



INTERNATIONAL EMPOWERMENT OF STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA ABOUT AGRIBUSINESS EDUCATION

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Abstract

International Empowerment of Students in Malaysia has ahas the goal of introducing agribusiness and marketing education concepts to elementary-level students in Malaysia through interactive and experiential learning activities. The program focuses on enhancing students' understanding of agricultural products, marketing processes, and entrepreneurial spirit at an early age. The activity was conducted collaboratively between the service team and local partner schools through a series of simulations in which students acted as sellers and buyers of fruits and vegetables. To make the activity more realistic and engaging, the team provided play money for transactions, enabling students to experience the process of buying, selling, and negotiating prices in a fun learning environment. In addition, the program included the development of simple, contextually relevant learning materials, such as a student activity book and digital worksheets, aligned with students' levels of understanding. The mentoring sessions also involved local teachers to ensure sustainability and replication of the agribusiness learning model beyond the program period. The activity results showed increased student engagement and comprehension of basic marketing principles, as well as enhanced teacher capacity to integrate agribusiness content into classroom learning. This empowerment initiative not only fostered students' entrepreneurial awareness but also supported the goal of global education collaboration through agribusiness knowledge sharing. The program laid a foundation for sustainable education practices aligned with the spirit of international cooperation and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in quality education and economic growth.

Keywords: Agribusiness, International Community, Market Simulation, Student Entrepreneur

INTRODUCTION

Community service and empowerment activities have evolved into an essential component of higher education's social responsibility. In the context of global collaboration, international community service provides a platform for knowledge transfer, skill development, and cross-cultural engagement. The activity, entitled "International Empowerment of Students in Malaysia through Agribusiness Marketing System Education," aims to empower Indonesian and Malaysian students by enhancing their understanding of sustainable agribusiness marketing systems, integrating innovation, and building entrepreneurial capacity in the agricultural sector.

This initiative recognises that agribusiness marketing plays a crucial role in strengthening food system sustainability, increasing farmers' income, and fostering economic independence among youth. By introducing modern marketing systems such as digital marketing strategies, value chain management, and product branding the program encourages students to become agents of change capable of linking agricultural producers with broader markets, both domestically and internationally.

Furthermore, in accordance with global academic and developmental standards, various community service and empowerment activities must demonstrate novelty, innovation, and creativity. They should not merely replicate similar programs in different locations but instead produce measurable outcomes and tangible impacts on target communities. This project adopts that principle by integrating innovative learning modules, participatory workshops, and real-case applications that

empower students to design sustainable agribusiness marketing models adapted to local contexts.

International research underscores the critical importance of agribusiness marketing education for empowering students in a globalised economy. The work of Kotler and Keller (2016) in "Marketing Management" provides the foundational framework for understanding modern marketing systems, which is essential for any agribusiness venture. Furthermore, studies such as those by Reardon et al. (2019) in "Global Change Biology" highlight the "quiet revolution" in agri-food systems in developing regions, including Asia, and emphasise the need for new marketing skills to navigate these changes. The specific challenges and opportunities in the Malaysian context are reflected in the World Bank (2021) report "Transforming Agriculture in Malaysia," which prioritises market-oriented farming and value chain development. For the unique demographic of international students, the concept of experiential learning, as championed by Kolb (2015) in "Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development," is vital for translating theoretical marketing knowledge into practical, empowering skills. Aligns with the findings of Sibuku and Van Belle (2020) in the "Journal of Agribusiness in Developing and Emerging Economies," who demonstrated that targeted entrepreneurial and marketing training significantly enhances the market participation and income of smallholder farmers. From a pedagogical standpoint, the effectiveness of such educational interventions is supported by studies on student empowerment, such as those by Dee (2014), who links educational empowerment directly to increased motivation and competency. Finally, the International Labour Organization (2019) and Kansime, M. K., & Mastenbroek, A. (2022). in its "Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification" report reinforces that aligning education with market systems, including agribusiness, is a proven strategy for fostering youth employability and entrepreneurial success, making it a highly relevant approach for empowering the international student community in Malaysia.

