

## Strengthening Civic Competences and State Defense of Children of Indonesia Migrant Workers in Sebatik, Indonesia-Malaysia Border

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### Abstract

*Indonesian citizens in the Sebatik Island area, the Indonesia-Malaysia border, have generally received their basic needs from Tawau, Malaysia, for a long time. This is indicated to have formed a dual nationalism mentality of Indonesian citizens in the region, which also affects some of the children of Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia who live on Sebatik Island and place their national loyalty to those who benefit their lives. The purpose of this activity is to strengthen the values of nationalism and defend the country to the children of Indonesian migrant workers on Sebatik Island to face the decadence of nationalism and prevent foreign infiltration through the country's border areas. The method used in community service begins with analyzing the community situation, identifying problems, and determining specific work goals, problem-solving plans and social approaches. The result of this activity is the implementation of a program to strengthen nationalism and defend the country for the children of Indonesia migrant workers whose parents work in Malaysia through counselling and socialization with competent resource persons in their fields and a community of Sebatik Young citizens has been formed as a forum for self-actualization.*

**Keywords:** Civic Competencies, State Defense, Borders, Sebatik



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### INTRODUCTION

Border areas at the forefront of a country need attention. The region's position is geographically difficult to reach from major cities in Indonesia. On the contrary, the border area is identical to the closest entrance from a neighbouring (foreign) country. The existence of the border area is the gateway for the entry of "foreigners" and "foreign goods". One of Indonesia's border areas that has its characteristics is Sebatik Island, Nunukan Regency, North Kalimantan Province. Two countries territorially own Sebatik Island. The island's northern area is Sabah, Malaysia. The southern region is in Nunukan Regency, North Kalimantan Province, Indonesia. Sebatik Island is an "island" and "borderland" as an island that has a land border between two

countries. (Wahyudi, 2022.) Indonesian citizens (WNI) in the Sebatik area who live in Malaysia's jurisdiction generally get their basic needs from Tawau, Malaysia. This happens because of easy accessibility, affecting lower prices and purchasing power. On the other hand, the people of Sebatik Island who work as farmers and fishermen will sell their natural products to Tawau Malaysia. Fishermen will sell their fish catches through intermediaries who have connections with the city of Tawau. Farmers also sell oil palm or cocoa (chocolate) agricultural products to Tawau. This situation has been going on for decades since 1968, when this island was inhabited by early residents who came from South Sulawesi. Gradually, the region showed progress in development, but the fulfilment of daily basic needs from Malaysia could not be fully released. (Wahyudi et al., 2020).

Indonesian citizens on Sebatik Island, Malaysia, are formally Indonesian citizens, as evidenced by their ID cards. Still, Malaysia's influence is inevitable in their daily lives, including the use of "legal" ringgit currency in buying and selling transactions in this area. The existence of Malaysia products that are easy to find in grocery stores, the diction of "Malaysia" as the language of association in daily life used by some children in the region to Malaysia TV and radio broadcasts that are easily accessible in Sebatik for decades are indicated to have formed a dual nationalism mentality of Indonesia citizens in this region (Wahyudi et al., 2021) The condition of Sebatik Island can weaken the spirit of nationalism of the local community. Potential vulnerability is caused by Sebatik residents' daily access to foreigners (Malaysian citizens). This happens because the border area is the main entrance and exit access for foreign nationals to carry out various activities in Indonesia's official territory, which can cause vulnerability. According to Affandi (2015), many factors can make the Republic of Indonesia vulnerable to defence. One of them is that Indonesia borders other countries. Maintaining the integrity of the Republic of Indonesia is absolute, including keeping the integrity of border areas, namely by negotiating with a soft power diplomacy approach in dealing with the process of demarcation or territorial disputes, not with hard power diplomacy.

Vulnerability and vigilance over border areas should be a concern amid the potential for counter-nationalism activities that often become daily activities at the Border. Building the spirit of nationalism is important for the people in the Indonesia-Malaysia border area, especially for Indonesian citizens (WNI) who are on Sebatik Island, Malaysia. This will strengthen Indonesia's existence in the border area so that Indonesian citizens can counter various forms of weakening nationalism from outside, such as the threat of foreign infiltration and separatism that can threaten the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia. In line with that, Yunardhani (2012) stated that TNC (Trans National Crime) is rampant through border areas, including the delivery of smuggled drugs, fishing in official Indonesia territory by foreigners, human trafficking, illegal immigrants (Indonesia Labor) to unofficial access to terrorism and weapons. In addition, heroin and types of methamphetamine are some of the most frequently found findings by the Nunukan Police through Sebatik. Furthermore, daily necessities often imported unofficially from Malaysia include 14 kg of LPG gas, sugar, fuel oil and clothing. On the other hand, raw goods from natural products sent to Malaysia include oil palm, cocoa beans (cocoa), bananas, seaweed, shrimp and fish.

