

# **SALUS Programme**

**“Opening MINDS, Not Filling GAPS”**

**Collaborative and Partnership for Academic, Emotional  
and Social Resilience Skills Training for children and  
young people**

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Challenging the Status Quo**

*“Our current education system needs to be injected with new methods and should not be too focused on rankings and examinations”*

*- Dr Maszlee Malik, Education Minister*

## **What is the SALUS Programme?**

(SALUS is Latin word for welfare, wellbeing)

The SALUS Programme is a proposed public private partnership between the Ministry of Education and other related Ministries and the Applied Positivity Enterprise Sdn Bhd. The programme offers an approach to addressing psychological well-being based on evidence-based psychological research and findings. Using praxis integrated approach of theories and practice, we developed the Resilience Skills Training (RST) Programmes within the SALUS Programme for children and young people (CYP) and the Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACTraining) for the teachers in schools, where resilience is defined as a “pattern of positive adaptation in the face of significant adversity or risk” (Masten & Reed, 2002, p. 75). These training programmes are transformative and therapeutic as the resilience skills training will enable children and young people as well as teachers to enhance and optimise their potentials to grow, flourish and thrive in schools. As the saying goes, “Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime”. It is important to teach, train and empower our children and young people with essential and an invaluable resilience skills to deal and cope with their academic, social, emotional and behaviour problems, instead of placing “cops to monitor primary schools” as reported in The Star (16 January 2014); “Teenage crime on the rise” (The Star, 10 April 2014); “WHO: Depression top cause of illness in teens” (The Star, 15 May 2014). Ultimately in whatever we are doing and will be doing, we want our children and young people, as they enter adulthood, to be responsible for their own lives. We need to create hope and helping our children and young people in schools see the way forward positively. Fostering psychological wellbeing from schooling stages (primary and secondary) helps build a positive mental health in schools.

We believe and see the SALUS Programme not for what this programme is, but for what the SALUS Programme could achieve in addressing the challenges and the changing face of our education system in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is all about how we do it, based on what our children and young people want and their needs, and then through the SALUS Programme delivering. The question raised “is there a desire to change the current status quo, i.e. the way things are as opposed to the way they could be, within our education system?” We need to challenge status quo to entice improvement in wellbeing of our children and young people. It is tough and a struggle but it is doable. Challenging status quo takes an open mind, open heart and open will - “Opening MINDS, Not Filling GAPS”.

## **Statement of Need**

The SALUS Programme is directly geared toward children, young people (CYP) and teachers in schools. Numerous calls have been made by relevant stakeholders indicating that our schools have not kept pace with the myriad changes of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. While CYP are confronted with a bewildering amount of information on a daily basis, our schools have not catch up fast enough to provide CYP with the life skills that they need to approach, respond and cope with these challenges. As a consequence, there has been an increase in reports of CYP as well as teachers experiencing psychological and behavioural problems in recent years. There is an urgent need for CYP and also teachers to learn coping skills that will help them build resilience and thrive in schools. The SALUS Programme is designed and implemented

in line with the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 Shifts. As stated by Datuk Idris Jala in his article (Starbiz, *The Star*, 14/4/2014), there is a need for “Radical revamp of education. Education Blueprint is comprehensive but implementation is key”. SALUS Programme for children and young people is a journey of self-discovery in personal development by incorporating the essence of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills – social and emotional learning, character development and growth mindset. It is not just about the destination; it is also about the journey.

