



CPPS Press Release

EDUCATION BLUEPRINT REQUIRES FURTHER WORK FOR A GREATER INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The ASLI - Centre for Public Policy Studies (CPPS) welcomes the release of the Preliminary Report, Malaysian Education Blueprint (2013-2025) as timely and necessary for preparing the future intellectual and social and human capital of Malaysia, in a globalised world.

We recognise that there has been lot of hard work and effort in drawing public opinion and in the compilation of this report. We therefore congratulate this participatory effort especially through the town hall meetings for feedback as well as the academic and professional evaluative work.

We also recognise that the five system aspirations (page E-9) and the eleven shifts (page E 10) to transform the educational system are necessary and strategic.

However we note that there are also major and serious gaps in the report and therefore urge the Ministry of Education to undertake further consultative processes to review the findings and plans and to actually incorporate public views that are now overlooked.

In reading this extensive blueprint we have noted a number of areas that require further work as it does not reflect a comprehensive understanding of the educational requirements and aspirations of all the Malaysian communities. If ignored this can lead to greater polarisation and national dis -unity due to the following issues:-

First, the report rightly recognises the need for strengthening language proficiency in both English and Bahasa Malaysia (page E-10) including new provision at the primary level with intensive remedial support for struggling students after school hours (page E-12).The target of specific targeting vernacular stream students in Bahasa Malaysia is most urgent, but specific recommendations have to be spelt out to ensure proper implementation.

Second, the report also rightly places emphasis on improvements of the quality of education (page E-14) through the effective recruitment and training of teachers. The supervisory and support systems for teachers must be addressed.

In this context while the entry requirements of teachers by merit is very important nonetheless there is a no mention of the urgent need to have ethnic balance of both teaching staff especially in primary and secondary schools including headship positions and positions in education departments at the Federal, state and district levels. This is very critical in ensuring the national character is maintained in all the educational streams and choices.

Third, there is a major conceptual issue to the way “the ethnically homogeneous environments” ((page E-7, 3-21, 7-15) are described and analysed. While the document rightly highlights the unparalleled degree of choice for parents, the selective use of data focusing on vernacular



schools in the context of national unity is regrettable. It's almost blaming the vernacular schools as the cause of polarization when in reality the national schools are driving many students of all races, away from the national schools.

There must be a clear revelation of data across all the 20 categories (page A-8) of educational institutions including the composition of students in residential schools, technical & vocational schools, matriculation and through other provisions such as preschool through Kemas or secondary through MSRM institutions. The student and staff population by ethnicity is not revealed nor identified as one contributing factor separating Malay students from non-Malays especially in the secondary school system. "Where then is the transparency to encourage confidence in the blueprint?"

In this context the root reasons for exodus of non-Malay students which are due to the imbalanced cultural and religious environment in a majority of NATIONAL schools. This must be noted and addressed to win credibility and support for blueprint. In addition the document only adopts the approach of 'direct interaction' among students from various ethnic communities. However it must be noted that even within homogeneous environments there can be an effective orientation towards multiculturalism which can be fostered in order to enable student interaction in multi-cultural situations. It has to be emphasised that multi-culturalism can contribute to national unity

The section on "Enhancement of unity in schools" (page 7-15 to 7-18) does not focus on how to ensure the environment of the school and the approach adopted by the school is truly appreciative of the multi religious, multi ethnic and multi-cultural reflection of Malaysian society

Fourth, the document lacks substantive data and statistics such as breakdown of data across the 20 categories of schools. The release of data in the blue print has been selective and therefore not comprehensive. The earlier documents entitled "Pembangunan Pendidikan" (2001-2010) and the "Pelan Induk Pembangunan Pendidikan" (2006-2010) provided more comprehensive charts and tables which enable the general public to appreciate the complexity of issues as well as hold the Ministry officials accountable.

Fifth, the blue print misses the opportunity to ensure an inclusive educational system. There is no specific mention how vernacular schools, mission and religious schools which are currently categorised as "national type", which also implies limited funding for infrastructure development can be truly incorporated as fully funded schools and national schools. A majority of students in mission schools are Malay students and therefore a review of this issue is essential. Therefore the time has come in our NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY to bring an end this dichotomy and ensure each of the different streams achieve the national character and inclusive nature in the interests of national unity.



This is why the objective of wave 3 (page7-18) with the objective working towards “schools of choice for all” continue to create insecurities over constitutional protections towards vernacular and religious schools. It is therefore imperative that the Blueprint takes the long-term view that the parental choices will remain—however with no compromise to the national agenda of national language, national unity and nation building.

It is in this context that CPPS feels that many of the community concerns raised by ordinary citizens and parents have been censured by some professionals and foreign and local consultants. Thus we would like the Ministry of Education to release the reports (page A-5) of the Independent Review Panel chaired by Prof Tan Sri Dzulkipli, the findings of the National Dialogues chaired by Tan Sri Dr Wan Mod Zahid as well as the commissioned academic and UNESCO reports. This will enable ordinary citizens to review these in the light of the Blueprint document.

The nation is looking for freshness in addressing the strongest asset of this country namely our younger generation. We need boldness and innovation from a critical but constructive dimension to ensure that our educational policy its implementation and institutions, bring out the best in our children to develop their full potential to serve the common good of this nation

We need to put into practice the slogan “people first, performance now” to ensure our education policy is truly transformed to enable our country to progress and not regress, due to a lack of political will to move innovatively and boldly forward

Issued on behalf of CPPS by

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