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STRENGTHENING SELF-LEADERSHIP AND LEARNERS CREATIVITY AT PKBM SADINA GARUT THROUGH THE CDER MODEL

[*1]Deri Prayudi, [2]Munir Nur Komarudin, [3]Dadang Suhardi, [4]Lita Ernawati, [5]Diah Nurul Fajriah

[1-5]Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis, Universitas Kuningan

*Corresponding Author:
deri.prayudi@uniku.ac.id

Abstract

Limited self-confidence, critical thinking capacity, and self-leadership constrain the readiness of learners at the Community Learning Center (Pusat Kegiatan Belajar Masyarakat/PKBM) Sadina in Garut Regency, Indonesia, to enter the workforce or start independent businesses. This community service program aims to strengthen self-leadership as a precondition for entrepreneurial readiness through the Coaching-Driven Entrepreneurial Readiness (CDER) model. A participatory descriptive qualitative approach was applied across the model's first three stages, namely socialization, self-development and leadership coaching, and evaluation with sustainability planning, involving 18 of the 25 planned learners. Data were collected through participatory observation and reflective notes during the coaching sessions. The assessment revealed two dominant conceptual block patterns: constancy in creative thinking and complacency in problem solving. This prompted the facilitation team to reformulate the coaching questions to better fit the participants' everyday experiences. These findings confirm that entrepreneurial readiness among non-formal learners cannot be built without first addressing the underlying cognitive and motivational barriers, while offering a methodological contribution to Human Resource Management by extending a managerial conceptual-blocks framework into non-formal community empowerment in rural settings.

***Kata Kunci**: coaching; self-leadership; conceptual blocks; entrepreneurial readiness; non-formal education.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Essentially, the transformation of the digital economy and the demands of an increasingly competitive workforce place the younger generation as the primary determinant of a nation's successful human resource development. However, not all young people have equal opportunities to prepare for these demands. The 2024 National Labor Force Survey (Sakernas) data recorded that 23.78% of Indonesian youth aged 16 to 30 were classified as not in employment, education, or training (NEET), with a higher proportion in rural areas (25.23%) than in urban areas (22.80%) (Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS), 2024)). A systematic review of 43 cross-country studies also confirmed that NEET status is associated with significant risks, including increased vulnerability to risky behaviors and lower long-term socioeconomic engagement, while higher levels of education are a protective factor (Rahmani et al., 2024). This situation emphasizes that the issue of youth not attending school, not working, and not participating in training is not merely a statistical issue, but a structural challenge intertwined with limited economic, educational, and psychosocial access, particularly in marginalized areas.

Non-formal education, such as that provided by Community Learning Centers (PKBM), serves as an alternative pathway for youth unable to pursue or complete formal education because of economic, academic, or social constraints (Pamungkas et al., 2018). Similarly, mentoring approaches in non-formal educational environments have been shown to strengthen critical thinking skills in learners, as demonstrated in a study of non-formal learning communities in Indonesia that have been operating for over two decades (Laksmi et al., 2026). However, it cannot be denied that most non-formal education programs in Indonesia still focus on completing administrative aspects, namely equivalency diplomas, and not many systematically integrate psychosocial approaches to build self-confidence, leadership, and entrepreneurial readiness in their learners (Benkova & Mareva, 2019).

Self-leadership, understood as an individual's ability to influence themselves through self-awareness, emotional management, and informed decision-making, has been shown to play a significant role in reducing psychological distress and improving individual performance, as found in a mindfulness-based self-leadership training

intervention among young adults (Sampl et al., 2017). Specifically in the context of socioeconomically vulnerable youth, structured mentoring relationships have also been shown to contribute to their psychological, cognitive, and social development, although the magnitude of the impact is small to moderate and highly dependent on the quality of the relationship and the consistency of the mentoring provided (Luo & Stoeger, 2023). However, this capacity for critical thinking and self-leadership is a fundamental issue for the students of the Sadina Community Learning Center (PKBM) in Cikupa Hamlet, Sukamaju Village, Cilawu District, Garut Regency. Initial identification with the PKBM management found that the majority of the 150 students aged 15 to 20 years who participated in the Package B and C equivalency program at this institution had low self-confidence, a pessimistic attitude, and minimal motivation to explore their potential, thus hampering their readiness to enter the world of work or start an independent business.

