



# MALAYSIAN TRUST SCHOOLS:

— A TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY —



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Published by:

**LeapEd Services Sdn Bhd**

**Level 52, Menara TM, Jalan Pantai Baharu, 50672 Kuala Lumpur**

**ISBN: 978-967-13316-4-4**

Printed By:

**D'FA Print Sdn. Bhd**

**16, Jln P/21 Selaman Light Industrial Park, Seksyen 10, 43650 Bandar Baru Bangi, Selangor.**

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# MALAYSIAN TRUST SCHOOLS:

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## A TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY

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# FOREWORD

**Secretary General  
Ministry of Education Malaysia**

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.  
Selamat Sejahtera.

The education transformation outlined in the Malaysian Education Blueprint (MEB) is a broad and complex process of streamlined priorities. In a strategic approach to intensify support towards raising the standard and quality of education, the Trust Schools Programme (TSP) is an excellent example of how MEB can work.

Over 10 years after implementation, TSP has brought proven impact to 90 schools in 11 states. TSP whole-school transformation not only focused on improving student outcomes and revitalising school culture, but also works on improving the quality of teaching and leadership in the school. Ensuring the sustainability of the transformation and amplifying the efforts across Malaysia requires ownership from schools, parents, local communities and government agencies working in tandem at all levels.

We share a common duty to develop holistic students with 21st century competencies that will enable them to compete globally and remain relevant to the needs of the industry and the world. The ministry as the leader in educating and producing the country's human capital, will adjust its policies and direction in line with the agenda of the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030. The transformation will be focusing on providing more productive, effective, skilled, technological and high-value energy resources, including in the new economic industry.

While we prepare and optimise the learning environment for students, we must also prepare the students to optimise their learning in these environments. The ministry has established significant focus on achieving 'education for all' by warranting specific intervention to support children with Special Education Needs through the 'Zero Reject Policy' and 'Zero Dropout Policy'. The 'Ziarah Cakna Program' was also launched to expand the concept of caring schools and promotes the concept of love, happiness and mutual respect through education.

To realise the transformation we aspire to achieve, the Ministry, with support from all parties, will increase the pace of work to ensure the quality of the education system delivery is continuously improved.

It gives me great honour to congratulate LeapEd on their 10th Anniversary celebration this year. It is my sincere hope this book will provide insight and encourage all stakeholders to invest in the future of Malaysia.



Over 10 years after its implementation,  
TSP has brought proven impact to  
**90 schools in 11 states.**  
TSP whole-school transformation not  
only focused on improving student  
outcomes and revitalising school  
culture, the program also works on  
improving the quality of teaching  
and leadership in the school.

**DATO' DR. MOHD GAZALI BIN ABAS**  
Secretary General  
Ministry of Education Malaysia



# FOREWORD

Director General  
Ministry of Education Malaysia

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.  
Selamat Sejahtera.

Starting as service provider for the Trust Schools Programme (TSP) in 2011, LeapEd Services Sdn Bhd (LeapEd) has certainly evolved and is consistently working in parallel to support the Ministry of Education (MOE) in various education transformation programmes. The Ministry is glad that as implementation partner for the TSP, LeapEd is willing to invest in research and development and continues innovating to improve programme delivery.

From working with Senior Leadership Team and Middle Leaders in schools via TSP, LeapEd has also expanded to systemic transformation programme involving Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri (JPN) and Pejabat Pendidikan Daerah (PPD) via the DTP-AMAN programme. This systemic approach complements Shift 6 of the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (MEB) and the ongoing District Transformation Programme (DTP) and to some extent redefines the Public Private Partnership (PPP) initiative in the Ministry which originally focusses more on assisting schools.

The Ministry certainly welcomes any support from the private sectors in realising the system aspirations and student aspirations outlined in the MEB. The Ministry's focus and work for 2020 will be on quality of students' learning, quality of teachers and school leaders. Students' learning in schools will be more effective when driven through quality teaching by teachers and supported by the schools' leadership team. All parties should be accountable in ensuring students' learning is a priority.

MOE definitely appreciates the effort made by LeapEd in understanding the education landscape in Malaysia and we are undoubtedly grateful for the global experience and insights brought by LeapEd. The special blend of international experience and local talents makes LeapEd unique and distinct. The Ministry is also glad that while keeping track of the global trends, LeapEd still manages to formulate interventions that fit our local context.

With that in mind, I hope that the partnership between the Ministry and LeapEd will continue to grow and our journey in education transformation will be successful. MOE appreciates the unwavering support provided by LeapEd over the years and we hope that LeapEd will keep contributing to the nation.

**BERSAMA-SAMA MELANGKAH LEBIH JAUH!**

“

MOE definitely appreciates the effort made by LeapEd in understanding the education landscape in Malaysia and we are undoubtedly grateful for the global experience and insights brought by LeapEd. The special

**blend of international experience** and local **talents** makes LeapEd unique and distinct.

**DR. HABIBAH ABDUL RAHIM**

Director General  
Ministry of Education Malaysia



# PREFACE

## Chairperson, LeapEd Services

The Trust Schools Programme (TSP) was conceived as a bold initiative to enhance Malaysia's Education system, with whole-school school transformation being the key to unlock student potential. As a pioneer public-private partnership in the education sector, TSP has been a 'gamechanger'. It has challenged perceptions, opened mindsets and created new ways of thinking and doing.

LeapEd has designed and developed a trailblazing model that infuses international best practice with our unique local context. At the same time, we have worked closely with multiple stakeholders to deliver and implement on the ground, thus turning rhetoric into reality. Step inside a Trust School today and you will likely feel an immediate palpable difference. Students who are happy, confident and engaged in their own learning. Teachers, school leaders and a wider community empowered and energised to make a difference.

The journey started with drawing up a 'road map' back in 2009. Along the way, we have met with diversions and obstacles, requiring resilience and resourcefulness to find alternative routes and adapt to an ever-changing environment. We have leveraged on our strengths and improved on our shortcomings. Yet our central commitment has never wavered, and our compass has remained true.

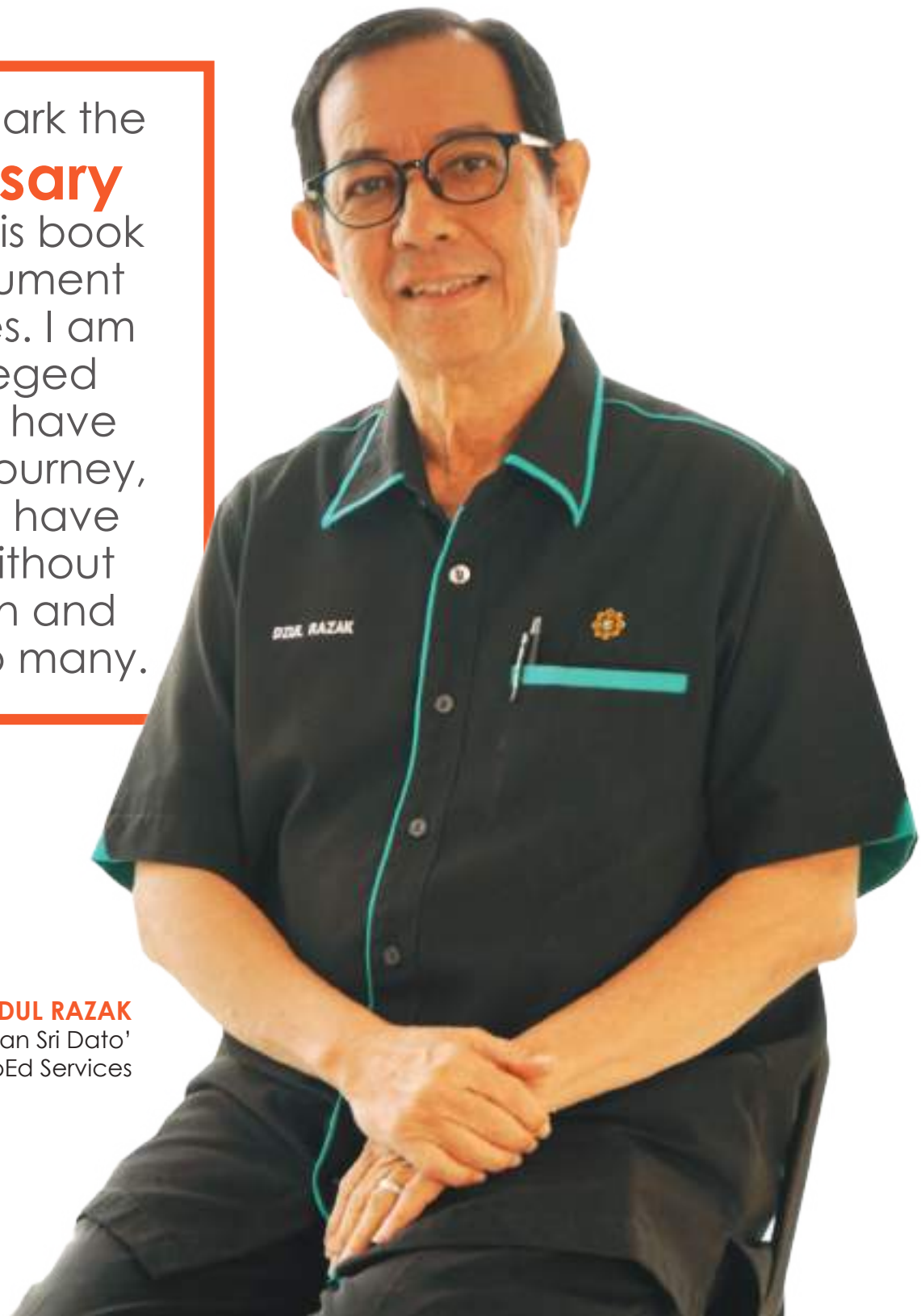
This year, as we mark the 10th anniversary of that journey, this book attempts to document the key milestones. I am incredibly privileged and humbled to have been part of this journey, which would not have been possible without the collaboration and contributions of so many. Allow me to acknowledge: the past and present staff of LeapEd, Yayasan AMIR, the Ministry of Education, as well as all private sector partners and sponsors. Last but not least, our deep appreciation goes to every single teacher, parent and student in Trust Schools throughout Malaysia, who have come with us on this remarkable journey.



“

This year, as we mark the **10<sup>th</sup> anniversary** of that journey, this book attempts to document the key milestones. I am incredibly privileged and humbled to have been part of this journey, which would not have been possible without the collaboration and contributions of so many.

**DZULKIFLI ABDUL RAZAK**  
Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dato'  
Chairperson, LeapEd Services



# Interview

## Trustee of Yayasan AMIR

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### **Q : What was your personal motivation in becoming involved with the Trust School project?**

With regard to how I got to know and become involved with the Trust Schools, it came about when I was Deputy Director General in the Ministry and Shahnaz was hosting a workshop. I was, at the time, involved with NKRA and heading the lab for Education under Dato' Idris Jala. When I was told about the Trust Schools through Shahnaz's workshop, I was struck by the fact that they wanted to focus on this holistic education concept because this has been my thrust, all my life. I have never agreed with this teaching to the test nonsense. So I thought immediately that this was fantastic because this was in actuality the philosophy of education. Over the years, something has been lost along the way. This is partly due to the demands of the public, the demands of the parent, and I would say that we [the Ministry] are also partly at fault. Here's an example: the highest-scoring students used to be rewarded with dinner with the Prime Minister - at the time Pak Lah. I told Dato' Seri Hisham: 'What are we advocating here? What's the message we're sending to the children? You've got to score this many As and then you get dinner with the Prime Minister?' In a way, it ends up pushing this idea of [the importance] of getting the results. So that was what drew me to the Trust Schools concept - I was very taken by it. I got to meet with Shahnaz a number of times, as well as Dr Raslan who was very involved and ended up being seconded to the Ministry. Over the course of discussions and meetings, I became more and more interested. Also, the way that Shahnaz and Nik spoke about education - it's well studied, well-thought-out, it hits all the buttons - I tell you, it's an embarrassment to many other educationalists.

But of course I had my reservations, namely, how is the Ministry going to take it? How are they going to respond to an outsider coming in, especially a corporate one? And all the signals indicated that there was resistance initially - whenever anything new comes along, there will be opposition. Having been 37 years in the system, I think I'm qualified to say that you will always feel threatened

when someone new comes in to try and show you the way. You might feel, well, I am the educationalist here, what do you really know about education? But the approach that was taken was very much about winning them over, and making them understand. It took some doing. I feel that my edge and advantage in my role as advisor, and also as part of the Board of Trustees, was knowing the personalities involved personally - many of the leaders and deputies were my proteges who had worked with me before. So my role was to say to them, look, you guys were having problems, you were losing money and having to make cuts, and here comes the private sector offering to help, why are you resisting? They're coming in and they're not even asking for a single cent from you. Let me tell you, for the private sector to want to come on board and help the government is a big thing considering they're usually saying 'Why should we help the Ministry of Education, they've got the biggest budget' - why can't you graciously accept help? I think that was my biggest embarrassment and I felt that I took a role as a buffer. Every time there was a presentation I would ask for five minutes beforehand to see the DG or the Deputy DG, just to set the tone and give a bit of context to where they were coming from.

### **Q : What were some of the key challenges?**

It's been a difficult journey with the Trust Schools; I would say that the first year was sheer hell. Not so much for me but for the team, who were trying so intensely to do something, and I really credit them for that. When we first started the Trust Schools, the CEO at the time was young and I think the mistake that we made was not engaging the whole Ministry's management team. That's what we should have done upfront. But we learnt from that lesson and we managed to make changes before the management changed. I've always said, nobody else could do this except Shahnaz. She gave birth to this baby. She's the only one that could do it and alhamdulillah, as soon as she came onboard, my god the changes came about! I'm just happy I could be that link and the bridge in between.

There are still some that have reservations, but I would say it's more of an ego issue. Overall I would say that we've come a long way. The people at the top bought it and the people on the ground bought it - where we had issues was at operations level, the mid-level. They kept saying, why do we have to do all these things, we've got enough on our hands. The teachers at the schools were resistant initially too because it meant more work for them! But when they saw the changes happening in the classrooms of other teachers and they saw the kids begin to enjoy going to class, that was a turning point and they began to ask questions: what are you guys doing that we should know about?

