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IGI SERANG CITY'S STRATEGY TO IMPROVE TEACHER COMPETENCE

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Keywords:

Teacher competency; Teacher professional organizations; Indonesian Teachers Association; Competency improvement strategies; Online and offline learning; Literacy and publication culture

ABSTRACT

Education in Indonesia faces challenges in the form of unequal teacher quality and limited access to self-development. This condition is one of the responsibilities of professional teacher organizations mandated by law, specifically Law Number 14 of 2025 concerning Teachers and Lecturers. This study aims to analyze the strategies implemented by the Indonesian Teachers Association (IGI) of Serang City, as a professional teacher organization, in improving teacher competency. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method, analyzing IGI Serang City's strategies from August 2023 to July 2025. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation studies. The results show that IGI Serang City implemented a comprehensive strategy focused on three main pillars: optimizing digital-based programs through regular webinars and online training reaching teachers from various regions; encouraging a culture of literacy and scientific publications by publishing three anthologies of teacher work; and maintaining direct interaction through offline activities such as workshops, training, and collaborations with various parties. This combination of online and offline strategies has proven effective in reaching a wider audience, offering flexibility, and building a productive learning community. The multidimensional strategy of IGI Serang City has not only succeeded in improving teachers' professional competence but also fostered a culture of sharing and scientific literacy, making it a relevant model for other teacher professional organizations.

INTRODUCTION

Education is the primary foundation for developing high-quality and competitive human resources. However, Indonesia's education system still faces crucial challenges, such as the uneven distribution of teacher quality (Tanjung & Zainil, 2025). Many teachers struggle to adapt to technological

developments and innovative learning methods (Nashrullah, Rahman, Majid, & Hariyati, 2025). This situation is exacerbated by the lack of structured and sustainable self-development opportunities, particularly for teachers in remote areas (Tanggur et al., 2025). Yet, teachers play a crucial role as the vanguard in shaping the quality of the nation's next generation. This is especially true with Indonesia currently promoting the golden generation of 2045 (Rofiqi, Purwanti, Khoiriyah, & Putri, 2025).

Today's students require not only knowledge but also critical, creative, collaborative, and communicative thinking skills (the 4Cs) to face the challenges of the 21st century (Batubara, Natalia, & Khairina, 2024). These high demands directly place dual responsibilities on teachers (Javed & Akhter, 2024). Teachers are required not only to teach but also to be facilitators, motivators, and innovators (Lena, Wahab, & Aisyah, 2024), capable of creating an inspiring and relevant learning environment (Yeh, 2025). However, many teachers still feel confused and struggle to meet these demands independently (Balqis & Ananda, 2024). This is where the role of professional teacher organizations becomes crucial in carrying out the mandate of the law. Professional teacher organizations such as the PGRI or Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia (Republic of Indonesia Teachers Association), IGI or Ikatan Guru Indonesia (Indonesian Teachers Association), and various subject-based professional organizations exist as a forum for teachers to share knowledge and experience and collectively improve their competencies (Munawir, Najib, & Aini, 2023).

Various professional teacher organizations undertake efforts to improve teacher competency through various activities such as training, seminars, workshops, and similar activities, both online and offline. For example, the IGI organizes competency improvement programs not only at the central level but also at the regional or local level, such as in Central Java (Saraswati, Astuti, Darmawan, & Idris, 2022), Lubuklinggau (Rijal & Frima, 2024), East Aceh (Iqbal, Widya, Andriani, Mustafa, & Faisal, 2024), and Pematangsiantar (Siburian, Purba, Siahaan, Siregar, & Sinaga, 2024). Many subject-based teacher professional organizations are also involved in developing teacher competencies in their respective subjects. For example, the Advanced Indonesian Vocational Teachers Association or Ikatan Guru Vokasi Indonesia Maju (IGVIM) held authentic evaluation training at the vocational high school level (Suprpto et al., 2022), the Indonesian History Teachers Association held a Digital E-Module Development program, and the Indonesian Chemistry Science Educators Association or Perkumpulan Pendidik Sains Kimia Indonesia (PPSKI) Banten held an innovative learning webinar (Rohimat et al., 2023).

