

# Broadening Partnership for Strengthening the Networks of Politani Kupang

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**Abstract** A tailor-made training (TMT) assembled by both Politeknik Pertanian Negeri Kupang (Politani Kupang) and Van Hall Larenstein of Applied Sciences, Netherlands (VHL) was conducted from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> November 2020. This training focused on the importance of establishing, maintaining, and broadening partnerships for a better institutional development. As many as 19 participants were invited to attend the training and were assigned into five groups based on the five prioritized commodities the institution was planning to expand further, which were: meat/beef, coffee, honey, shallot, and catfish. The training was organized through both online and offline methods. The online method implemented both an asynchronous pathway, in which all the materials were posted through Google Classroom and Whatsapp group, and an asynchronous pathway, in which the teaching-learning process was organized via ZOOM. For the in-person method, the participants were taken to a field trip. By the end of the training, all the participants had understood the concepts of partnerships and their importance, how to construct and differ between a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and a Contract, how to achieve cultural awareness for a fruitful partnership, and how to outline a business plan and demonstrate a 3-minute pitch to be implemented on potential business partners during the field trip.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Politeknik Pertanian Negeri Kupang (Politani Kupang) and Van Hall Larenstein of Applied Sciences Netherlands (VHL) was first established, one of its output was manifested in the form of a Tailor-Made Training (TMT). The TMT carried a bigger theme which was Towards Successful PPP Partnership on Climate adaptation for Food Security in East Nusa Tenggara and was divided into two batches (Towards Successful PPP Partnership on Climate adaptation for Food Security in East Nusa Tenggara, 2019). The first batch was successfully organized from the 6<sup>th</sup> to

13<sup>th</sup> of October 2019 in Soe city and Noinbilla village, South Central Timor Regency (TTS), which was aimed at farmers on how to establish smarter-climate agriculture that was more resilient to climate change (Vertygo, Moata, et al., 2020).

For the second batch, the TMT focused more on constructing value chains as well as establishing a partnership for development. However, the aspect of partnering for development is the central focus of this article. This TMT aimed at the importance of establishing, maintaining, and broadening partnerships for a better

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institutional development.

From Politani Kupang's point of view, it could be beneficial to facilitate its staff to be able to think more 'entrepreneurship-wise' and to pass it on to the students to also think as such. On a national scale, this also seems to go together with the government's program in promoting the so-called MBKM program ('Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka' or Independent Learning at Independent Campus). With the world of work is constantly changing at a faster pace, higher education institutions are challenged to be more adaptive and flexible with the world of work, business, industry, as well as with various advances and developments that occur in such worlds of work, business, and industry (Rustandi, 2021). To be able to achieve this goal, one approach is by broadening our partnerships, especially business partnerships with other companies or industries that could assist the students in equipping themselves with the more updated and relevant skills and knowledge necessary in the working field. The participants, who were Politani Kupang teaching staff, were trained through both theoretical and practical knowledge to assist them in achieving such goals that would, in turn, benefit the institution.

## 2. METHOD

The Tailor-made Training (TMT) training was conducted from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2020 through both online and in-person methods. The online method was implemented through both an asynchronous session, in which all the materials including assignments were posted on Google Classroom and WhatsApp group, and an asynchronous session, in which the teaching-learning process was organized interactively via ZOOM as the teleconference media platform. For the in-person method, the participants were directed to conduct a field trip to the site producing the targeted commodity, present their visit report to the instructors via ZOOM, and upload all the related documents and assignments to Google Classroom.

The participants were teaching staff of Politani Kupang representing five departments at the institution, which were: 1) Animal Husbandry, 2) Dryland Agricultural Management, 3) Forestry, 4) Crop Horticultural Plants, and 5) Fishery and Marine Affairs. Each group was asked to present their assignment, and they were then assessed by the instructors. As many as 19 participants were invited to attend the training and were assigned into five groups based on the five prioritized commodities the institution was planning to expand further, and they which were meat/beef for Animal Husbandry department, coffee for Dryland Agricultural Management department, honey for Forestry department, shallot for Crop Horticultural Plants department, and catfish for Fishery and Marine Affairs department.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Partnerships

The participants were provided with an in-depth overview of what a partnership was and why it was very

essential. A form of partnership has been achieved if two or more companies or parties have already agreed to manage a business as well as share all the responsibilities, profits, and losses in a formal circumstance. Different forms of partnerships could be performed based on the common grounds shared, interests, and period as presented below (Starmans, 2020d).

Based on Figure 1, it can be seen that up to the present, Politani Kupang has had partnerships but only in the forms of networks, social media groups, and MoU. The main goal of this training was to establish a form of contract that could also benefit the institution for a better-quality development and further justify the significant role of the institution in creating jobs for the society specifically for its graduates.