## Objectives

- The SALUS Programme aims to think differently and laterally in a new light—in very positive ways and perspectives about children and young people’s psychological well-being and educational development and progress. We need to change our focus from a purely academic one-size-fits-all mainstream education system to a more positive and enabling approach in dealing and coping effectively with the process of change during developmental transition stages such as transition from primary to secondary level, that can be a time of significant stress for children and young people.
- The SALUS Programme promotes growth mindset, development and potential with strong emphasis being placed on building our children and young people’s strengths, interests and needs, in achieving confidence, integrity and excellence, just like ‘Building bridges to the Future’. To quote Albert Einstein, “I fear the day that technology will surpass our human interaction. The world will have a generation of idiots.” It is vital to promote preventative measures to enhance sustainable psychological wellbeing of our children and young people in 21<sup>st</sup> century of digital age filled with constant change – changing our children and young people’s life styles and the ways they do and respond to things, resulting in an increasing issues of mental health problems.
- The SALUS Programme is relentlessly empowering and supportive – interactive, easy, fun and enjoyable approach. Our children and young people need skills to enable them to inwardly connected with whatever they are doing – learn to cultivate understanding and compassion within themselves.
- In summary, the SALUS Programme represents 21<sup>st</sup> century children and young people’s way of dealing and coping with their thinking, emotions and behaviours by being resilient and continuously stay in touch with what really matters to them.
- To address these challenges and transform the education system in schools, we offer the SALUS Programme to be run concurrently on the two main players in schools.
  - RST Programmes for children and young people; a proactive, preventive approach to emotional well-being that will strengthen their personal resources and develop effective resilience skills.

Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACTraining) for teachers, that aims to increase teachers’ psychological flexibility by addressing their goals and values so that they are more aware of who they are.

## Training and Estimated Costs

Children and young people of different age groups, corresponding to the different developmental transition stages, will be subjected to the RST Programmes. Four transitions levels have been identified as significant developmental changes, namely Level 1: Transition from lower to upper primary school at the end of Standard Three aged 9-10 years old; Level 2: Transition from Primary to Secondary schools at the end of Standard Six after the public examination UPSR aged 12-13 years old; Level 3: Transition from Lower to Upper Secondary at the end of Form Three after the public examination PMR aged 15-16 years old; and Level 4: Transition from Secondary schools to colleges/universities (tertiary education) or work at the end of the public examination SPM aged 17-18 years old. Each transition level will undergo training in the three domains of life skills—academic resilience skills, social resilience skills and emotional resilience skills—using a reflective experiential learning approach (project-based learning) under the supervision of qualified trainers/facilitators and teachers as mentors.

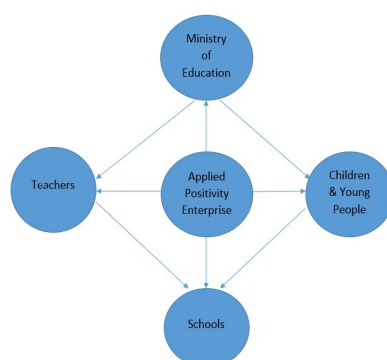
Teachers will be trained to undergo a tripartite training approach – three stages training, namely, Stage 1 – ACTraining as part of their continuing professional development (HRDF); once they have undergone ACTraining, at Stage 2, teachers will undergo the Resilience Skills Training (RST) for CYP; at Stage 3, they can act as mentors to the CYP for the RST Programmes with supervision from the trainers/facilitators. Figure 1 shows the main stakeholders involved in the SALUS Programme.

The real value and worth of the SALUS Programme is likely positively contributed to the wellbeing of our children and young people in schools, keeping them mentally and emotionally healthy. The wealth of experiences that we bring alone have made the SALUS Programme a worthwhile pursuit. To quote Warren Buffett, “Price is what you pay; value is what you get”. The estimated overall project costs inclusive of project design, development, delivery /implementation, management, evaluation over a period of 2 years will be discussed.

## Pilot Evaluation on the Effectiveness of the Programmes

The effectiveness of the programmes will be evaluated by questionnaires using the Kickpatrick Model that focuses on participants’ reactions, learning, behaviour and the final targeted results. Pilot evaluation of the training in the SALUS Programme involves continuous monitoring of implementation, assessment of changing needs and improvements. Pilot evaluation will be undertaken across multiple time points.

**Figure 1: The stakeholders of the SALUS Programme**



# **SALUS Programme**

1. Think GOOD, Feel GOOD, Do GOOD
2. Transition from Primary to Secondary Level
3. Transition from Lower Secondary to Upper Secondary Level
4. After your SPM, so what happens after this?
5. Transition Process of Youth Transformation from childhood to adulthood
6. Adventure and Outdoor / Indoor Camping

*"Believe in yourself! Have faith in your abilities! Without a humble but reasonable confidence in your own powers you cannot be successful or happy."*

- Norman Vincent Peale