

4 September 2019

HSBC Launches Sounds of Home to Soothe International Students' Homesickness

Reconnecting students studying abroad with their home through sound

HSBC's research shows that even though majority of international students are using technology like video calls and chat applications to connect with friends and family, it does not stop them from missing home. 92 per cent of international students say that they miss the familiarities of home while studying overseas, with almost six in 10 (57 per cent) saying it is the sensory experience they miss most, and three quarters (74 per cent) specifically miss the sounds of their hometown. International students identified the sound of people talking in their native language (50 per cent), the hustle and bustle of local markets (26 per cent), the rumble of public transport (25 per cent), and birds, insects or native animals (20 per cent) are among the sounds that international students say they are most likely to miss.

HSBC has recognised that international students often find missing home inevitable. As such, HSBC has released Sounds of Home – a series of sounds familiar to many Malaysian international students to help alleviate their homesickness. The Sounds of Home is crowdsourced and created by international influencer, Muhammad Nizar Shuib. The track features sound of crickets, beach waves, Kelantanese conversation, traditional Malaysian instruments, LRT announcement, rainforest and more. HSBC Sounds of Home is available on Spotify, Apple Music, iTunes, 7 Digital, Deezer, IMVU, Infogo.com, KKbox, Musical.ly and Tidal. Find out more about the process behind recording and compiling these evocative sounds at HSBC YouTube Channel, the link for Sounds of Home for Malaysia is <https://youtu.be/25Oo81UQ5EM>.

Despite the initial challenges that the international students face, they overwhelmingly agree that studying abroad has a positive and lasting impact (99 per cent). Two in five (43 per cent) international students feel homesick at least once a week or more, nearly half (49 per cent) believe missing family and friends has impacted their academic performance, and two in five (40 per cent) international students said that being away from home has affected their ability to get a good night's sleep. Homesickness is particularly prominent late at night, between 10pm to 12am.

Baroness Susan Greenfield, former fellow at The University of Oxford and CEO of NeuroBio Ltd said:

“International students were born into a connected, digital era, but the majority still miss their familiar lifestyles in the real world. Whilst it's reassuring that this young generation is not living in a cyber-parallel universe, the challenge is how to off-set the absence of family, friends, location, and language, in tangible new ways.

“Sounds and smells are - more than the other three senses - the most pervasive and the least contextual. Perhaps sounds are so important in homesickness because they are hard to encapsulate in a specific, single memory, and play a bigger role in our on-going consciousness. Sound also allows room for imagination, conjuring up in your mind a personal scenario. This means sound can be used to good effect to induce a sense of personal well-being.”

On top of homesickness, International students face a range of challenges, including setting up a bank account in their country of study (35 per cent) and setting aside enough money to

be able to travel home (40 per cent). Nevertheless, 84 per cent of international students believe they have not only gained new skills but have also become stronger people.

Tara Latini, Head of Retail Banking and Wealth Management at HSBC Malaysia, said:

“There are many benefits to studying abroad – new adventures, new skills and independence – but that doesn’t stop you from missing the familiarity of home. As someone who has lived and worked abroad, I know what it’s like to feel homesick.

“With over 64,000 Malaysians studying abroad, Sounds of Home seeks to help Malaysian international students feel closer to the people and places they love. We created these soundscapes to complement the financial guidance and support we provide as a leading bank for international students all over the world. It’s another way in which HSBC is a reassuring presence for students who are away from home, helping them to navigate the fulfilling and challenging world of international study. This is also in line with our ongoing efforts to support our Premier customers and their families in the journey of sending their children for overseas education.”

For more information about HSBC’s International Services visit:

<https://internationalservices.hsbc.com/index/overseas-education/>

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Notes to Editor:

The research

The Sounds of Home is an independent consumer research study into the experience of international students commissioned by HSBC. It provides authoritative insights into the emotional toll of moving to a new country as a student and explores perceptions of homesickness and living in an unfamiliar country.

The findings represent the views of 897 international students from 11 countries and territories: Australia, mainland China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, UK and USA.

The research is based on a sample of students aged 17 - 29 years old who are current international students or who have studied abroad in the last 5 years and was conducted between 12th June 2019 and 24th June 2019.

About HSBC Malaysia

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Islamic financial solutions. HSBC Bank Malaysia has also led innovation in Malaysia by introducing Malaysia's first ATM and Electronic Touch Banking in the early 1980s.

Today, HSBC Bank Malaysia has launched innovative solutions such as HSBCnet for secure banking for businesses, Trade Transaction Tracker and Facial Recognition.

The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited

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