### 3.2 Contracting

For the next topic, the participants were given a brief outlook on what MoU and Contract were and the differences between them. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) can be defined as a formal agreement between two or more parties summarized in a written document. It is not legally binding but insinuates the willingness of the parties to move forward to establish a contract. It explores the possibilities of both or among parties for project collaborations that could also lead to a form of business (Starmans, 2020b). The internship could also be aimed at an MoU that is perfectly suitable for Politani Kupang to enhance the skills of its pupils. On the other hand, in a contract, the agreement is also summarized in a written document; however, it is more legally binding and defines and outlines the rights and duties of all the parties involved.

The training further facilitated each participant group to formulate an MoU based on a potential partner. By the end of the session, each participant became knowledgeable of the basic differences between an MoU and a contract and was able to prepare it for a potential business partner.

### 3.3 Cultural awareness and pitch

In most cases, when trying to establish a business with a potential partner, one must be able to couple it with the capability to recognize the aspect of cultural awareness. Cultural awareness could be defined as the ability to sense both the similarities and differences among a variety of cultures and how it could be used to achieve more effective and fruitful communication (Cultural Awareness, 2018; Starmans, 2020c). In other words, it requires us to observe and comprehend cultural identity uniqueness not only from our working perspective but also from others where needs, expectations, and rights could be met.

For establishing and maintaining a business partnership, expanding our knowledge of other cultures and norms could assist in shaping perfectly suitable services for culturally different customers. Several guiding questions that could be used are as follows (Starmans, 2020c): 1) What is/are the sex? 2) What is/are the educational background? 3) How about social and/or economic status? 4) What is/are the age group? 5) What types of clothes or garments worn? 6) Do we know them personally or not? 7) Do you have

and if does, who are your supporters in the room? 8) How about the sitting position of everyone relative to each other? 9) What is the racial background of our potential business partner?.