**Q : What do you see as the main areas where Trust Schools have had the greatest impact?**

We were fortunate at the time to be able to interview the Principals of the schools because we knew they would be playing a pivotal role in making changes. So we interviewed about 8 candidates, and true enough, the eventual Principal and Deputy ended up turning things around at their school within a month. One month! At the beginning, over 100 teachers wanted to leave - they were given the option to transfer in the first year - but within a month, all of them wanted to stay. It's about the leadership, from top to bottom. You need to get your people on board. That's why it's so important to understand why you're doing something - I always go on this: whatever you do, it's the children, it's the children, it's the children.

I remember Tengku Azuan came and told me that a teacher in Semenuh told her that usually the previous HMs would say: finish your syllabus by July and then we begin latihan tubi. But this year, she said, the HM didn't ask her to do it, but she finished the syllabus in July and she didn't know how she did it! By coincidence I met this teacher and I asked her, do you know why you finished the syllabus early? I told her it was because the onus of studying and being educated falls into the lap of the children and not on you. The children were learning because they want to learn, not because they have to. And when the children are interested, they're receptive to learning and they get involved. So of course you'll finish your syllabus earlier and then you have time for enrichment activities. It was the teachers that saw this and that was the turning point and it happened in all the Trust Schools.

It happened in Kangkar Pulai and I was amazed because I had visited Kangkar Pulai when I was Deputy DG. When I saw the school, I lost my temper. I said, what are you people doing? It was practically a rat hole, the Guru Besar didn't even have a room, she's sitting in the library! In every nook and corner there were files. And the kids! The moment they saw you, they ran away, they were so scared of people. But within three months, the change was amazing. The kids became diplomats of the school and would come up and talk to you about their school. I was bowled over by that. To me, that was the greatest satisfaction - the transformation of the children.

**DATO' NOOR REZAN  
BAPOO HASHIM**

Trustee of Yayasan AMIR







I was with Tengku Azuan and we were visiting the schools and there was a boy named Afiq, who was rehearsing a speech that he would be delivering at a conference. It was a speech like any other, and we gave him some pointers to improve. But then he said, '*Cikgu, tuan-tuan dan puan-puan, saya nak bagitahulah: selama saya di sekolah, dari Darjah Satu sampai Darjah Enam, saya di kelas pemulihan, kelas yang ada gambar-gambar. Tapi syukur alhamdulillah, bila masuk Tingkatan Satu, Program Sekolah Amanah dibawa ke sini. Dan alhamdulillah, dalam masa beberapa bulan ini, saya dah menjadi lebih yakin sehingga hari ini saya boleh cakap dan menyampaikan penyampaian saya ini di depan tuan-tuan dan puan-puan*'. And I said, this is what Trust Schools are all about.

Later on, we were at a sound system rehearsal for the conference and I was getting so exasperated because none of the AV equipment seemed to be working. I was getting increasingly frustrated wondering when we were going to be finished. Afiq had been standing at the podium, chatting away, and he came up to me and said, '*Dato*'...smile. Don't frown'. That hit me, as a mother and a teacher. I just broke down, the tears just came. I have a bit of a reputation for losing my temper pretty badly and for a boy his age, an anak felda, to have developed the confidence to come and say something like that to me: I thought we must be doing something right.

The next day, the day of the conference, I told all the kids involved to just share what they've learned and have fun and enjoy the day. He was a kadet bomba and he stood up in his uniform, marched to the centre of the stage, saluted and said in English: Ladies and gentleman, Dato' Noor Rezan told us to enjoy our presentation today, and this is our day.' And then he looked at me and said, '*Dato*', thank you, you're smiling!' If you can affect a child like that and make him grow from somebody who was so shy and inconspicuous, to somebody who is the voice of the students and a group leader, that is the success of the program. And he got straight As in Form Three from being a remedial student. At the end of the day, it was how I saw the kids change that made everything worth it. And I think the whole team felt the same - we had the

opportunity to grow the child. I've always said, you don't just teach to help them get straight As, you grow the child. It's been such a fulfilling journey and I have only one regret - and that's that I'm not able to go down to visit the schools more often. I used to be able to visit the schools a lot more in the first, second and third year, but as the years went on and the program grew, the travelling became more tiring for me. But I still try and get out there and do whatever I can. I believe that God gave me the gift to inspire and motivate and if I don't do that, it's sinful.

**Q: So why is it despite the success being palpable - and it is palpable - that there is still resistance?**

That's the funny thing. I was on the other side of this at one point. There was one particular lady - I won't mention names - who was very corporate. Every time she came to give a presentation, it was all about money and we were very resistant to that. But it was different when Shahnaz came to us and when Dzameer and Kieran came to me. You could see it was about passion and enthusiasm, there was no talk of money. You could see that they'd made a sacrifice to come and give back to their country. Those kinds of things touch me. But, you know, I think there is still an element of ego. To them, it's insulting. There's a resistance to people in the corporate line, who are not education-based, coming in to help us. But I've always looked at things differently. Even with higher education - we never look to our bigger brothers and sisters for help. They've done so much research into what works and what doesn't. So why are we reinventing the wheel? Every single time. We make the same the blundering mistakes. I think the problem with the Ministry is that it's very sectorial. There's a mindset of, 'this is mine, don't interfere with me', which is wrong. The whole blueprint isn't going to work if they don't learn to integrate. Because at the end of the day, who are we doing things for? It's for the children.

I was a Master Trainer for KBSR and KBSM in the '80s and it was working. The kids who went through 11 years of KBSR and KBSM were a different lot at the end - they were vibrant and they were bold, because they were given the autonomy to learn. Why did we shelve it? Because UPSR came in and they dropped everything. In fact, all the transformational experts who came in from day one

asked, why did you drop it? That's the way you should've gone. I told Tan Sri Muhyuddin that the greatest impact besides the classroom and the children, are the leaders. It needs to be a solid arrowhead. You train the leaders for leadership roles but they also need to undergo the same training in the modules as the teachers. They need to be able to get the teachers and students and the parents on board and bring them with them.

That's why I wish sometimes that I was back at the Ministry. I know personally that I was a champion for the good of the children and I wish I was able to still be there to help. Unfortunately nowadays, there are not many that dare speak up. And even if they did, there's too much political interference.

**Q: Finally, what are your hopes for the future of Trust Schools? Where do you think the Trust School journey will go?**

As much as I don't want to say it, if the political leader sees the good, and if he's strong enough and wise enough to see it, he can influence the Education Minister. They've taken on a watered down version (TS25) but again, it's about implementation. We helped with the training, but when there was no money, they stopped it. Those people were lost and we haven't done anything since. Just because you have the recipe, doesn't mean you know how to cook it. An example is when they told teachers that to develop higher order thinking skills, they need to be asking children more complex questions. The questions don't need to be complex to develop these skills. Even with a child in taska, you can create a challenging situation by making the child think: such as show and tell with relevant questions. Even that can help develop higher-order thinking skills. But what happened was the teachers and students were confused and when it came to the exams, the questions were so complex that the children couldn't answer any! One year, it was an absolute massacre because of the ridiculous questions. That's what happens when you ask people to do something but you don't show them how. It's always about what, what, what but not how.

I'm still optimistic about Trust Schools, but as much as I don't want to say it, a lot depends on the political leadership.





Phase 0

# Planning

(2009-2010)



“

I joined LeapEd when it first started in 2011 as the Cluster Adviser for Johor. The pilot project started in 10 schools: 5 in Johor and 5 in Sarawak. Upon its success, the Trust Schools Programme (TSP) has expanded and undergone many changes. As a former School Principal, I believe the transformation done through the TSP will definitely have tremendous impact on the Malaysian Education system.

”

**TENGKU AZUAN TENGKU MOHAMED**  
Head of Cluster Engagement



## Phase 0 Planning (2009-2010)

### Introduction

The year 2009 was a watershed moment in Malaysia's education system. The country set its sights on creating a system that could compete on the international stage — a system that shines a spotlight on the quality of education delivered to its young people.

In July 2009, the government announced the education National Key Result Areas (NKRAs). The report made the areas of high priority clear for all to see. First, the achievement gap, especially between rural and urban schools needed to be closed. And second, the access to quality education across the nation needed to be widened. If these issues were not given the attention they so desperately required, the negative impact on the quality of talent in young people would be inevitable.

Eager to address these concerns and take positive action, the government committed to improving the nation's education system. Their search and passion for an innovative solution gave rise to a new initiative — the Trust Schools Programme or TSP.

The programme strives to create networks between schools in order to boost the overall environment as well as the teaching environment. The schools would receive opportunities for innovation, provide an ecosystem that motivates and excites stakeholders at every level to thrive and transform all schools.

The idea of TSP gained traction in a significant meeting on 11th September 2009. This meeting sparked a partnership between the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Khazanah Nasional Berhad (KNB) — a partnership to further develop the TSP. Then on 15th December 2009, at the 3rd Education Delivery Task Force meeting, YAB Prime Minister and the deputy Prime Minister, endorsed the Trust Schools Open Framework along with its planned autonomies and new legal framework.

Soon after, in February 2010, the MoE made the exhilarating statement that the first wave of schools would be announced. The sponsor application process was to begin and a commitment to launch the Trust Schools in 2010 was made.

2011



19 TALENTS



TSP  
TRUST SCHOOLS  
PROGRAMME

2 STATES  
- JOHOR  
- SARAWAK



10 SCHOOLS



2013

69 TALENTS



TSP  
TRUST SCHOOLS  
PROGRAMME

3 STATES  
- JOHOR  
- SARAWAK  
- KUALA LUMPUR



13 SCHOOLS



PINTAR  
SCHOOL  
LEADERS  
PROGRAMME

19 SCHOOLS



62 SCHOOLS



9 STATES  
- JOHOR  
- SARAWAK  
- KUALA LUMPUR  
- SELANGOR  
- SABAH  
- PAHANG  
- TERENGGANU  
- PERAK  
- NEGERI SEMBILAN

TSP  
TRUST SCHOOLS  
PROGRAMME

2015

267 TALENTS



120 SISC+

- DIFFERENTIATED TEACHING & LEARNING
- COACHING & MENTORING



19 SCHOOLS



PINTAR  
SCHOOL  
LEADERS  
PROGRAMME

30 SCHOOLS



4 STATES  
- JOHOR  
- SARAWAK  
- KUALA LUMPUR  
- SELANGOR



TSP  
TRUST SCHOOLS  
PROGRAMME

174 TALENTS



2014



STEPS

gusio  
GROUP OF SCHOOLS TRANSFORMATION

YA LeapEd  
TFM (PERAK)  
JPN (P.PINANG)

5 SCHOOLS



426 MOE OFFICERS

- SCHOOL & CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP



2016

260 TALENTS



GPSSA  
GURU PINTAR SARAWAK  
SABAH & SELANGOR

SOM  
STUDENT  
OUTCOME  
MEASUREMENT

HORIZON

10 STATES  
- JOHOR  
- SARAWAK  
- KUALA LUMPUR  
- SELANGOR  
- SABAH  
- PAHANG  
- TERENGGANU  
- PERAK  
- NEGERI SEMBILAN  
- KELANTAN



TSP  
TRUST SCHOOLS  
PROGRAMME

83 SCHOOLS



OUR  
JOURNEY

1 STATE  
- PAHANG



1 STATE  
- KEDAH

9 PPD



31 PPD  
(DTP-AMAN)



2018

278 TALENTS



TSP 2.0  
TRUST SCHOOLS  
PROGRAMME



1 STATE  
- KEDAH



83 SCHOOLS



10 STATES  
- JOHOR  
- SARAWAK  
- KUALA LUMPUR  
- SELANGOR  
- SABAH  
- PAHANG  
- TERENGGANU  
- PERAK  
- NEGERI SEMBILAN  
- KELANTAN



TSP  
TRUST SCHOOLS  
PROGRAMME

2017

278 TALENTS



## Phase 0 Planning (2009-2010)

### Important Documents

With the endorsement of the Trust Schools Open Framework, the required legal structure could now be formalised, signalling another major leap forward. The process would involve two legally binding documents.

The first was an Operating and Management Agreement (OMA), which set out the terms and conditions under which sponsors could operate in Trust Schools. It formed an agreement between the Ministry and each Trust School sponsor to protect the interests of both parties. It set out the operation terms, roles, rights, responsibilities, and guidelines on autonomies. The second document was an Exemption Order from the Education Act for curricular autonomies.

At the same time, the MoE focused on developing an operational framework. It would be based on extensive and evidence-based data from worldwide studies and syndication with key stakeholders from public and private entities. The framework was set to be piloted in 2011. Its aims emanated from the very heart of the programme's mission: to improve student outcomes and school management capabilities and to improve access to quality of education for all. The focus would be on catalysing systemic and sustainable change that is in line with the National Education Philosophy.

### Symbiotic Relations between Ministry of Education Malaysia, Khazanah Nasional Berhad Yayasan AMIR and Sponsors

Meanwhile, the joint taskforce kept one of the major goals firmly in its mind: to promote the nation's human capital in the long term. To this end, Khazanah would be instrumental in spearheading the involvement of Government-linked Companies (GLCs). During a press release, Executive Director of Strategic Human Capital Management, Shahnaz Al-Sadat, demonstrated Khazanah's commitment to significantly improve the nation's schools, when she declared:



Yayasan AMIR and the pilot project for Trust Schools is a commitment from Khazanah to support the government in their efforts to transform our education system. We believe that along with the principals, teachers, students, parents, and school communities at large, we will strive for this programme to be successful."



The concept of the Trust School was also to go beyond Corporate Social Responsibility. For the first time in Malaysia's education system, this change would involve the commitment of the private sector to become fully involved and instrumental in forming the nation's future — a future that would witness high quality human capital within its pluralistic society.

To harness the invaluable input of the private sector, it was agreed that they would work in tandem with the mainstream education system. This would provide the freedom to strategize and execute curricular activities and focus on development. These elements could then come together and equip students and school administrators with the skills to achieve excellence.

### Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)

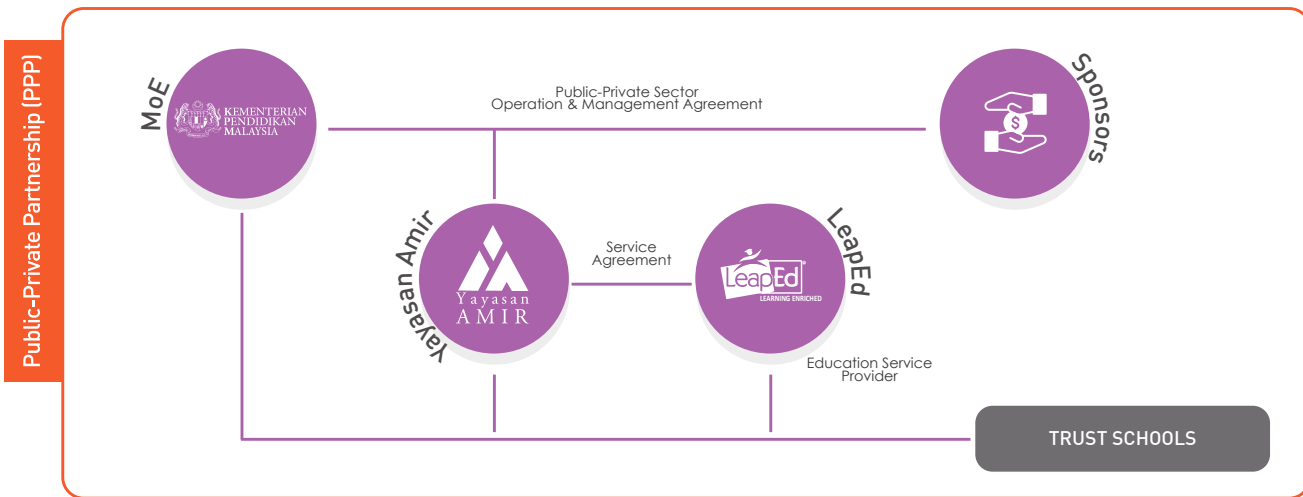
Moreover, in its continued focus to develop Trust Schools, Khazanah worked tirelessly to build a close rapport between the nation's private and public sectors via its non-profit arm, Yayasan AMIR (whose role would be instrumental in the implementation, management and supervision of the TSP). Khazanah looked forward to sharing this brave and innovative initiative with both corporate entities and the general public.

To this end, Khazanah and Yayasan AMIR (YA) remained deeply committed to their mission to enhance human capital development and to create future leaders. The focus was to be on equity along social grids. This, together with an ability to be replicable and autonomous in nature, would be vital characteristics for success. This momentous and courageous idea to change Malaysia's education system was beginning to take shape.

Considering the benefits the programme could bring to the nation's education system, the stakes were high. The importance of this transformation was understood by all and reinforced by the Chairman of YA, Raja Tan Sri Arshad Raja Tun Uda:



Quality education is the cornerstone of a country's development and forms the pillar of any nation's prosperity. Effective implementation of the TSP would not only make quality education more accessible but it will also allow the school system to tap into the best of public and private delivery models in creating a sustainable and high-quality school.”





## Phase 0 Planning (2009-2010)

The development of the TSP was gaining significant pace. YA was charged with pushing the programme forward and driving the accessibility of quality education to all public schools via a Public-Private-Partnership, in order to attain sustainable public-school transformation to produce better student outcomes. The timeline offered was five years, after which it would be reviewed, and its future decided upon.

The collaboration would also serve to partly fulfil the requirement to participate in the Trust School Framework announced by the MoE on the 7th of October 2010. The Ministry's role would be critical in acting as the project's regulator. The MoE would be responsible for accepting sponsor applications, monitoring agreed outcomes in the Public-Private Sector Operating and Management Agreement as well as the general coordination of the framework at state and district education offices.

Major change was also on the horizon in terms of school management. Each Trust School would be jointly managed by qualified private partners/sponsors and civil service principals, under the umbrella of the MoE. The collaboration would focus on improving both student outcomes and school management capabilities. The private partner/sponsor would provide operational, management and educational expertise as well as funds when required. Significantly, however, it would not clip the wings of school principals, who would continue to be responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the school.

## Concept and Characteristics of Trust Schools

To improve standards and equip Malaysia's young people with the education they needed to succeed, the Trust Schools would remain public. They would also take on the responsibility of being accountable for improving student outcomes and in return be awarded with greater freedom in decision making.

In addition, a main objective of the TSP was to unite the best of the public and private delivery models. Stretching across the performance spectrum, the goal was to create real and continued change in student outcomes, irrespective of their starting point. The spirit of equality and fairness would provide each school the opportunity to improve whether from mediocre to good, or good to excellent.

Through PPPs, schools could now begin the exhilarating journey of closing the education and achievement gap. The focus would be on the delivery of student outcomes rather than inputs and processes. The carefully considered timeline would give the selected schools a real chance for change and success. If the outcomes were favourable, the contract would be extended. Moreover, the schools would receive government funding and support from committed long-term private sector partners and leveraged private sector expertise.

Many of the pre-requisites for success were in place. But if the TSP was going to be successful, sustainability was key. Mindful of this essential ingredient, a framework was designed to ensure sustainability through five key levers.

Their purpose was to:



Establish a rigorous selection process and safeguards for potential sponsors and partners to ensure alignment of education philosophies, long term financial commitment/credibility, and track records in improving student outcomes.



Produce a legally binding agreement between the Ministry and the sponsors through the Operating Management Agreement, which set out the terms and conditions, along with the tangible deliverables (KPIs), within an agreed framework.



Agree not to have any additional financial commitment on the part of the government in co-undertaking the programme.



Ensure an appropriate matching of sponsor and schools, which would include a full buy-in from the school leadership, teachers, parents, students, and the wider community as a pre-condition to beginning the programme.



Have a MoE permanent Trust School Unit established to regulate, monitor, and ensure the programme objectives were met.



Phase 0  
**Planning**  
(2009-2010)





To achieve the programme's mission to produce sustainable step by step changes in all types of schools, it was also crucial that the selection process considered a number of factors. These would include geographical locations, the dimensions of the schools as well as school types. Mindful of these differences, Khazanah and Yayasan AMIR considered factors such as: transformational potential, location (rural or urban), various performance levels, and balanced social equity.

With the groundwork complete, the anticipation of beginning the transformation journey in the nation's schools was almost palpable. The students could receive a far superior education and develop holistically based on the programme's education philosophy.

Despite the growing levels of confidence, fears and uncertainties are inevitable. Anything was a possibility. Would there be an over-focus on constraints resulting in failure to implement? Would equity of access be a reality or would the whole process perpetuate elitism? Would politics ultimately dominate and throw the programme off its tracks? Would it last? And then the greatest fear of all: would it slide into yet another category of schools that did not fulfil what the nation's children needed, and above all, deserved?

Working diligently to overcome these fears, the MoE continued to take on the main role of regulator. They accepted and assessed sponsor applications. They monitored the agreed outcomes in the OMA as well as the general coordination of the framework at state and district levels.

Operating collaboratively with the MoE, the sponsors continued providing support and guidance to the Principals/ Headteachers. The sponsors would also be instrumental in supporting school leaders to achieve the agreed KPIs, providing guidelines in areas where autonomies had been granted, ensuring prudent financial management, and monitoring internal quality control. They also had the responsibility for reporting results on an annual basis directly to the MoE.



## Phase 0 Planning (2009-2010)



## Launch of First Trust Schools, December 2010

The eagerly awaited moment had arrived. The programme was ready to be delivered. YA had selected ten government schools from Johor and Sarawak to take part in the pilot project. On the 10th of December, the Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister 2010 YAB Tan Sri Muhyiddin Mohd Yassin announced the ten schools at the launch of the TSP and YA in Putrajaya. Carefully chosen, they provided a representative cross section of Malaysian schools, including both primary and secondary, vernacular and multi-racial, urban and rural areas.

The schools selected for this historic change to Malaysia's education system were: SK Bandar Uda 2 (Johor), SJK(T) Kangkar Pulaui (Johor), SK Kampong Layau (Johor), SMK Semenchu (Johor), SMK Gelang Patah (Johor), SM Sains Kuching 2 (Sarawak), SMK Bandar Kuching 2 (Sarawak), SK Tabuan (Sarawak), SK Empila (Sarawak) and SK Combined (Sarawak).

The programme had reached its first milestone. The mood of its creators was a mix of jubilation and a healthy dose of apprehension. It was time to let their creation take its first steps. Only time would tell if its future would be one of success.





## Phase 0 Planning (2009-2010)





## Baselining in order to accurately capture progress

Before launching the pilot, there was one last step to take. On the grounds of fairness and accuracy, it was vital that each pilot school's baseline was established. From this platform each school's progress could be reliably measured to reflect accurate development and success. Each school would be measured against seven focal areas:

- i. Leadership and Learning
- ii. School Self-Evaluation and Review
- iii. Curriculum and Assessment
- iv. Teaching and Learning
- v. Assessment for Learning
- vi. Student Support and Parental Community Engagement.

An agreement to commence baselining began in September 2010 with the contracting of Nord Anglia Education, a team of highly qualified education consultants from the UK. An external analyst meant that schools would be measured against international standards without possible inside bias. The baselining dates were set for 22nd September to 8th October 2010 in preparation for the programme roll-out in January 2011.

The baselining aimed to shed valuable light on the strengths and areas for improvement for each school. It enabled Khazanah and Nord Anglia Education to assess trends and

agree on a starting position for each school's development. A formalised range of methods was employed including lesson observation, assessment of teaching and lesson organisation, interviews with involved parties, review of a range of school and student data, and analysis of school ethos and the suitability of the learning environment.

Once equipped with the baseline assessment outcomes, Nord Anglia Education would be in prime position to provide the necessary intervention measures and enable Key Performance Targets to be set.

In the process of enabling each school to develop and progress, a customized Trust School Plan was created. Its key objective was to facilitate improvement across the performance spectrum. Both the Key Performance Targets and the Trust School Plan would be agreed upon by the schools themselves. Each plan would make a comparison of school and student performance with state and national averages. Critical to the credibility of the assessment, judgements would be made against international benchmarks of best practices. However, they would also be adapted to the Malaysian context — an adaptation that would be key in the success of the market.

## Phase 0 Planning (2009-2010)

On September 8th, 2010, the results were in. Maybe not surprisingly, the assessments revealed some common themes. Areas for improvement included:

- Over-emphasis and often single focus on teaching for the test.
- Narrow and limited school self-evaluation.
- Limited teaching styles.
- Culture of teacher absence.
- Inefficient teacher utilisation.
- Unreliable data and complexity of information systems.
- Poor management of the health and safety of students, staff, and visitors on the premises.

The areas highlighted were ones that could be confidently tackled by the programme, increasing confidence in the pilot's success. And if this wasn't satisfying enough, the result of the baselining revealed a greater gift — a gift that could not have been guaranteed or relied upon. Across the board, there was a desire to improve. They had enthusiastic students and strong foundations for planning with the presence of master teachers who serve as fantastic role models. These prerequisites for success were more than the stakeholders could have possibly hoped for.







## Autonomies afforded to Stakeholders

With the baselining complete, attention now shifted to how the programme would play out in the pilot schools. The schools were about to enjoy a range of freedoms that would go beyond finances to something never before seen in Malaysia. Autonomy would now be bestowed in three key areas: curriculum, staffing, and finance and procurement.

### CURRICULUM

Schools would function as usual with regard to the teaching of the core and compulsory subjects and continue to participate in mandatory national examinations. However, they now had a much broader canvas with the potential to be coloured in a myriad of ways to improve student outcomes. Schools were given freedom in their choice of elective subjects and could provide additional, external

assessments where appropriate. And maybe most powerful of all, they would have flexibility in school timetabling, including minimum hours per subject and pedagogy based on needs. No longer would the schools be bound by teaching methods of the past. They would be exposed to a new horizon of teaching, igniting the passion of students, and setting them on a path where success was within their reach.

### STAFFING

Similarly, autonomy in staffing would prove golden. The leadership was able to recruit staff and create new staff functions based on ability to support and deliver intended outcomes, rather than grade or seniority. This included academic and non-academic personnel, both local and foreign. Charting new territory, each school could implement an incentive for both overtime and extra pay for improved performance. Teachers were positioned to feel valued and motivated to provide the best for their students. There was also flexibility to move staff, including head teachers, if their performance was deemed unsatisfactory (after 2 sub-par reviews in one year). These changes would pave the way to create a more positive climate, placing the importance of students receiving a first-class education at the very forefront of the entire programme.

### FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT

The schools would have the flexibility to allocate funds, both government and private, based on school needs with annual audits to ensure accountability. This was a huge step in allowing the schools to establish a positive correlation between what is spent and the best outcome for students. In addition, YA would have the option to set its own procurement procedures and act as an approving authority, so long as prudent financial guidelines set by the Treasury were followed.

## Phase 0 Planning (2009-2010)











Phase 1

# Establishing

(2011-2013)





“

We coached the SLT, AT/MLs, and teachers to build and maintain self-confidence when facing great opportunities and challenges. This focus on leveraging the strengths of others helped build personal effectiveness and key relationships within schools and the community towards whole school transformation”

**HEMALATHA BALA SUBRAMANIAM**

Principal Adviser, Programme  
Implementation, Training & Coaching Hub

## Phase 1 Establishing (2011-2013)

### Pioneering teaching initiatives

The transformation journey, however, would need more than autonomies in key areas if it was to see spectacular improvement. It needed initiatives that offered teachers growth in new ways.

#### ADVISORY TEACHER INITIATIVE

One initiative to boost teaching capacity was to leverage on the excellent practices by some and spread their excellence far and wide. To achieve this, the programme would introduce and utilise teachers who would now be known as Advisory Teachers.

Staff given this title would be teachers deemed excellent in their role, achieving the highest standards of classroom

practice. Advisory Teachers would be encouraged to share their skills and experience with their colleagues to start a dialogue and circulate helpful ideas. The hope was to create a ripple effect: expertise flowing seamlessly within schools as well as overflowing to schools within their district.

To maintain the credibility of the Programme, the teachers selected were expected to demonstrate rigorous standards, as expressed in the Standard Guru Malaysia. They needed to be committed individuals whose abilities included potential to deepen and extend knowledge, willingness to take a lead role in developing policies and practices, and capacity to analyse and use data in order to support and shape learning. In return, the teachers would not only be rewarded professionally, through the prospect of promotion but also rewarded financially.



The presence of Advisory Teachers would also serve as a key factor in sustainability. The programme would leave a legacy of highly skilled teachers, whose teaching and advisory skills could continue to support the improvement of their school and other schools in Malaysia.

