

# Education for All: A Local SDG 4 Journey at Tambunan Bondulu Toboh Home

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## Abstract

SDG 4 Quality Education was one of the 17 global goals set by the United Nations in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with the main objective to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all. Marginalized groups are often disproportionately deprived of SDG 4's benefits due to various social, economic, and political barriers that hinder their access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities. Governments, international organizations, and civil society must undertake focused initiatives to address these inequities and advance inclusive education. The education program undertaken in Bondulu Toboh Children's Home was of a good initiative example that involves collaboration between the bi-partisan organization APPGM-SDG with the local education institutions. The collaborative effort that involves pooling resources and expertise can provide better learning opportunities for vulnerable communities to thrive academically and potentially break down the barriers of education inequalities. This research will primarily delve into analyzing the benefit of such an initiative that was aligned directly with SDG 4. Extending beyond that, this program can empower marginalized students to break the cycle of poverty and contribute positively to society's progress and development.

**Keywords:** Education, Local, SDG

## Introduction

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was endorsed by the UN in September 2015. It is a visionary and aspirational vision with the goals of fostering prosperity, conserving the environment, and ensuring social fairness for all countries and people. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a set of 17 interconnected objectives intended to guide humanity toward a more sustainable and equitable future by 2030 (United Nation, 2015). SDG 4, "Quality Education," stands out as a vital pillar of sustainable development because it recognizes the importance of inclusive and equitable education in empowering individuals and societies to thrive and adapt to a rapidly changing world.

Malaysia is dedicated towards achieving the SDGs by 2030 and particularly on provide comprehensive learning opportunities and systems. Moreover, the 12th Malaysia Plan indicated the emergence or increased Malaysia's quality education system (Fadzil et al.,2022). Despite these commendable efforts, Malaysia faces several hurdles in meeting SDG 4. Addressing regional differences in educational opportunities and outcomes, with a focus on rural and underprivileged communities, remains a goal. According to Mark (2013) not everyone has equal chances in life to succeed in school, and research has revealed that large inequalities exist depending on the socioeconomic and socio-demographic characteristics of families. In the Malaysian context, children living in orphanages are one of vulnerable groups of children in a society were less than satisfactory in which there are a problem on education although RM287 million from 1989 to 2018 was spend on children's well-being programs (Yaacob *et al.*, 2022). Hence, it is essential to provide better learning opportunities for fostering academic excellence and personal development to orphanages children especially in Rural area.

Higher learning institutions always find ways to convert their research outputs into the initiative to assist and uplift the communities to enhance their socioeconomic. According to Robinson et al., (2012), universities can offer a diverse range of possibilities and facilities, as well as resources and experience. They have a lot to offer disadvantaged communities, and university involvement with communities can enhance teaching, learning, and research. To promote knowledge sharing to marginalize children especially in rural area, Universiti Malaysia Sabah with the collaboration between the bi-partisan organization APPGM-SDG has organized education program undertaken in Bondulu Toboh Children's Home. Bondulu Toboh Children's Home, located in Tambunan, Sabah, is a dedicated facility that provides a safe and nurturing environment for orphaned and vulnerable children. This program aims to assist children at Bondulu Toboh Children's Home in becoming more motivated and confident in their examinations, as well as to incorporate effective learning techniques.

This paper, therefore, aims to assess the significance of such a program and to understand its impact and contributions to the broader goal of achieving inclusive and quality education for all. In this context, the educational program at Bondulu Toboh Children's Home stands as an exemplar initiative aimed at breaking barriers and ensuring community engagement between university-community led contributes to a brighter and more sustainable future for orphaned and vulnerable children.

### **Literature Review**

An orphan is defined by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) as a child under the age of 18 who has lost one or both parents to any cause of death. Meanwhile, according to Govender *et al.* (2014) there are two types of orphans: (i) actual orphans, who are children whose parents have died or have been missing for more than four years, and (ii) form orphans, who are children whose parents are still alive but are not living with them due to poverty, abandonment, or imprisonment.

