement. This shows that they value our input and that they are committed to providing a program that is tailored to our needs. I hope that other programs will follow the Embassy's example and engage participants in shaping the content of their programs. I am grateful for the Embassy's commitment to participant engagement. It has made the program more relevant and helpful to me, and it has made me feel like I am part of a community. I hope that other programs will follow the Embassy's example and actively engage participants in shaping the content of their programs. (Participant 12, Migrant Worker)

The program's impact on migrant workers extends beyond relationship-building; it serves as a catalyst for the development of essential skills necessary for their personal and professional growth. Through the business model competition, designed to engage participants both as teams and individuals, these skills are fostered and permeate into their personal lives, empowering them with newfound confidence and assertiveness in their daily interactions. Additionally, the program serves as a launchpad for participants to explore their entrepreneurial possibilities. Many migrant workers, despite facing resource constraints and a lack of necessary knowledge, find the competition offers a safe space to cultivate their

business ideas, receive valuable feedback, and potentially secure funding or resources to kickstart their ventures.

Another significant contribution of the program lies in its potential to address the exploitation and abuse faced by migrant workers, a prevalent issue stemming from their vulnerability, limited legal protection, and inadequate understanding of their rights. With the means of equipping them with skills, knowledge, and a robust network, the program supports in alleviating their vulnerability and empowers them to advocate for their rights. Notwithstanding the program's impactful role, it cannot single-handedly eliminate the systemic issues of migrant worker exploitation and abuse, necessitating an overhaul of labor policies, immigration laws, and societal attitudes to ensure fair treatment and safeguard their rights.

Furthermore, the program enhances participants' knowledge, particularly in the fields of business and investment, as experts in the respective fields share their insights and expertise, empowering participants to enrich their businesses with newfound knowledge. The program further broadens participants' understanding of domains such as financial management and investment, contributing to their overall knowledge and skill set. The satisfaction derived from acquiring fresh insights and knowledge, which also acts as a compass guiding their future endeavors, serves as a testament to the program's resounding success.

The Kampung Korea Program has been a great source of knowledge and growth for me. The speakers were very knowledgeable and experts in their fields, which made me feel privileged to learn from them. The insights and information I gained from the program have had a direct impact on the development of my business. My wife and I manage a noodle business, and the knowledge and skills I acquired from the program have been beneficial in the growth of our business. *Alhamdulillah*, our business is now thriving, and I am grateful for the positive outcomes we have achieved. (Participant 10, Migrant Worker)

Indeed, equipped with a multitude of resources to inspire the establishment of businesses upon their return to Indonesia, the Kampung Korea Program played an instrumental role in augmenting the participants' entrepreneurial ambitions and endowing them with the necessary tools for success. Beyond business, the program also fostered a fertile environment for learning and networking, which became a cornerstone of their personal and professional growth. Through the program's initiatives, participants had the opportunity to learn from successful entrepreneurs and establish meaningful relationships, thus planting seeds that would bear fruit in their future pursuits. Moreover, tailored to address

the specific needs of migrant workers and their significant contribution to the Indonesian economy, the program's curriculum focused on motivation, financial management, and entrepreneurship. It offered a pathway for these workers to acquire their own competencies, fostering an enhancement of their living standards and emboldening them to chase their aspirations.

Anchored by a set of values encompassing political, economic, and educational components, the Kampung Korea Program obliges as the bedrock of their mission to empower and uplift Indonesian migrant workers in South Korea, ensuring a holistic approach to addressing the challenges faced by this particular community. On the political front, the program advocates for the rights and well-being of Indonesian migrant workers, in the sense that it drives policy changes and initiatives that protect their interests and shield them from exploitation. On the economic side, the program acknowledges the role of entrepreneurship and innovation in forging sustainable solutions for these workers, represented by initiatives such as the highly engaging business model contest that stimulates creativity and fosters innovation. Moreover, the program places importance on education as a transformative force, empowering individuals to unlock their innate potential and contribute meaningfully to their communities. With the means of embodying these core values, the Kampung Korea Program is indeed a shining exemplar of initiatives that positively impact vulnerable populations, igniting a beacon of hope and driving enduring change.

## **Discussion**

The Kampung Korea Program stands as a paradigmatic representation of empowerment in action, offering support to individuals who repatriate after periods of overseas employment. Within this program's framework, empowerment not only serves as a guiding principle but also manifests as a dynamic force, nurturing the skills and aspirations of migrant workers while involving them in shaping the program's trajectory. In a resounding testament to the principles of inclusivity and democratization, the program harmonizes the principles of public value creation and social entrepreneurship, forging a pathway to holistic growth and progress for Indonesian migrant workers in South Korea.

