

When students are back in the physical classroom after the first Movement Control Order (MCO) in 2020, we may have thought that it was a once in a lifetime experience of distance learning. Little did we know, the situation worsened from November 2020 all the way through most of the following year where the majority of the students were forced to go back online. The extended period of distance learning has inevitably widened the learning gap and we now have a shared responsibility to recover learning for highly affected students particularly those who couldn't read among the primary school students and the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) candidates who had to adapt to the sudden change of their schooling experience. As such, at Edvolution, we conducted two community-led initiatives namely Projek Lulus SPM and Projek Celik Baca together with education officers in JPN Perlis. The two projects are part of the initiatives taken to bring people together and help underperforming students to get their SPM certificates and to improve primary school students' reading skills.

Our discussion with 38 School Leaders and 18 JPN Officers in Perlis during the first MCO indicated that almost all schools in Perlis and JPN themselves were unprepared to manage the crisis. Edvolution Enterprise (Edvolution) and Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri (JPN) Perlis then aimed to support the welfare and recover learning of 9 schools in Perlis by supporting state officers, school leaders and teachers with comprehensive crisis management and coaching support in response to COVID-19. The crisis management and coaching support are designed to guide JPN officers as the key point-of-contact in the state to effectively guide school leaders and teachers to adapt to the new norm. Both Projek Celik Baca and Projek Lulus SPM have specific groups of students who receive additional support to accelerate their learning. These students are known as Aspiring Students in Projek Lulus SPM and Aspiring Readers in Projek Celik Baca, reflecting our strong belief that every student has the potential to improve. This additional support comes not only from sessions with teaching volunteers, but also through interactions with another group of students called the Student Leaders. Student Leaders are the selected students entrusted to lead their peers by guiding the core subjects of Bahasa Melayu and Sejarah as well as guiding reading fluency. On top of that, all students involved gained benefit in terms of increased confidence and their student outcomes.

The projects could not have succeeded if it were not for the cumulative effect of the whole community. For Projek Celik Baca, there are 44 community volunteers and 15 digital volunteers. The digital volunteers recorded 15 reading sessions for students to watch and learn when schools were closed due to the pandemic. Additionally, schools were also provided with a USB drive complete with the materials for offline use. The community volunteers conducted 24 reading sessions in schools. For Projek Lulus SPM, there are 15 digital volunteers. The digital volunteers conducted 38 digital tuition sessions for students, focusing on Sejarah and Bahasa Melayu. These tuition sessions were watched by students online when schools were closed, and in-schools based on a timetable when schools were allowed to open. Schools were also provided with a USB drive complete with the lesson recording and materials for offline use. In terms of monetary, a sum of RM 11,330.00 has been raised together with Teach For Malaysia to support the implementation of Projek Celik Baca and Projek Lulus SPM. On top of that, during the school closures, the officers and schools work with the local communities to use public spaces such as mosques and community halls to continue conducting sessions for students.

As an outcome, Projek Lulus SPM witnessed 93% of Aspiring Students with borderline grades prior to their SPM examination went from a failing grade to passing their Bahasa Melayu paper for SPM 2020 and 85% in Sejarah. Similarly, the Aspiring Readers, main beneficiary of Projek Celik Baca are the students who could not read in the beginning of the project also showed an impressive improvement through the increase of 2 reading levels in their proficiency. The remedial teachers who were part of Projek Celik Baca worked on various differentiated and fun learning supports to engage the student. Within 7 months of the projects, schools were able to carry out and sustain their crisis response suited for the needs in their schools. This has led the schools to be able to complete and sustain the initiatives to impact more students in need. A virtual sharing session among teachers has also been conducted in December 2020. During the session, each school takes turns to share how they implemented one of the two projects which covers their best practices and key learnings. The successes we have seen were how officers and schools were able to contextualise the content and projects to the unique needs and situations of the school and its community alongside the leadership of our education officers and school leaders.

It is no doubt that the combined effort from various individuals in the education sector, private organisations and the surrounding community have resulted in the success of both projects. The volunteers' high commitment to provide the support needed really helps students to pass SPM is truly an example of how we all can play a part in lending a hand to help the students in need. Similarly for Projek Celik Baca, the strong sense of community has opened doors and possibilities to students who once could not read. In fact, teaching a child to read their first word is not only impacting the child alone but will essentially impact the whole community as mentioned by World Literacy Foundation, low literacy level will have a significant implication on the community. While Projek Celik Baca has shown great success in its implementation and extension in schools, we sure hope it does not stop here. That is why from July 2021, we have been working with Ishwaar Singh, an English teacher from Johor who proposes a sustainable and collaborative model that empowers parents as teaching volunteers in realising 'Jom Baca', another community-led programme to teach English literacy online. In this current situation, it is imperative that each and everyone of us find even more innovative ways to combat basic illiteracy - online!

That said, a community-based approach could be a potential solution to this concern which is in line with the 2018 circular by the Government that encourages public and private partnership in school programmes through Shift 9: Partner with Parents, Community and Private Sector at Scale in the Malaysian Education Blueprint. In these trying times, our little effort may result in much bigger impact for as long as we took a step forward in improving our education during the pandemic and beyond. The big question is - where do we see ourselves as part of the solution? It's time to start thinking if a similar approach can be used to benefit your local communities.

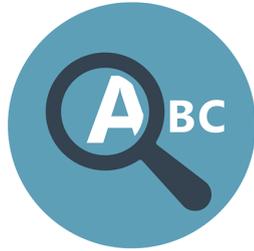
Various initiatives are outlined in the **Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025** to enhance our national education.



"If these many **initiatives are bricks** to build a mansion that is a transformed education system, then **parental engagement would be the mortar** which holds the bricks together."

*PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT, VITAL PART OF LEARNING | THE STAR (2018)*

# What's next?



**'PROJEK CELIK BACA'**



**'PROJEK LULUS SPM'**

Post-MCO Initiatives by Edvolution Enterprise with District and State Officers to recover and accelerate high need students' learning.

# Who are the students?



Both projects focus on student mentorship and peer coaching to accelerate recovery of learning loss.



## Aspiring Readers

- Primary Schools
- Improving literacy
- Local volunteers to conduct in-person classes



## High Need SPM Students

- Secondary Schools
- Improving SPM 2020 passing rate
- Volunteers to conduct online tuition classes for Bahasa Melayu and Sejarah



## Student Leaders

- Willing to guide or help other students.
- Attend 'Student Leaders' training session

## Execution of 'Projek Celik Baca'

### Week 1-2



**Identify 'Aspiring Readers'** based on school data of reading fluency.

**Selection of students as 'Student Leaders' (SL).**

### Week 3-10



**Face-to-face guidance by Volunteers** will run once a week.

'Student Leaders' will further guide 'Aspiring Readers' in small groups or individually.

### Week 11-12



**Assessment** to evaluate the performance of selected students to determine the **Next Steps**.



# Execution of 'Projek Lulus SPM'

## Week 1-2



**Selection of Form 5 students who have the potential to pass Bahasa Melayu and Sejarah** based on the latest examination marks.

**Selection of students as 'Student Leaders' (SL).**

## Week 3-10



**Tuition Digital and Peer Guidance** will run once a week for each subject.

Selected students will attend Tuition Digital and get Peer Guidance by SL.

## Week 11-12



**Assessment** to evaluate the performance of selected students to determine the **Next Steps**.



## Upcycling Face Mask Boxes into Learning Aids



Cikgu Dhiya,  
SK Oran

## Utilising the School Compound as an Open Book



Cikgu Mirawati,  
*SK Dato Kayaman*