This issue is even more crucial given that entrepreneurial self-efficacy has been empirically proven to mediate the relationship between entrepreneurship education and business start-up readiness, with the ability to manage resources and make business decisions being the most significant mediating factors (Adeniyi, 2023). Consistent with these findings, entrepreneurship education programs specifically designed for adolescents have also been shown to significantly increase self-efficacy and personal initiative compared to pre-intervention levels (Martín-Gutiérrez et al., 2023). Therefore, we can conclude that entrepreneurial readiness cannot be built without first strengthening its psychological foundations, namely self-confidence, critical thinking, and self-leadership. As far as the research has been conducted, studies that report the empirical application of the coaching approach to strengthen the psychological foundations of PKBM learners in rural areas of Indonesia are still very limited, leaving a gap (research gap) that needs to be filled through community service studies that are contextual and based on field evidence.

Based on these gaps, the community service team designed and implemented the Coaching-Driven Entrepreneurial Readiness (CDER) Intervention Model, a socio-educational innovation that integrates program socialization, self-development and leadership coaching, entrepreneurial literacy training, and program evaluation and

sustainability plans. This model is essentially a downstream of the proposing team's research line in the field of human resource management and organizational behavior for the period 2023 to 2025, including regarding participatory leadership and work flexibility in encouraging innovative motivation (Prayudi, Putra, et al., 2023), the role of innovation strategy and the work environment on organizational performance (Prayudi, Sinaga, et al., 2023), trust in leaders as a trigger for proactive work behavior (Arraniri et al., 2024), and the position of human resources as a strategic asset in the digital era (Prayudi, 2025). The people development principle, which views individuals as the primary asset for socio-economic transformation, underlies the design of the coaching intervention for students at the Sadina Community Learning Center (PKBM Sadina) (Plaksiuk et al., 2023), not merely an administrative supplementary program, but rather a systematic effort to build self-leadership capacity as a foundation for entrepreneurial readiness.

This article specifically reports on the implementation and findings of the three stages of the CDER Model, which were actually implemented in the field: program socialization, self-development and leadership coaching, and program evaluation and sustainability planning. It focuses on strengthening students' critical thinking and self-leadership capacity as a foundation for future entrepreneurial readiness. The article's primary contribution lies in presenting empirical field evidence on how the coaching approach can uncover and address conceptual blocks that hinder the ability of non-formal students in rural areas to recognize their potential and the opportunities around them. It also offers a contextualized model for reformulating coaching questions for target groups with limited reflective literacy. To complete the discussion, this article is structured in several sections: the Methods section describes the program implementation stages and partner participation; the Results and Discussion section presents the findings from each stage, along with the contextual constraints and solutions implemented during the coaching process; and the Conclusion section summarizes the theoretical and practical implications as well as recommendations for program sustainability for PKBM Sadina and similar PKBM in other rural areas.

2. METHOD

This community service activity is designed to position the Sadina Community Service Center (PKBM) learners as active participants in the change process, not merely passive recipients of intervention. The approach used is descriptive, qualitative, and participatory, following the Coaching-Driven Entrepreneurial Readiness (CDER) Intervention Model outlined in the Introduction. This model is structured in six stages: Educational Program Socialization, Critical and Reflective Literacy Training, Self-Development and Leadership Coaching, Business Idea Training and Business Model Simulation, Mini-Business Idea Expo and Advanced Coaching, and Program Evaluation and Sustainability Planning.

However, this article specifically limits reporting to three stages that have been implemented in the field up to the time of this manuscript's writing: (1) Educational Program Socialization, (2) Self-Development and Leadership Coaching, and (3) Evaluation and Sustainability Planning for the ongoing program. The other three stages, namely Critical and Reflective Literacy Training, Business Idea Training and Business Model Simulation, and Mini Business Idea Expo and Advanced Coaching, are still in the form of implementation plans for the next period and are therefore not yet covered by this article.

Location and Target of Activities

The activity was conducted at PKBM Sadina, located in Kampung Cikupa, Sukamaju Village, Cilawu District, Garut Regency, as outlined in the Introduction. The initial target specified in the program proposal was 30 to 40 learners of productive age. However, during the initial socialization phase, the number of program participants, jointly with the PKBM management, was set at 25 learners. Of the planned 25 learners, 18 actively participated in the series of stages reported in this article, from the socialization to the initial evaluation.

