

THE ROLE OF INDONESIAN STUDENTS IN THE MAULID FESTIVAL: AN EFFORT TO INTRODUCE ENGLISH CULTURE AND EDUCATION IN THAILAND

Ridha putri aulia RAHMAH¹, Abdul ROHIM², Nargis NARGIS³

^{1,2,3}Muhammadiyah University of Tangerang, Indonesia.

Corresponding author: Ridha putri aulia Rahmah

E-mail: Pridha169@gmail.com

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Abstract:

The International Community Service Program (Kuliah Kerja Nyata - KKN) is a form of community engagement that allows students to contribute to education and cultural exchange in their host country. This article discusses the role of Indonesian students in the Maulid Festival in Thailand and their efforts to introduce Islamic Nusantara culture and the importance of English education to the local community. The Maulid Festival serves as a platform for students to showcase Indonesian traditions in celebrating the Prophet Muhammad's birthday through various activities, such as cultural performances, religious lectures, and traditional cuisine. Additionally, students conduct socialization programs emphasizing the significance of English as a global skill that can expand educational and economic opportunities for the Thai community. Through this initiative, students not only act as cultural ambassadors but also as agents of change in raising awareness of the importance of learning foreign languages. This program demonstrates that the integration of culture and education can be an effective approach to community service while strengthening bilateral relations between Indonesia and Thailand.

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INTRODUCTION

International Community Service (KKN) is a form of community service that provides students with direct experience in applying knowledge and social skills in a global environment. This program is a place for students to interact with cross-cultural communities while contributing to various aspects, including education and cultural preservation. In this context, Indonesian students who participate in International KKN in Thailand have the opportunity to participate in the Maulid Festival, a religious celebration that has an important meaning for Muslims in Thailand.

The Maulid Festival is not only a religious celebration event but also a means to strengthen social and cultural relations between local communities and KKN participants. Indonesian students play a role in introducing the tradition of celebrating the Prophet's Birthday in Indonesia, such as reciting prayers, Islamic art performances, and serving typical Indonesian cuisine. In addition, as part of the community service program, students also held socialization about the importance of learning English for Thai society. English is a global skill that can increase access to education and economic opportunities, especially for the younger generation who want to compete in the era of globalization.

Through this activity, students not only act as cultural ambassadors but also as educational agents who play a role in increasing public awareness of the importance of foreign language skills. The integration of cultural introduction and English language education in the International KKN program shows that a multidisciplinary approach can be an effective strategy in community service.



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Therefore, this study aims to analyze the contribution of Indonesian students to the Maulid Festival in Thailand and its impact on the local community, both in terms of culture and education.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach, which aims to describe the role of Indonesian students in the Maulid Festival in Thailand and their efforts in introducing culture and the importance of English education to the local community. Data were collected through direct observation, interviews, and documentation of activities during the implementation of the International KKN.

Location and Participants. This activity was carried out in Thailand as part of the International KKN program attended by Indonesian students. Participants in this study included KKN student participants, local communities, religious leaders, and students who participated in English language socialization.

Data Collection Techniques. Data were obtained through the following techniques:

- Observation: Students conducted direct observations of the implementation of the Maulid Festival and the cultural interactions that occurred between KKN participants and the Thai community.
- Interviews: Conducted with community leaders, religious leaders, and activity participants to find out their perspectives on students' contributions to the festival and English language education.
- Documentation: Activities were documented in the form of photos, videos, and field notes to strengthen the research results.

Data Analysis Techniques. The collected data were analyzed using the thematic analysis method, namely by grouping information based on main themes, such as:

- Student participation in the Maulid Festival
- Introduction to Nusantara Islamic Culture
- Socialization of English language education
- Community response to activities

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Student Participation in the Maulid Festival. The Maulid Festival in Thailand is an annual event celebrated by the local Muslim community as a form of respect for the birth of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. In this activity, Indonesian students who participated in the International KKN participated in various cultural and religious activities. Based on the results of observations and documentation, students played a role in several activities, such as:

- Recitation of sholawat and marhaban: Students introduced the tradition of celebrating Maulid in Indonesia through the recitation of sholawat accompanied by hadrah, which received appreciation from the local community.
- Islamic art performances: Several students performed typical Islamic art performances from the Archipelago, such as the saman dance and the reading of religious poetry.
- Typical Indonesian cuisine: Students also contributed to serving typical Indonesian food, such as yellow rice, traditional cakes, and various snacks served to festival participants





Figure 2. English Language Education Socialization

Community Response to Activities. From the results of interviews with local communities and religious leaders, this International KKN activity has a positive impact in two main aspects.

1. Introduction to Nusantara Islamic Culture: The presence of students in the Maulid Festival provides a new perspective for Thai society on the diversity of Islamic culture in Southeast Asia.
2. Increasing Awareness of English Education: Socialization carried out by students increases the motivation of the community, especially the younger generation, to learn English as a skill that can support their future.

In addition, documentation in the form of photos and videos shows that this activity has succeeded in building close relationships between students and the local community. Students not only act as participants but also as facilitators who encourage cultural and educational exchanges.



Figure 3. Community Response to Activities

Implications and Challenges in Implementing Activities. Although the activity went well, there were some challenges faced by students, such as:

- Language differences: Most Thai people, especially the older ones, have limited ability to communicate in English or Indonesian, so students need to use translators or nonverbal communication.
- Cultural adaptation: Students must understand the norms and customs of the local community in order to interact more effectively.
- Time constraints: The KKN activity, which takes place in a limited time, requires students to develop efficient strategies for delivering English learning materials.

However, with good cooperation between students, the community, and local religious figures, these obstacles can be overcome with various adaptive and solution-oriented approaches.



Figure 4. Implications and Challenges in Implementing Activities

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, Indonesian students in the International KKN play an important role in the Maulid Festival in Thailand by introducing the Islamic culture of the archipelago and providing English language education to the local community. Student participation in this festival strengthens cultural relations between Indonesia and Thailand, while English language socialization provides educational benefits for the community, especially the younger generation.

This activity shows that a culture-based and education-based approach can be an effective strategy in community service. The challenges faced during the activity can be used as evaluation material to improve the effectiveness of similar programs in the future. Thus, the International KKN program has great potential to strengthen cultural diplomacy and improve the quality of education in the global community.

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