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# KKN INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA: YOUTH IN ACTION, DRIVING SUSTAINABLE AND HIGH-IMPACT COMMUNITY SERVICE

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## Abstract

International Community Service Program (KKN) is a cross-country student service program. The Indonesian Regional Coordinator, International Association of Economics & Business (IAEB) is trusted as a forum for implementing the International Community Service Activities in collaboration with Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) with students from 10 higher education institutions in Indonesia. This International Community Service Program was held in Medan, Binjai and Pematang Siantar, attended by 100 students from Universiti Utara Malaysia, Al-Washliyah Muslim Nusantara University, UIN North Sumatra, STIT Al-Washliyah Binjai, STAI Darussalam Kunir, Malikussaleh University Lhokseumawe, UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padang Sidempuan, STIT Batubara, UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi, Batutta University, STKIP Budidaya Binjai and students from Fatani Selatan Thailand which is designed to support community development, strengthen global leadership, cross-cultural management skills while strengthening bilateral relations between Indonesia and Malaysia and Thailand. The implementation method includes observation, interviews, discussions, and analysis of community needs to design work programs that focus on education, agriculture, business, social, and culture. The results of the activities include the implementation of international seminars on education, critical thinking in da'wah literacy, cross-country cultural discussions, cross-country cultural enrichment, implementation of the Sentra learning model (Beyond Centers and Circle Time / BCCT) , field learning on plant development with grabbing, coffee business planning, PKM Kampung Tahu, as well as involvement in social activities such as women and children protection at the Aksi Baik foundation. This program provides direct benefits to the local community and trains students for self-development and careers, having global competencies such as cross-cultural communication skills, critical thinking, and social sensitivity. The International KKN has been proven to strengthen academic and cultural relations between the three countries, as well as providing valuable experience for students in their role as agents of change. In conclusion, this program is a strategic forum to improve the quality of students in a global context, while creating a sustainable positive impact on the local community.

**Keywords** : International KKN, Cross-cultural community service, Global competence

## INTRODUCTION

Community Service Program (KKN) is a form of community service by university students as an effort to support integrated development (Aliyyah et al. 2021). It supports the development of a broader, cross-cultural community (Purnama et al., 2025). This program aims to improve the knowledge, skills, and well-being of the community, particularly in areas requiring greater attention, such as villages or neighborhoods with potential but

facing specific challenges (Hadinugroho and Firdaus, 2023). The international KKN program as a form of campus quality acceleration towards global accreditation Based on the latest transformation of business law and academic governance, the policy regarding the implementation of Community Service (PkM) has undergone a fundamental shift to become a campus with a global impact (Silalahi AD, 2026). The International KKN Program is a form of community service activity undertaken by students to provide direct experience in the community and apply the knowledge they have acquired during their studies. In addition to educational and teaching activities, students can also conduct field research outside Indonesia, which has a distinct socio-cultural context. The International KKN Program is a comprehensive implementation of educational, research, and community service activities. international collaboration among IAEB members. The International Association of Economics and Business organizes thematic International KKN programs, which combine the expertise competencies possessed by each student across study programs, so as to overcome the problems encountered in the global community across national borders or in the implementation of KKN activities.

The International Community Service Program, a collaboration between Universiti Utara Malaysia students and International member students of the Economics and Business Association in 2026, is designed to bring together domestic and international students from various partner countries. The KKN program, themed "Youth in Action: Driving Sustainable and High-Impact Community Service," took place from August 13 to 21, 2026, with a series of activities centered in Tanah Seribu Village, South Binjai District. The UUM delegation's participation is part of the INASIS Proton UUM International Outbound Mobility Multicultural Leadership and Global Management Exchange Program, which is designed to strengthen global leadership, cross-cultural management skills, and student involvement in community activities at the international level. Through this cross-cultural collaboration, students are expected to become agents of change who bring global innovation to solve real problems at the rural level, while promoting local potential to the international arena based on the principles of *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs).