Stages of Activity Implementation

The three reported stages were carried out sequentially, starting with the dissemination of the program to partners and concluding with an initial evaluation of its implementation.

1. Educational Program Outreach

This stage begins with a meeting involving PKBM (Community Learning Center) administrators, tutors, and learners to explain the program's objectives, benefits, and sequence of stages. Socialization is carried out through open focus group discussions (FGD), with the aim of building a joint commitment, technical agreements on implementation, scheduling, determining participants, and participation patterns of learners during the program. This open, dialogue-based approach aligns with the principles of community-based non-formal education, which emphasize the active involvement of learners from the initial program planning stage (Pamungkas et al., 2018).

2. Self-Development and Leadership Coaching

As the core of the CDER Model intervention during this reporting period, the coaching process was conducted individually and in small groups, focusing on strengthening self-awareness, reflective thinking skills, and decision-making as the foundation of self-leadership. The concept of self-leadership refers to the idea of self-influence in managing thoughts, behaviors, and decisions independently (Manz, 1986), while the coaching techniques employed by the implementation team were generally guided by a framework of reflective questions surrounding goals, real-world situations, choices, and follow-up commitments (Whitmore, 2010).

During the implementation, the implementation team found that some of the coaching questions were abstract and too conceptual and were difficult for participants to understand, considering the limited knowledge and experience of the learners in this kind of self-reflection context. This challenge was addressed by reformulating the coaching questions to be more contextual and relevant to the participants' daily experiences, in line with the principle that the effectiveness of mentoring or coaching relationships with socioeconomically vulnerable youth groups depends heavily on the quality of the

relationship and the appropriateness of the approach to the participants' context (Luo & Stoeger, 2023).

3. Program Evaluation and Sustainability Plan

The evaluation conducted during this reporting phase is formative in nature, relying on participatory observation by the implementation team during coaching sessions and the facilitator's reflective notes regarding participant dynamics and progress. The summative evaluation instruments planned in the program proposal, in the form of pre-post training questionnaires and concept understanding tests, have not been implemented in this reporting period and therefore are not used as data sources in this article. As a follow-up measure, the implementation team and the PKBM management are currently developing a coaching-entrepreneurship module as part of the program's sustainability plan, although, at the time of writing, the module has not yet been fully completed across all planned stages.

Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

The data used in this article are derived from direct observations by the implementation team (lecturers and students) during the socialization and coaching processes, the facilitators' daily reflective notes, and photographic documentation of the activities. The data were analyzed using a descriptive-qualitative approach, following the process of data reduction, data display, and concluding patterns that emerged during the mentoring process (Miles et al., 2013). With this approach, the findings presented in the Results and Discussion section are narrative and interpretative rather than based on quantitative measurements, reflecting the nature of the data available at this reporting stage.

Roles and Tasks of the Implementation Team

The distribution of roles among the implementation team across the three reported stages is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Roles and Tasks of the Implementation Team in the Reported Stages

Team Members	Tasks Performed During the Reported Stages
Implementation Team Leader	Developing the program design and training modules for the dissemination phase; leading leadership coaching and self-reflection sessions; and preparing reports and evaluations on the implementation of the initial phase.
Faculty Member 1	Developing post-training evaluation instruments (work on which was still ongoing at the time this article was written).
Faculty Member 2	Overseeing the dissemination of the program to learners and Community Learning Center (PKBM) administrators; monitoring the mentoring process; and coordinating program sustainability plans with PKBM administrators.
Student 1	Serving as a small-group facilitator during coaching sessions; guiding participants through reflective activities; and managing visual documentation of the activities.
Student 2	Serving as a co-facilitator for individual coaching sessions; and compiling the results of formative evaluations.

Source: Community Service Implementation Team (2025).

The team leader is responsible for designing the program and training modules for the dissemination phase, leading leadership coaching and self-reflection sessions, and compiling reports and evaluations of the initial phase's implementation. Lecturer member 2 plays a role in implementing socialization to students and PKBM managers, as well as coordinating monitoring of mentoring and program sustainability plans with managers. Lecturer member 1 contributed to the development of the evaluation instrument, the full implementation of which was still in process at the time of writing this article. Students

are involved as small-group facilitators and co-facilitators for individual coaching sessions, while also being responsible for visual documentation and the compilation of formative evaluation notes throughout the activities.

