

Improving Work Readiness and Career Planning for Internship Students from Poco Ranaka and Lamba Leda Vocational High Schools at the Watumori Plantation

Lena Ellitan, Lina Anatan

¹Universitas Katolik Widya Mandala Surabaya

²Universitas Kristen Maranatha Bandung

E-mail : lana@ukwms.ac.id, lina.anatan@maranatha.edu

Article History:

Received: 13 Januari 2026

Revised: 10 Mei 2026

Accepted: 16 Mei 2026

Keywords: *work readiness, career planning, student interns, Watumori Plantation.*

Abstract: *This Community Service activity aims to improve the work readiness and career planning of intern students from Poco Ranaka and Lamba Leda Vocational High Schools who are undergoing industrial work experience at the Watumori Plantation. The activity took place on May 24, 2025, at the Watumori Plantation. This activity included providing job competency training, developing soft skills, and guiding the interns in career planning, using counselling, interactive discussions, and simulations of real-world work situations. Through this activity, students are expected to understand the demands of the workplace, develop a professional attitude, and design career development strategies aligned with their interests and abilities. The results of the activity indicate increased student motivation and readiness for the workplace, as well as an increased understanding of the importance of early career planning. This community service is expected to serve as a practical training model for interns in the plantation sector and related industries.*

INTRODUCTION

Vocational High School (Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan/SMK in Bahasa) students, particularly those majoring in Plantation Crop Agribusiness, face various challenges in preparing themselves for the workforce, particularly during and after their internship program (Praktik Kerja Lapangan (PKL)). Although the primary goal of vocational high school education is to produce work-ready graduates in line with industry needs, a significant gap remains between students' competencies and the expectations of the real-world work sector.

One major challenge is the gap between the school curriculum and the needs of the plantation industry. Internships should bridge students with real-world work practices, however often the material taught in schools does not fully reflect the modern technology, work culture, and methodologies used in the plantation industry. This leaves students underprepared for the tools, systems, and work patterns they encounter during their internships or upon employment (Agustian, Amarta, & Wardoyo, 2024).

Furthermore, the readiness of technical competencies (hard skills) and work attitudes (soft skills) are significant challenges. Numerous studies have shown that, in addition to technical skills, skills such as professional communication, teamwork, time management, and problem-solving significantly influence job readiness. However, students often lack training in these soft skills, so that even though they possess technical skills, they are unable to adapt effectively to a work environment that demands good interpersonal interactions (Tri Soni, & Armida, (2023). Another challenge arises from students limited real-world work experience before their internship. Many students feel a lack of confidence and lack relevant practical experience, resulting in less than optimal mental and emotional preparedness when faced with real-world job demands. This impacts the effectiveness of their internships and industry perceptions of graduates' readiness to work immediately after graduation.

External factors such as a lack of access to the latest technology training, limited field practice facilities at schools, and a lack of networking or connections with plantation industry players contribute to suboptimal internship processes. This widens the gap between graduates' abilities and professional standards in the job market, particularly in the plantation sector, which continues to evolve with technology and demands for professionalism. All of these challenges emphasize the need to improve the quality of internship programs and synergize between vocational schools and plantation industry players. This synergy takes the form not only of internship placement contracts, but also of curriculum alignment, provision of technical and non-technical skills, and regular evaluations to ensure graduates are truly prepared for the real competitive work world (Agustian et al., 2024).

Career planning is an ongoing process that helps individuals recognize their potential, understand the world of work, and determine appropriate career paths. For Vocational High School students, career planning is crucial since the primary goal of vocational high school education is to prepare graduates who are ready to work. Internships or Field Work Practices (PKL) are strategic opportunities to begin concrete career planning (Winkel & Hastuti, 2013). Through internships, students engage directly in workplace activities aligned with their expertise. This experience helps students evaluate whether their chosen field aligns with their interests, talents, and abilities. With sound career planning, students can determine a more realistic career path after graduation. Students with a career plan tend to be more motivated to study and undertake internships. They understand that the competencies they learn will have a direct impact on their future careers, whether for employment, entrepreneurship, or continuing education. Without career planning, vocational high school graduates risk choosing jobs that do not align with their competencies, which can lead to job dissatisfaction and high unemployment rates. Internship experiences accompanied by reflection and career planning help students make more informed career decisions. Career planning from the time of the internship trains students to think long-term, set career goals, and develop concrete steps to achieve them. This is crucial for developing vocational school graduates who are independent and adaptable to changes in the workplace (Sukardi, 2011).

