



Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat

# Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat

Vol. 5 No. 1 Tahun 2025 | Hal. 45 – 51



## Raising Up Precious Mankind Project: Intensive English Learning Community Service to Improve English Proficiency Skills of Children in Tanjung Malaka, Tamalate, Makassar

Ghovinda Fitra Wijaya <sup>a,1</sup>, Wiputra Cendana <sup>a,2\*</sup>, Vannak Sorn <sup>b,3</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Universitas Pelita Harapan, Indonesia

<sup>b</sup> National Institute of Education, Cambodia

<sup>2</sup> wiputra.cendana@uph.edu\*

### Informasi artikel

Received: 23 Januari 2025;

Revised: 8 Februari 2025;

Accepted: 24 Februari 2025.

### Keywords:

English;

Community;

Society.

### ABSTRACT

Indonesia is striving to achieve its ambitious Vision of Golden Indonesia 2045, which requires a globally competitive human resource base. To realize this goal, proficiency in international languages particularly English has become an essential skill. However, recent data show that Indonesia ranks 80th out of 116 countries in terms of English language proficiency, with the city of Makassar among those with low scores. In response to this issue, an initiative called Raising Up Precious Mankind was established on February 11, 2024. This initiative focuses on enhancing the skills of children in Tanjung Malaka neighbourhood, Tanjung Merdeka urban village, Tamalate District, Makassar City. Through various educational and training activities, the program has supported children in improving their English fluency, numeracy, and artistic abilities. Beyond its direct impact on the children, this community engagement program has evolved into a platform that encourages broader civic participation. It also serves as a space for university and high school students to develop essential skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration.

### ABSTRAK

**Proyek Raising Up Precious Mankind: Pengabdian Masyarakat Pembelajaran Intensif Bahasa Inggris untuk Meningkatkan Kemampuan Berbahasa Inggris Anak-anak di Tanjung Malaka, Tamalate, Makassar.** Indonesia tengah berupaya mencapai visi besar Indonesia Emas 2045, yang menuntut sumber daya manusia yang kompetitif di tingkat global. Untuk mewujudkan hal tersebut, penguasaan bahasa internasional, terutama bahasa Inggris, menjadi keterampilan yang sangat penting. Namun, data terbaru menunjukkan bahwa Indonesia menempati peringkat ke-80 dari 116 negara dalam hal kemampuan berbahasa Inggris, dengan Kota Makassar termasuk dalam kelompok kota dengan skor rendah. Menanggapi permasalahan ini, pada tanggal 11 Februari 2024 didirikan sebuah inisiatif bernama Raising Up Precious Mankind, yang berfokus pada peningkatan keterampilan anak-anak di Tanjung Malaka, Kelurahan Tanjung Merdeka, Kecamatan Tamalate, Kota Makassar. Melalui berbagai kegiatan pendidikan dan pelatihan, program ini telah membantu anak-anak dalam meningkatkan kefasihan berbahasa Inggris, kemampuan berhitung, serta keterampilan seni mereka. Selain memberikan dampak langsung kepada anak-anak, kegiatan pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini juga telah berkembang menjadi sebuah komunitas yang menginspirasi partisipasi masyarakat luas. Program ini sekaligus menjadi wadah pengembangan keterampilan berpikir kritis, kreativitas, komunikasi, dan kolaborasi bagi mahasiswa dan siswa sekolah menengah atas yang terlibat di dalamnya.

### Kata kata kunci:

Bahasa Inggris;

Komunitas;

Masyarakat.

Copyright © 2025 (Ghovinda Fitra Wijaya, dkk). All Right Reserved

How to Cite : Wijaya, G. F., Cendana, W., & Sorn, V. (2025). Raising Up Precious Mankind Project: Intensive English Learning Community Service to Improve English Proficiency Skills of Children in Tanjung Malaka, Tamalate, Makassar. *Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*, 5(1), 45–51. <https://doi.org/10.56393/jpkm.v5i1.2922>



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/). Allows readers to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of its articles and allow readers to use them for any other lawful purpose. The journal hold the copyright.