One of the active teacher professional organizations known for its various innovative and relevant programs is the Indonesian Teachers Association (IGI). At the regional level, IGI Serang City has demonstrated strong initiative in responding to teachers' needs for competency development. However, the strategies they use to design, implement, and evaluate these programs have not been comprehensively identified. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the Serang City IGI's strategies in implementing teacher competency improvement programs. This analysis is crucial for understanding success factors, identifying challenges, and providing recommendations for the development of similar programs in the future, both within the IGI and other teacher professional organizations.

METHOD

This qualitative research was conducted to explore the meanings, perceptions, and in-depth experiences related to the strategies implemented by the Serang City Teachers' Association (IGI). This research used a case study, with IGI Serang City as the study subject, for in-depth and holistic analysis. Case studies allowed researchers to gather data from multiple sources to obtain a comprehensive and detailed picture of the strategies implemented to improve teacher competency.

Data collection for this study was conducted through triangulation of interview data,

observation, and documentation studies. Interviews were conducted with key informants directly involved in the formulation and implementation of the strategies: IGI Serang City administrators, resource persons for activities, and several teachers actively participating in the programs. Participatory and non-participatory observations were conducted on several competency improvement programs organized by IGI Serang City. A documentation study was conducted on the Serang City IGI work program plan, program materials used, activity reports, and program evaluations, as well as publications and social media related to the program from August 2023 to July 2025.

This data collection phase was carried out in stages, starting with initial interviews and document studies for initial mapping, followed by in-depth observations, and concluding with confirmatory interviews to verify findings in the field. Data triangulation was used to verify the validity of the findings by comparing information obtained from three different data sources (interviews, observations, and documents). Information from one source must be corroborated or confirmed by other sources to ensure the consistency and credibility of the resulting data, thereby minimizing bias. The data analysis technique used was qualitative thematic analysis. Data collected from all data collection stages was organized, transcribed (for interviews), coded, categorized, and interpreted to identify emerging patterns, themes, and core meanings related to the Serang City IGI strategy. This analysis process was carried out continuously, even from the initial data collection.

In this qualitative research, the researcher's role is as a key instrument, actively participating in the interaction and interpretation of data. While researchers strive to maintain objectivity, awareness of personal perspectives and backgrounds is recognized as an integral part of the research process, allowing for a richer and more contextual understanding of the phenomena being studied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the data analysis conducted, this study successfully identified and mapped various strategies implemented by the Indonesian Teachers Association or Ikatan Guru Indonesia (IGI) of Serang City to improve teacher competency during the period from August 2023 to July 2025. In general, the strategies implemented demonstrate an adaptive, innovative, and sustainable approach, utilizing various platforms, both online and offline.

Optimizing Digital-Based Programs: Webinars and Online Training

Over the past two years, IGI Serang City has consistently optimized its digital platforms to reach a broader and more flexible target audience. The main program in this strategy is the Serang City Online Teacher Discussion (Diskusi Guru Daring Kota Serang, Digdakser) webinar, which has been held 11 times, as follows:

1. The Digdakser Webinar I was held on August 11, 2023, on the topic "Twibbonize New Creations with Canva." The webinar was opened by Sonny Rohimat (Chairman of the Serang City IGI) and featured two speakers: Akto Gunawan (a teacher at SMKN 7 Serang City) and Ineka Tatulistinah (a teacher at SMKN 3 Serang City), with moderator Yusi Maesuri (SDIT Bina Bangsa). All moderators and speakers were members of IGI Serang City.
2. The Digdakser Webinar II was held on September 23rd on the topic of Implementing Differentiated Learning in the Independent Curriculum Through a Neuroscience Approach. The webinar was opened by Prof. Mufti Ali (professor at UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten) and moderated by Teti Purwanti (SMPN 13 Serang City, an IGI Serang City administrator). The webinar also

featured speakers: Muhammad Arif Rahman (Competency Development Analyst at the Banten Province BPSDMD) and Ida Maryamah (IGI member and Coordinator of the Serang City Teacher Movement). The Second Digidakser Webinar was a collaboration between IGI Serang City and the Suramanggala Institute.

