

THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH CREATIVITY SCHOOL (SEKAR): PREVENTIVE SOCIAL INNOVATION FOR CHILDREN OF INDONESIAN MIGRANT WORKER

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ABSTRACT:

The high number of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) has contributed to complex socio-economic challenges in Comprang Village, Subang Regency, including limited parental care among left-behind children of migrant workers. In 2023–2024, 327 residents were recorded as migrant workers, affecting more than 200 children and increasing their risk of psychosocial vulnerability. This study examines the Pumama Subang Program, focusing on the Children and Youth Creativity School (SEKAR) as a preventive social innovation. This study adopts a qualitative case study methodology, drawing on observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, underpinned by the theoretical frameworks of Attachment Theory and Self-Determination Theory. The findings indicate that SEKAR functions as a community-based safe space that provides complementary caregiving, psychosocial support, and capacity development. Participation in creative activities and migration literacy enhances children's self-confidence, learning autonomy, and social relationships. Facilitators also serve as alternative attachment figures who strengthen emotional security. SEKAR demonstrates strong potential as a scalable model to mitigate the intergenerational impacts of parental migration.

Keywords: *Children of Migrant Workers, Psychosocial Support, Safe Space, Social Innovation*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Labour migration abroad has become a survival strategy for many families in Indonesia, particularly in rural areas characterized by limited employment opportunities and the dominance of low-income sectors. This condition encourages communities to work as Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI), which not only contributes to household economic improvement but also alters the social and psychological dynamics of families, especially left-behind children. Recent data indicate that the increasing number of migrant workers, particularly women, has led to a growing population of children experiencing long-term limitations in parental care (Anshor, 2016).

Previous studies showed that left-behind children of migrant workers are at higher risk of psychosocial problems, including emotional distress, difficulties in social adjustment, and decreased academic performance (Graham & Jordan, 2011; Fellmeth et al., 2018). From a theoretical perspective, *Attachment Theory* emphasizes the importance of emotional bonds between children and primary caregivers in fostering a sense of security, while *Self-Determination Theory* highlights the fulfilment of basic psychological needs autonomy, competence, and relatedness as essential for children's development (Bowlby, 1988; Deci & Ryan, 2000). Existing interventions have generally focused on economic support or formal education services. However, these approaches remain limited, as they tend not to integrate complementary caregiving, psychosocial support, and sustainable community-based safe spaces. Moreover, most studies focus on the negative impacts of migration rather than developing preventive intervention models that holistically strengthen children's capacities.

To address these limitations, the PURNAMA SUBANG Program developed by PT Pertamina EP Subang Field introduces SEKAR (*Children and Youth Creativity School*) as a community-based social innovation. SEKAR is designed as a safe space that integrates non-formal education, capacity building, complementary caregiving, and psychosocial support for children from migrant worker families.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrative approach, combining *Attachment Theory* and *Self-Determination Theory* to analyze the role of community-based safe spaces as preventive social interventions. Unlike previous studies, this research not only examines the impacts of migration but also explores the mechanisms through which social interventions fulfil children's psychological needs and prevent intergenerational vulnerability. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the SEKAR program as a community-based preventive social innovation and to examine how it fulfils attachment needs and basic psychological needs among children of migrant worker families in Comprang Village, Subang Regency.

2. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design focusing on the SEKAR Program (Children and Youth Creativity School) in Comprang Village, Subang Regency. This approach was selected to gain deep understanding of the psychosocial dynamics of children from Indonesian Migrant Worker (PMI) families and the support processes provided through SEKAR as a preventive social innovation. The study was conducted in Comprang Village, Subang Regency, one of the major migrant worker areas within the operational area of PT Pertamina EP Subang Field. This location was chosen as it is the primary site for the implementation of the Purnama Subang Program, particularly the SEKAR initiative.

The interview was conducted with 20 children and adolescents from PMI families who had participated in SEKAR activities for at least three months, 10 caregivers (primarily grandparents) who assumed parental roles, and 5 facilitators directly involved in program implementation.

Table 1. Characteristics of Research Informants

Informant Group	Number	Criteria	Role in Study
Children & Adolescents of PMI	20	Participated in SEKAR \geq 3 months	Main subjects (psychosocial experiences)
Caregivers (Grandparents)	10	Substitute parental role	Perspective on caregiving
SEKAR Facilitators	5	Actively involved in program	Program implementation

Source: Processed by Primary Data (2026)

The data were collected using multiple techniques to ensure data validity. First, observations were done to examine class activities, migration literacy sessions, reflection activities, and interactions among children, facilitators, and peers. Second, in-depth interviews were carried out with children, caregivers, and facilitators to explore emotional experiences, learning autonomy, and perceptions of program impact. Third, focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with children and adolescents to capture shared experiences and collective narratives. Fourth, documentation analysis was undertaken, including program modules, activity reports, photographs, and attendance records.

