

## ENCOURAGING SELF-EMPOWERMENT AND INNOVATION FOR STUDENTS' ENTREPRENEURIAL POTENTIAL IN MAAHAD TAHFIZ DARUL FUQAHÀ, MALAYSIA

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### Abstract

This community service **aims** to shift the mindset from job seekers to business opportunity creators for children of Maahad Tahfiz Darul Fuqaha. The main challenge involves teenagers and adult mentors, such as teachers or orphanage caregivers, who understand self-empowerment in entrepreneurship, to guide the children in developing creativity and self-motivation. Children and adolescents at the Maahad Tahfiz Darul Fuqaha urgently need entrepreneurial awareness and independence to live in Kajang, Selangor, Malaysia. Through interactive training, participants are expected to develop a creative and optimistic entrepreneurial spirit. **Methods:** The course delivered simple stories, accompanied by icebreakers, questions, and answers to stimulate participants' enthusiasm. **Results** indicate that the training increased participants' understanding and motivation regarding the importance of entrepreneurship for future independence. However, it was found that the children require ongoing mentoring to empower themselves optimally. This training seeds self-empowerment, a creative mindset, and a spirit of independent living. Through this training, the children realize that the limitations of living in an orphanage are not barriers to development. **Implications** include improving participants' quality of life and the potential for scientific publication to share training results with the broader community.

**Keywords:** entrepreneur, self-empowerment, *story telling*

### Abstrak

Pengabdian masyarakat ini **bertujuan** untuk mengubah pola pikir dari pencari kerja menjadi pencipta peluang bisnis bagi peserta asuh di Maahad Tahfiz Darul Fuqaha. Tantangan utamanya melibatkan remaja dan mentor dewasa, seperti guru atau pengasuh panti asuhan, yang memahami pemberdayaan diri dalam kewirausahaan, untuk membimbing anak-anak dalam mengembangkan kreativitas dan motivasi diri. Anak-anak dan remaja di Maahad Tahfiz Darul Fuqaha sangat membutuhkan kesadaran kewirausahaan dan kemandirian untuk hidup di Kajang, Selangor, Malaysia. Melalui pelatihan interaktif, peserta diharapkan dapat mengembangkan jiwa kewirausahaan yang kreatif dan optimis. **Metode:** Pelatihan ini menyampaikan cerita sederhana, disertai dengan *ice breaking*, tanya-jawab, dan pemberian alat tulis untuk merangsang antusiasme peserta. **Hasil** menunjukkan pelatihan ini meningkatkan pemahaman dan motivasi peserta mengenai pentingnya kewirausahaan untuk kemandirian di masa depan. Namun, ke depan bahwa anak-anak membutuhkan pendampingan berkelanjutan untuk memberdayakan diri mereka secara optimal. Pelatihan ini menanamkan pemberdayaan diri, pola pikir kreatif, dan semangat hidup mandiri. Melalui pelatihan ini, anak-anak menyadari bahwa keterbatasan hidup di panti asuhan bukanlah hambatan untuk berkembang. Implikasinya mencakup peningkatan kualitas hidup peserta dan potensi publikasi ilmiah untuk berbagi hasil pelatihan dengan komunitas yang lebih luas.

**Keywords:** kewirausahaan, pemberdayaan diri, *story telling*

## INTRODUCTION

The Darul Fuqaha (Maahad Tahfiz Anak Yatim) in Kajang, Malaysia, is an educational institution with a mission to teach orphans and underprivileged children to memorize the Quran while providing religious and academic education. The students at this school are mostly orphans or from low-income families, facing additional challenges in terms of finances and family support. This situation forces the institution to act as an educational institution and as a caregiver, providing basic needs, such as housing, food, and other daily necessities. Therefore, the Darul Fuqaha Tahfiz School must focus on meeting students' emotional and spiritual needs so they feel safe and comfortable in the school environment.

In terms of academics and self-development, Darul Fuqaha Tahfiz School students face significant challenges. Students are required to memorize the Quran and balance formal education to prepare them to compete in the outside world. This rigorous learning requires adequate educational facilities and a dedicated teaching staff. Given their backgrounds, students here may need a more inclusive and personalized learning approach to develop to their full potential without feeling academically burdened.