The implementation of this International Community Service Program (KKN) integrates two program schemes: outbound and inbound activities. In addition to Binjai, outbound activities are held in Medan and Pematang Siantar at the Bhakti Mandiri Foundation School. Meanwhile, inbound activities are organized through a strategic collaboration with Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). (Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta, 2024) The primary focus of this International Community Service Program is to equip students with a brilliant, integrative, and comprehensive mindset. Through direct interaction with the global community, students are trained to actively contribute to solving social problems using relevant scientific approaches. This participation is aimed at shaping students' character as innovators, motivators, and problem solvers who are adaptive to the dynamics of global community service. Furthermore, student involvement is targeted to have a tangible impact on successfully achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in the educational, social, and cultural pillars. (Badruzaman, I, 2024)

This program's design simultaneously focuses not only on providing benefits to the local community but also on elevating students' global competencies (Universiti Utara Malaysia, 2023). These competencies include cross-cultural communication skills, collaborative capabilities in multinational teams, and social sensitivity to the needs of the international community. In the long term, the program's output is expected to provide a sustainable positive impact on student self-development, empowerment of the target community, and strengthening bilateral relations and regional cooperation between Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand.

Based on the aforementioned explanation, International Community Service Program students are required to design and implement work programs that address the needs of the community, both as subjects and objects of the Community Service Program implementation, while simultaneously optimizing and exploring the potential within the community. The International Community Service Program also provides students with the opportunity to apply the scientific theories they have learned at their respective universities and implement them in real-world settings. Furthermore, this activity encourages students to become motivators, facilitators, and community partners in finding solutions to the various challenges they face. Students are expected to learn how to address social and environmental issues, facilitate the exchange of ideas, and build dynamic collaborations between local communities and the academic community.

With this program, it is specifically hoped that the implementation of International KKN will have a measurable impact on the physical, social and economic environment of the local community, including: The community hopes that students can share new innovations that are easy to implement to solve local problems, such as digitalization of MSMEs, creative learning methods for children in schools, superior plant variety management systems; The presence of students from Universiti Utara Malaysia is able to broaden the horizons of local youth, motivate school-age children to continue their education to a higher level, and erode the limitations of traditional

perspectives; The target area of KKN has the opportunity to be known at the regional level (Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand) as a destination that has potential for culture, tourism, or superior commodities.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Multinational Collaboration and Interregional Higher Education Reconciliation, the implementation of International KKN has proven to be an important instrument in strengthening cross-border cooperation, especially in the Southeast Asian region (Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand). This integration involves macro-scale institutions (UUM) and micro (10 local universities in Indonesia, including Islamic-based institutions). Consortium-based collaborations such as the IAEB are able to eliminate bureaucratic barriers, enable resource sharing, and create high-quality work programs that cannot be achieved unilaterally. Complementary scientific activities such as guest lectures, visiting lectures, international seminars, and business planning competitions emphasize that modern international KKN is a fusion of the pillars of community service and research-based teaching (research-based community service).

The International Community Service Program, conceptualized as a form of *International Outbound Mobility,* acts as a catalyst in shaping students' global citizenship. Through intensive interaction, students are not only required to possess academic excellence, but also cultural intelligence *and cross* -cultural communication skills . Focused discussion forums that explore cross-cultural exchanges (such as introductions to Malaysian traditional clothing, Acehnese traditions, and the local Batubara culinary festival) serve as a space for enriching multicultural understanding. This prepares students to become global leaders with a high sensitivity to diversity and social dynamics at the international level.

One of the tangible contributions of the International Community Service Program (KKN) in intervening in real community issues is through a *pentahelix approach* in the microeconomic sector (MSMEs). Student involvement in the national superior plant nursery cluster at CV. Mitra Tanam and the food processing cluster in Kampung Tahu Binjai demonstrates the transfer of appropriate technology and knowledge. Students act as innovators by disseminating waste processing strategies (e.g., diversifying leftover tofu into tofu chips) and providing education on digital marketing . This intervention has a direct impact on increasing product added value, expanding technology-based market reach, and strengthening the economic independence of local communities, particularly the Binjai community.

