

MORE THAN JUST A FINANCIAL LITERACY PROGRAMME

STORIES BY **DOROTHY TEOH, MUNITA TAN AND IRFAN HAIRIE**

In June 2023, Dr Law Chee Hong, a senior lecturer at the School of Social Sciences at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) in Penang, was looking for a financial literacy programme that he and his colleagues could teach secondary school students when he came across The Edge Education Foundation's "Money & Me: Youth Financial Empowerment Programme".

His search was prompted by two things: the university's focus on community and industry engagement, and his belief in the importance of financial education.

"USM has this strong culture of contributing to society. It also helps us to build up our network with the community. At that time, I started looking for possibilities to collaborate with others, and from The Edge Education Foundation (TEEF) website, I came across Money & Me," he says in an interview via Zoom on May 2.

Money & Me is a free financial literacy programme designed by TEEF which was launched in 2016 in five schools in Kuala Lumpur with the support of Citi Foundation, which funded the programme until 2018. It is approved by the Ministry of Education (MoE) as a co-curricular programme for Form 4 students. Last year, over 600 students in 25 schools in nine states, including Sabah and Sarawak, took part. The programme has also received national-level recognition from the MoE, meaning that students get higher co-curricular points for their participation.

Since 2016, Money & Me has been carried out in collaboration with partners from the corporate sector, teachers at participating schools, Rotary Clubs and academia, such as Law and his colleagues.

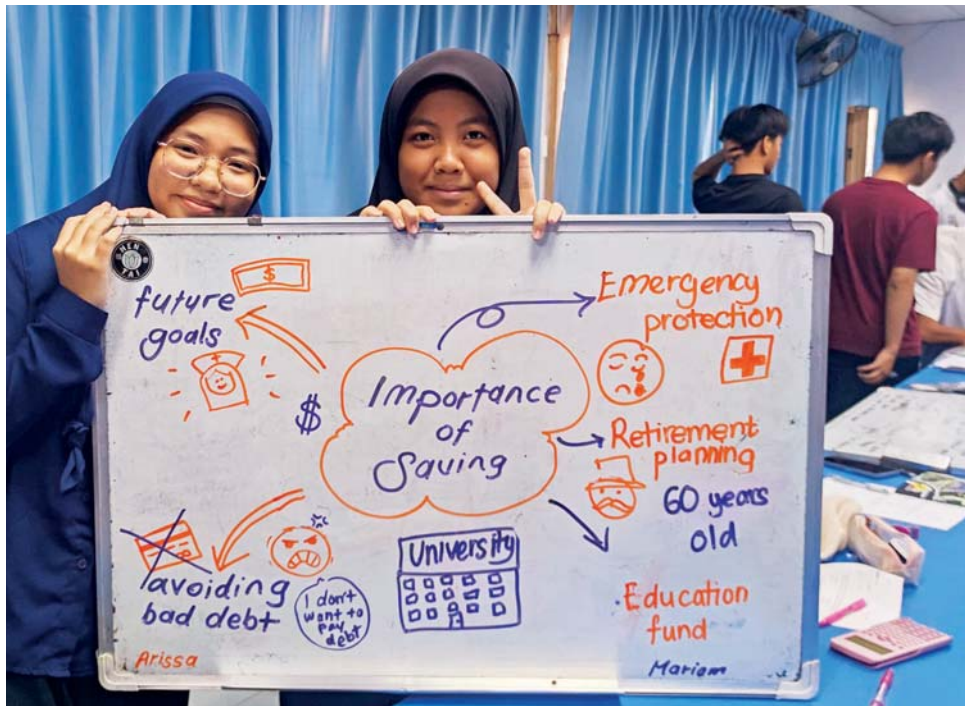
After discovering Money & Me, Law contacted TEEF to discuss the possibility of running the programme at SMK Bukit Gambir, a school attended by children of some USM staff just minutes from the USM campus. He and two of his colleagues then taught the programme to 34 Form 4 students at the school last year. This year, he and four other lecturers are running the programme again at the school.

Although Law says he could have approached the school to run a financial literacy programme independently, he lacks "a proper syllabus and an outline guiding the whole process". One of the selling points of Money & Me for him was the structured nature of the programme and the content of the lessons.

