

## An Andragogy-Based Non-Formal Education Model for Former Migrant Workers: A Study of the Desbumi Program in Juntinyuat, Indramayu

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### Abstract

*Returning Indonesian migrant workers often face difficulties in socio-economic reintegration after returning to their home regions, characterized by low public participation, limited entrepreneurial skills, and dependence on unsustainable remittances. This study aims to analyze the application of andragogy principles in the Desa Peduli Buruh Migran Program by Migrant CARE within the Gema Karya Migran Group in Juntinyuat, Indramayu, as well as its contribution to the socio-economic reintegration of former migrant workers. The research method is descriptive qualitative, with data collection through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis involving program facilitators, group members, families of migrant workers, government, and the migrant worker protection service center. The research results indicate that the program has implemented Knowles' six principles of andragogy, namely the need to know, self-concept, role of experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation. This implementation has successfully restored the social functioning of group members through increased participation in village deliberations, the development of self-confidence, and the ability to independently handle licensing procedures. However, the contribution to economic reintegration remains limited because income from micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises is sporadic and dependent on orders from corporate partners. In conclusion, the Desbumi Program is effective as a social reintegration strategy, while economic reintegration requires ongoing support, particularly in the areas of market access and digital marketing.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesian migrant workers make a significant contribution to the national economy through remittances amounting to hundreds of trillions of rupiah annually, making them one of Indonesia's primary sources of foreign exchange (Oroh, 2023 as cited in Eprilianto et al., 2024; Bank Indonesia, 2023 as cited in Kementerian Pelindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia, 2024). Indramayu Regency is one of the major migrant-sending areas with the highest number of Indonesian migrant workers in West Java, including Juntinyuat Village, which has a notably high rate of out-migration (Tyas, 2010). However, despite this economic contribution, returning Indonesian migrant workers (after completing their work term and returning home) face serious structural challenges in the process of reintegrating into their home communities. Data indicates that the majority of returning migrant workers struggle to secure decent employment upon returning to their villages, as the skills they acquired while working abroad are often irrelevant to the needs of the local labor market (Ningtyas & Fauziyah, 2024). As a result, many of them return to being homemakers

without a steady income or are forced to work in the informal sector with unstable earnings (Saleh et al., 2022). In addition to economic issues, former migrant workers also face social stigma from the surrounding community, such as being suspected of having infectious diseases or perceived as bringing moral issues, which further complicates the reintegration process (Rohimi, 2022). Psychologically, they often experience a decline in self-confidence, anxiety about the future, and social isolation because they are accustomed to living independently abroad but must readjust to a local culture that is more collective and hierarchical (Wafiroh & Setiana, 2024). This phenomenon indicates that the reintegration of former migrant workers is not merely an economic issue but also concerns the comprehensive restoration of social and psychological functioning.

Various community interventions have been developed to support the reintegration of former migrant workers, one of which is the Desa Peduli Buruh Migran (Desbumi) Program, initiated by Migrant CARE since 2014. This program positions the village as the primary actor in providing protection and empowerment for migrant workers, both before departure and after returning to their home regions (Wafiroh & Setiana, 2024). One of Desbumi's primary objectives is to provide former migrant workers with diversified employment options through the development of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) based on local potential, so they do not have to migrate abroad again as their sole livelihood option. In Juntinyuat Village, the Desbumi program is implemented through the formation of the Gema Karya Migran Group, comprising approximately 20 members, the majority of whom are women over 30 years old. This group regularly holds community meetings, production skills training (such as making *terasi bawang (siwang)*, *baso goreng (basreng)*, and *peyek kacang*), as well as assistance with business licensing procedures, including obtaining a *Nomor Induk Berusaha (NIB)* and halal certification. These activities are designed to equip former migrant workers with entrepreneurial skills and market access, thereby providing them with more diverse livelihood alternatives beyond working abroad.

