

Communication networks in community parenting programmes for migrant worker families in Indramayu

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Abstract This study addressed two research questions: how communication networks among family, village government, and community actors are formed in community parenting programmes for left-behind children in Kenanga and Juntinyuat Villages, and how two-way communication within the microsystem and mesosystem supports programme sustainability. The study applies Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory of Human Development and communication network analysis to examine the relationships among concrete actors, including village heads, PKK administrators, *Karang Taruna*, teachers, health workers, police officers, religious figures, NGOs, surrogate carers, migrant mothers, and children. Communication networks in this study are understood as functions carried out by concrete actors, rather than as actors themselves. Certain actors influence parenting attitudes within the community, others manage the circulation of information from village institutions to families, while several actors connect local caregiving groups with migrant workers abroad. Using a qualitative approach, this research was conducted in Kenanga and Juntinyuat Villages, Indramayu Regency, through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation involving forty informants. The findings show that community parenting operates as a communication-based social intervention that promotes shared responsibility for left-behind children. In this sense, the villages seek to cultivate a new social behaviour: collective care. This process generates social capital by distributing responsibility across families, schools, village institutions, health workers, youth groups, religious communities, and NGOs. Furthermore, two-way communication functions as a feedback loop through which actors exchange parenting guidance, child protection information, educational assistance, and socio-emotional support. However, the central contribution of this study lies in showing that migrant mothers, despite being primary stakeholders in the care chain, remain relatively isolated within the communication network. Their weak connection with surrogate carers, schools, village institutions, and community actors reveals a fragmented mesosystem and an incomplete care chain. Therefore, Desmigratif requires stronger digitally mediated communication strategies to reconnect migrant mothers with village-based parenting networks.

Keywords: communication network; community parenting; migrant worker families; left-behind children; multidirectional care

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INTRODUCTION

Being one of the regions with the highest number of migrant workers both at the provincial and national levels (BP2MI, 2022) from 2016 to 2023, some villages in Indramayu had been designated as the implementer of the Productive Migrant Village (Desmigratif) programme, along with 503 other villages in Indonesia. At least there are four villages which have been made as the pilot project of Desmigratif development in Indramayu at the start, namely: Kenanga Village; Juntinyuat Village; Dukuhjati Village; and Juntiweden Village. This local context is important because Indramayu is not only a sending area of migrant workers, but also a social space where migration produces consequences for family life, childcare practices, village institutions, remittance management, and community responsibility. Therefore, the implementation of the Desmigratif programme in Indramayu needs to be understood not merely as a government programme, but as a communication-based social intervention that attempts to change community behaviour. This programme, which is designed to involve the role of many parties, has four pillars of activities carried out in an integrated manner. The four pillars of Desmigratif programme have been widely explained as the core framework of the programme, namely migration service, productive business, community parenting, and cooperative or village-owned enterprise development (Kemenko PMK, 2023; Nuraeni, 2021). First pillar, the migration service centre. It is a service in the form of information provision and work process assistance provided by the village government to people or village communities who will go abroad as migrant workers. Second pillar, productive business, namely services in the form of assistance in the business sector starting from the business start-up stage, product innovation development, technology utilisation, to the product marketing stage. So that remittances sent by migrant workers from abroad can be managed properly by their families and become the basis of a sustainable productive business for migrant workers when they return to their place. Third pillar, integrated childcare which is also known as community parenting, namely assistance services in the formation of a family development were left behind children are cared for together by the community. Fourth pillar, the development of village-owned enterprises, namely services that make accessing business and working capital easier for left behind families, so it can protect migrant workers and their families from the debt bondage of moneylenders or brokers who usually provide loans with high interest rates.

However, the four pillars should not be understood as separate programme components. From the perspective of financial literacy and community empowerment, the second pillar, namely productive business, and fourth pillar, namely cooperative or BUMDes-based capital access, function as the economic engines of the Desmigratif programme (Figure 1). These two pillars create financial resilience for migrant families by encouraging productive use of remittances, reducing dependence on informal loans, and supporting household economic stability. This economic foundation then enables the third pillar, community parenting, to work more effectively as the social engine of the programme. In other words, sustainable childcare for left-behind children cannot be separated from the financial capacity of migrant families and the economic support system available in the village. Therefore, the Desmigratif programme needs to be read as an integrated ecosystem in which economic empowerment, financial protection, migration services, and community-based parenting support each other. The following figure illustrates these pillars.

The focus of this research was on the implementation of community parenting programmes. In accordance with the government's plan, the community parenting programme run by each village involves the cooperation between village government and various community institutions. However, the number of parties involved and playing a role in the implementation of community parenting programmes is a challenge, because without realising it, the communication that is formed between individuals and social groups in this programme forms a communication network (Horta Ribeiro et al, 2025). If this communication network is not managed properly by the actors involved in it, the implementation of this programme will not last long. This was revealed in Nuraeni's research (2021) which was conducted in five Desmigratif villages. The results of her research indicated that the lack of human resources involved in implementing community parenting greatly affects the communication network that exists among the actors. From a social marketing perspective, the villages implementing Desmigratif programme are trying to 'sell' a new social behaviour to the community: shared responsibility for the welfare of left-behind children. This means that community parenting is not only a

childcare program, but also a behavioural change campaign that requires trust, participation, repeated communication, and collective commitment. The finding that responsibility is shared across family, community, and village institutional levels indicates the presence of social capital. Social capital becomes visible when village leaders, families, teachers, youth groups, PKK members, NGOs, and other actors are willing to exchange information, provide support, and maintain collective responsibility. In this sense, communication networks are not merely channels of information, but also the infrastructure of trust that allows the programme to survive. Two-way communication among actors also functions as the feedback loop of the programme. In marketing communication terms, this feedback loop is similar to the 'customer service' mechanism of a public programme because it enables beneficiaries, families, and community actors to express needs, problems, complaints, and expectations. Without this feedback loop, village governments may only distribute programme messages from the top down without knowing whether the community understands, accepts, or supports the parenting programme. Therefore, the sustainability of community parenting depends not only on the availability of programme activities, but also on whether communication among actors is reciprocal, responsive, and trusted.

