



IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EQUALITY EDUCATION PROGRAM THROUGH COLLABORATION OF PKBM CENTELLA ASIATICA AND RUMAH BELAJAR AN-NAJMA IN BENGKULU CITY

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji implementasi program pendidikan kesetaraan melalui kolaborasi antara PKBM Centella Asiatica dan Rumah Belajar An Najma di Kota Bengkulu. Penelitian bertujuan menganalisis pelaksanaan program, mengidentifikasi bentuk kolaborasi antar lembaga, serta mengkaji faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi efektivitas program. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa observasi, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan dokumentasi yang melibatkan pengelola PKBM, tutor, pengelola rumah belajar, serta warga belajar Paket B dan Paket C. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kolaborasi kedua lembaga berhasil memperluas akses pendidikan bagi masyarakat putus sekolah dan warga belajar dewasa melalui sistem pembelajaran yang fleksibel dan berbasis komunitas. Program mengintegrasikan pembelajaran akademik, keterampilan hidup, dan nilai-nilai keagamaan sehingga menciptakan pengalaman belajar yang holistik serta meningkatkan motivasi dan partisipasi warga belajar. Pembagian peran yang jelas antara kedua lembaga memperkuat pelaksanaan program, sementara dukungan masyarakat mendukung keberlanjutannya. Namun demikian, masih terdapat kendala berupa keterbatasan fasilitas, infrastruktur digital, dan ketidakteraturan kehadiran peserta.

Kata Kunci: pendidikan kesetaraan, pendidikan nonformal, pembelajaran berbasis komunitas, PKBM, pembelajaran sepanjang hayat

Abstract: This study examines the implementation of an equality education program through the collaboration between PKBM Centella Asiatica and Rumah Belajar An Najma in Bengkulu City. The study aims to analyze the implementation process, identify the forms of institutional collaboration, and explore factors influencing program effectiveness. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, with data collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation involving PKBM managers, tutors, learning center administrators, and learners in Package B and Package C programs. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The findings reveal that the collaboration has successfully expanded educational access for school dropouts and adult learners through a flexible, community-based learning system. The program integrates academic instruction, life skills, and religious values, creating a holistic learning environment that enhances learner motivation and participation. A clear division of responsibilities between the two institutions strengthens program implementation, while community support contributes to its sustainability. However, challenges remain, including limited facilities, inadequate digital infrastructure, and irregular learner attendance.

Keywords : equality education, non-formal education, community-based learning, PKBM, lifelong learning.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a basic right of every citizen as well as a strategic instrument in improving the quality of human resources. However, various community groups still face obstacles in accessing formal education due to certain economic, social, geographical, and personal factors. In this context, non-formal education is present as an educational pathway that functions as a replacement, supplement, and complement to formal education to support the realization of *lifelong learning* (Law No. 20 of 2003; UNESCO, 2021).

One of the main services of non-formal education in Indonesia is the equality education program which includes Package A, Package B, and Package C. This program is designed to provide opportunities for people who drop out of school or cannot access formal education to gain competencies equivalent to primary and secondary education levels. In addition to being oriented towards academic achievement, equality education is also directed at the development of *life skills*, community empowerment, and the formation of the character of learning citizens (Lisinus & Sembiring, 2020; Sudjana, 2019).

In recent years, the implementation of equality education has faced increasingly complex challenges. The low motivation of adult learning citizens, limited resources of organizing institutions, and community needs for education that is relevant to local social and cultural values demand innovation in the management of equality programs (UNESCO, 2021). Therefore, collaboration between the Community Learning Activity Center (PKBM) and various community institutions is one of the strategies that is considered effective to expand access to educational services while improving the quality of learning (Rogers, 2014).

Collaboration in community education is a form of partnership that allows for resource synergy, institutional capacity strengthening, and expanding the reach of educational services. In the perspective of community education, community-based partnerships not only serve as a means of program implementation, but also as an empowerment mechanism that involves the active participation of the community in the educational process (Kindervatter, 1979; Bhola, 2002). Through this approach, education is no longer seen as a mere institutional activity, but rather as a social process rooted in the needs and characteristics of the local community.