The KKN program entitled *"Youth in Action: Driving Sustainable and High-Impact Community Service"* explicitly adopts the pillars of *the Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs). SDGs Point 4 (Quality Education): Implemented through the introduction of cutting-edge teaching methods such as the Center Learning Model ( *Beyond Centers and Circle Time* / BCCT) for PAUD/early school teachers at Haefa Madani School. SDGs Point 5 (Gender Equality & Child Protection): Realized through a partnership with the AKSI BAIK Foundation in educating the community regarding efforts to protect the rights of children and women. Character Education: Strengthening aspects of spirituality and ethical leadership channeled through training for da'wah cadres at STIQ-MUI Binjai City ensures that the technological modernization and globalization brought by students remain based on strengthening the moral character ( *Rabbani* ) of the target community. (Silalahi, AD, 2026)

## METHOD

The observation and problem identification phase is an important initial step in implementing UUM's International Community Service Program (KKN) with collaborative partners, particularly at the central location of the program, Binjai. Students conducted an initial survey through the IAEB team in Indonesia directly to the location to understand the community conditions as well as the potential and existing problems, then opened a space for discussion with UUM and collaborative partners. The methods used included dialogue, meeting directly with village leaders in South Binjai, conducting interviews with community leaders, discussions with community groups, and studying related documents. This approach aims to obtain accurate and relevant data as a basis for developing a targeted work program.

Based on these observations, the student team designed a comprehensive work program that took community needs into consideration. The program was designed to cover various aspects, such as education, agriculture, social issues, economics, business, and creativity. The program's primary focus was to provide direct benefits to the local community while leveraging existing potential. To ensure success, the students also conducted data collection, in-depth analysis of the community's specific needs, and tailored activities to suit field conditions.

In addition, intensive discussions and coordination were conducted between the IAEB Indonesia team, UUM, and the International KKN Partners, accompanied by the Supervisory Lecturer of PIC Inasis Proton UUM, DPL from the Collaborative Group Universities, and community leaders, including an audience with the Mayor of Binjai. This


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process ensured that the designed program received full support from the relevant parties. Furthermore, the programs were arranged in the form of a systematic activity schedule and detailed implementation steps, so that their implementation could run effectively and directed.

The implementation of this International KKN involved 20 students from Universiti Utara Malaysia, 6 students from Al-Washliyah Muslim Nusantara University, 2 students from STIT Batubara, 5 students from Malikussaleh University, 7 students from UIN Syahada Padang Sidempuan, 10 students from STIT Al-Washliyah Binjai, 11 students from STKIP Budidaya Binjai, 5 students from Fatani Selatan Thailand, also participated by online participants, namely 3 students from STAI Darussalam Kunir, 6 students from UIN Jambi collaborating with each other, accompanied by 25 lecturers from collaboration partners. The KKN program provides opportunities for students to exchange learning at collaboration partner universities, in this case student exchanges, guest lecturers are carried out. This collaboration expands the reach of student service by involving cross-institutions and cultures. The presence of students participating in the International KKN program in this program strengthens the synergy between community service and the development of students' global competencies, while also providing real contributions to the Binjai community, especially the selected subjects and objects such as Kampung Tahu, Sumatera Roestery, Mitra Tanam Nursery, Haefa Madani School and Bhakti Mandiri Pematang Siantar School.

The results of the planned activities that were implemented in a programmed and directed manner are as follows:

