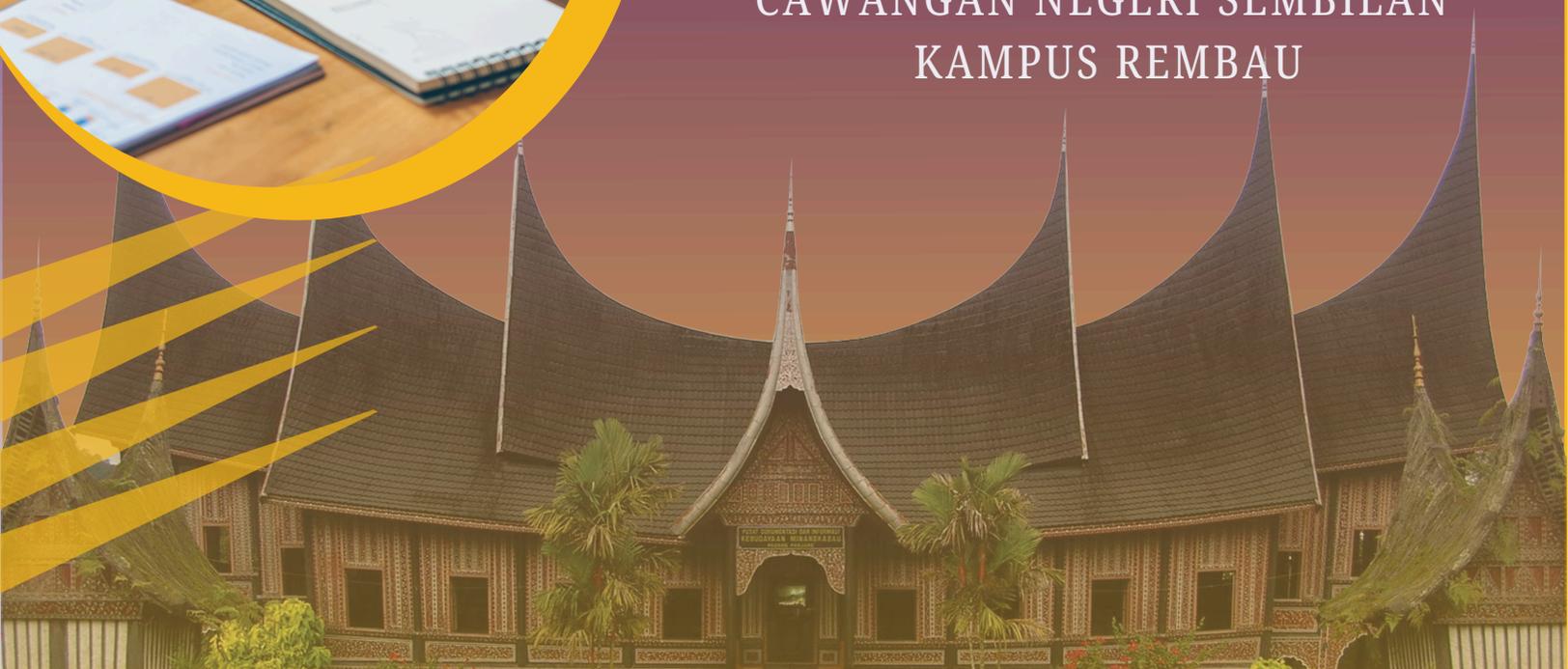


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# **ADAPTABILITY: THE SOFT SKILL THAT OPENS DOORS ABROAD**

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Working abroad is one of the most rewarding experiences a person can have. It offers a chance to see the world from a new perspective, meet people from different cultures, and grow both professionally and personally. But while technical skills and qualifications may secure the job offer, they are not enough to guarantee success in a foreign environment. What truly makes a difference is adaptability: the ability to adjust, learn, and thrive in the face of change.

Adaptability is often described as a soft skill, but it is a powerful life skill. Adaptability aids individuals in navigating cultural differences, overcoming unforeseen obstacles, and persevering in the face of setbacks. For anyone who dreams of working overseas, adaptability is not optional; it is essential.

Adaptability means being flexible and open-minded. It is the willingness to change your approach, try new ways of working, and accept that what worked in your home country may not work in another. This is more than just being “easy-going”. True adaptability involves resilience, curiosity, and a proactive attitude. It enables people to handle uncertainty with confidence and view challenges as opportunities rather than obstacles.



## Adaptability

Picture 1: A person holding two masks, one sad and one happy, symbolizing the ability to adjust emotions, behaviors, or attitudes according to different situations

Imagine arriving in a country where the language is different, the food is unfamiliar, and the workplace culture is not what you expected. Without adaptability, this experience can quickly turn into frustration. But with adaptability, the same situation becomes a chance to learn, grow, and create new opportunities.

Adaptability is a crucial skill for anyone working abroad because it shapes how individuals navigate culture shock, build their careers, stay resilient, and add value to organisations. Moving to a new country often means facing unfamiliar habits, from workplace etiquette to communication styles, and adaptable people can adjust more smoothly, earning trust and respect from local colleagues. Beyond daily interactions, adaptability is also a highly sought-after trait in today's workforce, signalling an ability to handle change, embrace diversity, and succeed in uncertain environments – qualities that open pathways to career growth and international leadership roles. At the same time, life abroad comes with challenges such as homesickness or miscommunication, and adaptable individuals are better equipped to bounce back, keep a positive mindset, and turn setbacks into learning opportunities. From an organisational perspective, these employees are invaluable because they can bridge cultural differences, adjust to local business practices, and strengthen connections between global teams, ultimately driving better collaboration and outcomes.

The good news is that adaptability can be learnt. It is not an inborn trait but a skill that grows with practice and experience. Here are some ways to build adaptability before and during an overseas assignment. Learn about the culture early. Read books, attend cultural

training, and talk to people who have lived there. Practising the language by learning simple phrases can reduce barriers and show respect. Stay curious. Instead of judging differences, ask why things are done in a certain way. Step outside your comfort zone. Try local food, join community activities, and be open to new experiences. Keep a growth mindset. Remind yourself that challenges are not failures but opportunities to grow.

In conclusion, adaptability is more than just a soft skill; it is a life skill that determines how well a person thrives in new environments. For those working abroad, adaptability allows smoother cultural adjustment, career growth, emotional resilience, and stronger contributions to organisations. The beauty of adaptability is that it can be learnt and strengthened over time. For anyone preparing to step onto the global stage, remember this. Your technical skills may get you through the door, but adaptability will keep you moving forward. The world is full of opportunities, and adaptability is the skill that allows you to seize them with confidence and courage.