3. The Digidakser Webinar III was held on November 24, 2023, on the topic of Utilizing Wordwall and Google Sites Learning Media. The webinar was opened by Harjono (Chair of the IGI Banten Province), with speakers including Yogi Wiratomo (Chair of the Mathematics Learning Study Center, Indraprasta PGRI University) and moderator Hidayani Sabila Fitri (SKhN 01 Serang City), who is also the treasurer of IGI Serang City.
4. The Digidakser Webinar IV was held on January 26, 2024, and was the first webinar following the issuance of the government policy on teacher performance management through the Platform Merdeka Mengajar (PMM). The webinar, "Opinion Writing for Teachers," was opened by Neli Fori Karlina (Senior High School Supervisor, Banten Province) and moderated by Dedeh Mayasari (SMPN 1 Serang City), a member of the Serang City IGI (Innovative Learning Tools and Practices) board. The webinar featured three speakers: Muhamad Alwi (Principal of SMKN 1 Cidaun, Cianjur), Wahyu Fatihah (teacher at SMAN 4 Cilegon), and Dail Ma'ruf (IGI member, Principal of Salam Elementary School, Serang City) (Fatihah et al., 2024).
5. The Digidakser Webinar V was held on February 16, 2024, on the topic of Innovative Learning Tools and Practices for the Ukin PPG Model. The webinar was opened by Dr. Erisda Eka Putra (Curriculum Developer at the Center for Curriculum and Learning, BSKAP, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology) and presented three speakers: Imam Falah (member of the IGI, Elementary School Supervisor in Serang City), Fatiroh (SMPN 7 Serang City), and Anggun Ratna Asih (SMKN 1 Kebumen), as well as moderator Namiroh (SMKN 1 Serang City), a member of the IGI in Serang City.
6. The Digidakser Webinar VI was held on March 9, 2024, on the topic of Classroom Waste Management in Supporting the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. The webinar was opened by Robby Zidny (Head of the Chemistry Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University). Two speakers were Lilis Lismawati (Primary School Supervisor, Ciamis Regency), Tri Retno Wulan (IGI member, teacher at SMAS Informatika, Serang City), Sumitra (teacher at SMPN 2 Sentani, Jayapura), and Nana Mulyana (Head of the Banten Province Chemistry MGMP), with moderator R.A. Annita Meilina Ahmadi (SMPN 1 Padarincang). The Digidakser VI webinar was held in collaboration with the Banten Province Chemistry MGMP.
7. The Digidakser Webinar VII was held on July 19, 2024, with the topic of Good Practices in Initial Learning Assessment. The webinar was opened by Dr. Suwardi (Supervisor of Serang City Middle Schools, representing the Serang City Education and Culture Office) and presented two speakers, namely Naning Marlina (SMAN 1 Tasikmalaya) and Siti Daryanah (member of IGI, SDN Cibonteng, Serang City), as well as moderator Jasmani (SMAN 6, Serang City), who is a member of IGI, Serang City.
8. The Digidakser Webinar VIII was held on September 13, 2024, with the topic of Utilizing the Surrounding Environment as a Learning Medium. The webinar was opened by Didin Syamsuddin (Head of the Arabic Language Education Study Program, Djuanda University), with two speakers: Rijal Kamaluddin Husaini (member of IGI, Secretary of PPSKI) and Sri Kurniasih (Principal of As-Salam Kindergarten, Serang City), and moderated by Yusi Masuri (SDIT Bina Bangsa, Serang City), who is also the Secretary of IGI Serang City.