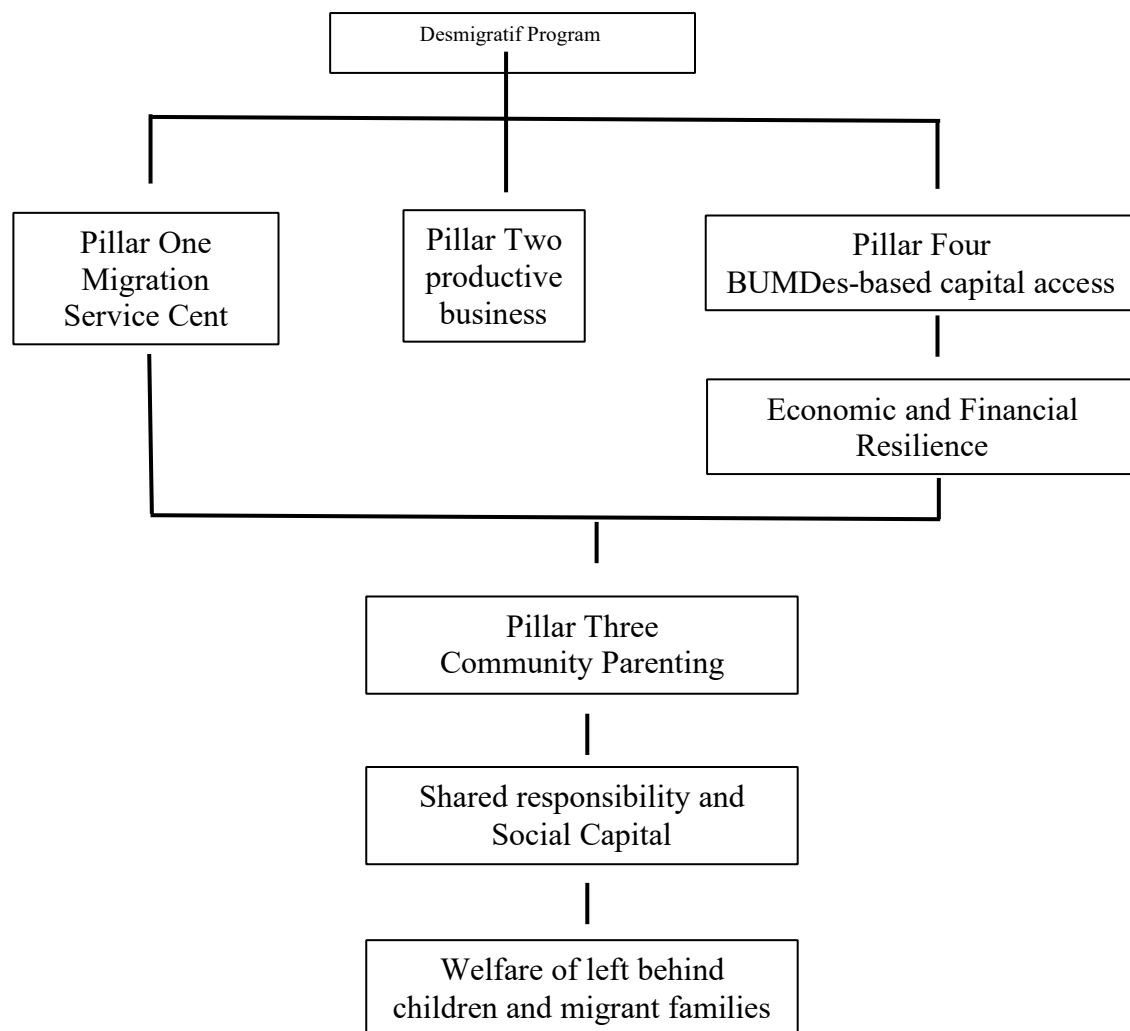


Figure 1. Four Pillars in Desmigratif programme
Source: www.kemenkopmk.go.id (2023)

Although it still needs improvement, from the explanation above, it can be seen that the government, through the Desmigratif programme, has begun to prioritise the role and support of the community to improve the quality of life of left behind children. These are in line with Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory which stated that human development is influenced by the

environmental context, so that the reciprocal relationship between the individual and the environment will shape the individual's behaviour (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Flynn & Mathias, 2025; Webb & Paretti, 2026). The transition to Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory is relevant because the problem of left-behind children in migrant worker families cannot be understood only from the relationship between children and their parents. In Desmigratif villages, childcare is shaped by a wider ecology that includes extended families, peer groups, schools, village government, religious and community leaders, NGOs, women's groups, youth organisations, and economic institutions such as BUMDes or cooperatives. Therefore, an ecological approach is necessary because it allows this study to examine how different layers of actors interact, communicate, and influence the sustainability of community parenting. It is because community parenting programmes cannot be separated from the involvement of local government and the community institutions around left behind children, such as *Karang Taruna*; Family Welfare Empowerment Group (PKK); Police officers; and non-governmental organisations (NGO). Nuraeni (2021) and Solehuddin et al (2025) revealed that social groups greatly help the effectiveness of village government programmes, because these groups can be relied upon to take approaches in providing motivation, training, coaching, and mentoring to the beneficiaries.

