

## **Education Key To A Better Future**

**BERNAMA**

**22/06/2018**

**By Sakini Mohd Said**

KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama) -- Well-known South African anti-apartheid crusader Nelson Mandela once said that education was the "most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world".

The late Mandela, who was a former president of South Africa, had uttered this famous line in 2003 in Johannesburg when commemorating the launch of Mindset Network, a group working to improve education and health in South Africa.

Education is, indeed, the key to a better future for every individual and the very foundation of a nation's development and progress.

With this in mind and to keep the national education system abreast of technological developments, Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced earlier this month that a special committee would be set up to review and improve the existing curriculum from the preschool to university level.

The committee would comprise experts from the private sector who would also refer to the curriculum used in other countries and look into aspects such as civic consciousness, Dr Mahathir said at a press conference on June 6.

## **CHANGE WITH THE TIMES**

Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris Vice-Chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Mohammad Shatar Sabran welcomed the setting up of the special committee, saying that curriculums should remain flexible so that they can be changed to keep up with the times.

"I am not, however, saying that the existing curriculum is not effective, in fact, our curriculum is good and has gained world recognition.

"But we cannot afford to take the one-size-fits-all approach and be complacent and not make any changes. The curriculum has to be upgraded to keep in pace with technological developments so that our graduates remain relevant in time to come, " he told Bernama.

Pointing to the fourth industrial revolution (IR 4.0), Mohammad Shatar said the changes taking place in certain industries and sectors would need a new generation of workers who were not only competitive and possessed good academic credentials but also emotional and moral strength.

Education Minister Dr Maszlee Malik has also been quoted by the media as saying that the existing curriculum has its share of strengths and shortcomings.

"We may make some improvements and add more value to the curriculum, " the minister said.

### **EXISTING POLICIES GOOD**

Mohammad Shatar also hoped that improvements to the curriculum would not only put emphasis on skills development but also the assimilation of humanitarian values.

"I believe that any nation will be considered backwards if it's only able to create a generation that is great (endowed with skills) but devoid of humanity."

Principal fellow at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's Institute of Ethnic Studies Prof Datuk Dr Teo Kok Seong felt that the nation's present education policies were good enough but what was needed was a review of the action plans.

As far as he was concerned, the school and university curriculums were on the right track

and, as such, no changes were needed with regard to the nation's education system policies.

Both the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (Preschool to Post-Secondary Education) and the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education) "are already quite perfect and not only do they fit Malaysia's requirements but the blueprints also meet international standards to enable Malaysians to compete at the global level", he said.

Suggesting that the action plans for the implementation of the two blueprints be reviewed, Teo said their current state of effectiveness was questionable as they were drawn up in 2013 and 2015 respectively.

"The action plans have to be modified to keep in pace with IR 4.0 and the acceleration of technology, " he said, adding that the use of Bahasa Melayu as a tool to unify the people, as envisioned in the 1956 Razak Education Report, should also be given emphasis.

"This policy has been in existence for 62 years but ethnic polarisation still exists in the country... it starts at the school and continues till university and at the workplace, " he said.

## **EARLY EDUCATION**

Former Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Prof Emeritus Tan Sri Dr Sharifah Hapsah Syed Hasan agreed with Teo that a comprehensive review of the existing curriculum was not necessary in view of the recent implementation of the blueprints for schools and higher education.

She said what the authorities would need to do now was to identify strategic points of intervention that would lead to greater impact.

Among the points of intervention that the authorities could consider is providing for seamless education from childhood to adulthood.

"The 'cradle to career' education concept will lead to our children receiving a high-quality education that will provide them with a strong foundation for their physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual and social development," she said.

Another intervention point the government could consider was making early education accessible to children of marginalised communities living in the rural or urban areas and improving the quality of education provided by kindergartens and nurseries so that "no child is left behind".

Sharifah Hapsah also said that it was important to identify children's talents at an early age so that they can be exposed to the appropriate educational environment to optimise their strengths.

"Besides smart and talented children, this also applies to autistic children and high-risk teens," she said.

She is confident that the special committee to be set up by the government to improve the education curriculum was capable of identifying the necessary intervention points and injecting a breath of fresh air to the national education system.

BERNAMA

© 2018 BERNAMA. All Rights Reserved. [Disclaimer](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Security Policy](#)

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/en/news.php?id=1473760>