Previous studies on the Desbumi program have generally focused on migrant protection or general economic empowerment. Rohimi (2022) demonstrated that Desbumi can enhance legal awareness among migrant communities. Widyaswara et al. (2022) emphasize the role of village governments in promoting economic empowerment through training and mentoring. Faizal & Angin (2024) discuss the importance of village government support for program sustainability. In these three studies, the focus of analysis remains limited to institutional roles and the general impacts of the program, without delving deeply into the learning processes occurring within the empowerment groups.

Empirically, the Desbumi program for the Gema Karya Migran group in Juntinyuat Village has demonstrated achievements in social aspects, such as increased member participation in village deliberations, growing self-confidence, and the ability to independently handle permits. However, in economic terms, its contribution remains limited because income from MSMEs is irregular and depends on orders from corporate partners or deposits from migrant workers preparing to migrate. This situation indicates the need for an evaluation of the ongoing empowerment process, particularly regarding how the program facilitates adult learning to enable the transformation of knowledge into sustainable economic self-reliance.

Although these various studies have made important contributions, no study has specifically analyzed the Desbumi program from the perspective of adult learning processes or andragogy. In fact, community empowerment programs such as Desbumi are essentially non-formal educational processes, in which group members, most of whom have low levels of education and complex life experiences require a learning approach tailored to their characteristics as adult learners. This gap indicates that further research is needed to explore how adult learning principles are applied in empowerment programs for former migrant

workers, as well as the extent to which such application contributes to the success of their socio-economic reintegration.

Based on this gap, the main research questions addressed in this study are: How are andragogical principles applied in the Desbumi Program for the Gema Karya Migran Group in Juntinyuat Village, Indramayu, and how do they contribute to the socio-economic reintegration of former migrant workers? This study uses the six principles of andragogy proposed by Knowles (1980) as an analytical framework, including the need to know, self-concept, role of experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation. The objective of this study is to analyze the application of andragogy principles in the Desbumi Program within the Gema Karya Migran Group in Juntinyuat Village, Indramayu, and to examine the contribution of this application to the socio-economic reintegration process of former Indonesian migrant workers, both in terms of restoring social functioning (public participation, self-confidence, administrative independence) as well as aspects of economic capacity building (business skills, financial management, market access).

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using the case study method. This approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to deeply understand a social phenomenon within a real-world context, particularly the implementation of community empowerment programs within a specific group. A case study is a qualitative research method that examines a specific system, in this case, the program and the beneficiary group in depth through data collection from various sources to build a comprehensive understanding (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). Qualitative descriptive research is used to describe and understand social phenomena naturally and objectively, enabling this study to systematically outline how andragogy principles are applied in the Desbumi program and their contribution to the socio-economic reintegration of former migrant workers.

The research was conducted in Juntinyuat Village, Indramayu Regency, one of the migrant-concentrated areas with the highest number of migrant workers in West Java from January to March 2026. The location was selected based on the presence of the Gema Karya Migran Group, an active beneficiary group of the Desbumi Program by Migrant CARE, enabling the researcher to directly observe the ongoing empowerment and learning processes. Research informants were selected using purposive sampling, a technique of intentionally selecting samples based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. This technique's emphasis on data quality and depth makes it suitable for qualitative research aimed at deeply understanding phenomena. The criteria for selecting informants included: (1) direct involvement in the Desbumi program, either as a program manager, facilitator, or beneficiary; (2) the ability to provide in-depth information about the learning and empowerment processes; and (3) availability to serve as an informant throughout the research process. Based on these criteria, the research informants consisted of: (a) program managers from the Migrant CARE branch in Indramayu; (b) active members of the Gema Karya Migran Group; (c) family members of former migrant workers as indirect beneficiaries; (d) village officials from Juntinyuat; and (e) representatives from the Balai Pelayanan Pelindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia (BP3MI) of Indramayu Regency.

