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Uzbek-Education

COUNTRY'S FIRST EDUCATION EXPORT A SUCCESS

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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 8 (Bernama) -- In a move to turn Malaysia into centre of educational excellence, the country's first education export to the international market turned out to be a success story in Uzbekistan.

It was so successful to the extent that the Uzbekistan President's Office had directed 60 other higher learning institutions there to introduce a business faculty.

"The President's Office is so impressed with the Malaysian education system introduced at the Business Faculty of the Tashkent State Technical University that he directed other higher learning intitutes to use it as a model," said Dr Yahya Mat Hassan, the university's Business Faculty Deputy Dean in an interview with Bernama in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, recently.

The faculty, the first of its kind in Uzbekistan and in other Commonwealth Independent States (CIS) as well, was introduced by Renong, the local multi-national company, in October 1994 as part of its social responsibiity towards helping the development of education in Uzbekistan apart from involving in business activities there.

Renong also provided 100 financing for the faculty, including lecturers, books, computers, a lecture hall and a library.

He said Renong was committed to the project for 10 years after Renong Berhad and Ministry of Higher and Special Secondary Education of Uzbekistan signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in July 1994.

Dr Yahya said the MoU was signed following Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's visit to Uzbekistan in 1993 and was part of Malaysia's vision to help the development of Uzbekistan's education.

Prior to the first education export, he said, Malaysia only involved in twinning programmes with other higher learning institutions abroad.

The faculty at Tashken State Technical University follows the Malaysian education system from syllabus to semester breaks in line with the international education standards. However, learning and teaching modules are carried out to suit Uzbekistan's environment.

The faculty offers a four-year Bachelor of Business Management with majoring in Finance and Marketing.

"Malaysia's education export is considered a success because it offers a comprehensive business management education which can live up to international standards," he said.

The first batch of 80 Uzbek students enrolled with the faculty in October 1994 and to-date there are 260 students in their third semester.

Dr Yahya said there were some challenges in the early stages of the faculty, for one it was the first time that Uzbek students had to attend a course conducted in English and another to follow a competitive semester system requiring excellent grade.

They were used to studying in Uzbek and Russian and paid less attention to scoring good results, he said.

"This is also the first time that Business Management is taught in the country, based on Western thought philosophy using the free market economy concept," he said.

Uzbekistan, a former Russian republic, has been under the centrally-planned economy for about 80 years before gaining independence in 1991.

In an efforts to overcome the challenges, Dr Yahya said the faculty had introduced intensive business English programme to help students follow the

lectures.

It also introduced a "surgery" system to help students having problems in coping with their studies by preparing a training module to guide them.

"Students development seminars are also organised from time to time to help them change their ideology apart from introducing a special programme to prepare them towards nation-building," he said.

As the results, the students performed satisfactorily and would be ready for the job market upon completion of their studies, he said.

As for the lecturers, he said, almost all were sourced from Malaysian universities through the collaboration between the Tashkent State Technical University and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's Consultative Bureau.

He said four lecturers were engaged for four courses in a month instead of 16 lecturers for 16 courses in a four-month semester.

This would enable Malaysian lecturers to keep their jobs back home and lecturing in Uzbekistan on a month contract basis, he said.

"The project has provided Malaysian lecturers with experience working abroad and it has also established a permanent interaction between the people of Malaysia and Uzbekistan," Dr Yahya said. -- BERNAMA

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