9. The Digidakser Webinar IX was held on November 15, 2024, with the topic of Utilizing Electronic Media as Learning Media. The webinar was opened by Assoc. Prof. Isman Kurniawan (Telkom University) and moderated by Namiroh (SMKN 1, Serang City), a member of IGI, Serang City. The three speakers were M. Rizki Purkon Nazili (teacher at Darma Nusantara Vocational School, Pandeglang), Asep Rudini Setiawan (teacher at Aliya Islamic Elementary School, Bogor City), and Yayan Inriyani (Principal of SMPN 27 Serang City).
10. The Digidakser Webinar X was held on December 6, 2024, with the topic "Inspiration from the Classroom." The webinar was opened by Nurbadriyah (IGI Central Honorary Council, Senior High School Supervisor, Banten Province). Four speakers were Murdoyoko (SMAN 28, Tangerang Regency), Wahyu Fatihah (SMAN 4, Cilegon), Uyun Siti Syarifah (IGI member, SKhN 01, Serang City), and Luda Sofiah (Head of UPT SDN Sadah, Serang Regency), with moderator Wawan Setiawan (SMAN 1, Bandung, Serang Regency).
11. The Digidakser Webinar XII was an international webinar featuring speakers from two countries: Indonesia and the Philippines. The webinar was held on April 18, 2025, and opened by Dr. Anis Zohriah (postgraduate, UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten), with the topic "Primary and Secondary Education Management in Indonesia and the Philippines." The webinar speakers were Sonny Rohimat (Chairman of the IGI Serang City) and Adzhar Ladja Amilhasan (President of the Filipino Student Community Indonesia), and the moderator was Sukardiyono (SMKN 8 Serang City), a member of the IGI Serang City. The Digidakser XI webinar was held collaboratively with the Banten Province SMA/SMK/SKH Teacher Leader Community and the Islamic Education Management Masters Program at UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten (Rohimat, Amilhasan, Zohriah, & Bachtiar, 2025).

The Digidakser program is a concrete implementation of IGI Serang City's strategy to optimize digital platforms. The webinar format allows IGI to reach teachers more broadly and flexibly, overcoming geographical and time constraints. Furthermore, the Digidakser webinar presents a variety of topics relevant to teachers' needs in line with the demands of the modern era (Kamalov, Santandreu Calonge, & Gurrib, 2023). IGI Serang City has also successfully established an extensive collaborative network, as evidenced by the participation of various parties, including partners, speakers, and moderators. Observations and documentation studies also revealed that webinar participants included teachers not only from Serang City but also from various provinces across Indonesia, from Aceh to Papua.

The Digidakser Webinar program has received a positive response from participants, with each series numbering hundreds and sometimes even exceeding a thousand. They assessed that the webinars meet teachers' needs for competency development, particularly in gaining inspiration from the various ideas and good practices presented by the speakers. Furthermore, the free e-certificates distributed to all participants also help teachers meet the administrative requirements for supporting evidence of competency development. Furthermore, a policy will be implemented in 2024 requiring every teacher to accumulate at least 32 points of self-development. These points must be demonstrated by uploading certificates to the Merdeka Mengajar Platform managed by the Ministry of Education. Each webinar certificate is equivalent to four points of competency development. This means that the seven webinars conducted by IGI Serang City have provided 28 points that teachers can use to meet these requirements.

In addition to webinars, the Serang City IGI also held seven independent online training sessions: one in 2023 and six in 2024. The increased frequency of online training in 2024 demonstrates the Serang City IGI's recognition of the importance of providing opportunities for teachers to learn independently at their own pace and in their own time (Supardi & Rosdiana, 2025). The flexibility of participating in these training sessions is a key attraction, especially for teachers with limited time (Billett, Leow, Chua, & Le, 2023). These training sessions follow up on the webinars, which included independent learning, post-tests, and concrete action. The independent training program adopted the independent

training program implemented by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology through the Merdeka Mengajar Platform or PMM (Rohimat & Najarudin, 2022).

The independent training program recognizes teachers who have implemented concrete actions on various competency development topics. Although each series only has dozens of participants, the independent training program has received a positive response from teachers. In addition to recognizing competency, this program also provides an e-certificate, which is recognized for meeting teacher competency development goals on the Merdeka Mengajar Platform, earning eight points. This means that one training session is equivalent to two webinars. However, due to the longer process and administrative fees, the number of participants for this program is significantly lower than for webinars.