Public value creation, a concept gaining significant traction in public management discourse, resonates that public sector organizations should transcend bureaucratic processes and focus more on creating value for the public (Moore, 1995). However, the Kampung Korea Program transcends mere bureaucratic fulfillment, evolving into an entity that imparts transformative knowledge and skills to migrant workers. With the provision of essential training in business and entrepreneurship, it surpasses its primary role as a support system and evolves into an institution that positively impacts the lives of individuals. Moreover, its strategic collaborations and commitment to inclusivity align with Stoker's (2006)

argument that collaborative approaches can enhance public value, reflecting the symbiotic relationship between the program, its participants, and the broader community.

The concept of public value creation, as described in the literature, encompasses the provision of goods, services, and regulations that contribute to the well-being of the community. In the context of the program, the Indonesian Embassy in South Korea leverages its resources and network to deliver a comprehensive curriculum focused on entrepreneurship, business management, and financial literacy. This commitment embodies Weber's (1978) principle of "value-rational", where an organization's actions are guided by a belief in the intrinsic worth of an action, irrespective of its potential outcomes. The resultant public value radiates through the participants' enriched knowledge and expertise, equipping them with the ability to establish independent ventures and elevate their economic circumstances.

From the perspective of social entrepreneurship, the program embodies the role of an "enterprise-oriented" entity (Dees, 1998), dedicated to addressing the vulnerabilities of migrant workers by arming them with essential competencies and networks. The social value created by the program aligns with Mair and Marti's (2006) concept of the "social bricoleur", which characterizes social entrepreneurs as individuals who address immediate social needs using available resources. In the context of the program, this manifests as imparting entrepreneurial knowledge and skills to empower Indonesian migrant workers to establish businesses upon their return. This emphasis transcends mere knowledge transfer, fostering a profound transformation that reverberates positively through the participants' lives and resonates within their communities upon reintegration.

Through the convergence of these theoretical underpinnings, the program orchestrates a remarkable paradigm shift. It elevates migrant workers from passive recipients of training to active co-creators of the program's trajectory, thereby exemplifying the democratic ideals of participation and transparency. This newfound empowerment acts as a compelling catalyst, igniting a sense of ownership and commitment among participants, leading to heightened engagement and program effectiveness.

The program's approach to participant involvement stands out as an exemplary practice that reflects the principles of democratic governance and participatory decision-making. This approach resonates with Cornwall's (2008) view that creating spaces for individuals to express their opinions fosters a sense of ownership and empowerment. The program's solicitation of participant feedback and their involvement in decision-making processes amplify its impact. Moreover, the Kampung Korea Program's utilization of a blended approach, encompassing political, economic, and educational value creation, is noteworthy. It shows how carefully calibrated, multidimensional programs can have far-reaching effects on the lives of migrant workers, echoing the sentiments of scholars such as

Moore (1995) and Yunus et al. (2010) who emphasize the power of social entrepreneurship in creating public value.

In its continual evolution, the Kampung Korea Program emerges as a beacon of empowerment for returning individuals, weaving together the principles of social entrepreneurship and public value creation into a coherent narrative of progress. As it charts a path of empowerment for migrant workers, the program extends its influence beyond immediate beneficiaries, setting a precedent for similar initiatives on a global scale. In doing so, it reinforces the need for ongoing exploration and implementation of programs dedicated to the empowerment and well-being of returning individuals, hence contributing to the holistic advancement of communities and fostering a brighter future.

## **Conclusion**

We have delved into the inner workings of the Kampung Korea Program, unpacking the transformative power of social entrepreneurship in creating public value, particularly in the context of reintegrating Indonesian migrant workers returning from South Korea. The program's measurable impact showcases a unique fusion of economic, political, and educational values, embodying an empowering initiative. It not only addresses the individualized needs of migrant workers but also fosters an inclusive environment, valuing their active participation and ensuring their voices shape the programs trajectory.

Still, we acknowledge that our qualitative case approach methodology may have limitations in offering specific recommendations for process improvement or initiatives, as the small sample size and localized context may restrict broader generalizability and applicability of the findings. The small sample size of 15 participants, with variations in education levels (including high school, bachelor's, and master's degrees), is worth noting as it could impact the transferability of our findings to other contexts. We therefore recognize that a larger and more diverse sample could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the program's success and offer insights into tailoring initiatives to different demographics.

Nonetheless, our study does bring to light the broader implications of the program and provides important guidelines for policymakers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and social entrepreneurs looking to design and execute similar initiatives. It spotlights the primacy of democratic decision-making, inclusivity, and participant engagement in program development and advocates for a learner-centric framework that considers specific and individualized contexts and needs.

More importantly, the program's network of value creation, which extends across political, economic, and educational domains, emerges as a guiding light for similar initiatives aimed at empowering vulnerable populations. Its impact goes beyond individual growth, radiating throughout the broader community, urging policymakers to cultivate an environment

conducive to such transformative endeavors. This entails endorsing the creation of social entrepreneurship programs, integrating principles of public value creation into core objectives, and advocating for the rights and well-being of returning migrant workers.