1. Socialization of Early Learning Methods: Implementing the Center Learning Model (Beyond Centers and Circle Time / BCCT) in schools for teachers and early childhood children through a play-while-learning approach.
2. The International Seminar on Teacher Development in Binjai was held with resource person Prof. Dr. Ismail, M.Ag from STKIP Budidaya Binjai and Dr.Syazwani from Universiti Utara Malaysia, the aim is to provide efforts for the development and innovation of professional teachers.
3. International Cultural Talks (Malaysia and Indonesia) This program aims to strengthen cross-cultural relations between Indonesian and Malaysian students through discussion forums and seminars between students, supervised by Field Supervisors. These activities involve the exchange of ideas, experiences, and knowledge about the cultures of both countries, as well as building a deeper understanding of cultural similarities and differences.
4. Da'wah Cadre Training: Providing religious guidance and direct training to the community at the MUI College of Al-Qur'an Studies (STIQ).
5. Business Practices and Grafting Methods: Conducting interactive discussions and direct practice of nursery techniques for superior national export-oriented fruit commodities.
6. Product Processing Training: Directly assist local entrepreneurs in processing raw materials (soybeans) into tofu, soy milk, and utilizing waste products into tofu chips.
7. Business Operations Education: Learn about upstream to downstream business from the manufacturing process to marketing of local coffee commodities.
8. Visiting/Guest Lecturer Program: Combining community service with formal academic activities through lecturer exchanges and public lectures between universities across countries.
9. Cross-Border Cultural Enrichment Practice. This program aims to enhance understanding of the diversity of Indonesian, Malaysian, and Thai cuisine . It introduces the enrichment of Indonesian and international cultures through a culinary competition featuring international cuisines. The diverse flavors and tastes are derived from the ancestral roots of our respective nations.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Socialization of Early Learning Methods: Implementing the Center Learning Model (Beyond Centers and Circle Time / BCCT) in schools for teachers and early childhood children through a play-while-learning approach, was carried out at Haefa Madani and Maura El Mumtaz Binjai schools on August 15, 2026. Before playing, children gather in a circle (circle time) to receive instruction from the teacher. This model was demonstrated by students from UUM and the Faculty of Islamic Studies (FAI) at UMN Al-Washliyah and STIT Batubara. The basic principle is a "Playing While Learning" approach. Children develop their potential through guided play stimulation. 4 steps guide for teachers, namely Step 1: Greet children in a friendly manner, make Circle Time interactive with an opening song. Step 2: Provide a clear basis for playing rules in this case sharing toys, tidying up after playing. Step 3: Free children to choose a center, the teacher acts as a facilitator and observer of child development. Step 4: Close with Recalling (question and answer impressions of children's play) at the end of the circle session before going home.



Figure 1.2.3 Release of KKN Participants and activities at Haefa Madani School

2. The International Seminar on Teacher Development in Binjai was held with resource person Prof. Dr. Ismail, M.Ag from STKIP Budidaya Binjai and Dr.Syazwani from Universiti Utara Malaysia, the aim is to provide efforts for professional teacher development and innovation to be implemented on August 16 2026. Teacher development is not only based on improving academic competence, but also on strengthening spiritual and managerial character. Formation of the Rabbani Generation, Teachers are encouraged to integrate moral, ethical, and spiritual values into every subject. Professional teachers serve as role models (uswatun hasanah) who build strong character in students. Excellent Governance: Teachers are trained to have transparent, accountable, and structured classroom governance and learning management. This is crucial to attract and maintain the level of public trust in school institutions. Social & Psychological Maturity: Teachers are given psychological insight to guide students in choosing a positive, adaptive social environment, and free from academic stress. The innovation emphasized is the shift from conventional methods (lectures) to methods that are adaptive to the development of the times and child psychology: BCCT Method Innovation (Beyond Centers and Circle Time): Adopting a center-based class system for early childhood education. Teachers innovate by creating creative game media as a means of delivering material, so that children actively explore their potential independently. Cross-Cultural Innovation: Teachers are invited to open global horizons by utilizing the treasures of Indonesian and international culture (such as cultural exchanges, cross-cultural management, and global collaboration) as interesting contextual learning media for students. Integrated Digital Da'wah: Teachers innovate by utilizing technology and digital media as a means of spreading good values, literacy, and interactive educational materials.
3. International Cultural Talks (Malaysia and Indonesia) This program aims to strengthen cross-cultural relations between Indonesian and Malaysian students through discussion forums and seminars between students, supervised by Field Supervisors. These activities involve the exchange of ideas, experiences, and knowledge about the cultures of both countries, as well as building a deeper understanding of cultural similarities and differences.



