

LeapEd & PayNet launch Sekolah Anak Malaysia (SAM), Malaysia's 'first digital school'

SAM is the first digital school offering the national curriculum with a personalised, innovative learning experience designed specifically for the online environment.

KUALA LUMPUR, 22 August 2024 – LeapEd Services Sdn Bhd (LeapEd) and Payment Network Malaysia Sdn. Bhd. (PayNet) today announced the launch of Sekolah Anak Malaysia (SAM), Malaysia's 'first digital school.' SAM is the first digital school where the curriculum and teaching methods are purpose-built for the digital environment, ensuring flexibility, interactivity, and individual student growth.

SAM was initiated in response to LeapEd's Post-COVID Recovery Research Study, which identified the urgent need to close learning gaps. This urgency was further underscored by the concerning 2023 PISA scores, highlighting the critical need for innovative educational solutions. Post the COVID-19 pandemic, the Malaysian government immediately took action to reverse learning losses. Yet, Malaysia's learning outcomes remain low, facing two main challenges: improving learning levels in the aggregate and ensuring disadvantaged groups are not left behind, according to the World Bank's April 2024, Malaysia Economic Monitor report.

With a vision to reach 10,000 students within the next decade, SAM currently serves students from Form 1 to Form 3, with plans to expand into upper secondary education next year and launch a primary school programme by 2026.

Shahnaz Al-Sadat, Chairperson of LeapEd Services and Managing Director of Sekolah Anak Malaysia, believes that although the Malaysian education system faces significant challenges, the greater opportunity lies in our collective efforts to address them. "LeapEd is not just responding to a momentary need but hopefully laying the groundwork for a lasting transformation in education. We are working with the government and civil society organisations to tackle the immediate issue of learning deficits while simultaneously working towards ensuring long-term quality education. We are eager to engage all Malaysians in making this innovation a success for future generations because every child deserves access to a world of possibilities," she said.

SAM's success is bolstered by strategic partnerships with leading organisations dedicated to enhancing the educational experience. PayNet is a leading financial technology company dedicated to driving innovation in Malaysia's digital economy, making it a prime partner in LeapEd's mission to provide quality education for all. As a founding partner of SAM, PayNet plays a pivotal role in funding the school's industry-linked curriculum and providing scholarships, thereby empowering the next generation of learners with the skills and knowledge needed to excel in the digital age.

"PayNet is committed to empowering the next generation through future-ready education. By integrating finance technology into the curriculum and nurturing holistic, global citizens, we're bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world opportunities. This partnership aligns with our vision to spark early interest in digital and financial literacy, ensuring students are equipped with the skills needed to thrive in the rapidly evolving financial services landscape," said Jun Maria Tan Abdullah, Senior Director, PayNet Akar.

Other partnerships involved include:

- **21K School:** LeapEd forged a strategic partnership with 21K School, Asia’s leading online school, to realise its vision of providing accessible, high-quality and relevant education, combining global best practices with local expertise. Together, they bring global perspectives and sustainable practices to the heart of SAM’s educational journey.
- **IIUM Sejahtera Centre for Sustainability and Humanity:** Partnering with SAM, provides essential residence and facilities support, contributing to the holistic development of students within a sustainable and ethical framework.
- **Malaysian Red Crescent Society (PBSM/RCSM):** PBSM, SAM’s national co-curricular partner, integrates leadership development and community engagement into the student experience.

Tuan Haji Hakim Bin Haji Hamzah, Secretary General of the Malaysian Red Crescent Society shared, "We hope that this collaboration would enable us to instill the spirit of volunteerism and humanitarian values amongst the students, not forgetting to enhance their knowledge on health and safety plus disaster preparedness."

LeapEd also launched the READy+ programme - a targeted initiative designed to tackle the literacy and numeracy challenges faced by Malaysian primary students in BM, English, and Maths, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Part of the *Program Sokongan Pemulihan Pendidikan (PSPP) under the Ministry of Education*, READy+ complements the Ministry’s *Program Literasi dan Numerasi (PLaN)* by enhancing teacher capacity and integrating best-practice diagnostic tools, equipping educators with improved pedagogical skills to address literacy challenges and foster inclusive learning environments across Malaysia.

SAM and READy+ were launched at a LeapEd’s **Partnership, Advocacy, and Collaboration in Education (PACE)** forum at the International Islamic University Malaysia. The “Reimagining Education, Innovation in Action” forum is part of PACE’s ongoing objective of addressing critical educational issues, including the impact of the pandemic, mental health, and the abolishment of PT3. Since its inception in December 2021, PACE has provided a platform for discussions among corporate leaders, NGOs, and student representatives, driving forward educational reforms.

Shahnaz, who was recently named a finalist for the Asia Education Medal by T4 Education and HP, added, “These programmes are designed to address the gaps exacerbated by the pandemic and establish a new benchmark for educational excellence in Malaysia. This marks the commencement of a transformative journey, with SAM and READy+ expected to significantly advance the educational landscape and contribute to the nation’s future.”

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About LeapEd Services Sdn Bhd

LeapEd Services Sdn Bhd (LeapEd) is Malaysia's first homegrown education service provider and trusted social enterprise. LeapEd aims to develop holistic students with 21st century competencies and schools that embed sustainable education practices. With the belief that every child deserves a great future, LeapEd works closely with its strategic partners, Yayasan AMIR and the Ministry of Education Malaysia, in a public-private partnership (PPP) that focuses on whole-schools transformation and student-centred learning, to realise the individual potential of every learner.

Since our establishment in 2010, we have designed and implemented various education models such as the District Transformation Programme-AMAN (DTP-AMAN), Islamic School Enhancement Programme (ISEP), Ground-up School Transformation (GUSTO) programme, Program Sekolah Transformasi (PreSTasi), Supporting Remedial English Students in Primary Schools (ESRI), CyberWira, as well as the nation's Trust Schools Programme (TSP). Since inception, these programmes have benefited over 257,253 students, 12,768 teachers and 1,586 schools across 15 states nationwide.

For more information, please visit: www.leapedservices.com

About PayNet

Payments Network Malaysia (PayNet) is the national payments network and central financial infrastructure for Malaysia with the vision to empower Malaysia's digital economy. Our extensive retail payments suite, DuitNow (QR and P2P), JomPAY (Bill Payments), FPX (Online), MyDebit (Domestic Debit), MEPS, and IBG (Interbank GIRO) has near ubiquitous coverage across the nation and is part of the daily fabric of life in Malaysia. In addition, PayNet's real time retail QR payments network, DuitNow, is also interoperable with domestic schemes in Singapore, Thailand, and Indonesia to enable seamless cross-border transactions with those countries. PayNet is committed to promoting a secure, efficient, and innovative payments ecosystem in Malaysia, and works closely with its stakeholders to develop new products and services that meet the evolving needs of consumers and businesses. For further details, please visit our website: www.paynet.com.my.

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