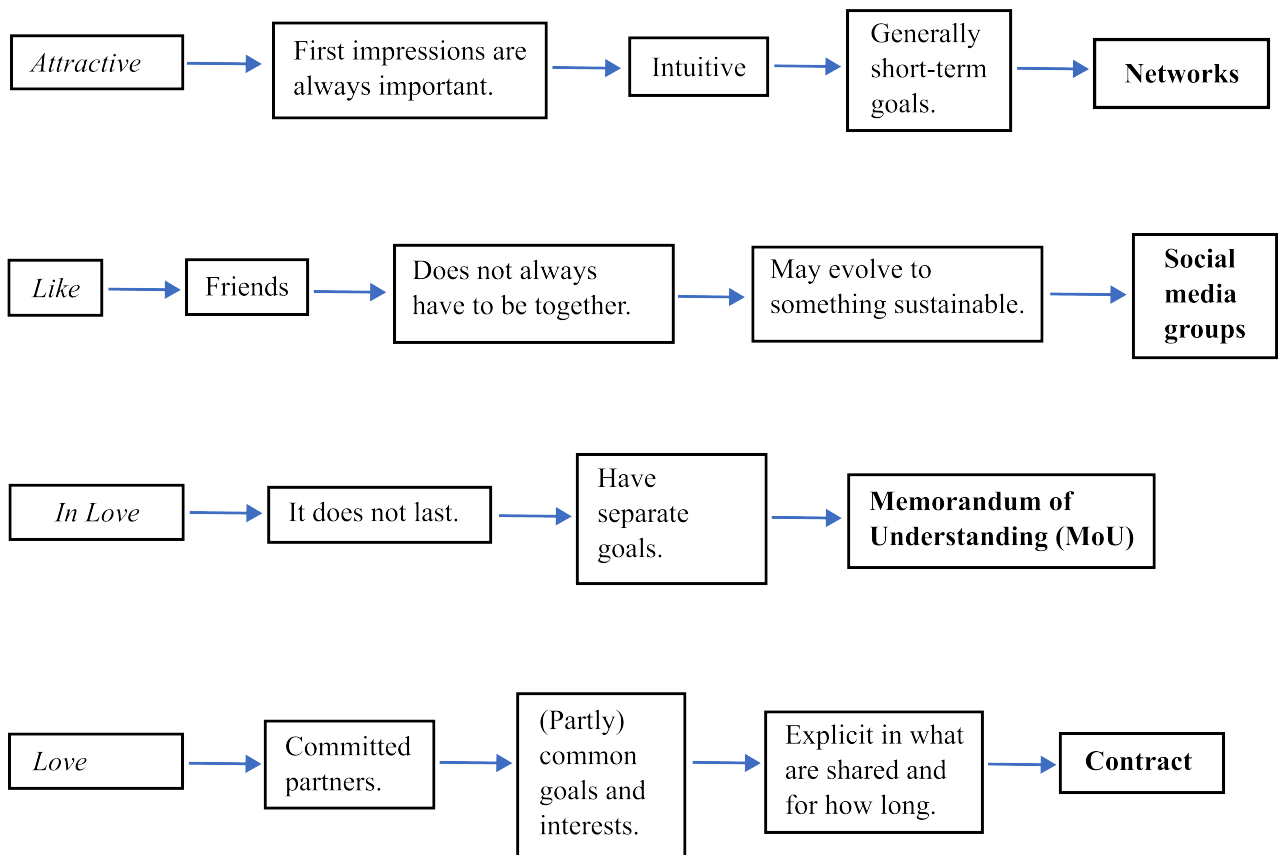


Figure 1 . Types of partnership



Figure 2 . Role-playing displayed by (a) the Honey Group and (b) Shallot Group



Figure 3 . 3-minute pitch practised by (a) the Beef Group and (b) further demonstrated during the field trip



Table 1 . 3-minute pitch structure (Starmans, 2020c)

Aspect	Duration (seconds)
<b>Introduction</b> (explaining the reason for the visit, grateful for the welcoming, etc.)	20
<b>Compliment</b> (making positive/flattering remarks on the building, environment, room, or person)	10
<b>The Team</b> (introducing each member of the team and from which company or institution)	30
<b>The Problem</b> (outlining the problem (and urgency) needed to be solved)	30
<b>Solution</b> (proposing the ideas that perhaps could lead to an MoU)	30
<b>Opportunity</b> (what would be the benefit for the other party)	20
<b>The Steps</b> (discussing the procedures as well as facilities and resources required for each step)	20
<b>Financials</b> (the proposed budget with a clear and concise statement on who is going to fund which part)	10
<b>The Ask</b> (giving opportunity to the other company for their input)	10

The answers to each question would subsequently affect the strategies or approaches taken; for instance, does racial or social background would mean that it is necessary for letting other colleagues with the same background to establish and maintain communication? Or perhaps try to engage with the local elders or cultural leaders first? As seen in Figure 2, during the training, each group was assigned to a role-play exercise where each person acted as a customer (local people), a service provider (representing Politani Kupang), and an observer that would give feedback during the interaction. This exercise served as a preparation before executing the actual communication during the field trip to the assigned potential business partner for each commodity.

After the exercise, in front of the instructor each group representative presented the summary (conducted online) of what they had found during the practice. Most groups agreed with the notion that as an eastern country, Indonesia has very strong cultural and religious beliefs that formed the way people think, behave, and live. Consequently, these aspects must be considered when trying to establish any certain form of partnership. It is generally accepted that during interaction, before communicating the main point, it is necessary to start the conversation with small talk (*'chit-chat'*) to create a more pleasant and convenient environment (*'breaking the ice'*). Sometimes, by accepting accustomed behaviors, such as drinking any beverage or eating any traditional dish or snacks that have been served, such as *sirih pinang* (consisting of betel nut (*Piper betel*) and areca nut (*Areca catechu*)) could smoothen the conversation, so that the agreement can be achieved effectively. Wearing decent or presentable but not too glamorous clothing could also be effective to display a more down-to-earth personality. Asking help from influential local leaders to mediate the negotiation could also help the business partnership to be established and maintained.

The participants were also taught how to do a 3-minute pitch that outlined the main point to discuss when *'selling'* our ideas and/or products to the business partners involved. The main goal of this approach is to attract the attention of the partners while making them easier to understand by not explaining it convolutedly but as briefly and simple as

possible. The practice of the pitch by the participants is shown on Figure 3. The structure of the pitch is comprised of several aspects shown in Table 1.

The participants then prepared a 3-minute pitch and uploaded it to the google drive created by the instructors. This served as a preparation prior to the visit to the potential business partner during the field trip.

### 3.4 Business Planning

The last day of the training ended with the participants being introduced to how to start up a business plan. This was considered as the final output of building a partnership that was justified by a contract. The instructor further suggested a 12-slide pitch that could highlight how the business plan was going to be executed, which can be seen in Table 2.

Three forms of financial reports were also elaborated to manage and observe how the company grows once it has been established. These reports are 1) Balance Sheet – a financial report that lists the company's assets, liabilities and shareholders' equity at a certain period, 2) Income Statement – which displays the company's profitability, income and expenditures, and 3) Cash flow – considered as the company's *'wallet'* that outlines the amount of cash and its equivalents that enters and leaves the company (Financial Statements, n.d.; Starmans, 2020a).