Table 2. Data Collection Techniques and Analytical Focus

Technique	Activities	Data Focus
Observation	Class activities, interactions	Behavioral and social dynamics
In-depth Interviews	Children, caregivers, facilitators	Emotional experiences and changes
Focus Group Discussions	Group discussions	Collective narratives
Documentation	Modules, attendance, reports	Data validation

Source: Processed by Primary Data (2026)

The collected data were transcribed, organized, and analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis was guided by Attachment Theory and Self-Determination Theory to interpret how the SEKAR program supports children's psychosocial development, particularly in fulfilling attachment needs and basic psychological needs, including autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings and discusses the results on the implementation of the SEKAR Program (Children and Youth Creativity School) in Comprang Village, Subang Regency. The analysis focuses on the role of SEKAR as a community based safe space in supporting the fulfilment of emotional, social, and psychological needs of children and adolescents from Indonesian Migrant Worker (PMI) families.

3.1. *Implementation of the SEKAR Program as a Community Based Safe Space for Children and Adolescents from PMI Families*

From the perspective of Attachment Theory, secure emotional relationships between children and caregivers serve as the main foundation for a sense of safety and psychological stability (Bowlby, 1988). The findings show that SEKAR plays an important role as a space where children gain more secure attachment experiences through interaction with facilitators and peers. SEKAR facilitators are consistently present as responsive support figures, providing attention, emotional support, and a safe space for children to express their feelings. This presence functions as an alternative secure base for children from PMI families who experience limited interaction with their parents. A facilitator explained:

“Many of the children here were initially quiet and withdrawn. But after attending several activities, they started to talk about their feelings, about their parents working abroad. They feel more comfortable because there is someone willing to listen.” (Interview with Program Facilitator 1, 2026)

Theoretically, emotional responsiveness from support figures is a key characteristic of secure attachment (Ainsworth, 1978). Facilitators who listen, respond to children’s emotional needs, and create a safe atmosphere enable children to develop trust and emotional openness. Children who previously displayed withdrawn behaviour, irritability, and difficulty concentrating began to show positive changes after participating in SEKAR activities. They became more open in communication, expressed trust toward facilitators, and were able to build healthier social relationships with peers. This aligns with Bowlby’s view (1988) that secure attachment helps children develop emotional regulation, self-confidence, and the ability to build social relationships. A SEKAR student stated:

“I feel happy here, I can tell stories to the facilitators. It feels like having a place to pour my heart out.” (Interview with Child 1, 2026)

The consistent presence of support figures at SEKAR helps mitigate emotional stress by providing ongoing emotional support. Thus, SEKAR functions not only as a learning space but also as a complementary caregiving system that strengthens children’s emotional resilience. In the context of parental absence due to migration, the complementary attachment formed at SEKAR does not replace the role of parents but serves as a buffer that reduces the negative effects of prolonged separation on children’s emotional regulation and social relationships. Children’s narratives about “a place to talk when missing parents” and “having a second family” show that the program successfully provides a relational context that rebuilds trust in adults and the surrounding environment.

3.2. *Mechanisms Through Which SEKAR Fulfils Attachment Needs and Basic Psychological Needs in Children from PMI Families*

In addressing the occurrence From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory, children’s psychological well-being is shaped by the fulfilment of three basic needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The findings indicate that SEKAR activities are intentionally designed to encourage children’s active participation in simple decision-making processes, such as choosing activities or expressing creative ideas, thereby fostering a sense of autonomy and control over their learning experiences. As stated by one of the facilitators:

“We always involve the children in choosing activities. They can decide whether they want to draw, read, or role-play, so they feel they have a voice.” (Interview with Facilitator 2, 2026)

In addition, the need for competence is fulfilled through skills-development activities, including arts, literacy, and educational games, which provide children with repeated experiences of success and contribute to increased self-confidence. This is reflected in a student's statement:

"I feel happy when my drawing is displayed. It makes me want to make an even better one." (Interview with Child 2, 2026).

Meanwhile, the need for relatedness is supported through warm and supportive social interactions between children, facilitators, and peers, creating a strong sense of belonging and emotional connectedness, as expressed by another child:

"At SEKAR I have many friends. When I'm sad, I can play with them." (Interview with Child 3, 2026)

In line with Deci and Ryan (2000), the fulfilment of these three needs contributes to increased intrinsic motivation, psychological well-being, and social adaptability among children. These findings are further reinforced by Fellmeth et al. (2018), who highlight the importance of social and emotional support in mitigating the negative impacts of parental migration on children's mental health. Thus, SEKAR functions not only as an educational space but also as a caregiving environment that supports children's holistic psychosocial development. Through the consistent presence of responsive support figures, children gain emotional security (attachment), while participatory and creative activities simultaneously fulfil their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. As emphasized by a facilitator:

"We are not just teaching; we are also listening and accompanying. Children need to feel heard, accepted, and appreciated." (Interview with Facilitator 3, 2026)

This integrated approach enables children from PMI families to develop self-confidence, emotional stability, and healthy social relationships, thereby strengthening their psychosocial resilience. Accordingly, SEKAR can be understood as an effective preventive social innovation in mitigating the negative impacts of parental migration and preventing the reproduction of social vulnerability across generations.