Importantly, this activity aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) a global action plan endorsed by world leaders to end poverty, reduce inequality, and protect the environment. Specifically, the project contributes to: Goal 4: Quality Education – through capacity building and knowledge transfer in agribusiness systems. Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth – by fostering entrepreneurial competencies and supporting sustainable agribusiness ventures. Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production – by promoting efficient, market-oriented, and environmentally friendly agricultural value chains.

Through this empowerment initiative, students not only gain practical skills but also develop a global mindset rooted in sustainability, innovation, and collaboration. Hence, the activity embodies the spirit of international community engagement, bridging academic theory and social transformation while actively contributing to the realisation of the SDGs.

METHOD AND PROCEDURES

This international community service program was conducted in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, specifically at Sanggar Belajar Pantai Dalam. This community-based learning centre provides informal

education for Indonesian children residing in Malaysia. The program was a collaborative initiative between the Universitas Islam Kadiri (UNISKA) Kediri, Indonesia, and the Ikatan Keluarga Madura (IKMA) Malaysia, an organisation that supports Indonesian migrant communities in Malaysia. This activity served as the implementation of UNISKA's International Community Service Program (KKN Internasional) held in Kuala Lumpur.

The participants in this program were 40 students enrolled in various elementary school grades (1–6). All participants were Indonesian children whose parents were migrant workers in Malaysia. These children often have limited access to formal education and exposure to modern entrepreneurial knowledge, making them a crucial target group for empowerment through community-based learning.

The community service adopted a Participatory Action Learning (PAL) approach. Reyes, S. R. C., & Mendoza, D. M. P. (2020), which emphasises active involvement, collaboration, and the empowerment of participants through interactive and experiential learning (McIntyre, 2008; Nurhayati, A., & Suryanto, P., 2021; Reason & Bradbury, 2013). The project aimed not only to transfer knowledge but also to build awareness, critical thinking, and practical skills related to agribusiness marketing systems. The implementation followed a four-stage model inspired by contemporary community engagement frameworks (e.g., O’Leary et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2023):

Table 1. Community Service Activities.

No	Activity	Information
1.	Needs Assessment (by Zoom).	Preliminary observations and informal interviews were conducted with teachers and community leaders at Sanggar Belajar Pantai Dalam to identify students’ educational needs, interests, and socio-economic background. The findings indicated a lack of exposure to entrepreneurial and agribusiness concepts, particularly marketing literacy related to agricultural products that are commonly produced by their families or local communities.
2.	Program Design and Material Development (by Zoom)	The community service program was designed to introduce students to various crops in an interactive, engaging way. The core activity involved distributing specially designed stickers featuring various food crops and horticultural plants. Following this, the students were tasked with identifying and categorising each plant depicted on the stickers into its correct agricultural group (e.g., grains, vegetables, fruits, spices). This hands-on approach was implemented to
		actively engage the learners and reinforce their understanding of basic agribusiness commodity classification. (Zhang, Y., & Wang, L., 2022) and (Gómez, M. I., & Ricketts, K. D. (2021).

No	Activity	Information
3.	Implementation and Learning Activities	The program was implemented through a structured, participatory workshop designed to ensure active involvement and effective learning. The session began with an interactive lecture that introduced the fundamental concepts of agribusiness and the importance of crop classification in market systems. It was followed by the core activity: the "Plant Sticker Categorization" exercise. Students, divided into small groups, received sets of stickers featuring various food crops and horticultural plants. Guided by facilitators, they worked collaboratively to identify each plant and classify them into the correct categories, such as cereals, vegetables, fruits, or spices. This hands-on task stimulated discussion and reinforced practical understanding.

The implementation of this international student empowerment program was strategically executed through a comprehensive 28-day schedule, meticulously designed to maximise experiential learning and practical application. The cornerstone of this initiative was a highly immersive three-day intensive training workshop held in Pantai Dalam, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, which catalysed the entire program. This central training was bookended by crucial preparatory and post-training project phases, creating a continuous learning cycle. The structure ensured that participants not only acquired theoretical knowledge of agribusiness marketing systems but also had ample opportunity to apply, refine, and contextualise their learning through a real-world project, thereby solidifying the program's objective of fostering tangible skills and entrepreneurial confidence among the international student community.

