

Picking Up Opportunities, Organizing Hopes: Socialization of Smart Program to Choose the Future for Penabur High School Students Thanks to Tuapeijat

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ABSTRACT

Adolescents in island regions still face limited access to information regarding higher education, scholarship opportunities, and the risks of negative behaviors that may close their future opportunities. This condition underlies the implementation of the *Cerdas Memilih Masa Depan* program by Universitas Negeri Padang students through the Community Service Program (KKN) at SMA Penabur Berkat, Tuapeijat, Sipora Utara, Mentawai. The activity was conducted on July 6, 2025, involving 25 twelfth-grade students. The methods used were interactive lectures, group discussions, a simple interest-talent simulation, and question-answer sessions supported by PowerPoint presentations and concise modules. The results showed an increase in students' understanding of strategies for choosing majors and universities, knowledge of scholarship opportunities, and awareness of avoiding risky behaviors such as early marriage, drugs, and online gambling. This program demonstrates that participatory-based socialization is effective in increasing the motivation of Mentawai adolescents and has the potential to be developed as a sustainable strategy in preparing a more visionary young generation.

Keywords: *Adolescents, Higher Education, Motivation, Scholarships, Mentawai*

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a transition period from childhood to adulthood which is characterized by various changes, both physical, psychological, and emotional (Lubis et al., 2023). Adolescence is divided into three periods, namely early adolescence (10–13 years), middle adolescence (14–16 years), and late adolescence (17–21 years) (Sulhan et al., 2024). In this phase, adolescents tend to be in unstable conditions so they are susceptible to various deviant behaviors. Oktonika (2020) states that this period is a period of self-adjustment to many factors of change, which if not directed properly can cause negative behaviors such as skipping school, loitering, fights, promiscuity, and drug abuse (Jasmisari & Herdiansah, 2022).

One of the solutions that many offer to reduce this problem is through education. Wahidin (2017) explained that education plays an important role in the formation of adolescent character. Education is understood as a conscious and planned effort to create a learning process that allows students to develop their potential optimally, both in spiritual aspects, self-control, intelligence, and skills (Pristiwanti et al., 2022). With quality education, adolescents are expected to avoid deviant behavior while having a clearer future direction. Investment in education has also been proven to be able to improve skills, open up economic opportunities, and facilitate social mobility (Yuniarto, 2016).

To continue to higher education, adolescents need strong motivation to learn. If a person gets the right motivation or drive to achieve the desired goal, then extraordinary energy is released, so that unexpected results are achieved (Hanum & Rijal, 2020). Sardiman (2016)

defines motivation as an effort to create certain conditions that encourage individuals to do something, even when reluctance arises. However, the reality is that not all students have enough motivation to continue their studies. Research by Yuliana et al. (2021) found that some students think that college is just a waste of time, effort, and money, without job security. This view has an impact on the low interest in continuing higher education. Nationally, interest in continuing higher education is still low. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (2024) shows that although 30.85% of the Indonesian population completed high school/vocational school equivalent, only 10.20% managed to complete higher education.

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The disparity is also evident between urban and rural areas: 13.39% of urban residents have completed higher education, while in rural areas only 5.58%. One of the areas facing this challenge is the Mentawai Islands, especially Tua Peijat in North Sipora District. Geographically, Mentawai is a relatively isolated archipelago with limited access to transportation and information, where to reach the provincial capital must be taken by sea or air (BPS, 2024). The portrait of students in this area shows a high enthusiasm for learning, but on the other hand they still lack information regarding the university admission path, types of scholarships, and career prospects from certain majors.

Based on these considerations, Penabur Berkas High School in Tua Peijat was chosen as the location of the activity because it is one of the high schools that is quite representative and has final grade students who are in the phase of determining the direction of education next. For this reason, students of the Real Work Lecture (KKN) of Padang State University carry out the Smart Choice of the Future program as a form of educational intervention that

Relevant and on target. This program aims to: (1) equip students with insights into the selection of majors and universities that suit their potential, (2) introduce various national and international scholarship opportunities along with strategies to get them, and (3) increase adolescents' awareness of the dangers of behavior that can close the future, such as early marriage, drugs, and online gambling.

It is hoped that with this program, students of SMA Penabur Berkas Tua Peijat, North Sipora, Mentawai will gain a positive new understanding of the importance of higher education as a way to expand opportunities, have higher motivation to continue their studies, and have the courage to design a better future.

METHOD

This community service activity was carried out through the *Smart Choosing the Future program* on July 6, 2025 at Penabur Berkas High School, Tua Peijat, North Sipora District, Mentawai Islands Regency. The participants of the activity amounted to 25 grade XII students who were in the phase of determining the direction of education after finishing high school. The selection of this school is based on the consideration that final grade students are a group that is at a critical stage in determining educational and career choices, so they need adequate information and motivation.