PT Watu Mori Farm is an integrated agricultural business located in Melo Village, Liang Ndara Village, Mbeliling District, West Manggarai Regency, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), Indonesia. The main business field is fruit plantations, especially superior durian such as Musang King, Blackthorn, and other premium varieties, which are developed as superior plantation products. Integrated agricultural concept: Durian plantations are combined with livestock and other agricultural businesses (organic fertilizer from livestock manure, holistic agricultural systems). Watu Mori Farm has become a location for work practice and organic farming training,

so it can be a location for PKM activities to increase the capacity of human resources (HR), especially students/students in the field of agriculture. This includes workshops in organic farming, mentoring premium durian cultivation, integrated and sustainable agricultural management.

Problems and Objectives

Based on discussions with managers and mentors of vocational high school students' internships at the Watumori plantation, the following problems were encountered: (1) students' limited understanding of the world of plantation work; (2) lack of soft skills (discipline, communication, teamwork); (3) limited insight into short- and long-term career planning.

Based on the background and problems faced by vocational high school students who were interning at the Watumori plantation, the team formulated the following mentoring objectives: (1) improving the work readiness of interns; (2) equipping students with career planning skills; (3) fostering a professional attitude and work ethic.

Literature Review

The Concept of Work Readiness

Work readiness is an individual's ability, willingness, and confidence to enter the workforce and carry out work tasks effectively. For vocational high school students, work readiness is not only defined as mastery of technical skills (hard skills), but also encompasses work attitudes, knowledge, and non-technical skills (soft skills) that align with the demands of the business and industrial world (DUDI).

Pool and Sewell (2007) state that work readiness is a combination of skills, knowledge, understanding, and personal attributes that enable individuals to obtain and maintain employment and develop careers. Vocational high school education aims to prepare graduates who are work-ready, entrepreneurial, and ready to continue their education. Therefore, work readiness is an important indicator of the success of vocational high school education. Schools are required to align their curriculum with industry needs and develop students' soft skills in an integrated manner throughout their learning. Vocational high school students' work readiness is a multidimensional concept encompassing hard skills, soft skills, work attitudes, workplace knowledge, and career maturity. Developing work readiness requires synergy between schools, industry, and students so that vocational high school graduates are able to compete and adapt in the workplace (Wibowo, 2016).

Career Planning for Vocational High School Students

Career planning is a systematic process in which students identify their interests, talents, self-values, and job opportunities, and design concrete steps to achieve their future career goals. This process involves understanding themselves, gathering information about the world of work, formulating goals, and developing realistic action strategies (Yusuf & Nurihsan, 2016). Many vocational high school students possess technical skills but experience confusion when choosing the right career path or continuing their education. Career planning helps reduce this uncertainty. Career planning is not simply about choosing a first job, but rather about building a long-term roadmap for professional and personal development. Vocational high school students' career planning is a crucial process that helps them understand themselves, explore the world of work, set goals, and design concrete actions to achieve their aspirations. Successful career planning is not just about securing their first job, but also about developing a long-term career that aligns with their potential and the demands of the job market. A comprehensive approach involving

schools, guidance counsellors, parents, and industry can significantly improve students' career readiness.

Internships as a Means of Competency Development

Internships are a form of experiential learning that provides students or job seekers with the opportunity to directly engage in the real world of work. In the context of human resource development, internships are seen as a bridge between the theory learned in school and the practice of the workplace (Mulyadi, 2018). Through internships, participants have the opportunity to apply academic knowledge in real-world work situations. Direct involvement in tasks and projects allows participants to understand work procedures, technology usage, and professional standards in a specific field. This helps improve mastery of technical competencies that are often difficult to acquire through theoretical classroom learning alone. In addition to hard skills, internships play a crucial role in developing soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, time management, problem-solving, and work ethic. Interactions with superiors, coworkers, and clients train participants to adapt to organizational culture and enhance emotional intelligence and professionalism. Overall, internships are a strategic tool for developing competencies, both technical and non-technical. With proper management, internship programs can improve the quality of graduates, reduce the gap between the world of education and the world of work, and support the formation of a competent and professional workforce (Wibowo, 2016).

Implementation Method

The target group for the Watumori Plantation internship program is students from the Poco Ranaka and Borong SKM (Small Business School) programs. Community Service activities for vocational high school students include training, workshops, and outreach, followed by interactive discussions.