## Introduction

According to the Indonesia English Proficiency Index (EF, 2024), Indonesia ranks 80th out of 116 countries, with Makassar among the cities with low English proficiency scores. This finding was shocking given that people are expected to have more English exposure as the world becomes more digitalized. Furthermore, research revealed that Makassar has the third lowest English proficiency level among Indonesia's 20 largest cities. As Indonesia works toward reaching the 2045 Golden Indonesia vision, its human resources must be competitive on the global stage. One of the keys to accomplishing it is to master the international language, particularly English (Isadaud, Fikri, & Bukhari, 2022). Therefore, the condition must be addressed immediately.

A woman who worked at one of Makassar's semi-international schools and lived in Tanjung Malaka neighbourhood confirmed the situation, saying, "I am really sad if I remember the children in my environment who cannot speak English as fluently as the kids in this school." This statement inspired the writer to help improve the English proficiency skills of children in Tanjung Malaka neighbourhood, Makassar. In February 2024, the writer and two other coworkers began constructing a community project called the Raising Up Precious Mankind Project (RPM). Community service is a service conducted by people or organizations to develop and give positive impacts to other communities (Hollis, 2002; Cortese, 2019; Wu, 2011; Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). This community service aims to actively contribute to the development of education in Indonesia by reaching out to children to help them improve their skills, particularly in English, while also offering them the opportunity to create relationships and practice various other skills.

Along with teaching English, RPM contributed to improving children's literacy and numeracy classes by using interdisciplinary learning that combined science, math, and art (Chu dkk, 2021; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007; Johnston-Wilder dkk, 2016). Rowntree (1982) said that "interdisciplinary learning is the approach as 'one in which two or more disciplines are brought together, preferably in such a way that the disciplines interact with one another and have some effect on one another's perspectives.'" (Ivanitskaya, Clark, Montgomery, and Primeau, 2002). The students interdisciplinary learning focused on more than just English language abilities, structure, grammar, and vocabulary. At the same time, the students had the opportunity to identify overlapping topics linked to English and study from different fields, enriching their knowledge and allowing them to use the skills in their daily lives.

## Methods

The Raising UP Precious Mankind was initiated by Ghovinda Fitra Wijaya, Agnes Yesica Sharen Br Sitepu, and Sinthia Marlina Amperawati Turnip on February 11th, 2024, in Makassar. The initiators were inspired by the staff who testified to the struggle that the students in Tanjung Malaka neighbourhood face regarding English proficiency. Along with that, Education First released the data that demonstrated the low English proficiency level of people in Makassar (EF, 2024). So, the initiators collaborated to develop the English proficiency of the children in Tanjung Malaka. To begin the project, the initiators first communicated with the local community to learn about the conditions that existed in that community, then expressed their intention to conduct the program, and finally asked them to assist in providing a location for the teaching and learning process, as well as communicating with parents to gather the children to learn together. This strategy was in line with Pawar (2020), who stated that in a community development project, the first important step is to understand and consider the community's perspective on the current conditions or needs as revealed in the research, followed by raising community awareness about the issue and engaging them in the community development process, as community development requires both human and material resources. For the teaching and learning process, the initiators were collaborating together to design the lesson that will be taught along with the teaching strategies that will be implemented. The initiators also provided the teaching materials and

resources, such as whiteboards, business files, handouts, and worksheets, and were also tutors who delivered the lessons to the students and ensured that the students achieved the learning objectives.

## Results and Discussion

In the first month of operation, the RPM was able to teach 5 elementary level children who lacked vocabulary and confidence in speaking English. However, after 2 month of attending RPM, children can describe the stationery and its color in front of their peers. After two months of service, the RPM was able to reach out to twelve elementary children to help them learn and improve their English. The children were generally from middle- to low-income backgrounds, but they were consistent and passionately motivated to improving their numerous skills, especially English.

