



Deconstructing the Risky Link and Match Policy: Training of Trainers (TOT) on Human Trafficking Mitigation for High School and Vocational High School Guidance and Counseling Teachers

Rindu Erwin Marpaung¹, Valentina Moiso²

¹Universitas HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar, Indonesia

²Assistant Professor in Sociology, Dept. of Cultures, Politics and Society, University of Turin, Italy

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Correspondence address to:

Rindu Erwin Marpaung,
Universitas HKBP Nommensen
Pematangsiantar, Indonesia

Email address:

rindumarpaung@uhnp.ac.id

Abstract— This community service program aims to enhance the capacity of Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers across SMA and SMK in Pematangsiantar City and Dairi Regency as early detection agents against such threats. The implementation utilized a Training of Trainers (ToT) approach, including conceptual presentations from public policy and political sociology perspectives, followed by Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with 60 participants. The results revealed a profound information asymmetry, where the evolution of digital TPPO remains a novel issue for educators. A crucial finding during the FGD indicated institutional vulnerability at the vocational school level (SMK) due to structural pressures from the Link and Match policy. Educational institutions are implicitly indicated to potentially facilitate human trafficking chains unintentionally (unintentional complications) due to the absence of due diligence mechanisms regarding the legality of employment agencies. This program concludes the necessity to deconstruct the illusion of instant social mobility in student career counseling.

Keywords: Guidance and Counseling Teachers; Human Trafficking; Link and Match Policy; Modern Slavery; Special Job Fair



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INTRODUCTION

Vocational education (TVET) is designed to provide economic independence for its graduates (Sudira, 2012). Through Presidential Instruction of the Republic of Indonesia Number 9 of 2016 concerning the Revitalization of Vocational High Schools (SMK), the Link and Match policy is being aggressively promoted to ensure graduates are absorbed into the industrial world, which also serves as a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for schools (Ardianto, 2013). However, from a political sociology and public policy perspective, this structural pressure to meet job absorption targets has the potential to create new vulnerabilities if not accompanied by strict protection mitigation (Lature & Amsori, 2022).

In the digital era, the *modus operandi* of human trafficking (TPPO) has evolved. Unlike slavery in the past, modern slavery (Pratama, 2020) operates through digital work contract fraud, debt traps, and manipulation of the economic vulnerability of the new working class (Skeels & Bashir, 2024). Targets have now shifted to young, educated people (high school/vocational school graduates) transitioning to employment, putting them at risk of becoming entangled in cyber-scamming or transnational online gambling (Sangaji, Muhammad Salman Jabbar, 2025).

In this context, educational institutions, through their Guidance and Counseling (BK) units, occupy a crucial role (Berney, 2025). In implementing public policy, BK teachers operate as street-level bureaucrats with discretion in determining the direction of students' career guidance (Şahin & Örselli, 2025). Unfortunately, there is a literacy gap (information asymmetry) among educators regarding the anatomy of digital human trafficking crimes. Therefore, this Community Service (PkM) activity was implemented through a Training of Trainers (ToT) approach (Asquith et al., 2022). This structural intervention aims to deconstruct the understanding of BK teachers in Pematangsiantar and Dairi regarding the risks of unverified Link and Match, while simultaneously increasing their capacity to detect early cybercrime threats targeting elementary and secondary school graduates (Rahayu et al., 2022).

METHOD

This community service activity uses the Training of Trainers (ToT) method. It will be implemented in two phases: the first on April 28, 2026, in Pematangsiantar City, and the second on June 12, 2026, in Sidikalang, Dairi Regency (Rasul & Rogger, 2018).

The target partners for this activity total 60 participants, consisting of 30 high school/vocational school guidance counselors in Pematangsiantar and 30 guidance counselors of the same level in Dairi. The steps for implementing the community service are systematically structured, including (Wipulanusat et al., 2018):

Preparation Stage: Conducting a partner needs analysis (Need Assessment) regarding legal literacy for preventing TPPO in secondary education environments (Miao et al., 2018).

Implementation Stage: The presentation of dialectical material focused on (a) the anatomy of modern slavery in Southeast Asia, and (b) the deconstruction of labor distribution policies and students' structural vulnerabilities (James, 2024). This activity also received attention from local mass media as a form of public information

dissemination (Schwarz et al., 2020).

KOLASE FOTO KEGIATAN TRAINING OF TRAINERS (ToT) PENCEGAHAN TPPO (Pematang Siantar)



Figure 1. Photo of Training of Trainers (ToT) Activities for TPPO Prevention

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Stage: A case study session where participants discuss their empirical experiences in dealing with offers from fake labor agencies (Siagian, 2024). Evaluation Phase (Mukhtar, 2021): Qualitative assessment measures participants' paradigm transformation through participatory feedback and partner follow-up commitments (Sogbe et al., 2025).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Information Asymmetry in TPPO Literacy in the Digital Era

The implementation of the ToT in Pematangsiantar and Dairi demonstrated a similar sociological reality (Leeds, 2025): a high level of information asymmetry among educators (Murphy et al., 2022). The evolution of crime into modern cyber-based slavery remains a foreign concept to most participants (Ula & Suwarno, 2023).

Until now, understanding of human trafficking vulnerability has been limited to the physical exploitation of unskilled labor (Jackson, 2022). The structural education provided in this activity has successfully dismantled this conventional paradigm, equipping guidance and counseling teachers with a critical awareness that the current threat operates massively through grooming on social media and the manipulation of job postings (Altunkaya & Ayranci, 2020).

Institutional Vulnerability and Unintentional Complexity in Vocational High Schools

A crucial dynamic was revealed through implicit confessions from participants during the focus group discussion (FGD) session (Supriyanto et al., 2019). At the vocational high school (SMK) level, there are strong indications of institutional vulnerability due to the pressures of the Link and Match policy (Linda Gea Vetrycia et al., 2024). Structural pressures to meet graduate intake targets quickly often force educational institutions to implement coping mechanisms by relaxing job market verification filters (Tummers et al., 2015). This encourages schools to enter into memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with various agencies without rigorous due diligence (Rawat et al., 2022).

From a political sociological perspective, this situation triggers unintentional complicity (Skeels et al., 2026). The school had no malicious intent (*mens rea*), but rather fell victim to a policy blind spot lacking verification mechanisms (Suwanto & Fitriyadi, 2019). Educational institutions unwittingly became entry points (nodes) for human trafficking syndicates (Khiyarusoleh et al., 2023). This ToT intervention facilitated participants' awareness of these institutional traps, deconstructed the illusion of instant social mobility, and committed to tightening the filters at the Special Job Exchange (BKK) as the primary protector of graduates (Rawat et al., 2022).



Figure 1. Photo Of Training Of Trainers (Tot) In Dairi District

CONCLUSION

The Training of Trainers (ToT) program on human trafficking mitigation for high school and vocational school guidance and counseling teachers in Pematangsiantar City and Dairi Regency has successfully raised educators' critical awareness in detecting

modern slavery. The understanding of guidance and counseling teachers has transformed from a quantitative orientation of "graduate distributors" to "protective filter agents" from the structural traps of human trafficking.

As a policy brief, the findings of this PkM urge the local Education Office and Manpower Office to formulate and mandate Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Verifying the Legality of Special Job Exchanges (BKK) at the school level. Furthermore, the "Prevention of Human Trafficking and Cybersecurity" module must be immediately integrated into the Grade 12 Career Guidance and Counseling service.

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