

**Muhyiddin Inaccurate On Quality Of Education**  
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**By Lim Guan Eng**

Education Minister Muhyiddin Yassin, was quoted as saying that according to the World Economic Report's Global Competitiveness Index 2011-2012 (Report), our children received a better quality of education than the children in the United States, Germany and United Kingdom. This is a grossly inaccurate statement designed purely for political propaganda that would only diminish the prestigious position of a Deputy Prime Minister.

Not only is Muhyiddin in a state of denial by covering up the significant challenges, weaknesses and even defects in the Malaysian education system, he has made Malaysia an international laughing stock by claiming to be better than US, UK and Germany. Muhyiddin should answer why there is not a single Nobel Prize winner who is a Malaysian and neither is there a single Malaysian university amongst the Top 200 Universities in the world? Or when given the choice, why more Malaysian students want to study in US, UK and Germany than in Malaysian universities?

Muhyiddin is guilty of cherry picking or choosing selectively only those favorable statistics from this Report. The ranking of 14 which Malaysia received on the quality of education is just one indicator out of many, which measures different aspects at different levels of our education system. In almost all other measures on education, we are ranked lower than 21. For example:

- Quality of Primary Education: Rank 21
- Primary Education Enrollment: Rank 61
- Secondary Education Enrollment: Rank 101
- Tertiary Education Enrollment: Rank 66
- Quality of Math and Science Education: Rank 23
- Quality of Management Schools: Rank 27
- Internet access in schools: Rank 36
- Availability of Research and Training Services: Rank 18

Our Secondary Education Enrollment ranking of 101 is particularly worrying and points to a significant minority of students who dropped out after primary school and is thus deprived of a chance to pursue a higher education. Our rank of 101 puts us below Thailand (Rank 94), Indonesia (Rank 91), Brunei (35) and Singapore (17) in the ASEAN region.

Malaysia's relatively low performance on objective or non-subjective measures such as the primary, secondary and tertiary enrollment rates should be highlighted over and above that of executive survey opinion indicators such as the Quality of Education ranking. Hence, to highlight this subjective indicator and to ignore the other more objective indicators is highly irresponsible and diverts attention from the other serious problems in our education system, including that of high dropout rates leading to low enrollment rates especially at the secondary and tertiary levels.

In almost all of these other indexes, Malaysia's performance is far from reassuring. For example, in the 2009 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) involving 75 countries, Malaysia was ranked 55th in reading ability, 57th in Mathematics ability and 52 in Science. Our performance in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) has also seen a steady decrease from 1999 to

2007.

The overwhelming evidence from the data in the Report actually contradicts the wild boasts by Muhyiddin and confirms that the UK,US and Germany education system is better than Malaysia. In fact the Report reveals that Malaysia have a long uphill climb before our access and average quality of education reaches world-class standards. The time has come for Malaysia's Education Ministry to boldly admit its weaknesses instead of hiding behind baseless boastings so that we can address these problems.

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