

## Development of Creative Economy Skills Through Macrame Crafts at Al Muhajirin Orphanage

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### Article Info

Received: 19<sup>th</sup> July 2025

Revised: 30<sup>th</sup> July 2025

Accepted: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2025

Available online: 25<sup>th</sup> September 2025

### Keywords:

Creative Economy;

Macrame Craft;

Orphanage Youth Empowerme.

p\_2775-345X/e\_2775-3441/  
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### Abstract

Limited access to creative economy skills training remains a major challenge for children living in orphanages. The lack of practical skill provision places them at risk of facing difficulties in achieving economic independence in the future. One promising opportunity in the creative economy sector is macramé crafts, which are highly demanded in the market due to their aesthetic value and functional product variations. This activity aimed to enhance creative economy skills through macramé craft training, which can be further developed into marketable products. The program provided benefits such as fostering creativity, motivation, and entrepreneurial skills among participants. The implementation method consisted of four stages: preparation, socialization, practice, and evaluation. The activity took place at Al Muhajirin Orphanage during April–May 2025, involving 15 participants who attended four training sessions. The results showed that all participants successfully produced a macramé product and experienced significant skill improvement. Prior to the training, 100% of participants had no experience in making macramé. After the training, 53.3% demonstrated independent ability in producing macramé, while 46.7% were able to complete it with minimal assistance, indicating that all participants had moved beyond the “unable” category. These achievements indicate that the training was effective in providing a practical foundation for creative economy skills.

### To Cite this article:

Carolin, J., Handayani, T., Jannah, T. M., Putra, A. M. (2025). Development of Creative Economy Skills Through Macrame Crafts at Al Muhajirin Orphanage. *Community: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*, Vol. 05 No. 02 September 2025. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.57060/community.y250205>

## INTRODUCTION

Children living in orphanages often face limited access to practical skills education that could support their future economic independence (Kurniawati & Khamainy, 2021). This condition can hinder their opportunities to become socially and economically empowered when they have to live independently. One strategic approach that can be used to address this challenge is to provide training based on creative economy, which has great potential in creating independent business opportunities and fostering an entrepreneurial spirit from an early age (Purwaningsih & Al Muin, 2021).

Macrame, as a form of handicraft, is the right choice to develop because it is easy to learn and has high aesthetic and commercial value in both local and digital markets. Macrame craft training not only aims to improve technical skills, but also trains participants' perseverance, creativity, and

confidence. Based on research conducted by (Habib, 2021) , it can be seen that community empowerment in the creative economy has considerable potential, particularly for culinary, fashion, and handicraft businesses. Therefore, these findings can serve as an alternative form of community empowerment that can be implemented. Practical skills training can increase learning motivation and work readiness among adolescents (Clara et al., 2024).

The implementation of this training is also in line with the direction of human resource development in facing the challenges of the 21st century, which requires critical, collaborative, creative, and communicative thinking skills (4C). In this context, macrame training activities serve as a platform for fostering these skills in an integrated manner, as stated by (Situmorang & Saragih, 2024) that a project-based approach to learning is highly effective for building soft skills and hard skills simultaneously.

Therefore, the macrame craft training activities carried out at the Al Muhajirin Orphanage are a concrete form of efforts to empower children through applicable and sustainable non-formal education. This leadership project aims to improve creative economic skills through macrame craft training, which can be developed into products with market value. Making macrame is not only a fun activity, but also trains fine motor skills, patience, and precision (B et al., 2024). These skills are expected to equip them to become more independent and competitive individuals in the future.

## METHODE

Socialization and training activities were conducted continuously twice a week, four times in total, starting from April 19, April 20, April 26, and April 27, 2025. The participants of the socialization and training activities on macrame craft making were 10 students from the Open University of Bogor, PGSD Study Program, batch 2 of 2024, who provided the socialization and training, followed by 15 children from the Al-Muhajirin Ar-Rohmaniyah Orphanage, aged 4-17 years, as participants in the socialization and training, accompanied by 1 person from the Al-Muhajirin Ar-Rohmaniyah Orphanage management. In carrying out the socialization and training activities for making macrame crafts, there were 4 stages that were carried out.