Overall, the situation at the Darul Fuqaha Tahfiz Islamic Boarding School reflects a profound need for educational support, nurturing, and empowerment. In addition to religious and Quranic instruction, a focus on character education and life skills is crucial to ensuring students are prepared for the future. With a holistic approach and the support of dedicated donors and teaching staff, the school creates an environment conducive to the holistic development of its students, encompassing academics, spirituality, and independence.

In the development of humans into useful individuals, mental development is very important, in addition to intelligence, skills, or technical expertise. Mental strengthening is a priority to minimize self-weakening and negative impacts (Aqmala & Sukono Putra, 2020). Increasing motivation and self-potential can be conveyed through many disciplines including from the Islamic side, financial independence, and psychology through self-motivation supported by SWOT analysis (Suratman et al., 2022). The introduction of

self-potential can then be supported through teaching and strengthening social media as a promotional tool so that the ability to adapt to the digital world is needed (Suratman et al., 2023). Including in the creation of entrepreneurs, it is necessary to instill a mindset and motivation on how to empower oneself from an early age as a provision for independence in the future (Nurul et al., 2023). Someone who is educated to be an entrepreneur through self-empowerment since childhood is expected to have a perspective that is not dependent on others (Sari et al., 2021). It can be understood that a child's character is formed from what is heard, seen, and felt. When individuals are introduced to the world of entrepreneurship from an early age, these habits and experiences will form an entrepreneurial character that is embedded in them until adulthood (Budiman et al., 2022). When self-empowerment is associated with a continuous learning process, it can help individuals, especially students, to adapt to the school environment starting from non-formal education such as daycare, kindergarten, elementary school, to the next level. From here, entrepreneurship education is expected to produce students who are more responsible, creative, creative, disciplined and innovative (Ariffin et al., 2023). This introduction becomes increasingly important and essential when children enter adolescence. Adolescents who are able to adapt well tend to be more successful in school life, work, and interactions in society compared to adolescents who have difficulty adjusting (Suratman & Palupi, 2019).

The world of entrepreneurship is increasingly in demand because it can help someone become independent while opening up job opportunities for others through creativity and independence. Self-development will significantly support the survival of the young generation of productive age, including children under the care of orphanages whose potential and skills need to be honed for a better future (Nurjanah et al., 2023). Especially for the case of managing maahad or orphanages in the future, independence is one of the most important things for orphanages to survive without relying on donors (Kurniawati & Khamainy, 2021). Given that some managers and residents of orphanages have little access to opportunities to develop their insights or thoughts on their physical skills (Noorrizki et al., 2023; Safitri et al., 2023; Zukmadini et al., 2020). Strengthening self-empowerment is hoped to foster a

mature attitude of independence so that living and education costs can run smoothly and help ease the burden on the orphanage. Hence, they must be empowered to improve their quality of life (Herawati et al., 2020). There have been many community services, such as in social institutions, to increase knowledge and enthusiasm about entrepreneurship and actual training practices, which should not be enough with just a short meeting but require a deeper understanding of philosophy and technical training (Marliza et al., 2023). The problems faced by the managers and foster children of Maahad Darul Fuqaha in Kajang, Selangor, Malaysia, are almost the same as those faced by other orphanages, not only related to funding but also attention, examples obtained from volunteers who help and guide orphanage children to develop their skills and creativity as provisions in living life with a better future. With the existence of community service activities, the proposer intends to invite the management of the orphanage to help (partner) carry out training activities to provide expertise and skills for foster children. Apart from filling the foster children's free time, the aim is also to develop insight, knowledge, skills, and expertise based on information technology (IT) as provisions for entrepreneurship.

## METHODS

This community service activity was carried out at Maahad Darul Fuqaha in Kajang, Selangor, Malaysia, a social institution providing physical, mental, and social services to children, especially children from elementary school to high school. This Maahad replaces the role of parents or guardians to meet their needs. Like social institutions in Indonesia, the goal is to support the development of children's personalities as part of the nation's independent and quality next generation (Karyadiputra et al., 2019). It is hoped that this Maahad will create a better future for foster children through training and skills training. The implementation method goes through several stages, from the planning, preparation, implementation, and evaluation stages. At the planning stage, the service team identifies the situation and needs of the activity object. This creation was assisted by the Prambanan Tour travel agent, considering that this activity is included in a

series of International Student Mobility activities, which were also attended by 5 Digital Business Study Program students and three accompanying lecturers in Malaysia on November 12-15, 2024. Prambanan Tour facilitated the introduction and discussion with the management of Maahad Darul Fuqaha regarding the need for service, location, time, and background of participants regarding age, gender, and activities carried out at Maahad.