Since the training, by applying the strategies and steps explained above, the institution has had dozens of partnerships in the form of MoUs and Cooperation Agreements established with multiple small and micro-businesses, multi-sectorial government departments, and senior high schools. The farmer's union was also one of the most common target groups, with which Politani Kupang established and maintained a mutual relationship. One good example is given in Figure 3 which is from the Animal Husbandry Department of Politani Kupang where one of the authors, as a participant of the training since 2021, also established such a partnership in pig farming, in which the department provided the animal feed. In turn, the farmer's union took care of the farms, which would then be concluded in a share of profit according to the Cooperation Agreement (Vertigo, Helda, et al., 2021; Wea et al., 2021). Other examples of partnerships are shown in Table 3.

**Table 2 .** 12-slides pitch structure (Starmans, 2020a)

Slide Pitch	Content
<b>Introduction</b>	Setting up the vision and mission of the proposed business/company.
<b>The Team</b>	Identifying the key players and relevant educational backgrounds are needed.
<b>The Problem</b>	Identifying the problem requires to be solved.
<b>The Solution</b>	Proposing the idea or solution.
<b>The Market</b>	Selecting the potential markets.
<b>The Product</b>	Further describing the details of the products, what would be the characteristics and advantages of it.
<b>The Consumers</b>	Identifying the targeted consumers including how it is going to meet their demands and quality standards.
<b>The Competition</b>	Identifying other companies that are going to display a significant competition.
<b>Business Model</b>	Constructing the business model (Retail, Membership, Franchising, E-commerce, Wet market, Restaurants, etc.)
<b>Marketing Plan</b>	Selecting the strategy of the marketing method(s).
<b>Financials</b>	Calculating the expected profit and how will the dynamics of the cash flow be.
<b>The Ask</b>	Calculating on how much funding needed and how it could be achieved or raised.

**Table 3 .** Several examples of partnerships established with multi-sectorial institutions and business partners since the training (Praptiwi, 2022)

Institutions/Business partners	Date of Establishment (date/month/year)
Vocational High School of Loli, Vocational High School of Maritaing, National Institute of Flores	17/02/2021
‘Wahana Visi Indonesia’ NGO	21/10/2021
‘Bougenville’ and ‘Agrowisata Pelangi’ Small Business	18/11/2021
NTT Provincial Fishery and Marine Affairs Department	18/11/2021
Vocational High School of Mambo	16/12/2021
‘Jago Kopi’ Small Business	30/12/2021
POS KUPANG Newspaper	17/01/2022
Vocational High School of Adonara I	14/03/2022
Large-scale Training of Kupang Animal Husbandry Department	25/03/2022
Vocational High School of Aesesa I, District of Nagakeo	28/03/2022
Expert Staff of NTT Governor	11/05/2022

During the COVID-19 pandemic, by using such strategies one of the authors also established a mutual partnership with the Public Health Biomolecular Laboratory of NTT Province (Laboratorium Biokesmas NTT) in order to organize a free and routine COVID-19 testing at Politani Kupang, and in turn, Politani Kupang was obliged to follow the laboratory’s program of the COVID-19 anticipation protocols (Woso, 2021). In addition, during this time period Politani Kupang in collaboration with the Laboratory also organized a molecular biology-based training for Politani laboratory staff (and other staff from various government departments and labs) in order to enhance their lab skills in their field (Vertygo & Inabuy 2020; Vertygo, Inabuy2, et al., 2021).

On a larger scale, Politani Kupang is now in negotiation with the provincial government departments to develop ecogrotourism in the future in one of its areas. Researchers from Politani Kupang would be recruited for planning, executing, and monitoring the program. On a smaller scale, in the coming years, partnerships with Farmer’s Union are expected to broaden-up with more diverse commodities to support food security and safety on a regional level. By using such strategies and approaches taught in the training,

hopefully it could increase the chance of success in the pursuit of establishing such mutual partnerships.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Several things can be concluded and recommended based on the tailor-made training batch II elaborated above. Firstly, the participants had understood more about the importance of an institution in establishing and widening partnerships that could benefit not only the teaching staff and their pupils but also further justify the quality of the institution both regionally and nationally. Secondly, the participants were able to distinguish between a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and a contract and how important it is to be established in building a business partnership with other companies. Thirdly, each participant became more sensible towards cultural awareness when planning a business partnership, especially with local communities with strong cultural beliefs. Lastly, it was recommended that the institution further motivate and push its teaching staff to be able to expand any MoU already established into a contract that could be beneficial for them.

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## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

We would like state that there are no known conflicts of interests occurred related to this publication. The manuscript submitted is of original work that has not been published elsewhere nor being considered in other journal publications. All authors have also been notified and approve of the corresponding author as the only contact regarding submission, revision, and approval processes of the manuscript. In return, the corresponding author will notify all listed authors on the progress of the manuscript.

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