In terms of orphanage children, Alfred *et al.*,(2018) conducted study for home for orphans and under-privileged children. This study's findings suggest an important connection between academic success, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, hence learning motivation. Meanwhile, emotional support influences academic performance as well as orphans' children's personal behaviour, social life, and living environment (Hamdaqa, 2019). According to Suryani and Soedarso (2020), life skill education fosters life values, which help orphans face

life's obstacles. The ability to self-educate, develop, and seek good life meaning can be a possible investment for orphans to thrive.

In order to ensure that students receive the most comprehensive education possible, the environment should be considered not just in terms of the learning process, but also by the teachers and the surrounding community. More could be done creatively, and one approach is to organize more educational programs that incorporate participation from various stakeholders. Previous study such as Azhar and Azman (2021) studies the effects of the Corporate Social Responsibility educational program from the perspective of the schools' pupils and school found out educational programmes also eased the financial burden of the school as well as providing benefits to the surrounding community. Meanwhile, Siew (2022) claims that mentor-mentee outreach program was able to develop creativity, problem solving, critical thinking, and teamwork skills among rural secondary school students; and to support students in achieving gains in STEM knowledge or skills, positive attitudes, and practices. A mentor-mentee outreach program was designed through a university-school collaboration to promote STEM education achievement in the participating rural secondary schools.

On the other hand, education's success is influenced not only by the process of education in schools and the availability of facilities and infrastructure, but also by the participation of the family and society. Fakhrudin (2019) suggests that non-formal education plays a significant role in enhancing community development in terms of education (school) and equity. Aminrad *et al.*, (2013) believed that a high level of awareness and knowledge, as well as a positive attitude of students, may have been achieved from respondents' families, teachers, media, private reading, and school curriculums. Bakar *et al.*, (2010) examine the learning environment factors influencing students' academic shows that achievement motivation was found strongly related to academic performance.

It is important to note that education goals as not isolated targets, but in interaction with the other Sustainable Development Goals, as outlined in SDG 17. Boeren (2019) stated that to achieve SDG 4 it is important for schools to collaborate and collaborate with a diverse range of stakeholders in the corporate and non-profit sectors, hence, promoting the SDG 17. According to Shabalala and Ngcwangu, (2021), higher education institutions (HEIs) and implementation of sustainable community engagement (CE) projects is important to accelerate the implementation of SDG 4.

### **Research Methodology**

This study will employ primary data analysis obtained through interviews and survey of questionnaires from the participants. This analysis will aid in the understanding of the learning gaps experienced by the marginalized group of students. Besides that, the evaluation on the effectiveness of the program will provide robust evidence supporting the need for more of such program to be conducted in the future. Before the program starts, preliminary questionnaires are given out to identify the learning gaps of the participants. Upon completion of the program, the same questionnaires are given out to examine the participants' learning experiences and to determine whether the program has proved to be effective in achieving their objectives. Besides that, an interview session was also conducted on the selected participants to obtain their feedback on the program conducted.

Figure 1 showed the survey questionnaires given out to the participants. The following questions are posed to the students in the questionnaires: (1) Level of understanding in the subject studied, (2) Able to use effective learning tips in the best possible way, (3) Ability and

confidence to answer exam questions, (4) The knowledge gained in learning topics, (5) Mastering the correct answering technique questions. Each of the questions are to measure the learning outcomes gained by the participants through the educational program. Three subjects which are considered as the critical subjects for students to master was selected in this education program. These three subjects consists of *Bahasa Melayu*, English language, and Mathematics which are necessary subjects for the students to achieve the basic 3R concept of learning (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic).




**We Care Programme: Uplift and Educational Support at Bondulu Children's Home**  
 Tarikh: 20 May 2023 (Saturday)  
 Tempat: Bondulu Toboh Children's Home, Tambunan  
 Masa: 8.00 am – 4.30 pm

**SOAL SELIDIK**

Sila nyatakan sejauh mana anda setuju dengan setiap kenyataan yang diberi dengan tandakan  
 SATU NOMBOR daripada skala 1 hingga 4 seperti di bawah :-  
 1 - Tidak memuaskan, 2 – Memuaskan, 3 – Baik, 4 – Cemerlang