Encouraging a Writing Culture Through the Publication of Anthologies

One of the unique and impactful strategies of the Serang City IGI is the publication of anthologies by educators in Banten Province. This strategy not only serves as a platform for channeling writing talents but also effectively promotes a culture of literacy and research among teachers (Sumarsono, Sunandar, Kusumaningrum, & Argadinata, 2024). With anthologies, teachers act not only as readers but also as writers. This provides motivation, pride, and recognition for their work (Sumarno, 2022), which directly enhances professional competence and self-confidence (Rohmah & Asrini, 2025). This strategy demonstrates that competency enhancement extends beyond pedagogical knowledge to scientific documentation and publication skills.

Within two years, the Serang City IGI successfully initiated the publication of three anthologies by educators in Banten Province. The first book, "Ketika Pendidik Bicara Pendidikan," was launched offline on June 4, 2024, at the FKIP Hall of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University. The second book is entitled "Inspirasi dari Ruang Kelas", which was launched virtually at the Digidakser X Webinar on December 6, 2024. The third book is entitled "Membangun Iklim Pendidikan", which was launched offline at the FKIP Hall of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University on June 17, 2025.

The launch of three anthologies written by educators from Banten Province by the Serang City Indonesian Teachers Association (IGI) represents a highly strategic and effective response to teachers' needs for professional competency development, particularly in writing literacy and the sharing of best practices. Based on the authors' responses, this program successfully facilitated teachers' need to channel their aspirations and ideas, as well as develop insights and reading resources, which in turn enhanced their literacy skills and knowledge. This writing program serves not only as a means of improving individual competency but also as a powerful platform for collaboration, transforming teachers from mere "spectators" into "part of the history of civilization's progress" through the contribution of ideas and best practices.

More profoundly, IGI Serang City, through this initiative, has provided a "home for growth and development" that is practical and has a real impact. By encouraging teachers to write on relevant topics such as "building an educational climate," IGI directly encourages critical reflection on teaching practices and the learning environment, which is at the heart of continuous professional development. This program also addresses the challenge of low literacy among students by positioning teachers as literacy role models who are motivated to introduce the importance of writing to their students. Therefore, the publication of this anthology book has successfully become a model program that empowers teachers, improves their professional status, and creates a catalyst for positive change in the Banten education ecosystem.

Collaboration and Direct Interaction Through Offline Activities

While optimizing digital platforms, IGI Kota Serang maintains offline strategies to strengthen interaction and collaboration among teachers. Offline activities implemented include workshops and

program discussions, teaching at the right level training, and the Temu Pendidik Nusantara (TPN) XII or 12th Nusantara Educators Meeting.

The workshops and program discussions aim to directly discuss teachers' needs and challenges, ensuring more relevant and targeted program design. The event was held on June 4, 2024, in the FKIP Hall of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University. Attended by 100 participants, IGI Serang City also launched its first anthology, "Ketika Pendidik Bicara Pendidikan." The event featured ten speakers, including teachers, principals, lecturers, and representatives from the Banten Province Teachers' Center (BGP).

The TaRL (Teaching at the Right Level) training was held on May 20, 2025, in the hall of SMA Negeri 6 Kota Serang. This activity focuses on a practical and applicable teaching approach, allowing teachers to practice directly and receive face-to-face feedback. This activity is a collaboration between the Indonesian Teachers Association (PP IGI) and Telkomsel, targeting 100 teachers from 24 public and private schools at the elementary school (SD), junior high school (SMP/MTs), and senior high school (SMA/SMK) levels. The event was opened by the Head of the Serang City Education and Culture Office, with speakers from the IGI Central Board and the Serang Telkomsel Branch.

The 12th Nusantara Educators Meeting (TPN) is an annual event organized by the Guru Belajar Foundation. In 2025, IGI Serang City participated as one of the organizers of the 12th TPN XII in 45 regions, with the first phase taking place on June 17, 2025. Participation and organization of this event demonstrated IGI Serang City's commitment to building networks, sharing good practices, and inspiring teachers with a national perspective. The event was held at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP) Building at Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University (Untirta) in collaboration with the Mathematics and Science Cluster departments at Untirta and various educational communities in Serang City and Banten Province. The event was opened by the Deputy Mayor of Serang and attended by over 200 participants, including teachers, principals, school supervisors, lecturers, students, and the general public (Aulia, 2025).