Every Sunday afternoon, children at RPM spent 1-1.5 hours learning together. During the learning activity, the tutors taught the children about topics linked to the General Education English Curriculum promulgated by the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (2018) theme, such as "Me and my friend, me and my school, me and my family, me and the world around." Within the framework, the tutors taught a variety of relevant topics so that the students may apply them in their daily lives. This theme focuses on improving students' communication skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as well as linguistic understanding, such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.



Figure 1 First Meeting on February 11th, 2024

In addition, students learnt through differentiated learning activities such as listening comprehension, word pronunciation, vocabulary games, worksheet assignments, and presentations. These activities are planned specifically to develop children's communication skills and language expertise. Furthermore, the students learnt English while studying various disciplines such as math, science, and art. As Pawar stated, "Instead of focusing only on single issues in communities, community development practice must adopt a comprehensive social development approach to simultaneously cover multidimensional aspects" (Pawar, 2020). The RPM used this technique to fulfill its goal of providing opportunities for children to develop relationships and practice various skills.





Figure 2 Last Meeting with Ms. Sinthia on June 9th, 2024

According to the PISA report 2022, Indonesia's reading, numeracy, and scientific literacy levels remain well below than the OECD average . Even South Sulawesi's Board of Education indicated that its literacy and numeracy scores remained lower below Indonesia's national average in 2024. As a result, in order to involve in the development of numeracy skills, the RPM taught basic math operation skills and their application in daily life, which integrated with English language instruction. This session improved the students' mathematics vocabulary and taught them how to interpret math operations in English word problems. Additionally, as a community service with the goal of developing students' various skills, the RPM collaborated with Ms. Presilia Marthen, an art teacher from Sekolah Dian Harapan Makassar, to improve students' art skills by teaching primary and secondary colors, as well as the basic art drawing pattern, from January 19th, 2025 to February 16th, 2025.



Figure 3 Art Session with Ms. Presillia

After a year of working on the project, the students' English proficiency improved significantly. Now, the students are more competent in using communication in simple interactions during the session and can apply the terminology learned for the project presentation. In its service, the RPM initiators had the opportunity to share information about the program with junior school children at Sekolah Dian Harapan Makassar by being invited to the Book Week event in 2024. Through this activity, the RPM contributed to sharing information about the condition of Indonesian English proficiency, particularly in Makassar, as well as raising awareness about the needs of the local community and persuading the Junior School of Sekolah Dian Harapan Makassar community to be empathetic in taking action to help those in need in society. The RPM was also blessed by the Junior School Department of Sekolah Dian Harapan, who donated 11 foldable study tables and stationery items like pencils and erasers.



Figure 4 RPM shared on a Book Week Event at SDH Makassar



Figure 5 RPM shared on a Book Week Event at SDH Makassar



Figure 6 RPM received the donation from SDH Makassar

Furthermore, during its service, the RPM has been becoming a place for either college or senior high school students to have community engagement experience alongside developing their skills. According to Comeau, Palacios, Talley, et al. (2019), “Community engagement is the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interests, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people” (in Gomez, Fowkes, & Price, 2024). Patricia, a college student, had the opportunity to share her experience by teaching English to RPM children from February to March 2024. Gabrielle Harijanto, a senior high school student, discovered happiness in assisting disadvantaged children in Tanjung Malaka by collaborating with the tutor and volunteering to provide materials and teach at RPM from August to December 2024.





