

SOCIAL CAMPAIGN DESIGN SUPPORTING RECOVERY FROM CHILDHOOD EMOTIONAL NEGLECT AMONG LATE ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract: *Childhood Emotional Neglect (CEN) is a form of adverse childhood experience characterized by the consistent lack of emotional responsiveness from caregivers, which often remains unrecognized yet significantly affects long-term emotional and interpersonal development. In late adolescence, unresolved CEN may manifest as emotional dysregulation, difficulty forming healthy relationships, and impaired social functioning. In the Indonesian context, public awareness of CEN remains limited, and design-based social interventions addressing its interpersonal impacts are still scarce. This study aims to develop a visual communication-based social campaign that supports interpersonal recovery from the negative effects of Childhood Emotional Neglect among late adolescents. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, utilizing literature review, questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and observational analysis of existing social campaigns. The campaign was developed through a Design Thinking framework and structured using the AISAS communication model (Attention, Interest, Search, Action, Share), emphasizing empathetic storytelling and emotional engagement. The study resulted in a social campaign titled *Anak Bawang Berhak Disayang (Every Underdog Deserves to Be Loved)*, which integrates digital and physical media to foster emotional awareness, encourage reflection on past experiences of emotional neglect, and support sustained interpersonal recovery, particularly through emotional reconnection with parents. The campaign utilizes a website and social media as its primary platforms to guide users through awareness, reflection, and recovery stages. Future research is recommended to evaluate audience impact, emotional outcomes, and behavioral changes using quantitative or mixed-method approaches.*

Keywords: *childhood emotional neglect; social campaign; emotional appeal; interpersonal recovery; late adolescents*

Introduction

Childhood Emotional Neglect (CEN) is conceptualized as a condition in which caregivers consistently fail to provide ad-

equate emotional responsiveness, resulting in unmet developmental needs despite the absence of explicit maltreatment (Webb & Musello, 2013). Worldwide esti-

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mates suggest that close to 18% of children encounter emotional or physical neglect during their developmental years prior to age 17 (Stoltenborgh in Yang et al., 2025). In Indonesia, documented similar concerns through a nationwide survey involving over 73,000 children from more than 42,000 households, identifying 16,189 cases of neglect and indicating that multiple children within the same household are often affected. Similarly, Paramita & Faradiba (2020) identified CEN as one of the most frequently reported adverse childhood experiences among Indonesian adolescents.

Children who experience emotional neglect often face difficulties in recognizing, expressing, and regulating emotions, which may persist into adolescence and adulthood (Ye et al., 2026). These difficulties can manifest as psychological and interpersonal challenges, including depressive symptoms, heightened anxiety, reduced self-esteem, impaired social functioning, and difficulties in maintaining healthy relationships (Rahma et al., 2024). In more severe cases, unresolved CEN has been associated with social isolation, antisocial behavior, and an increased risk of criminal involvement in adulthood (Franz, 2022; Haslam & Taylor, 2022).

The interpersonal impacts of CEN become particularly salient during late adolescence (ages 18–22), a developmental stage characterized by identity formation and increasing social demands (Ristyanda et al., 2024). Late adolescents with CEN histories often report feelings of invisibility and unworthiness due to a lack of emotional validation in childhood, which may hinder the development of social networks and emotional support systems. Consequently, these individuals may experience difficulties in forming healthy romantic, social, and professional relationships (Logan-Greene & Semanchin Jones, 2018;

Rahma et al., 2024).

Despite its significant interpersonal consequences, CEN among late adolescents remains underexplored in the Indonesian context. Existing research largely focuses on clinical or psychological outcomes, while studies addressing the interpersonal dimension of CEN particularly through design-based social interventions are still limited (Berliana et al., 2019). Moreover, social campaigns in Indonesia that explicitly address CEN are relatively scarce, resulting in limited public awareness and insufficient psychosocial support for affected adolescents (Kumari, 2020).

Social campaigns offer a potential strategy to address this gap by functioning as reflective and educational communication tools. According to Jackson (as cited in Danurdara et al., 2024), social campaigns aim to raise awareness, convey information, and influence audience attitudes and behaviors through effective communication. Within the field of visual communication design, emotionally appealing and empathy-driven messages can facilitate reflection, reduce negative perceptions of mental health issues, and increase the likelihood of help-seeking among those affected by unresolved childhood trauma (Kumari, 2020; Yap et al., 2019).