3.3. *Strengthening Children's Independence and Psychosocial Resilience Through Participatory Approaches at SEKAR*

The findings reveal that the implementation of the SEKAR Program in Compreng Village functions as a community-based safe space that significantly contributes to fulfilling the emotional, social, and psychological needs of children from Indonesian Migrant Worker (PMI) families. From the perspective of *Attachment Theory*, secure emotional relationships serve as the foundation for children's sense of safety and psychological stability (Bowlby, 1988). In this context, the consistent and responsive presence of SEKAR facilitators acts as an alternative secure base for children experiencing limited parental interaction. This is reflected in behavioral changes, where previously withdrawn children become more open and capable of expressing their emotions, as highlighted by a facilitator:

"Children who were initially quiet began to share their feelings because they felt someone was willing to listen." (Interview, 2026)

This finding aligns with Ainsworth (1978), who emphasizes that emotional responsiveness is a key characteristic of secure attachment, fostering emotional regulation, self-confidence, and healthier social relationships.

Furthermore, from the perspective of *Self-Determination Theory*, the findings indicate that SEKAR systematically fulfils children's basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Children's involvement in choosing activities reflects the fulfilment of autonomy, while creative activities such as arts and literacy enhance competence through repeated experiences of success, as expressed by a child:

"I feel happy when my drawing is displayed; it motivates me to improve" (Interview, 2026)

Meanwhile, warm interactions with facilitators and peers foster relatedness, with children describing SEKAR as "a second family." The fulfilment of these three needs contributes to increased intrinsic motivation,

psychological well-being, and social adaptability, supporting findings by Fellmeth et al. (2018) on the importance of social support in mitigating the negative impacts of parental migration.

The integration of emotional support (*attachment*) and psychological need fulfilment (*self-determination*) further contributes to strengthening children's independence and psychosocial resilience. The participatory approach embedded in SEKAR activities enables children to actively engage in learning, decision-making, and self-expression. This is evidenced by increased confidence in speaking, improved emotional regulation, and greater social interaction. A child noted:

"I used to be shy speaking in front of others, but now I am more confident because I practice at SEKAR"
(Interview, 2025)

Theoretically, this demonstrates that competence built through repeated success enhances intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000), while the presence of responsive facilitators strengthens emotional security, a prerequisite for exploration and independence (Bowlby, 1988; Sari & Husnah, 2026).

Overall, these findings confirm that SEKAR functions not only as an educational space but also as a complementary caregiving system that serves as a buffer mechanism against the negative impacts of parental migration. The integration of relational support and individual capacity development positions SEKAR as an effective preventive social innovation in breaking the cycle of intergenerational vulnerability. The relationships among themes, sub-themes, empirical findings, and their theoretical linkages are systematically presented in the thematic finding matrix in Table 3.

Table 3. Thematic Finding Matrix

Main Theme	Sub-theme	Empirical Findings	Data Indication	Theoretical Link
Safe Space	Supportive interaction	Children become more open	Increased communication	Attachment Theory
	Role of facilitators	Facilitators as secure base	Emotional sharing	Attachment Theory
Autonomy	Active participation	Children involved in decisions	Activity selection	SDT (Autonomy)
Competence	Skill development	Increased confidence	Performance improvement	SDT (Competence)
Relatedness	Social relationships	Stronger sense of belonging	Warm interactions	SDT (Relatedness)
Resilience	Emotional regulation	Better emotional control	Reduced withdrawal	Integrated theory
	Self-confidence	Increased confidence	Public speaking	Integrated theory

Source: Processed by Primary Data (2026)

Table 3 illustrates that the research findings form an integrated pattern between relational dimensions and individual capacity development. The *safe space* theme highlights that supportive interactions and the presence of facilitators as a *secure base* play a crucial role in fostering children's sense of safety and emotional openness, as explained in *Attachment Theory* (Bowlby, 1988). This condition serves as a foundational basis that enables children to actively engage in self-development processes. The fulfilment of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, as outlined in *Self-Determination Theory* (Deci & Ryan, 2000), indicates that a participatory and supportive learning environment enhances intrinsic motivation and self-confidence. The integration of these two dimensions ultimately contributes to the development of psychosocial resilience, reflected in improved emotional regulation and increased self-confidence. This thematic matrix demonstrates that the effectiveness of SEKAR lies not only in its programmatic aspects but also in its ability to integrate emotional support and psychological need fulfilment as key mechanisms in preventing the sustained vulnerability of children from PMI families.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the SEKAR Program functions as an effective community-based preventive social innovation in addressing the psychosocial vulnerability of children from Indonesian Migrant Worker (PMI) families by providing a safe space that integrates complementary caregiving and capacity development. The findings indicate that facilitators serve as alternative attachment figures that fulfil children's attachment needs, while participatory activities simultaneously support the fulfilment of autonomy, competence, and

relatedness, contributing to increased independence, self-confidence, and psychosocial resilience. SEKAR operates not only as a learning space but also as an intervention mechanism capable of preventing the intergenerational transmission of vulnerability caused by parental migration. Practically, this model can be replicated in other migrant worker communities with contextual adaptation, through strengthening facilitator capacity, integrating substitute caregiving roles, and enhancing cross-sector collaboration among local governments, schools, and community organizations to ensure sustainability and broader impact.

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