

A WEBINAR will be held on March 27 to address the soft skills education gap among the youth.

Entitled "The Lockdown Generation: Playing Our Part to Nurture Future Leaders", the webinar is organised by Taylor's College and the Malaysian Institute for Debate and Public Speaking (MIDP), in partnership with *The Star*.

As the nation continues to grapple with Covid-19, Taylor's College campus director Josephine Tan believes that remedial actions are needed to assist students who are lagging behind in developing critical soft skills due to prolonged school closures.

"With the movement control order, losing almost one full year of social interaction and informal learning can be extremely damaging for the growth of the students.

"They are missing out on polishing their soft skills such as communication skills, critical and creative thinking, collaboration, teamwork, and character building.

"We believe that if students have the right input and platforms to practise, communication abilities and methods do not have to diminish with the lack of physical interaction," said Tan.

MIDP chief executive officer Emellia Shariff pointed out that the lack of soft skills would mean students will suffer a much bigger consequence – one that impacts their employability and opportunities in the future.

"In a report published by Khazanah Research Institute in 2018, it was found that employers rated soft skills as more important than academic qualifications. Yet, the Malaysian education system continues to emphasise academic

# Free webinar on soft skills

## Experts to help students master critical knowledge

and professional qualifications.

"This means that the only place our students are able to develop their soft skills is through after-school learning and their social lives, which were pretty much non-existent during the MCO," she said.

To foster dialogue on the roles that organisations and industry leaders can play in nurturing soft skills among the youth, the webinar will feature prominent panel speakers, including Malaysian Employers Federation executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan, TalentCorp Graduate and Emerging Talent and Industry Partnerships head Nazrul Aziz, and Teach for Malaysia chief executive officer Chan Soon Seng.

Taylor's College and MIDP have also recently partnered to establish The Hub For Soft Skills Education.

The initiative is to fill in the gap for soft skills education through training activities and competitions focusing on debating, public speaking, storytelling, drama, spoken word poetry, writing, and many others.

The partnership will see MIDP conducting weekend trainings for school students and organising up



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to 30 competitions a year, while also sponsoring free workshops for students from B40 families and other underserved communities. These activities are endorsed by the Education Ministry.

According to Emellia, the partnership's mission is to improve soft skills literacy and accessibility in Malaysia.

"Our programmes allow students from public, private, board-

ing and international schools to come together to have an exchange of ideas, schooling experiences and cultures.

"Additionally, in international competitions, we also want our Malaysian students to have that same benefit when they meet students from across the globe," she said.

Emellia believes this is important to nurture young minds



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**Emellia:** The lack of soft skills will impact students' future employability and opportunities.

while encouraging students to express and exchange views in a critical and constructive manner on important issues.

"Ultimately, they will grow up to contribute to the economy and society, as well as enrich our democracy," she said.

The webinar is open to all. To register, visit [bit.ly/lockdown-gen](http://bit.ly/lockdown-gen).