

# Digital innovation on the road

IN a bid to make digital technology accessible to all Malaysian students, the Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) together with PINTAR Foundation, an organisation that spearheads school adoption programmes, rolled out a mobile learning unit under the national #mydigitalmaker initiative.

The “Kembara #mydigitalmaker bersama PINTAR” aims to expose students, teachers, parents, and local communities in rural Malaysia to digital making content and tools. It is also expected to create exposure and opportunities to digital education for some 100,000 students in rural, sub-urban and underprivileged schools.

This will ultimately steer students’ interests in digital making and later develop a more concrete understanding of digital technology and its exciting future.

At the launch of the ceremony at SMK Kompleks KLIA, a #mydigitalmaker model school, Datuk P Kamalanathan, deputy minister 1, Ministry of Education Malaysia said: “At the rate digital ecosystems are accelerating, careers in digital technology will soon be a large part of Malaysia’s future; and filling these highly sought-after

positions will be talents that are digital economy ready.

“To achieve this, it is important that we look at the very foundation of our future — our children and educators today. The key approach to building a nation of digital makers begins with creating opportunities for students — wherever they may be — and equipping our educators to nurture and polish these untapped talents.

“We have trained close to 20,000 teachers to effectively deliver the new computational thinking and computer science module integrated into the curriculum this year. We are confident that the teachers are well-equipped to cultivate computational thinking leading to higher order thinking skills amongst our students. In years to come, more teachers will be trained in collaboration with MDEC, universities and other industry partners.”

He also said that the ministry wishes to mobilise the current generation of young people with the drive, confidence and know-how, so that they can be the ‘makers’ of their own technology and innovations of the future.

“The “Kembara #mydigitalmaker bersama PINTAR” is a brilliant continuation of this national ICT-education initiative, and the Ministry of Education applauds this joined effort between MDEC

and PINTAR Foundation for exposing to students and educators all over Malaysia to similar opportunities,” said the deputy minister.

“Kembara #mydigitalmaker bersama PINTAR” is a bus, customised to fit a range of exciting digital making tools as well as information about future digital technology careers and the safe usage of digital technology. The bus will travel to most states throughout Peninsular Malaysia, exposing students, teachers and local communities from rural, suburban and underserved schools to digital making opportunities, tools and content.

Digital technology corporations such as Microsoft Malaysia, Google Malaysia, DiGi Telecommunications, Sasbadi, Designex3D, Cytron Technologies, Janalima, Centillion Robotics, Acestar and Maker21 are among the industry partners that will be showcasing learning modules and content covering robotics, creative animation, virtual reality, apps development, cyber safety as well as 3D printing and modelling in the mobile learning unit.

Volunteers will also be despatched to guide and help students understand the vast ecosystem of digital technology, and facilitate the



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introduction of Digital Maker co-curricular activities via school clubs, and Digital Maker Hubs in local communities.

Since January 2017, Computational Thinking has been integrated into the new Standard Based Curriculum for Primary (KSSR) and Standard Based Curriculum for Secondary (KSSM) as a part of the agenda spearheaded by the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MoE), and supported by MDEC.

The integration of Computational Thinking and Computer Science is benefitting all primary schools nationwide, while Basic Computer Science and Computer Science are being offered as elective subjects at around 50 per cent of secondary schools at the moment. By 2020, all school students are expected to expose to computational thinking and computer science concepts.