No	Soalan	Sebelum Program				Selepas Program			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1	Tahap pemahaman dalam subjek yang dibelajari.		/						/
2	Berupaya menggunakan tips-tips pembelajaran efektif dengan sebaiknya.		/						/
3	Keupayaan dan keyakinan menjawab soalan-soalan peperiksaan.		/						/
4	Ilmu pengetahuan yang ada dalam topik-topik pembelajaran.		/						/
5	Memahami teknik menjawab soalan dengan betul.		/						/

Figure 1. Questionnaires

## Results

Based on the questionnaires survey analysis, the participants have overall reported gaining a good learning experience from the program. In the first question, the participants were reviewed based on their level of understanding obtained in the respective subjects taught in the program. Out of the total 22 participants surveyed, there was a discernible improvement in their level of understanding in each of the respective subjects. Following the program sessions, the majority of respondents had demonstrated improved ability to comprehend the topic with a deeper knowledge. Before participating the program, the students had reported a relatively low score of understanding with mostly having a level 3 (Good) understanding. Upon completing the modules, the participants were able to advance their learning scores to level 4 (Excellent). This provided robust empirical support that the program has been very effective in helping students to enhance their level of understanding for each of the module subjects. Figure 2 reflected the level of understanding scores by the participants before and after completing the modules.

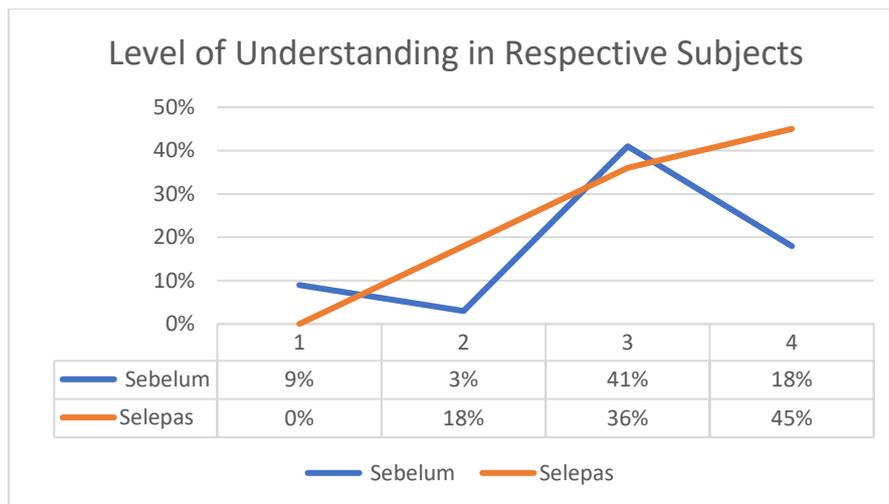


Figure 2. Level of Understanding in Respective Subjects

The second questionnaire explored the ability of the students to use effective learning tips obtained from the modules. Figure 3 showed the participants awareness and ability in using key learning tips before learning the modules in the program, whilst Figure 4 illustrated the improvement to the participants’ awareness and ability to utilize important learning tips that will be beneficial for their learning. A clear hike in students’ ability to enhance their learning abilities and academic performance by using these key important tips was clearly reflected in the analysis. In total, 82% of the respondents received respectable ratings of score 3 (Good) or score 4 (Excellent), indicating that they felt they had successfully applied the wide range of effective learning tactics that had been discussed throughout the program.

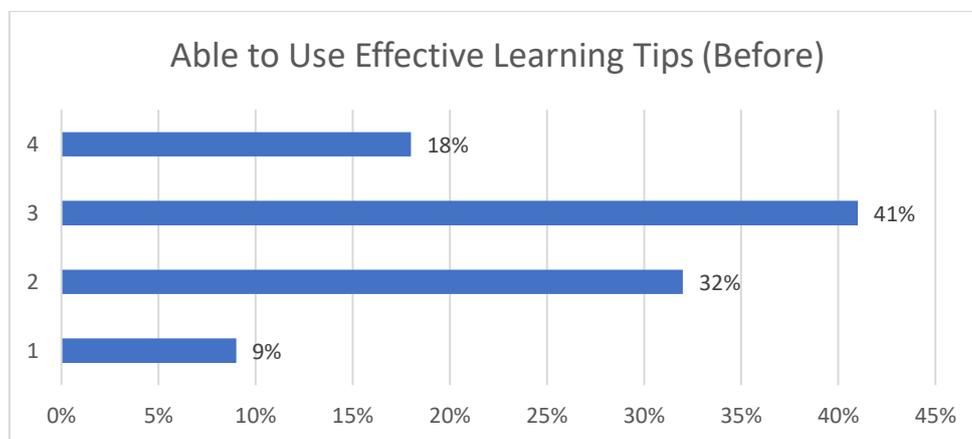


Figure 3. Able to Use Effective Learning Tips (Before)

