

Education blueprint merely administrative changes, not reforms, says Pakatan Malaysian Insider
Sept 9 , 2013
BY RITA JONG

Malaysia's new education plan has some good programmes but remain merely administrative changes rather than real reforms and renewal, a Pakatan Rakyat (PR) taskforce said today.

The Pakatan Rakyat Education Taskforce also said the final National Education Blueprint 2013-2025 placed more emphasis and resources into vocational education but made no mention of any efforts to streamline technical, vocational and skill training.

"The Malaysian Independent Review Panel led by Tan Sri Dzulkipli Abdul Razak, the vice-chancellor of the Albukhary International University, had expressed this in an internal memo following the preliminary blueprint in September last year.

"But the final blueprint does not seem to have taken the advice of the review panel," the taskforce said in a statement today.

The taskforce also criticised the blueprint for failing to address many of the concerns expressed by stakeholders.

"What was said to be 'new' in the final blueprint was not transformational and failed to give confidence to the state of the Malaysian education system, that it was making a turn for the better."

The taskforce said the minister was supposed to embark on a second round of intensive public consultations to gather feedback from different stakeholder groups to incorporate into the final blueprint during the one-year period after the preliminary report was released.

"Unfortunately, the final document failed to address many of the concerns previously expressed by stakeholders," said the taskforce.

"Many non-governmental organisations and stakeholders had requested for the ministry not to rush the implementation of the National Education Blueprint and allow them to study the final draft, but the ministry has turned a deaf ear."

Instead, the taskforce said, the ministry had gone on to announce the final blueprint, which had neglected many concerns and recommendations of stakeholders, and that it did not inspire confidence that a substantive renewal and reform education system would take place.

Among the additions to the final blueprint were making SPM English a compulsory pass in 2016, a new Bahasa Malaysia syllabus for national-type schools, increase the percentage of higher order thinking skills questions for the UPSR, Form 3 and SPM exams, revamping the teacher training colleges, and expanding the initiatives for special needs education.

The taskforce added that there was no mention in the blueprint of building new schools according to the needs and demands of parents, for example Sekolah Agama Rakyat and Sekolah Kebangsaan Jenis Cina and Tamil.

The blueprint was also strongly opposed by the United Chinese School Committees Association of Malaysia (Dong Zong) for fear that it would affect the status of vernacular schools and the Chinese language in national education.

Its vice-president Chow Siew Hon had said last month that there was nothing racist in its demand to preserve vernacular education but that the National Education Blueprint was silent on the status of vernacular education. – September 9, 2013.

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