Previous studies have discussed the Desmigratif programme and migrant family issues from several perspectives. Nuraeni (2021) examined Desmigratif development through a holistic, thematic, integrative, and spatial planning approach, and highlighted the importance of institutional coordination in implementing the program. Muslihudin et al. (2021) discussed the empowerment of migrant workers through Desmigratif and showed that the programme is closely related to economic empowerment, family support, and community-based protection. Fitriani (2022) analysed Desmigratif using a soft system methodology and emphasised the complexity of actors and programme implementation in migrant worker villages. Fransisco (2025) focused more specifically on the reciprocal relationship between left-behind children and extended family members at the micro level. These studies are important, but they have not specifically explained how communication networks among village actors shape shared responsibility in community parenting, particularly in the context of Indramayu. Thus, the novelty of this study lies in its attempt to analyse Desmigratif not only as a policy or empowerment programme, but also as a communication network that connects economic support, social capital, institutional collaboration, and multidirectional care.

However, the discussion and analysis regarding the communication networks among the communities in productive migrant villages had been very minimally carried out by the previous researchers. In fact, if seen further, an in-depth analysis of communication networks can clearly reveal the role of each actor in carrying out village programmes. This research gap is urgent because without communication network analysis, the government and village stakeholders may be "flying blind" in allocating budget, designing intervention, selecting key actors, and evaluating the sustainability of Desmigratif. In the absence of such analysis, it is difficult to know who functions as the central communicator, who bridges different groups, who has limited access to information, and whether the parenting programme has gained sufficient community buy-in. From a social media and marketing communication perspective, this condition reflects a 'brand buy-in' problem: the success of community parenting depends on whether the village government and supporting actors can communicate the value of shared responsibility effectively to the community. Moreover, in the previous study Fransisco (2025) only focused more on the reciprocal relationship between left behind children and their extended family members which is on the micro level. Then, what if this multidirectional care is brought from the family level to a wider level, such as the people in productive migrant villages? Could the role of many actors in community parenting programmes be a supporting factor or even an inhibiting factor in its implementation? Based on the context of Indramayu as one of the important migrant worker sending areas, this study formulates the research problem as follows: the implementation of community parenting in Desmigratif villages requires the involvement of many actors, but the pattern of communication among those actors, the distribution of responsibility, and the strength of feedback loops have not been clearly explained. This creates a practical and academic problem because the sustainability of community parenting depends on whether communication networks can generate social capital, shared responsibility, and community buy-in.

Therefore, this study seeks to address two interrelated research questions: how communication networks among families, village government, and community actors are formed in the implementation of community parenting programme for left-behind children in Kenanga and Juntinyuat Villages, and how two-way communication within the microsystem and mesosystem supports the sustainability of such programme.

The new identity as a transnational family attached to migrant worker families cannot be avoided. Parreñas (2001) in her book titled 'Children of global migration: Transnational families and gendered woes' examined how the early process of transnational family development in the Philippines was neglected by society, the state and even the church. This was because Filipino people at that time still considered the nuclear family as a norm where parental care in the family was carried out by parents, especially mothers and fathers as the main breadwinners. Even in the Philippines, the nuclear family is considered as the basic building block of a society and kinship is characterised by consanguinity, affinity, or ritual (Battistella & Conaco, 1998: 221-222). However, along with the increasing number of people who take the opportunity to work abroad such as Asia, Europe and US, the number of nuclear families in the Philippines who are transitioning to transnational families is also increasing, even these families are headed by women (Parreñas, 2001: 361; Ho, Parreñas, & Yeoh, 2025). Not only in the Philippines, other migrant workers from sending countries in Southeast Asia such as Indonesia and Vietnam are also gradually experiencing a similar phenomenon (Panuwityo, 2025; Somaiah et al, 2026).

Although later the role of another family that replaced the mother or father (migrant parents) becomes normal among migrant families, the way of this care arrangement has actually developed in "Asian" families long ago, where the family has a great responsibility for the welfare of other family members including the obligation to provide expense and provide care to those in need (Jahangir et al, 2025). As seen in other Asian countries, despite having a fairly rapid level of economic development such as Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea, and Thailand, families such as grandparents or father-mother siblings take a substitute role as surrogate carer for children while they are left by their parents to work (Chen, Short, & Entwisle, 2000).

In the context of care arrangements, indeed, the role of surrogate carers (parents/non-parents) is very important. Data from CHAMPSEA study (2008) conducted in Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand on families with migrant parents showed the rates of care arrangements were 52,5% for maternal grandparents, 40,3% for paternal grandparents and 7,2% for distant relatives (Hoang et al., 2015). This data showed that the highest percentage of surrogate carers are grandparents. Yet even though their percentage is the largest, they are the people who are the most vulnerable to being negatively affected by the entire migration process (Hoang, 2025; Lase et al, 2026). Therefore, when a surrogate carer is unable to properly guide and transfer the norms of life for left-behind children who are entering their teens during the transition period of their parents' migration, they need a social environment that can provide support for them to get through the crisis. This is where the important role of the environment for left behind children, because a good environment has a good influence on children's development and vice versa, a bad environment has a bad impact on children's development (Budiarti, 2025; Ilahy, 2025; Ucheje & Balafama, 2025). This was in line with Cuellar, Jones, and Sterrett (2015) review, they revealed that there was a significant relationship between the environment and positive parenting in the childcare process. Even, school which is one of the closest environments to left behind children, also has an important role in breaking the inequalities in the global care chain in caring for left behind children. It is because the gap in childcare that should become the responsibility of parents and their families was reduced by creating a harmonious and open relationship between the teacher and left behind children (Da Fonseca, 2024; Habib, 2024; Lilawati, 2024).