Fig 1. Community service in Maahad Darul Fuqaha, Malaysia (1)

The discussion results obtained information related to students taught by Maahad, which totaled 50 students. The activities carried out at Maahad are learning with the boarding school curriculum and the national curriculum applicable in Malaysia. The mainstay of this Maahad is memorizing the Quran, and there have been entrepreneurial activities with products such as packaged tea and soap. From this information, the service team prepared the material presented by the main speaker and shared tasks with students of the Digital Business Study Program to condition the participants at the Maahad Location during the service activities.

The delivery of material uses a presentation or lecture method, namely to explain the material on character and entrepreneurship in detail, including providing actual examples, so that students can be more focused and motivated towards the entrepreneurial profession, leading students to achieve good results by using and preparing effective methods and having perfect open materials to achieve dynamic learning goals (Mansir, 2020). Continued with a discussion method that functions as a means for participants to explore material that has yet to be understood through questions and

answers, training the courage to express opinions about self-empowerment.

## RESULTS

The results of the activity were in the form of delivering entrepreneurship material. The material was delivered to the 2nd floor Hall of Maahad Darul Fuqaha, Kajang, Selangor, Malaysia, starting at Asr time until Maghrib time on Thursday, November 14, 2024. The service participants were 40 children, namely 15 girls and 25 boys, with an age range of 7 years - 17 years, or an attendance percentage of 80% of the 50 students who were informed since the beginning of the communication. The service team consists of 3 lecturers from the management department and students of the Digital Business Study Program, Management Department, FBE UII. In addition, several Maahad managers, lecturers, and students from the MM Study Program and PDIM Study Program were present.



Fig 2. Community service in Maahad Darul Fuqaha, Malaysia (2)

At the planning stage, it was carried out boldly through Zoom meetings or other communication channels (such as the telephone and the WhatsApp application). Discussions were held to understand the needs before implementing community services.

At the implementation stage, the agenda began with reading the holy verses of the Koran, followed by a friendly greeting between the service team and Maahad managers. The participants' meeting ranged in age from children to teenagers; the material focused more on self-empowerment, motivating that becoming an entrepreneur starts with self-discipline since childhood, maintaining trust honestly, carrying

out what is said so as not to disappoint others as in the introduction of the material starting from an icebreaking session of encouragement, introduction to entrepreneurship, introduction to the character of entrepreneurs through storytelling and ending by attracting participant participation to provide conclusions from what has been conveyed. The last is the closing, distribution of stationery packages, and taking pictures together. In addition to preparing materials related to self-empowerment, a complete stationery package of 40 pieces was also prepared to be distributed to participants, and ten reserves can be entrusted to the manager if anyone needs that stationery.

In implementing this service, we realized that the process felt short and no specific evaluation had been conducted, so the contribution felt far from satisfactory. This service still focuses on instilling the fundamentals of entrepreneurship. Considering that Maahad Darul Fuqaha's participants and administrators range from children to adults, enrichment activities and practical training oriented towards product and service production are crucial. Furthermore, continued guidance for child participants requires the assistance of a manager who also understands entrepreneurship and sustainable, independent living.

## CONCLUSION

The delivery of material related to entrepreneurship through self-empowerment characters has increased the joy and enthusiasm of the participants trained to introduce entrepreneurship. The characters delivered are not far from the intrinsic aspects inherent in Maahad Darul Fuqaha's foster children in their daily activities. So that the service participants become easy to absorb and motivated to develop individual character, and the desire to become entrepreneurs arises. This activity does not aim to make all students become entrepreneurs but to instill an understanding and spirit of entrepreneurship through self-empowerment. This understanding is given early on so that in the future, they can face economic threats and become more resilient in facing life. The students' enthusiasm in following the presentation of the material wrapped in a story about a King and a Jar of Honey was apparent. This can be seen from how the participants listened to the storytelling material and scrambled to answer every

question to ensure the material was received well.

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