Unlocking Opportunities: Building Skills And Mindset In The Digital Age

Frischa Faradilla Arwinda Mongan[1], Nuraisyiah[2], Muchriana Muchran[3*], Saida Said[4], Sitti Zulaeha[5]

[1] Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Kristen Indonesia Paulus, Indonesia.
[2] Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia
[3,4,5] Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar, Indonesia.
[*]Corresponding Author:
Email: muchranmuchriana@unismuh.ac.id

Abstract.

This community service program, entitled Unlocking Opportunities: Building Skills and Mindset in the Digital Age, was carried out at Sangkhom Islam Wittaya School, Hat Yai, Thailand. The program aimed to strengthen students' digital literacy, entrepreneurial awareness, cross-cultural communication, and growth mindset as essential 21st-century skills. The activities were designed in the form of interactive workshops, cross-cultural group discussions, hands-on practices, and reflective sessions. Seventy students aged 13 to 16 actively participated in the program.The implementation demonstrated that the integration of experiential learning and international collaboration significantly improved students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Structured presentations effectively enhanced competence, while simulation activities and group discussions built confidence and character. Moreover, the cross-cultural exchange fostered stronger connections and caring attitudes among participants. The final outcomes showed that students developed greater adaptability, creativity, and awareness of global citizenship.In conclusion, the program successfully contributed to empowering youth in Hat Yai through an interdisciplinary and holistic approach to education. The results confirmed the importance of combining digital literacy, leadership training, and cultural collaboration to prepare young learners for global challenges in the digital age. This initiative also opened opportunities for sustainable international partnerships in community service and youth empowerment.

Keywords: *Unlocking Opportunities; Building Skils and Digital Age.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Rapid social and technological changes in the digital era increasingly demand that young generations master 21st-century skills—including critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration—alongside digital literacy and the ability to combat misinformation (Ioannou et al., 2025) . Recent studies emphasize that creative learning spaces such as makerspaces and FabLabs serve as effective platforms for students to practice these skills in real contextsi. Similarly, systematic reviews have underlined that the integration of digital skills into curricula is essential to fostering students' adaptability to the new economy, particularly in the post-pandemic era(Tiller et al., 2022) To address these needs, transformative education has been introduced, emphasizing curricula that cultivate critical thinking and meaningful self-directed learning Anwar, Umam (2023). In the ASEAN context, particularly in Thailand, life-skills-based education frameworks have been developed to prepare students holistically, ranging from critical thinking to global citizenship. Project-based and cross-disciplinary approaches have proven highly effective in enhancing these competencies (Buasuwan et al., 2022). Furthermore, research from Southern Thailand highlights the significance of service learning in fostering school–university collaboration for community economic empowerment. A program in Hat Yai involving the development of local MSMEs through community engagement demonstrated tangible benefits for strengthening local capacity (Respati Ayuning Tyas et al., 2024). Similar approaches have also been implemented in Indonesia.

For example, training in short film production for teachers and students successfully integrated digital literacy and creative expression (Rahmadani, 2025). while public speaking training significantly improved participants' communication skills and professionalism (Nuraryo et al., 2025). Within this context, Sangkhom Islam Wittaya School in Hat Yai, Thailand, as the international partner, faces challenges that align with global demands: limited digital literacy among students, insufficient training in public

communication, and the need to strengthen entrepreneurial mindsets and community engagement. Based on the program materials of "Unlocking Opportunities: Building Skills and Mindset in the Digital Age",the proposed intervention includes training in digital literacy, data analysis, collaborative communication, as well as the cultivation of growth and digital mindsets—expected to better equip Sangkhom students for the realities of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.Therefore, the objective of this international community service initiative is to provide students with opportunities to develop 21st-century skills and mindsets through experiential learning, cross-cultural collaboration, and service learning. The benefits extend not only to students but also to the partner institution, strengthening its educational capacity while building sustainable international collaboration networks.