Based on the explanation above, it is obvious that although there were many previous studies regarding the care of left behind children carried out by surrogate carers, there is still a gap regarding the role of society in the process of care arrangements from migrant parents to surrogate carers which had not been explored by the previous researchers. Therefore, this research used Bronfenbrenner's ecology of human development theory to see how society (actors) interacts with left behind children in an integrated activity to reduce the negative impact of parental migration. This theory was first introduced and developed by Bronfenbrenner in 1970 through his research related to children and family policy. The results of this research were published in 1979 (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and resulted in a new paradigm that uses an

environmental approach for human development as individuals. This new paradigm is a conception from research on the development and interaction of individuals with their environment, as well as the processes that influence each other between the two. According to Bronfenbrenner, the development of an individual is a continuous change where he will experience growth and always be connected with his environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

In general, the Ecology of Human Development theory explains that human development, especially children, is influenced by a very complex interaction system and influences each other in an environment that consists of two parts. First, the initial stage of human development that occurs through a process of physical and psychological reciprocal interaction between a person who is developing and his closest environment, then develops more actively and complexly throughout his life's journey. In its development, this interaction is measured over a certain period in various activities, for example the interaction between children and parents or children and their peers in the environment, which lasts for a long time (proximal processes). Second, during the proximal process, there is a strong influence on the development of individual character in a varied and systematic manner, originating from the closest environment to those far away.

Furthermore, in his theory, Bronfenbrenner divides environmental development into five social subsystems that can help encourage and guide a person's growth, starting from the microsystem where individuals establish relationships with their closest environment such as family, school, peers to the macrosystem on a broader scale. The five environmental subsystems are the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The five systems are interconnected and influence each other in the development of a person's environment. Meanwhile, among Bronfenbrenner's five systems, this research will focus on the microsystem and mesosystem.

This focus can reinforce what was conveyed by Bronfenbrenner in the ecological system of human development theory that individual development is produced by the interaction between a person and their environment that can influence each other. In other words, children left behind in their daily activities will not only be influenced by their microenvironment, but will also be influenced by the interactions that occur between different parts of the microenvironment. Therefore, this theory was used to see how community parenting programmes are carried out by actors who live side by side and interact with left-behind children in Kenanga and Juntinyuat villages. In actor network, the term network contains two meanings, namely establishing contacts for profit and connecting with each other (Parson, 2011; Wei, 2024). Meanwhile, Aldrich and Watten see the network more as a system, namely a totality of units that are connected to each other with certain definite relationships (Martomo, 2020). This study of the actor network was then also used and developed by several researchers in other fields, where one of which was researchers in communication studies (Clarke, 2024; Conti, 2024). Littlejohn & Karen (2010) called studies used to show patterns of relationships between individuals in a group with communication networks. In a communication network, the communication process involves more relations than attributes because a relationship is not just an individual, but it is a feature in the relationship of two or more people. Therefore, the communication network is based on two main things, namely actors and relations. According to Pace and Faules (2000), by knowing the position of each actor in a communication network, it will be easier for us to find out how actors communicate and connect with each other. They divide the actor's position into seven parts in the communication network, namely clicks, opinion leader, gatekeeper, cosmopolite, bridge, liaison, and isolate.

After the position of actors are identified in the communication network, as stated by Bolling et al. (2025), communication networks can also be used to see the process of exchanging information among actors. According to Devito (2024) there are two conceptualisations of interaction in communication, namely one-way and two-way communication. One-way communication is a message conveyed by the source to the target, but here the target cannot or does not have the opportunity to provide feedback or ask questions, in other words no interaction occurs during the communication. Meanwhile, two-way communication is verbal and nonverbal interaction between two people who depend on each other. This type of communication allows for interaction or reciprocity of care because the communicant can send responses (feedback) to messages sent directly by the communicator (Mahendra, 2024).

METHODOLOGY

Based on the explanation of the research questions above, this study used a qualitative approach that explored and clarified a phenomenon or social reality, by describing several variables related to the problems and units studied. The location of this research was in two villages in the Indramayu Regency, namely Kenanga Village and Juntinyuat Village. This research gained the data by using in-depth interviews for five months from September 2023 to January 2024. Meanwhile, the secondary data were gained by doing a participant observation and searching for activity documentation. So, the data obtained in this study were not only interview transcripts as primary data, but also documents such as population data, village regulations, and photos of activities as secondary data. In addition, this research had passed the evaluation of the Yogyakarta State University Research Ethics Commission.

Table 1. Informant list table

Element Level	Role	Age	Code
Microsystem Surrogate carer and migrant mother	Kenanga		
	Father	41 yo	Ba
		42 yo	Bb
	Grandmother	60 yo	Bi
	Migrant mother	39 yo	Bj
	Aunt	39 yo	Bk
	Juntinyuat		
	Grandmother	16 yo	Cf
		58 yo	Cg
	Migrant mother	40 yo	Ci
	38 yo	Cj	
Left behind children	Kenanga		
		13 yo	Bc
		15 yo	Bd
		14 yo	Be
		16 yo	Bf
		16 yo	Bg
		16 yo	Bh
		17 yo	Bl
	Juntinyuat		
		10 yo	Ca
		16 yo	Cb
		15 yo	Cc
		16 yo	Cd
	14 yo	Ce	
Non left behind children		16 yo	x1
		17 yo	x2
Mesosystem Community	Kenanga		
	Kuwu/ Village Head		Ab
	The Head of <i>Karang Taruna</i>		Ad
	The Head of PKK		Af
	Puskesmas staffs		Ah
	Bhabinkamtibmas (Police officer)		Aj
	Public figure		An
	Teacher		Ap
	Juntinyuat		
	Puskesmas staffs		Ag
	Bhabinkamtibmas (Police officer)		Ai
	Linmas officer		Ak
	NGO staff		Al
	Kuwu/ village head office staff		Am
	Teacher	SMA (Public Senior High School) 1	Ao
		Juntinyuat (teacher 1) (teacher 2)	Aq

