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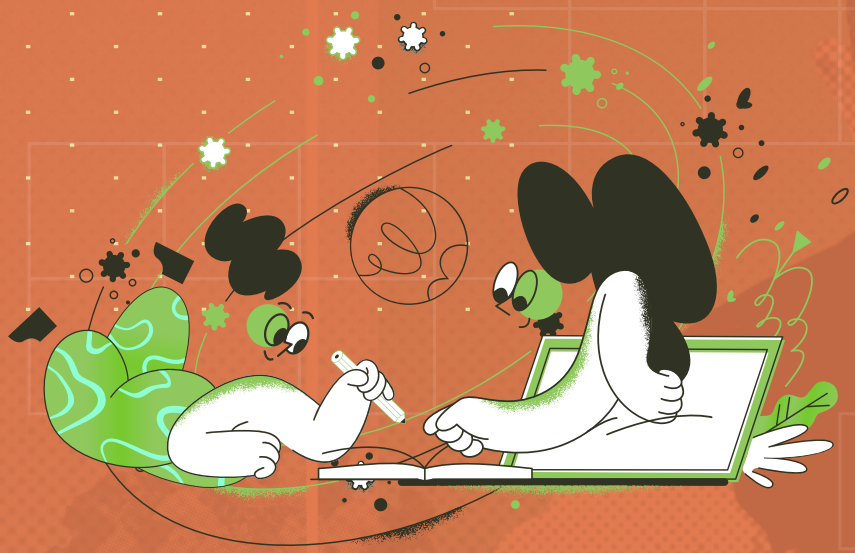
Post-Covid Education Recovery in Malaysia: **Insights from Students, Teachers, School Leaders and Parents**



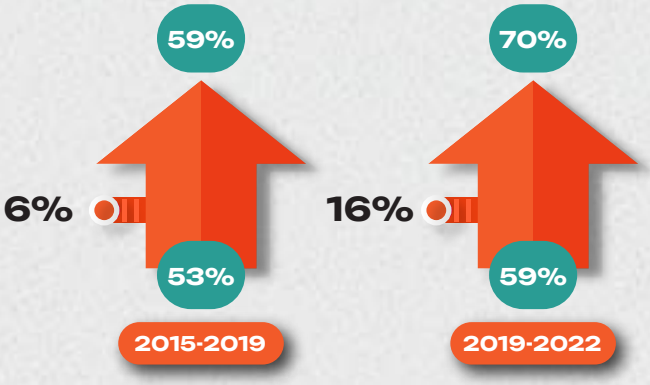
Post-Covid Education Recovery in Malaysia: Insights from Students, Teachers, School Leaders and Parents

The Research Project was designed and conceived by LeapEd in collaboration with researchers from Monash University, Malaysia.

The Study took place in the wake of unprecedented global learning disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Findings were presented on 17 August 2023, with the venue kindly sponsored by UEM at Mercu UEM. The event was part of a thought leadership initiative by LeapEd's PACE (Partnerships, Advocacy, Collaboration in Education) Forum, which included invitees from a wide range of stakeholders, including officials from the Ministry of Education (MOE), Teachers, Principals, corporate leaders, NGOs, parents and students.

Scope:

Nature of learning disruption resulting from the "school to home" and "home to school" transition from the perspective of Students, Teachers, School Leaders & Parents.



Source: World Bank

Learning poverty rates track progress towards achieving the United Nations SDG #4

43%
Pre-pandemic Learning Poverty rate

42%
Not achieving the MPL in reading by the end of primary school (2019)

This Research Project is believed to be the largest education study of its kind ever undertaken in Malaysia outside of the Ministry of Education in 2022

90 Trust Schools (Public Schools)

11 States

16,000 Students (10-17 years old)

2,565 Teachers

176 School Leaders (Principals and Senior Assistant)

6,528 Parents

Bilingual online survey administered onsite (29 Aug - 30 Nov 2022)

