

Building learning spaces for kids from B40 families



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Architecture and education students adding some final touches to brighten the wall in the learning space.

Taylor's University students worked together to create in-house learning spaces for 12 underprivileged families at the Lembah Subang 2 People's Housing Project (PPR).

Called The Nest, this provides children from the B40 families with a comfortable space to study.

Currently in its second series, this iteration of The Nest caught the attention of the government and an official body, recently partnering with the Housing and Local Government Ministry under the National Community Policy together with the Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association (Rehda), to expand their initiatives to more families across the Klang Valley.

The Nest, first initiated in 2018, aims to create intentional learning spaces inside low-cost housing units for children to have an uplifted learning experience.

The inspiration stemmed from research efforts to rejuvenate Klang City, initiated by the School of Architecture, Building and Design (SABD) to develop sustainable strategies to revive the town.

For these children, learning at home is often challenging as they do not have a space to call their own.

We wanted to address this issue by creating a space that can increase their interest and motivation to study.

We challenged not only ourselves but also our Taylor's University students on whether we would be able to create a learning space for these children to study comfortably - all with a limited budget of RM500 per house," said SABD lecturer Dr Camelia May Li Kusumo.

SABD joined forces with the School of Education (SOEd), to create learning spaces to encourage learning at home.

Together with the ministry, Camelia, and SOEd senior lecturer Hema Letchamanan approached the leaders of each block at the PPR Lembah Subang 2, going children and interested to take part in this project.

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Rarity > use it is our responsibility to create a conducive and safe environment for children to study," said Hema.

means for Taylor's University to learn to interact with different communities, be more connected and use t

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Planning began earlier this year, with the identification of the families. Once this was done, Camelia and Hema, along with the student teams, paid a visit to the families to assess their current living space. Subsequently, in early August, 130 students – with the aid of three lecturers – from Taylor’s iABD and SOEd, broke into a dozen smaller groups to roll out their plans in renovating a learning space.

Leading up to the renovation, students proposed ideas to their designated families to improve the space; sourcing the materials from relevant associates. Students assigned to their respective families also extended work on minor renovations around the space.

Second year Architecture student Wong Zhao Xian who is also a student group leader, said: “When we first got the assignment to help one of the families to build a learning space, we figured that it would be a straightforward process.”

They quickly realised this project was no walk in the park. It was not long before multiple challenges surfaced during the execution stage.

We had no idea the extent of our family’s lifestyle until we met them and saw the space we were going to work with.

We decided as a group, to spend some time to get to know our assigned family, do more research on working within a small space and do our best to help them fully utilise the space we helped create,” said Wong.

Jan Jun Hui who is pursuing his degree in education, said he was proud to be a part of this project.

In spreading awareness on The Nest, Taylor’s University students from its School of Media and Communications organised an exhibition in the neighbourhood to showcase the students’ work and raise awareness on the importance of having a dedicated learning space inside every house.

At the exhibition, a consultation booth was set up for residents who were not part of the project. The residents brought along photographs of the rooms in their houses and the students offered advice and suggestions on how learning spaces could be created via Do-It-Yourself guidelines prepared by the students.

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