Source: Processed by the author (2026)

The interview process was conducted in five rounds involving different groups of informants. Based on the research background, informants in this study were selected using a purposive sampling technique, it means that the researcher has a target individual with characteristics that are appropriate to the research (Willie, 2024; Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024). The criteria for informants who were chosen in this study consist of knowing information about the implementation of community parenting programmes and the forms of cooperation with social groups; have been a surrogate carer for at least five years; left behind children aged 10 to 18 years whose mothers have been migrant workers for at least five years; social group representatives who are directly or indirectly involved in the implementation of community parenting programmes; and have been a migrant worker for at least five years. From these criteria, 40 informants who met the requirements were then determined (See the table1). However, to obtain data that can support the analysis of community parenting in the two villages where the research was conducted, two non-left behind children were also involved as informants in this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Kenanga Village

The results show that the communication network in Kenanga Village was formed through collaboration among families, village government, and community actors in various community parenting activities. The village head, or *Kuwu*, emerged as the central actor who initiated and coordinated the programme by drawing on the local value of *gotong royong* as the basis for involving PKK administrators, *Karang Taruna*, police officers, community leaders, religious figures, *Puskesmas* staff, and families of left-behind children. This network operated not only through formal village programme, but also through routine community-based activities, such as *Rumah Edukasi*, entrepreneurship assistance, Sports Week, *Posyandu Remaja*, *Giat dan Curhat Bersama Polsek Sindang*, the Building Teen Families Programme, and discussions with *Bapak Kuwu*. Through these activities, the village government functioned as an opinion leader and coordinator, while community actors served as *facilitators* who connected children with educational, health, religious, entrepreneurial, and social support systems. This finding indicates that community parenting in Kenanga was not implemented as a single programme, but as a network of activities linking the child's family environment with the wider village community. The document also notes that Kenanga's community parenting was built through collaboration with PKK, *Karang Taruna*, police officers, community leaders, and religious figures, and was subsequently integrated into routine programme such as *Rumah Edukasi*, *Posyandu Remaja*, BKR, and discussions with *Bapak Kuwu*.

From the perspective of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, the communication network in Kenanga Village connected the *microsystem* and *mesosystem* of left-behind children. At the *microsystem* level, children interacted directly with parents, surrogate carers, peers, teachers, and community facilitators. However, several left-behind children experienced limited communication at home because migrant mothers were physically absent, while surrogate carers, particularly grandparents, often faced constraints related to time, age, and parenting knowledge. This condition made community-based activities important as a compensatory support system. At the *mesosystem* level, interaction among families, village government, PKK, *Karang Taruna*, *Puskesmas*, police officers, and schools helped to create a broader care environment. Two-way communication became essential in this process. For instance, *Posyandu Remaja* shifted from one-way counselling to a participatory activity involving youth cadres, health consultations, WhatsApp-based communication with *Puskesmas staff*, and discussions on adolescent health. Similarly, *Giat dan Curhat Bersama Polsek Sindang* enabled teenagers to ask questions, share concerns, and understand the risks of juvenile delinquency in a more dialogic setting. The BKR programme and discussions with *Bapak Kuwu* also became spaces where surrogate carers and fathers could receive parenting guidance and discuss children's education. Thus, two-way communication supported sustainability by creating feedback, trust, and repeated interaction among children, families, and community actors.

Juntinyuat Village

In Juntinyuat Village, the communication network was formed through the strong involvement of village government, Migrant Care, PKK, *Karang Taruna*, *Linmas*, Remaja Masjid, *Puskesmas* staff, community leaders, and families. Unlike Kenanga, Juntinyuat had a stronger institutional foundation for migrant worker protection, as it received assistance from Migrant Care and had Village Regulation No. 2 of 2017 concerning the protection of migrant workers and their family members. This made Migrant Care an important external actor in the early implementation of community parenting. The network in Juntinyuat was then developed through several activities, including *Rumah Edukasi*, *Posyandu Remaja*, *Remaja Masjid*, Creation Month, and sharing sessions on security and community protection. In *Rumah Edukasi*, PKK and *Karang Taruna* shared daily schedules to accompany children in studying, praying, reading the *Qur'an*, and learning computer skills. This programme created a safe interaction space where left-behind and non-left-behind children could learn and socialise together.

Ecologically, Juntinyuat's community parenting also connected the child's microsystem and mesosystem. At the microsystem level, children interacted with fathers, migrant mothers, surrogate carers, peers, teachers, religious mentors, and youth cadres. At the mesosystem level, these direct relationships were supported by links among village government, PKK, *Karang Taruna*, Migrant Care, *Linmas*, *Puskesmas*, *Remaja Masjid*, art studios, and schools. Two-way communication was evident in *Posyandu Remaja*, where teenagers were not merely recipients of health campaigns, but also cadres who designed events and discussed activity proposals with village staff. In *Remaja Masjid*, religious learning was conducted through informal discussions with young religious figures, allowing children to ask questions comfortably. In Creation Month, teenagers communicated with peers, *Karang Taruna*, Migrant Care, and art trainers through film production, dance, and gamelan activities. Meanwhile, security-sharing activities with *Linmas* and *Bhabinkamtibmas* created informal forums where teenagers could discuss daily activities, peer interaction, social media risks, and juvenile delinquency. These findings show that two-way communication supported the sustainability of community parenting by transforming children from passive beneficiaries into active participants. It strengthened the relationship between family care, peer support, village institutions, and community-based mentoring, thereby making community parenting a shared ecological responsibility rather than merely a family obligation.

