

## **PPBM: Trainee teachers not even allowed to work part-time**

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**By Vanesha Shurentheran**

### **PPBM Youth submits memorandum urging government not to cancel monthly living and travel allowances for trainee teachers.**

PUTRAJAYA: Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia's (PPBM) Armada Youth questioned how will the trainee teachers survive without allowances, when they are not even allowed to work under Act 174 of the Educational Institutions (Discipline) Act 1976.

"How will they survive when they will not be given allowance?" questioned PPBM Armada education member Mohd Ashraf Mustaqim Badrul Minir.

He said that the clause in Act 174 does not allow teachers in training to work full time or part-time, neither are they allowed to join any political party.

Earlier today, Ashraf had handed over a memorandum to a representative from the education ministry demanding that monthly living and travel allowances for trainee teachers not be cut from next June as planned.

He urged the government to re-think their decision, as it would only be a burden to the teachers in training.

Ashraf was referring to Deputy Education Minister Chong Sin Woon who was reported to have said that existing trainees would continue to receive the RM430 monthly living expense allowance and travel allowance not exceeding RM500 per year until they graduate.

"The affected trainee teachers will now have to apply to the National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN) for a loan to help with their living expenses," Chong had reportedly said.

Ashraf said that several complaints have also been made by the trainee teachers where they claimed to have not received their allowances on time.

He said the trainee teachers have a full schedule, where they attend classes during the day till the evening and at night they prepare materials for the next day, which they now have to fork out money for.

“It doesn’t make sense why education is always the victim,” Ashraf said, adding that the government had decided to close 11 out of the 27 teacher training schools in Malaysia and replaced some with Permata Centres.

PPBM Youth said that Permata’s budget comes from the Prime Minister’s Department, and its annual budget has seen an increase from RM36.3 million for 2016 to RM85 million this year.

He said that Permata should help to absorb the teacher training cost of the undergraduates.

Ashraf said that according to his calculations, throughout the course of the 3,000 students’ studies, including the existing allowances, the cost would come up to RM151.4 million.

“This is for all 3,000 teacher training students, not for just a year, but for the duration of the whole course,” he said.

To be a teacher in Malaysia, trainees have to enrol in the Institute of Teacher Education’s foundation course.

Upon completing their one-year pre-undergraduate degree in Education (PPISMP), trainees go on to do the PISMP.

The foundation course allowances, and the fees, totalling RM8,163, would continue to be paid by the government.

National Union of the Teaching Profession (NUTP) secretary-general Harry Tan told the daily the short notice given for the announcement was unfair to parents and trainees.

Former NUTP secretary-general Lok Yim Pheng, now a Malaysian Human Rights Commission (Suhakam) commissioner, urged the ministry to reconsider the decision.

She said she was aware that at least 30% of trainees’ parents are also BRIM recipients.

“What is the situation like in other institutes? How will the poor cope?” she asked, adding that the ruling would cause many trainee teachers to go into debt.

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