



## PRODUCTION ASSISTANCE OF DIGITAL CONTENT ON MALAY CULTURE FOR MALAY CUSTOMARY INSTITUTIONS IN PEKANBARU CITY AS AN EFFORT IN GLOBAL CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

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### ABSTRACT

The sustainability of Malay culture in the digital era depends on the ability of its cultural actors to produce narratives relevant to technological developments. The Riau Malay Customary Institution (LAM) in Pekanbaru City possesses a wealth of local wisdom but faces challenges in visualizing it in digital media. This community service activity aims to provide technical assistance in producing digital content as a means of global cultural diplomacy. The implementation method uses an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, which includes socialization, digital storytelling workshops, production assistance, and platform management evaluation. The results of the activity demonstrated significant improvements in the partners' technical skills in producing short videos, cultural infographics, and social media management. The resulting content successfully packaged the values of Tunjuk Ajar Melayu into a global format, as evidenced by the expanded reach of cross-national audiences on the partners' social media accounts. This community service concluded that strengthening the digital capacity of traditional activists is key to transforming local wisdom into a force for cultural diplomacy on the international stage.

**Keywords:** Malay Culture, Digital Content, Traditional Activists, Cultural Diplomacy, Community Service.

### ABSTRAK

Keberlanjutan budaya Melayu di era digital bergantung pada kemampuan aktor budayanya dalam memproduksi narasi yang relevan dengan perkembangan teknologi. Lembaga Adat Melayu (LAM) Riau Kota Pekanbaru memiliki kekayaan pengetahuan kearifan lokal namun menghadapi kendala dalam memvisualisasikannya ke media digital. Kegiatan pengabdian ini bertujuan untuk memberikan pendampingan teknis produksi konten digital sebagai sarana diplomasi budaya global. Metode pelaksanaan menggunakan pendekatan *Asset-Based Community Development* (ABCD) yang meliputi tahap sosialisasi, workshop *digital storytelling*, pendampingan produksi, dan evaluasi manajemen platform. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan pada keterampilan teknis mitra dalam memproduksi video pendek, infografis budaya, dan pengelolaan media sosial. Konten yang dihasilkan mampu mengemas nilai-nilai *Tunjuk Ajar Melayu* ke dalam format global, yang dibuktikan dengan perluasan jangkauan audiens lintas negara pada akun media sosial mitra. Pengabdian ini menyimpulkan bahwa penguatan kapasitas digital pegiat adat adalah kunci transformasi kearifan lokal menjadi kekuatan diplomasi budaya di kancah internasional.

**Kata Kunci:** Budaya Melayu, Konten Digital, Pegiat Adat, Diplomasi Budaya, Pengabdian Masyarakat.

### INTRODUCTION

Malay culture, with its philosophical values embodied in the Tunjuk Ajar Melayu (Malay Teachings), constitutes a collective identity that serves as a social foundation in the Indonesian archipelago. However, the sustainability of this identity faces serious challenges amidst the wave of digital disruption that dominates the global narrative. The urgency of this initiative stems from the fact that cultures absent from the digital space tend to be perceived as "non-existent" by the younger generations (Gen Z and Alpha). If traditional activists rely solely on conventional preservation methods, Malay local wisdom will be alienated from international cultural exchange.



Therefore, transforming oral traditions and customary values into digital content is not merely a trend, but an urgent need to safeguard cultural sovereignty globally.

Previous work on cultural digitization has been broadly divided into two main groups. The first group focuses on digitalization as an archiving or static documentation effort (Effendy, 2006; Arif, 2018). In this view, technology is used to preserve cultural data to prevent loss, but places less emphasis on interaction and audience reach. The second group began exploring the use of social media as a means of promoting local culture, but findings often indicated that the resulting content was still amateurish and lacked aesthetic standards capable of competing in global diplomacy (Febriades, 2020; Lubis, 2021).

