

Sit Speaking: Empowering Youth Leadership Through Public Speaking and Cross-Cultural Collaboration

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Abstract. In today's interconnected world, the ability to communicate effectively is essential for young people to thrive as leaders and agents of change. While public speaking is often underemphasized in youth development, it remains a vital tool for fostering confidence, critical thinking, and collaboration across cultures. Sit Speaking was established to address the gap in youth empowerment by using public speaking as a platform for leadership development. Specifically, the study aimed to explore how structured mentoring in public speaking can strengthen youth leadership capacity while promoting cross-cultural collaboration between Indonesian students and international peers. The Sit Speaking Community was founded in March 2025 and employs a qualitative, project-based approach. Weekly mentoring sessions were conducted with local youth participants, focusing on skill-building, practice, and peer evaluation. In addition, collaborative workshops were organized with students from other country such as Thailand & Korea to encourage intercultural dialogue and exchange of perspectives. Data were gathered via observation and surveys. Preliminary findings indicate that participants demonstrated significant improvement in public speaking confidence, leadership readiness, and intercultural awareness. The cross-border collaborations produced innovative youth-led initiatives that were locally grounded yet globally relevant, including international presentations and community engagement projects. Sit Speaking has shown strong potential as a sustainable model of youth empowerment through communication. The project highlights how local initiatives, rooted in weekly mentoring, can expand into international collaborations with meaningful outcomes. Ongoing results suggest that public speaking can serve not only as a personal skill but also as a catalyst for leadership, cultural understanding, and community transformation.

Keywords: Cross-Cultural Collaboration, Leadership Development, Public Speaking, Youth Empowerment, Youth Mentoring