One of the interesting practices of the collaboration model can be found in the collaboration between PKBM Centella Asiatica and the An Najma Learning House in Bengkulu City. PKBM Centella Asiatica as a non-formal educational institution that organizes equality education programs has established a partnership with Rumah Belajar An Najma which has a basis for religious education and Islamic character development. This collaboration allows for the implementation of equality education that is not only oriented towards academic achievement, but also integrates spiritual, moral, and social values in the learning process.

The integration of equality education with religious education has a strong relevance to the concept of *holistic human development*, which is the development of the whole human being which includes intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions (Delors, 1996). This approach is also in line with the theory of andragogy which emphasizes that adult learners tend to be more motivated when the learning process is directly related to life experiences, practical needs, and value systems that they believe in (Knowles et al., 2015). Therefore, the combination of academic learning and religious coaching has the potential to increase the participation and learning success of citizens learning equality education.

Although various studies have discussed the implementation of equality education in PKBM, most of the research still focuses on aspects of program management, learning effectiveness, or the development of learning citizen skills (Lisinus & Sembiring, 2020; Sudjana, 2019). Studies on the collaboration model between PKBM and religious community-based institutions as a strategy for implementing equality education are still relatively limited. In addition, previous research has generally not examined in depth how the integration of religious values contributes to the sustainability of the program, the learning motivation of learning citizens, and the strengthening of students' character in the context of equality education.

Based on these gaps, this study offers novelty by analyzing the implementation of equality education programs through a collaboration model between PKBM and religious-based learning houses. This research not only examines the implementation of equality education programs, but also explores forms of institutional partnerships, the integration of spiritual values in the learning process, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors that affect the success of the program. Thus, this research is expected to make a conceptual contribution to the development of a more contextual, inclusive, and sustainable model of equality education based on community collaboration.

Based on this description, this study aims to: (1) describe the implementation of equality education programs at An Najma Learning Houses based on religious values; (2) analyze the form of collaboration between PKBM Centella Asiatica and Rumah Belajar An Najma in the implementation of equality education; and (3) identify supporting factors, obstacles, and problem-solving strategies in the implementation of the Religious Community-Based Equality Education Program.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. The qualitative approach was chosen because the research aims to understand in depth the process of implementing equality education programs through collaboration between PKBM Centella Asiatica and Rumah Belajar An Najma in the context of social and community education. This approach allows researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of program implementation practices, inter-institutional partnership patterns, and the experiences of actors involved in the learning process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