"Money & Me has solid and structured lesson plans, and I highly recommend it to every IPTA and IPTS (Institut Pengajian Tinggi Awam/Swasta or public and private higher education institutions)," he says.

He believes that involving universities in programmes like Money & Me will not only help to expand financial education but also create valuable opportunities for academics to engage with the community.

Money & Me consists of six one-hour lessons structured around five components: Save, Spend, Earn, Grow and Give. To measure impact, a pre-programme assessment is carried out before the first lesson to benchmark participants' level of financial literacy. After the sixth lesson, a post-programme assessment is conducted. TEEF then prepares a report for each school which is shared with both participating schools and partners.



Two Money & Me participants at SMK Bandar Kuching No. 1 showing why it is important to save during the first lesson at the school on May 29. TEEF is partnering with the Rotary Club of Kuching Central to run the financial literacy programme at the school, with the support of teachers.

As part of the programme, participants learn about the importance of saving (including saving for retirement), differentiating between needs and wants, delayed gratification, budgeting, smart spending, using credit cards responsibly, and awareness of scams, among other things.

Building on that platform of financial literacy, the programme then teaches participants basic entrepreneurship skills such as how to design a business plan, which they then have to implement in school during an event called "Sales Day".

The entrepreneurship component of the programme also appealed to Law and the students at SMK Bukit Gambir. "Among the 30-plus students who participated, some were very interested in entrepreneurship. They would like to start a business, but they have no clue how to do it. From my point of view, it is a good thing to see that the students are quite eager and serious in wanting to delve deeper into the realm of business, after they have learnt concepts such as budgeting," he says.

Wan Nooraribah Ishak @ Wan Ishak was the deputy head of co-curricular activities at a school in Pasir Mas in Kelantan when she heard about the Money & Me programme from TEEF. She was eager to provide her students with financial education and took the lead in implementing the programme, even though it meant that she had to translate the programme material from English to Bahasa Malaysia. Her school was the first in Kelantan to adopt the programme in 2023.

"I believe this is a great programme to expose students to what finance is all about, and teach them about the business landscape," says Wan Nooraribah, who has since retired.

SMK Convent Sentul in Kuala Lumpur is one of the five schools that adopted Money & Me when it was launched in 2016. This is its ninth year in the programme which has been taught at the school by volunteers from EY, a Money & Me partner, for that entire period. Noor Fazillay Mat Said, an accounting teacher at SMK Convent Sentul, is familiar with the programme, having overseen it from the very beginning.

Money & Me also encourages participants to give back to the community by donating a portion of their revenue from Sales Day. That aspect was what appealed to Flavia Suimin, principal of SMK St. Francis Convent in Kota Kinabalu. "The inclusion of an end-of-session CSR programme also aligned with our school's values of social responsibility and provided a meaningful way for students to apply their learning," she says.

"This programme goes beyond teaching [financial education] — it fosters crucial skills in planning, critical thinking, collaboration and responsible decision-making," she adds. SMK St. Francis Convent joined Money & Me in 2022. Last year, 50 of its students took part in the programme.

Wan Nooraribah agrees that the hands-on experience of running a small business project for Sales Day helps students to acquire important life skills.

"As a group programme, students learnt intra and interpersonal communication as well as the value of tolerance in achieving success together, which is important in the working world," says Wan Nooraribah. "These soft skills are just as important as financial knowledge in today's world."

As teacher Noor Fazillay of SMK Convent Sentul puts it: "This programme has a lasting, relevant and practical impact, making it more than just a co-curricular activity; it is an investment in the students' future." **E**

"It is highly beneficial, especially since many students today lack basic financial knowledge such as money management, savings habits, using credit cards, and distinguishing between needs and wants," she says.



Law (back row, in blue) with Penang State Exco for Tourism and Creative Economy Wong Hon Wai (in batik shirt), USM lecturers Dr Chin Phaik Nie and Dr Loke Yiing Jia (third and second from right, respectively), SMK Bukit Gambir principal Rohaiza Abdul Ghani (right), and Money & Me participants during Sales Day last year



EY facilitators (wearing lanyards) with teachers Noor Fazillay (centre, in beige tudung) and Syuhaila Yahya (on Noor Fazillay's right) and Money & Me participants at SMK Convent Sentul

TURNING LESSONS INTO REAL RESULTS

Since 2016, Form 4 students who took part in the Money & Me: Youth Financial Empowerment Programme have generated close to RM250,000 in revenue from Sales Day.