In addition to sustainability, the programme would be replicable. Within all the schools, there are teachers whose excellence could be full utilised to develop greater expertise if only they are recognised and given resources. The programme gives teachers potential to assume leadership roles, a non-traditional route to promotions, and builds an extensive network that encourages collaboration. All these factors increase confidence in teachers and most importantly, raises the standard of teaching and learning.

### **GENERALIST TEACHER PROGRAMME**

Another initiative introduced was the Generalist Teacher Pilot Programme, which called for a single teacher that specialises in an age range rather than a subject, in primary schools. These teachers would teach a smaller batch of students a range of core and foundation subjects. This set-up provided young children with consistency and emotional security. Generalist teachers were also able to apply consistent rules and routines, rewards and sanctions. This inevitably creates a safe environment where children can understand what is expected of them and thrive on familiarity.

The generalist teacher also had greater opportunities to learn about each child in their care. This knowledge enabled them to cater to each child's learning needs and to incorporate differentiation in their teaching, meeting the abilities of each child. Teachers also had certain valuable freedoms such as flexibility over the timetable and the physical learning environment.

As with any education system, there are downsides. Possible disadvantages included: the generalist teacher may not be an expert in all subjects, specialist teachers may have greater confidence to empower students to produce higher quality work or may be able to create more opportunities for deeper learning of the material.

The drivers of the TSP were armed with a distinct advantage. By going ahead with a pilot programme using generalist teachers, they would be able to assess the impact of the generalist teacher model and inform decision making for future programmes. The Generalist Teacher Pilot Programme was to be introduced in three of the Trust Schools: SK Combined, SK Tabuan, and SK Empila, during the 2012 academic year. Its continuation and further replication would be dependent on these pilot schools' success measured by students' progress and attainment, including their emotional, personal, and social development.



## Phase 1 Establishing (2011-2013)

### A Malaysian Context

Before diving head first into the Generalist Teacher Programme, the Malaysian context needed to be taken into account. Namely, the fact that Malaysian primary school teachers specialised in a particular subject area and taught that subject to multiple classes within and across year groups.

During the baselining in 2010, concerns were raised pertaining to a variety of issues that could potentially be addressed through a generalist teacher programme. They included, a lack of effective staff utilisation, inconsistencies between teaching methodology and practice, and insufficient differentiation strategies. Possible solutions to address some of these concerns were outlined in the baselining report which included:

- Leaders could deploy teaching staff more efficiently to maximise the learning opportunities for all students.
- A review of the breadth and balance of the curriculum, the length of the school day, and consideration of how subjects could be linked together could identify where time might be used more effectively.





At times, the feedback from the baselining was a stark reminder of why Malaysia needed something as pioneering as the TSP. All too often, students were not receiving the standard of education they needed and deserved. For example, it was noted that in one lesson, the entire class

was asked to chant "the correct answer." But when asked students admitted to not understanding what they were being taught, but they did not ask for clarification from their teachers during the lessons. The very core of what education is about for young people, was at times, sadly missing.



## Targeting the landscape

To address these major cracks stretching across the education landscape, some serious work needed to be undertaken. The School Development Plan aimed to:

Enable a more integrated approach to the curriculum by developing Year 1 classrooms that enable student learning through integration of core subjects taught by one teacher in a base classroom.

To strengthen the integration of the generalist teachers into the pilot programme, the framework was further informed by lessons learnt in a similar programme in SJKT Kangar Pulai in Johor Baru in 2011. The positive outcomes included:

- Establishment of consistent rules and routines
- Improved student behaviour
- Improved professional partnerships between staff involved
- Supportive of the KSSR curriculum
- Increasing use of Assessment for Learning strategies
- Increasing use of differentiation strategies.

The project confirmed not only the potential success of the pilot in the Trust Schools but also the potential challenges. For example, there was parental resistance to the system in Kangar Pulai and not without reason. Parents voiced concern that their child's development might be negatively impacted as a result of introducing both mixed ability classes and active learning strategies. This display solidified the message that clear and consistent information about the initiative would need to be established and shared with parents and caregivers through all stages of the project.

Leaving no stone unturned for a successful pilot Generalist Teacher Programme, the key objectives would be to evaluate whether the approach would positively impact the students' well-being, involvement, outcomes, the emotional and physical learning environment, and ability to develop cross-curricular links. It would also serve to identify if an increasingly flexible timetable, providing teachers with increased autonomy over the length of teaching and learning episodes, would ultimately prove fruitful.

## Students given a voice

In addition to placing a very much needed focus on teachers, it was crucial that a voice be given to the very reason for the programme's existence: the students. It was time to move away from thinking of students as empty vessels to be filled and towards thinking of them as critically thinking, creative, enquiring, and engaged citizens. To achieve this, they needed to be given a say in not only how their school was run but also in their learning process — a voice that would give them a sense of ownership, leading to greater confidence and self-esteem. No longer would they need to remain quiet when they didn't understand. They would have the confidence, the motivation, and the desire to speak up and deepen their level of learning and understanding.

To provide students with a voice, a Student Voice Group would be established. Its aim was to create modern thinkers who were able to perform confidently on the international stage. They would learn vital skills in leadership, presentation, enterprise, co-operation, and creativity. Their views would be listened to, heard, and acted upon. This would yield improved learning and global benefits in terms of creating life-long learners. Furthermore, the group was not intended solely for secondary schools but also for primaries. Naturally, primary school children would receive more teacher support, but the ideas would be theirs and the advantage of starting so young would be tremendous. The end goal was for Trust School students to be the pioneers of this approach. To provide students with the confidence to speak, to lead, to innovate, and to go out into the world equipped to thrive as global-citizens.





## Phase 1 Establishing (2011-2013)



Our job is to plant trees, under whose shade we will never sit – but we know that Malaysia will harvest the fruits 🌳🌳

**JIM REYNER**

Education Lead, C2011, Sarawak



## Setting the goals for success

In conjunction with the above initiatives, strategic goals for the programme were needed. The strategic goals for the TSP would come under four headings.

### Goal 1

#### Develop high quality leadership and management

If the programme were to be successful, it needed strong leadership and management to drive the transformation forward — to inspire participants so they would be willing and motivated to drive towards success. The senior leadership team would need to regularly and actively engage in professional learning and development, incorporating new learning into practice. They would then manage the performance of all staff. This process would be rigorous and carefully monitored with a clear focus on contributing to school improvement. Additionally, the school's financial planning would be linked to strategic objectives to ensure relevance and transparency.

### Goal 2

#### Improve the quality of teaching and learning

The goal was to embed new pedagogies into teaching and learning. Students would be exposed to the excitement of learning through engaging lessons that facilitate collaboration. Their intellect and creativity would also be captivated through their physical learning environment, which would provide them with a sense of achievement. Moreover, they would feel safe to contribute, to express their ideas, and engage in discussions, further contributing to effective learning.

### Goal 3

#### Maximise student achievement and potential

Conscious of the importance of developing the whole child, an effective co-curriculum framework that supports the holistic development of every child was going to be crucial. The schools would needs provisions to help students establish attitudes with an emphasis on 'values-driven' human capital (*Modal Insan*).

### Goal 4

#### Strengthen the engagement of parents and community

As fundamental figures in a child's success in school, the goal is to establish a positive relationship with parents and encourage them to support their child's education. This would involve keeping them well informed about their child's academic success, their skill development, and encouraging them to participate actively in school activities. Similarly, the importance of the community would be key. Each school would have a programme for engaging with the community (local businesses, district, state private, and government institutions), in the enhancement of students' education.

The goals were firmly in place but to what extent they would be achieved was still far from certain.

# SEKOLAH KEBANGSA

Phase 1  
**Establishing**  
(2011-2013)





## The first signs of success

December 2011, the first year of the pilot schools was firmly under the stakeholders' belt and with it some major accomplishments. The strategic goals set down for the Trust Schools Programme's pilot schools were bearing significant fruit.

### LEADERSHIP

Due to the retirement or transfer of principals in six of the ten pilot schools, the schools now had significantly stronger leadership. They had also taken greater ownership of the school improvement planning process with senior leadership teams playing an active role in the writing of the Trust School Improvement Plans.

Principals were now confident in exercising their authority to make sure their school was being run effectively. They also proved effective in their handling of financial management. All ten schools spent more than 95% of their school budget by the end of 2011. It was a notable achievement for eight out of the ten schools. For the first time they had managed their school fund independently. Aspirations for the pilot's success were riding high.

### TEACHERS

Moreover, an improvement in the quality of learning and teaching was considerable. The year witnessed several teachers in Sarawak, who initially wanted to opt-out but decided to stay upon realising the benefits of the programme. There was also a marked improvement in the professionalism of teachers with regard to matters such as punctuality and planning of lessons as well as a new-found confidence in teachers to share objectives and success criteria with students. And most rewarding of all, students were becoming engaged learners in an environment that continues to nurture them into life-long learners and informed global citizens.

### STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The goal of maximising student achievement and potential took strides in the introduction of new pedagogies that created opportunities for students to develop their communication skills. Furthermore, co-curricular activities were integrated into the school day for the majority of the schools resulting in higher student participation.

### PARENT & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Finally, efforts to strengthen the engagement of parents and the community were paying off. The year saw an increase in community involvement such as, Iskandar Regional Development Authority Initiative, Career Day and Community Day in the schools. PIBG (Parent Teacher Associations — PTAs) in some schools had contributed funds for the 2012 Trust School Improvement Plan, illustrating their willingness to be part of the school transformation. Communities were also involved in collective action (gotong royong), resulting in schools being cleaner and more organised.



## Phase 1 Establishing (2011-2013)



### LeapEd takes the driver's seat

Their job complete, it was time for Nord Anglia Education to hand the keys to LeapEd. It was January 2012 when LeapEd leapt on board to continue to design and implement the TSP. A home-grown education service provider, it was a wholly owned subsidiary of Khazanah and operated based on social business principles, with a mission to raise the standard of education across the whole of Malaysia.

Engaged by YA, LeapEd would drive the TSP forward by:

1. Setting up clear targets for Trust School Plans
2. Developing strategic educational programmes, products, services, and execution plans
3. Executing and monitoring the strategic educational programmes and services
4. Improving school leadership and management, teaching, and learning
5. Improving delivery of curriculum and pedagogy
6. Providing Continuing Professional Development

For LeapEd to ultimately succeed, it would require strong support from the MoE and continued commitment from YA. There would also need to be clear communication on the autonomies that schools had in key decision making, complemented by strong cooperation, participation, and ownership by teachers and the senior leadership teams. Furthermore, communication of the success of the programme and formal acknowledgment from key external stakeholders was needed to enable LeapEd to leverage the programme's expansion.

## LeapEd's work scope

### Phase 1 (Baselining)

Six months prior to operations, LeapEd assessed the performance of the Trust Schools over an array of measures. Based on the report and findings, non-academic Key Performance Targets (KPT) for each Trust School were developed and proposed by LeapEd.

### Phase 2 (Transforming)

This phase was to be carried out within the first three years of the five-year contract. It would include developing and executing the transformation programme and the Trust School Improvement Plans (TSIP), coaching and training Trust Schools to develop an annual TSIP based on non-academic KPTs, overseeing the cluster team to provide guidance to Trust School staff, and providing them with Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

### Phase 3 (Sustaining)

The final phase was set to take place in the last year of the five-year contract. LeapEd would be responsible for monitoring the continued implementation of the TSIPs and activities to address sustainability. A focus would be placed on sustainability of the Trust Schools' activities via ownership and leadership of the Trust Schools' leadership/teaching staff to implement the programme independently.

In 2012, LeapEd saw a number of successes, including:

- Building relationships and trust with school leaders, teachers, and stakeholders
- Raising awareness of the school improvement programme and the requirement for improvement of pedagogy, leadership, and management of the school
- Financial awareness and practice to utilise the school budget for improvement in teaching and learning as well as to upgrade school infrastructure
- Consistency and standardisation of CPD Programmes starting with TeachSmart.



## Phase 1 **Establishing** (2011-2013)

These successes were certainly ones to be celebrated, but maybe most exhilarating were the successes articulated by the schools themselves. The feedback was hugely encouraging and injected a confidence that the idea to radically transform the landscape of Malaysia's education system for the better may well become a reality. A flavour of the feedback was reflected by the headteachers and principals of the pilot schools:

“Improvement in the learning environment for the children is evident.”

**Headteacher – SJKT Kanglar Pulau**

“Positive changes in teachers' behaviour, for example, the teachers have fostered stronger cooperation amongst each other and exhibited initiative in respect to the programme's activities.”

**Principal – SMK Gelang Patah**

“Teachers and students who are from Orang Asli settlements and even the SLT themselves now have the confidence to converse in English, something they were not previously able to do.”

**Headteacher – SK Kampung Layau**



“Being part of the Trust School Project has boosted teachers’ confidence and improved their management of schools.... school is a more fun learning environment for the students.”

**Principal – SMK Semenchu**

“We have introduced the Trust School concept, activities and programmes to other schools, and have become ambassadors for the Trust School in our area.”

**Headteacher – SK Bandar Uda 2**

“School management assessed several areas of improvement for the school, in particular English, Maths, and Science.”

**Principal – SMK Sains Kuching**



## Launch of Malaysia's Education Blueprint (MEB) 2013-2025

In October 2011, the MoE launched a comprehensive review of the country's education system, in the context of rising international education standards, the government's aspiration to better prepare Malaysia's children for the needs of the 21st century, and increasing public and parental expectations of education policy.

Between October 2011 and December 2012, the MoE would draw input from many sources, from education experts at UNESCO, the World Bank, OECD, and six local universities, to principals, teachers, parents, students, and other members of the public from every state in Malaysia.

The result was an MEB that evaluated the performance of the country's education system with considerations of historical starting points against international benchmarks. It suggested 11 strategic and operational shifts that would shepherd Malaysia into a new age of education.

### TSP flies high in nation's press

News of the remarkable progress of the TSP was spreading with significant accolades coming from the nation's press. On 18th August 2013, an article in the Star quoted YA's Board of Trustees chairman, Raja Tan Sri Arshad Raja Tun Uda:

"In schools located in remote areas where attendance was an issue, we have seen a greater desire and enthusiasm among the children to be present in school. This is due largely to the learning environment the teachers have created in classrooms and throughout the school."