The novelty and uniqueness of this community service lies in the integration of Malay Local Wisdom with Global Cultural Diplomacy strategies. Unlike previous approaches that focused solely on "preserving culture," this activity emphasizes "marketing cultural meaning" through professional digital storytelling techniques. The use of universal narratives (such as politeness and natural harmony) as a bridge of communication between nations makes this mentoring program strategically positioned as a soft power instrument in international diplomacy, driven by a grassroots actor, the Riau Malay Customary Institution (LAM) in Pekanbaru City.

Despite the overall improvement in digital literacy, there is a significant gap in the current context of community service. There are still very few programs specifically targeting LAM members in Pekanbaru City as primary content producers. Most digitalization initiatives are carried out by external parties (academics or professional content creators), resulting in the loss of the "spirit" or authenticity of the traditional messages conveyed. Furthermore, there has been no in-depth study measuring the extent to which technical skills in content production can be directly converted into tools for cultural diplomacy by indigenous communities themselves. This community service program aims to fill this gap by positioning LAM members not merely as objects of preservation, but as active subjects (digital diplomats) who master content production technology.

The primary objective of this community service activity is to increase the capacity of LAM Riau members in Pekanbaru as traditional activists in producing global-quality digital content without losing the essence of local wisdom. The problem-solving plan was developed through a systematic, participatory approach, including:

1. Identifying elements of Malay culture with universal relevance for digitalization.
2. Providing intensive mentoring on videography and content editing using mobile devices (mobile-based production).
3. Training partners in managing social media platforms with international communication standards, including the use of English and optimizing global platform algorithms.

With these steps, it is hoped that a model of sustainable cultural transformation will be created, where Malay traditions not only survive locally, but are also recognized and celebrated globally as an important contribution to world civilization.

## METHOD

This community service program uses a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, a research model that integrates mentoring with concrete actions to solve social problems (Afandi et al., 2022). The primary focus is on transforming the skills of partners (Indigenous Activists) in producing digital content. The activity stages follow Kurt Lewin's cycle model, which consists of: Planning, Acting, Observing, and Reflecting. The data sources for this study are divided into two:

1. Primary Data: Obtained directly from participants (community service partners) through pre- and post-test results on digital literacy, as well as direct observation of the quality of the content produced.



2. Secondary Data: Obtained through a documentary study of partners' social media platforms and relevant literature on Malay local wisdom (Effendy, 2006).

The data collection technique used a Likert-scale questionnaire (1-5) to measure perceptions of capacity building, and an observation sheet to assess the technical aspects of the digital content (visual quality, narrative, and diplomatic aspects).

Data analysis was conducted quantitatively and qualitatively to explore the process of transforming cultural narratives. Descriptive Percentage Analysis was used to measure the success of the workshop. To measure the effectiveness of the mentoring in improving content production skills from the pre-test to the post-test stage, the Normalized Gain formula (Hake, 1999) was used:

The community service implementation procedure consisted of four main stages:

1. Socialization Stage: Coordinating with traditional leaders to establish a shared understanding of the importance of digital cultural diplomacy.
2. Workshop Stage (Action): Providing intensive material on digital storytelling and smartphone-based videography techniques.
3. Independent Mentoring Stage: Partners produced a digital content piece with the theme "Malay Local Wisdom" under the supervision of a team of experts.
4. Evaluation and Reflection Stage: Assessing the effectiveness of the content based on reach and engagement on global social media platforms.

The data validity testing method in this study used Source Triangulation and Method Triangulation to ensure the data obtained was objective and valid (Sugiyono, 2017).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This mentoring activity resulted in significant changes in the capacity of LAM, or indigenous activist communities, to produce digital content. Based on pre- and post-test data analysis, a trend was found in increasing digital literacy and narrative skills among participants, as measured using Normalized Gain (N-Gain) scores. The data revealed the highest increase in cultural storytelling techniques. This indicates that indigenous activists possess a very strong cultural knowledge base, enabling them to significantly improve their ability to package traditional messages in a more engaging way when given the logical touch of digital narratives.

