Improving the Effectiveness of the Music Team and Song Leader through Worship Service Coordination Training at HKBP Immanuel Patumbak Church

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Abstract: This community service activity highlights the importance of synergy between the music team and song leaders (SL) in worship services at HKBP Immanuel Patumbak Church. Music plays a central role not only as a complement to liturgy, but also as a means of expressing faith and uniting the congregation in praise to God. However, there is still a gap between church music theory and practice, where coordination between music ministers is often ineffective and theological understanding of the role of music in worship is still limited. Based on these conditions, this activity aims to empower music ministers and SLs to improve coordination, deepen theological understanding, and strengthen spiritual motivation in ministry. The approach used is participatory and reflective, with methods including lectures, technical training, worship simulations, and joint reflection. The social engineering strategy is carried out through the formation of new patterns of cooperation that are more synergistic and communicative among ministry team members. The activity was held on August 18, 2025, involving 50 participants consisting of musicians, song leaders, and congregants. The results of the activity showed a significant increase in the participants' coordination skills, theological awareness, and enthusiasm for ministry. In addition, a sense of togetherness was created that strengthened the quality of worship and music ministry in the church. In conclusion, this service successfully bridged the gap between church music theory and practice and became an effective empowerment model in building synergy in church music ministry based on spirituality and professionalism.
Keywords: Church music; Song leader; Team effectiveness; Worship ministry; Music training.

How to cite: Panggabean, A. J., Lumbangaol, S., dan Siahaan, T. A. (2026). Improving the Effectiveness of the Music Team and Song Leader through Worship Service Coordination Training at HKBP Immanuel Patumbak Church. *Samakta: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*, 3(1), 35–43.

INTRODUCTION

The church as a spiritual and social institution plays a strategic role in shaping spiritual life and strengthening social cohesion within the congregation. In the Christian tradition, worship is central to church life, bringing together theological, liturgical, and communal dimensions in a unified experience of faith. One important element of worship is music, which not only complements the liturgy, but also serves as a medium for expressing faith, a means of spiritual communication, and an instrument for building community solidarity. Worship music plays a role in building a religious atmosphere, helping to internalize the message of the Word, and deepening the congregation's emotional and spiritual involvement. Therefore, the quality of church music ministry is not only determined by technical ability but also by theological awareness and synergy among the ministers involved in the worship process.

The HKBP Immanuel Patumbak Church, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra, is one of the active congregations in the Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP) with a heterogeneous congregation in terms of age and social background. Ministry activities are dynamic, including in the field of church music, which involves a music team and song leaders (SL). However, based on initial observations and interviews with administrators and music ministers, a number of obstacles were found in the coordination of worship services. Some of the problems that arise include tempo inconsistency, uncoordinated song changes, and differences in perception regarding musical dynamics and expression. In addition, there is a gap between technical competence and theological understanding, so that the music ministry does not yet fully support the creation of a solemn and focused worship experience.

This problem shows that the main challenge is not solely musical skill, but rather the effectiveness of teamwork in the context of spiritual ministry. From a theological perspective, music ministry reflects the principle of the unity of the body of Christ, in which each member has a different function but is directed toward the same goal. A lack of coordination not only affects musical quality, but also influences the spiritual atmosphere of the congregation. Therefore, empowerment-based intervention is needed that integrates theological, technical, and social dimensions simultaneously. This approach places music ministers and song leaders as subjects of change through a process of reflection, training, and participatory and contextual mentoring tailored to the needs of the local congregation.

Conceptually, church music ministry in contemporary literature is understood as a liturgical practice that combines spirituality, aesthetics, and social relations. Recent studies show that the quality of worship music correlates with the level of congregational participation and the depth of religious experience (Ingalls, 2018; Nekola & Wagner, 2015). Music is not merely an artistic expression, but a communal practice that shapes identity and solidarity of faith. In the context of church ministry, the effectiveness of team collaboration is largely determined by open communication, clarity of roles, and inclusive collaborative leadership. A participatory values-based approach to ministry team management has been shown to improve collective performance while strengthening members' spiritual commitment (Allen, 2018; Westermeyer, 2017 revised edition). Thus, improving the quality of music ministry requires the integration of spiritual formation and strengthening team work competencies.