Thus, the stages and implementation techniques described above form the basis for presenting the findings in the Results and Discussion section, particularly regarding the conceptual block patterns identified during the coaching process and their implications for strengthening the self-leadership of PKBM Sadina learners)

3. HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

Participation and Dynamics of Program Implementation

Of the 25 students who agreed to participate in the program during the socialization phase, 18 were recorded as actively participating in the socialization process, including the coaching session and initial evaluation, or 72% of the planned number of participants. This decrease in participant numbers during the implementation phase compared to the initial plan is not uncommon in non-formal education programs for socioeconomically vulnerable youth, given that their involvement in structured activities often clashes with family financial responsibilities and limited access (Rahmani et al., 2024). Nevertheless, this level of participation still provides an adequate database for mapping conceptual block patterns in the target group, as described in the following section.

Conceptual Block Profile in Participants' Creative Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills

The assessment instrument used by the implementation team in the coaching sessions focused on two competency units: creativity and problem-solving, based on the conceptual block type framework developed (Whetten & Cameron, 2016). Conceptual blocks, within this framework, are understood as thinking habits or fixed approaches that limit a person's ability to define problems or generate alternative solutions, although these habits are often unconscious.

The concept of conceptual blocks was first systematically introduced by Adams (2001) in Conceptual Blockbusting, identified six categories of barriers to creative thinking: perceptual, emotional, cultural, environmental, intellectual, and expressive blocks. Whetten & Cameron (2016) further simplified this concept into four more applicable categories for managerial and decision-making contexts: constancy, commitment, compression, and complacency. Two of these categories, constancy and complacency, were chosen by the implementation team as the assessment instrument references for this activity due to their alignment with the priority issues agreed upon with partners during the proposal development stage: low critical thinking capacity and personal leadership among learners.

The assessment analysis results, as presented in Table 2, indicate that the dominant conceptual block pattern in the creativity competency unit is constancy, a tendency to think vertically, defining problems from only one perspective without considering alternatives. This pattern was identified through reflective questions regarding participants' usual approaches to finding new ideas or ways to complete tasks, with a negative indicator being the lack of effort to identify diverse opportunities for emerging new approaches. Meanwhile, in the problem-solving competency unit, the dominant pattern was complacency or non-inquisitiveness, demonstrated by participants' tendency to ignore relevant facts or information and rely solely on a single source of information when responding to a problem.

Table 2. Analysis of Assessment Results on Participants' Creative Thinking Skills

No	Assessed Competency Units	Conceptual Block Types	Explanation	Indicators Shown
1	**Creativity** (The ability to generate new ideas, recognize the need for new approaches, and creatively combine diverse perspectives)	Constancy (Thinking vertically)	Defining a problem in only one way without considering alternative perspectives.	Question related to "What approach do you take when seeking new ideas or ways to complete tasks/work?" **Negative indicators that emerged:** Never trying to identify diverse opportunities for emerging new methods.

No	Assessed Competency Units	Conceptual Block Types	Explanation	Indicators Shown
				Stimulation for positive indicators: Participants are encouraged to identify various opportunities to generate new ways or ideas for completing work by utilizing imagination or intuition, and to have the courage to change the way things are done or habits that are considered the most correct.
2	Problem Solving (Identifying and analyzing problems to achieve optimal solutions and making informed decisions)	Complacency (Non-inquisitiveness)	Sometimes they are unable to solve problems because they are reluctant to ask questions or are not actively seeking data and information.	Question related to "What is your approach in responding to a problem you face?" **Negative indicators that emerged:** Ignoring relevant facts or information, or relying solely on one source of information. **Stimulation for positive indicators:** Participants are encouraged to identify facts and information relevant to a problem, identify relationships between facts and information, recognize cause-and-effect relationships, and pay attention to other languages such as symbolic language (e.g., mathematics), sensory imagery (smelling), feelings and emotions (fear, happiness), and visual imagery (mental depiction).

Source: Community Service Implementation Team Documentation (2025).

This finding is consistent with the conditions identified by the implementation team during the socialization phase, namely the low capacity of learners to independently identify and analyze problems as one of the foundations of self-leadership, which Manz (1986) defines as the ability to consciously influence one's own thoughts, behavior, and decisions. When participants are accustomed to defining problems from a single perspective (constancy) and are reluctant to dig deeper into information (complacency),

the capacity for critical self-evaluation, a prerequisite for independent decision-making, is practically undeveloped.

