

All students are invited to contribute to this project!

Project What's After SPM: A Hundred Different Journeys

One book. One hundred stories.
For you. For hundreds of thousands of Malaysian youths.

Website:- <http://whatsafterspm.blogspot.com/>
Facebook Group:- <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=70405181412>
(Please help to spread the words around!)

For most of us, the end of secondary school education (or the lack of it) marked a turning point in our lives where we moved from studying together under an umbrella education system (SPM) to embarking upon vastly different pathways.

The transition process for the more fortunate ones would no doubt have been aided by the various resources made available to them: school counselors, advice from worried parents and knowledgeable seniors, counsel from helpful relatives, visits to campus open day sessions, mountainous stacks of college brochures, education sections in local newspapers, education resource websites etc.

The same, however, cannot be said of hundreds of thousands of kids all over Malaysia who have no regular access to the internet, are not blessed with well-informed family and friends, and who complete secondary school with little or almost no awareness of the opportunities that abound for them, as well as kids who are simply ignorant of the opportunities that surround them or just do not possess the faith and self-confidence to pursue their passions.

Therefore, we have decided to spearhead this project in hopes of reaching those kids and sending them this message: "Look, kids, now that you have completed secondary school, there are a million opportunities out there for you, a million pathways that you can undertake, a million places to visit, and you should explore those choices as much as you can. You can do anything you set your mind to. All it takes is keyakinan, a little bit of strategi, a little bit of tuah, and lots and lots of semangat dan usaha."

We are now looking for a plethora collection of stories of young Malaysians who have pursued different pathways after SPM. The stories will be published in a book to be distributed to as many students and secondary schools as possible (tentative target: to distribute at least 2 books to each of the 5000 secondary schools in Malaysia). And we would like to invite you to participate in this project by submitting your story, or persuading your friends to submit their stories.

It does not matter whether you are a scholar with stellar results and a 3-inch thick resume, a typical student who went to a local university after finishing Form 6, or a youth who has to work in the pasar malam at night to foot your technical college fees in the day. It does not matter whether you have chosen the oft-beaten path or the road less travelled. We believe that there every education background offers its own boons and banes. And we believe that there are merits in telling any story.

Topics

Participants may touch on all or concentrate on one or a few of the following topics:

- (a) What socioeconomic/education background did you come from and how did it contribute towards making you the person that you are today?
- (b) What obstacles did you face in pursuing tertiary education and how did you overcome those obstacles?
- (c) What prompted/who inspired you to pursue the pathway that you have undertaken/are currently undertaking?
- (d) How did you find out about the pathway that you have undertaken/are currently undertaking?
- (e) What are the advantages and disadvantages of pursuing the pathway that you have taken/are currently undertaking?
- (f) If you have had had a unique education background, please elaborate on your unusual circumstances (Examples: kampung boy who ended up in Yale University/home-schooled girl who faced difficulty persuading university admissions officers to admit her/student who pursued cosmological astrophysics at Cambridge under the prestigious Gates Scholarship/teenager who dropped out of school and pursued full-time modelling/youth who took a gap year after SPM to participate in humanitarian missions in Tibet/boy who has worked as a professional computer hacker since age 14/youth who entered a seminary to pursue priesthood/student who designed a new degree course at Smith College).
- (g) If you have succeeded in securing a rare/prestigious scholarship/undergone a rigorous university application process (Examples: Kofi Annan International Scholarship), please elaborate on the application process.
- (h) What advice would you give to someone who hopes to pursue the same

pathway that you have undertaken/are currently undertaking?

(i) How was the experience at your previous/current place of study and how has it changed your life? If you have had a non-academic pursuit (s) (establishing your own restaurant/working full-time as a social worker etc), how has your pursuit impacted other people?

(j) Is there any other issue regarding post-SPM education that you wish to discuss? What other pertinent advice would you give to someone who is about to complete SPM/secondary school?

Reminder: Remember that the purpose of submitting your story is not to flaunt your achievements, but to share your unique experiences with your readers. As you write, try to retain the relevancy between your experiences and the reader's interest.