Based on this analysis of the situation, this community service activity was designed as a form of social engineering through training and mentoring of church music teams. The program focused on two main aspects, namely spiritual empowerment to strengthen theological awareness of the essence of music as a ministry, and technical and social empowerment to improve communication, coordination, and collaboration among worship leaders. The activities were carried out through stages of needs analysis, delivery of conceptual material, musical synchronization training, worship simulations, joint reflection, and ongoing

mentoring. An experiential learning approach was applied so that participants not only understood the theory, but also experienced a process of transformation in their attitudes and work patterns in the context of worship ministry.

The general objective of this activity is to improve the effectiveness of cooperation between the music team and song leaders in worship services at HKBP Immanuel Patumbak Church through a participatory and integrative approach. Specifically, this activity aims to improve technical musical competence, deepen theological understanding of the function of liturgical music, foster a spiritual attitude and sense of responsibility in ministry, and build harmonious and sustainable team communication patterns. The expected outcome is the formation of a collaborative, professional, and reflective music ministry culture, thereby improving the quality of worship and positively impacting the spiritual lives of the congregation. This program also serves as a model for spiritual community empowerment that can be replicated in other churches within the HKBP environment.

METHOD

This community service activity was carried out at the HKBP Immanuel Patumbak Church, Patumbak District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra. The partners in this activity were the church's music and liturgy team, consisting of musicians, song leaders, and council representatives. The location was chosen based on the results of an assessment of the partners' needs, which identified a lack of effective coordination of music services during worship. The church, as a socio-religious space, was considered strategic for the application of a collaboration-based empowerment model and spiritual capacity building.

The activity targeted 50 participants, consisting of 15 musicians (keyboard), 10 active song leaders, 20 young congregants who are prospective music ministers, and 5 church council representatives. Participants were selected based on their active involvement in weekly worship services. Partners were involved from the planning stage through discussions of needs, identification of service obstacles, and preparation of the training agenda. This approach placed partners as active subjects in the empowerment process.

The methods used are participatory approaches through Participatory Action Learning (PAL) and Community-Based Empowerment. These approaches emphasize a collaborative cycle of reflection–action–evaluation to bring about changes in behavior and work patterns within the ministry team. Implementation strategies include interactive lectures, technical training, worship simulations, group reflection, and post-training mentoring. Each strategy is designed to integrate spiritual, technical, and social dimensions into church music ministry. To ensure systematic and measurable implementation, the stages of the program were structured into a five-phase empowerment cycle as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Steps for Systematic Implementation of Activities

Stages	Main Activities	Output
1. Preparation (Pre-Activity)	Church needs assessment, coordination with pastors and councils, preparation of training materials	Work plan and activity schedule documents
2. Activity Implementation	Theological lectures, music and vocal training, worship simulations, reflection	Improvement of participants' spiritual and technical abilities
3. Evaluation and Reflection	Discussion of simulation results, identification of	Recommendations for music team development

Stages	Main Activities	Output
	team strengths and weaknesses	
4. Follow-up Assistance	Formation of permanent ministry teams and mentoring	Sustainability of church music empowerment activities

The stages of the activity consist of five main phases, namely: (1) identification and analysis of needs, including observation of worship services, interviews with pastors and councils, and mapping of coordination obstacles between the music team and song leaders; (2) participatory planning, in the form of developing training modules, designing musical theology and technical musical materials, and determining evaluation instruments together with partners; (3) program implementation, including delivery of materials, training in tempo and dynamics synchronization, collaborative practice, and worship simulation as hands-on practice; (4) evaluation and reflection, through focused group discussions, questionnaires, and performance observations to identify improvements in competence and teamwork effectiveness; and (5) follow-up and mentoring, in the form of establishing a more organized ministry team structure, preparing a ministry schedule, and conducting periodic monitoring for three months after the activity to ensure the sustainability of the program's impact. This cycle is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Visualization of the Flow Chart of the Community Service Activity Implementation Process

Data collection instruments included team performance observation sheets, participant self-evaluation questionnaires, and group reflection notes. The observation sheets were used to assess aspects of tempo synchronization, song transition coordination, nonverbal communication, and team cohesion during worship simulations. The questionnaire uses a 1–5 Likert scale to measure participants' perceptions of improvements in technical competence, theological understanding, and teamwork effectiveness before and after the activity.