This Community Service activity was conducted using interactive lectures, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), role-playing, and self-reflection. The material presented and the reflection materials covered three aspects: (1) Work readiness and work ethic; (2) Introduction to the world of work and industrial culture; (3) Career planning and self-development.

Time, Venue, and Participants

This activity was held in the Watumori Plantation meeting room in Melo Hamlet, West Manggarai. The activity lasted one day and consisted of three sessions on Saturday, May 24, 2025. This activity was attended by 31 students of SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka and 8 students of SMKN 2 Lamba Leda who were interning at the Watumori Plantation from April to June 2025.

Table 1 List of Participants

Name	Gender	Asal Sekolah
1. Reinardus Alfin Jematu	Male	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
2. Agnes N. Sarni	Female	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
3. Aleksander Acentus Kasih	Male	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
4. Mariani Kresensia Sokang	Female	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
5. Febriano Gana	Male	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
6. Patrisius P. Safio	Male	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka

7. Yosefina Irmaniati	Female	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
8. Yanuarius F	Male	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
9. Maria K.J	Female	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
10. Aleksandra M	Female	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
11. Eudoksiano P.R.C	Male	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
12. Rofinus J.H	Male	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
13. Petrus A.K	Male	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
14. Yohana M.H	Female	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
15. Yulianus F.H	Male	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
16. Margareta V.P	Female	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
17. Jendrianus A.R.	Male	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
18. Flora A.	Female	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
19. Yanoanus A.	Male	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
20. Alfianus L.	Male	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
21. Erminilda	Female	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
22. Fersianus S.	Male	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
23. Fransiskus D.	Male	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
24. Maria S.Y.	Female	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
25. Hendrikus M.	Male	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
26. Fansiskus C. D	Male	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
27. Nikolaus W. A	Male	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
28. Jovian E.	Male	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
29. Febriyansi F. J	Male	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
30. Desriana N	Female	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
31. Ferdinandus S.	Male	SMKN 1 Poco Ranaka
32. Gaudensius F. Sangka	Male	SMKN 2 Lamba Leda
33. Emilianus G.A	Male	SMKN 2 Lamba Leda
34. Marianus H.	Male	SMKN 2 Lamba Leda
35. Sistriana F.	Female	SMKN 2 Lamba Leda
36. Gleonardus R.	Male	SMKN 2 Lamba Leda
37. Yohanes A	Male	SMKN 2 Lamba Leda
38. Kristoforus D.	Male	SMKN 2 Lamba Leda
39. Ferginius A. G	Male	SMKN 2 Lamba Leda

Source: Authors's Elaboration

Based on the results of observations during the implementation of the Community Service activity with the theme of Improving Work Readiness and Career Planning for Internship Students of Poco Ranaka Vocational High School and Lamba Leda Vocational High School at the Watumori Plantation, it was seen that students showed an active and positive level of participation. Students were directly involved in the entire series of activities, starting from the material presentation session, interactive discussions, to self-reflection practices related to work readiness and career planning. During the activity, students appeared enthusiastic in listening to the material presented, actively asking questions, and participating in group discussions and class discussions. The interaction between students with the presenters and facilitators went well, marked by relevant responses and the students' ability to relate the material to their ongoing

internship experience at the Watumori Plantation. In addition, students demonstrated discipline, responsibility, and openness in expressing their views and future career plans. This active participation shows that this community service activity has a positive contribution in improving students' understanding of the world of work and encouraging them to start designing career plans in a more focused and realistic manner according to their potential and experience. Attached are some photos taken during the community service.



Figure 1. Interactive Lecture



Figure 2. Group Discussion



Figure 3. Preparation For Role Play Session



Figure 4. Self-Reflection Session

Feedback from Training Participants

Based on observations during the Community Service activity themed "Improving Work Readiness and Career Planning" for Internship Students at Poco Ranaka Vocational High School and Lamba Leda Vocational High School at the Watumori Plantation, it was observed that students demonstrated an active and positive level of participation. Observations of student participation were conducted by observing several indicators, namely, activeness, attitude, cooperation, and understanding of the material.

1. Activeness: Students were directly involved in all activities, from the presentation sessions to self-reflection exercises. They actively asked questions, provided responses in group and class discussions, and voluntarily shared experiences related to their internship.
2. Attitude: Students demonstrated discipline and responsibility, arriving on time, following the facilitator's instructions, and being open to suggestions and input from the presenters and peers.
3. Cooperation: During group discussions and career planning simulations, students were able to work well together, support each other, and divide tasks fairly so that each member had the opportunity to contribute.
4. Material Understanding: Students were able to relate the material presented to their internship experience at the Watumori Plantation, demonstrated critical thinking skills, and began to realistically design their career development strategies.