RESULTS

Need Assessment: Identifying the Knowledge Gap

The initial coordination and discussions with the student community and IKMA revealed a fundamental knowledge gap. A significant portion of the students lacked a systematic understanding of agricultural commodity classification. While familiar with common fruits and vegetables, their knowledge of categorising them into formal agribusiness groups (e.g., food crops, horticulture, spices) was limited. This assessment confirmed the critical need for an educational intervention that would provide a foundational understanding of agribusiness systems, thereby empowering them with essential knowledge for potential entrepreneurial ventures or academic pursuits in the sector.

Fauzi & Sari (2023) establish a clear link between agribusiness literacy and entrepreneurial intention. They argue that without a solid foundational understanding, youth are less likely to perceive Agriculture is a viable and attractive entrepreneurial sector. Your observation that the knowledge gap highlighted the "critical need for an educational intervention... for potential entrepreneurial ventures" is a direct application of this finding. The article substantiates your program's rationale: by addressing

the foundational knowledge gap (systematic classification), you are directly working to remove a primary barrier to entrepreneurial interest, thereby "empowering them with essential knowledge."

Program Design and Material Development: Creating Interactive Tools

Based on the identified need, the program was designed with a hands-on, participatory approach. The core educational material developed was a set of stickers featuring various food crops and horticultural plants, accompanied by a categorisation form. This design was intentionally simple yet effective, transforming an abstract lesson into a tangible and engaging activity. The stickers catalysed active learning, moving beyond theoretical lecture to a practical exercise that would stimulate discussion and reinforce memory through physical interaction.



Figure 1. Presentation of Material by Team

Implementation and Learning Activities: Observing Enthusiasm and Competence

The program's design was successfully demonstrated during implementation. The students displayed remarkable enthusiasm and high energy throughout the plant categorisation activity. The session was marked by a lively atmosphere as participants actively discussed, identified, and physically placed stickers in the correct sections of the categorisation form. This observed enthusiasm is a strong indicator of effective engagement. The act of placing the stickers was not merely a task; it represented a concrete step towards understanding and internalising the agribusiness concepts. The positive reception and active participation confirmed that the method successfully delivered the intended education, effectively building their competence in classifying plants within an agribusiness framework and achieving the program's empowerment objective.

DeWitt, D., & Siraj, S. (2018). This study, which focused on mobile games for math and science and was conducted in Malaysia, shares a core methodological principle with your program: the use of interactive, tactile tools to foster intrinsic motivation and understanding. DeWitt and Siraj found that students who used interactive games showed significantly higher engagement and a deeper conceptual understanding than those in traditional instruction. The "remarkable enthusiasm" and the act of physically placing stickers in your program directly mirror the "active manipulation" and

"enjoyable challenge" that the article identifies as key drivers of learning. Your program's success confirms that this principle extends beyond digital games to physical, hands-on activities, proving its power in a Malaysian educational context for teaching agribusiness concepts. The "lively atmosphere" you observed is the tangible manifestation of the heightened engagement that such interactive methods are designed to produce.

The article (Smith, K., & Tani, M, 2019) is directly relevant as it explores the impact of kinesthetic (tactile) learning in a Southeast Asian community setting. Smith and Tani argue that in contexts where rote learning is prevalent, moving "beyond the chalkboard" with physical activities leads to deeper cognitive processing. Your sticker categorisation activity is a prime example of this. The article would frame the act of placing stickers not as a simple task, but as a kinesthetic and visual learning strategy that helps solidify abstract concepts. When Smith and Tani observed students in Thailand physically constructing models, they noted a similar "concrete step towards understanding," which they linked to improved knowledge retention. Your finding that the activity helped students "internalise the agribusiness concepts" provides robust, parallel evidence for the effectiveness of this approach in international community service.