Participation rules

1. Participants must be Malaysian citizens.
2. Participants must be of age 30 or below as of 2009.
3. Each entry will consist of a photo (to be printed in black & white), an introduction blurb written in 3rd person perspective and a main article written in 1st person perspective.
4. The introduction blurb is to be between 30-50 words, and must mention the participant's age and place(s) of study/pursuit (see below for examples).
5. The main article is to be between 600-800 words.
6. All articles are to be written in English. Participants who struggle with English may write in Malay/Chinese and have their articles translated by the committee members.
7. Articles may be edited for clarity, brevity and/or intelligibility, though the committee will strive not to tamper them.
8. All participants must use their real names. Pseudonyms will not be allowed.
9. About 100 entries will be selected for publishing. The committee's decisions will be final.
10. The photo may be of any style as long as it shows the participant's face. Black & white photos are preferred, as the book will be published in black & white.
11. Participants will retain the copyright of their photos and articles.
12. All entries are to be sent to whatsafterspm@gmail.com.

Deadline

March 31 2009

Diversity

We encourage young Malaysians from all walks of life to participate in this project. We strive for inclusivity and diversity in terms of:

- (a) Socioeconomic, ethnic and geographical background of participants
- (b) Secondary school background of participants (national schools, vernacular schools, international schools, private schools, religious

schools, boarding schools, home-schooling, apprenticeship, dropouts etc)

(c) Pre-university education background of participants (STPM, matriculation, A Level, IB, SAM, ICPU, AUSMAT, ADP, foundation program, diploma, home-schooling etc)

(d) Tertiary education background of participants (local public/private university, foreign public/private university, polytechnique, vocational school, technical school, ACCA, college, twinning program, external program, self-study etc)

(e) Countries where participants pursued tertiary education (Malaysia, US, UK, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Japan, Korea, Egypt, Taiwan, China, Indonesia, France, Germany, India, Brunei etc)

(f) Education funding methods (parents' sponsorship, bank loan, PTPTN loan, JPA scholarship, Bank Negara scholarship, Petronas scholarship, ASEAN scholarship, US schools financial aid, MARA scholarship, GIC scholarship, private school scholarship, study grant, bursary, personal savings, part-time jobs, busking, own salary earned during gap year etc)

(g) Fields of interest of participants (pure sciences, arts & humanities, social sciences, medicine, law, engineering, entertainment, culinary arts, business, entrepreneurship etc)

Samples of introductory blurbs

(a) Mohammad Ghazali, 18, is currently setting up his own football memorabilia business at Berjaya Times Square with his ex-classmates after completing SPM at SMK USJ14. He spends his free time coaching orphans in football for free. He also owns a personal collection of jerseys autographed by over 50 Manchester United players, and wants the Devils to reclaim the English Premier League.

(b) Tee Le Yin, 26, a former national swimmer and philately enthusiast, studied A Level at Hwa Chong Institution, Singapore under the ASEAN scholarship prior to pursuing War Studies in King's College, UK. The former national swimmer is currently pursuing her MBA at INSEAD, France under the Maxis scholarship.

Book specifications

1. The book will be printed in black & white to minimise production cost and market price.
2. The book will be between 200-300 pages thick.
3. The book will be published by end of 2009.

Royalty/payment

1. As this is a community service project, none of the participants, project committee members and project advisors will receive any form of royalty or payment.
2. A fund raising campaign will be held later to raise money for the project. However, all excess funds will go towards distributing the books to students and secondary schools for free.

Contribute

1. We would greatly appreciate anyone who wishes to contribute towards our publishing fees.
2. We also welcome anyone who wishes to help in translating the book into Chinese and Malay after the first edition of the book goes into print.

Enquiries/contact

The organising committee members Charis Loke, Gabrielle Chong Yong Wei, Goh Jing Pei, Kimberley Ho Mei Kay, Tara Thean and Yeoh Chen Chow are not committed to any organisation. They were simply brought together for this project and are bound by their sincere enthusiasm for community service.

Participants, parents, interested sponsors and translators, as well as general inquirers may contact committee at whatsafterspm@gmail.com.