Discussion

According to Pace and Faules (2000), understanding the position of each actor within a communication network enables a clearer analysis of how actors communicate and connect with one another. Klijn et al. (2025) further explain that the term network contains two meanings, namely establishing contacts for mutual benefit and being connected to one another. Meanwhile, Aldrich and Watten regard a network more as a system, namely a totality of units connected to one another through certain definite relationships (Martomo, 2020). This concept is relevant to the implementation of community parenting in Kenanga and Juntinyuat Villages, as the network formed among actors in both villages is not random, but structured through the relationship between conceptors, facilitators, and beneficiaries. Littlejohn and Karen (2010) define the relationship between actors in a network as a communication network. Akama, Chaplin, and Fairbrother (2014) also explain that communication networks are an entry point for information in building adaptive behaviour because they reflect the roles and relationships of individuals in a group or society. Therefore, the distribution of information through the communication network in community parenting does not only reveal who is involved, but also how actors are interconnected, how information flows, and how support for left-behind children is collectively organised.

In Kenanga Village, the communication network was formed through collaboration among family, village government, and community actors. The village head, or *Kuwu*, became the central actor who initiated and coordinated the programme by using the local value of *gotong royong* to involve PKK administrators, *Karang Taruna*, police officers, community leaders, religious figures, *Puskesmas* staff, and families of left-behind children. This confirms the view that a communication network is constituted by two principal elements: actors and the relations that connect them. As Pace and Faules (2000) argue, identifying each actor's position within the network enables a clearer understanding of how actors communicate and are connected to one another, while Bolling et al. (2025) further demonstrates that communication networks can be

used to examine the process of information exchange among actors. The network did not only operate through formal village programmes, but also through routine activities such as *Rumah Edukasi*, entrepreneurship assistance, Sports Week, *Posyandu Remaja*, *Giat dan Curhat Bersama Polsek Sindang*, Building Teen Families Programme, and discussion with *Bapak Kuwu*. The Kenanga network reflects Aldrich and Watten's view of the network as a system of interconnected units with definite relationships (Martomo, 2020). The village government functioned as the conceptor and coordinator, community actors acted as facilitators, while left-behind children, parents, and surrogate carers became beneficiaries. However, the centrality of *Kuwu* also creates a structural vulnerability. If the flow of information depends too heavily on one actor, the network may become less sustainable when that actor is inactive, changes position, or fails to distribute information effectively. Thus, *Kuwu's* position should be seen not only as leadership, but also as a potential communication bottleneck.

In Juntinyuat Village, the communication network was formed through the involvement of village government, Migrant Care, PKK, *Karang Taruna*, *Linmas*, *Remaja Masjid*, *Puskesmas* staff, community leaders, and families. This shows that Juntinyuat's network was shaped not only by local community relations, but also by external institutional support. Together with them, children were not merely passive recipients of information but became active participants. For example, teenagers in *Posyandu Remaja* helped design events and discussed activity proposals with village staff. In *Remaja Masjid*, children learned religion through relaxed discussions, while Creation Month allowed them to communicate with peers, *Karang Taruna*, Migrant Care, and art trainers through film, dance, and gamelan activities.

These findings support Akama, Chaplin, and Fairbrother's (2014) argument that communication networks reflect roles and relationships within society and serve as an entry point for adaptive behaviour. In both villages, community parenting functioned as a communication network that connected family care, peer support, village institutions, and community-based mentoring. Nevertheless, the most significant insight of this study is that migrant mothers, despite being primary stakeholders in the care chain, remain positioned as relatively isolated actors within the communication network. This suggests that the effectiveness of community parenting cannot be understood merely through administrative coordination but must also be examined through the quality of interaction, the distribution of communication roles, and the extent to which key actors, particularly migrant mothers and surrogate carers, are meaningfully included. Thus, community parenting in Kenanga and Juntinyuat should be understood as an adaptive communication network that supports left-behind children through collective, dialogic, and sustainable community involvement, while also underlining the need to reconnect migrant mothers more actively within the care communication system.

Moreover, the communication network in Kenanga and Juntinyuat Villages shows that community parenting does not depend only on biological parents but involves several actors. However, the central issue is not merely the presence of these actors. The more important question is how these actors are connected, which actors dominate the flow of information, which actors are excluded, and how these patterns affect left behind children. For this reason, the study distinguishes between actors and communication roles. Actors refer to the individuals or institutions involved in the community parenting network, such as *Kuwu*, teachers, surrogate carers, migrant mothers, PKK leaders, community figures, and government or community institutions. Meanwhile, terms such as opinion leader, gatekeeper, cosmopolite, bridge, liaison, and isolate refer to communication roles performed by those actors within the network. This distinction is necessary because the objective of the study is to identify the communication network among actors, not merely to classify communication roles. To understand how these communication roles operate in practice, this study first identifies the concrete interaction spaces in which actors meet, exchange information, and build relationships. In this context, closed communication groups refer to recurring activity-based interaction spaces where specific actors communicate more frequently with one another around shared parenting, educational, health, religious, social, or economic concerns. The involvement of non-left-behind children is important here as a comparative benchmark, because their relatively stable home-based parenting situation helps clarify how community parenting differs when children experience parental migration and depend more heavily on village-based support networks.

Based on the network structure, several closed communication groups are formed around community parenting activities, such as *Rumah Edukasi*, entrepreneurship assistance, sports week and creation month, security and community protection discussions, discussion forums with *Kuwu*, *Remaja Masjid* activities, Building Teen Family programmes, *Posyandu Remaja*, and consolidation activities. These groups show that community parenting activities create spaces for interaction among children, parents, teachers, health workers, youth organisations, and village actors. However, the existence of these groups does not automatically mean that the network works effectively for left behind children. The crucial issue is whether these groups are able to connect children, surrogate carers, migrant mothers, schools, and community institutions into one integrated support system. The position of *Kuwu* is particularly important in this network. *Kuwu* appears as the main actor who connects the village with external institutions, including the Ministry of Manpower and the Indramayu Regency Government. At one level, this confirms the formal authority of *Kuwu* as village head. However, identifying *Kuwu* as an opinion leader or cosmopolite is not enough, because this role is already predictable from his formal position. A deeper analysis shows that the dominance of *Kuwu* creates a structural vulnerability in the communication network.