Indeed, the Kampung Korea Program exemplifies the symbiotic potential of social entrepreneurship and public value creation in facilitating the reintegration of migrant workers, establishing a precedent for global emulation. The insights gleaned from this initiative provide a robust foundation for future research trajectories and present compelling policy imperatives. These insights spur reflection on how we can empower those returning from overseas work to catalyze meaningful, constructive changes in their lives and communities. Amidst the ongoing global challenges of migration and reintegration, the lessons from the Kampung Korea Program shine a light on the path towards more equitable and empowering solutions.

This study also calls for future research to further explore the realm of social entrepreneurship initiatives, with the aim of advancing our understanding of optimal strategies for maximizing public value creation. This avenue of inquiry spans multiple dimensions, including the analysis of factors contributing to program success, the elucidation of the manifold roles played by different stakeholders, and an examination of how cultural, social, and economic contexts influence program efficacy. Additionally, the potential of longitudinal studies holds promise in showcasing the enduring impacts of such initiatives on the lives of migrant workers, providing insights into the sustained, transformative changes that can be instigated within individuals and their communities.

While complex migration dynamics persist worldwide, the empowering model of Kampung Korea Program offers important lessons and a model for developing impactful initiatives to support returning workers, foster inclusive communities, and drive meaningful societal change.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1 Socio-demographic characteristics of study participants

No.	Occupation Status	Participant	Age	Origin	Sex	Occupation and Location	Education	Place of Employment	Period of Employment	Enterprise in Indonesia
1.	Ex-migrant worker	Participant 1	26	Cilacap	F	Entrepreneur in Indonesia	Bachelor's	Siheung and Dangjin	2016-2021	Minimarket, motorcycle workshop, car rental, boarding house rental
2.		Participant 4	26	Cirebon	M	Entrepreneur in Indonesia	High school	Daegu	2016-2022	Boarding house, minimarket, marketing services
3.		Participant 6	35	Jember	M	Entrepreneur in Indonesia	Not disclosed	Not disclosed	2016-2020	Internet service provider business
4.		Participant 11	32	Tulungagung	M	Entrepreneur in Indonesia	Not disclosed	Not disclosed	2015-2020	Grocery store
5.	Migrant worker	Participant 2	29	Gunung Kidul	F	Factory worker in South Korea	Not disclosed	Not disclosed	2019-2025	Not disclosed

**Appendix 1** Socio-demographic characteristics of study participants (continued)

No.	Occupation Status	Participant	Age	Origin	Sex	Occupation and Location	Education	Place of Employment	Period of Employment	Enterprise in Indonesia
6.	Migrant worker	Participant 3	32	Nias	M	Factory worker in South Korea	High school	Gyeongju	2018-2023	Pinang plantation, digital currency investment, gold, stocks
7.		Participant 5	40	Majalengka	M	Factory worker in South Korea	High school	Ansan	2019-2023	Culinary business (noodles), land investment
8.		Participant 7	26	Grobogan	M	Factory worker in South Korea	High school	Gyeonggi	2019-2025	Real estate, land investment
9.		Participant 8	26	Malang	F	Machine operator in South Korea	High school	Cheonan	2016-2025	Boarding house rental, investment, gold, and land
10.		Participant 9	41	Indramayu	M	Factory worker in South Korea	High school	Incheon	2014-2015	Agricultural business, stock investment

**Appendix 1** Socio-demographic characteristics of study participants (continued)

No.	Occupation Status	Participant	Age	Origin	Sex	Occupation and Location	Education	Place of Employment	Period of Employment	Enterprise in Indonesia
11.	Migrant worker	Participant 10	38	Kediri	M	Factory worker in South Korea	Bachelor's	Chungcheongnam	2018-2024	Agricultural business
12.		Participant 12	32	Indramayu	M	Factory worker in South Korea	High school	Hwaseong	2013-2024	Oyster mushroom cultivation, rice field investment
13.	Embassy official	Participant 13	39	Jakarta	M	Counsellor/Coordinator for Investment and Trade Function	Master's	Seoul	2019-present	Not applicable
14.		Participant 14	48	Aceh	M	Coordinator for Protocol and Consular Function	Master's	Seoul	2021-present	Not applicable
15.		Participant 15	42	Jakarta	F	Labor Attaché	Master's	Seoul	2021-present	Not applicable

Remarks:

- ☐ Not disclosed: Some participants opted not to disclose certain information because they considered those details too personal or irrelevant to share in the context of this study.
- ☐ Not applicable: Embassy officials are based in Seoul, South Korea, and do not have entrepreneurial activities in Indonesia.