According to Yunardhani (2012), people in border areas think buying and selling these goods is not included in criminal acts. For them, if they supply daily necessities imported from within the country, the price will be higher because of the high cost of transportation. On the other hand, Hersusanto (2012) stated that some Indonesian citizens in the border area of Sebatik (Indonesia) are suspected of having dual identity cards. They made a Malaysia identity card (IC) to get subsidies from the Malaysian Government. This assistance includes an allowance package for widows or widowers worth 500 ringgit when converted to Rupiah of

around 1.5 million Rupiah, an allowance for 18-year-old youth worth 100 ringgit or Rp. 300,000,- and an elderly allowance of 600 ringgit or when converted to a rupiah of 1.8 million Rupiah. The Indonesian border community on the Sebatik border is also suspected to have joined as a *wataniyah* soldier in 2008 who was tasked with protecting Malaysia's borders from external threats. The cases mentioned above show that there is an option for Sebatik border residents to obtain welfare by becoming Malaysian citizens. Wibowo (2016) added that recruiting Indonesian workers working in Malaysia to volunteer as Malaysian border guards is also an example of the fading sense of nationalism. On the other hand, there has been no effort to instil the values of nationalism and national defence on a regular and sustainable basis for border residents, especially for Indonesian citizens who live in Malaysia's jurisdiction on Sebatik Island, Malaysia (Wahyudi, 2022). Referring to the above situation analysis, we are interested in carrying out an international Community Service related to "strengthening nationalism and defending the country for the children of Indonesian migrant workers on Sebatik Island, whose parents are earning a living in Malaysia".

### **COMMUNITY SERVICE METHODS**

The method of carrying out activities is interpreted as a pattern or system of actions to be carried out or the sequence or stages that are necessary for carrying out community service activities. The stages that need to be followed are to start by analyzing the community situation, which is essential because community service activities must begin with the intention to help the community. This stage can be done with two sub-stages, namely: First, determine the target audience, whether (a). The broader community as a whole; (b). Specific communities; (c). Specific audiences or organizations; (d). Certain people in society. In this Community Service activity, the target audience is certain people in the community, namely youth and students. Second, determine whether the problem area to be analyzed is: (a). Comprehensively means trying to find, see and study the overall problem the target audience faces. (b). In a limited way, it is only limited to one or two areas of the problem. In this Community Service activity, the problem is only limited to the social aspect, with the number of participants being between 50 and 100. Then, identify the issues that are problems for partners, namely the lack of maximum understanding of theories and practices related to citizenship and national defence at the Border, especially the children of Indonesia migrant workers, as well as the lack of communities and programs that specialize in strengthening citizenship and defending the country in border areas. Then, specific work objectives, namely to enhance citizenship and protect the country, must be determined. This will be followed by a problem-solving plan, starting from the program socialization stage, coordination to determine precisely the Community Service activities to be carried out, mentoring and training, the formation of the Sebatik youth community and the evaluation of the implementation of Community Service. The last is the social approach in target Community Service activities. The principle is that the target community must be made a subject of this community service activity, not an object. For this reason, in this Community Service activity, the community (*village apparatus*) is involved in the planning process of determining the criteria for prospective participants, preparing work plans, determining schedules and other administrative planning.

### **COMMUNITY SERVICE RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Community Service Result**

This activity began on 15 March 2024, through the inaugural meeting of the preparation of activities for Sebatik. In this session, all team members joined via Zoom to discuss the preparation for the Sebatik Community Service event, including discussing the duties of each

member with different skills. On 16 April 2024, a Technical Meeting of Activities (Breafing) was held, and all team members attended it. Technically, this session was discussed and related to the events held in Sebatik, Indonesia and Malaysia. On 20 March 2024, Field Observations were carried out to target schools where migrant workers attend high school levels, one of which is at SMKN 1 Sebatik Barat and SMAN 1 Sebatik Tengah in Sebatik, Indonesia, which is directly adjacent to Malaysia. Then, on April 16-19, the Implementation of Activities in Sebatik, Indonesia and Malaysia was carried out in several sessions, followed by the formation of communities, namely as follows:

### **Internalization of citizenship and state defence competency materials for children of Indonesia migrant workers (PMI) Malaysia on Sebatik Island**

The Internalization Session on Citizenship Competencies and State Defense Materials for Children of Indonesia Migrant Workers (PMI) Malaysia on Sebatik Island was attended by the sub-district head of Central Sebatik district at the opening session, followed by a presentation of material by military officers at the Border, namely the Chief Commander of the TNI who handles security issues in the border area in Nunukan Regency as part of the resource persons along with other resource persons from the State University of Surabaya with the target participants being The children of Indonesia Migrant Workers whose parents live in Malaysia. Still, they must cross the Border to attend a secondary school in Sebatik, Indonesia. In this session, the material was provided by resource persons in the form of materials related to the dynamics of threats and defence at the Border, national defence and citizenship, politics nationalism, communication Indonesianness, national history, Border Laws or the fulfilment of the rights of vulnerable people, Educational Motivation for border residents, Border Geography, National Identity and National integration, international relations and the economy of nationalism. This material aligns with the conception of civic competence, as Branson (1999) stated, which is civic knowledge, disposition, and skill.