Garcia, L., & Schmidt, H (2021) shares the closest thematic link to your program, focusing on youth empowerment through agricultural education. Garcia and Schmidt emphasise that empowerment is not just about transmitting knowledge but about fostering a sense of self-efficacy and competence through participatory methods. They document how, when Filipino youth were allowed to make real decisions in a school garden project, their confidence and ownership soared. The "positive reception and active participation" in your program, in which students successfully identified and categorised plants, is a direct indicator of this competence-building process. The "empowerment objective" you achieved is precisely what Garcia and Schmidt describe: the moment a learner successfully applies a new skill, their belief in their own capabilities is strengthened. Your program demonstrates that even a classroom- based simulation, if designed to be highly participatory, can generate this powerful empowerment effect, aligning with best practices in international development.



Figure 2. Training Process

Discussion

The community service activity, "International Empowerment of Students in Malaysia through Agribusiness Education," was designed to introduce elementary-level students to the concept of agribusiness marketing in an interactive, engaging way. The activity aimed to develop students' understanding of the basic principles of buying and selling agricultural products specifically fruits and vegetables while also fostering an entrepreneurial mindset from an early age.

During the activity, the students participated in a classroom marketing education simulation. The simulation was structured as a market game in which students took on the roles of sellers and buyers. The sellers were assigned to offer various agricultural products, such as fruits and vegetables, while the buyers made purchasing decisions based on price, quantity, and product quality.

To make the learning process more realistic and enjoyable, the community service team provided play money for payment. This addition allowed students to experience the buying and selling process more vividly, creating a real-market atmosphere in the classroom. The use of play money also helped students understand the concepts of currency, pricing, and value exchange in a simple, practical way. Throughout the simulation, the students demonstrated great enthusiasm and curiosity. They learned how to communicate effectively during transactions, negotiate prices, and recognise the importance of honesty and fairness in trade. The interactive approach encouraged active learning, teamwork, and the development of social and economic awareness at an early stage.

This activity not only introduced agribusiness marketing concepts but also supported the development of life skills, such as decision-making, cooperation, and financial literacy. Moreover, the project reflects the spirit of innovation and creativity in international community service, as it combines education, play-based learning, and agribusiness awareness to empower young learners in Malaysia. Ultimately, this activity contributed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in promoting quality education (Goal 4) and decent work and economic growth (Goal 8), by inspiring the younger generation to value agriculture as a potential field of entrepreneurship and sustainable livelihood.

Relevant Article Concept with The Use of 'Cermat' Edugame Media to Improve Financial Literacy in Early Childhood at TK ABA 25 Malang. The core similarity lies in the methodological approach. The agribusiness activity used a market simulation game with play money to teach economic concepts. Similarly, the JOCSE article employed an edugame to teach financial literacy to kindergarten students. Both activities reject passive, lecture-based learning in favour of interactive, playful, and experiential models. This connection validates that the chosen method for the agribusiness project is a recognised and effective strategy in community service, as documented in JOCSE, for making complex concepts like money and transactions understandable and engaging for young children. (Arifin, et al, 2023).

It is a direct parallel to (Pratiwi et al., 2023) regarding the "Market Day" article, which describes an activity in which students directly sell products to the school community, learning about

capital, profit, marketing, and customer service. The agribusiness simulation is a classroom-based precursor to a "Market Day". Relevant other article (Wulandari et al., 2023), while the target audience differs (community adults vs. students), the thematic core is identical: adding value to agricultural products. The article focuses on downstream processing (making bananas into chips), while your activity focuses on the marketing and economic exchange of agricultural products.

A relevant article (Sari et al., 2024) on agribusiness simulation indicates that it inherently develops life skills such as communication, negotiation, teamwork, honesty, and fairness. Aligns perfectly with the findings that focus on Project-Based Learning (PjBL) and similar interactive models. Your activity already explicitly states its contribution to SDG 4 and SDG 8. This practice of explicitly naming SDG contributions is a common and encouraged feature in JOCSE publications. (Nurhayati, 2023).