Data analysis is conducted using simple qualitative and quantitative descriptive methods. Observation and reflection data are analyzed through data reduction, thematic categorization,

and conclusion drawing. Questionnaire data were analyzed using a comparison of pre-test and post-test average scores to identify improvements in participants' competence. The results of the analysis were used to assess the effectiveness of the program and formulate recommendations for the development of church music ministry.

Indicators of success include: (1) an increase of at least 20% in the average score for team coordination and theological understanding; (2) the formation of a music ministry team structure with clear roles; (3) improved harmony and synchronization in worship simulations; and (4) the continuation of team reflection practices during the three-month mentoring period. Monitoring is conducted periodically with church leaders to ensure the sustainability of the social and spiritual impact of this empowerment program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Results
The main outcome of this community service activity was the creation of a model of synergy in church music ministry based on participatory collaboration between the music team and song leaders (SL), formulated as the Effective Musical-Liturgical Ministry Model (MPEML). This model was developed through a participatory and reflective approach during the training, simulation, and joint evaluation process. MPEML is based on three main pillars, namely the theological dimension, the technical dimension, and the socio-cultural dimension. These three dimensions are integrated and form a more systematic, collaborative, and worship-oriented framework for music ministry.

In the theological dimension, there was an increase in participants' understanding of the meaning of music as an integral part of liturgy and spiritual ministry. Based on the results of written reflections and group discussions, most participants stated that before the training, they viewed music ministry more as a technical responsibility. After the activity, participants showed a change in perspective that music is a form of expression of faith and a calling to ministry. Indicators of this change can be seen in the increased awareness to prepare oneself spiritually before serving and the emergence of a commitment to maintain the solemnity of worship.

On the technical side, a more structured coordination system was established between the music team and the song leader. Observations during worship simulations showed improved tempo synchronization, song dynamics, and clarity of nonverbal communication between team members. Participants also agreed to use a weekly practice checklist format to ensure service readiness. In addition, the church established a clearer division of roles in the music ministry structure, including scheduling regular practices and periodic evaluations.

On the socio-cultural dimension, this activity resulted in changes in the team's internal communication patterns. Interactions that were previously hierarchical became more dialogical and participatory. Reflective discussions encouraged team members to give each other open and constructive feedback. These changes strengthened a shared sense of ownership of the quality of worship and fostered solidarity in ministry.

Instrumentally, this activity produced several concrete products, namely: (1) a mini guidebook entitled "Effective Guide to Music & Song Leader Coordination in HKBP Worship"; (2) a weekly practice checklist format; (3) a theological reflection module for music ministers and SLs; and (4) video documentation of worship simulations as an evaluation medium. These products serve as supporting tools for the sustainability of the MPEML model in church ministry practices.

The outputs of the activity included an increase in the theological and technical knowledge of the participants, the establishment of a clearer ministry coordination system, and

the formulation of a routine practice plan and weekly evaluation. The identified outcomes included changes in ministry behavior, increased communication sensitivity, strengthened collective responsibility, and an improvement in the quality of worship, which was considered more harmonious and focused based on the testimony of the congregation after the activity.

Discussion

The results of the activity show that the effectiveness of church music ministry is greatly influenced by the integration of theological, technical, and social dimensions within a collaborative framework. The Effective Musical-Liturgical Ministry Model (MPEML) developed in this activity emphasizes that improving the quality of worship requires more than just musical skills training; it also requires a participatory empowerment process that involves collective reflection and changes in teamwork patterns. This approach is in line with the Participatory Action Learning principle, which emphasizes the reflection-action-evaluation cycle as a community-based social change strategy (Reason & Bradbury, 2015). In the context of community service, the participatory empowerment model has proven effective in increasing community capacity while building a sense of ownership of the program (Slamet, 2020).

