



A Collaborative Approach between Students and Lecturers to Build Sustainable Leadership

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history Received: 2025-10-31 Revised: 2026-02-10 Accepted: 2026-03-13 Published: 2026-04-08</p> <p>Keywords Intercultural Competence Transformational Leadership Sustainable Development Education International Academic Collaboration</p>	<p>To address the growing demand for globally competent and sustainability-oriented leadership, Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ), Indonesia, and Prince of Songkla University (PSU), Thailand, implemented a collaborative community service program integrating intercultural exchange, leadership training, and civic engagement. The initiative aimed to strengthen cross-cultural understanding, leadership capacity, and sustainable practices among students and faculty. The program consisted of EDUBRIDGE in Pattani, RISE Initiatives in Hatyai, and a Building Leaders Seminar in Jakarta, which consolidated and reflected on the Thailand-based activities. Grounded in Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984) and Transformational Leadership Theory (Burns, 1978), the program employed interactive workshops, design thinking, leadership simulations, and immersive English camps. Six UNJ delegates collaborated with PSU counterparts to design and facilitate activities. Outcomes included improved leadership competence, intercultural communication, empathy, and problem-solving skills, alongside increased confidence in applying leadership concepts to community challenges. The program also strengthened institutional partnerships and international engagement. Overall, this initiative demonstrates the transformative potential of sustained international academic collaboration in cultivating sustainable leadership.</p>
<p>Kata Kunci Kompetensi Interkultural Kepemimpinan Transformatif Pengembangan Pendidikan Berkelanjutan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat Internasional</p>	<p>Pendekatan Kolaboratif Mahasiswa dan Dosen untuk Membangun Kepemimpinan yang Berkelanjutan. Untuk menjawab kebutuhan akan kepemimpinan yang kompeten secara global dan berorientasi keberlanjutan, Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ) dan Prince of Songkla University (PSU) melaksanakan program pengabdian kepada masyarakat kolaboratif yang mengintegrasikan pertukaran antarbudaya, pelatihan kepemimpinan, dan keterlibatan sipil. Program ini bertujuan memperkuat pemahaman lintas budaya, kapasitas kepemimpinan, dan praktik keberlanjutan di kalangan mahasiswa dan dosen. Kegiatan meliputi EDUBRIDGE di Pattani, RISE Initiatives di Hatyai, serta Seminar Building Leaders di Jakarta sebagai forum refleksi dan perumusan tindak lanjut. Berlandaskan Teori Pembelajaran Eksperiensial (Kolb, 1984) dan Teori Kepemimpinan Transformasional (Burns, 1978), program ini menerapkan lokakarya interaktif, design thinking, simulasi kepemimpinan, dan English camp imersif. Enam delegasi UNJ berkolaborasi dengan sivitas PSU dalam merancang dan melaksanakan kegiatan. Hasilnya menunjukkan peningkatan kompetensi kepemimpinan, komunikasi antarbudaya, empati, dan keterampilan pemecahan masalah, serta meningkatnya kepercayaan diri dalam menerapkan konsep kepemimpinan pada tantangan komunitas. Program ini juga memperkuat kemitraan institusional dan menunjukkan potensi transformatif kolaborasi akademik internasional dalam menumbuhkan kepemimpinan berkelanjutan.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Copyright © 2026, Leiliyanti, et al This is an open access article under the CC-BY-SA license</p> <div style="text-align: right;">  </div>

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INTRODUCTION

The 21st century is marked by pressing global challenges such as climate change, social inequality, and rapid globalization, which collectively underscore the urgent need for leadership that is both globally competent and sustainability-driven (Sachs et al., 2022; Wals, 2015). According to the United Nations (2023), progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) remains uneven, with critical gaps in areas such as quality education (SDG 4),

climate action (SDG 13), and reduced inequalities (SDG 10). The UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report highlights that higher education institutions must move beyond traditional classroom teaching to equip young people with the skills, values, and competencies necessary to become agents of sustainable change (Leal Filho et al., 2019; UNESCO, 2022). Similarly, the World Economic Forum identifies leadership, intercultural collaboration, and complex problem-solving as among the top skills needed to navigate future uncertainties (World Economic Forum, 2020).