The method used is participatory and educational by emphasizing the active involvement of students. The implementation of activities includes the delivery of material through interactive lectures, group discussions, simple interest-talent simulations, and question and answer sessions. Interactive lectures are used to explain the subject matter which includes the importance of higher education, strategies for choosing majors and colleges, national and international scholarship opportunities, as well as future inhibiting factors such as early marriage, drugs, and online gambling. Group discussions and Q&A sessions provide opportunities for students to express their views, dig deeper into information, and tailor the material to their own experiences. In addition, interest-talent

simulations are carried out so that students better understand their suitability with the major to be chosen.

To support the effectiveness of the activity, KKN students use PowerPoint media, concise modules, and simple worksheets filled out by students. The effectiveness of the program was observed through student involvement in discussions, enthusiasm when asking questions, as well as brief reflections given at the end of the activity. With this approach, it is hoped that socialization activities will not only be informative, but also able to build critical awareness and motivation for students to design a better future.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Smart Choosing the Future *socialization activity* was held on July 6, 2025 at Penabur Blessing High School, Tua Peijat, North Siparo, Mentawai Islands Regency, involving 25 grade XII students. The activity lasted for one day in the classroom with a conducive atmosphere and full of enthusiasm from the participants.

The material was delivered in the form of presentations using PowerPoint media which were divided into several main themes, namely: (1) curiosity, new knowledge, and new perspectives; (2) the importance of higher education as a way to expand opportunities; (3) strategies for choosing majors and universities; (4) national and international scholarship opportunities; and (5) factors that can close the future, such as early marriage, drugs, and online gambling.

In the early part, students are introduced to the idea that the world is wider than the environment in which they live. Inspirational quotes and illustrations of cultural diversity managed to attract the attention of students, some of them even expressed a desire to migrate and continue their education outside the region. This is in accordance with the view of Lubis et al. (2023) that adolescence is a period of identity search that needs to be directed towards new positive experiences.

Material on higher education as a long-term investment also received special attention. BPS data (2024) which shows significant differences in job opportunities between high school and college graduates makes students better understand the value of education. In the discussion, some students stated that they previously thought that lectures were just a waste of money and time, a view that is in line with the findings of Yuliana et al. (2021). However, after socialization, students began to see that higher education actually paved the way for better opportunities.

In the strategy session for choosing a major, students follow a simple simulation by writing down their personal interests and then matching them with relevant college majors. This activity gave rise to interesting discussions, as students began to realize the importance of compatibility between their own potential and study choices. These results support the idea of Pristiwanti et al. (2022) who emphasize education as a conscious effort to develop individual potential.

The material on scholarships is the most in-demand part. Information about KIP Lectures, Featured Scholarships, and overseas programs such as MEXT and GKS raises many questions from students. They seemed enthusiastic about asking about the requirements, selection stages, and strategies to prepare themselves from an early age. This response shows that there is a need for information that they did not previously obtain, both from the school and the surrounding environment.

The concluding section discusses factors that inhibit adolescents' futures, such as early marriage, drugs, and online gambling. Some students relate this material to the reality around them, for example the case of early marriage that is still encountered in social environments. This situation reinforces the relevance of the study by Jasmisari and Herdiansah (2022) which emphasized that adolescents are very vulnerable to deviant behavior if they are not given clear directions.

Overall, this socialization activity gave positive results. First, students gain a new understanding of higher education pathways and scholarship opportunities. Second, students begin to realize the importance of careful future planning by considering interests and talents. Third, students have a better awareness of behavioral risks that can hinder the future. This result strengthens the view of Wahidin (2017) that education can be a strategic solution to shape the character of adolescents while directing them towards a better future.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the implementation of *the Intelligent Choosing the Future* socialization activity in Tua Peijat, North Siparo, Mentawai Islands Regency, it can be concluded that:

The activity succeeded in increasing students' understanding of the importance of higher education planning, major selection, and national and international scholarship opportunities. Students show high enthusiasm in participating in activities, especially in discussions related to scholarships and career prospects, which indicates a new motivation to continue their education. This socialization also increases students' awareness of factors that can close the future, such as early marriage, drugs, and online gambling, so that they are more aware of these risks. The advantage of this activity is the use of participatory methods (interactive lectures, discussions, and questions and answers) that make students more actively involved in the learning process. The disadvantage of this activity is the limited time so that the discussion of the material cannot be carried out in more depth, and there is no follow-up in the form of long-term assistance. In the future, similar activities can be developed through collaboration with educational institutions, local governments, and non-profit organizations to provide broader scholarship information, career mentoring programs, and ongoing mentoring for adolescents in the archipelago.

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