

PARENT PERSPECTIVES

This issue of ***Parent Perspectives*** is a collection of testimonials from Malaysian FPS-ers from over the years. These are some examples of why everyone involved in FPSPi believes that participating in this unique and challenging program is life changing! Please enjoy, and also consider submitting **YOUR** testimonial for our next testimonial edition in April!



FPSPi
FUTURE PROBLEM SOLVING PROGRAM
INTERNATIONAL

In Their Own Words

My affair with FPS started in 1999, when FPSP Australia was invited by the NAGC of Malaysia to introduce the program to us. Since then I have been involved in and with it. Over the years I have developed relationships with my students and their families that go beyond the program. I have also made great friendships with people from the various countries affiliated to FPSPi. Personally I know the values and benefits of the program and would love to see it spread its wings beyond the reaches of the urban advantaged population of students. Having said that I would like to share with all the views of the people who have enabled me to keep the program running till today – my students, past and present.

~~Lalitha Nair, Affiliate Director, Malaysia ~~

Ng Zee Wan (Manager, Corporate Investments at Eastern & Oriental. Bachelor of Commerce, Deakin University)



I come from an Asian upbringing where being a little more inquisitive will deem you as a bother rather than a curious mind. Coupled with a Malaysian schooling system with teaching methods emphasis on rote learning, you would not find many students with the ability to exercise creative and critical thinking in planning, creating and decision making.

Participating in and practicing FPS as a student has altered my way of thinking completely. I am able to pinpoint problem areas and issues quicker. My approach in resolving problems is more focused. It is as though I am able to see through a subject matter from 1 to 10 in an expedited manner and problems don't seem to be an obstacle, just a necessary process to experience in order to achieve your ultimate goal.

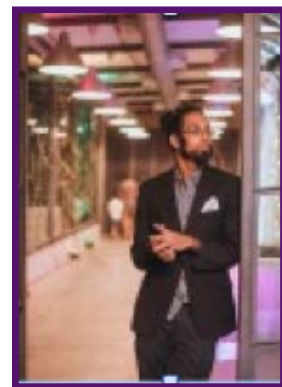
Since developing skills in FPS as a student, I've carried it into my adult life and applied it throughout my career. It is apparent that FPS has had a great impact on my life and I cannot imagine having to grow up without it.

“Success is the result of perfection, hard work, learning from failure, loyalty and persistence.” ~Colin Powell~

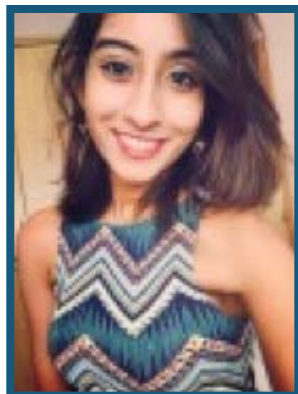
Suryan Nair (A recently qualified chemical engineer from Taylor's University)

FPS has allowed me to exercise more creative and critical thinking in a way that is typically not exercised in Malaysian/Asian schools. This has allowed me to better approach problems, situations where playing by the book wouldn't have worked very well.

In my time as a FPS student, I felt a lot of the coaching and lessons were mostly coming from a Western narrative (i.e. The Australian National Director would come to Malaysia (a tropical country full of sunshine and plenty of rain) for training using drought as a Future Scene. Needless to say a lot of the students felt out of place. It would help if more relevance of these problems was shown to Malaysians/Asians, be it a change in setting, or application in Malaysia/Asia.



Prasanna Narayanaswami (Final year, advertising and journalism degree student at Taylor's University)



Living in an Asian country where children were taught to keep their views to themselves, FPS gave me the confidence to speak up. Our school system spoon-fed us but FPS provided me with tools to think critically and form creative solutions to global issues. We were challenged to break away from our comfort zones and deliberate important problems such as climate change and social discrimination.

By presenting the issues in a more Asian context, FPS participants would be inspired to improve the future problems faced by their own country.

Joel Hue (Year 9 student at HELP International School)

I feel that joining the FPSP has affected me in several ways and has edified myself as a person. Most notably, I have learned the importance of perseverance and not to waste opportunities that are given to me. I have also learned how to co-operate with people I may not be used to working with, and to constantly have an open mind.

There is a saying about the Malaysian attitude, which goes: 'If one can do, let him do. If no one can do, what can I do?' I must admit that before, I used to live by this attitude, and while joining the FPSP has not enabled me to kick the habit entirely, it definitely has helped me improve.