Figures 4 and 5. Indonesian and Malaysian Cultural Discussion Activities

The International Cultural Discussion Program is a strategic forum bringing together students from Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), a student delegation from Thailand, and students from 10 universities in Indonesia. Directly accompanied by Field Supervisors (DPL) from across the country, this activity aims to:

- Strengthening Bilateral Relations: Building bridges of communication and close cultural diplomacy at the youth and student level in Southeast Asia.
- Exploration of Cultural Characteristics: To be a forum for exchanging ideas, experiences and knowledge in order to map similarities ( *similarities of groups* ) while respecting the differences in the cultural treasures of each country.
- Building Cross-Cultural Management: Equipping students with international communication skills and adaptive global understanding. Learning Methods & Activity Formats


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This activity is packaged through an interactive, participatory and collaborative approach through several main sub-activities:

- Cross-Cultural Focus Group Discussion (FGD): Students are divided into focus groups to conduct in-depth cultural analyses. Each representative takes turns presenting the unique treasures of their respective regions.
- Traditional Cultural Treasures:
  - *Malaysian Delegation:* Presenting and socializing the unique customs and philosophy of traditional Malaysian clothing.
  - *Indonesian Delegation:* Showcasing the richness of local traditions, such as visualization of Acehnese wedding customs ( *Lintoe and Dara Baro* ), an anthropological analysis of the *"Kawin Lari" culture* of the Mandailing tribe, and an introduction to culinary heritage such as *the Tapai and Lemang Festival* from Batu Bara.



Figure 6. Group photo of cultural heritage presentation participants

4. Da'wah Cadre Training: Providing religious guidance and direct training to the community at the MUI College of Al-Qur'an Studies (STIQ).
   The Da'wah Cadre Training Program is a form of religious-based community service organized through collaboration between Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), FAI UMN Al-Washliyah, and STIT Batubara. Centered at the College of Al-Qur'an Sciences (STIQ) of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) in Binjai City, this activity aims to: Form a Rabbani Generation: Produce young da'wah cadres who have strong spiritual character, integrity, and competence. Modernization of Da'wah Methods: Equipping students, students, and local communities with strategies for broadcasting Islamic values that are adaptive to technological developments. Cross-Country Religious Synergy: Becoming a forum for exchanging experiences related to the management of da'wah methods and Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia.




Figure 7. Group photo after activities at STIQ MUI Binjai

5. Business Practice and Grafting Methods: Conducting interactive discussions and hands-on practice of nursery techniques for superior national export-oriented fruit crops. The Business Practice and Grafting Methods program is a form of community service based on applied science and entrepreneurship. This activity is carried out in collaboration with agribusiness experts from CV. Mitra Tanam Kota Binjai.



Figure 8. Participants seriously listen to the presentation from the Plant Nursery Extension Team.

The main objectives of this activity are: Acceleration of Vegetative Propagation: Equipping international students and local young farmers with technical skills in propagating superior fruit plants. Export Opportunity Analysis: Opening participants' insights into the management of nursery businesses that have international market potential (exports). Preservation of Superior Varieties: Introducing and developing fruit plant commodities that have received official variety release and become nationally superior. Implementation Method & Form of Activity This activity is packaged through an educational approach based on fieldwork (field trips) and direct practice (hands-on learning): Interactive Discussion of Agribusiness Management: Participants receive material presentations from a team of senior extension workers regarding business opportunity analysis, export seed quality standardization, to the national seed marketing supply chain. Direct Practice of Grafting Method (Grafting): Students and target partners are guided intensively to practice grafting techniques. This process combines rootstocks that have strong roots with scions from high-quality parent trees so that the plants bear fruit quickly and are identical to their parents. Exploration of 7 National Superior Commodities: The focus of the practice is carried out on seven superior tropical fruit commodities native to the region with high economic value, including: Rambutan Brahrang, Pokat (Avocado) Idola, Mangosteen Idaman, Guava Honey Green, Guava Honey Red, Cempedak Guling, Chocolate BCL3. Expected Impact and Output Through this activity, participants not only understand agricultural theory on paper, but have motor competence in producing superior seeds independently. The long-term output of this program is the birth of young agribusiness innovators who are able to boost the local economy through the use of appropriate technology in the horticultural sector.