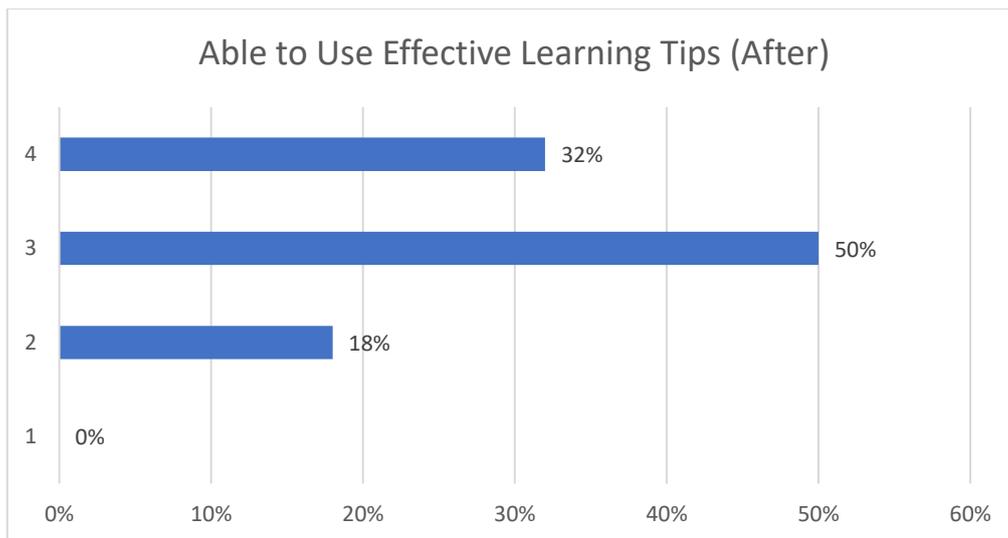


Figure 4. Able to Use Effective Learning Tips (After)

The subsequent question addressed the students’ ability and confidence in their examination before and after attending the program. As reflected in Figure 5, the students’ ability has immensely increases after participated respective modules of the program. Initially, only 50% of the participants has reported high ability and confidence in their examination. Attending the program has clearly uplifted the confidence and enhanced their ability in answering the examination with about 82% has demonstrated improvement with the higher scores of between 3 (Good) and 4 (Excellent). With a better understanding of the subjects, students would gain confidence in their abilities to tackle related obstacles and excel in their studies. Based on the interview session with the participants, the following conversation has been recorded:

*“The modules has greatly enriched my knowledge in the subjects of Bahasa Melayu, English and Mathematics.” – Participant 1*

*“I feel motivated and much confident to answer the exam questions with the help of the instructors today.” – Participant 2*