From a marketing communication perspective, this creates an information bottleneck. Messages about programme objectives, parenting support, child protection, financial literacy, and migrant family empowerment may not be distributed evenly across the community. A significant weakness in the network is the absence of strong communication related to financial literacy. This is important because the Desmigratif programme is not only a protection programme, but also a productive migrant village programme. One of its key concerns should be how migrant families manage remittances and transform migration income into long-term family welfare. Therefore, the communication network should not only facilitate information about activities, schedules, and child supervision, but also support financial education for migrant families.

Apart from identifying actor positions in communication networks, Putri et al (2026) stated that two-way communication is verbal and nonverbal interaction between two people who are mutually dependent on each other. This type of communication allows for reciprocity because the communicant can send responses (feedback) to messages sent directly by the communicator (Rania et al, 2026). This two-way communication can be seen from the interaction of parents and children in non-left behind families, or the interaction between left behind children and migrant mothers or surrogate carers in left behind families. Moreover, this two-way communication also occurs between left behind children and their peers (non or fellow left behind children) when communicating with friends at school and when taking part in activities in the village such as practicing dance choreography and *gamelan*, discussing in meetings to prepare some activities for *Posyandu Remaja*, playing and joking in the midst of *Rumah Edukasi* activity, creating scenarios and editing films, and when determining strategies during soccer practice. Not only with peers, other two-way communication also occurs between left behind children and community actors in several routine activities, such as during health problem consultations with *Puskesmas* staff, questions and answers between participants and presenters in entrepreneurship mentoring activities, discussions in preparation meetings for some activities in *Posyandu Remaja* with the head of PKK, and discussions with police officers regarding the types of sanctions for juvenile delinquents. In implementing these community parenting activities, two-way communication is considered more effective because the conceptualisation of two-way communication is considered as an interaction that includes feedback. This feedback then becomes one of the conditions for communication to occur (Fitrianti & Hidayat, 2026; Siregar & Sarah, 2026).

This is in line with the Ecological Theory of Human Development by Bronfenbrenner, which states that individual development is a continuous process of change where he will experience growth and always be connected by interaction with his environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Within this ecological relationship, the communication network does not merely show who communicates with whom but also indicates how certain actors occupy more strategic positions in sustaining the programme. In the context of community parenting, village government, facilitators, families, and community members are connected through different roles and responsibilities. Some actors, particularly village government and facilitators, may have a more central position because they are involved in coordinating activities, sharing programme

information, and encouraging community participation. This central position does not necessarily imply domination but rather shows that certain actors play a stronger role in maintaining communication flows and ensuring that the programme can be implemented consistently. This suggests that left-behind children are influenced by a complex system of interactions within an environment that extends beyond the family to include wider society, which, in the context of community parenting, refers specifically to the village community, as shown in the figure 2.