In November 2013, another article in the Star reported on the MoE's efforts to create a learning environment in which teachers act as facilitators and students maximise their potential through peer learning. The most powerful proof of all, however, came from the children themselves. The article quoted responses from children attending the Trust Schools. Their words demonstrated the vast aspirations of our youth and reminded us what we have been fighting to protect and enhance all along. 11-year-old Sahmeeha, from SJKT Kangar Pulai in Johor Bahru, commented on her ambition to go to space while simultaneously showing her ability to think of infinite possibilities:

"Space is so interesting. If you look at the Milky Way, one dot is the sun. And the Earth is one of many planets. Imagine, there are trillions of dots, all waiting to be explored."

## Phase 1 Establishing (2011-2013)



Continuing accolades towards the programme were highlighted by Bernama in September 2013. Chairman of the Independent Review Panel on education, Tan Sri Professor Dzulkipli Abdul Razak, reported how the success of the Trust Schools served as an assurance that the blueprint would work. Furthermore, Dzulkipli illuminated on the real mission of the programme: to transform the education system in such a way, that the young people of Malaysia had a real fighting chance to compete globally. They would receive an education that went beyond getting As on examinations. They would receive an education that would make them well rounded, enable them to think critically and engage globally:

“We are looking at the total make-up of the students...we don't just celebrate 5As or 4 As but we celebrate a student's achievement as a person.”

He further highlighted the major improvements in the confidence and abilities of the students just two years into the programme. Their active and engaged participation in classrooms was moving towards that found in the UK, Australia, and the United States. The result was hugely impressive in regard to students' ability to collaborate with one another and to question and communicate with their teachers through the Student Voice Group.

The proof of success so far emboldened LeapEd and the stakeholders to look further into the future. Their aim now focused on having 500 Trust Schools nationwide. The teams of Teaching and Learning Advisors with their national and international experience would continue to provide training and mentoring to teachers and school leaders. The model would be based on a gradual release. Trust Schools would be heavily supported and guided at the beginning with the end goal of operating independently.

Chief executive and managing director of LeapEd, J. D. Chacko, noted that:

“...students under the programme show confidence and creativity and the ability to communicate and collaborate, which is what employers want and work for.”









In addition to feedback from students and principals, invaluable feedback was also received from the teachers themselves. S. Gomathy, a science teacher of 12 years at SJKT Kangkar Pulai, remarked on how her teaching had become more enjoyable thanks to the programme. She explained she received training “where [she is] introduced to new methodologies to bring to [her] classroom”. She believed that this method of learning was more advantageous because students receive a complete set of knowledge.

Furthermore, the Trust Schools reported that their academic performance had improved under the programme. In the 2012 Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah (USPR) examinations, the schools' grade point average was 1.84 as compared to 2.65 in 2009. Additionally, the overall UPSR pass rates had improved 17% since 2009, resulting in the schools' upgrade from Band three to Band two in 2012.

The feedback was more than the programme's creators had dared hope for. This was best articulated by headteacher, Santhakumari Singgaram who explained that the benefits of being a Trust School extended far beyond grades:

“Students love to come to school and they enjoy learning. They are confident and brave enough to share their ideas...in my 32 years of teaching, this is the first time that students have been brave enough to give their feedback and I, brave enough to ask them for it.”

Invaluable and uplifting feedback also came from parents. Ms. N. Wani Nathan described how her daughter who was in Y3 at the time had flourished at school:

“She used to be quiet but now she freely expresses her ideas and opinions. I feel like the teachers here nurture every child's talent. I wish that had been the case when I was at school!”

The feedback from Ms. N. Wani Nathan takes us to the heart of the programme's mission: to provide a rich and engaging learning environment where Malaysian students can maximise their potential, both personal and academic. As reflected by student Sahmeeha, the nation's youth were embarking on a brighter path where the possibilities were indeed, endless.





Phase 2

# Transforming

(2014 – 2016)





“

A wonderful learning journey for teachers and students. Working as partners, LeapEd has empowered our teachers with effective pedagogical skills to make teaching and learning more meaningful ”

**GOH SIAK WAH**

Former Senior Assistant 1, SMK Seri Setia  
Current Senior Assistant of Students Affairs, SMK Sungai Maong

## Phase 2 Transforming (2014-2016)

Five years had passed since the idea of a TSP was first conceived. The passage of time had demonstrated that what started off as a seed of an idea was starting to flower. The Trust Schools were showcasing an education system where students were engaged in their learning and motivated to achieve. A new and different horizon had emerged. It was one that could dramatically change their future, and ultimately their country's future.

This new climate of learning was born from the innovative methods successfully adopted by the Trust School teachers. Their approaches had shifted from teacher-led instruction to teaching that lauded critical thinking and fostered creativity. Not only were the changes significant for the Trust Schools themselves but for existing educators too. The school leaders were now in prime position to inspire others within the world of education.



## MoE's continued support

Whilst there was a well deserved sense of triumph at the successes thus far, the improvements in the Trust Schools brought into focus the flaws in the education system as a whole. It was a contrast, however, that held a positive force. It reflected how the education system, including the programme itself, could be improved. This realisation was shared by Secretary General of the MoE, YBhg. Tan Sri Dr. Madinah Bt. Mohamad when she reiterated the MoE's commitment to supporting the programme and the need for increased collaboration with the private sector:

**“...there is more we are discovering about the state of our education and how we can further improve...MoE remains committed to supporting the implementation of the programme. We hope for more collaboration with the private sector...to ensure our young Malaysians receive the quality education they deserve.”**

The MoE also extended a heartfelt appreciation to the private sector, whose contributions had proved invaluable. They were after all, fundamental players in helping to realise the aspirations towards developing our students holistically based on the key attributes, written in the MEB 2013-2025. The Director General of Education, Ybhg. Dato' Sri Dr. Khair Bin Mohammed Yusof, also reiterated the achievements made by the TSP so far:

**“...under the TSP, we have seen the quality of schools enhanced as school leaders, teachers, students, parents, and the community work together for the future of our students.”**

The successes radiating from the Trust Schools propelled the programme into appreciable expansion. From ten pilot schools in 2011, there were now 30 schools across four states, Johor, Sarawak, Selangor, and Kuala Lumpur. Along with the expansion came an increased number of corporations and individuals from the private sector who felt inspired and eager to support the programme with its remarkable and speedy success. Chairman of YA, Raja Tan Sri Dato' Seri Arshad Bin Raja Tun Uda, highlighted how the impact shown so far from students to the communities had restored faith in the fact that change is possible with the hard work and dedication of all the parties involved. The programme was a beacon leading to real and lasting school transformation.





## Phase 2 Transforming (2014-2016)

### Amplifying impact

Approximately 22,000 students were reaping the benefits of the programme. Collaboration was common place and students could thrive under teachers who were focused and motivated. Moreover, they were being developed in line with the attributes envisioned in the MEB:

- Thinking skills
- Leadership skills
- Knowledge
- Bilingual proficiency
- Ethics and Spirituality
- National Identity

The programme also expanded its vision to school-wide transformation. The goal set for the end of the initial five-year timeline was to produce a learning environment that empowered students to take responsibility for their own learning.

## Accreditation

Moving forward, it was clear that the programme needed a measuring tool to assess each school's progress. To achieve this, an accreditation system was agreed upon. Three levels of performance were identified that would define the various stages of progress: Foundation, Accreditation, and Model Schools. These stages would be further grouped into five levels:

### Level 1

#### **Starting (Foundation: 0 – 30 percent progress)**

The school has demonstrated limited evidence of the standard of good practice that is expected in Trust Schools.

### Level 2

#### **Developing (Foundation: 31 – 50 percent progress)**

There is evidence that the school is implementing the Trust School methodologies and systems with up to half of the expected standards being achieved.

### Level 3

#### **Establishing (Foundation: 51 – 70 percent progress)**

The methodologies and systems in the school are evident and are becoming embedded to ensure sustainability with over half of the standards being achieved. The school has met the minimum expectations of a Trust School and is expected to show continued development.

### Level 4

#### **Extending (Accreditation 71 – 90 percent progress)**

The school's methodologies and systems are embedded with nearly all of the standards met. The school is achieving well above the minimum expectations with sustainable continued development expected.

### Level 5

#### **Enhancing (Trust School Model 91 – 100 percent)**

The school is demonstrating outstanding achievement and can be benchmarked against international standards. Methodologies and systems are embedded into daily practice, resulting in sustainable and independent continued growth and development.



## Phase 2 Transforming (2014-2016)



### Overall Progress of the Trust Schools

It was 2014 and three Trust School Cohorts were at various stages of the programme.

#### COHORT 2011

Cohort 2011 were the trailblazers. The first to set off on the transformation road, they were the ones highlighting what could be achieved and just as importantly, flagging any challenges to the incoming cohorts, enabling them to avoid potential potholes.

In 2014, the success of this cohort was one to be admired. It fuelled optimism for the programme's future. With the first year spent predominantly on adjustments to the programme, the cohort made significant headway in a short amount

of time. Without exception, all schools progressed well and internalised methodologies and systems of a Trust School to ensure sustainability moving forward.

#### COHORT 2013

Cohort 2013 was also showing signs of positive progress. The three schools were driving securely at the Developing stage, demonstrating increased implementation of the Trust Schools' methodologies and systems. As they learnt from Cohort 2011, in the first two years of the programme, the main focus should be directed to strategic goals one and two, (improving school leadership and quality of teaching and learning), before results could be seen in strategic goals three and four. Cohort 2013 was showing the expected results of achieving below the projected target set for 2014. Cohort 2011 had demonstrated that progress in these areas would come about in the second half of Year 3 of the Programme.

#### COHORT 2014

Similarly, Cohort 2014 had set off on its journey. Seventeen schools in total, covering one new state, Selangor and more districts in Kuala Lumpur, it was off to a flying start. Although only in the starting stage, too early for marked progress, it was looking highly promising. Despite being just past the starting line, some of the schools were showing encouraging results and hopes were high for significant progress over the next few years.





## Media Coverage

The positive progress made by the programme continued to hit the press. On 4th April 2014, Nusajaya celebrated the impact of the Trust Schools thus far in their article, “Eighteen schools: in them we trust”. Providing readers with valuable insight into the workings of the programme, the article celebrated its success in the state of Johor. The article revealed how State Education Department Deputy Director, Md. Hasidin Zaini, had applauded the programme, citing how the students had been provided with the opportunity to develop holistically and become independent learners. He went on to describe the conducive learning environment the programme created for students—one not solely based on exams. He said the achievements of the Trust Schools set an example to schools in other states.

Capitalising on the impetus, the stakeholders wasted no time on planning and setting future goals. On the 19th June 2014, Bernama reported that the MoE, in conjunction with the private sector, was aiming to set up 500 Trust Schools by 2025, reaffirming that the programme wouldn't be a bright, dazzling star that burned too fast. It was something that would continue to radiate — something that would be sustainable.

Bernama's article also highlighted the words of MoE Deputy Director General, Datuk Misrah Ibrahim who noted the objective of creating a school transformation model as a long-term strategic vision and reinforced the importance of giving Malaysia's young people the opportunity to develop on more than an academic level. The success of the Trust Schools would be dependent on attendance, levels of discipline, identity, character and patriotism, as well as academic achievement.

Phase 2  
**Transforming**  
(2014-2016)





Adding to the growing tide of further expansion, an announcement was made at the Trust Schools Conference in Kuching on June 25th, 2014. The MoE and YA revealed their plans to cast the net of Trust Schools further across the country. The plan was to implement it by stages with increased involvement from the private sector and continued support from parents. During a working visit to one of Kuching's Trust Schools, SK Tabuan, Deputy Prime Minister, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, voiced his confidence in the success of the programme and the impact it would have on these students, and ultimately, students across the country

**"I am confident that the programme can contribute to better quality education. The best practices associated with the TSP can be made more sustainable and further extended to non-participating schools."**

However, and quite significantly, he added that the programme couldn't be a quick fix. As with any real sustainable change, it would need time and continued effort by all parties:

**"This is not an overnight effort. It will take eight to ten years for us to really see the results, but education quality is what we continue to strive for."**

## **2015 TSP Expansion**

Acknowledging that change would take time did not affect the speed in which development was taking place. For example, the expansion of the programme was now a reality. At the end of 2015, the number of Trust Schools had risen to an impressive 62.

The programme's reach was widening. Now there were five new states: Perak, Negeri Sembilan, Sabah, Terengganu, and Pahang. The addition of these new states was truly transforming the education landscape. It was impacting approximately 3,500 teachers and 49,000 students in a total of nine states. There was no denying that the programme was well on its way to achieving its vision.

## **Sukuk**

As the programme powered forward, a welcome announcement was made regarding a new funding structure. Khazanah (KNB) was to issue the first ringgit-denominated and responsible investment — Sukuk, launched by the Deputy Prime Minister and the MoE, YAB Tan Sri Muhyiddin Mohd Yassin on 18th May 2015. The structure of the Sukuk meant that a set of pre-determined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) would be measured over a five-year observation period and if KPIs were met Sukuk-holders would receive the nominal amount in full. If not, there would also be consequences. Additionally, it was reported that Khazanah would be rolling out the first of its sustainable and responsible RM1 billion tranche. KNB's Board of Directors and YA's Chairman, Raja Tan Sri Arshad Raja Tun Uda, announced after the launch that they were looking at RM100 million to start with, but with an upside of RM150 million.



## Phase 2 Transforming (2014-2016)



This hugely useful structure would enable YA to manage its cashflow which would allow the introduction of twenty new Trust Schools and provide a means for investors to fulfil their corporate responsibility. Khazanah met with potential investors, including financial institutions and foundations and management companies. Their Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer, Mohd Izani Ghani, highlighted that these potential investors were interested in giving back to society for the sole purpose of education. Moreover, Izani further explained:

“At the beginning of every year, there will be an issuance for the schools’ roll out for that particular year.”

### TSP Enhancement and initiatives

#### TRUST SCHOOLS’ STANDARDS AND PRACTICE (TSSP)

In addition to the new funding structure, 2015 witnessed a number of initiatives that would continue to support and reinforce the programme’s credibility. First would be the introduction of the TSSP, which highlighted the standard needed to achieve accreditation. The objective was to ensure that the schools continued the practices of the Trust Schools beyond the fifth year of the programme. They needed to achieve level 4 in order to be accredited as a Trust School.