Moreover, in the era of the 4.0 Industrial Revolution, where major transformations are taking place in the world of industry and human life, requiring adaptation to the rapid advancement of digital technology, automation, and high connectivity, there is an urgent need for future global leaders who prioritize sustainability (Haleem et al., 2024; Kisi, 2021; Oberer & Erkollar, 2018; Prestiadi et al., 2020; Prince, 2017; Smith & Cockburn, 2021). In this regard, higher education is an agent of change that should develop students' 21st-century skills to prepare them to face global challenges (Palar et al., 2021). In this context, universities have a unique responsibility to cultivate leaders who are capable of integrating academic knowledge with civic responsibility and intercultural awareness. By aligning educational initiatives with the SDGs, higher education can contribute to addressing structural inequalities while preparing graduates to actively participate in solving global issues. At the same time, higher education institutions play a crucial role in advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals through transformative leadership, governance, and curriculum integration. Strong institutional leadership and governance frameworks are essential to ensure that teaching, research, and operations are strategically aligned with sustainability objectives, enabling universities to become impactful and globally engaged institutions (Latha et al., 2025). This aligns with the call for institutions of learning to serve not only as centers of knowledge but also as catalysts for social transformation (Tilbury, 2011).

Responding to this call, Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ), Indonesia, and Prince of Songkla University (PSU), Thailand, initiated a cross-border community service program designed to merge leadership development with sustainability-focused learning. This initiative reflects the conviction that leadership education must extend beyond the classroom, situating students and lecturers within real-world contexts where intercultural exchange, problem-solving, and civic engagement intersect. By doing so, the program seeks to nurture leaders who are capable of translating theory into practice, while also embodying values of empathy, inclusivity, and responsibility toward both local and global communities.

The collaboration between UNJ and PSU was operationalized through three core activities: EDUBRIDGE in Pattani, RISE Initiatives in Hatyai, and the Building Leaders Seminar in Jakarta. Each of these activities was structured around experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) and transformational leadership theory (Burns, 1978), ensuring that participants engaged in reflective, participatory, and impact-oriented learning. The experiential learning approach has been proven effective in developing leadership skills at various levels of education. This approach is based on critical thinking, which is highly applicable for improving 21st-century skills (Indraswati et al., 2020). Several studies have shown the role of experiential learning in improving thinking and leadership skills at various levels of education. In outbound training programs, this method can improve students' leadership competencies through structured stages ranging from planning and implementation to evaluation (Sholeh et al., 2023). In vocational high schools, leadership theory literacy training that utilizes experiential methods such as simulations and presentations has helped students better understand and apply leadership concepts (Muspawi et al., 2023). Meanwhile, at the elementary school level, experiential learning is effective in shaping students' self-leadership character through a cycle that includes concrete experiences, reflection, conceptualization, and direct experimentation (Laili & Nisak, 2022). The success of this method is largely influenced by its involvement in real experiences and active participation, with teacher readiness and guidance being key factors in its smooth implementation (Laili & Nisak, 2022).

In addition, the Transformational Leadership framework was chosen as a paradigm to guide positive change through inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and empowerment of followers in line with recent findings in higher education services regarding the application of transformational leadership for sustainable productivity (Etomes et al., 2024). Research conducted over the past decade shows a trend that comprehensive, integrated, community-based, place-based, and experiential lifelong learning has powerful transformative potential. A study in Cameroon revealed that synergistic interactions between various components, including the learning environment, community support, and local context, are key factors in driving participant transformation (Bryant et al., 2021).

Based on this framework, the collaborative initiative between UNJ and PSU was designed through three core activities: EDUBRIDGE; RISE; and Seminar Building Leaders to create an immersive learning experience that facilitates the development of leadership capacity, intercultural communication, design thinking, and empathy for community sustainability. The development of the program, which is implemented through the synergy of universities as facilitators and partners, in this case the American Corner Thailand, and the involvement of students from two different universities with different cultural backgrounds, can accelerate the process of transforming participants in understanding user needs and global challenges. It is hoped that the implementation of this program will increase the effectiveness of international academic collaboration in shaping global leaders with integrity and a focus on sustainability. By employing strategies such as design thinking, interactive workshops, and immersive English camps, the program emphasized not only skill development but also the co-construction of knowledge between Indonesian and Thai participants.

