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The Role of Probation Officer in the Implementation of Life Skills Education Programs for Child Clients at the Bapas Semarang

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the role of Probation officer in implementing the Life Skills Education Program to support the social reintegration process of child clients at the Bapas Semarang This study was motivated by the national trend of an increase in the number of correctional students, which reached 1,639 cases in 2023, as well as 146 child clients under the guidance of Probation officer at Bapas Semarang. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method, where data is collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and secondary document analysis. The results of the study show that Probation officer have a strategic role throughout the social reintegration cycle, from the pre-adjudication to post-adjudication stages. In this context, Bapas organizes a Life Skills Education Program, in which Probation officer play an important role in providing guidance on independence and job training. The main challenges faced include budget constraints, limited human resources of competent facilitators, and low levels of parental cooperation in the community research assessment process.

Keywords: Probation Officer, Life Skills Education, Social Reintegration, Child Clients

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Introduction

Children are the nation's most important asset because they will be the successors of values, culture, and innovation that will determine the direction and progress of society in the future. According to the Law on Child Protection Article 1 Number 23 of 2002, a child is an individual who has not reached the age of 18 (eighteen), including children who are still in the womb. During the transition period, children may experience several changes that can encourage them to engage in positive or negative behavior (Al, 2021). This negative behavior makes children in transition very vulnerable to various forms of delinquency (Tianingrum Agus & Nurjannah, 2019). According to the Directorate General of Corrections in Ramadhano (2024), the number of child prisoners, known as Anak Didik Pemasyarakatan (Andikpas), has increased over the five-year period from 2020 to 2024, with the highest number recorded in 2023 at 1,639 Andikpas. Meanwhile, at the Semarang Class I Correctional Facility, there are 146 child clients, consisting of 145 boys and 1 girl.

Comprehensive handling involving various parties is necessary in dealing with juvenile delinquency issues beyond the legal aspect. One form of this is providing children with social reintegration as a form of alternative or retribution in accordance with the provisions of Law No. 22 of 2022. Law No. 35 of 2014 provides confirmation regarding the protection of children with the aim of guaranteeing their rights, including the right to education. One form of education that can be provided

is non-formal education. Non-formal education that can be implemented in correctional facilities is life skills education with the aim of improving life skills. Exploring clients' potential in the realm of non-formal education through the implementation of training activities in independence guidance provides benefits for the future world of work, namely by increasing career opportunities through creativity and skills (Wahyu & Kriswanto, 2024). In a national journal (Farida, 2019), explains that life skills education has a broader meaning than just vocational skills or work skills education.

In this process, child clients are accompanied by Probation officer, also known as Social Workers *in the Correctional Field.* The guidance provided by probation officer covers various aspects, including social skills, education, mental health, and job search (FT Cullen, 2017). Probation officer is very important for the successful implementation of life skills education programs. Ochoa et al. highlight the importance of community involvement in programs designed to prevent substance abuse among adolescents, which integrate skills such as self-management and social competence (Ochoa, et al.). This study aims to determine the role of Probation officer in the Implementation of Life Skills Education for the Social Reintegration of Child Clients at Correctional Centers, the forms of life skills education programs for child clients at the Semarang Correctional Center, and the challenges faced by Probation officer.

Method

In this study on the Role of Social Advisor in the Implementation of Life Skills Education Programs for the Social Reintegration of Child Clients at the Class I Correctional Facility in Semarang, the method used was qualitative research, which aims to understand individual experiences, group life, society, history, behavior, organizational functions, and social activities to help solve problems based on the participants' perspectives (Dr. Bambang Rustanto, 2015). In describing the implementation, roles, and challenges in this case study,of Sukmadinata (2010) it is in accordance with the opinion .

The researcher collected data through observation, interviews, case studies, and field notes to gather in-depth data (Moleong, 2018). The data sources for this study were primary data sources, namely three social guidance advisor, two child clients at the Semarang Class I Bapas, one manager, and one head of the child client social guidance subsection. Meanwhile, the secondary data sources were statistical data on the number of employees, the number of child clients, photos, data documents on life skills education programs, and documentation of life skills education programs, regarding the profile of the institution, and the attendance list of child clients during the implementation of the life skills education program at the Semarang Class I Bapas.