Data collection was conducted using three techniques: in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis, aimed at obtaining comprehensive data and enabling triangulation to enhance the validity of the findings. In-depth interviews were used to explore informants' perspectives, experiences, and interpretations of the Desbumi program; observations were conducted to directly observe routine group meetings, production activities, and interactions with facilitators and village officials; while the documentary study examined activity archives, Migrant CARE reports, and production photos as

supplementary data and for verification. Data analysis followed the model proposed by Miles and Huberman (2014), consisting of three stages: data reduction through transcription, the compilation of field notes, and thematic coding. To ensure data validity, this study employed source and method triangulation by comparing information from various informants (facilitators, members, families of migrant workers, village officials, and BP3MI) as well as by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### **Application of Andragogy Principles in the Desbumi Program**

Desa Peduli Buruh Migran (Desbumi) program implemented by Migrant CARE with the Gema Karya Migran group in Juntinyuat Village is essentially a non-formal educational process for former migrant workers. As adult learners, group members require a learning approach tailored to their characteristics. Malcolm Knowles (1980) identified six principles of andragogy that distinguish adult learning from that of children, including the need to know, self-concept, role of experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation. The following outlines the application of these six principles in the Desbumi Program in Juntinyuat Village.

##### 1) Need to Know

The first principle of andragogy states that adults need to understand the reasons behind their need to learn before they are willing to invest time and effort (Knowles, 1980). In the Desbumi Program, this awareness stems from the economic and social realities faced by former migrant workers. Based on Migrant CARE's initial assessment, Juntinyuat Village was selected because it has the highest number of migrant workers in Indramayu Regency and was also the first Desbumi site established by the organization. Group members realized that remittances from working abroad cannot be relied upon in the long term. A village official explained that the driving factors behind migration are not solely economic; rather, young people today are more attracted to high wages abroad than to working in the agriculture and fisheries sectors, which are abundant in Juntinyuat Village. This awareness of post-migration limitations serves as the foundation for members to understand why they need to participate in the empowerment activities and training offered by Migrant CARE.

##### 2) Self-Concept

The second principle emphasizes that adults possess a self-concept as independent individuals who are responsible for their own decisions (Knowles, 1980). However, migration experiences, particularly for female migrant workers in the domestic sector, often undermine their self-confidence and independence. The Desbumi program plays a role in restoring this self-concept. Before joining the program, most group members felt hesitant and lacked the confidence to deal with village officials or the district government. After participating in the program, the members experienced significant changes; those who previously felt unable to handle administrative matters on their own now have the confidence to handle permits all the way up to the district level. Program facilitators also acknowledge that group members have been able to organize and coordinate production activities independently, something that was previously unimaginable. This demonstrates a transformation in self-concept from dependence to independence.

##### 3) Role of Experience

The third principle of andragogy states that adults bring rich experiences into the learning process, and these experiences can serve as valuable learning resources for

both themselves and others (Knowles, 1980). In the Desbumi program, members' migration experiences, both positive and negative, were used as material for discussion and collective learning. The process of identifying local potential was conducted by leveraging members' experiences and knowledge of the surrounding environment. The support team mapped the natural potential and human resources in Juntinyuat Village, located near the coast. Based on these experiences and potential, the group then developed signature products such as *terasi bawang (siwang)* and other coastal processed goods. Additionally, the migration experiences of members who had worked in various countries served as valuable material in group discussions, particularly when addressing safe migration and the protection of migrant workers.

#### 4) Readiness to Learn

The fourth principle emphasizes that adults are ready to learn what they need to tackle real-life challenges in their social lives (Knowles, 1980). Migrant CARE capitalizes on this readiness by providing training and mentoring tailored to the group members' needs. Initially, the Desbumi program focused solely on handling legal cases involving migrant workers. However, members found these activities tedious because they did not yield direct economic benefits. In response to this situation, Migrant CARE subsequently developed productive economic activities in the form of MSMEs. Group members were highly enthusiastic because these activities directly addressed their need for additional income. The production process began with initial capital of Rp600,000 from the group's funds, and these production activities became a regular agenda whenever product stock was low and/or depleted.