In this article, we present the processes and outcomes of this collaboration, highlighting how joint initiatives between universities can contribute to achieving the SDGs while strengthening institutional partnerships. The program

demonstrates that leadership education rooted in intercultural collaboration can enhance competencies in communication, problem-solving, and sustainable practice. More importantly, it illustrates the transformative potential of international academic cooperation in shaping leaders who are prepared to navigate global challenges and advance a sustainable future.

METHOD

Program Approach

This international community service program was designed as a collaborative method to integrate leadership training, intercultural exchange, and civic engagement between Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ), Indonesia, and Prince of Songkla University (PSU), Thailand. The program was guided by the principles of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), which emphasizes learning through cycles of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and application, and transformational leadership theory (Burns, 1978), which stresses the role of leaders in inspiring and empowering others toward collective goals.

By adopting this dual framework, the program sought to cultivate globally minded and sustainability-oriented leaders through direct participation in structured activities across both countries. Community service was employed not only as a form of civic contribution but also as a pedagogical method to promote empathy, problem-solving, and intercultural communication, all of which align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

Program Design and Activities

The method consisted of three interconnected activities, each designed to progressively build leadership competencies while fostering cross-cultural understanding:

1. EDUBRIDGE in Pattani, Thailand. Facilitated through forum group discussions, English camps, and cultural exchanges with PSU students, this activity promoted communication skills, teamwork, and mutual understanding across cultures.
2. RISE Initiatives in Hatyai, Thailand. Implemented through leadership simulations, design thinking workshops, and sustainability-oriented service projects, this activity placed emphasis on creative problem-solving, innovation, and the practical application of leadership theories to real community challenges.
3. Building Leaders Seminar in Jakarta, Indonesia. Conducted as a reflective and consolidating platform, the seminar brought participants together to exchange insights, evaluate experiences, and formulate strategies for future collaboration.

Together, these activities were structured to follow the experiential learning cycle, ensuring that students and lecturers moved from concrete experiences in the field to reflective observation in discussions, abstract conceptualization through theory-based workshops, and active experimentation in project design and implementation.

3. PARTICIPANTS AND ROLES

The program engaged six delegates from UNJ (three lecturers and three students) who collaborated with students, lecturers, and faculty members from PSU, as well as participants from other universities in the Hatyai region of Thailand. The total of the participants are around 20 students. This broadened the academic exchange and enriched the intercultural dialogue by including diverse perspectives from multiple institutions.

4. DATA AND REFLECTION METHODS

As a method of community service learning, the program integrated reflective practices to capture outcomes and growth. These included participant reflections and journals, where students documented learning experiences and challenges; focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted after each major activity to elicit collective insights; observations and debriefing sessions led by lecturers, capturing participant behavior, intercultural interactions, and leadership development; and outputs from design thinking workshops and seminar presentations, which served as evidence of applied learning and strategic planning.

Participants were selected purposively, emphasizing diversity in academic background, leadership potential, and interest in sustainability-focused community engagement (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Cross-institutional teams were formed to design and facilitate program activities, ensuring shared responsibility between Indonesian and Thai participants. Lecturers played dual roles as facilitators and mentors, while students served as both learners and co-creators of program content. Unlike some community service models, this initiative did not directly involve local community stakeholders; instead, the focus remained on academic collaboration and intercultural capacity building among university participants.

Such reflective tools align with community service-learning methodologies, where critical reflection is considered essential for transforming service experiences into leadership and civic competencies (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pre-implementation

Activity Preparation (April–July 2025)

Activity preparation will begin in April 2025. Initial coordination is carried out between the UNJ lecturer team and Prince of Songkla University (PSU) to ensure the continuity of the Building Leaders For A Sustainable Future collaborative program and participation in RISE (Regional Innovators for Social Empowerment) held by American Corner together with Prince of Songkla University, Thailand.

Preparation activities include:

- Internal Coordination at UNJ: Selection of student and faculty participants, division of tasks, and initial briefing on the activities to be undertaken.
- External Coordination with PSU and American Corner: Through email and online meetings (via Zoom), discussions were held on the activity agenda, travel logistics, and technical requirements for the activities, such as faculty presentation materials, presentation aids, and cultural performances by students as previewed in Figure 1.