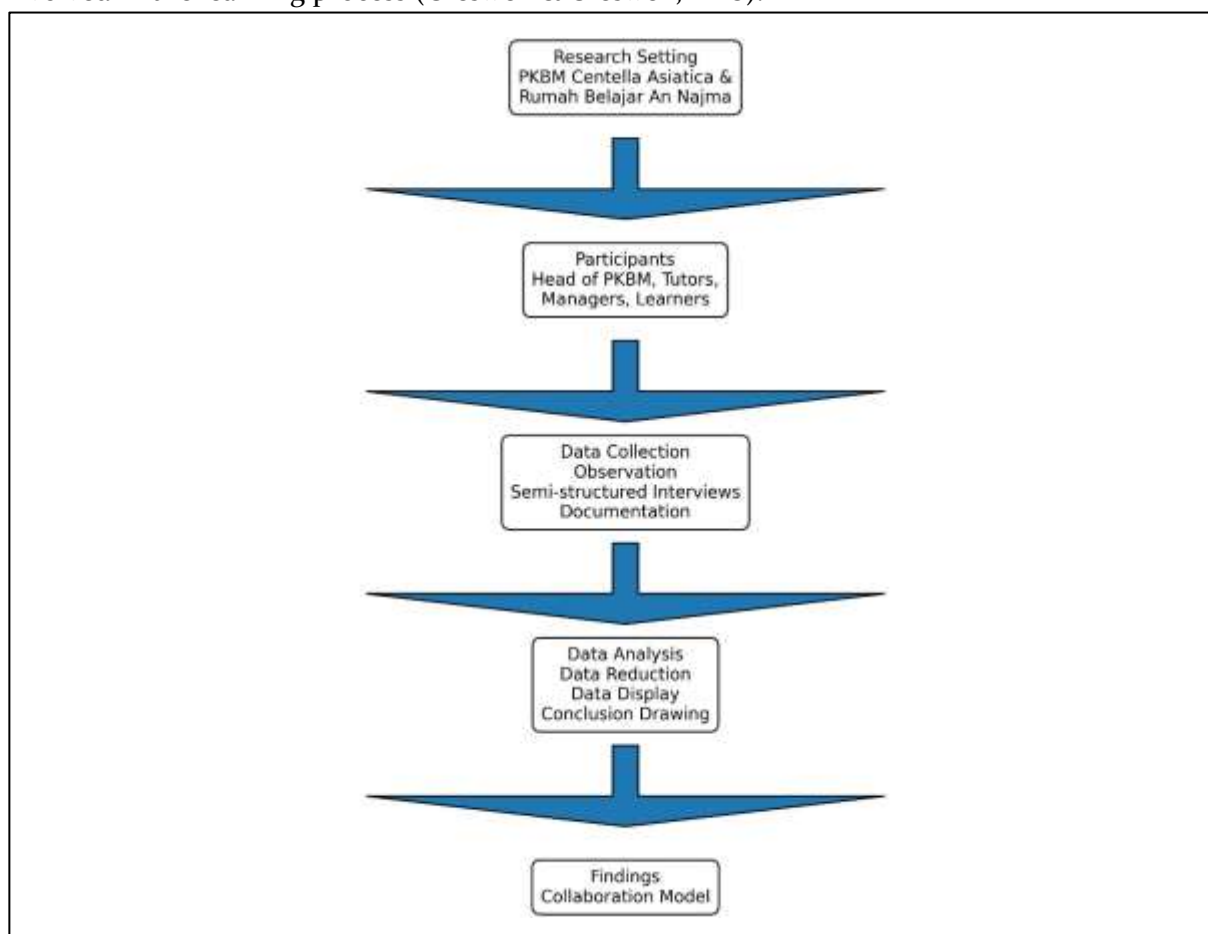


Figure 1. Research Procedure of the Study

This figure illustrates the stages of the study, beginning with the identification of the research setting and participants, followed by data collection through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing to identify the collaboration model between PKBM Centella Asiatica and Rumah Belajar An Najma in implementing equivalency education programs.

The research was carried out at PKBM Centella Asiatica and the An Najma Learning House located in Bengkulu City. The selection of the location was carried out purposively with the consideration that the two institutions have developed a collaborative model in the implementation of equality education that integrates academic learning with the development of religious values. Data collection was carried out for three months, namely in January-March 2025.

The research subjects were selected using *the purposive sampling technique*, which is the selection of informants based on the consideration that they have knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the implementation of equality education programs (Patton, 2015). The research informants consisted of the Head of PKBM Centella Asiatica, the manager of the An Najma Learning House, tutors for Package B and Package C programs, and learning residents who actively participated in learning activities. The criteria for selecting informants include: (1) being directly involved in the management or implementation of equality education programs; (2) have at least one year of experience in learning activities at the institution; and (3) willing to provide information openly according to research needs.

The research data was collected through three main techniques. First, participatory observation is carried out to observe the learning process, interaction between tutors and learning residents, religious activities that are integrated in learning, and the condition of facilities and infrastructure that support the implementation of the program. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with all informants to obtain information about the form of institutional collaboration, program implementation, supporting factors, obstacles faced, and the impact of the program on learning residents. Third, documentation studies are carried out on various supporting documents such as curriculum, learning schedules, data on learning residents, activity reports, documentation photos, and inter-institutional cooperation documents.