This offline strategy complemented the online program by providing a personal touch, deeper interaction, and opportunities for hands-on practice, which are often difficult to achieve in a webinar format. These offline activities ensured that the programs designed by IGI Serang City were not merely theoretical but also relevant and targeted (Liu et al., 2022). By involving various stakeholders, IGI Serang City was able to create more holistic and solution-oriented programs. Another advantage of these offline activities was that participants could directly practice the material and receive face-to-face feedback (Sharma et al., 2022).

Furthermore, collaboration with various parties demonstrated IGI Serang City's ability to build strategic partnerships. This not only expanded the program's reach but also improved its quality and available resources. The broad range of participants, from various educational levels, demonstrated IGI's commitment to reaching the entire educational spectrum. Participation as one of the organizers of the 12th Nusantara Educators Meeting (TPN XII) demonstrated IGI Serang City's commitment to building networks and sharing good practices at a broader level. This activity not only connected teachers in Serang City but also inspired them with national insights (Anggraeny & Dewi, 2023). Collaboration with Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University (Untirta) and other educational communities also reflected IGI's efforts to create a strong and mutually supportive educational ecosystem (Koroleva & Tomasova, 2024). The presence of various parties, from teachers to the Deputy Mayor, demonstrated significant recognition and support for IGI Serang City's role in advancing education in the region (Kiss et al., 2022).

IGI Serang City effectively addresses the need for teacher competency development by adopting a blended strategy that prioritizes face-to-face interaction over offline activities. Offline programs such as the Program Workshop and Discussion, TaRL Training, and the 12th Nusantara Educators Meeting (TPN) are designed to fill gaps often unmet by online formats: the need for hands-on practice, face-to-face feedback, and in-depth social interaction. The high number of participants in each activity demonstrates teachers' high enthusiasm for the offline format, as participants responded that face-to-face activities are more effective in understanding the material and building networks and communication among teachers. Workshops, in particular, serve as a direct needs assessment mechanism, ensuring relevant and targeted program design that meets teachers' needs and challenges, as reflected in the statement that the materials provided are "in line with teachers' needs." This approach ensures that IGI programs are not merely theoretical but oriented toward practical solutions and provide new knowledge to update educators.

Furthermore, IGI Serang City focuses not only on knowledge transfer but also on building a strong professional learning ecosystem and collaborative network. The presence of various parties at the event, from teachers, principals, and lecturers to representatives of the National Teachers' Association (BGP) and the Deputy Mayor, emphasized IGI's commitment to creating a holistic program and gaining significant support. Collaboration with Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University, Telkomsel, and other educational communities (including as the organizer of TPN XII) significantly expanded the program's reach, quality, and resources. This strengthened IGI's role as a space for shared growth, where teachers could share, strengthen, and be inspired by national insights. Through this program, IGI succeeded in creating a platform where our teachers not only teach but also continue to learn and collaborate, demonstrating IGI's commitment to fostering a healthy and sustainable educational climate through good practices and strategic partnerships.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

IGI Serang City's overall strategy for implementing the teacher competency improvement program can be conceptualized as a holistic, ecosystem-oriented blended approach, adaptively integrating the power of digital platforms and offline interactions to achieve relevant and sustainable results. IGI strategically addresses geographic and time constraints through digital program optimization, which effectively reaches a broad audience, delivers up-to-date content, and pragmatically assists teachers with administrative needs. However, to ensure depth of implementation and contextual relevance and foster a strong community, IGI balances this with a focused offline strategy. These offline activities serve as a direct needs assessment mechanism, providing space for hands-on practice, face-to-face feedback, and intensive social interaction, ultimately ensuring the program is not only theoretical but also practical and on-target.

Furthermore, the success of IGI Serang City is driven by the development of a culture of literacy and strategic partnerships. The publication of anthologies is an innovative strategy for elevating teacher competency from the role of "consumers" to "producers" of knowledge, empowering professional status, and encouraging critical reflection. The most important aspect is IGI's ability to build a robust education ecosystem through multi-stakeholder collaboration between universities, government agencies, and private companies. This synergy not only expands its reach and improves the quality of its resources but also generates significant public recognition, ultimately strengthening IGI's position as a catalyst for change and a platform for collaborative growth for teachers in Banten.

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