The complacency block in the problem-solving competency unit also explains why the coaching process during this reporting period encountered obstacles in the form of participants' difficulty understanding abstract reflective questions, as described in the Methods section. Participants who are accustomed to not digging deeper into information or relying on a single source of answers tend not to have a framework for responding to open-ended questions that require exploring various possible answers. Whetten & Cameron (2016) attribute this condition to the limited use of "thinking languages," which are the various ways of viewing problems, whether verbally, symbolically (e.g., mathematical language), or through sensory and visual imagery. The assessment instrument used by the implementation team was also designed to encourage participants to utilize this variety of thinking languages, although in practice, most participants still relied solely on a single verbal line of thought.

Theoretically, these two patterns are not mutually exclusive. Constancy is a cognitive manifestation of thinking habits that are rarely reexamined, while complacency is a motivational manifestation of a reluctance to examine those habits. Someone accustomed to viewing a problem from a single perspective tends not to feel the need to seek additional information that could challenge that perspective, because one explanation is considered sufficient. Conversely, a reluctance to explore new information also locks in dependence on existing perspectives, because there is no new input to stimulate revision. This mutually reinforcing relationship underpinned the implementation team's decision to design a coaching intervention that targets both aspects simultaneously, rather than treating creativity and problem-solving as separate competencies.

Adapting Coaching Techniques in Responding to Conceptual Blocks

Based on the profile of the aforementioned conceptual block, the implementation team adjusted their field coaching techniques. The reflective question framework based on the GROW model (Goal, Reality, Options, Will), which is a general guideline (Whitmore, 2010) in practice, this needs to be translated into language and context that is

closer to the participants' daily experiences, so as not to get stuck at the level of abstraction, which actually strengthens the complacency block. As an illustration, reflective questions regarding the approach used by participants in finding solutions to a problem, which were initially asked in a general and conceptual manner, were reformulated into questions that referred to concrete situations that participants had experienced, for example, how they usually deal with everyday obstacles at home, in their circle of friends, or in the odd jobs they do every day. Documentation of the personal development and leadership coaching sessions is presented in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Documentation of the self-development and leadership coaching session with PKBM Sadina learners: (a) program orientation; (b) group discussion facilitation; (c) reflective Q&A interaction; (d) group coaching with a circular seating arrangement.

Source: Community Service Implementation Team documentation (2025).

This reformulation approach aligns with the findings of (Luo & Stoeger, 2023) which indicate that the effectiveness of mentoring relationships among socio-economically vulnerable youth is largely determined by how well the approach fits the participants' life contexts, rather than merely by the theoretical framework employed by the mentor. A similar conclusion was reached by Laksmi et al. (2026) in a study of non-formal learning communities in Indonesia; they found that strengthening critical thinking literacy through mentoring requires incremental adjustments based on the learners' initial capabilities, rather than the application of a uniform reflective framework across all target groups.

Implications for Strengthening Self-Leadership and Entrepreneurial Readiness

The findings of conceptual block patterns in the initial stages of the CDER Model implementation reinforce the argument made in the Introduction that entrepreneurial readiness among Sadina Community Learning Center (PKBM) learners cannot be developed without first strengthening their foundation of self-leadership and critical thinking capacity. Creativity, which in Zampetakis et al. (2011) research was shown to be positively related to entrepreneurial intentions among young people, is difficult to develop as long as participants remain trapped in vertical thinking patterns (constancy) that limit the emergence of alternative ideas. Similarly, business decision-making readiness, which Adeniyi (2023) found to be mediated by entrepreneurial self-efficacy, will be difficult to develop as long as participants are not accustomed to actively seeking information, as required to overcome the complacency block.

The placement of the Self-Development and Leadership Coaching phase before the Business Idea Training and Business Model Simulation phase in the CDER Model design thus finds its justification in these field findings. Strengthening self-awareness and reflective thinking skills needs to be done first as a foundation, in line with self-awareness-based self-leadership training that has been proven effective in reducing psychological stress and improving individual performance in young adults (Sampl et al., 2017), before entering the entrepreneurial literacy stage that requires participants to be able to generate and evaluate business ideas independently. Entrepreneurship education

programs designed specifically for adolescents, as found by Martín-Gutiérrez et al. (2023), also only show a significant increase in self-efficacy and personal initiative when participants have an adequate psychological foundation to respond to the material reflectively, rather than simply receiving information passively.