Results and Discussion

1. Results

a. Form of the Life Skills Education Program

Andikpas and perpetrators of crime generally lack skills and education (Vandala, 2019) . The life skills education program aims to improve the life skills of child clients and enable them to successfully reintegrate into society, find employment, avoid reoffending, and become productive members of society (Davis, L., Steele, J., Bozick, R., Williams, M., Turner, S., Miles, J., 2014) . The program includes independence guidance and work training. Independence guidance helps children discover and develop their abilities. Job training provides practical experience in vocational skills. According to the views of Kakupa & Mulenga (2021) , providing vocational skills will help residents of correctional facilities improve themselves and easily reintegrate into society after their release. The life skills education program that has been implemented at the Semarang Class I Correctional Facility is diverse, including technical skills training, hydroponic cultivation training in line with the national security agenda of food self-sufficiency, food and beverage business training, cupping therapy, and barbershop training. Life skills play an important role in the life of every individual, and the cultivation of life skills makes them more adaptable and better prepared to face failure (Dr. Aswathy Mary Prince & Dr. Saroj Yadav, 2025).

b. The Role of Social Advisor

Researchers found that social workers at the Semarang Class I Correctional Facility have the task of assisting child clients in several stages, as follows:

Table 1
Stages and Roles of Probation officer in the Social Reintegration Process of Child Clients

Stage	Role of probation officer in the Social Reintegration Process of Child Clients
Pre-adjudication	The stage before the court hearing, which involves community research and assistance with the investigation of child clients
Adjudication	Assistance during the trial until the judge's decision
Post-adjudication	guidance, assimilation supervision, and guidance programs at LPAS/LPROBATION OFFICERA/PSMP.

Table 2
Stages and Roles of probation officer in the Implementation of Life Skills Education Programs

Stage	Role of probation officer in the Implementation of Life Skills Education Programs
Planning	Probation officer obtains information about clients based on pre-adjudication, namely through litmas. The program plan is developed to include work skills, work/production training (LATKERPRO), and guidance based on interests/talents, then discussed and approved in a meeting of the Correctional Observation Team (TPP).
Implementation	Implementation is carried out through planned training activities, with probation officer coordinating with relevant parties while monitoring compliance with general/specific requirements of juvenile clients.
Evaluation	At the evaluation stage, the probation officer assesses the juvenile client based on several aspects.

The table above shows that from the beginning to the end of the stage, children facing legal proceedings are accompanied by a correctional counselor. According to Sunariyah et al. (2025), based on their research, correctional advisor are functional officers at the Correctional Center who have a strategic role in the criminal justice system, particularly in providing social assistance to correctional clients. This role is carried out throughout all stages of the judicial process, from pre-adjudication to post-adjudication, with a primary focus on supporting the social reintegration of clients after serving their sentences.

c. Challenges faced by Probation Officers

In practice, the results of the study show that Probation Officers at the Correctional Center still face various challenges and obstacles that have the potential to hinder the optimization of their role as previously described . These obstacles include low levels of participation and cooperation from the families of juvenile clients, particularly in the assessment and assistance process, as well as budget constraints that impact the effectiveness of services. Additionally, the dynamics of regulatory adjustments, particularly the implementation of Law Number 1 of 2023 governing alternative sentencing, require the adaptation of policies and work practices of Community Guidance Officers to align with the new legal provisions.

2. Discussion

a. The Role of Probation officer in the Life Skills Education Implementation Program

Probation officer play a strategic role in the correctional system, especially in supporting the rehabilitation and social reintegration process for child clients and prisoners. Based on Umronah's (2020) view, Probation officer have a number of roles, including: (1) helping to strengthen client motivation, (2) providing space for emotional expression, (3) conveying necessary information, (4) assisting in the decision-making process, (5) helping clients understand the situation they are facing, (6) providing support for change in the social environment, (7) assisting in the process of reorganizing behavior patterns, and (8) providing assistance in the context of transfer of authority. These roles are carried out in three domains, namely micro, mezzo, and macro, each of which requires different and specific approaches and roles.