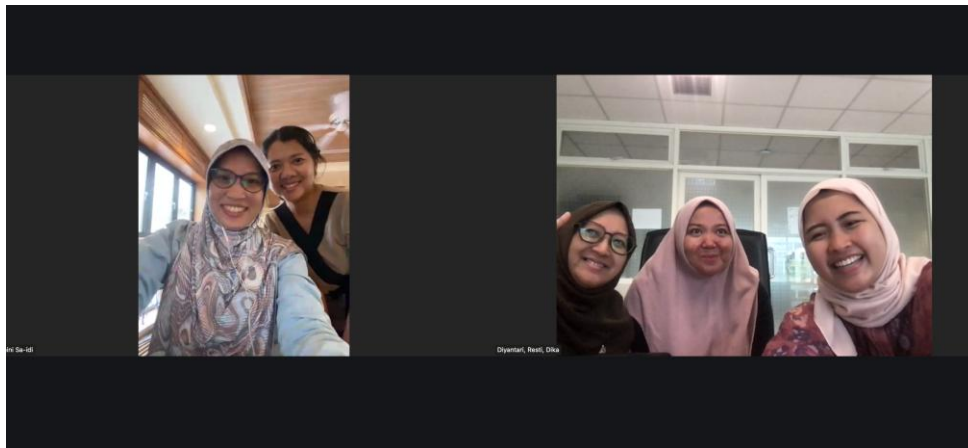


Figure 1. Zoom Meeting with PSU's Representatives (External Coordination)

- **Content and Material Preparation:** Students prepared Indonesian ice-breaking activities, brought cultural items such as instant food, and practiced for a simple cultural performance during Cultural Night, and lecturers prepared presentation materials to share their teaching experiences and prepared to be judges in the pitching session of the RISE program as previewed in Figure 2.

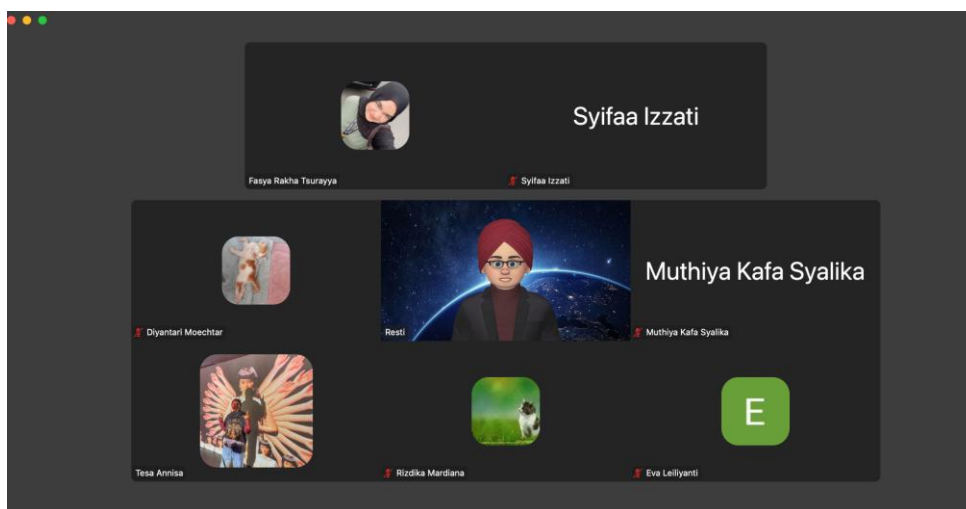


Figure 2. Content and Material Preparation with UNJ's Team

Design

The Leadership Workshop equips students from UNJ and PSU with essential leadership competencies, including team management, cross-cultural communication, and problem-solving skills. Recognizing the increasing demand for soft skills in today's dynamic global environment, the workshop is designed to prepare students to become proactive, empathetic, and effective leaders in both local and international contexts.

A key feature of the workshop is the integration of hands-on learning through case studies and leadership simulations. These activities allow students to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios, sharpening their ability to lead

diverse teams, navigate challenges, and communicate effectively. Students are encouraged to reflect on their roles within a team, understand group dynamics, and practice decision-making in complex situations, as skills that are directly transferable to community-based programs and future careers.