The validity of the data is maintained through source triangulation techniques and triangulation methods (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Source triangulation was carried out by comparing information obtained from the head of PKBM, learning house managers, tutors, and learning residents. Meanwhile, the triangulation method is carried out by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation to obtain more accurate and credible data.

Data analysis uses the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) which includes three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. At the data reduction stage, the researcher conducts the process of selection, coding, and categorization of data that is relevant to the focus of the research. The data presentation stage is carried out in the form of descriptive narratives, matrices, and thematic tables to facilitate data interpretation. Furthermore, conclusions are drawn continuously during the research process by identifying patterns, relationships, and meanings that emerge from the field data.

Through this procedure, this study seeks to produce a comprehensive picture of the implementation of the collaboration-based equality education program between PKBM Centella Asiatica and Rumah Belajar An Najma and its contribution to the expansion of community access to education in Bengkulu City.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Equality Education Program at An Najma Learning Houses

The results of the study show that the equality education program organized through the collaboration of PKBM Centella Asiatica and Rumah Belajar An Najma includes Package A,

Package B, and Package C services which are implemented flexibly according to the characteristics of learning residents. Most of the participants were teenagers who had dropped out of school and young workers who had limited time to attend formal education. Therefore, learning scheduling is carried out twice a week taking into account the social, economic, and occupational conditions of the participants.

The learning process applies the principle of andragogy which places learning residents as active subjects in the learning process. Tutors act as facilitators who connect learning materials with participants' life experiences so that learning becomes more relevant and meaningful. These findings are in line with andragogy theory which asserts that adult learning is more effective when it is associated with the real needs, experiences, and life contexts of participants (Knowles et al., 2015; Merriam & Bierema, 2014).

In addition to facilitating the achievement of academic competence, the equality education program at Rumah Belajar An Najma also integrates religious values in every learning activity. The learning activity began with a joint prayer and the reading of verses of the Qur'an and ended with a reflection on moral values and social responsibility. The integration shows that equality education is not only oriented towards the achievement of cognitive competence, but also on character formation and strengthening the spiritual dimension of learning citizens. This approach is in line with the concept of holistic education which emphasizes the development of intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects in a balanced manner (Miller, 2007; UNESCO, 2021).

The findings of the study show that a learning approach that combines academic and spiritual aspects is able to increase the participation and learning motivation of learning residents. Participants felt that the material provided was closer to daily life so as to encourage active involvement during the learning process.

Collaboration Model between PKBM Centella Asiatica and Rumah Belajar An Najma

The results of the study revealed that the collaboration between PKBM Centella Asiatica and the An Najma Learning House was built through the division of complementary roles. PKBM is responsible for administrative aspects, curriculum preparation, tutor provision, reporting to the education office, as well as the evaluation and certification process. Meanwhile, Rumah Belajar An Najma provides learning facilities, captures learning residents, and supports the implementation of community-based learning activities.

This cooperation model shows the characteristics of community-based education, namely the implementation of education that utilizes local resources and community participation to meet the learning needs of citizens (Kindervatter, 1979; Rogers, 2004). Through this approach, access to education becomes closer, affordable, and in accordance with the socio-cultural conditions of the local community.

These findings reinforce the results of previous research that shows that partnerships between non-formal educational institutions and local communities can improve the accessibility of educational services, strengthen the sustainability of programs, and increase community participation in the learning process (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2022; Aontu & Eze, 2018). In the context of this research, collaboration not only functions as an administrative mechanism, but also as a strategy for community empowerment through education.

The uniqueness of the model found lies in the integration of equality education with the development of Islamic values which is carried out systematically in the learning community environment. This model shows that religious-based institutions can be strategic partners in expanding access to non-formal education while strengthening the character formation of learning citizens.

Supporting Factors and Inhibiting Program Implementation

Data analysis shows that the successful implementation of equality education programs is supported by several key factors. First, the support of the community and local leaders who

contribute to the provision of learning facilities and program promotion to prospective participants. Community support is an important factor in the success of non-formal education because it is able to create a sense of ownership for the programs that are carried out (Bhola, 2008).