#### STUDENT OUTCOMES MEASUREMENT (SOM)

Furthermore, there was the introduction and development of the SOM. Being able to measure the impact of the programme on the students themselves was crucial. Students worldwide were continuing to face a future that could no longer be predicted in terms of skills. Students needed to be equipped with adaptability, critical thinking, creativity, and resilience, as well as cognitive skills.

The TSP was the perfect antidote to these challenges but it isn’t enough to simply say that. It needed to be evaluated with measures that are reliable and rigorous. Stakeholders needed to be motivated to monitor student progress, both academic ability and intangible capacities.

The SOM would also provide holistic information about an individual student's growth and progress in areas as stated in the MEB. The assessment tools created would be used alongside the existing tests such as UPSR, PT3 and SPM. A goal of the SOM was to collect information on students that could be used by teachers to inform their teaching and meet the diverse, individuals needs of students.

In an exciting move forward, various tools were created to effectively measure student performance on multiple levels. The measurement initiative would incorporate and complement the MoE initiatives on psychometric assessment in School Based Assessment (SBA).

# PROJECT HORIZON

Conducted in 2015 and initiated by LeapEd, it set out to obtain an analysis of the TSP— its outcomes, implications, and recommendations five years after implementation. To maintain the integrity of the results, research into how the programme had done so far was carried out by an external party (Incept Labs). Their final report provided constructive insights into the programme and substantiated the need to move forward from the current more prescriptive practices .

The findings also revealed that the programme had successfully achieved many of its objectives. Deeply committed to transforming the education system, LeapEd welcomed the feedback from Project Horizon and continued to work unremittingly to improve the programme through rigorous research and development.



## Phase 2 Transforming (2014-2016)



### Trust School Conference

In the midst of rapid progress and the introduction of new initiatives, the year welcomed its fourth annual Trust School Conference organised by YA, in collaboration with the MoE. The 2015 theme was, "Integrated Approach Drives Education Transformation". The three-day conference centred around how the integration of school curriculum and integration from across all levels of society are essential for producing the transformation desired.

The 2016 theme was, "Innovation Drives Sustainable Education Transformation". It highlighted the innovation in the TSP in education transformation in Malaysia. The conference featured a variety of presentations such as: classroom setup for Subject Based Classrooms, implementation of the Generalist Teacher Programme, Student Voice Group, Advisory Teachers/Middle Leaders Programme, community engagement, State Education Department (JPN) and District Education Office (PPD) approaches.

### 2016 Trust School expansion

The previous five years had observed substantial change within Malaysia's education system. The programme was surging forward, adding success after success to its portfolio. The year 2016 saw the biggest expansion of the programme to date. It welcomed twenty-one new schools, making 83 schools in total. They were spread out across ten states, including: Kelantan, Terengganu, Perak, Selangor, and Sarawak. The new districts comprised Kota Samarahan in Sarawak, Klang in Selangor, Manjung in Perak and Dungun, and Marang in Terengganu.

### Programme workshops

In Petaling Jaya on May 2016, a four-day workshop was attended by over one hundred members, which formed the PPD Monitoring Team. The workshop served as a platform to provide an in-depth understanding to those who would be assisting and overseeing the operationalisation of the TSP.

Additionally, a day visit to a Trust School in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur was organised to help the participants have a better understanding and insight into the programme by interacting with school leaders, teachers, students, and stakeholders during the session. The workshop proved to be highly productive. With all hands-on deck, a comprehensive action plan was developed that would serve as a reference for the monitoring team to support their respective states.

The year ended with state-based CPD sessions for the monitoring team in September and October. The sessions also provided an in-depth understanding of the School Evaluation Framework, Trust School Improvement Plan, and the Performance Management System.



## School Progress

The year 2016 was indeed proving to be a momentous and unforgettable year on the programme's transformation journey. The landscape behind was one that had irrevocably changed for the better.

### COHORT 2011

Despite structured intervention only commencing in earnest in 2013, Cohort 2011 was now officially in Year 4, the Solidifying Phase of the programme. It was with justified exuberance that the cohort reported that all the schools were progressing well. They had made tremendous headway on their Key Performance Targets and had embedded the methodologies and systems of a Trust School into their practices to ensure sustainability. They had progressed steadily from their respective Take Off Value (TOV) in 2011 in all four strategic goals. The level of progress was further aided by the fact that officers from both the JPN and PPD of Johor and Sarawak had been more involved, playing a major role in ensuring the schools received the support they needed.

### COHORT 2013

The three schools in Cohort 2013 were also showing exemplary progress. In their fourth year, the Transitioning Phase, all three schools demonstrated embedded Trust School methodologies and systems. They showed increased independence and a particularly strong level of commitment by the teachers in developing their competencies to improve learning and teaching.

Moreover, their progress attracted the attention and enthusiasm from near and far. Throughout 2016, the three schools received a constant stream of visitors from both local and international institutions. They were clearly heading towards accreditation and had every reason to give themselves a congratulatory pat on the back.

### COHORT 2014

In their third year of the programme, the seventeen schools in Cohort 2014 were also on track for all strategic goals. Their growing independence was becoming more and more evident. In addition, the schools were demonstrating initiative and forward planning, along with a commitment to achieve through strengthening their network. They worked closely with other schools in the same cluster in a bid to enhance their progress towards accreditation. They were actively engaging parents and collaborating with external parties and private sectors. This behaviour by the schools was a prodigious boost for the programme. It was exactly the kind of collaboration the programme was aspiring to.

### COHORT 2015

Also on the right road was Cohort 2015. With 32 schools, it was in Year 2, the Transformation Phase. It had the biggest intake of Trust Schools so far, including a different type of school selected. It now had two premier schools who joined the programme: Kolej Melayu Kuala Kangsar and Kolej Tunku Kursiah. All schools were showing good progress and were seen to have developed a firm grasp of the Trust Schools Programme. The introduction of the MidLED programme was also just starting and the early signs were positive.

### COHORT 2016

Finally, Cohort 2016 had an increase of twenty-one schools which were appointed in November. The schools at this stage were undergoing the Key Performance Target setting process. As with the other cohorts, there was every expectation that Cohort 2016 would prove to be every bit as successful as the cohorts that came before.





## Media coverage in 2016

The TSP was clearly becoming an unstoppable force. Its credibility as a workable system that could bring about major improvements to the education system, was simply undeniable. With its hefty and successful evidence, the programme was set to not only lengthen its reach but also widen it by incorporating various types of schools across the country.

Once again, the monumental success of the programme and the thrill of further expansion did not go unnoticed by the country's media. On August 2nd, 2016, the Deputy Education Minister II Senator Chong Chin Woon, announced that the number of schools in the programme was expected to rise to an incredible 700 schools nationwide by 2025. The senator explained that:

**"The ministry plans to not only increase the number of [Trust] Schools but also the types of schools that are involved. The ministry sees a bright future if the programme is expanded to involve various types of schools for minority groups, special needs students and rural schools."**

The words of the senator couldn't have been sweeter for they echoed what was at the very heart of the programme's vision: a quality education accessible to all. The year 2016 had indeed ended on a remarkable high. The successes of all the cohorts had been immense. The introduction of the Sukuk and the increasing opportunities to attract more private investors had also been invaluable to the programme.

The vision of giving the country's young people a quality education, was no longer a hope, a dream, or a wish. It was a reality and thousands of students were already reaping the benefits.





“

*LeapEd menjadi inspirasi kami dalam merealisasikan kepemimpinan teragih, pelaksanaan pembelajaran pengajaran interaktif, menggalakkan penglibatan aktif jaringan komuniti dan meningkatkan keprihatinan membangunkan potensi murid ”*

**HJ BAHARUM AHMAD**  
Principal, SMK Semenchu

Phase 3

**Solidifying**  
(2017-2018)









Phase 3  
**Solidifying**  
(2017-2018)





## Overview

The TSP had now been progressing for seven years. It had been a journey filled with abundant hope, excitement, and celebration along the way. It had also been a journey peppered with trepidation and challenges. Would the once fledgling idea ultimately grow into something solid and sustainable? The developments so far certainly pointed to a positive transformation of the country's education landscape through the programme's commitment to building the capacities of school leaders and teachers to provide excellent practices in their schools.

## Views of key people about TSP

The programme's development and successes were articulated by the stakeholders — most notably the MoE. Now with a total of 83 Trust Schools, the MoE's Secretary General, Dato' Sri Alias Bin Haji Ahmad, highlighted how the professional development undertaken among administrators and teachers had been directly contributing towards the continuous capacity building of resources within the Ministry. He went on to express MoE's gratitude for the continued trust, support, and confidence that had been extended to them in the preceding years. And to the delight of all concerned, he strengthened the stakeholder's relationship by further cementing the MoE's continued commitment to the programme:

**"...we will continue to work closely with YA and its partners to ensure that the objectives of the transformation initiatives will be achieved."**

The Director General of the MoE, Tan Sri Dr. Khair Mohamad Yusof, similarly expressed his positive view of the programme. In a rewarding recognition for the Trust Schools, he reflected on his belief that the programme was a model in which students would be equipped with preparation for an ever-changing world, with its wide range of

**"...embedded systems and innovation in the classrooms which implement 21st century learning approaches with emphasis on students' active participation and application of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), in solving issues and problems."**

Tan Sri Dr. Khair also noted how the programme had provided support with coaching and mentoring school leaders. He called it the 'Growth Oriented Development' where the atmosphere of a school is sufficiently dynamic to instil learning processes across disciplines, which enables knowledge sharing and experiential learning. In a further welcomed comment, he announced that the MoE aspired to improve the performance of schools and students by increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the education system.

## Phase 3 Solidifying (2017-2018)

In addition to the MoE's uplifting and encouraging comments, YA's Chairman, Raja Tan Sri Dato' Seri Arshad Bin Raja Tun Uda, highlighted successful key milestones, including the Trust School Guidelines (*Garis Panduan Sekolah Amanah — GPSA*) Workshop, an initiative, that had been started in 2016, which included five workshop modules involving JPN and PPD personnel from nine states focused on providing a deep understanding of the TSP. Tun Uda highlighted the additional chapters were to focus on Finance and Procurement and Human Resource Management and would be written in 2017.

Furthermore, Raja Tan Sri Dato' Seri Arshad Bin Raja Tun Uda announced how the Trust School Network (*Rangkaian Sekolah Amanah*) had served as a platform for providing:

“...a dynamic atmosphere in bringing the spirit of togetherness and teamwork, we want to build a strong bond among the Middle Leaders from all 32 secondary and 51 primary Trust Schools.”

He went on to note that they had taken the opportunity to connect students, representing each Trust School in a parallel programme in the *Rangkaian Sekolah Amanah*. The programme was held at Outward Bound School, Lumut, Perak in November 2017.

Closing his speech, Raja Tan Sri Dato' Seri Arshad Bin Raja Tun Uda expressed his sincere gratitude for the invaluable support of the sponsors and their unfailing passion in investing in the country's education system. He also expressed gratitude to LeapEd for their vital support:

“I would also like to thank LeapEd ... for all the critical support given to the programme as our education service provider. I am confident that over the past seven years, Trust Schools have built the capacity and adopted the processes required to continue the TSP on its journey towards the goal we have set.”

## Khazanah Issued 2nd tranche of Sukuk

Amidst the crucial support and comments from the Ministry came the welcome news that Khazanah had now raised a sizable RM100 million via a second tranche of the seven year Sustainable and Responsible Investment (SRI) Sukuk. This second tranche was launched by Second Finance Minister, Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani on the 13th of June 2017. The proceeds from this tranche proved vital in funding the rollout of the programme to at least another 20 schools in Kuala Lumpur, Johor, and Sarawak. It also continued to feature the highly valued retail offering, which enabled investors to give back to society via impact investing. It was the first in Malaysia to feature such an offering and provided individuals the opportunity to support and further implement the programme. Members of the public who were unable to subscribe to the SRI Sukuk could still support the programme through crowdfunding platforms on ATAPlus. The structure of the SRI Sukuk would also have unique features. Dedicated to education, it targeted investors who were keen to give back to society. It had Key Performance Indicators that would affect the returns from the Sukuk investment and gave investors the option to waive their principal.

## Innovative Funding Support by Khazanah

In 2015, Khazanah announced that it would be rolling out a Sustainable and Responsible Investment ("SRI") Facility up to RM1 billion. The first tranche of RM100m was issued in the form of Malaysia first ringgit-denominated 7-year SRI Sukuk ("Sukuk Ihsan I") with the identified cause of Education. Sukuk Ihsan I was launched by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, YAB Tan Sri Muhyiddin Mohd Yassin on 18th May 2015.

As recognition for the success of TSP, Khazanah chose to direct the proceeds of Sukuk Ihsan I to YA in order to expand the programme to more States including Sabah and Pahang. The structure of the SRI Sukuk has unique features. One of the features is that a set of pre-determined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) would be measured over a five-year observation period and if KPIs were met Sukuk-holders would forego part of the returns from the Sukuk. If KPIs are not met, the Sukuk-holders will receive the nominal amount in full. Another feature is the option for Sukuk-holders to waive their principal upon seeing good progress of achieving the KPI. This is an innovative way to ensure that Corporate Responsibility funding is tied to performance and delivery of the expected impact rather than the pure grant or sponsorship giving.

This type of innovative funding structure requires the KPIs to be developed that represent the expected impact – in this case, sustainable schools' transformation. LeapEd played a key role in the development of these KPIs and the implementation processes to give credibility to TSP and gain the Sukuk-holders' confidence. LeapEd's high quality monitoring and evaluation capabilities proved to be critical in this instance.

In 2017, Khazanah issued a second RM100m tranche in the form of another 7-year SRI Sukuk ("Sukuk Ihsan II"). The Second Finance Minister, Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani launched it on the 13th June 2017. Once again TSP was selected to be a beneficiary, credit to the strong partnership between MoE, YA and LeapEd. The proceeds from this tranche proved vital in funding the rollout of TSP to more States including Kelantan and Perak. It also has an additional unique feature of the highly valued retail offering which enabled individual investors to give back to society via impact investing. It was the first in Malaysia to feature such an offering and provided individuals the opportunity to support the implementation of TSP in Malaysia.



## Phase 3 **Solidifying** (2017-2018)



## Overall Progress

With strong financial backing afforded by the Sukuk in place, attention returned to the progress of the schools. Although each cohort was at a different stage, they all had shown significant progress and promise.