To address the limited exposure to human-centered problem-solving approaches, the workshop introduces the Design Thinking framework. This structured yet flexible method emphasizes empathy, ideation, and iterative testing, enabling students to approach challenges with creativity and purpose. As recent scholarship notes, design thinking has emerged as a formalized approach to creative problem-solving that is increasingly applied across disciplines (Meinel & von Thienen, 2016). It is not only a process of generating innovative ideas but also an iterative cycle of prototyping, experimenting, and refining solutions based on feedback (Vikas T. N et al., 2022). By working on locally relevant issues, students gain confidence in applying design thinking to develop community-based solutions that are sustainable and impactful.

The workshop also fosters intercultural understanding by incorporating global perspectives on leadership and innovation. Stories of American changemakers and civic innovators serve as inspiration, helping students explore how values like collaboration, civic responsibility, and creativity shape leadership in different cultural contexts. Through dialogue and teamwork with peers from different backgrounds, students strengthen their intercultural communication skills and broaden their worldview.

Overall, the Leadership Workshop bridges the gap between academic learning and real-world application, empowering students with the mindset and skills to find solutions to real-world problems that will prepare them to be leaders with empathy, integrity, and innovation.

Implementation

EDUBRIDGE 2025 – (25 July 2025)

On 25 July 2025, the English Program, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HUSO) at Prince of Songkla University (PSU), Pattani Campus, hosted the PSU–UNJ EduBridge Program as part of the broader “Building Leaders for a Sustainable Future” collaboration. This one-day event was designed to strengthen international academic partnerships, foster intercultural understanding, and open pathways for long-term cooperation between the two institutions.

The English program at PSU welcomed the UNJ delegation of six lecturers and students with warm hospitality, which set the tone for an atmosphere of genuine exchange as it can be seen in Figure 3. The morning began with an official welcome ceremony, where faculty members from PSU and UNJ reaffirmed their shared commitment to advancing education through cross-border collaboration. The opening was followed by an institutional introduction, providing insights into PSU’s academic structure, its role in Southern Thailand, and its dedication to sustainability and cultural diversity.



Figure 3. Welcoming Ceremony at HUSO PSU

Following the welcome ceremony, students from both universities engaged in a structured academic discussion session. In small, interactive groups, they exchanged ideas on their respective course structures, learning methodologies, extracurricular involvement, and the broader educational values upheld by their institutions. These conversations revealed not only differences in academic systems but also striking similarities in the challenges faced, particularly in adapting to evolving educational demands and cultivating graduates equipped with both academic and life skills. For the UNJ students, the dialogue was an opportunity to see their own academic journey from a comparative perspective, deepening their appreciation of how education is shaped by cultural and institutional contexts.



Figure 4. Mixed student groups engaged in academic discussion

While students shared experiences as previewed in Figure 4, lecturers from UNJ and PSU convened in a parallel session. Their discussions focused on tangible opportunities for collaboration, including student exchange programs, joint research projects, and the possibility of inviting visiting professors from partner universities as previewed in Figure 5 below. This dialogue extended into the exchange of teaching experiences, methodologies, and student assessment techniques, allowing both sides to reflect on best practices and identify areas for innovation. The lecturers discussed that collaborative projects could not only enhance the quality of education but also serve as a platform for intercultural competence among students.



Figure 5. UNJ and PSU lecturers in collaborative discussion

In the afternoon, the focus shifted toward community building. It can be seen in Figure 6 that students participated in team-building activities designed to foster collaboration, strengthen communication skills, and promote intercultural friendship. Through creative group challenges and problem-solving exercises, they learned to navigate differences in language, perspective, and working styles. Laughter and camaraderie replaced initial formality, and by the end of the session, many students had already formed meaningful connections that extended beyond the academic setting.



Figure 6. Team-Building Session

From the students' perspective, the EduBridge Program was more than just an academic exchange; it was a personal learning journey. Many reflected on how the program allowed them to practice English in authentic, collaborative contexts, while also broadening their understanding of educational diversity in Southeast Asia. They expressed appreciation for the openness and warmth of the PSU community, which made them feel not only welcomed but also valued as contributors to the discussions.

The EduBridge Program had succeeded in its aim to provide a platform for English language practice, cultural understanding, and the creation of international academic networks. More importantly, it had laid the groundwork for long-term cooperation between PSU and UNJ, rooted in mutual respect and a shared vision for educational development in the region.