Second, the commitment of PKBM managers and tutors who consistently provide assistance to learning residents. The role of the tutor is not only as a material presenter, but also as a motivator who helps participants overcome various learning barriers. Third, the high enthusiasm of learning residents for learning that combines academic competence, life skills, and religious education.

On the other hand, this study also found a number of obstacles that affect the effectiveness of the program. Limited learning facilities, lack of digital facilities, and irregular attendees are the main challenges in organizing the program. This condition is a common problem that is widely found in non-formal education in developing countries, especially in community groups that have limited economy and learning time (UIL, 2022; UNESCO, 2021).

Nevertheless, the creativity of tutors in utilizing simple learning media such as literacy cards, educational videos based on Islamic values, and educational games has been proven to be able to maintain participants' motivation to learn. These findings suggest that the success of the program is not solely determined by the availability of facilities, but also by the tutor's pedagogical capacity to create engaging and contextual learning experiences.

Theoretical Discussion

From the perspective of andragogy theory, the success of the equality education program at Rumah Belajar An Najma shows that adult learning becomes more effective when learning materials are relevant to the life needs of participants and provide benefits that can be directly applied in daily life (Knowles et al., 2015). The integration of academic materials, life skills, and religious education strengthens the meaning of learning for learners so as to increase their motivation and participation.

In addition, the collaboration model found in this study supports the concept of community-based learning that places community as an integral part of the educational process. Local community involvement not only expands access to education, but also improves the sustainability of programs through strong social support (Rogers, 2004; Bhola, 2008).

Table 1. Theoretical Foundation of the Collaboration Model

Theoretical Basis	Main Principle	Evidence Collaboration	Outcome
Andragogy (Knowles et al., 2015)	Learning must be relevant to adult needs	Integration of academic subjects, life skills, and religious values	Increased learner motivation and participation
Community-Based Learning (Rogers, 2004; Bhola, 2008)	Community involvement in education	Partnership between PKBM and Rumah Belajar	Expanded educational access
Lifelong Learning (UNESCO, 2021)	Flexible and inclusive learning opportunities	Alternative pathway for school dropouts and adult learners	Educational empowerment
Holistic Education	Development of cognitive, moral, and spiritual dimensions	Religious-based equality education	Character and social responsibility development

The table above shows that the success of the equality education program at Rumah Belajar An Najma is not only determined by the academic aspect, but also by the integration of various complementary theoretical perspectives. The andragogy theory explains the importance of the relevance of the material to the needs of adult learners, while the concept of community-

based learning emphasizes the role of the community as a strategic partner in the implementation of education. On the other hand, the lifelong learning paradigm provides a foundation that education must be accessible flexibly throughout life. The integration of these three perspectives results in a more holistic model of equality education, which not only enhances the academic competence of learning citizens but also strengthens their character, spirituality, and social capacity in community life.

The findings of this study are also relevant to the lifelong learning paradigm which emphasizes the importance of providing flexible, inclusive, and responsive learning opportunities to the needs of the community (UNESCO, 2021). In this context, equality education not only functions as an alternative path to obtain a diploma, but also as a means of empowering individuals and strengthening the social capacity of the community.

Furthermore, the results of the study show that the integration of academic and spiritual education results in a more holistic approach to education than conventional equality education models. This approach allows citizens to learn to develop intellectual competencies while strengthening character, morality, and social responsibility. Therefore, the collaboration model between PKBM Centella Asiatica and Rumah Belajar An Najma can be seen as a best practice in the implementation of equality education based on religious communities that has the potential to be replicated in other regions with similar community characteristics.

The findings demonstrate that the implementation of the equivalency education program at Rumah Belajar An Najma reflects the fundamental principles of andragogy proposed by Knowles et al. (2015). Adult learners tend to be more motivated when learning activities are directly connected to their personal experiences, social roles, and immediate life needs. In this study, the integration of academic subjects, religious values, and life skills enabled learners to perceive education as meaningful and relevant to their daily lives. Consequently, learner participation and persistence were relatively high despite limitations in facilities and learning resources.