Key Findings

STUDENTS

Secondary: 59%
Primary: 72%

Happy to be back at school

35% feel they are not learning more

27% struggling to catch up

32% concerned about learning loss

>50% school closures hurt academic performance Maths, English, BM)

68% not receiving extra support from teachers

TEACHERS & SCHOOL LEADERS

<20% concerned about learning loss

90% satisfied with measures to minimise learning loss

80% Worried about learning gaps widening among B40

70% 84% hopeful of learning recovery

60% 55% students having difficulty with reading

81% >55% students having difficulty in writing

60% 70% "Very good" financial status

PARENTS

B40
Non-B40

44% 38% concerned about learning loss

47% 43% trust teachers

81% 88% satisfied with measures to minimise learning loss

80% 79% hopeful of learning recovery

38% 32% children having difficulty with reading

49% 54% children having difficulty with writing

26% 52% "Very good" financial status

Key Conclusions

DISSONANCE

between students, teachers, school leaders and parental perceptions

32%

38-44%

are worried about learning loss

<20%

are significantly less worried about learning loss

68%

feel insufficiently supported, indicating misaligned expectations and unmet needs.

DISCONNECT

between teacher perceptions and observations

~85%-90%

are satisfied with measures to minimise learning loss

50-85%

are struggling with reading and writing

Is this down to complacency or a false sense of hope and misplaced optimism?

DEFICIT

of trust among parents

Alarming trust deficit among on B40 parents; whereby they are

- Less confident in measures to minimise learning loss
- Less hopeful on learning loss recovery

DISPARITY

of economic status

80%

are worried about learning gaps among students from lower socio economic groups

Widening achievement gap as B40 parents report far higher levels of difficulty with their children's

- READING
- WRITING

Key Recommendations

DIAGNOSE

Urgent need to **gather baseline data** to accurately **diagnose impact of disruption** and **current levels of learning losses.**

DESIGN

Framework of data driven and evidence based interventions to address learning losses, with **measurable student outcomes.**

DIFFERENTIATE

Flexible approach, with **school autonomy and empowerment** for teachers to **tailor initiatives** to meet their **specific contexts and the needs of individual learners.**

DEVELOP

Critical to **build capacity of teachers and school leaders for effective implementation, continuous and consistent tracking** of student progress.

DIGITISE

Strategic use of digital solutions to accelerate learning, with **wraparound support** to ensure tools are **fully embedded for maximum impact and sustainability .**

About the Researchers

Prof Niaz Asadullah was a Professor of Economics at Monash University Malaysia. He was previously at the University of Malaya as a Full Professor (2014-2022) and Deputy Director of the Centre for Poverty and Development Studies (2014-2016). Other current affiliations include: research associate at SKOPE (Dept of Education, University of Oxford), visiting Fellow in Economics at Reading University, visiting Professorial Fellow (Hon.) at the University of Manchester, visiting Professor at the Mindanao State University (MSU) and Chulalongkorn University (College of Population Studies).

Dr Jayanthi Sothinathan is the Chief Education Solutions and Design Officer at LeapEd. Prior to joining LeapEd, she had 26 years of working experience as a teacher and teacher educator with the Ministry of Education, Malaysia, where she was recognised with the "Outstanding Lecturer" award. At LeapEd, she has been at the forefront of education research and development and has led the design and delivery of the latest iteration of the flagship Trust Schools Programme model. She also acts a supervisor to postgraduate students in the Faculty of Education at Taylor's University.

Nina Adlan Disney was an Executive Director at LeapEd. She has been involved in the Malaysian education system for the past 30 years, as a lecturer, researcher, consultant, publisher, and most importantly, as a mother of three! She has held a variety of leadership roles covering the entire spectrum of learning and development, including Law Faculty Dean at HELP University, CEO of Malaysia Airlines Academy and Asia Pacific Schools. In 2021, she was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award for Education Excellence from KSI Strategic Institute for Asia Pacific and now serves as an Adjunct Professor for Strategic Education Planning at UNITAR International University.

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