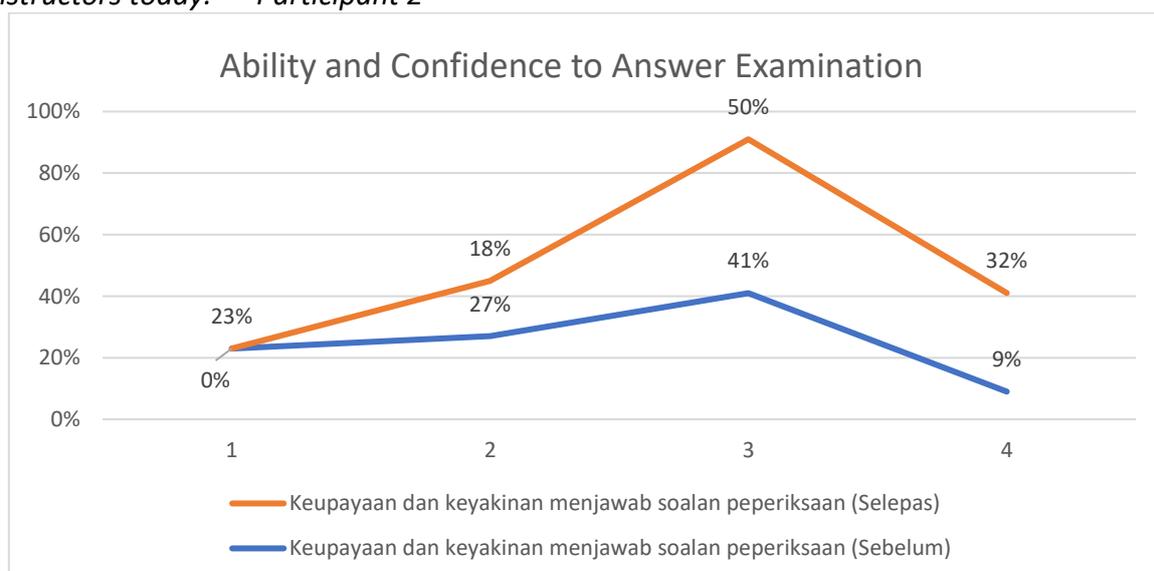


Figure 5. Ability and Confidence to Answer Examination

Next, the students were evaluated based on the knowledge gained from the program before and after. As illustrated in Figure 6, the students were reported to largely benefit from the program through significant knowledge enhancement. The program that delved into specific subjects has allowed students to gain deeper insights and knowledge beyond what they might learn in regular classroom settings. Prior to the workshop, only 46% of the participants demonstrated a proficient understanding of the subjects matter. However, this percentage significantly increased to 72% after the program session has ended. Meanwhile, Figure 7 demonstrated the students' ability in mastering the correct technique in answering questions. Following the workshop, only 27% of respondents said they had a firm understanding of the approach, down from 32% before. This could be due to the confusion of the students on the question asked. Nonetheless, an impressive 45% of the participants was found to be able to master the correct answering technique extremely well after attending the program.