Alexander Long (currently in his 2nd year undergraduate studies at Stanford University.)



When I was younger, FPS helped me build a strong foundation for thinking. It helped me build a framework for thinking through tough problems and uncertainty that the future inevitably brings. It provided me an environment where I could weld imagination and critical thinking. These are two skills which underlie progress, but are rare to find in harmonious co-existence within a single person.

I found that, even as a young child working with other young children, my teammates were motivated and hungry to learn. I am lucky that FPS was designed in such a way so as to provide a well-structured environment where I could make friends while learning.

"Judge a man by his questions rather than by his answers."

— Voltaire —

Gayathri Nair (Environmental Science graduate, Murdoch University. Presently executive manager of a consulting practice in Australia)

The Future Problem Solving Program has had considerable impact on me and on my development as a student, as well as further into adult professional life. I credit the program for giving me a unique skill set which, as a student in the Malaysian school context, was unlike what my peers had developed.

Though not without its merits, Malaysian schooling at the time was very much focused on rote-based learning. At a high school level, much of the information was memorized and regurgitated for 100% exam-based evaluations, which did not do much for equipping students to use learned information in application-based problem solving situations.

I soon learnt this was the type of evaluation we needed to be familiar with for tertiary education (which I completed in Australia) and therefore was pleasantly surprised at how much better prepared for it I was compared to my peers.

The FPS program had (in a fun, outside-of-school, with different but well-defined framework) instilled in me research techniques, how to quote evidence in academic writing, team work dynamics, clear written and oral communication skills, new perspectives, and most importantly a six step problem solving process I consider invaluable in solving even the most mundane of adult life challenges today!

Moving forward as a part of the larger FPS alumni community, I'd be very excited to see these new perspectives and skills being gained by those who participate. I enjoyed learning perspectives on topics through the scenarios and research, and I believe it's a powerful tool. With FPS, there is a unique opportunity for students from all over the world to gain new understanding and points of view from each other's cultures and backgrounds. I feel that with the myriad of worldly perspectives equally represented through the content of the program, therein sits untapped potential to grow a truly globally aligned young FPS alumni.



Lim Yan Yi (A student in Methodist College, Kuala Lumpur)



Born into an Asian family, I have been brought up to be more conservative, careful and always BE cautious in what I think and say. The lack of free and out-spoken communication with people has accounted for my timid personality over the years.

During the MAGIC competition at IC, I was forced to sit down in front of strangers. When the competitors were asked to "ice-break" shortly before the start of the Global International Problem Solving (GIPS) competition, I felt at a great disadvantage among them. They could speak very fluent English. I was brief with my responses, fearing that I may say something unintelligent. Right on cue, the competition started. My two partners divided the sections of the booklet among us and then we immediately started working on our parts.

The determination on both my partners' faces was a wakeup call for me. It was almost too late for me to realise that close to the end of the competition we had been tapping on the sections of our booklets with the tip of our pencils for too long and that we each needed some fresher ideas and assistance. From that moment on, I learnt that what we really needed all this time was communication. I forced myself out of the layers of shyness and asked the questions that I craved to ask, even if they may have sounded very foolish, and I even offered as many answers

I could produce even when my answers weren't as bright and creative as theirs. However, little did I know, the very few answers I managed to spill out were the very last few threads that successfully led us to the silver at the Awards Giving Ceremony.

Nicholas Lau (A student of the Australian Matriculation Programme at Sunway College)

I've been a student of the FPSP programme for 7 years. I'd like to say that it's certainly a new and unique challenge for Malaysian students like me. The programme has improved my thinking skills immensely since it requires many answers that Malaysian students would consider unorthodox and impractical, and doesn't just require a normal straight answer. It also allows me to demonstrate my creativity, as the programme is designed for students to express their creativity. It doesn't impose any kind of limitation on how you think like schools here normally do. I also think that it has helped me overcome some daily challenges as a Malaysian student such as thinking out of the box and learning that ideas are certainly possible. In short FPSP is a terrific program for people who would like to better sharpen their minds and learn that creativity has no bounds.



Shaneal Diiren (heading to Melbourne University for a degree in environmental science and geography)



I remember having my first go at the FPS Program at the age of 12, briefly indulging myself in the ethos of lateral thinking and cultivating a creative mindset. It was fresh, it was exciting, and most importantly, a great new horizon of knowledge out of the usual. Growing up with the Malaysian education system, which prioritizes rote learning and a great deal of memorizing made me crave the avenue of alternative skill development that the program offered.