Theological changes in participants' paradigms from a performative orientation to a service orientation indicate a process of internalizing spiritual values in musical practice. Studies of contemporary church music confirm that liturgical music serves as a means of faith formation and community identity building, rather than merely an aesthetic expression (Ingalls, 2018). When music ministers understand their role as part of spiritual ministry, the quality of worship appreciation improves collectively. This finding reinforces the view that spirituality and professionalism in music ministry must be balanced in order to create an authentic and transformative worship experience (Ruth & Lim, 2021).

From a technical and organizational perspective, the establishment of a new coordination system and the use of routine practice checklists indicate the institutionalization of change in the ministry structure. This change is important because the success of empowerment programs is not only measured by the improvement of individual competencies, but also by the formation of systems that support the sustainability of new practices (Brinkerhoff & Wetterberg, 2016). In community service studies, program sustainability is largely determined by the existence of internal evaluation mechanisms and clear work structures at the partner level (Laksana et al., 2022). Thus, the MPEML model does not stop at one-off training, but leads to the formation of a more systematic and professional teamwork culture.

In the social dimension, the shift in communication patterns from hierarchical to dialogical reflects an increase in social capital within the church community. Social capital, characterized by trust, cooperation, and open communication, is a key factor in the successful transformation of communities (Putnam, 2000). Through collaborative training and joint reflection, ministry team members began to see themselves as part of a complementary ministry unit. This finding is consistent with the results of research by Krause and North (2018), which shows that good technical coordination in group music correlates with increased social cohesion and collective satisfaction.

When linked to community service practices, these activities demonstrate the characteristics of faith-based and arts-based social engineering. Several community service articles in the Samakta Journal emphasize that a participatory approach that integrates local values and the real needs of partners can produce more sustainable behavioral change than a one-way instructional approach (e.g., Lestari & Rahman, 2021; Hidayat et al., 2023). This activity shows a similar pattern, where the active involvement of participants from the

identification to evaluation stages encourages a transformation in attitudes and interaction patterns within the service team.

The transformation that has taken place can be categorized into three main aspects. First, the structural aspect, namely the formation of a more organized music ministry team with a clear division of tasks. Second, the cultural aspect, in the form of a shift in the value of ministry from technical routine to spiritual orientation and quality of worship. Third, the psychosocial aspect, namely an increased sense of responsibility, solidarity, and openness to evaluation. These multidimensional changes show that church music can function as a medium of social engineering that strengthens community cohesion while improving the quality of liturgical practices.

However, time constraints and variations in individual musical abilities pose challenges in the model adaptation process. The literature on community empowerment emphasizes that social change requires a continuous process and long-term capacity building so that the transformation is not temporary (Ife & Tesoriero, 2016). Therefore, ongoing mentoring is an important element in ensuring the sustainability of the MPEML model in the church environment.

Overall, this discussion shows that a participatory-reflective approach in church music ministry effectively produces change at the individual, team, and organizational structure levels. The MPEML model can be positioned as a practical contribution to the development of a spiritually-based community empowerment model that is theologically, technically, and socially integrated.

Figure 2. presentation of material using the lecture method.

Figure 3. Music Team and Song Leader Training

Figure 4. Practical Test of Musical Worship.

Figure 5. Group reflection activity

Figure 6. The formation of a new, more organized work team with a clear division of tasks between the song leader and music minister.

CONCLUSION

The community service activity themed "Effective Team Music & Song Leader (SL) at HKBP Immanuel Patumbak Church" successfully achieved its main objective, which was to improve the effectiveness of cooperation between the music team and song leaders in worship services. Through a participatory, educational, and reflective approach, this activity was able to combine spiritual, technical, and social aspects into a comprehensive empowerment process.

In general, the results of the activity show that collaborative training based on theological reflection and technical skills can form a new pattern of ministry that is more synergistic and professional. Training participants not only gained improved musical abilities, but also experienced a transformation in attitude, behavior, and understanding of the meaning of music as a form of service to God. This activity also produced the MPEML (Model of Effective Liturgical Musical Service) social engineering model, which can be applied in other churches as a practical guide in building worship service team cooperation. This model has proven effective in strengthening: social and spiritual cohesion among ministry members, more harmonious, dynamic, and faith-filled liturgical worship, and active congregation participation in worship life.

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