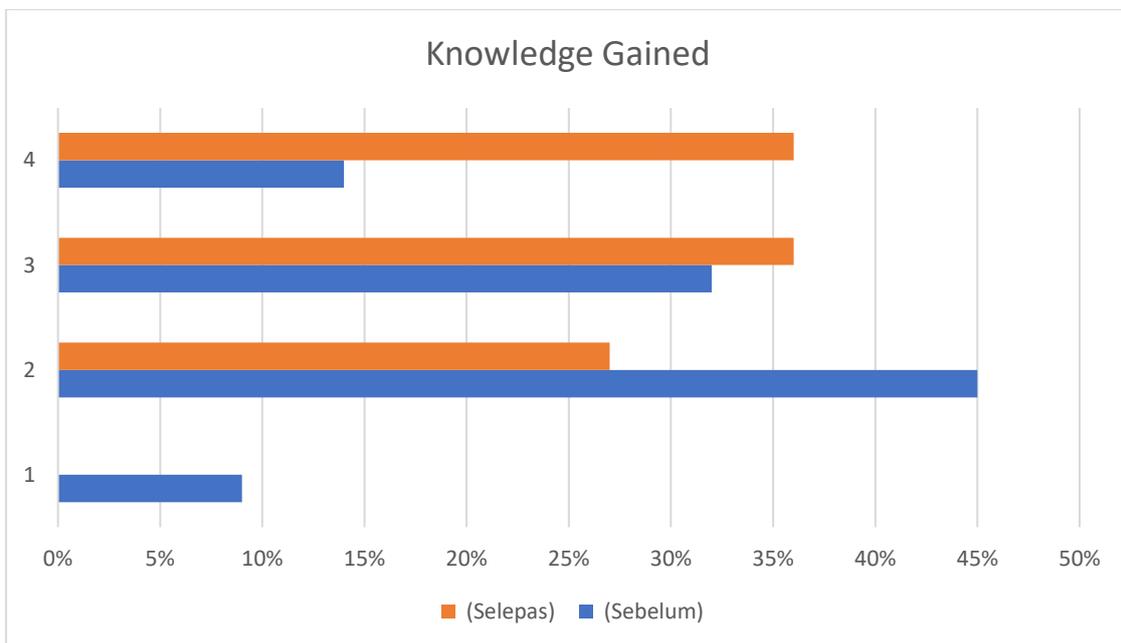


Figure 6. Knowledge Gained

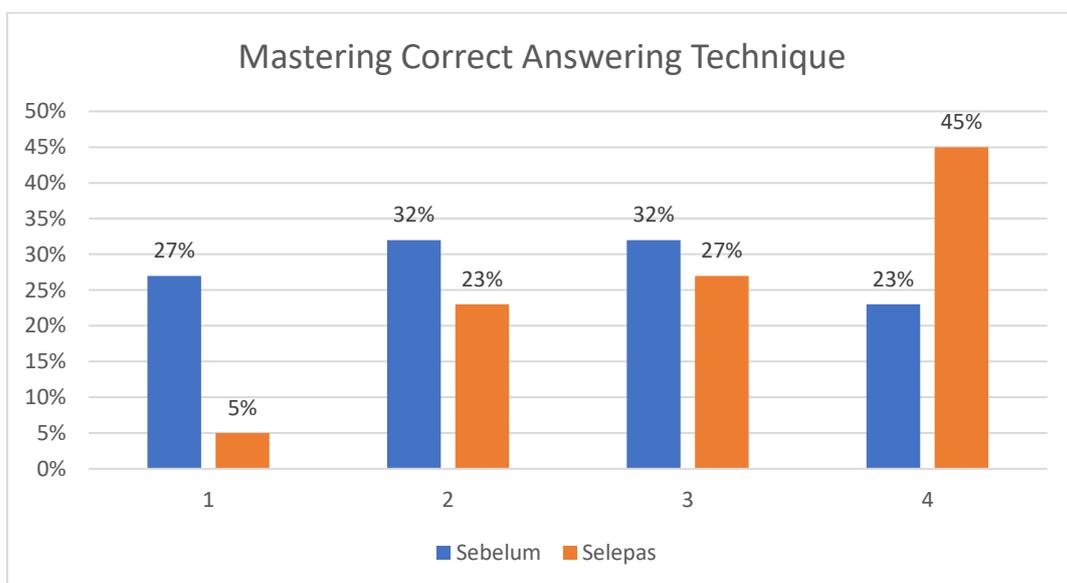


Figure 7. Mastering Correct Answering Technique

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the analysis on the primary data collected through the questionnaires survey and interview session has evidently pointed out the success of the program in advancing SDG 4 by promoting inclusive, quality education and learning opportunities for all, thereby contributing to sustainable development and creating a more equitable prosperous future. The education program organized by the university through collaboration build with the sponsor All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPGM-SDG) and local schools has helped in promoting inclusive education by providing program that specifically tailored to accommodate the needs of these marginalized group of students who may be in short of learning resources. By reaching out to the home, creating an inclusive learning environment created will help bridging the gap between the marginalized learners and others in the formal education system.

Besides that, the program allows initiative to address barriers to education by engagement with the local schools in advocating education. For instance, the program recognizes one of the factors that hinder access to education in the marginalized population lies at the lack of learning resources. Hence, learning materials has been provided to the students in the home. One of the essential requirements for a quality education depends on the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. Therefore, a highly trained educators are the keys to enhance students' understanding of the subjects. The program that involved highly experienced educators were able to effectively empowered the participants with knowledge. Besides that, the engagement with the local stakeholders has encourage active involvement of the local educators and established a strong collective efforts that pool resources, expertise and network which can further amplify the impact of such educational initiatives.

Finally, it can be observed that this program has further benefited through the gathering of valuable data on the educational outcomes and helps to identify what are the areas that require further improvement. The monitoring and evaluation of the program's impact has allowed adjustments and optimization to ensure the effective progress toward SDG 4. Education is a catalyst for sustainable development, as it equips individuals with knowledge about environmental conservation, health, and responsible citizenship. . The next generation of leaders who are socially and environmentally sensitive can be inspired by sustainable development concepts that can be incorporated into community education programs.

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