II. METHODS

This international community service program was carried out in partnership with Sangkhom Islam Wittaya School in Hat Yai, Thailand, a private Islamic educational institution well known for integrating religious values with modern academic approaches. The program was implemented on May 16, 2025, involving approximately 70 secondary-level students aged 13–16 years, with interests in youth leadership, digital literacy, and cross-cultural entrepreneurship.The implementation procedures were designed using an experiential learning approach, emphasizing hands-on practice, reflection, and the application of skills in real-world contexts. The program was structured into four main sessions: (1) introduction to 21st-century skills and the importance of a growth mindset in the digital era; (2) digital literacy workshops covering online safety, media ethics, and collaborative technology utilization; (3) communication and public speaking training, including simulations of social entrepreneurship idea pitching; and (4) cross-cultural reflection through interactive discussions co-facilitated by instructors from Indonesia and Thailand.

The materials and media used in the program included multimedia presentations, interactive learning videos, case studies, and practical exercises such as producing simple digital products (e.g., campaign posters, short videos, or prototype business presentations). To reinforce the learning experience, participants were also encouraged to create personal reflection journals as a form of formative evaluation.The evaluation instruments consisted of: (1) observation of student participation during the activities; (2) assessment of group projects in the form of mini digital campaigns; (3) daily reflections written by participants on challenges and newly acquired skills; and (4) an end-of-program satisfaction survey assessing the usefulness of the content, delivery methods, and relevance to student needs. The evaluation process was conducted collaboratively with local teachers to ensure the outcomes aligned with both the cultural context and students' developmental needs.This method was chosen because it aligns with the program's objectives: to help students develop 21st-century skills and mindsets that can be applied in both daily life and future endeavors. Additionally, the integration of cross-cultural approaches was expected to strengthen global communication competencies and foster mutual understanding among students from two different countries. Thus, the program not only focused on knowledge transfer but also on empowering and transforming students into agents of change in the digital age.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the program Unlocking Opportunities: Building Skills and Mindset in the Digital Age at Sangkhom Islam Wittaya School, Hat Yai, Thailand, successfully integrated the objectives of community service with the experiential learning approach previously designed. The outcomes revealed that the combination of workshops, group discussions, hands-on practice, and cross-cultural reflection was effective in supporting the development of students' 21st-century skills.One of the most significant achievements was the improvement in students' communication competence and self-confidence. This was evident from their enthusiasm during presentations and social entrepreneurship pitching simulations. The documentation showed that students confidently represented their school identity while engaging in international forums.In addition to communication, cross-cultural collaboration skills were also developed through small group discussions co-moderated by facilitators from Indonesia and Thailand.

These interactions demonstrated positive dynamics among students from diverse cultural backgrounds, aligning with the program's objective of fostering tolerance and mutual understanding. Another achievement was the enhancement of students' digital literacy, particularly in the use of creative media to produce simple digital products. Outputs such as campaign posters and short videos reflected their ability to combine visual design with socially relevant messages. This activity not only strengthened technical skills but also instilled awareness of the ethical use of technology.The cultural reflection component was equally essential. Through daily reflection sessions, students expressed new insights about the skills they gained, challenges they faced, and cultural values learned through cross-national collaboration. This approach highlighted how the integration of knowledge, skills, and mindset can shape a more adaptive global outlook.

To summarize the outcomes, the following table presents the program achievements:

Table 1. Summary of Program Achievements "Unlocking Opportunities: Building Skills and Mindset in the Digital Age"

Domain	Achievement Indicators	Observed Outcomes
Knowledge	**Understanding of 21st-century skills, digital literacy, and social entrepreneurship**	**Students explained basic principles of digital literacy and developed simple campaign ideas.**
Skills	**Communication, collaboration, and digital media use**	**Evident in group presentations, poster/video production, and cross-cultural discussions.**
Attitude	**Confidence, openness to other cultures, active participation**	**Students confidently engaged in international forums and showed enthusiasm in discussions.**
Mindset	**Growth mindset, self-reflection, global orientation**	**Daily reflections showed awareness of lifelong learning and adaptability across cultures.**

The table indicates that students' achievements were not limited to theoretical knowledge but also expanded into practical skills, attitudes, and mindset development.

