PayNet

Students Gain Global Digital Skills & Industry Experience through Program Akar powered by AWS re/Start

3ʳᵈ from the left standing in front row: Dr. Rani Sarojeni Burchmore, Regional Leader, AWS re/Start; Dato' Mohd Izzaddin b. Idris, Chairman, PayNet; Datuk (Dr.) Nora Abd Manaf, Former Group Chief Human Capital Officer, Maybank; Farhan Ahmad, GCEO, PayNet; Jun Maria Tan Abdullah, Senior Director, PayNet Akar; Pete Murray, Country Manager, AWS Malaysia.

KUALA LUMPUR, 20 November 2024 – Payments Network Malaysia (PayNet), in partnership with **Amazon Web Services (AWS),** today celebrated the inaugural cohort of **Program Akar powered by AWS re/Start**, an industry-first initiative designed to equip future leaders with globally recognised cloud skills for Malaysia's Financial Services Industry (FSI).

Program Akar powered by AWS re/Start committed to starting the programme with 100 students in 2024. The pilot programme successfully trained its first 50 students in July with industry-recognised AWS Cloud Practitioner Certifications, training in Digital Payments and focused pathways and mentorships to gain future permanent roles at their target companies. Upon graduation, the programme will commence the next cohort in Q1 of 2025.

The success of Program Akar powered by AWS re/Start's first cohort was made possible through each partner's collaborative efforts. This multi-stakeholder approach was vital in nurturing well-rounded talent to ready them to meet the workforce demands of the FSI and drive the nation's digital future:

- **World Education Placement Services (WEPS)**: The programme's dedicated programme implementation partner ensured an up-to-date curriculum that meets the demands of FSI organisations and supports students in securing internship and job placement opportunities.
- **Asia Pacific University of Technology and Innovation (APU)**: The first cohort of 50 learners who participated and graduated from the programme were students from the School of Technology and the School of Computing, receiving educational support from both.
- **FSI Organisations**: Institutions such as PayNet, Bank Negara Malaysia, Maybank, Public Bank, Hong Leong Bank, GHL and Bank Islam offered students experiential learning through internships. The opportunity for students to apply their knowledge from the programme during their internship, paired with valuable feedback from industry coaches and mentors, enables holistic development beyond technical skills, including essential soft skills and leadership abilities.

From 2nd left to right: Datuk (Dr.) Nora Abd Manaf, Former Group Chief Human Capital Officer, Maybank; Thomas Matthew, GCEO, TalentCorp; Farhan Ahmad, GCEO, PayNet; Pete Murray, Country Manager, AWS Malaysia.

In line with the programme's aspirations for Malaysia's FSI, the event also hosted a forum panel discussion titled **"Future-Proofing the Industry: Values-Based Early Talent Development of Visionary Leaders**." Farhan Ahmad, GCEO, PayNet, Pete Murray, Country Manager, AWS Malaysia, Thomas Matthew, GCEO, TalentCorp, and Datuk (Dr) Nora A Manaf, Former Group Chief Human Capital Officer, Maybank all shared insights on the importance of developing future leaders by embedding core values alongside technical skills, empowering young talent to navigate industry shifts with integrity, resilience, and a strong leadership mindset.

Jun Maria Tan Abdullah, Senior Director of PayNet Akar, said, "This programme is made possible through the collective efforts of PayNet, AWS, WEPS, APU, and the FSI. We aim to expand our network of stakeholders to continue preparing talent for roles in cloud computing, AI, machine learning, data science, and cybersecurity. However, technical skills alone are insufficient; attributes like aspiration,

agility, self-direction, and relationship-building are equally vital. This holistic approach will nurture and empower talent to lead in the global digital economy."

Building on this shared vision, *Pete Murray, Country Manager, AWS Malaysia* said, "Today, we celebrate the remarkable achievements of our Program Akar powered by AWS re/Start graduates. This program represents a joint commitment to nurturing local talent and driving digital transformation in Malaysia. These graduates have not only acquired valuable cloud computing skills but have also positioned themselves at the forefront of the digital economy and represent the workforce of the future. As these talented individuals embark on their careers in financial services, we're confident they will play a crucial role in shaping Malaysia's fintech landscape. Congratulations to all the graduates – your future looks incredibly bright!"

Mughilen Rathakrishnan, Chief Executive Officer, WEPS said, "As we celebrate the success of Program Akar powered by AWS re/Start graduates, we acknowledge the rapidly evolving landscape of Malaysia's IT industry. The need for skilled digital professionals is becoming increasingly critical as digital transformation accelerates across sectors. This new wave of talent is not only poised to meet the demands of today but is also shaping the future, fostering innovation and adaptability in a tech-driven world. At WEPS, we're proud to support this transition and empower a workforce ready to drive Malaysia's digital economy forward."

Program Akar powered by AWS re/Start is one of the initiatives under PayNet Akar, designed as a foundational platform for FinTech education and innovation, with its current focus on students within the education system within K-12 and tertiary levels. With the graduation of this cohort, it is hoped that with the newly acquired skills, these students will acquire high-value technical jobs and command higher starting salaries while reducing the digital talent gaps faced by the industry.

With PayNet's vision to empower early talent and foster a culture of innovation for a robust, future-ready financial ecosystem, and AWS's commitment to driving Malaysia's digital transformation through cloud and generative AI upskilling, this Program Akar powered by AWS re/Start paves the way towards building a digitally skilled workforce to lead Malaysia's financial services industry in the global digital economy.

AWS re/Start operates in more than 180 cities across 60 countries, connecting over 98% of graduates with job interview opportunities. This initiative is part of AWS's ongoing effort to provide free cloud training, and has reached over 31 million learners across 200 countries and territories. In Malaysia alone, AWS has trained over 100,000 individuals in cloud skills since 2017. For more information on AWS re/Start, visit https://aws.amazon.com/training/restart/.

About PayNet

Payments Network Malaysia (PayNet) is Malaysia's national payments network with a mission to accelerate the country's payment flows by making the digital payment infrastructure more accessible, widespread, and secure. Our comprehensive retail payments suite—including DuitNow (QR and Transfer), JomPAY (Bill Payments), FPX (Online), MyDebit (Domestic Debit), MEPS, and IBG (Interbank GIRO)—provides extensive coverage across the nation, forming a core part of daily life in Malaysia. In 2023, this ecosystem enabled a total transaction value of USD 1.4 trillion, equivalent to 3.3x of Malaysia's GDP.

Additionally, PayNet's real-time retail QR payments network, DuitNow, is interoperable with domestic schemes in Singapore, Thailand, and Indonesia, facilitating seamless cross-border transactions with these countries. PayNet is committed to promoting a secure, efficient, and innovative payments ecosystem in Malaysia and works closely with its stakeholders to develop new products and services that meet the evolving needs of consumers and businesses. For further details, please visit our website: www.paynet.my

About WEPS
World Education Placement Services Sdn. Bhd. (WEPS) is a leading provider of innovative educational solutions and workforce development programs. With a commitment to bridging the skills gap and empowering individuals for the future of work, WEPS helps transform organizations into skill-based-organizations with cutting-edge educational solutions and workforce development programs through technology platforms and solutions. WEPS offers a comprehensive suite of services designed to meet the diverse needs of learners, educational institutions, and employers.

About AWS

Information can be found at https://press.aboutamazon.com/aws

###

Media Contact

Farah Qistina
Farah.Qistina@edelman.com
+60 16-209 5448

Aina Zuraini
Aina.Zuraini@edelman.com
+60 11-1169 2356