Therefore, this study aims to develop a social campaign design that supports interpersonal recovery from the negative impacts of Childhood Emotional Neglect among late adolescents aged 18–25 by increasing awareness, reducing mental health stigma related to childhood trauma, and encouraging supportive help-seeking behaviors. This research contributes to the field of visual communication design by proposing a campaign framework that integrates the Design Thinking process and AISAS communication to address

the interpersonal consequences of CEN through emotional appeal and reflective visual storytelling.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach within a constructivist–interpretivist paradigm to examine how late adolescents experience and interpret the interpersonal impacts of Childhood Emotional Neglect (CEN), and how these lived experiences can inform the design of an empathy-driven social campaign. Emphasizing subjective meaning-making, emotional experiences, and social contexts (Creswell & Creswell, 2023), the research adopts a design-based research method grounded in the design thinking framework, applying the stages of empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test to translate insights into a practical campaign solution (Interaction Design Foundation, 2016).

Data are collected from primary and secondary sources to ensure depth and contextual richness. Primary data include the Childhood Emotional Neglect Questionnaire (Webb & Musello, 2013) and in-depth interviews, while secondary data are obtained through document analysis of relevant literature and observational studies of previous social campaigns. All data are analyzed using qualitative thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns related to emotional regulation, interpersonal difficulties, recovery needs, and media preferences among late adolescents. These insights inform the development of a conceptual social campaign that integrates a creative brief and the AI-SAS (Attention, Interest, Search, Action, Share) communication model (Sugiyama & Andree, 2011) to structure audience engagement through emotional appeal and

reflective visual storytelling. Research credibility is ensured through triangulation, member checking, and expert review.

Empathize

The empathize stage aimed to develop a deep understanding of the emotional experiences, interpersonal challenges, and media behaviors of late adolescents aged 18–25 who have experienced Childhood Emotional Neglect (CEN) and are actively engaged with digital culture. This stage began with the administration of the Childhood Emotional Neglect Questionnaire (CENQ) developed by Jonice Webb (Webb & Musello, 2013) to identify specific indicators of emotional neglect based on participants’ lived experiences and to select participants for in-depth interviews. Questionnaire results indicated recurring experiences of emotional detachment, discomfort in social settings, difficulty seeking support, excessive self-reliance, people-pleasing tendencies, and social withdrawal.

Following the questionnaire phase, in-depth interviews were conducted with four late-adolescent CEN survivors and three psychologists specializing in child and adolescent mental health. Insights from the psychologists indicated that many late adolescents affected by CEN tend to rely on maladaptive coping strategies, such as overworking, social withdrawal, addictive behaviors, or externalizing blame. Despite increasing public awareness of CEN, both experts and respondents emphasized that effective coping strategies remain poorly understood and insufficiently practiced among affected individuals.

Interviews with respondents revealed that most respondents first encountered information about CEN through social



Figure 1. In-Depth Interview with Psychologists
(Source: Personal research documentation, 2025)

media, though often in superficial and fragmented forms. This reflects broader patterns among adolescents and young adults, who engage with mental health content through creative and expressive digital formats. Platforms such

as Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and Facebook were most frequently accessed, with a clear preference for short-form content featuring implicit emotional appeal, relatable storytelling, and non-preachy messaging. Streaming services and podcasts were also identified as complementary media that foster emotional resonance and reflection.

To inform the creative strategy, this stage also included an observational analysis of previous social campaigns addressing neglect, trauma, and loneliness. Campaigns such as *Sound of Violence* by Save the Children Hong Kong (Staff, 2024), *Neglect Hides in Plain Sight* by SPCA Singapore (Shaw, 2024), and *Holiday Home* by Airbnb (D&AD, 2024) demonstrated the effectiveness of empathy-driven approaches, interactive elements, and emotionally resonant storytelling in fostering personal connection and encouraging behavioral reflection. These campaigns

highlighted the importance of presenting sensitive issues through familiar media environments, experiential engagement, and solution-oriented narratives.

