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Learning to Plan for the Future Through the Tree of Hope Activity: Literacy Movement at Tanzil KG Lindungan Selangor, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The Tree of Hope activity is an innovative program implemented in Malaysia to help children of Indonesian migrant workers plan for their future. This case study was conducted at At Tanzil Learning Center, Lindungan Village involving 45 students in grades 1-4 aged 5-12 years old. Using a mixed method of lectures and practical exercises, the activity aimed to help the children express their aspirations visually and verbally. The activity process included showing educational videos about various professions, making a wish tree, and sharing stories about aspirations. The results showed that the most popular professions were TNI (20%), Police (17.8%), Doctor (15.6%), Teacher (13.3%), and Firefighter and Pilot (11.1% each). This activity not only succeeded in increasing the children's motivation and confidence, but also created a fun and interactive learning environment. The program has proven to be effective in providing psychological and social support for immigrant children, as well as building a community that supports each other in achieving common goals. Through this creative approach, Tree of Hope contributes positively to the development and future of Indonesian migrant worker children in Malaysia.

Keywords: Community Service, Self-Development, Learning Motivation

INTRODUCTION

The number of migrant workers working in Malaysia continues to grow. About 1.3 million people have official documents and work legally, but there are an additional 1.25 million people who do not have documents or work illegally. This fact reflects that Malaysia remains an attractive country for Indonesian migrant workers seeking better economic opportunities (Rahmayanti et al., 2023). However, this economic attraction hides social challenges, such as the practice of bringing families, including children, to Malaysia. Initially, many children are brought by their parents on tourist visas (Gilgan. 2022). However, these visas are often not renewed and the children end up overstaying, or overstaying their permit. As a result, children of migrant workers who have no legal status in Malaysia have difficulty accessing basic rights, including adequate education (Haggstrom. 2020). Due to the lack of legal documentation, these immigrant children

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are often unable to attend formal schools, resulting in a lack of quality education, stunted development, and impacting their long-term future. While counseling studios have become an important alternative education option for undocumented children of Indonesian workers in Malaysia, they are still limited and do not replace access to formal education. Therefore, improving access and educational opportunities for children of illegal Indonesian workers in Malaysia requires the support and interest of various stakeholders such as the government, community organizations, and the general public (Makmur et al., 2023).

Learning to plan for the future is an essential skill in today's rapidly changing world, and educational activities that develop this skill are becoming increasingly important. One such initiative is the “Tree of Hope” activity, a case study in Malaysia (Wong. 2022). The program guides participants through a practical approach to envisioning their own aspirations and goals, using the metaphor of a tree as a symbol of growth, stability and connection. Exploring hopes and dreams allows one to have a clear vision of the future and develop resilience and adaptability in the face of uncertainty (Handayani et al., 2020).

The “Wish Tree” activity is more than just an exercise in creativity. It is based on an educational theory that emphasizes experiential learning. Participants will be encouraged to reflect on their personal experiences and aspirations while collaborating with others and sharing insights and perspectives (Givens. 2020). This collective engagement not only enhances individual understanding, but also builds a supportive community that values shared goals and supports each other. In Malaysia, where cultural differences intersect, this activity promotes integration and understanding between participants from different backgrounds (Afandi, 2022). Moreover, the importance of these activities goes beyond personal growth. These activities are aligned with broader educational objectives that aim to improve students' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities (Long et al., 2022) By visualizing their future using the Tree of Hope, participants are encouraged to consider the steps required to achieve their goals, thus developing strategic planning skills. This proactive approach provides individuals with the tools they need to overcome challenges and capitalize on opportunities in their personal and professional lives (Mustari, 2023).

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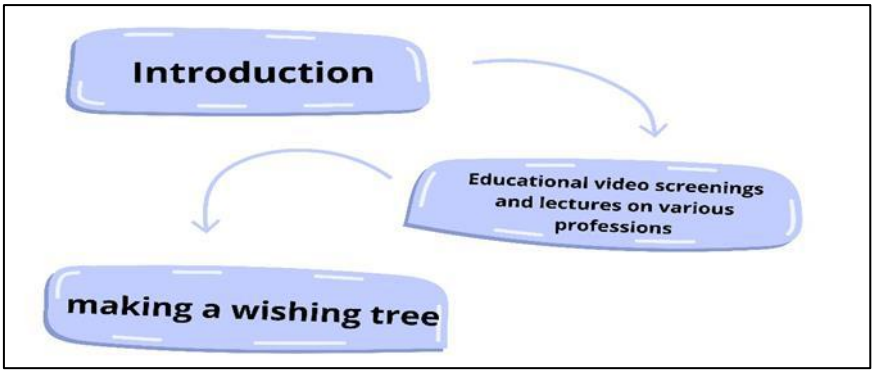
In conclusion, the Tree of Hope activity is an example of an innovative way to teach future planning skills in the Malaysian context. By encouraging self-reflection, collaboration and strategic thinking, this initiative not only empowers individuals but also helps develop more resilient communities (Kress. 2020). As Malaysia continues to evolve, educational programs like this will play an important role in preparing its citizens for success in an increasingly complex world (Paramansyah, 2020).