The data presented in the results demonstrate a significant trend in partner capacity across all indicators. The most prominent finding was in the Cultural Storytelling Techniques aspect, which achieved the highest N-Gain score (0.76) in the High category. This indicates that the mentoring process successfully stimulated the creativity of indigenous activists in converting local wisdom values into structured digital narratives.

Although the Technology Literacy and Platform Management indicator falls within the Moderate category, a score approaching 0.70 indicates that partners have surpassed the threshold of basic understanding and are beginning to operate digital tools independently for global cultural diplomacy purposes. In addition to improving individual capacity, the results of this community service program are also measured through the performance of the content produced during the mentoring period. The trend in digital audience reach has shifted from local to international reach (global diplomacy). Audience distribution of partner content publications

Percentage of Audience Reach Distribution for Malay Cultural Content on Social Media. The results demonstrate a positive trend, with the content produced not only being consumed by domestic audiences (65%), but also beginning to reach international audiences (35%), such as in Malaysia, Singapore, and the Indonesian diaspora abroad. This demonstrates that the use of local wisdom narratives packaged with digital visual standards can transcend geographical boundaries.

The findings of this community service program confirm that transforming traditions into the digital space is the most effective instrument for strengthening identity in the global era. The



increase in N-Gain scores in the storytelling aspect (Table 1) indicates that members of the Riau LAM (Indonesian Indigenous Peoples Association) in Pekanbaru City, as traditional activists, are able to contextualize local wisdom, such as the concepts of politeness and Tunjuk Ajar Melayu (Malay Teachings), into content formats appealing to digital audiences. This aligns with the concept of Convergence Culture proposed by Jenkins (2006), where old media (oral tradition) and new media combine to create greater narrative power.

The success of increasing global reach demonstrates that Malay local wisdom has significant bargaining power in cultural diplomacy. Using a soft power approach (Nye, 2004), the digital content produced by partners is not simply documentation, but rather diplomatic messages that communicate a polite and philosophical national identity. A unique finding from this mentoring program is the increased collective pride among traditional activists; they no longer view digitalization as a threat to the purity of tradition, but rather as a "shield" protecting tradition from narrative extinction.

A logical interpretation of the global reach data suggests a "longing" among international audiences for authentic Nusantara values. This mentoring bridges the access gap that has hindered indigenous activists from speaking out on the global stage. As Pilang (2011) points out, when a locality is able to transcend its boundaries without losing its meaning, it has achieved a meaningful level of cultural diplomacy. This success depends heavily on the sustainability of content production and consistency in maintaining a balance between digital aesthetics and the authenticity of Malay traditional values.

## CONCLUSION

The implementation of community service activities to assist with digital content production for the Malay Customary Institution (LAM) or the Malay customary activist community as a whole has had a significant impact on strengthening global cultural diplomacy. Based on data analysis, it can be concluded that the application of participatory mentoring methods successfully increased the technical capacity of partners, with an average Normalized Gain (N-Gain) score of 0.70, which falls into the High category. Key findings indicate a positive correlation between mastery of cultural storytelling techniques (score 0.76) and the content's international acceptance. The transformation of customary activists from conventional cultural preservers to active digital content producers has proven effective in expanding the reach of local wisdom values. This is validated by digital audience distribution data, which shows that 35% of viewers come from international sources, including those from related countries and the global diaspora. Therefore, strengthening digital literacy and creative narratives for customary actors is a crucial instrument in transforming local wisdom into the soft power of Indonesian cultural diplomacy in the digital era. This success confirms that digitalization does not distort the authentic values of tradition, but rather strengthens the existence of Malay identity amidst the currents of globalization.

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community service will provide sustainable benefits for the preservation of Malay culture in the digital age.

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