However, the findings extend beyond the perspective of andragogy alone. While Knowles emphasizes learner autonomy and experiential learning, Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory argues that adult education should also facilitate critical reflection that transforms an individual's worldview and social understanding (Mezirow, 2000). The incorporation of religious reflection, moral discussions, and community-based activities at Rumah Belajar An Najma suggests that learning is not merely instrumental but also transformative. Learners are encouraged to reassess their life experiences, strengthen their moral values, and develop greater social responsibility. Therefore, the program can be interpreted as promoting both experiential and transformative learning processes.

The collaboration model identified in this study also supports the concept of Community-Based Learning (Rogers, 2004; Bhola, 2008), which views education as a social process rooted in local community participation. Unlike conventional institutional models where learning activities are centralized within formal educational settings, community-based education utilizes local resources, social networks, and cultural values to facilitate learning opportunities. The active involvement of community leaders, religious institutions, and local residents in supporting the program demonstrates that educational sustainability is strengthened when communities perceive themselves as stakeholders rather than passive beneficiaries.

From a broader perspective, the findings are consistent with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which emphasizes that learning outcomes are shaped by interactions between individuals and their surrounding social environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The success of the program was not solely determined by the instructional competence of tutors but also by support from families, community members, religious leaders, and institutional partnerships. This finding suggests that effective equivalency education requires a supportive ecosystem that extends beyond the classroom environment.

Furthermore, the study reinforces UNESCO's lifelong learning paradigm, which promotes flexible, inclusive, and learner-centered educational opportunities throughout the life

course (UNESCO, 2021). In contrast to traditional perspectives that view equivalency education primarily as an alternative route to obtaining academic certification, the findings indicate that the program serves broader functions, including community empowerment, character development, and social inclusion. Learners not only acquire academic competencies but also develop confidence, religious values, and social skills that enhance their participation in community life.

Compared with conventional equivalency education models that focus primarily on academic achievement, the collaboration between PKBM Centella Asiatica and Rumah Belajar An Najma demonstrates a more holistic educational approach. This model integrates cognitive development, spiritual formation, social engagement, and life skills education into a unified learning experience. Such integration aligns with the holistic education perspective, which advocates the balanced development of intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of human growth (Miller, 2007).

Therefore, the collaboration model identified in this study can be conceptualized as a Community-Based Holistic Equivalency Education Model. Its uniqueness lies in the integration of formal equivalency curriculum requirements with community participation and religious-based character education. This model offers an alternative framework for strengthening non-formal education programs in Indonesia, particularly in communities where religious institutions play a significant role in social and educational development.

CONCLUSION

The findings demonstrate that the implementation of the equality education program through the collaboration between PKBM Centella Asiatica and Rumah Belajar An Najma has successfully expanded educational access for individuals who were unable to complete formal schooling. This collaboration represents an effective community-based partnership model that combines the administrative and academic capacities of PKBM with the social, cultural, and religious resources of a local learning community.

The study reveals that the integration of academic learning, life skills education, and religious values contributes to a more holistic learning experience for learners. The application of andragogical principles enables participants to connect learning activities with their daily experiences and practical needs, thereby increasing motivation, participation, and learning relevance. In addition, the community-based approach strengthens local ownership of educational programs and enhances the accessibility of non-formal education services.

Despite its positive outcomes, the program continues to face several challenges, including limited learning facilities, inadequate digital infrastructure, and irregular learner attendance due to economic and family responsibilities. Nevertheless, the adaptive strategies employed by tutors and the strong support of community stakeholders have enabled the program to maintain its continuity and effectiveness.

This study contributes to the growing discourse on non-formal education by providing empirical evidence that collaboration between PKBM and faith-based community learning centers can serve as an effective model for delivering inclusive and sustainable equality education. The collaboration model developed by PKBM Centella Asiatica and Rumah Belajar An Najma may therefore be considered a contextual best practice that can be adapted in other regions with similar socio-cultural characteristics. Furthermore, this model supports the realization of lifelong learning and contributes to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) through the provision of equitable, inclusive, and community-responsive educational opportunities.

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