Define

Synthesizing insights from questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and observations of prior social campaigns, this study defines the core problem as the limited availability of empathetic, accessible, and relatable interventions that address the interpersonal impacts of Childhood Emotional Neglect (CEN) among late adolescents. In response, the campaign is defined around three strategic priorities:

1. emotional validation as an entry point for acknowledging lived experiences of CEN;
2. emotional regulation through practical and accessible tools such as journaling, emotion identification aids, mindfulness, and grounding techniques;
3. and the development of healthy interpersonal relationships supported by community engagement and professional guidance.

To ensure relevance and reach, the campaign adopts a mixed-media approach that integrates traditional media with digital platforms, particularly social media, while prioritizing empathy, relational sensitivity, audience confidentiality, and cultural-emotional contexts to deliver an ethically grounded and emotionally resonant intervention.

Ideate

At the ideation stage, research insights were translated into creative solutions through focused brainstorming, result-

ing in the campaign's big idea, "Connecting the Past, Healing the Present." This concept frames interpersonal recovery in late adolescence as a reflective process that begins with acknowledging previously unrecognized experiences of Childhood Emotional Neglect (CEN). These insights were consolidated into a creative brief that defined the campaign's strategic direction, visual approach, and narrative framework.

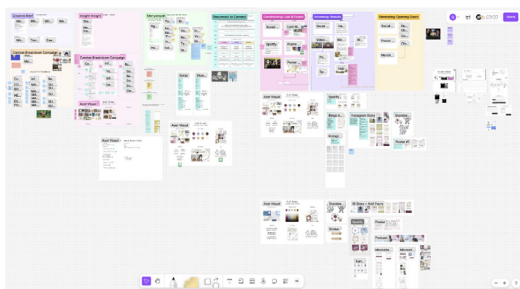


Figure 2. Brainstorm & Ideate Stage
(Source: Personal research documentation, 2025)

The campaign adopts a bittersweet, nostalgic, and homey tone, delivered through relatable and non-preachy storytelling to create emotional safety and encourage reflection. This approach is embodied in the campaign title "Anak Bawang Berhak Disayang" (Every Child Deserves to Be Loved) and the tagline "Dulu Dia-baikan, Kini Dirayakan" (Once Neglected, Now Celebrated). The metaphor of "anak bawang or onion kid," a popular Indonesian term referring to individuals who feel overlooked or unimportant, particularly in childhood social contexts is used to represent emotional neglect in an accessible and culturally familiar way.

At the same time, onions are widely associated with resilience and inner value, as strength and usefulness are revealed beneath their layered skin. This metaphor aligns with the emotional recovery process, which involves uncovering hidden wounds, processing emotional pain, and integrating past experiences into a more

whole and empowered sense of self. Through warm, reflective, and relatable language, the "anak bawang" narrative enables the campaign to communicate the complexity of CEN in a manner that resonates deeply with the target audience.

Prototype

The prototyping stage translated conceptual and strategic insights into tangible campaign outputs through a structured development process, progressing from rough sketches and refined visual explorations to high-fidelity prototypes. A cohesive visual identity was established to ensure consistency across all media touchpoints, including the formulation of a color palette, moodboard, logo, key visual, typography, and illustration style aligned with the campaign's emotional tone and narrative intent. The campaign prototype integrates multiple media formats, with a website positioned as the primary platform, supported by social media visuals, posters, outdoor activations, merchandise, and digital content.

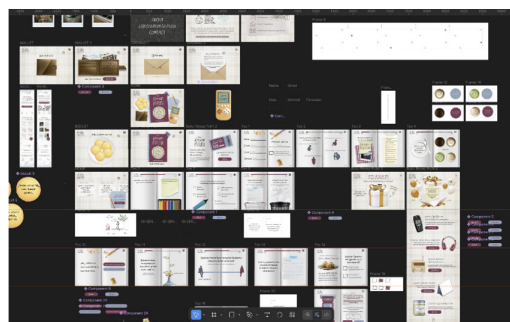


Figure 3. Prototype Stage
(Source: Personal research documentation, 2025)

Test

The testing stage was conducted iteratively to evaluate the effectiveness, clarity, and emotional resonance of the campaign prototypes. Evaluation involved feedback

sessions with representatives of the target audience and expert reviews from visual communication design practitioners, focusing on visual quality, narrative coherence, cultural sensitivity, emotional appeal, and audience engagement. Insights from each testing round were used to refine the campaign's visual execution and messaging. A final evaluation was conducted with three campaign experts to assess the overall concept, media integration, and simulated implementation. Due to time constraints that limited full-scale implementation, the final expert evaluation was used to consolidate recommendations that strengthen the campaign concept and support future development and potential implementation.