Figure 1: Activity Stages

In stage 1) Preparation, the student team first obtained permission from the management of the Al-Muhajirin Ar-Rohmaniyah Orphanage located on Jl. Kayu Manis Raya, Pondok Cabe Udik, Pamulang, South Tangerang, Banten. After obtaining permission, the team proceeded with a site observation to assess the readiness of the venue and training facilities, and developed an activity plan that included preparing training materials, procuring macrame tools and materials, and managing funds from group member contributions. 2) The socialization stage was carried out in the first meeting on April 19, 2025, which began with an opening by the student team, the delivery of material about macrame crafts and their economic benefits, and the implementation of a pre-test to determine the initial understanding of the participants. 3) The practice stage was carried out intensively in the next three meetings (April 20, 26, and 27, 2025), with participants divided into small groups based on age and pre-test results so that assistance could be provided optimally. In this stage, PPG students play an active role as facilitators in practicing basic macrame knots such as double knots, spirals, bird heads, and single knots, as well as making simple products such as key chains, bracelets, and wall decorations. 4) The evaluation stage is carried out at the end of the activity to measure the effectiveness of the training through an assessment of the participants' work based on creativity, neatness of knots, and level of independence, and is supplemented with a post-test to determine the increase in participants' understanding. Reflection on the activity is carried out using

the Traffic Light model of the Visible Thinking Routine (VTR) approach as a tool to assess the success of the program and design follow-up actions for the future.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The macramé skills training for children at the Al-Muhajirin Orphanage is designed not only to teach basic knotting techniques, but also to instill the values of collaboration, creativity, and independence. This macramé art training can improve the skills, creativity, and independence of orphanage children through participatory and hands-on practice (Asmidar et al., 2025). This is also in line with the findings (Susilawati & Naldi, 2019) which state that creativity-based skills training can foster self-confidence and independence in orphanage children. Through a series of four stages: Preparation, Socialization, Practice, and Evaluation. This project involves various parties, including the management of the Al-Muhajirin Orphanage, PPG students as facilitators, and orphanage children as active participants. Providing skills through structured stages such as surveys, collaboration, and data collection can strengthen a sense of responsibility and increase the active participation of orphanage children (Andayani et al., 2023). Thus, each party has a clear role in ensuring the success of the project from the planning stage to the final evaluation.

### **Stage 1 Preparation**

This initial stage began with direct observation at the Al-Muhajirin Orphanage. This observation includes the number of children living in the orphanage, the age range of the participants, the condition of the facilities, and the readiness of the orphanage to support the activities. (Watri et al., 2025) states that observation and interviews from the outset are necessary so that facilitators can fully understand the motivation, character, and learning challenges of the children in the orphanage. With this understanding, the activities designed can be more relevant to the needs of the participants. In line with this, (Rosita et al., 2024) explain that strengthening the function of the institution and collaborative planning from the beginning of implementation are key to the successful implementation of sustainable education and care activities in orphanages. This shows that the preparation stage not only serves to gather basic information but also as a means of building a shared commitment between the organizers and orphanage managers. When orphanages are actively involved from the early stages, they will feel a shared responsibility for the success of the activities, so that the support provided will be more optimal. In addition, the active involvement of orphanage managers allows for technical adjustments, such as scheduling activities, grouping participants, and providing facilities, which are very important to ensure the smooth implementation of the program. Thus, the activities are not only tailored to the needs of the children, but also realistic to implement in the context and capacity of the orphanage.

After observation, students submitted a letter of request to the campus and orphanage partners to obtain approval for the activity. Next, students began the project with internal coordination to divide roles for logistics, documentation, training materials, and a structured event rundown. The team also prepared technical equipment (ropes, rings, beads) and refreshments, while conducting internal training on basic knot techniques and activity procedures so that each facilitator was ready to confidently assist participants. (Saputra et al., 2024) stated that a clear division of tasks and thorough logistical planning would minimize technical obstacles during the activity. This is reinforced by (Zebua et al., 2024), who found that preparing materials and tools according to children's needs, accompanied by training for facilitators to understand the characteristics of participants, has a significant effect on the quality of activity implementation and participant satisfaction. Therefore, as part of the preparation stage, the student team also conducted internal training on basic knot techniques and activity procedures so that each facilitator is ready to guide participants with confidence.