### COHORT 2011

Now in their fifth year, Cohort 2011 continued blazing the untrodden trail.

Their five schools in Johor were becoming independent in terms of planning and implementation, quality of content and planning for school improvement, and sustainable practice by school leaders. It was acknowledged, however, that further work needed to be done to accommodate new initiatives introduced by the MoE or planned by the school.

The five schools in Sarawak similarly continued to demonstrate a commitment to the programme and were on track for accreditation. They demonstrated a wide range of embedded systems and innovation reflecting their confidence in the programme.

These achievements were particularly impressive given that two of the schools, SMK Sains Kuching and SMK Seri Setia, had faced significant staffing challenges. Sains Kuching, for example, experienced major changes within the senior management team as well as three Middle Leaders and Advisory Teachers retiring. To counter any serious impact for both schools, substantial support and assistance was provided to the Senior Leadership Teams from both the JPN and PPD officers as well as LeapEd. The support provided in the name of sustainability translated into excellent progress by both schools — achievements that were an absolute testament to the success of the Trust School Programme thus far.

### COHORT 2013

The three schools in Cohort 2013 were now in their fifth year, the Transitioning stage. They had competently embedded methodologies and systems of a Trust School that would ensure the sustainability of the programme. As with Cohort 2011, they were able to successfully run CPD sessions independently based on their cluster and school's needs.

They also worked closely with each other in order to strengthen their network and to enhance their progress towards accreditation — a main goal of this cohort. Moreover, they were actively engaging parents and collaborating with external parties and private sectors, fulfilling a key focus of the programme.

### COHORT 2014

Similarly, Cohort 2014 was powering forward. Seventeen schools across four clusters covering Johor Bahru, Pasir Gudang, Pontain, and Klang Valley. The schools were in the Transitioning Phase of the programme. To the joy of all involved, the schools were moving steadily above their TOV (take off value) and were ahead of the projected progress for all strategic goals. They were also demonstrating increased independence and focused on ensuring that effective Trust Schools practices were embedded.

The excellent progress demonstrated by this cohort clearly displayed the strong level of commitment by the teachers in developing their competencies to improve learning and teaching. The schools had worked hard to strengthen their network by collaborating closely with other schools in the same cluster to progress towards accreditation. The trend was indeed positive.





#### COHORT 2015

In line with the other cohorts, Cohort 2015 was displaying positive progress. The November intake was also showing a positive trajectory despite 2017 being their first year. The progress demonstrated by this cohort clearly displayed the strong level of commitment by the teachers in developing their competencies to improve learning and teaching.

#### COHORT 2016

Finally, Cohort 2016 was showing remarkable progress. It had been on the journey for a full year. Being in the Transformation Phase of the programme, the emphasis was on creating an innovative culture in schools, which was well on its way.







## Rollout of the Trust School Guidelines (*Garis Panduan Sekolah Amanah — GPSA*)

If the kind of progress witnessed so far was to continue, the sustainability of the programme at the Federal, State, and District level was critical. As a continuation from the initiative in 2016, the five workshop modules would be held at respective states throughout 2017. The aim would be to provide an in-depth understanding of the inner workings of the programme, which would support the up-skilling of JPN and PPD personnel.

Among the modules to be implemented were:

- Introducing a Five-Year Plan, including Key Performance Targets and Performance Management System Target Setting
- Trust School Improvement Plan
- Trust School Standard and Practices review
- Developing Action Plan at PPD level.

In addition to these workshops, another two series of workshops involving JPN and PPD personnel took place to gain feedback on the modules implemented. They would also serve as a platform to co-develop Continuing Professional Development content.

As the TSP covered holistic management of a school, there was focus placed on the Finance and Procurement and Human Resource Management as well as strengthening and innovating the various programmes and approaches.

One such programme was the Trust School Network (*Rangkaian Sekolah Amanah*), that was specifically targeted towards principals, teachers, students, and JPN and PPD officers. Its primary aim was to build and strengthen networks for the key beneficiaries of the programme and design them for maximum impact and sustainable outcomes.



Phase 3  
**Solidifying**  
(2017-2018)





## Moving towards TSP 2.0- STAND, STEPS, and STEER 1.5

With the strengthening of programmes and initiatives in place, it was time for the programme to take the next momentous step in its journey — one that would utilise LeapEd's dedicated focus and core beliefs about education.

LeapEd has always held that education is ultimately unique for each learner. In order to emulate this, the education system needs to allow each learner the free will to navigate their own learning journey. This shift towards greater independence would be a key driver in the programme's next move: the introduction and development of Trust School Programme 2.0 (TSP 2.0)

Discussions on TSP 2.0 and its new and broader vision swiftly took place, leading to the School and System Transformation Agency Dimensions (STAND) team. The team included representatives from the Education Operations Department and Education Development Department of LeapEd. In a thrilling move forward, the team engaged in rigorous research, discussion forums, and workshops to develop the different types of education.

The first system was the Sustainable Transformation Enablement, Engagement, and Response. The STEER working team was established in March 2017 and focused on identifying key elements from TSP 1.0 that yielded positive results in the schools. The objective was to firmly steer the vision into action by developing a number of models to support practical applications.

A key aspect of TSP 2.0 would be Continuous Professional Development programmes including TeachSmart, MidLED, and LeadED. They would

be piloted throughout 2018 with all existing Year 2 (Cohort 2016) trust schools. In addition, new trust schools from Cohort 2018 would also be adopting TSP 2.0. STEER 1.5 would act as a bridge between the two, taking in schools that were not yet in Year 2 of TSP 1.0 or taken into the programme before TSP 2.0 was fully developed.

Beginning in 2015, LeapEd and Yayasan AMIR created a streamlined development initiative called Student Empowerment and Progress Standards (STEPS). The plan was to develop it as a pilot project that would focus on the deeper level of transformation by making the link to actual classroom practice. Using assessment for learning strategies and the project-based learning approach, STEPS would research and analyse student outcomes within the areas of literacy, numeracy, and leadership.

To support the work in the development of the three models of STAND, STEER 1.5 and STEPS, numerous discussions would take place along with frequent workshops to ascertain how best to go forward in making TSP2.0 a reality. It was a time of uncertainty and trepidation, but also of heightened excitement about the vision and how the pieces would fall.

The speed of development and the number of initiatives accelerated rapidly. Although the trust schools were all succeeding in line with expectations, resting on one's laurels is not an option. TSP2.0 had been conceived and needed to be developed swiftly. There would be no room for error. The first programme was hugely successful and the next one needed to be every bit as successful if not more so.





Intervensi	Cara Pelaksanaan	Ahli Pasukan Yang Terlibat	Kompetensi yg diperlukan	Rangka M
Bantuan jurulatih luar / CPD untuk meningkatkan kemahiran guru.	Mengadakan LADHP berfokus utk meningkatkan kemahiran guru dlm bidang kokurikulum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pegawai PPD</li><li>• SLT</li><li>• Guru</li><li>• Jurulatih luar</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kemahiran kejurulatihan</li><li>• Kemahiran kepegawaran</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 kali setahun (3 jam) setiap sesi</li></ul>

Phase 4

# Transitioning

(2018 - BEYOND)



“

Saya mengajar murid-murid tahun 6 bagi subjek Bahasa Inggeris dan Matematik. Sebelum ini, kita lebih banyak menggunakan pendekatan ‘spoon-feeding’ di mana cikgu memberi dan murid hanya menerima. Di awal pengenalan Sekolah Amanah, saya agak terkejut walaupun pengisiannya bukanlah sesuatu yang baru namun pendekatannya agak berbeza. Namun saya melihat program ini sebagai sesuatu yang unik walaupun telah berpengalaman mengajar lebih 23 tahun ”

**SITI ARPAH BINTI MD SAID**  
Teacher/ Middle Leader,  
SK Desa Pandan



## Phase 4 **Transitioning** (2018-Beyond)



The year 2018 had witnessed the birth and development of TSP2.0. It was a considerable step forward and one that would be critical for the overall continuing success of the TSP. The programme would continue to be governed and guided by LeapEd's deep seated belief that education needs to provide every student with the opportunity to forge their own learning path with an education system that is given the independence and autonomy to realise the individuality of each learner.



Since the programme's inception in 2011, LeapEd had continued to work relentlessly to ensure that its philosophy was upheld, in addition to supporting the country's economic and social needs. The hard work by all involved had paid off, as highlighted in the Project Horizon report, which stated that LeapEd's:

**"...strongest capability is in relation to the design of comprehensive, detailed, and integrated processes for engaging leaders and staff in whole school development."**

Moving forward it was crucial that the students themselves took a lead role. After all, they were the main players; the ones that everyone was behind. It would be through the students that TSP2.0 had the potential to become a spectacular success story.

## Paradigm Shift

LeapEd's philosophy was also perfectly aligned with the seismic shift being witnessed in the approach to education over the preceding years. Research had called for the once traditional and controlled approach to education to be replaced by one that focused on design and self-regulation. This opened up discussions on how the transformation could take place and gave rise to the Knowledge-Agency Window.

The focus in education would inevitably take on very different perspectives and priorities. Education 1.0 would focus on Academic Achievement, Education 2.0 would look at the development geared towards Design Thinking and Education 3.0 would look at prioritising Reflective Capacity for Self-Regulation.

Looking ahead, LeapEd envisaged the challenge in understanding and implementing Education 2.0. But it was also fully cognisant that to ignore this challenge could cost them dearly. If they remained in the domain of Education 1.0, they ran the risk of reaching a plateau in the development of the Trust Schools Initiative. This outcome would be a disaster for the programme. With that potential looming, there was no choice. Change had to take place and it had to take place quickly.



## Phase 4

# Transitioning

(2018-Beyond)

### The five dimensions

Anxious to avoid the possibility of slowing or halting the development of the TSP, LeapEd undertook robust research to ascertain how best to implement this transformation. The first step was to look at the five dimensions within each education paradigm, where fundamental change occurred. These dimensions were explored within the context of the learner leading the way with the other dimensions playing a crucial but supporting role. LeapEd attempted to adopt the following dimensions of Education 2.0:



	EDUCATION 1.0	EDUCATION 2.0	EDUCATION 3.0
 <b>Learner</b>	Provision for learners to effectively function & conform within immediate environment	Provision for learners to maximise their potential and grow as individuals	Provision for learners to participate in the design of their learning to impact society at large
 <b>Classrooms</b>	Teachers create spaces to develop academic achievers	Space where learners' potential is maximized	Spaces that nurture life-long learning
 <b>Schools</b>	Learning institutions that develop academic achievers	Learner-centered institutions that maximise individual's potential	Networks that nurture life-long learners
 <b>Communities</b>	Supporting schools to improve achievement	Partnering with schools to value-add to learners' current and future development	Creating optimal learning opportunities in school and wider community to impact society at large
 <b>System</b>	System directs goals, processes and decision making within the school	System allows for flexibility in setting goals, developing processes and making decisions in the school	System provides resources for and supports self-directed school networks

In contrast with TSP1.0, which was based on strategic goals, the implementation of TSP2.0 would be grounded in these five dimensions. Fundamentally, it would hone in on the needs of each Trust School rather than attempt to address all dimensions.

This strategy, depending on the school, district, state, or community, would mean each dimension could operate at different levels, allowing for a greater and more targeted impact. A learner for example, may operate at Education 2.0, while Systems may be still in Education 1.0. The aim was not to squash schools into the same dimension at the same time, but to allow each one to progress independently, so that they could ultimately manoeuvre all schools to Education 3.0.



## Phase 4

# Transitioning

(2018-Beyond)

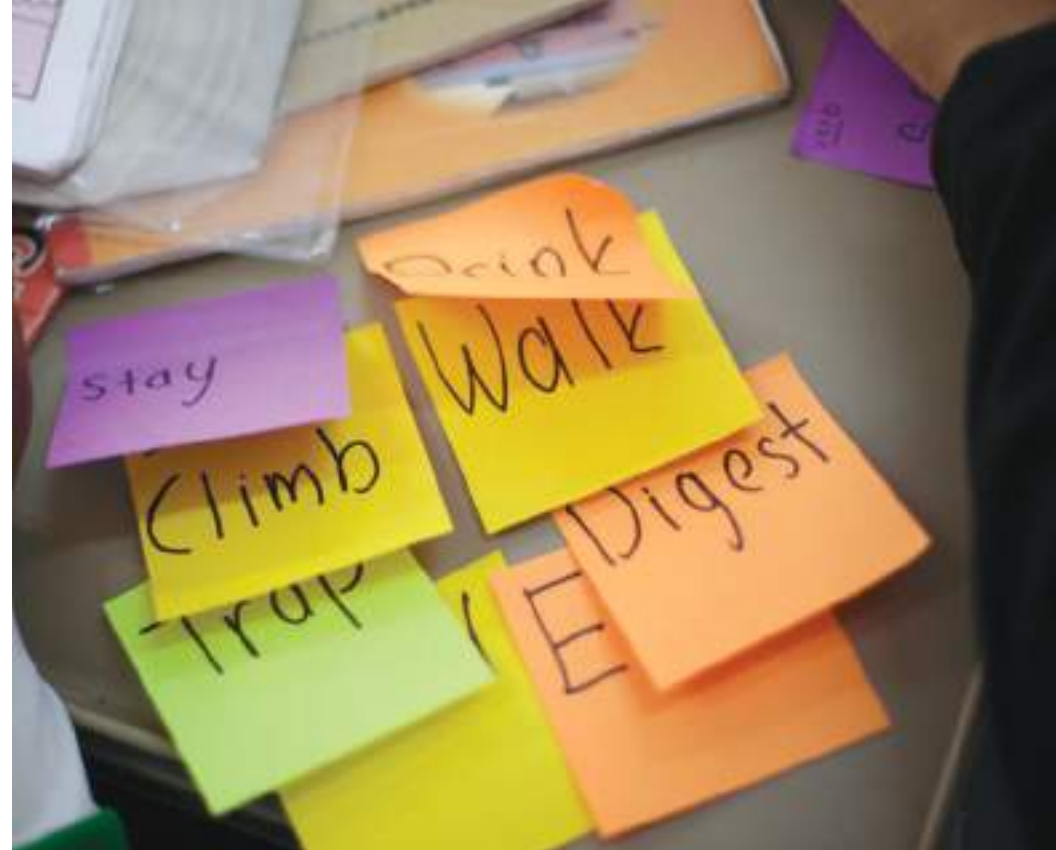


### Timeframe

With the dimensions in place, it was agreed that the timeframe would be for a fixed period of three years but would be divided into four phases. Each phase would progress at a rate entirely dependent on the school's needs. The duration of each phase could also differ, having three implications:

1. Schools completing all four phases before the three-year duration (School A).
2. Schools completing all four phases in three years (School B).
3. Schools not completing all the four phases within the three-year duration (School C).