On the other hand, the materials inserted in this session also accommodate the five fundamental conceptions of state defence from the Ministry of Defense (2019), namely Love for the Fatherland, awareness of the nation and state, loyalty to Pancasila as the state ideology, willingness to sacrifice for the nation and state, and the initial ability to defend the country. The content of protecting the country in civic education is that the values of defending the country consist of the value of love for the homeland, awareness of the nation and state, loyalty to Pancasila as the state ideology, willingness to sacrifice for the nation and state and the initial ability to defend the country has relevance to civic competencies, namely civic knowledge, civic disposition and civic skill. Branson (1999) revealed that civic education consists of three civic competencies that need to be developed: (1) civic knowledge, (2) civic skill, and (3) civic disposition. In more detail, Soemantri (2017) stated that psycho-pedagogical or andragogic and sociocultural civic education is designed, carried out, and evaluated in the context of developing civic intelligence, which is psychosocially illustrated in the mastery of civic knowledge, the embodiment of civic dispositions, the appearance of civic skills, and the possession of civic commitment (civic commitment), civic confidence, and civic competence all emanate from and crystallize back into civic virtues/civility. This ability is a debriefing for every citizen to consciously participate in civic participation as a manifestation of civic responsibility. That is the ontological, epistemological, and axiological context of civic education as a discipline and educational program that is fundamentally understood and professionally extended. In line with this, the values of defending the country with five components (borrowing the term above) as formulated by the Ministry of Defense, namely: (1) love for the homeland, (2) awareness of the nation and state, (3) belief in Pancasila as the state ideology, (4) willingness to sacrifice and



(5) the initial ability to defend the country are values that are also to be developed in shaping the character of citizens.

The character of defending the country needs to be developed through civic education, which comprehensively formulates critical dimensions in creating citizen character from psycho-pedagogical / andragogic and sociocultural aspects. The five values of defending the country can be formulated as the value of love for the homeland, awareness of the nation and state, belief in Pancasila as the state ideology, willingness to sacrifice, if we bring up the essence of love, understanding, confidence and desire, then the four values will be related to civic disposition (Civic character). Likewise, the value of the initial ability to defend the country with the essence of ability will pertain to civic skill (civic ability). This is also in line with the opinion of Tippe (2017), who stated that the five fundamental values of defending the country reflect a combination of the affective domain and the psychomotor domain, which refers to the keywords in each value, namely the domain of the words love, conscious, loyal and willing which is the affective domain. Ability is a psychomotor domain.

### **Establishment of the Sebatik Young Citizen Community (SYC) as a forum for the actualization of citizenship and national defence competencies for children of Malaysia Indonesia Migrant Workers (PMI) on Sebatik Island**

In this session, a Sebatik youth community named Sebatik Young Citizen (SYC) was formed, consisting of students and youth who are children of Indonesian migrant workers as a means of self-actualization of various materials delivered by competent resource persons in their fields. This is in line with the opinion of Li (2020), who stated that in strengthening nationalism, forms of citizen involvement can be done, including participating in general elections, volunteering, being involved in organizations, and being active in associations. Furthermore, youth participation in civic life to solve social problems, care for others in their communities, and fight for social change is a form of civic engagement (Ballard, 2019). The existence of SYC in the future can be a driving force in actualizing citizenship and national defence competencies among Sebatik youth and the children of Indonesian migrant workers. Therefore, SYC members must actively carry out activities and collaborate with various parties. This aligns with Keegan (2020), who stated that to become active citizens, young people must develop a critical awareness of their role as youth to prepare themselves early. SYC can be a pioneer for young people among the children of Indonesian migrant workers who are educated, have a good education and have a high spirit of nationalism and patriotism. Their existence will be a good role model. Support from the Government is needed to prepare for a better future.

### **CONCLUSION**

Threats, Disturbances, Challenges and obstacles in the form of potential weak civic competence and attitude to defend the country from the children of Indonesia migrant workers (PMI) Malaysia in Sebatik, in the long run, can interfere with the country's sovereignty in the border area. This can be overcome by strengthening through Community Service activities, which are carried out through the provision of civic and state defence competency materials systematically and continuously by competent experts and instructors in their fields. In addition, the community service activity requires an output that can be sustainable which is implemented through the establishment of the Sebatik Young Citizen (SYC) community as a forum for the actualization of citizenship competence and national defence for the children of Indonesia Migrant Workers on Sebatik Island who have participated in these activities. SYC will be a role model for the image of the children of Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia who have a good education and a high spirit of nationalism.

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