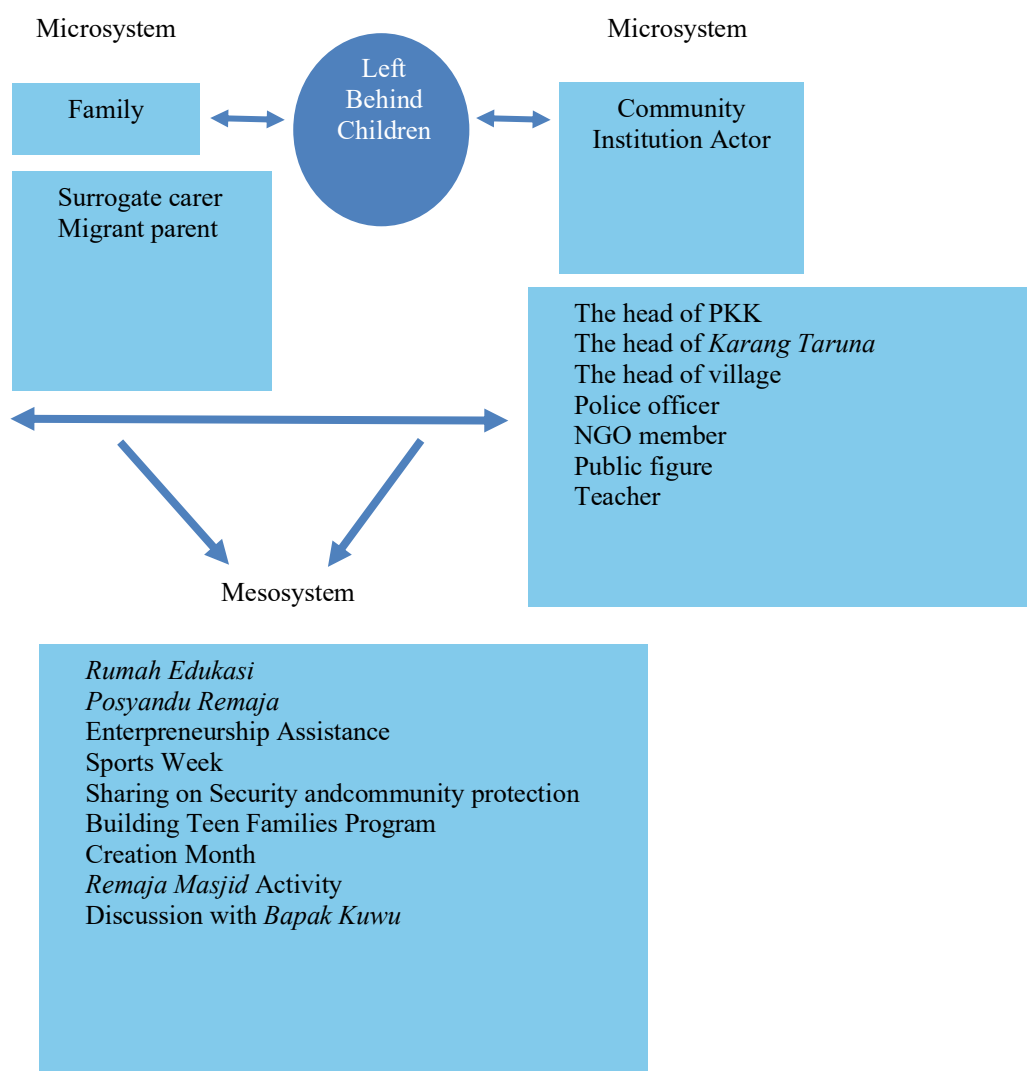


Figure 2. The microsystem and mesosystem of left behind children
 Source: Research findings (2026)

Bronfenbrenner (1979) further categorised these two environments, namely family and society, into different system levels: the microsystem and the mesosystem. The microsystem refers to the closest environment surrounding the individual, in this case left-behind children, where direct interactions occur with migrant parents, family members, siblings, schools, peers, and other immediate actors. Meanwhile, the mesosystem consists of the interrelations between different parts of the microsystem, meaning that children’s development is strongly influenced by the quality and suitability of relationships among these immediate environments. In the context of community parenting, facilitators and local community figures therefore play an important role as connecting actors, as they link programme ideas with family practices and help

translate information from programme conceptors or village authorities into messages that can be understood and applied by families and beneficiaries. In this sense, information control should not be understood merely as the possession of authority, but also as the ability to organise, clarify, and distribute information within the communication loop. When these connecting actors are trusted and able to support two-way communication, the programme becomes less dependent on formal instruction alone and is more likely to be sustained through shared understanding, mutual participation, and continuous interaction among actors.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the community parenting programme for migrant worker families in Kenanga and Juntinyuat Villages should not be understood merely as a village-based childcare activity, but as a communication-based social intervention that redistributes responsibility for left-behind children across family, community, and village institutional levels. As outlined in the introduction, Indramayu is one of the major sending areas of Indonesian migrant workers, and this migration context produces complex consequences for children, surrogate carers, village institutions, and migrant families. Although this study focuses specifically on the community parenting pillar of the Desmigratif programme, the findings show that childcare cannot be separated from the broader ecosystem of migration services, productive enterprise, financial literacy, remittance management, and village-based economic support. Therefore, community parenting should be understood as part of an integrated Desmigratif ecosystem, rather than as an isolated social programme.

This research also responds to a gap in previous studies, which have tended to discuss Desmigratif mainly as a policy, empowerment, or institutional programme, but have not sufficiently explained how communication networks among actors shape shared responsibility in community parenting. The study shows that the sustainability of community parenting depends on how actors communicate, exchange information, build trust, and maintain repeated interaction. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory helps explain that the development of left-behind children is shaped not only by the family as the microsystem, but also by interactions among families, schools, village government, community organisations, health workers, religious groups, youth groups, NGOs, and other social institutions as part of the mesosystem. Within this ecological framework, the study also distinguishes between concrete actors and communication roles. Concrete actors refer to specific individuals or institutions within the child's microsystem and mesosystem, such as village heads, teachers, religious leaders, PKK administrators, *Karang Taruna*, health workers, police officers, surrogate carers, migrant mothers, and children. Meanwhile, categories such as opinion leader, gatekeeper, cosmopolite, bridge, liaison, and isolate are understood as communication functions performed by these actors in connecting, filtering, or limiting the flow of information across the child's ecological environment.

In Kenanga Village, the network was strongly shaped by local leadership and the value of *gotong royong*, while in Juntinyuat Village it was strengthened by Migrant Care and Village Regulation No. 2 of 2017 concerning migrant worker protection. In both villages, activities such as *Rumah Edukasi*, *Posyandu Remaja*, *Remaja Masjid*, BKR, Creation Month, entrepreneurship assistance, and security-sharing forums created spaces for two-way communication, enabling children, surrogate carers, and community actors to exchange information, express concerns, and build trust. Nevertheless, the most significant finding of this study is that migrant mothers, despite being primary stakeholders in the care chain, remain positioned as relatively isolated actors within the communication network. This finding is theoretically and practically important because it shows that community parenting may successfully connect local village actors yet still fail to fully integrate the transnational family structure that shapes the lives of left-behind children. Migrant mothers should therefore be understood as central actors in the care chain, as they remain emotionally, economically, and developmentally significant for their children even when they are physically absent. When migrant mothers are positioned as isolated actors, the care chain becomes incomplete because the relationship between children, surrogate carers, village institutions, schools, community actors, and transnational parental care is not fully connected. Thus, the sustainability of Desmigratif should not only be assessed by the number of actors involved or the variety of roles identified, but also by the capacity of the network to reconnect the most important actors in the child's care chain. Future strengthening of the

programme therefore requires more inclusive and digitally connected communication strategies, such as WhatsApp groups, online parenting forums, social media-based support groups, and regular reporting systems that connect migrant mothers with surrogate carers, schools, village institutions, and community actors. By integrating transnational family communication with community-based parenting, the Desmigratif programme can move beyond administrative coordination and become a more adaptive, dialogic, and sustainable support system for migrant worker families and left-behind children.

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