RISE 2025 – Day 1: Innovate the Google Way (26 July 2025)

The momentum of the collaboration continued on 26 July 2025 as the UNJ delegation joined the opening day of RISE 2025, held at the tranquil Chestnut Hill Eco Resort in Songkhla. Organized by American Corner Pattani and American Corner Yala in collaboration with the English Program, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HUSO), PSU Pattani, the program aimed to develop participants' leadership and problem-solving capacity through the structured process of Design Thinking.

RISE 2025 gathered students from PSU Pattani, Yala Rajabhat University (YRU), and Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ), alongside PSU's international students from Iraq and Africa. This mix of local and international participants brought together a wide range of perspectives, fostering an environment of rich intercultural exchange. Notably, the entire camp was conducted in English, reinforcing both language practice and the capacity to communicate ideas in a global academic context as it can be seen in Figure 7.



Figure 7. Group photo pre-departure to Chestnut Hill Resort

The day began with the keynote session *"Think Like Google: Human-Centered Innovation for Community Change"* delivered by Khun Jitsupa Uthairat, a guest speaker from Google. Drawing from her professional experience, she outlined core principles for developing innovative solutions, emphasizing the importance of starting from real local problems, focusing on user needs, learning quickly from failure, thinking big, and maintaining creativity. Her talk underscored the value of using simple yet effective tools such as design sprints, prototyping, and iterative testing to ensure ideas remain grounded in practical application as it can be seen in Figure 8.



Figure 8. Khun Jitsupa Uthairat addressing participants

Following the keynote, participants engaged in a Mini Design Sprint Challenge, guided by the Google method. Working in diverse teams, they explored the central question, “*What is something from your local area that you’d like to innovate?*” This led them through a process of identifying needs, reframing them into “*How might we...*” questions, brainstorming possible solutions, and selecting the most promising concept to develop into a basic prototype. Each team then presented their early ideas, receiving constructive feedback directly from the Google expert.



Figure 9. Teams brainstorming during the design sprint

The evening concluded with an American Cultural Night, hosted by American Corner Pattani and Yala. Participants took part in interactive games such as “*What Do You Know About America?*” and American-themed bingo, learned about U.S. cultural traditions including Independence Day, and shared laughter over friendly competition. This evening of informal interaction allowed participants to bond more personally, which laid the groundwork for stronger collaboration in the days ahead.

For many students, the first day of RISE was a turning point in how they perceived language and collaboration. They remarked that working in English with peers from multiple countries not only improved their communication skills but also deepened their ability to listen, negotiate, and integrate diverse ideas into cohesive solutions. The UNJ students reflected that language acted as a bridge, allowing them to connect with others in ways that transcended cultural boundaries.

From the lecturers’ perspective, this first day of RISE showcased how experiential, hands-on activities could bring immediate engagement and tangible learning outcomes. UNJ lecturers served as facilitators during team activities, encouraging students to contribute actively and guiding discussions toward clarity and feasibility. They observed that the combination of structured problem-solving and cross-cultural interaction fostered an impressive level of creativity and collaboration, even among participants meeting for the first time.

By the end of the day, the program had already begun to deliver on its objectives. Participants left with stronger connections, new tools for innovative thinking, and an eagerness to tackle the more advanced stages of Design Thinking in the days to come.

RISE 2025 – Day 2: Design Thinking for Community Change (27 July 2025)

The second day of the RISE program, 27 July 2025, was dedicated to deepening participants’ understanding and application of the Design Thinking process, moving from ideation to tangible prototypes. The day began with an energizing recap and icebreaker, setting a collaborative tone for what would be one of the most demanding yet rewarding phases of the camp.

The morning session opened with a keynote talk by Asst. Prof. Attapol and Aj. Afdol Awae, a specialist in social development in Thailand’s Deep South and in community innovation as it can be seen in Figure 10. Together, they contextualized the Design Thinking process, including empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test, within Southeast Asian social realities. Aj. Afdol emphasized that true innovation emerges when local knowledge is combined with creativity, allowing solutions to be both culturally relevant and practically feasible. His examples of community-driven projects in the southern provinces resonated strongly with participants, particularly those aiming to create change in contexts similar to their own.