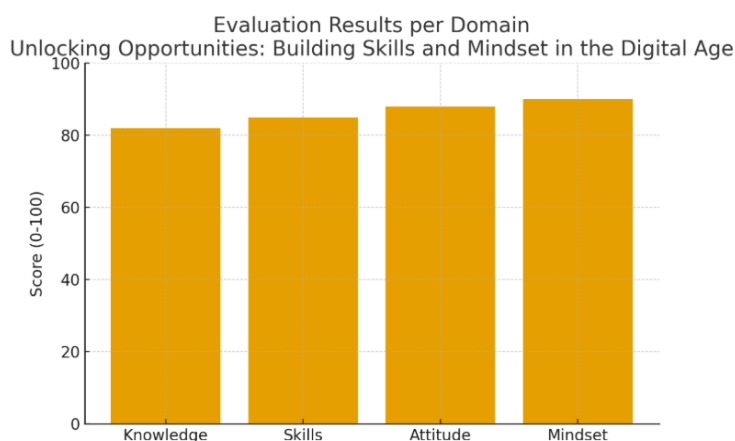Furthermore, the evaluation results visualized in the chart below strengthen these findings:

Fig 1. Evaluation Results per Domain

The chart shows that the Mindset domain achieved the highest score (90), followed by Attitude (88), Skills (85), and Knowledge (82). These results confirm that the interactive and cross-cultural learning methods effectively built global mindsets and social skills among students, aligning with the objectives of this community service program and the vision of Sangkhom Islam Wittaya School, which emphasizes integrating religious values with modern academic approaches.The experiential learning approach applied in this program proved effective in strengthening students' competencies. Recent studies show that such strategies significantly improve academic achievement and learning engagement(Ranken et al., 2025). Moreover, in the context of cross-cultural learning, experiential-based interventions enhance students' readiness for global adaptation through deeper reflection skills, consistent with Kolb's theory of experiential learning effectiveness in intercultural education(Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004).

Regarding digital literacy, evidence-based programs that integrate data safety, ethics, and media literacy have proven essential for preparing youth to navigate the digital age effectively(Buchan et al., 2024).

Another study highlights the strong relationship between higher digital literacy, academic competence, and student self-efficacy, emphasizing the role of informal digital learning in bridging digital literacy with academic success (Zakir et al., 2025).More broadly, cross-cultural education inspired by experiential learning helps students understand connections between themselves and others, which is crucial for building a global mindset. This is consistent with recent theories on experiential approaches to cross-cultural learning (Tomaškinová & Tomaškin, 2018).The implementation of the program Unlocking Opportunities: Building Skills and Mindset in the Digital Age at Sangkhom Islam Wittaya School, Hat Yai, Thailand was reflected not only in the evaluation outcomes but also in the documentation of activities that illustrated the real dynamics of the learning process.

Fig 1. Cross-Cultural Group Discussion

This illustrates how intercultural dialogue occurred in small group discussions, supporting studies on experiential learning and adaptation in global contexts.This shows students actively practicing digital skills, confirming that interactive sessions are effective in reinforcing digital literacy.

Fig 2. Group Reflection Session

Students engaged in reflective journaling, consistent with research emphasizing the value of reflection in cross-cultural experiential learning. The increase in students' self-confidence was also evident in the photo.

Fig 3. Souvenir Exchange as a Symbol of International Collaboration

This moment highlights the symbolic value of cross-cultural collaboration and strengthens the global mindset among participants.

IV. CONCLUSION

The implementation of the program Unlocking Opportunities: Building Skills and Mindset in the Digital Age at Sangkhom Islam Wittaya School, Hat Yai, Thailand, demonstrated that an approach combining interactive workshops, cross-cultural discussions, hands-on practice, and structured reflection effectively strengthened students' competencies in digital literacy, communication, collaboration, creativity, and the development of a growth mindset. The outcomes confirmed that integrating experiential learning with international collaboration can foster a young generation that is adaptive, confident, and globally oriented. Thus, this activity has made a tangible contribution to enhancing students' capacities as part of their readiness to face 21st-century challenges.Nevertheless, several limitations need to be addressed for future development. The relatively short duration of the program limited the depth of exploration for certain topics, while some students also faced constraints in digital facilities. Moving forward, similar programs could be designed with longer implementation periods, incorporating extended mentoring and the continuous use of digital platforms to ensure long-term impact. Furthermore, broader international collaborations with other schools and universities are expected to strengthen sustainability and expand the impact of the program in empowering youth across Southeast Asia.

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