Sales Day is when groups of up to six members each implement the small business projects that they developed as part of the programme. The event usually takes place between 9am and noon in school, and it allows the participants to apply what they have learnt in class.

The first year when the programme was launched, Sales Day was held at Sunway Putra Mall in Kuala Lumpur. Seventeen teams from five schools participated and they made a total of RM9,000 from selling items such as handmade keychains, friendship bracelets and flower bouquets. In 2017, the event was held at 1 Utama Shopping Centre in Petaling Jaya and the 16 teams that participated managed to earn RM15,531.

Since then, Sales Day has been held at participating schools. Food and beverages have played a key role in the students' business plans because these items sell well, and also because they require less capital.

Teacher Lee Wei Wen, who currently serves as the lead coordinator for the Money & Me programme at SMK Seafield in Subang Jaya, is impressed with what Money & Me participants have managed to do. The school first took part in the programme in 2023.

"I think it's an amazing achievement, especially considering that these are Form 4 students. Business [as a] subject is taught in schools, but most of the time it's just theory — students don't get the chance to run a business.

"That's why the Money & Me programme is so valuable. It fills that gap by giving them real experience. The revenue figure shows how invested the students are, and how effective the programme has been in turning lessons into real results," says Lee, who is also head of the English panel at her school.

The success of Sales Day isn't measured by revenue alone. "One of the clearest long-term impacts is how confident and independent the students become. They're not just more vocal and assertive, they're also more comfortable taking the lead," she says.

"I've noticed that many of the students who joined the Money & Me programme in Form 4 go on to lead school-based sales programmes when they are in Form 5. They carry those experiences forward and often become role models for their juniors. The programme truly leaves a lasting impact, not just in terms of business skills, but in shaping their character and leadership," she adds.

But Sales Day is about more than just making a profit or enabling participants to gain hands-on experience in setting up and running a small business for a few hours in school. What sets it apart is its emphasis on donating a portion of the profits that Money & Me participants have made to causes that matter to them.

Over the years, this has included orphanages, elderly care centres, feeding the homeless, animal shelters and donations to the PIBG (Persatuan Ibu Bapa dan Guru or Parent Teacher Association) and schools to help fund student activities, welfare support for underprivileged students, and even for minor upgrades to school facilities.

Since 2016, Money & Me participants have donated over 15% of their gross earnings to



Members of Team Beelicious from SMK Kemena, Bintulu, winner of the Money & Me Young Entrepreneurs Challenge 2024, unload part of their donation to Peryatim Bintulu. The six members of the team donated RM400 worth of rice, cooking oil and biscuits to the orphanage on March 19 this year.



Participants from SMK St Francis Convent, Kota Kinabalu, with the food and beverage products which they prepared and sold during Sales Day last August



SMK Bandar Kuching No.1 students with Hung Sung Huo (fourth from right), principal Chew Kui Hock (fifth from right), assistant principal of co-curricular Yip Sei Lang (first from right), president-elect of the Rotary Club of Kuching Central Pauline Pui (fifth from left), president-nominee Charley Pan (sixth from left), past president Frankie Yang (fourth from left) and teachers



A team from SMK Bandar Puncak Jalil in Selangor preparing noodles for sale at their stall during Sales Day at the school last September

charity. The highest was in 2016 when the 17 teams from five schools that took part in the programme at its inception gave away 30.7% of their revenue. Although the percentage donated to charity has generally declined over the years, it has not fallen below 9%.

Last year, the winner of the Money & Me Young Entrepreneurs Challenge was a team from SMK Kemena in Bintulu, Sarawak, a first-time participant and where teachers took on the responsibility of teaching the programme. The winning team, named "Beelicious", donated 10 sacks of rice, five bottles of cooking oil and 10 packets of biscuits worth RM400, 15% of their revenue, to the Kompleks Kebajikan Anak-Anak Yatim (Peryatim) Bintulu.

Another school in Sarawak, SMK Bandar Kuching No.1, with the support of the Rotary Club of Kuching Central and the school's Interact Club, helped a new project to benefit terminally ill patients. The five Money & Me teams at the school donated RM565 — over 90% of their net profit from Sales Day — towards the purchase of a new refrigerator for the Kuching Life Care Society's Hospice and Palliative Care Centre (HPCC).