6. Product Processing Training: Directly assisting local entrepreneurs to process raw materials (soybeans) into tofu, soy milk, and utilizing waste products into tofu chips. Product Processing Training as a form of community service based on food science, circular economy, and micro-entrepreneurship. This activity is carried out through direct collaboration with business actors in Kampung Tahu Binjai and supported by the AKSI BAIK Foundation, Suka Maju Village, West Binjai. The main objectives of this activity are: Diversification of Processed Products: Increasing the selling value of soybean raw materials through a variety of derivative products other than conventional tofu. Implementation of Zero Waste (Circular Economy): Educating local entrepreneurs to optimize waste products or unsold tofu so that they do not become waste, but are reprocessed into new products. Improving Economic Welfare: Helping local MSMEs find new income opportunities to strengthen the economic resilience of local families. Through this training, entrepreneurs in Kampung Tahu Binjai gained new insights that food product innovation doesn't have to be expensive, but can instead effectively utilize existing resources. The tangible output of this activity is the creation of new product variants (soy milk and tofu chips), reduced potential losses from unsold products, and improved managerial and digital marketing skills among local MSMEs.
7. Business Operations Education: Learn about upstream to downstream business from the manufacturing process to marketing of local coffee commodities. The Business Operational Education Program is a form of community service based on business management, agribusiness, and global entrepreneurship. This activity is carried out through field studies and direct business curation at the Kopi Sumatera Roastery Binjai MSME with local coffee practitioners. The main objectives of this activity are: Supply Chain Understanding: Equipping international students with an in-depth understanding of coffee business governance from upstream (raw material supply) to downstream (ready-to-consume product marketing). Strengthening Local


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Potential: Lifting Sumatra's specialty coffee commodities to have higher competitiveness in domestic and international markets. Operational Management Education: Providing practical insights into quality standardization, efficient production processes, and financial management for micro-entrepreneurs. Through coffee operational education, International KKN students and young entrepreneurs gain a clear picture that the success of a coffee business is not only determined by taste, but by the strength of integrated operational management. The output of this activity is the documentation of the upstream-downstream business model of local coffee, increased managerial capacity of participants in the agribusiness sector, and the creation of opportunities for international network marketing collaboration in the future.

8. Visiting/Guest Lecturer Program: Integrating community service with formal academic activities through lecturer exchanges and public lectures between universities across countries. The Visiting/Guest Lecturer Program is a manifestation of strengthening the Tri Dharma Perguruan Tinggi pillars that combine elements of community service with formal education on an international scale. This series of activities is carried out as the opening and closing of the International KKN program, taking place at the Al-Washliyah Muslim Nusantara University (UMN) and the State Islamic University (UIN) of North Sumatra.



Picture. 9 and 10. Student Exchange Activities

The main objectives of this collaborative academic program are: Campus Internationalization: Facilitating the exchange of cutting-edge ideas, research, and academic perspectives between lecturers from Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) and partner universities in Indonesia. Enriching Student Horizons: Providing opportunities for local students to obtain global-standard lecture materials directly from expert lecturers abroad. Strengthening Strategic Partnerships: Strengthening institutional relationships between faculty leaders to open up opportunities for research collaboration, joint publications, and further studies (Masters and Doctoral) in the future. Through this program, academic geographical boundaries have been successfully bridged through intensive knowledge transfer. The tangible output of this activity is an increase in the achievement of the university's key performance indicators (KPI) in terms of lecturers' activities off-campus/internationally, the creation of a competitive academic climate for students, and the drafting of an implementation memorandum of understanding (MoA) for further exchange programs in the following years .

9. Cross-Border Cultural Enrichment Practice. This program aims to enhance understanding of the diversity of Indonesian, Malaysian, and Thai cuisine. It introduces the enrichment of Indonesian and international cultures through a culinary competition featuring international cuisines. The diverse flavors and tastes are rooted in the ancestral roots of our respective nations.