METHOD

The implementation method contains a description of the methods used and the stages of implementation. This activity was carried out on Friday, August 23, 2024. The method used in this activity is a mixed technique, namely lectures and exercises. The number of participants who participated in this activity was 45 students in grades 1-4 aged 5-12 years, the reason for choosing this method is because it is easier to understand and fun for young children (Lasmiatun, 2023).

Tools and Materials

Tools and materials in making a wish tree are: 1) cardboard; 2) scissors; 3) cutter; 4) pencil; 5) eraser; 6) ruler; 7) green and brown paper; and 9) stickers. In making the wishing tree, first make the design on a paper, then make the design and size on a large cardboard. Second, cut out the cardboard according to the design that has been carved. Third, lining the cardboard with brown paper. Fourth, arranging the cardboard boxes that have been coated by paper on the wall where teaching and learning activities are held. This activity was carried out with the following series of events: 1) introduction, 2) screening of educational videos and lectures on various professions, 3) making a wish tree. (Lubis, H.Z. et al., 2022).



Picture 1. Flow of Service Activities

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DISCUSSION

Learning about the Tree of Hope was successfully introduced at the Immigrant Children's Empowerment event and received great enthusiasm from the participants. The author wanted to give children the opportunity to express their dreams and fantasies while increasing their motivation and creativity. This chapter describes the results of these activities. We hope that this activity with a fun and interactive approach can make a positive contribution to the psychological and social development of immigrant children. Below are the results and a detailed description of the Wish Tree activity:

The purpose of this activity is for children to be able to express their dreams both visually and verbally. The activity, which was attended by a total of 45 children, is expected to have a positive impact on the lives of children in the future. The process of making a wish tree is as follows:

1. Children are invited to watch an educational video that introduces various professions.
2. Next, they were given materials to make a piece of paper containing their dreams.
3. Leaves were attached to the prepared wishing tree, creating a collective work of art that expressed their dreams.

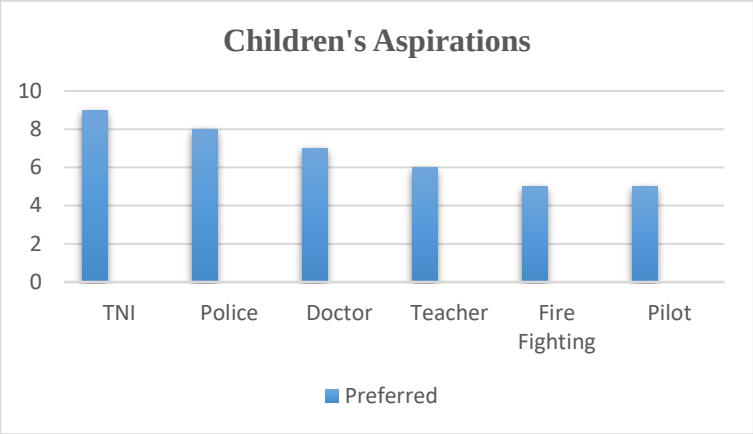
The result of the activity was that most of the children wrote down their dreams such as doctor (15%), military (20%), and police (18%). This activity was shown to increase children's motivation and confidence in thinking about their future. They felt supported to dream big, and seeing their goals visually gave them more tangible hope. Below is a table of the dreams expressed by the children in making the wish tree:

Table 1. Children's Aspirations

No	Profession (Ideals)	Number of Children (%)
1.	Indonesian National Army (TNI)	20% (9 Children)
2.	police	17,8% (8 Children)
3.	doctor	15,6% (7 Children)
4.	teacher	13,3% (6 Children)
5.	Fire Fighting	11,1% (5 Children)
6.	Pilot	11,1% (5 Children)

Source: Community service data, 2024

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Picture 2. Diagram Of Students' Preferred Aspirations

The Tree of Hope located at At Tanzil Learning Center in Lindungan Village plays an important role in supporting the education and development of children in the community. One approach in practice is activity-based education, where students are encouraged to learn through play. This method not only makes learning more fun, but also helps children who have learning difficulties understand the subject better. Moreover, through this activity, the author makes children aware of the importance of having goals and having the passion to achieve them in the future. Thus, SB children also learn that everything in life must be prepared early on so that it can be used as motivation in later life. This activity not only encourages students to write down their goals on pieces of paper, but also allows them to tell others why they chose that goal.



Picture 3. Making a Wishing Tree



Picture 4. Wishing Tree

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Picture 5 and 6. Sharing Students' Dreams

CONCLUSIONS

Tree of Hope activities implemented in Malaysia have shown very positive results in helping children plan for their future. The activity, which was attended by 45 students in grades 1-4 (5-12 years old) at At tanzil Learning Center, Lindungan Village on 23 August 2024, used a mixed method of lectures and exercises. Through a creative and interactive approach, the children were able to express their aspirations both visually and verbally. The survey results showed that the most popular profession was the Indonesian National Army (20%), followed by Police (17.8%), Doctor (15.6%), Teacher (13.3%), and Firefighter and Pilot (11.1% each).

This activity not only succeeded in increasing children's motivation and confidence in planning for the future, but also helped them visualize life goals in a concrete way. The program encourages children to understand the importance of having goals early on and creates a fun learning environment. More than just developing individual aspirations, Tree of Hope has proven to be an effective method of providing psychological and social support for immigrant children in Malaysia. Through this activity, a community of mutual support and respect for a common goal is built, creating a sustainable positive impact on the development of immigrant children in Malaysia.

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