Figure 4. Test Stage
(Source: Personal research documentation, 2025)

Result

The campaign was implemented over

six months (24 weeks) through three sequential stages: conditioning, informing, and reminding. The conditioning stage focused on raising awareness and self-reflection by helping audiences recognize unacknowledged emotional wounds and their impact on current interpersonal relationships. The informing stage provided empathetic and accessible education about Childhood Emotional Neglect (CEN), equipping audiences with coping strategies while fostering empowerment and hope for recovery. The reminding stage functioned as an affirmation phase, reinforcing that emotional healing is both possible and worthy of social acknowledgment, and emphasizing the role of healthy interpersonal connections in sustaining recovery. These stages were strategically aligned with the AISAS framework (Attention, Interest, Search, Action, and Share) which was applied to guide audience engagement from initial emotional awareness, through active information-seeking and self-reflective actions, to sustained participation and message sharing within social contexts.

Table 1. Campaign Stage Details
(Source: Personal Document, 2025)

Stage	What to Say	AISAS Method
Conditioning	Peeling the Layers of Emotional Neglect	Attention, Interest, Search
Informing	Turning Pain into Healing	Search, Action, Share
Reminding	Every Underdog Deserves to Be Loved	Interest, Search, Action, Share

1. Visual Concept

The logo combines a logogram depicting a layered onion with a small heart supported by hands, symbolizing

emotional neglect and the need for care with a handwritten logotype that conveys warmth and sincerity. A monochromatic logo application ensures flexibility and reinforces the campaign's intimate, childlike tone. Supporting visuals employ a muted color palette dominated by soft purples and blues, accented with light green and brown to evoke calm melancholy, hope, and nostalgia. Typography blends child-like handwritten fonts with clean modern typefaces, while simple, hand-drawn illustrations resembling children's sketches are used to evoke childhood memory.



Figure 5. Logo & Color Palette
 (Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

These elements are unified through a key visual system that incorporates negative space, silhouettes, aged paper textures, and loosely structured layouts to visually represent emotional absence, vulnerability, and childhood spontaneity.



Figure 6. Campaign Key Visual
 (Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

2. Instagram Post



Figure 7. Instagram Post
 (Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

Instagram posts are structured into sequential rows that visually and narratively guide audiences from childhood memory recall to emotional awareness

and basic education about Childhood Emotional Neglect (CEN). Each post includes a clear call to action directing audiences to the campaign website, with later posts introducing recovery-oriented content and campaign activations as part of the informing phase.

3. Instagram Story



Figure 8. Instagram Story
(Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

Instagram Stories present the “Anak Bawang” narrative through short-form storytelling that introduces indicators of emotional neglect in an accessible and personal manner. The sequence concludes with an interactive bingo feature that encourages self-reflection and sharing, supported by clear calls to action linking to the main campaign account and website.

4. Broadcast Message



Figure 9. Broadcast Message
(Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

Broadcast messages distributed via WhatsApp and Facebook target parents as a secondary audience by delivering awareness-focused messages about emotional neglect in a familiar and relatable communication style. Each message includes calls to action directing recipients to the campaign’s digital platforms and encouraging peer-to-peer sharing to broaden awareness.

5. Spotify

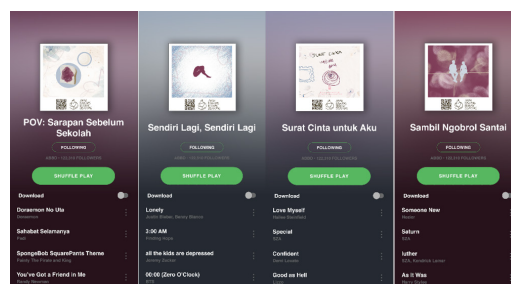


Figure 10. Spotify
(Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

The campaign utilizes Spotify playlists curated with nostalgic and emotionally reflective music to evoke childhood memories and support emotional engagement among late adolescents. These playlists are promoted through Spotify Ads and linked to the campaign’s social media and website as part of a cross-platform activation strategy.