#### 5) Orientation to Learning

The fifth principle of andragogy states that adults learn in a problem-centered manner, meaning they want to immediately apply knowledge to solve real problems, not merely memorize theory (Knowles, 1980). The Desbumi program applies this principle by designing activities that are directly relevant to the problems faced by members. The program facilitator explained that Migrant CARE initially focused more on advocacy and legal aid. To address members' boredom, production activities based on local potential were later developed, given that Juntinyuat Village is famous for its shrimp paste and soy sauce. The training provided is not theoretical but hands-on. Members learn to make *terasi bawang (siwang)*, *bakso goreng (basreng)*, and *peyek kacang* using raw materials available in their surroundings. They were also assisted in obtaining business permits essential for legally marketing their products, such as the *Nomor Induk Berusaha (NIB)* and halal certification.

#### 6) Motivation

The sixth principle of andragogy emphasizes that adult motivation is more internal (self-confidence, quality of life, recognition) than external, such as material incentives (Knowles, 1980). In the Desbumi program, the internal motivation of group members has proven to be the primary driver of participation and the sustainability of activities. One of the most meaningful forms of recognition for the group is when they begin to be involved in the *Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan Desa (Musrenbangdes)*. Program facilitators noted that the village now dares to invite the Desbumi group to participate in the musrenbangdes, which serves as an entry point for them to provide input on village development activities. Involvement in this village planning forum instills a sense of pride and recognition that they are considered an important part of the community. Additionally, the group's cohesion serves as a strong internal motivator, described by one informant as the most tangible outcome of this program.

Based on the above description, the Desbumi Program in Juntinyuat Village has substantively applied all six of Knowles' (1980) andragogical principles, even though it was not explicitly designed as an educational program. The application of the "need to know" principle is evident in members' awareness of their economic limitations following migration. The principle of the learner's self-concept is reflected in the restoration of members' self-confidence and independence in managing administrative tasks. The principle of the role of experience is realized through the utilization of local potential and migration experiences as collective learning materials. The "readiness to learn" principle is captured through the shift in focus from case management to productive activities. The problem-centered "orientation to learning" principle is implemented through practical training that directly addresses members' needs. Finally, the "motivation" principle is evident in members' pride when involved in village development planning meetings (musrenbangdes) and the increased cohesion of the group.

The successful application of these six principles explains why the Desbumi program was able to significantly restore members' social functioning, even though economic achievements still require a longer process. In other words, the andragogical approach to community empowerment has proven effective in building individual and collective capacity, particularly in the psychosocial and public participation aspects.

### **Achievements of Andragogy and Its Contribution to Social Welfare**

The success of a community empowerment program is measured not only by the outputs of its activities but also by the changes, specifically the capacity building that occur among the beneficiaries. Skidmore (1983, as cited in Hasim et al., 2025) views capacity as a multidimensional potential that develops through social interaction and learning, encompassing three main dimensions, namely knowledge, skills, and attitude. These three dimensions serve as key indicators in evaluating the effectiveness of social interventions, including the Desbumi program for the Gema Karya Migran Group. From a social welfare perspective, capacity building across these three domains reflects a successful empowerment process, as individuals not only gain new understanding but also acquire practical skills and exhibit behavioral changes..

#### **1) Knowledge Capacity**

According to Skidmore (1983), the knowledge dimension encompasses an individual's understanding of information and basic concepts relevant to their life. Knowledge must be developed through participatory and meaningful learning experiences, not merely through one-way information transfer. In the Desbumi program, the most noticeable improvement in group members' knowledge is in the areas of administrative procedures and business licensing. Before participating in the program, most members did not understand how to handle documents such as the *Nomor Induk Berusaha* (NIB) and halal certification, so they tended to delegate these matters to others by paying for their services. After participating in a series of trainings and mentoring sessions facilitated by Migrant CARE and in collaboration with relevant government agencies, the members now possess adequate procedural knowledge. This knowledge is not merely theoretical but directly applicable, as they have practiced it in the process of handling documents independently.