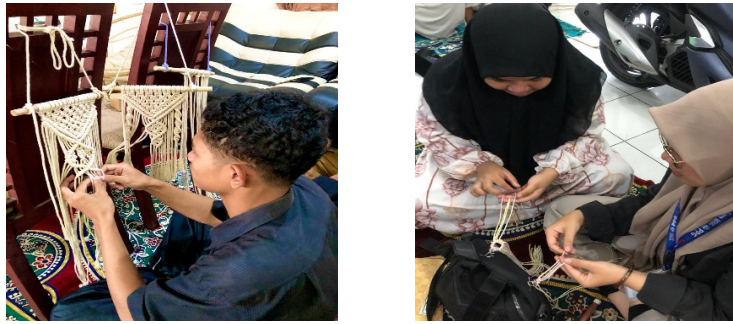
**Figure 2.** Observation and Permits for Project Implementation at Al-Muhajirin Orphanage

## Stage 2: Socialization

During the socialization stage, which was held on April 19, 2025, the student team began with a welcome speech and introductions to create a warm and friendly atmosphere. This was followed by introductory material on macramé, including its definition, brief history, types of basic knots and their practice, several examples of macramé craft products, and an explanation of its economic potential. The presentation was made interactive with a short question and answer session to engage the participants. To conclude the session, the team conducted a pre-test to measure initial understanding: it turned out that 68.8% of participants had heard the term “macramé” and 82.5% had seen macramé products firsthand, but had never practiced making them themselves. These findings indicate a positive initial interest, while also emphasizing the importance of practice-based training and basic technical guidance. After the orientation session, participants were divided into several groups based on their age and initial level of understanding. This is in line with the findings (Anggraini et al., 2018) that skills training will be more effective if it is accompanied by pre-tests and post-tests to map initial abilities and evaluate learning outcomes. In addition, (Al’azmi et al., 2024) emphasized that training stages that begin with material presentation, followed by demonstrations, and then hands-on learning have been proven to significantly improve participants' skills and interest. After the orientation session, participants were divided into several groups based on their age and initial level of understanding, as grouping allows for a learning approach that is more tailored to the needs of each participant, thereby making interaction and skill transfer more effective (Al’azmi et al., 2024).

## Stage 3 Practice

The practice stage is conducted in three gradual meetings, starting with an introduction to the tools and basic macrame knots, until the final meeting where participants are free to experiment with simple product designs. Participants are divided into small groups based on age and pre-test results to facilitate learning according to skill level: beginner groups focus on mastering basic knots visually, while those who understand more quickly are directed to design challenges.



**Figure 3.** Documentation of Macramé Training Activities

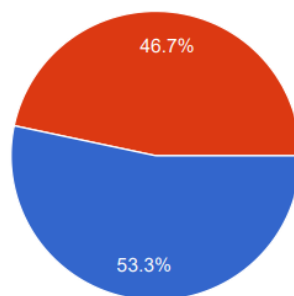
PPG students act as demonstrators, individual mentors, and motivators, demonstrating techniques directly, providing personal corrections, and maintaining enthusiasm for learning. Each session is accompanied by hands-on practice (learning by doing) with complete tools and materials, as well as competency reinforcement through peer tutoring models, reflection journals, and appreciation of work to foster participants' confidence, independence, creativity, cooperation, and perseverance. The schedule of activities for this leadership project is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Macramé Training Activity Schedule

Date	Time	Activities
19 <sup>th</sup> April 2025	08.00–08.30 AM	Opening Activities
	08.30–09.30 AM	Socialization of macramé skills and creative economy
	09.30–12.00 AM	Practice of making macramé (basic knots, simple products)
20 <sup>th</sup> April 2025	08.00–12.00 AM	Advanced practice (spiral knots, and other products)
26 <sup>th</sup> April 2025	08.00–12.00 AM	Product finishing and free design practice
27 <sup>th</sup> April 2025	09.00–12.00 AM	Evaluation and closing

#### Stage 4 Evaluation

The evaluation stage aims to assess the success of the macramé training through three main instruments: post-test, skill observation, and final product assessment. The post-test results show that before the training, 100% of participants had no experience in making macramé, but afterwards, 53.3% of participants were able to make macramé independently and 46.7% completed their work with little guidance, especially in combination knot techniques.