6. Interactive Standee

Interactive standees placed in public spaces attract attention through emotionally evocative visuals and invite engagement via QR code scanning. The QR code directs audiences to a microsite for sharing personal stories related to emotional neglect, followed by calls to action leading to the campaign’s official digital platforms.



Figure 11. Interactive Standee
(Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

7. Sticker



Figure 12. Sticker
(Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

Stickers designed to resemble wound plasters were placed on cracked or damaged surfaces to visually symbolize hidden emotional neglect and attract public attention. Each sticker includes a QR code

directing audiences to an anonymous microsite for written emotional expression, followed by calls to action linking to the campaign’s website and social media.

8. Tarot Booth



Figure 13. Tarot Booth
(Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

The tarot booth functions as a reflective installation that uses custom-designed tarot cards to guide audiences in revisiting childhood experiences and interpersonal wounds. Tarot is positioned as a narrative and self-awareness tool rather than fortune-telling, with each session concluding with a keepsake card containing a QR code to the campaign’s digital platforms.

9. Website & Voucher



Figure 14. Website & Voucher
(Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

The campaign website serves as a central safe space where users complete self-assessments, interactive quizzes, and receive personalized recovery recommendations related to Childhood Emotional Neglect (CEN). Engagement is incentivized through recovery-based vouchers and tools, including digital support resources and interpersonal healing activities that require shared participation.

10. WhatsApp Bot, Community, and Notification Push



Figure 15. WhatsApp Bot, Community, and Notification Push
(Source: Personal documentation)

A WhatsApp Bot and Community were developed to provide continuous emotional companionship, peer support, and guided reflection, particularly during vulnerable hours. The system delivers personalized messages, affirmations, and reminders, integrated with Google Calendar to support consistent self-care routines.

11. Interactive Installation

The “Healed Home” or “Rumah Pulih” installation is a password-protected mini house containing self-healing tools such as journals, affirmation cards, and therapeutic objects. Access is tied to campaign assessments, and activities are designed to be completed collaboratively to encour-

age interpersonal reconnection.

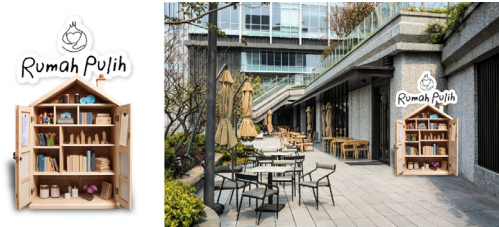


Figure 16. Interactive Installation
(Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

12. Podcast



Figure 17. Podcast
(Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

The podcast series consists of five cross-disciplinary episodes exploring creative and embodied approaches to processing childhood emotional neglect, featuring public figures from various fields, including writing, music, physical activity, and visual arts. The episodes are distributed through Spotify and YouTube Ads to extend the campaign’s reach and engagement.

13. Poster

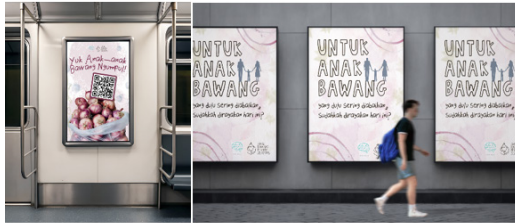


Figure 18. Poster
(Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

Campaign posters deliver empathetic messages encouraging late adolescents to rebuild emotional connections with themselves, others, and their parents. These visuals are placed in high-traffic public spaces to reinforce campaign presence and reflection.

14. Merchandise & Social Media Challenge



Figure 19. Merchandise & Social Media Challenge
(Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

Campaign merchandise in the form of nostalgic aromatherapy candles functions

as both a personal emotional reminder and a fundraising medium for children’s welfare. The closing social media challenge, #LangkahKecilku or #MyBabySteps, invites participants to share recovery journeys and interpersonal reconnection stories, reinforcing collective healing and visibility.