Figure 10. Aj. Afdol Awa addressing design thinking

Following the keynote as it can be seen in Figure 11, teams moved into Workshop 1: Reframe the Challenge. Using idea trees, they analyzed their initial concepts, identified key user needs, and distilled their project focus into concise “How might we...” questions. This reframing allowed participants to sharpen their problem definitions, ensuring that their solutions would address core issues rather than surface-level symptoms.

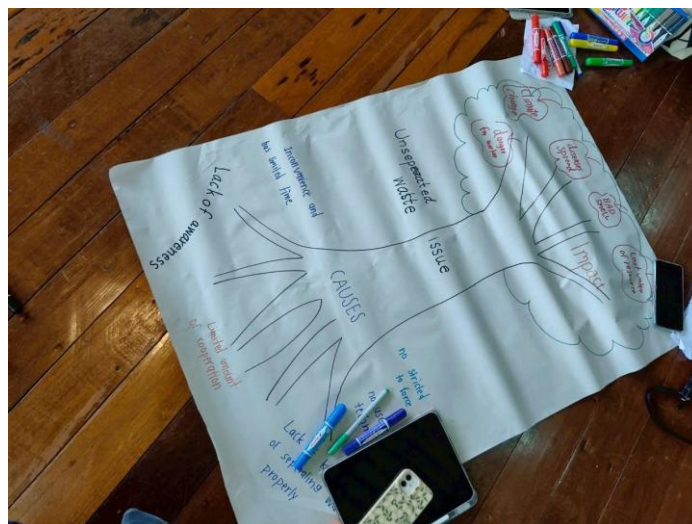


Figure 11. Brainstorming challenges using “idea tree”

The mentor walk proved to be a pivotal moment in the day. Each team received direct, targeted feedback from experienced facilitators and lecturers, including those from UNJ, who guided participants to refine their ideas with an emphasis on feasibility and impact. The feedback sessions encouraged teams to think critically about their user base, potential implementation challenges, and the sustainability of their ideas.

After the lunch break, the energy shifted towards creation during Workshop 2: Rapid Prototyping, as it can be seen in Figure 12. Teams transformed their ideas into tangible forms, some building physical mock-ups, others developing platform designs or detailed storyboards. The room buzzed with creative energy, as students cut, sketched, assembled, and tested elements of their concepts.



Figure 12. Prototype creation by participants

The gallery walk in the late afternoon was both a showcase and a testing ground. Teams rotated around the room to present their prototypes to peers, receiving constructive critiques and fresh perspectives. This reciprocal process not only improved the quality of the projects but also strengthened mutual respect among participants, as they recognized the effort and thought behind each solution.



Figure 13. Participants presenting prototypes during gallery walk

The day concluded with pitch rehearsal sessions, where teams practiced their presentations in preparation for the final day as previewd in Figure 13. UNJ lecturers, along with other mentors, provided last-minute adjustments to content, delivery, and visual clarity. These rehearsals highlighted the importance of communication as an essential skill for turning innovative ideas into convincing proposals.

From the students' perspective, this day tested their resilience and adaptability. Working intensively in diverse teams meant negotiating different approaches to problem-solving, balancing strong ideas with group consensus, and remaining open to constructive criticism. For the UNJ participants, the experience reinforced the value of patience, active listening, and respect for varied viewpoints. By the time the day ended, fatigue was visible, but so was the sense of accomplishment. Teams left the room knowing that their ideas were now ready to be refined and confidently presented in the high-stakes final pitching session that awaited them the next morning.

RISE 2025 – Day 3: Pitch & Impact (28 July 2025)

The final day of RISE 2025, 28 July 2025, carried with it a sense of anticipation and purpose. After three days of immersive learning, team collaboration, and rigorous preparation, this was the moment for participants to present their solutions to the challenges they had been working on since the camp began. The morning opened with final preparations, teams gathered around their prototypes, fine-tuning visual elements, refining key points, and rehearsing their delivery one last time.

