

Improving interior schools my top priority, minister says

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According to Education Minister Fadhlina Sidek, the first thing she did when she took office was to switch the focus of the ministry to prioritise the development of poor schools in the interior of Sabah and Sarawak to ensure children there had equal access to education.

Speaking to Sherkawi Jirim who hosted the Bernama TV “Ruang Bicara” session last night with the theme “New Dimensions of the Ministry of Education”, Fadhlina said the ministry has seven core focuses and she moved up the importance of improving interior schools to the top spot.

“Within the first 100 days of my office, we will study the needs of the schools and improvement plans that have already been carried out and what more needs to be done.

“Access to education for these students is our priority,” she said, assuring a viewer from Sabah.

The minister was responding to a question from Sabahan Lin Yee, who brought to Sherkawi's attention the condition of 50 schools in the interiors of Sabah with emphasis on schools in Persiangan, Nabawan, and Tenom.

Lin shared that there were 50 hybrid schools in which solar projects had been abandoned in those areas.

"Some have been fitted but there has been no maintenance. The schools are very poor with broken tables and chairs and no roads leading to the schools," said Sherkawi, reading the question to the minister.

Fadhlina (above) also shared that vulnerable groups like Orang Asli children were also given special attention.

"Apart from ensuring access to education for Orang Asli children, we have given importance to a community-based approach designed to prevent the vulnerable from being further marginalised.

"This is through the Kedap programme which introduced classes for indigenous adults, especially parents.

"We got indigenous parents to attend classes with their children so they are

better able to assist their children with their school work,” she explained.

Fadhlina said this programme helps the children to improve their reading and writing skills and to solve mathematical problems.

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