Discussion

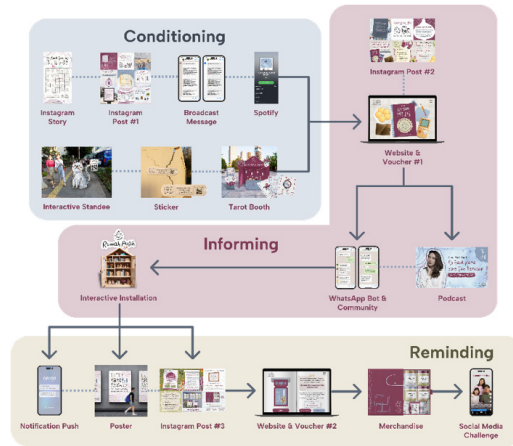


Figure 20. Media Integration
(Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

The Anak Bawang Berhak Disayang campaign demonstrates how an integrated, multi-platform strategy can support emotional awareness, reflection, and recovery related to Childhood Emotional Neglect (CEN) among late adolescents through a structured conditioning–reminding flow. During the conditioning stage, media execution was divided into online and offline channels. Online activation began with Instagram Stories introducing the “Anak Bawang” narrative through emotional storytelling about indicators of CEN, followed by interactive bingo templates that encouraged self-recognition and peer sharing. These activations were supported by Instagram Ads and complemented by awareness-ori-

ented Instagram feed content. Reflective engagement was further strengthened through a nostalgic Spotify playlist, promoted via Spotify Ads, directing audiences to the campaign's social media and website. To reach parents as a secondary audience, educational WhatsApp and Facebook broadcast messages were distributed, highlighting emotionally neglectful behaviors that are often unrecognized and encouraging peer-to-peer dissemination as a form of collective support.

Offline, the campaign extended emotional engagement through interactive standees and stickers featuring QR codes that linked to reflective microsites, including platforms for sharing stories about silent witnesses of CEN and unspoken messages addressed to parents. A reflective tarot booth was also introduced to guide personal contemplation of childhood experiences and interpersonal relationships through symbolic interaction. All offline touchpoints directed audiences back to the campaign's digital ecosystem. These activations converged on the campaign website, where users completed a self-assessment to identify the severity and potential causes of CEN and received personalized recovery guidance. Engagement was further reinforced through the discount voucher, which incentivized shared healing experiences at partner cafés using recovery kits accessed through personalized passwords. Additional support systems, including a WhatsApp Bot companion, community groups, and reflective podcasts, emphasized continuity of care and social support.

At the reminding stage, sustained engagement was maintained through periodic digital reminders, affirmations, and progress-based rewards delivered via WhatsApp Bot and Google Calendar. The discount voucher program reframed recovery as a measurable and ongoing

process by linking emotional progress to counseling sessions or shared healing experiences with parents, thereby encouraging emotional reconnection and intergenerational dialogue. The campaign concluded with the participatory #LangkahKecilku (#MyBabySteps) challenge, inviting late adolescents to share personal recovery narratives, particularly those involving parental engagement to normalize emotional conversations surrounding CEN.

Despite its strengths, this study is limited by its conceptual and design-based nature, as audience impact and behavioral outcomes were not empirically tested through longitudinal evaluation. Future research should examine user responses, emotional outcomes, and relational changes over time to validate the campaign's effectiveness. Further development should also strengthen organizational identity visibility across media and expand large-scale offline activations to foster collective healing. Attention to visual visibility, consistency, and audience-centered research remains essential to ensure clarity, credibility, and scalability of the campaign.

Conclusion

This study reveals that awareness of Childhood Emotional Neglect (CEN) among late adolescents remains low, despite its significant long-term impact on interpersonal relationships. Findings from literature review, questionnaires, observations, and in-depth interviews indicate that effective intervention requires emotional validation as an entry point for acknowledging lived experiences of CEN, emotional regulation supported by practical and accessible tools, and the development of healthy interpersonal relation-

ships through community engagement and professional guidance.

In response, the Anak Bawang Berhak Disayang campaign was designed as a visual communication-based intervention. Employing a Design Thinking approach through the stages of empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test, the campaign integrates emotional storytelling, culturally resonant metaphors, and participatory media. Guided by a bittersweet, nostalgic, and homey tone and structured using the AISAS framework, the campaign translates research findings into three sequential stages: Conditioning, Informing, and Reminding derived from the big idea “Connecting the Past, Healing the Present.” Implemented across integrated media platforms, including a campaign website, discount vouchers, a WhatsApp bot, public activations, social media, and reflective merchandise, the campaign functions both as an educational platform and a safe space for late adolescents to recognize emotional wounds, validate their emotional needs, and initiate healthier interpersonal connections.

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