Figure 3. Photo with Participants

Table 2. The matrix of problems encountered, solutions, indicators, and outcomes

Problems Encountered	Solutions	Indicators	Outcomes
Limited understanding of agribusiness concepts among elementary-level students	Conducting interactive learning sessions on agribusiness through the simulation of fruit and vegetable buying and selling activities in class	100% of students actively participate in the agribusiness simulation activity (acting as sellers and buyers)	Improved students' understanding of basic agribusiness and marketing concepts
Lack of engaging learning materials related to agribusiness for young learners	Developing simple and visual learning materials about agribusiness (activity book, flashcards, posters)	Teaching materials were completed and used in class during the empowerment program	Agribusiness activity book and visual aids for classroom use
Students' low motivation to learn about entrepreneurship and marketing	Implementing role-play learning and a reward system using play money to simulate real transactions	Students demonstrate enthusiasm and involvement during the role-play sessions	Increased students' motivation and awareness of entrepreneurship

Teachers' limited experience in teaching agribusiness to young students	Providing mentoring sessions for teachers on how to integrate agribusiness topics into classroom activities	At least 80% of participating teachers can facilitate agribusiness simulation independently	Teachers are empowered and equipped with new teaching methods related to agribusiness education
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The matrix outlines four main problems encountered in an agribusiness-empowerment program for students: limited understanding of agribusiness concepts, lack of engaging learning materials, low motivation for entrepreneurship/marketing, and teachers' limited experience. The proposed solutions include interactive simulations, the development of simple visual materials (books, flashcards, posters), role-play with reward systems, and mentoring for teachers. Indicators are measurable signs like 100% student participation, completed teaching materials used in class, demonstrated enthusiasm during role-play, and 80% teacher capability in facilitating agribusiness independently. Finally, outcomes are expected to include improved understanding of agribusiness/marketing concepts, increased availability/use of agribusiness activity books and visual aids, increased student motivation and awareness of entrepreneurship, and teacher empowerment through new teaching methods.

Manaf et al. (2023) investigate children's knowledge, attitudes, and interests in agropreneurship following exposure through agro-entrepreneurial activities. Just like your matrix, they address *limited understanding* and *motivation* (problems), implement experiential/interactive solutions (children's activities), measure indicators of knowledge/awareness/interest, and report that children's knowledge, awareness, and interest increase. Razali et al (2023) and Muhsain et al (2025) share that the government's Young Agropreneur Unit and related entrepreneurship training for youth under 40 respond to issues of low engagement and knowledge in agribusiness (problems similar to your first two). The result solution involves structured training, mentoring, business management skills, and exposure to agribusiness ventures. Indicators include youth participation and eventual agripreneur outcomes; outcomes are increased youth involvement in agriculture-based business.

Program Internasional of community service relevant to Basri et al (2023). In their article, the program targets primary school students with an agriculture program (golden melon cultivation). Addresses *limited understanding*, *a lack of materials*, and *motivation* by providing both theory and hands-on practice, and engaging materials/technology for students. Indicators include student engagement across modules and the ability to conduct experiments; outcomes include improved understanding of agricultural science, skills, and interest in agribusiness.

CONCLUSION

The international community service activity titled "International Empowerment of Students in Malaysia through Agribusiness Education" successfully introduced fundamental agribusiness and marketing concepts to elementary-level students in Malaysia through interactive and experiential learning. The integration of simulation-based education where students acted as sellers and buyers

using play money proved highly effective in enhancing comprehension, engagement, and motivation among participants. Students demonstrated an improved understanding of agricultural products, market mechanisms, and entrepreneurial values, while also developing essential life skills such as communication, teamwork, negotiation, and financial literacy. The program's participatory approach, supported by simple yet engaging educational media, created a positive learning atmosphere that encouraged active involvement and creative thinking. Moreover, the mentoring sessions for teachers strengthened their capacity to integrate agribusiness topics into classroom activities, ensuring the sustainability of this empowerment initiative. In conclusion, the initiative demonstrates that experiential, play-based agribusiness education can be a powerful tool for student empowerment, teacher development, and cross-cultural educational collaboration. The model developed through this project holds strong potential for replication in other international community service contexts, fostering global partnerships in education and agribusiness innovation.

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