Limitations of the Study

Several methodological limitations at this reporting stage need to be explicitly stated, not to undermine the outlined findings, but rather to balance their interpretation and open up room for improvement in subsequent implementation stages.

The instrument is descriptive, not psychometric. The conceptual block assessment at this stage was conducted through observation and reflective questions based on the Whetten & Cameron (2016), framework, not a standardized instrument with formal validity and reliability testing. The results presented in Table 2 are therefore qualitative diagnostic in nature, not psychometric scores that can be statistically compared across participants.

There is a lack of pre-intervention comparative data. The summative evaluation instrument, a pre-post-training questionnaire planned in the program proposal, has not been implemented during this period, so the identified conceptual block patterns cannot be compared with the participants' baseline conditions before the program began.

Limited sample size. These findings are based on 18 learners in one community service-learning center (PKBM). Therefore, generalizing the constancy and complacency patterns to other learner groups, both at PKBM Sadina and similar PKBMs in other rural areas, requires caution and further verification.

The roles of observer and facilitator overlap. The implementation team, acting as coaching facilitators, simultaneously acted as observers, recording and interpreting participants' conceptual block patterns. Therefore, the resulting interpretations were not entirely independent of the facilitator's perspective.

These limitations are common in reports on the initial stages of ongoing community service activities and were a key consideration for the implementation team in designing more targeted summative evaluation instruments for the subsequent stages.

Initial Evaluation and Direction of Program Sustainability

As explained in the Methods section, the evaluation during this reporting period remains formative in nature and does not yet employ quantitative instruments such as pre- and post-training questionnaires. The findings on the conceptual block patterns described above were obtained through participant observation and qualitative assessments during coaching sessions, making them descriptive in nature and not yet statistically generalizable. Nevertheless, these findings provide a strong foundation for the implementation team to develop a more targeted summative evaluation instrument for the next period, specifically to measure the shift in participants' mindsets from a tendency toward constancy and complacency toward a more open and exploratory mindset.

The coaching-entrepreneurship module currently being prepared by the implementation team together with the PKBM managers is aimed at integrating the results of this conceptual block mapping as one of the initial diagnostic materials, so that PKBM tutors can recognize similar patterns in other learners outside the 18 participants who have participated in the initial stage of the program. Therefore, the assessment results at this stage serve not only as a snapshot of the target group's condition but also as a basis for developing an instrument that can be replicated in similar mentoring activities at other PKBMs in rural areas.

4. CONCLUSION

This community service activity confirms that the low self-confidence, critical thinking capacity, and self-leadership of the Sadina Community Learning Center (PKBM) students are rooted in a conceptual block pattern that can be mapped empirically, namely constancy in creative thinking skills and complacency in problem-solving skills, as identified from 18 students who participated in the first three stages of the Coaching-Driven Entrepreneurial Readiness (CDER) Model. Its main contribution lies in the downstreaming of the conceptual block framework, which has been commonly applied in management training in corporate environments, into the practice of psychosocial mentoring for non-formal youth in rural areas, a step that broadens the scope of Human Resource Management science while strengthening the theoretical argument that

entrepreneurial readiness cannot be built without first addressing the underlying cognitive and motivational barriers. Practically, this finding recommends a conceptual block assessment as an initial diagnostic instrument for Sadina Community Learning Center (PKBM) and similar PKBMs before designing an entrepreneurship program, a step that is currently being operationalized by the community service team through the coaching-entrepreneurship module that is being developed. The nature of the study, which is still descriptive-qualitative and limited to one PKBM, opens up space for three further stages of the CDER Model and replication in other PKBMs with more measurable evaluation instruments, while also emphasizing that the problem of rural youth who are not working, not attending school, and not participating in training requires psychosocial interventions that directly target the foundations of self-leadership, not just expanding access to equal education. Ultimately, the CDER Model lays the foundation for a simple but fundamental shift in perspective: that authentic human resource empowerment begins with the courage to recognize the perspectives that have held someone back from seeing the potential they actually possess.

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