The final pitch presentations began promptly as previewd in Figure 14, with each team given between five and seven minutes to showcase their projects. The presentations were delivered entirely in English, reflecting the camp's goal of fostering both linguistic competence and professional communication skills. Each team walked the audience through their identified problem, the empathy-driven research they had conducted, the "How might we..." question that shaped their solution, and the strengths of their proposed prototype. Visuals, demonstrations, and clear storytelling were used to persuade the panel of judges



Figure 14. Teams delivering their final pitch to the judges

The judges evaluated each presentation on several dimensions, including problem clarity, empathy and insight, innovation and feasibility, communication and delivery, as well as the quality of visuals and time management as it can be seen in Figure 14. Projects ranged from environmental initiatives and community engagement platforms to education-focused solutions, each grounded in the principle of designing with the end user in mind.



Figure 15. Judges evaluating each team's presentation

Before the announcement of winners, the atmosphere shifted from high-stakes competition to cultural celebration. The Indonesian delegation took the stage to perform the Betawi traditional dance, Jali-jali, accompanied by lively music and graceful movements as it can be seen in Figure 16. For the UNJ students, this was more than a performance; it was an act of cultural sharing, a chance to bring a piece of Jakarta's heritage to an international audience. The smiles, applause, and warm reception from participants and organizers alike underscored the role of culture as a bridge in fostering understanding and friendship.



Figure 16. Jali-jali dance performance by UNJ students

Following the performance, the award ceremony began. Three categories were recognized: Best Innovation, Best Teamwork, and Most Community-Centered Idea. The winners were celebrated for their creativity, collaboration, and ability to design solutions that were both impactful and feasible. Even for those whose teams did not receive an award, the sense of accomplishment was palpable, completing the RISE program was itself a significant achievement.

Post-implementation

Evaluation

The final stage of the international community service program was the Building Leaders Seminar, held in Jakarta, Indonesia. As the culminating activity, the seminar was deliberately designed to integrate and consolidate the outcomes of the Thailand-based initiatives—EDUBRIDGE in Pattani and the RISE Initiatives in Hatyai—into a structured platform for reflection and future-oriented planning.

The seminar brought together delegates from Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ), Prince of Songkla University (PSU), and partner universities from the Hatyai region, creating a diverse academic forum that reinforced the program's emphasis on intercultural collaboration. Over a series of plenary sessions, small-group discussions, and participant-led presentations, students and lecturers critically examined their experiences in Thailand, identifying key lessons related to leadership competencies, intercultural communication, and sustainability awareness. This reflective process aligns with Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle, wherein participants progressed from concrete experiences in the field toward higher-order reflection and conceptualization.

Beyond reflection, the seminar also functioned as a space for knowledge exchange. Delegates shared insights on leadership practices, cultural adaptation, and innovative approaches to sustainability projects within higher education. Faculty members acted as facilitators and mentors, guiding discussions that connected participant experiences to broader theoretical frameworks, including transformational leadership (Burns, 1978) and education for sustainable development (Tilbury, 2011). This collaborative dialogue not only validated individual learning outcomes but also enhanced collective understanding of sustainable leadership within intercultural contexts.

Equally significant was the seminar's role in strategic planning for future collaboration. Delegates co-developed action plans that emphasized continuity of the partnership, the expansion of participant networks, and the integration of sustainability themes into future joint programs. These plans underscored the value of sustained academic partnerships in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

In summary, the Building Leaders Seminar in Jakarta served as a critical post-implementation phase that transformed program experiences into actionable insights and long-term strategies. By combining reflection, knowledge exchange, and forward planning, the seminar ensured that the impacts of the international community service program extended beyond individual learning to contribute to institutional growth and regional academic cooperation.

CONCLUSION

As of mid-July 2025, all stages of preparation for collaborative activities between Jakarta State University and Prince of Songkla University have been running according to plan. Coordination with organizing partners, finalization of the activity agenda, and preparation of participants, both lecturers and students, have been carried out intensively since May. This activity is designed not only to strengthen institutional relations between UNJ and PSU, but also as a medium for global capacity building, both in the context of academics, social innovation, and cultural exchange.

The main activity will be held on July 24-29, 2025 in two locations, namely Pattani and Hat Yai, Thailand. This collaborative program is expected to have a significant impact on the development of student and lecturer competencies in terms of leadership, international collaboration, and cross-cultural understanding.

This progress report is a form of documentation that will be updated after the event takes place. The results of the event will be reported in full in the final report, accompanied by documentation, participant reflections, and the achievement of event targets.

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