Additionally, members' knowledge of basic financial management has improved, covering the recording of cash inflows and outflows, the separation of personal and group finances, and the preparation of monthly financial reports submitted to the program facilitators. Knowledge regarding safe migration, including how to read employment contracts, the rights of migrant workers, and awareness of human trafficking practices is also part of the members' capacity-building through regular

meetings with diverse materials tailored to current issues. This knowledge enhancement aligns with the findings of Hasim et al. (2025) that thematic and contextual approaches in community-based education can stimulate curiosity and enable participants to connect theory with direct practice. With increased knowledge, group members are equipped to make better and more independent decisions in managing their businesses and protecting themselves from harmful practices.

## 2) Skills Capacity

According to Skidmore (1983), the dimension of skills encompasses the technical and social abilities individuals need in daily life. Skills are not merely transferred technically but are shaped through social interaction, contextual learning, and real-world experiences (Hasim et al., 2025). In the Desbumi program, the primary skills developed are the production of processed foods based on local coastal resources, such as *terasi bawang (siwang)*, *bakso goreng (basreng)*, and *peyek kacang*. The learning process is conducted in stages and is practice-based, with experienced members teaching their skills to others, until the group collectively becomes capable of producing on a certain scale. These production activities not only train technical aspects but also foster character traits such as independence and responsibility.

In addition to production skills, members also develop basic business management skills, such as bookkeeping, transaction recording, and profit-and-loss calculations. Digital marketing skills have also been trained, though their utilization remains suboptimal as there are no orders through those channels yet, and members tend to revert to conventional methods like consignments via migrant workers about to depart or orders from corporate partners. These challenges indicate that the transfer of skills into sustainable practice still requires further guidance, particularly regarding market access and technological adaptation. Nevertheless, the skill improvements achieved have provided members with new capacity to generate economic value from previously underutilized local potential, as emphasized by Skidmore (1983) that skills must be built through real-world experiences relevant to participants' life contexts.

## 3) Attitude Capacity

According to Skidmore (1983), the dimensions of attitude include values, beliefs, and positive behaviors formed through healthy interpersonal relationships and supportive social experiences. Attitudinal capacity is the most important dimension because it serves as the foundation for sustainable behavioral change (Hasim et al., 2025). In the Desbumi program, the most significant achievements have occurred precisely in this area. The most striking change in attitude is the increased self-confidence of the members. Before the program, members felt inferior and powerless when dealing with village, sub-district, and district government officials, they preferred to pay others to handle administrative matters. After participating in the program, some members reported that they now dare to handle permits on their own all the way to the Indramayu Regency Government without intermediaries. This shift from fear to courage is evidence of restored self-efficacy and social functioning, consistent with findings that strengthening values and emotional reflection within the community can enhance the self-confidence of marginalized groups.

The most substantive behavioral change is the increased public participation of group members. The village government began inviting group representatives to attend the *Musyawah Perencanaan Pembangunan Desa* (Musrenbangdes) in Juntinyuat, providing space for members to offer input on village development policies and programs. They are no longer merely passive recipients of top-down policies but have become active agents shaping the direction of development in their community. Additionally, solidarity and collective cooperation have grown through

joint production activities and mutual support in facing various challenges, such as raw material shortages due to seasonal factors or marketing difficulties. However, these shifts in attitude and behavior still face structural challenges, such as local political conflicts arising from village head elections that undermine group cohesion, as well as a patriarchal culture that continues to limit women’s roles in public spaces. This indicates that the development of attitudinal capacity cannot be fully successful without being balanced by supportive changes in the social environment, as emphasized in Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological approach (Sadownik, 2023).

**Andragogy as an Instrument of Socio-Economic Reintegration from a Social Welfare Perspective**

The process of socio-economic reintegration for former migrant workers cannot be separated from how they relearn to function productively and participatively within their home communities. The Desbumi program in Juntinyuat Village demonstrates that the andragogical approach functions not merely as a learning method, but as a strategic instrument for restoring social functioning while simultaneously building the foundation for economic self-reliance. From a social welfare perspective, the success of reintegration is measured by the extent to which individuals are able to fulfill their social roles satisfactorily and have access to resources and opportunities for a decent life. The contributions of each andragogical principle to social and economic reintegration are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Contributions of Andragogy Principles to Social and Economic Reintegration

