

**Public-Private Synergy Crucial In Realising Nation's Aspiration - Muhyiddin
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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 13 (Bernama) -- Private investment in education will go a long way in creating new talents required for the nation's development, Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said.

Although education was the responsibility of the government, he said, he believed that both the public and private sector played a major role in its development, and in realising the nation's aspiration and the government's target growth.

Investment in education would help increase productivity in the long run, he said, describing education as among the highest output multipliers for Malaysia.

Muhyiddin, who is Education Minister, said growth in the education would generate growth in other sectors.

"Through such initiatives as the Economic Transformation Programme and National Key Economic Areas, the sector is projected to contribute to the Gross Domestic Product to the tune of RM60.7 billion by 2020, from RM27.1 billion in 2009," he said when launching the Axiata Young Talent Programme (AYTP), here.

Commending the telecommunication company's initiative towards producing well-rounded future leaders through the programme, Muhyiddin noted that such programme was critical in supporting Malaysia's ambition in attaining a high-income economy.

"I believe such public-private partnerships such as this would result in greater synergy in helping to nurture the necessary competency and skill sets, which then enables greater productivity and elasticity in response to the economic, social, technological and cultural demands of multi-racial Malaysia," he said.

At the same time, he said, education, in its true sense, should also nurture noble values, critical thinking, leadership and communication skills apart from instilling knowledge among students.

The AYTP is aimed to develop the youth of today to become future leaders, by sponsoring academically-excellent and well-rounded students at leading academic institutions in Malaysia and around the world.

AYTP consists of three components namely National Secondary School Programme, International Baccalaureate Pre-University Programme and Undergraduate Degree Programme.

Earlier, Axiata Group President and Group CEO Datuk Seri Jamaludin Ibrahim said Axiata is investing at least RM100 million towards the merit-based programme via the Axiata Foundation in the course of 10 years, and is expected to benefit 400 students.

He added that priority will also be given to students from low income and rural families.

Speaking to reporters later, Jamaludin said the initial investment would only for the National Secondary School Programme and International Baccaalaureate Pre-University Programme.

For the National Secondary School Programme, he said, the scholarship will cover the full five years of the secondary school at Kolej Yayasan Saad Melaka including tuition fees, textbooks and laptop computers.

So far, 70 students have benefited from the programme that was launched in 2009, with 60 of them are Form 1 and Form 2 students, while another 10 are pre-university students.

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