The Rotary Club of Kuching Central, which is The Edge Education Foundation's Money & Me partner at the school, contributed RM700, and the school's Interact Club donated RM235. Two student representatives, accompanied by three teachers who were involved in the programme, went shopping for the refrigerator, which will be used to store medication.

The HPCC building was completed last year, and the society is now in the process of obtaining a Private Medical Practice Control Section (CKAPS) licence from the Ministry of Health.

"The Kuching Life Care Society will be able to serve up to 58 terminally ill patients. We are deeply grateful for the generous donation from the students, teachers and the Rotary Club," says Hung Sung Huo, founder and chairman of the Kuching Life Care Society. **E**

Sales Day revenue over the years

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020*	2021**	2022***	2023	2024	TOTAL
SCHOOLS	5	8	14	13	-	9	14	23	25	
STATES	1	2	2	2	-	2	4	7	9	
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	96	142	341	352	-	114	205	526	639	2,415
SALES DAY REVENUE (RM)	9,000.10	15,531.85	30,874.65	40,989.65	-	-	-	69,232.76	78,949.65	244,578.66
AMOUNT DONATED TO CHARITY/PIBG/COMMUNITY (RM)	2,759.00	4,175.00	5,103.65	7,698.39	-	-	-	10,940.20	7,090.75	37,766.99

*Money & Me was temporarily suspended in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic

**Sales Day was not carried out in 2021 as schools conducted home-based learning and teaching

***Sales Day was not a requirement of the programme

COLLABORATION THE KEY TO SUCCESS

The success of “Money & Me: Youth Financial Empowerment Programme”, now in its ninth year, is rooted in collaboration — with teachers at participating schools, partners from the corporate sector, Rotary Clubs throughout the country, and academia.

This year, just over 50 schools signed up for the programme. At most of these schools, teachers run the programme themselves. At the remaining schools, especially those in the Klang Valley, volunteers from Money & Me partners facilitate the programme. Two of these partners — EY Malaysia and PwC in Malaysia — have been with the programme since its inception in 2016.

We hear from some of these partners on why they decided to partner The Edge Education Foundation and adopt the programme, the reasons for their continued collaboration, how Money & Me aligns with their corporate responsibility initiatives, and the impact on their volunteers.

We also hear from teachers as to why their schools decided to adopt Money & Me, and how it is benefitting students.

NORASHIKIN AB RAHIM
TEACHER,
SMK INDERA SHAHBANDAR,
PEKAN, PAHANG

“The Money & Me programme equips students with various financial skills, enhancing their confidence and understanding of

financial management through easy-to-understand modules suited to their age. It also helps them make wise financial decisions. As students from rural areas, this exposure to financial management has greatly broadened their minds.”

This is SMK Indera Shahbandar’s second year in the programme.

MOLLY WONG
GENERAL MANAGER,
PWC ACCELERATION CENTER
KUALA LUMPUR

“Money & Me is a source of immense pride for PwC in Malaysia, representing one of our longest-standing community partnerships. Our nine-year commitment reflects the deep resonance this programme has with our core values.

Money & Me goes beyond basic financial literacy; it empowers students with practical skills in entrepreneurship, business management and capital fundraising, fostering creativity and innovation through business idea development. This holistic approach aligns perfectly with PwC’s commitment to making a tangible, positive impact in our communities, particularly through youth empowerment and education.

The launch of PwC Acceleration Center Kuala Lumpur has further enriched the Money & Me experience. Building upon the tradi-

tional Sales Day culmination where students are required to put their business plans into action, we’ve introduced an immersive office visit for the past two years.

Money & Me provides a unique platform for our people to embrace the ‘learning-by-teaching’ principle. By facilitating and mentoring students,



Money & Me participants from SMK Taman Desa with PwC Acceleration Center Kuala Lumpur staff during the office visit on December 19 last year. The visit included work-life sharing sessions with PwC employees, interactive breakout discussions, an office tour and networking opportunities, giving students a glimpse into the professional world and potential career paths.

our volunteers hone their communication, facilitation and leadership skills while gaining valuable experience in real-world application.”

Volunteers from PwC Acceleration Center Kuala Lumpur currently facilitate the programme at SMK Taman Desa in Kuala Lumpur.