The completion of each phase would also be determined by progression targets, which would be based on progress levels and not on end targets.



## School Strategic Plan

Moreover, the schools' strategic plans would continue to be critical to their success and to the success of the programme. After much discussion, it was agreed that each school would commence with a five-year plan. Should the school already have their plan in place, LeapEd would ensure that there was effective implementation and monitoring of activities and projects to enable the school to achieve their goals.

The schools would also receive the continued support from LeapEd for the first three years. Equipped with all they needed, the remaining two years would see the schools' independence. The strategic plan would focus on areas that the school needed to develop based on LeapEd's, Theory of Change and identified through a robust Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) exercise including a Needs Assessment/Baselining activity. The areas would be designed and developed as mini projects with specific guidelines. Establishing a clear pathway for successful development. These areas would cover: specific phased targets, project plans, roles and responsibilities of project teams, and M&E tools and guidelines.

In addition, it was agreed that a maximum of five projects would be recommended. This would be dependent on the school's capacity and available resources. There would not be a minimum of projects set.

The projects themselves had the huge advantage that came with incorporating all players on the ground. It provided a sense of autonomy and empowerment, which would fuel the schools' motivation to succeed. The projects would be driven by the Senior Leadership Team with project members comprising Middle Leaders, transformers, teachers, parents, community representatives, and students, depending on the project. A yearly tactical plan would be developed to track progress and monitored using the latest version of the MoE's Quality Standards (*Standard Kualiti Pendidikan Malaysia Gelombang 2 —SKPMg2*).

It was indeed an invigorating development where the schools could firmly feel the reassuring arm of LeapEd, but also taste the joy and sense of accomplishment that comes with independence and empowerment.



## Phase 4 Transitioning (2018-Beyond)







## Sustainability and Scalability

### Beyond TSP: GUSTO

As in previous years, the programme continued to develop and implement both new and existing initiatives. In 2015, the project, Ground-up School Transformation Programme (GUSTO), was initiated. It was a thrilling collaboration between the JPN of Perak and Pulau Pinang, YA, LeapEd, and Teach for Malaysia (TfM). It would see the involvement of five schools, two secondary schools in Perak, SMK Kamunting and SMK Kuala Kurau; and three primary schools in Pulau Pinang, SMK Permatang Tok Labu, SMK Jelutong, and SMK Taman Sejahtera.

Together, the involved parties developed the programme to leverage the lessons and successes of the school transformation framework

and approaches used in the TSP. It was to prove a particularly welcome initiative. For the first time since the TSP began, it would focus on underperforming schools whose students were predominantly from families and communities from the lower end of the socio-economic scale. The inclusion of these schools was a vital move towards a quality education accessible to all.

This innovative programme would also take a staggered approach towards transformation. In the first year, the focus would be on Form 1 teachers and students, moving up to Form 2 teachers and students in the second year and then to Form 3 teachers and students in the third year. This type of approach was critical as it would allow for a gradual and progressive transformation over a three-year period. With a solid and secure base established, the school would be well-equipped and have

the confidence to achieve complete transformation. They would be in a position to develop internal capacity to ensure sustainability by the end of the programme. To this end, it would have three main components that would support the school transformation to meet the Key Performance Targets:

1. In-school support provided by the Education Mentors
2. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
3. Appointment and development of Change Teachers (teachers who act as change agents within their schools)

The teachers would play a pivotal role in promoting the positive change in their schools and work towards enhancing their teaching by receiving instructional leadership support from Change Teachers in their respective schools.



## Phase 4 Transitioning (2018-Beyond)

### Beyond TSP: District Transformation Programme-AMAN (DTP-AMAN)

Adding to an already impressive array of initiatives was the introduction of DTP-AMAN. This bold development set its sights on implementing a whole-state education transformation. The aim was to implement transformation by impacting all three components of the state education system: the JPN, the PPDs and the schools. System-wide transformation at the state-level would be implemented through two distinct but related work tracks:

- (a) Organisational Enhancement focused on effecting transformation at the JPN and PPDs. The objective was to enhance the capability and capacity of personnel and units within the JPN and PPDs to provide better support to the schools in their school improvement efforts.

- (b) PPD-led Transformation involved staff from the PPDs: School Improvement Partners (SIPs), School Improvement Subject Coach (SISCs) and DTP Officers supporting and scaffolding school transformation that would be driven by the Senior Leaders of the respective schools.

The initiative hopes to ultimately and indirectly impact 64 pilot schools in Kedah. The schools would be clustered in groups of four, making a total of 16 clusters in all nine PPDs; Kota Setar, Kuala Muda Yan, Kulim Bandar Baru, Kubang Pasu, Pendang, Baling, Sik, Padang Terap and Langkawi (in 2017 only eight PPDs with Baling/Sik clustered as one). Adopting this type of cluster approach would allow the schools a truly meaningful advantage. Within their cluster they would be in a position to establish important networks and learning communities which would be vital in facilitating mutual support and collaboration. Fundamentally, it would also be integral to the project-training model, which required SIPs and SISCs to lead cluster-based training.





## Beyond TSP: Islamic School Enhancement Programme (ISEP)

The final initiative at this stage of the journey was the vision of an Islamic School Enhancement Programme in order to place Tahfiz institutions at the forefront of Islamic education for the 21st Century. It was recognised that Tahfiz schools sought to provide a conducive Islamic learning environment. As such, LeapEd's mission would encompass three factors:

1. To deliver a holistic school enhancement programme that reflected the unique identity of Tahfiz schools.
2. To optimise Islamic Education through incorporating 21st Century Teaching and Learning
3. To develop capacity building within the Tahfiz school community to enable students to achieve their potential as global citizens.

Grounded in reliable, investigative field research, LeapEd partnered with a leading Tahfiz school in a pilot project: *Maahad Tahfiz Negeri Pahang* (MTNP). Under the sponsorship of the Pahang State Foundation (Yayasan Pahang), the aim was to provide a customised intervention programme that would address the direct needs of Tahfiz schools within the context of a Malaysian Islamic education.



## Phase 4 **Transitioning** (2018-Beyond)





## The next chapter...

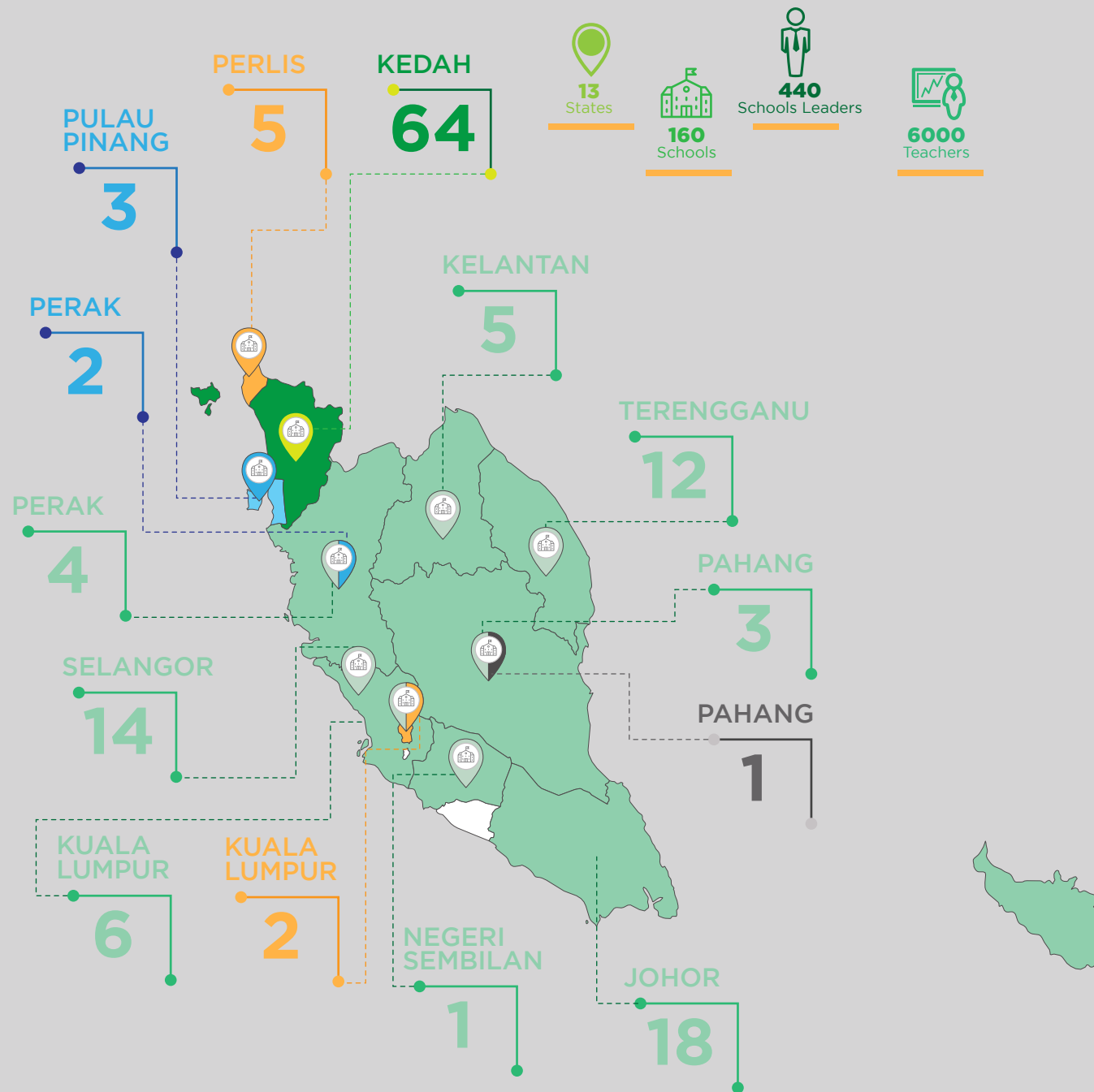
The traditional approach to education and the role of schools had witnessed an evolution. Gone were the days where education was scripted and focused on rote learning. A new and better path was forged. It called for a sharp change in direction with a specific focus on self-directed learning.

The change in direction sat comfortably in the arms of LeapEd's philosophy. It saw a cohesive system with five dimensions: learners, classrooms, schools, communities, and system. With these dimensions working together, a transformative school culture that was both sustainable and scalable was indeed, achievable. Their vision for learners to participate in the design of their own learning was not only doable but was completely in line with the first-class education systems around the world. Determined to make their vision a reality for their country, LeapEd and the MoE buckled their seat belts, turned the ignition, and continued their exhilarating drive ahead.

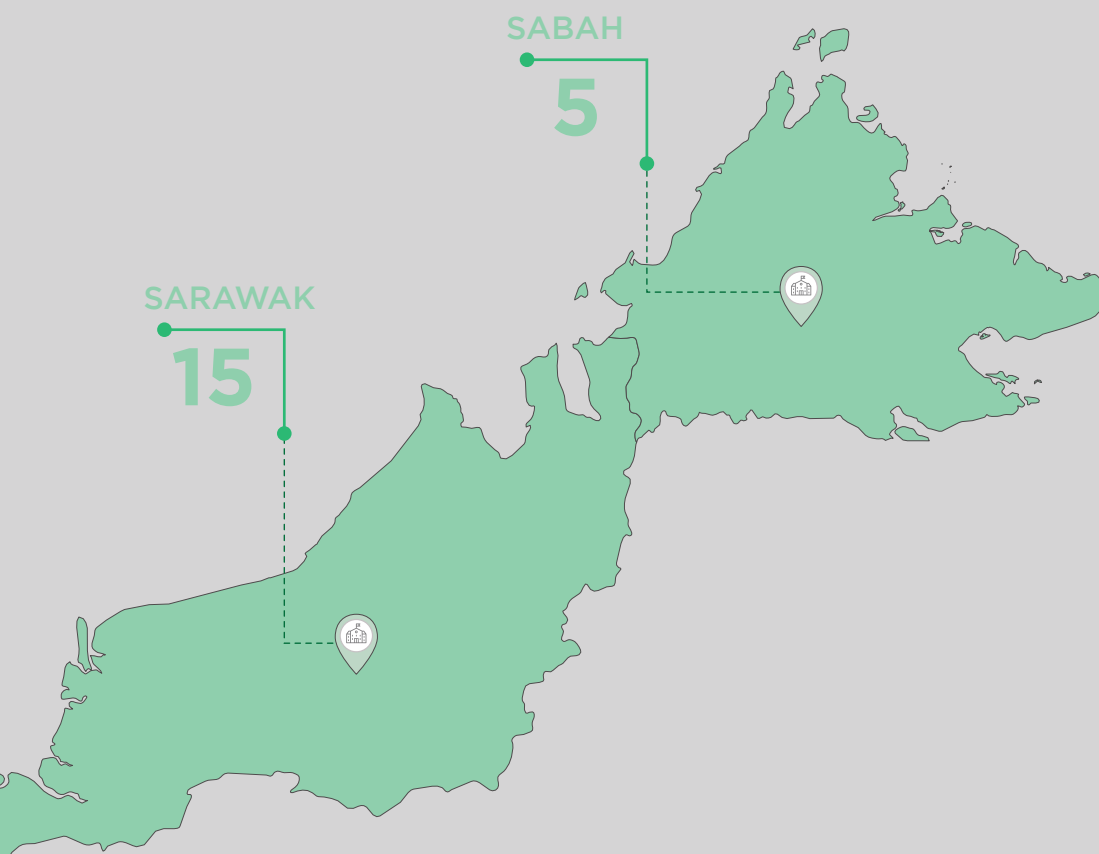
The final chapter of this transformation journey is yet to be written. But if the journey so far is any reflection, the next chapter will be exhilarating.

# Our Presence

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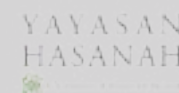
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ISBN 978-967-13316-4-4



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