

Government has set employment KPIs too low
Malaysiakini.com
October 05,2011
By Rajiv Rishyakaran

In 2010, only 50 percent of Malaysian local graduates were able to secure jobs within six months after they left university.

Yet Higher Education Minister Mohamed Khaled Nordin hails this 50 percent employment rate as a "success", and attributes it to government-initiated programmes such as the "MyCareer, MyFuture" programme.

The programme is a collaboration between the Higher Education Ministry and My-Partners to train graduates in contact centre operations, communications and customer service.

An astounding RM6 million has been spent on the programme in less than two years since its inception in 2009, but the graduate employment rate has only experienced a five percent increase in the past year. A slight improvement in employment rates certainly does not equal "success".

Considering that the job market in Malaysia has improved with the gradual recovery from the global economic downturn of 2008, a 50 percent employment rate in 2011 should not be hailed as a success by any measure.

For Khaled to claim "success" at a 50 percent graduate employment rate within six months of graduation, the resounding question is: What exactly is the KPI that has been set for our higher education minister?

If 50% employment for the graduate population means that Khaled has achieved his KPI, there is a dire need for a review of this KPI.

With such low expectations set on our Higher Education Ministry, it is unsurprising that our universities are not globally competitive and our graduates not being equipped with a stronger skill set.

The bar needs to be set higher, with at least a 90 percent graduate employment rate within six months of graduation.