Figure 7 Patricia volunteered on tutoring students



Figure 8 Gabrielle volunteered on tutoring the students

As a result, as a community service, the RPM has helped children in Tanjung Malaka to improve their English language fluency, numeracy skills, and art skills. Furthermore, this community service has developed into a community that encourages others to participate in societal progress. Along with being a platform for college and senior high school students to improve their critical thinking, creativity, communication, and cooperation skills.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, after 1 year of service, the RPM has achieved its goal of contributing actively to developing the quality of education in Indonesia through improving their skills, particularly in English, along with offering them the opportunity to build relationships and practice various other skills. This community service developed the English proficiency skills of elementary students along with other skills such as numeracy and creativity skills through art sessions. It has also become a platform for other communities to demonstrate empathy and awareness through donations. Moreover, it becomes a platform for higher-level students to practice skills such as communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking. The writer hopes that this community service will be long-lasting and continuously contribute to improving students' skills, as well as being a platform for other people to be involved in community engagement. Things that can be recommended to be improved for the betterment of this service are 1) it will be better if it has an attendance list for each student, 2) to reach out to more students it will be better if it can get a bigger room that can accommodate more students, 3) it is recommended that if the community service can provide 2 types of classes which for lower grade (1-3) and higher grader (4-6).

### Acknowledgements

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to all individuals and institutions whose support has been instrumental in the growth of the *Raising Up Precious Mankind* (RPM) initiative. Special thanks are extended to the program initiators Ghovinda Fitra Wijaya, Agnes Yesica Sharen Br Sitepu, and Sinthia Marlina Amperawati Turnip whose vision and dedication laid the foundation for this meaningful project. Deep appreciation is also conveyed to Ibu Ida Mantasiah, whose generosity in providing a space for the program has enabled its implementation. The author is likewise thankful to Ms. Patricia Natalie Sanjaya, Ms. Presilia Marthen, and Gabrielle Harijanto for their volunteer work in tutoring and helping to further develop the program. Acknowledgment is also due to the Junior School Department of Sekolah Dian Harapan Makassar for providing a platform to share about RPM and for donating foldable tables and stationery. Additionally, gratitude is extended to Ibu Sri Wahyu Dianti Bendon for her kind contribution of crayons to support the children's learning activities. Without the collaboration and support of these individuals and communities, the development of this community service initiative would not have reached its current progress, and its efforts to achieve its mission would have faced far greater challenges.

### References

- Chu, S. K. W., Reynolds, R. B., Tavares, N. J., Notari, M., & Lee, C. W. Y. (2021). *21st century skills development through inquiry-based learning from theory to practice*. Springer International Publishing.
- Cortese, C. F. (2019). *The impacts of rapid growth on local organizations and community services*. In *Coping with rapid growth in rural communities* (pp. 115-135). Routledge.
- Darling-Hammond, L., & Bransford, J. (Eds.). (2007). *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Dewan Pendidikan Sulawesi Selatan (2024, December 30). *Berita: Refleksi Akhir Tahun Dewan Pendidikan Sulawesi Selatan Hasilkan 6 Rekomendasi*. Retrieved from Dewan Pendidikan Sulawesi Selatan: <https://dewanpendidikansulsel.org/refleksi-akhir-tahun-dewan-pendidikan-sulsel-hasilkan-6-rekomendasi/>

- EF. (2024). *EF English Proficiency Index*. Indonesia: Signum International AG.
- Gomez, I., Fowkes, V., & Price, I. (2024). *Teaching community engagement for health professions students in underserved areas*. Discover Education.
- Hollis, S. A. (2002). *Capturing the Experience: Transforming Community Service into Service Learning*. Teaching Sociology, 200-213.
- Isadaud, D., Fikri, M. D., & Bukhari, M. I. (2022). *The Urgency of English in the Curriculum in Indonesia to Prepare Human Resources for Global Competitiveness*. Diajar: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran, 51-58.
- Ivanitskaya, L., Clark, D., Montgomery, G., & Primeau, R. (2002). *Interdisciplinary Learning: Process and Outcomes*. Innovative Higher Education, 95-111.
- Johnston-Wilder, S., Lee, C., & Pimm, D. (2016). *Learning to teach mathematics in the secondary school: a companion to school experience*. Routledge.
- Pawar, M. (2020). Community Development Approaches, Activities, and Issues. In S. Todd, & J. L. Drolet, *Community Practice and Social Development in Social Work* (pp. 1-18). Singapore: Springer.
- Wu, H. (2011). *Social impact of volunteerism*. Points of Light Institute. Retrieved February, 2, 2016.