<b>Principles of Andragogy (Knowles, 1980)</b>	<b>Contributions to Social Reintegration</b>	<b>Contributions to Economic Reintegration</b>
Need to Know	Fostering collective awareness of post-migration challenges and encouraging participation in community groups.	Motivating members to learn productive skills as an alternative livelihood rather than migrating again.
Self-Concept	Restoring self-confidence and the courage to handle public administration matters down to the district level.	Building self-reliance in managing businesses and making economic decisions without relying on others.
Role of Experience	Creating a space to share migration experiences, strengthening solidarity and social support networks.	Leveraging local (coastal) knowledge and potential to develop village-resource-based MSME products.
Readiness to Learn	Making productive activities a response to boredom and the need for income.	Enabling timely knowledge transfer, with MSME training provided only when members are truly ready.

Orientation to Learning	Helping members solve real-world problems such as business licensing and market access.	Practical, hands-on training (in production and financial management) that is applicable and relevant.
Motivation	Increasing participation in <i>Musrenbangdes</i> and fostering a sense of pride as part of the community.	Promoting business sustainability through group cohesion, even though the income generated is still sporadic.

Source: Compiled by the Researcher, 2026

A key finding from the Desbumi program is that the restoration of social aspects turns out to be a prerequisite for the effectiveness of economic efforts, not the other way around. In many empowerment programs, interventions often directly target income generation and technical skills while neglecting the psychosocial conditions of beneficiaries. The andragogical approach implemented by Migrant CARE, however, implicitly prioritizes the restoration of self-concept, self-confidence, and social participation first. Only then are productive economic activities introduced. This sequence is particularly relevant for former migrant workers returning home with psychological burdens, such as shame, trauma, or pressure from not bringing back substantial savings. Without the restoration of social functioning, economic skills training will be difficult to absorb because individuals remain in a state of low self-esteem and despair.

From a social welfare perspective, andragogy serves as an empowerment method that respects the dignity and capabilities of clients as subjects, not objects. The principles of andragogy require facilitators to consistently treat group members as equal adult learners whose experiences are valued and who have the right to determine the direction of their own learning. This contrasts with a charity-based approach, which tends to render beneficiaries passive and dependent. Overall, although the Desbumi program has not yet fully succeeded in economic reintegration due to ongoing dependence on corporate partners and limited market access, the andragogical approach has successfully laid a solid foundation for long-term self-reliance. Tangible social reintegration, marked by participation in *Musyawah Perencanaan Pembangunan Desa* (Musrenbangdes), the courage to handle permits, and group solidarity, constitutes social capital no less important than financial capital. Therefore, andragogy can be viewed as a strategic instrument for sustainable socio-economic reintegration within the context of empowering former migrant workers.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research objective to analyze the application of andragogy principles in the Desbumi program for the Gema Karya Migran Group in Juntinyuat and its contribution to the socio-economic reintegration of former Indonesian migrant workers, two main findings were obtained. First, the Desbumi program has substantively applied the six principles of andragogy proposed by Knowles (1980), namely the need to know, self-concept, role of experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation. The application of these principles has proven effective in the context of empowering former migrant workers because the adult learning approach, centered on the needs and experiences of group members, is able to overcome the psychosocial barriers resulting from post-migration. Second, the contribution of andragogy to socio-economic reintegration shows uneven results. In the realm of social reintegration, the andragogical approach has successfully restored members' social functioning significantly through increased

participation in village meetings, the growth of self-confidence, the ability to independently handle permits, and the development of solidarity and social support networks. In the realm of economic reintegration, andragogy's contribution remains in its early stages because income from MSMEs is sporadic and has not yet become a primary source of livelihood, primarily due to limited market access and digital marketing. Thus, the Desbumi program is more appropriately viewed as a successful social reintegration strategy, while economic reintegration still requires ongoing support. These findings confirm that for former migrant workers who have experienced psychosocial trauma and stigmatization, the restoration of social functioning is a prerequisite for the effectiveness of economic interventions, not the other way around.

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