

Malacca State, Malaysia

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Refugee Children Back to School - Oral Health Care with Love

There are approximately 2000 or more registered refugees in Malacca, but there are very few refugee education and learning centers there. Referring to the experience of Tzu Chi Selangor Branch in running refugee schools, Malacca volunteers intend to run schools for the refugee children. There is a location in Semabok where Rohingya refugees have gathered. The village head Mohammad Hashim Bin Jafar and the parents planned

to rent a wooden house as a classroom. In December 2021, a team of volunteers made visits and assessed the situation, which led to the joint operation between Tzu Chi and the village to set up a refugee education and learning center. That center officially opened in January 2022.

A sample of Master Cheng Yen's philosophy: "Teaching with courtesy and nurturing with virtue. Education is not only for knowledge, more so for moral education, building a strong foundation from childhood, and inspiring humanism and the principle of life." Xu YuPing, a Tzu Chi volunteer in charge of the refugee project, expressed hope during these difficult times and took steps to accompany refugees and help cultivate their knowledge, skills and character



To help refugee children, Malacca volunteers assisted in the establishment of an education and learning center. Dr. Huang Yueji (right) and Dr. Wu Meijie (left) from Tzu Chi International Medical Association Malaysia came to examine the children.

Dr. Wu Meijie taught oral hygiene, and the students listened attentively. On the right is teacher Mohamma Harun of the Education Learning Center.



education, following Master Cheng Yen's philosophy.

After 2 months, religious culture and academic courses officially opened for registration. On March 23, dentists Huang Yueji, and Wu Meijie from Malaysian Tzu Chi Medical Association came to examine the children and provide oral hygiene education. The dedicated volunteers also specially prepared cute little gifts to ease the nervousness of the children.

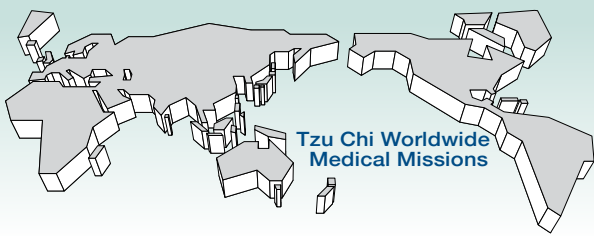
Mohamma Hashmi, the head of the village, said: "The refugee family's livelihood is difficult. Adults can tolerate toothaches as much as possible, or they can take painkillers. Children have never been to a dental clinic because they cannot afford the high costs. Today the dentists came for the first time. It was also the first time for the children to see a dentist."

When the children lay down on the dental chairs, many were too stiff to move, and some trembled; some opened their mouths wide and stared at the doctor; some closed their eyes tightly. Doctors and volunteers tried to

ease the children's fear with soft words, and asked teacher Mohamma Harun to assist in translation, so that children could rest assured and understand the doctor's explanation and reminders on dental hygiene.

During the epidemic, it is essential to carry out the epidemic prevention measures. The two dentists highly valued the importance of medical safety. Every time they examined a child, they utilized new instruments and a new pair of gloves to avoid the risk of cross-infection. A total of 22 children received dental checkups. Dr. Huang Yueji created detailed dental medical records for each child for follow-up care.

After the examinations, Dr. Wu Meijie taught the children how to brush their teeth correctly, and urged them to develop the habit of brushing twice a day - once in the morning and once at night before bed time. During the interaction, she found that some children had never used a toothbrush or toothpaste. Teacher Mohamma Harun added that some Rohingya people in rural areas use



their fingers as toothbrushes and use a kind of local powder to clean their teeth. So some children follow these adult practices.

Volunteers have prepared a set of toothbrushes and toothpaste for each of the children in advance. Dr. Huang Yueji reminded the children that the children's toothpaste, with a strong fragrance, is only for cleaning purposes and should not be mistaken for snacks. The dental hygiene education course debuted for the first time today. Considering that the children still need time to practice, Dr. Huang Yueji arranged to come again in April to guide the children and review their teeth brushing practices in person.

He will then observe them, guide them with the correct tooth care skills, and let the students learn how to protect their teeth with good oral hygiene.

On April 3rd, the village head Mohamma Hashmi and teacher Mohamma Harun came to Tzu Chi Malacca branch to share their experiences at the Refugee Education and Learning center with the volunteers in the Jing Si hall, and to express appreciation to Tzu Chi and the volunteers. The material and spiritual care for children's education will light up their futures with love, so that Rohingya children can grow up with dreams and embrace a better life.



Each child was given a set of toothbrush and toothpaste to learn about oral health care.