In other respects, social advisor also have a role in providing guidance to clients as stipulated in Article 55 of Law Number 22 of 2022 concerning Corrections. This guidance is aimed at supporting the improvement of clients' mental, spiritual, intellectual, and skill qualities, as well as their independence. In order to provide education as a form of increasing skills and independence, clients are given training provided to prisoners and correctional students as stipulated in Government Regulation Number 32 of 1999 concerning Procedures for Implementing the Rights of Correctional Residents. According to Anderson in Dr. Shadreck P.M. (2025), vocational training programs have been introduced in most correctional institutions to provide inmates with skills and knowledge that can help them find employment and facilitate their reintegration into society after release. Life skills education is one form of the life skills improvement program provided by the Correctional Center for juvenile clients, as it aims to empower individuals to develop skills that can help improve the economic welfare of clients (Sucipto, N. R., & Sutarto, 2015). Exploring the potential of clients in the realm of non-formal education through the implementation of training activities on independence guidance provides benefits for the future world of work, namely by increasing career opportunities through creativity and skills (Nirantara Sasmita et al., 2024). Community independence does not form on its own, but rather through a planned process that requires empowerment (Marcella & Kriswanto, 2024).

There are two types of life skills education programs implemented at the Semarang Class I Correctional Institution, namely Independence Guidance and Job Training. The independence guidance and job training programs are aimed at developing the talents and skills of inmates so that they have the ability to reintegrate as free and responsible members of society. The planning and evaluation processes for this program are carried out by a special community guidance committee. Program planning is carried out through meetings before the initial budget is drawn up at the beginning of the year when the program is held. Planning includes activity planning, preparing materials, venues, speakers or facilitators, and collaborators. The program implementation design is tailored to the vision and mission of the head of government, current trends, sometimes according to needs, and of course the budget.

In its implementation, the life skills education program uses principles from (Hidayanto, Dwi Nugroho, Zainab Hanim Ham, Budi Rahardjo, Sunarno & Mangkuwiyata, 2020), which are oriented towards the development of knowledge, skills, independence, and adaptive abilities. The facilitators of the independence guidance program usually come from other collaborative partners who are experts in their fields. Probation officer also play a role in assisting and supervising child clients as stipulated in Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Criminal Justice System for Children, 2012. The life skills education program is carried out alternately and is called the BRILIAN BASSAMA (Personality and Independence Guidance Tour of Bapas Class I Semarang) program. This is because the working area of Bapas Class I Semarang covers 5 regions, namely Kendal, Demak, Semarang City, Semarang Regency, and Salatiga.

The evaluation stage is carried out by PROBATION OFFICER based on the results of supervision and assistance that has been carried out. Program and child client evaluations play a

role in improving the quality of learning by identifying what is effective and what is ineffective in the implementation process (Tania et al., 2024). In the context of correctional education, empowerment must be viewed in terms of the extent to which the education program helps prisoners acquire the skills and abilities to control their lives without infringing on the rights of others (Rowlands, 1997) . In addition, discussions and evaluation results can also be conducted with facilitators and relevant partners. Probation officer will provide evaluations based on several aspects of the child client's perseverance, attitude development, and discipline.

b. Challenges Faced by Probation officer in Implementing Life Skills Education Programs

In carrying out their duties and roles, social workers at Bapas Class I Semarang encounter challenges. Based on interviews conducted by the author, it can be seen that the obstacles faced by social workers in implementing the life skills education program are as follows:

a) Limited Budget
   In preparing the program plan, the special program committee team stated that funding was an obstacle for them. Limited operational costs will certainly have an impact on the running of the program. Meanwhile, the performance of Bapas Class I Semarang is quite extensive, covering 5 regions. This requires a budget from before the life skills education program and covers the start of social reintegration, namely the initial pre-adjudication to post-adjudication stages.
b) Limited Human Resources
   The human resources referred to in the implementation of the life skills education program are facilitators who have competencies in line with the training provided. In practice, the Probation officer at Bapas Class I Semarang anticipate these resource limitations by collaborating with government and private agencies that have expertise and experience in the specified training fields, so that the program can run optimally.
c) Lack of Parental Awareness
   Probation officer still face obstacles in the form of a lack of openness and cooperation from the parents of their clients in the community research (litmas) process, even though litmas aims to gather information and identify children's interests and talents as a basis for developing program recommendations.

Conclusion

Probation officer at Bapas Semarang play a comprehensive strategic role in the implementation of the Life Skills Education Program to support the social reintegration of child clients, through assistance provided from the pre-adjudication to post-adjudication stages, particularly through life skills education programs (independence guidance and job training). However, in its implementation, various obstacles are still encountered, including budget constraints, a shortage of competent facilitators, and low levels of parental cooperation in the social research process (litmas). Based on these findings, this study recommends strengthening policies, increasing budget allocations, and strengthening cross-sectoral synergies to optimize the implementation of life skills education as an effort to prevent recidivism and increase the independence of Correctional Students.

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