Overall, observations indicate that this Community Service Program activity successfully increased students' awareness of the importance of work readiness and career planning. The high level of participation, positive attitudes, strong collaboration, and understanding of the material demonstrated throughout the activity are indicators of the program's success in supporting student competency development in line with the needs of the workplace. This is evident in the photos of the activity.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Community Service activity, which focused on improving the work readiness and career planning of internship students from Poco Ranaka Vocational High School and Lamba Leda Vocational High School at the Watumori Plantation, was successfully implemented and had a positive impact on the participants. Through this activity, students gained a more comprehensive understanding of the world of work, particularly in the plantation sector, as well as the importance of professionalism, discipline, and responsibility in the workplace.

Furthermore, this activity helped students identify their potential, interests, and talents, enabling them to develop more focused and realistic career plans aligned with their respective expertise. Direct interaction with the real work environment also increased students' self-confidence, motivation, and mental readiness to enter the workforce after graduation.

Thus, this community service activity not only contributed to improving students' soft and hard skills but also strengthened the synergy between the school, the business world, and industry (DUDI). It is hoped that the results of this activity will provide sustainable provisions for students in facing the challenges of the workplace and planning their future careers more thoroughly.

Based on observations and mentoring of internship students from Poco Ranaka Vocational High School and Lamba Leda Vocational High School at the Watumori Plantation, it was found that some students still lacked work readiness, understanding of the industrial world, and short- and long-term career planning. Therefore, targeted and sustainable Community Service activities are needed to improve students' non-technical competencies (soft skills) and mental readiness for entering the workforce.

Recommended community service activities include work readiness training that covers an introduction to the plantation industry's work culture, work ethic, discipline, effective communication, teamwork, and occupational safety and health. This training aims to equip students with professional attitudes and work behaviours that align with the demands of the industrial world.

Furthermore, career planning assistance is recommended through career guidance, interest and talent mapping, and an introduction to job opportunities and career paths in the plantation sector and related sectors. These activities are expected to help students design realistic career goals, understand the competencies that need to be developed, and prepare for their next steps after completing their vocational high school education.

Furthermore, the community service program is also recommended to feature industry practitioners and vocational high school alumni as resource persons in work experience sharing sessions. This activity can increase student motivation, provide a realistic picture of the world of work, and strengthen the link between vocational education and industry needs.

To support the sustainability of the program, synergy is needed between universities, vocational high schools, and the Watumori Plantation through regular mentoring programs, monitoring student progress, and periodic work readiness evaluations. This way, the community service program is not merely incidental but can have a long-term impact on improving the quality of vocational high school graduates.

Through this community service program, it is expected that the internship students at Poco Ranaka Vocational High School and Lamba Leda Vocational High School will have better work readiness, a well-developed career plan, and high self-confidence in facing the world of work and continuing their education to a higher level.

REFERENCES

- Agustian, D., Amarta, A., & Wardoyo, S. (2024). Tantangan Pendidikan Vokasional dalam Meningkatkan Penyerapan Lulusan SMK di Dunia Industri. *Jurnal Studi Guru Dan Pembelajaran*, 7(3), 1373–1382. <https://doi.org/10.30605/jsgp.7.3.2024.5016>
- Mulyadi, M. (2018). Peran program magang industri dalam meningkatkan kompetensi mahasiswa. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan*, 23(2), 145–156.
- Tri Soni, S., & Armida, A. (2023). Pengaruh Praktek Kerja Industri dan Soft Skill Terhadap Kesiapan Memasuki Dunia Kerja Siswa SMKN 2 Kecamatan Guguak Kabupaten Lima Puluh Kota . *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*, 7(3), 25352–25358. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jptam.v7i3.10637>
- Pool, L. D., & Sewell, P. (2007). *The key to employability: Developing a practical model of graduate employability*. *Education + Training*, 49(4), 277–289.
- Sukardi, D. K. (2011). *Bimbingan Karier di Sekolah-Sekolah*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Wibowo, A. (2016). *Manajemen Pendidikan Karakter di Sekolah*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Winkel, W. S., & Hastuti, S. (2013). *Bimbingan dan Konseling di Institusi Pendidikan*. Yogyakarta: Media Abadi.
- Yusuf, S., & Nurihsan, A. J. (2016). *Landasan Bimbingan dan Konseling*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.