During my years involved in the FPSP, I took part in the CmPS, Scenario Writing, and booklet problem solving, with all of them giving me a variety of challenges to overcome. These segments on their own have helped me throughout the years with a bolstered sense of belief in myself, situational management skills, networking skills, and a deeper understanding of the various types of people you will cross paths with when it comes time to work as a team.

One of the bigger challenges I personally had to overcome was that of knowing my limits when working as a team member and in a long-term perspective how to delegate and lead a said team throughout a project. It has no doubt helped me through my IB Diploma Programme and other side ventures I have taken up over the years.

I am truly grateful to have attended 3 FPSPI Conferences from 2010 to 2012, as they provided me with an unfathomable world of experience, and I highly recommend it to anyone who wishes to broaden their horizons and experience various world cultures – even making some very lasting friendships take root. Looking back, I will not trade away those years of experience for anything else. The Asian society I grew up in lacked that wonder and diversity, which I believe is surely needed to make more holistic individuals flourish.

My hopes are for a more unaltered integration of the program into our nation's schools and learning centres, to challenge both the students and the status quo on what is defined as proper learning. Perhaps then, more students will be a lot more interested in treading the road less travelled, and even then maybe a handful of them will go on to represent their peers on the world stage, hungering for new horizons to experience and conquer.

Jeremiah Joel Cheah Wei Quan {BA(Hons) student in Contemporary Music (Audio Technology at Sunway University)}

The Future Problem Solving Programme (FPSP) has opened my eyes to a whole new perspective when dealing with issues. The techniques used to identify problems in the programme help me greatly in my college and university life. Being able to identify potential problems before my peers has enabled me to provide constant value whilst doing group assignments. It also saves me time as I can identify problems that may arise before they occur.

The experience I have gained through competing internationally for Malaysia has been nothing but a delight. Not only do you have the opportunity to compete against peers with the similar mindset, you also get to interact with Problem Solvers across the world on a friendly basis. I would highly recommend the Future Problem Solving Programme to anyone who is interested in gaining skill sets which can only bring benefits in the working world.



*“Laughter is timeless.
Imagination has no age.
And dreams are forever.”*
~ Walt Disney ~

Lim Yan Xuan (Grade 10 student in Maz International school)



As I sat down in my destined seat in the hall for GIPS (Global Issues Problem Solving), my mind spoke to me that it was time. It was my first time competing at an event internationally. I felt nervous when we were waiting outside the hall to go in. My tummy felt like it was filled with butterflies, my heart was pounding vigorously and I wanted to go to the washroom. I looked at other participants around us. It seemed like other teams had 4 members whereas we had 3 members in our team. Even though we had only three of us, we thought that as long we tried our best, we would do great.

The challenge that I faced was that I was too shy to interact with others. Our group would always stay together every time wherever we go. After a few days later, I started to socialize with other people. I was so glad that I managed to conquer my fear of talking with others. Moreover, to prepare for this competition, we would meet up at my house every Sunday and discuss the topic 'Intellectual Property' and we would also practice on wording a booklet. For example: How to create a 'yes' challenge/solutions, time management, and etc. Those sessions were never boring because we had supportive parents guiding us. Sometimes, they would prepare pastries and tarts during discussion.

I managed to overcome the fear by conquering it. At the start I was overthinking about socializing with others, but now I am happy that I met these people and I still do have contact with them. In this experience, I learned a lot of lessons. I know about teamwork and how to overcome fear. This has been a memorable experience.

Vishaal Nair (currently in year 12 of the Australian Matriculation at Sunway College, heading for Monash University in 2018)

The FPS program has played an essential role in my transition from childhood to adolescence. It helped me develop creative thinking skills and has helped me view and handle challenges from different angles. I also have the program to thank for tremendously improving my English language skills in addition to enhancing my maturity and the way I think. I am sure the program will contribute to the development and growth of a more intellectual community in Malaysia.



Thank you to the Malaysian affiliate for sharing these truly inspiring testimonials! We know that every affiliate has success stories to share! Please ask your current students, former students, parents, coaches, administrators, and anyone who would like to share their FPSP story to submit them to:

Deb Woythal
Parent Outreach Chair

dwoythal@gmail.com

Deadline March 30, 2017