**Figure 4.** Post-test results on participants' independence in making macramé



Furthermore, to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' technical abilities and creativity, skill observations were conducted during each practice session. The skill observations showed that 59.1% of participants had a good command of basic techniques (score of 3), 31.8% were very good, and 9.1% needed further practice. in terms of design creativity, 50% of participants showed high creativity, 31.8% showed moderate creativity, 9.1% were very creative, and 9.1% still needed improvement; and in terms of neatness of results, 50% were very good, 31.8% were good, 9.1% achieved the highest score, and the rest needed improvement. The final product assessment showed that all training participants successfully completed one macramé piece, ranging from simple key chains to complex wall decorations, with varying degrees of creativity and finishing quality. These results confirm that a participatory learning approach and hands-on practice can consistently improve participants' technical competence and facilitate the transfer of theoretical knowledge into practical skills (Muhammad et al., 2024).

To reflect on the implementation process, evaluate the achievement of objectives, and design relevant follow-up actions, the team used the Visible Thinking Routine (VTR) approach with the Traffic Light strategy. This approach helps to systematically map out various issues that arise during activities: from challenges that need to be addressed immediately, aspects that can still be improved, to the strengths of the participants and the implementation team. Through this reflection, the team strives to look not only at the final results, but also at the learning process that took place, so that it can be used as a basis for developing future activities. The following are the results of the reflection based on the three main categories in the Traffic Light approach: Red Light, Yellow Light, and Green Light.

**Table 2.** Traffic Light Reflection

	1. Red Light
	a. Use of Sharp Tools.
	Scissors and needles used in the macramé-making process require close supervision, especially for participants aged 9–14 years.
	b. Activity Duration Management
	The wide age range of participants (9–20 years) requires adjustments to the duration of activities.
	2. Yellow Light
	Several technical and managerial aspects that still need to be improved or enhanced include:
	a. Basic Techniques
	It is important to ensure that participants have fully mastered basic knots, such as the bowline knot and spiral knot, before moving on to more complex patterns.
	b. Finishing Quality
	The neatness of the final knots and rope cuts is still inconsistent. This indicates the need for additional practice to improve the final product.
	c. Material Management
	There are obstacles in measuring the rope accurately. Imprecise measurements risk wasting material or running out of rope during the manufacturing process.

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### 3. Green Light

Several things that have gone well and become strengths in the implementation of this activity are:

#### a. Participant Enthusiasm

The children at the Al Muhajirin Orphanage showed high enthusiasm and the ability to quickly understand and follow the instructions given.

#### b. Design Creativity

Participants have demonstrated high creativity through diverse and original works, such as pot hangers, bracelets, and wall decorations.

#### c. Independence

A number of participants have been able to complete simple patterns independently without full supervision, showing positive development in their abilities.

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## CONCLUSION

The creative economy skills development project through macramé crafts at the Al-Muhajirin Orphanage was successfully implemented in a comprehensive and structured manner through the stages of preparation, socialization, practice, and evaluation. This activity not only equipped participants with technical macramé skills, but also fostered values such as creativity, cooperation, and self-confidence. The training results showed that all participants were able to complete macramé products independently, with varying degrees of autonomy. This project made a real contribution to introducing the potential of the creative economy in the orphanage environment and can serve as inspiration for similar initiatives to build children's independence through practical and economically valuable skills.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to express his gratitude to Universitas Terbuka for providing support and opportunities in carrying out this activity. He would also like to thank the Al Muhajirin Orphanage for agreeing to be a partner and venue for this community service, as well as all those who helped make this article possible.

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