LEE SOO FERN
PARTNER, MALAYSIA TALENT
LEADER, ASEAN DIVERSITY,
EQUITY & INCLUSIVENESS LEADER,
ERNST & YOUNG CONSULTING
SDN BHD

“This is indeed EY’s longest-running collaboration in community programmes, underscoring our commitment to making a lasting impact in the financial well-being of young individuals. The collaboration aligns with our purpose of building a better working world and supports our ambition to positively impact one billion lives by 2030.

The programme has enriched our volunteers’ experience, helping them develop transformative leadership skills while utilising their core capabilities to make a meaningful difference. In ad-

EY Malaysia volunteers interacting with Money & Me participants at SMK Convent Sentul during a session

dition to fostering a sense of fulfillment through volunteering, the programme offers them fresh perspectives and strengthens their connection to the community.

Money & Me integrates seamlessly into EY Ripples — a global corporate responsibility programme aimed at driving long-term change in three focus areas: supporting the next generation of workforce, collab-

orating with impact entrepreneurs and accelerating environmental sustainability.”

Prior to becoming a Money & Me partner, EY Malaysia partnered TEEF in the Programme for After Class Enrichment (PACE), a tuition cum mentoring programme for underperforming students from the B40 community, at SMK Convent Sentul from 2013 to 2015.



USNIATI MOHD UMAR
TEACHER,
SM SUNG SIEW SANDAKAN,
SABAH

“Our school decided to participate in this programme because our students gain knowledge and basic skills in money management, budgeting, and understanding the value of saving and investing.

They become more responsible in making financial decisions, which has a positive impact on their overall attitude and discipline. This programme also com-

plements their academic learning with practical and relevant life skills.

At the same time, it teaches them how to become successful entrepreneurs by planning their finances wisely. Many students want to become entrepreneurs. So far, there are 18 teams. We went to every Form 4 class to promote the programme. We had to form two classes per session because there were so many students who were interested.”

SM Sung Siew Sandakan is taking part in Money & Me for the first time.



Teachers Usniati (centre, in pink tudung) and Nur Waznah Farzana Kahar (on Usniati’s left) with Money & Me participants at SM Sung Siew Sandakan, Sabah



Baker Hughes volunteers with Money & Me participants at SMK Bandar Puncak Jalil in Selangor

ONG TIEN SOON
SENIOR RESOURCE MANAGER AND
VOLUNTEER MALAYSIA LEADER,
BAKER HUGHES

“This programme has been one of our longest-running partnerships in the education pillar. We support various initiatives, but education advancement remains one of our core pillars of focus. The Money & Me programme provides an excellent opportunity for students to enhance their financial literacy skills.

We started our Money & Me part-

nership journey with SMK Seri Kundang, and with SMK Bandar Puncak Jalil two years ago. We had positive experiences with both schools over the years, and partnering with two schools will definitely expand our reach and influence a wider range of students.

We also believe that financial quotient or intelligence (FQ) is another fundamental skill, on top of IQ (intelligence quotient) and EQ (emotional quotient), that every student should learn in schools. Engaging with a more diverse group

of students also provides our volunteers more opportunities to participate and contribute their expertise in a meaningful way, strengthening both community ties and internal cultures.”

Baker Hughes, which is marking its fifth year of partnership with TEEF in the Money & Me programme, facilitates the programme at two schools — SMK Seri Kundang and SMK Bandar Puncak Jalil.

MONEY & ME

YOUTH FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME

DR CHEE WEI YEN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
DELOITTE MALAYSIA

“Financial education is often overlooked in schools and this initiative fills a critical gap.

The programme aligns closely with Deloitte corporate responsibility initiatives, particularly under its World Impact and World Class framework, which focus on education, skills development, and financial empowerment. Deloitte’s World Class initiative aims to impact 100 million futures by 2030 by bridging gaps in education, skills and employment opportunities. Money & Me directly contributes by providing financial literacy training to young people, equipping them with essential skills for economic resilience — key to Deloitte’s goal of fostering inclusive prosperity.

By teaching budgeting, saving and responsible spending, Money

& Me helps students navigate financial challenges, supporting their transition into the workforce, a core pillar of Deloitte’s CSR... It also enhances employee engagement — volunteering in Money & Me boosts morale and professional growth for staff. Employees gain leadership and communication skills while contributing to societal good — a

win-win for retention and talent attraction.”