Figures 11 and 12. Cross-Country Cultural Enrichment Culinary Diplomacy

The Cross-Country Cultural Enrichment Practice Program is a form of community service based on culture and culinary diplomacy ( *gastrodiplomacy* ). This activity is held through collaboration between the academic community of STKIP Budidaya Binjai with a delegation of students from Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) and students from South Fatani, Thailand. The main objectives of this communal activity are: Culinary Diversity Education: Understanding the characteristics, similarities, and unique tastes of traditional dishes owned by Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. Preserving Ancestral Heritage: Introducing the cultural roots of the same nation through the philosophy behind traditional herbs, spices, and cooking techniques that are passed down from generation to generation. Strengthening Cross-Country Brotherhood: Being an effective informal communication media to dissolve cultural barriers and build solidarity among Southeast Asian students. Through this cultural practice, students not only learn the theory of multiculturalism but also experience it directly through their five senses. The tangible output of this activity is the documentation of international culinary recipes, increased tolerance and appreciation for cultural differences, and the culmination of a souvenir presentation as a sign of the success of international cultural collaboration.

## CONCLUSION

"Youth in Action: Driving Sustainable and High-Impact Community Service" Collaboration: Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), IAEB, & 10 Indonesian Universities . The implementation of the International KKN program which took place from 13 to 21 August 2026 was centered in Tanah Seribu Village, South Binjai, and expanded to Medan City and Pematang Siantar. This program as a whole has been running successfully, conducive, and achieved high-impact output targets *for* the community and the agencies involved.
The following are the main conclusions from the successful implementation of the program based on the 4 pillars of achievement:

1. Success of Downstream Innovation & Community Education
    - Transformation of Early Childhood Education: The delegation successfully socialized and demonstrated the *Beyond Centers and Circle Time* (BCCT) Learning Model at Haefa Madani and Maura El Mumtaz Binjai Schools, providing an alternative interactive teaching method for teachers.
    - Product Downstreaming & Circular Economy: Students successfully assisted MSMEs in Kampung Tahu Binjai to diversify their products (tofu and soy milk) and optimize their waste products into high-value tofu chips integrated with digital marketing.
    - Horticultural Sector Development: Through collaboration with CV. Mitra Tanam Binjai, participants successfully mastered and practiced vegetative propagation techniques ( *grafting* ) on 7 nationally superior fruit commodities oriented towards the export market.
    - Modern Da'wah Cadre Development: Religious development at STIQ MUI Binjai has succeeded in equipping local da'wah cadres with digital-based da'wah competencies.
2. Strengthening Multicultural Diplomacy and Youth Character
    - This program serves as an effective platform for fostering cross-border relationships. Through focus group discussions (FGDs) on cultural synergy and a culinary competition highlighting the unique culinary traditions of three countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand), students successfully identified common ancestral roots and fostered a strong sense of cultural tolerance.
    - Through a character development *sharing session* with YPI Bhakti Mandiri Pematang Siantar, this program succeeded in strengthening global leadership skills, cross-cultural management maturity, and the psychological health of youth in organizations.
3. Integration of Academics and Global Standard Curriculum
    - The series of community service activities concluded in a balanced manner with academic activities through the *Visiting/Guest Lecturer program* , public lectures, and student exchanges at UMN Al-Washliyah and UIN North Sumatra. These activities successfully stimulated the exchange of research ideas, refined the international curriculum, and opened opportunities for further study (Master's/Doctoral) across countries for the academic community.
4. Strategic Partnership Synergy Between Institutions
    - This International KKN proves that multi-party collaboration ( *pentahelix* ) involving international associations (IAEB), universities across countries, local governments (Binjai City Government), social institutions (AKSI BAIK Foundation), and local MSMEs is able to create sustainable work programs.


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In general, this International Community Service Program (KKN) not only leaves a physical impact and provides knowledge updates for the target community. For the 100 student delegates, this program successfully shifted the paradigm from simply being there to help to a space for "learning together, exchanging ideas, and growing alongside the community" to create agents of change globally.

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