Deloitte Malaysia partnered TEEF for Money & Me in 2018 and its volunteers currently facilitate the programme at SMK SS17 in Subang Jaya. The programme is Deloitte’s longest-running partnership in terms of community initiatives.

DELOITTE MALAYSIA



Deloitte Malaysia volunteers (front row, first to fourth from left) with Money & Me participants at SMK SS 17 in Selangor

SALWANI AZLINA JAAFAR

SENIOR ASSISTANT
OF CO-CURRICULUM,
SM SAINS KUALA TERENGGANU

“My school adopted the Money and Me programme as a medium to

educate and equip students with essential financial skills. Now they realise where their money goes instead of wondering where it went!”

SM Sains Kuala Terengganu is a first-time participant in the programme and the first school from Terengganu.



Money & Me participants at SM Sains Kuala Terengganu during a session in April this year

FRANCIS ARULANANTHAM

CLUB SERVICES DIRECTOR
2024/2025,
ROTARY CLUB OF DAMANSARA

“We saw that this comprehensive programme could aid kids in understanding and practicing financial literacy, and we find that it is a sustainable programme. We were also aware of rising cases of bankruptcy amongst young adults. We thought that bringing this programme to young people could deter them from making unwise financial decisions.

This is a very useful programme

for youngsters as it teaches them three important principles, that is, earning, saving and giving. By taking this programme to the schools, we are in a small way able to do our part in promoting financial literacy amongst students. [But] we have one suggestion: as children as young as 14 are able to open EPF accounts now, perhaps this programme should be open to Form 2 students as well.”

The Rotary Club of Damansara joined the Money and Me programme in 2023. Its members and teachers will jointly facilitate the programme at SMK La Salle in Petaling Jaya.

SUSIE BARROW

SENIOR MANAGER, DIVERSITY,
EQUITY AND INCLUSION ASIA,
HAYS

“We’re still early in our journey with the Money and Me programme, but if we had to sum up our experience so far in one word, it would be: energising.

When we shared the opportunity to volunteer with our leaders, the response exceeded all expectations. Every slot was filled within days, and we even had a waiting list. That enthusiasm only grew when our first volunteers stepped into the classroom. We knew the sessions would require effort —

effort we were more than willing to give — but what we didn’t expect was how much energy we’d get back. The students were incredibly engaged, the school staff were welcoming and supportive, and we even found ourselves learning a few things about our own personal finances along the way. It’s been a powerful reminder

that when people come together with purpose and passion, the impact is felt on all sides.”

Hays Malaysia joined the Money & Me programme this year. Its volunteers currently facilitate the programme at SMK Aminuddin Baki in Kuala Lumpur.



Natasha Ishak (right), regional director of Hays Malaysia, and senior manager Tyen How Woon explaining the difference between needs and wants at a Money & Me session at SMK Aminuddin Baki on June 11



A teacher at SMK Datuk Onn in Butterworth with Money & Me participants during a session last year. At this school, teachers work together with Rotarians to facilitate the programme.



Money & Me partners

- Baker Hughes
- Deloitte Malaysia
- EY Malaysia
- Hays Malaysia
- PwC in Malaysia
- Universiti Sains Malaysia

ROTARY CLUBS

- Ara Damansara
- Damansara
- Kota Kinabalu
- Kuala Lumpur Dynamics
- Kuching Central
- Seberang Jaya
- Sentul

Left: A Rotary Club of Kuala Lumpur Dynamics member listening to a participant’s answer during a Money & Me session at SMK Subang Utama in Subang Jaya, one of two schools where the club is facilitating the programme



Team Sweet Tooth from SMK Sultan Abdul Samad in Petaling Jaya which won third place in the Money & Me Young Entrepreneurs Challenge 2024 pose with their certificates and cheque for RM1,000 at a presentation ceremony on Feb 18, 2025. Seated, from left, are Rotary Club of Ara Damansara president-elect Siraanjivi Ganasan, past president Teh Mei Li, president Ling Hau Ching, school principal Norhaily Abd Halim, TEEF CEO Dorothy Teoh, past district governor Leslie Salehuddin of Rotary Club of Gombak, head of co-curricular activities Sunita Devi; and teacher-in-charge Jacquelyn Su Wan Chuen. Standing on right is Munita Tan, TEEF senior programme manager.