



# **CPR** for **Malaysian Education**



**Maszlee Malik**



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# **CPR for Malaysian Education: Post Covid19 Structural Reform**

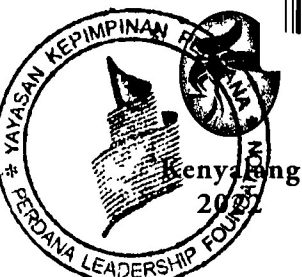
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# Introduction



**I**ndonesian philosopher Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, famously known as Buya Hamka remarked: -

*“Life is akin to the ocean. Those who are careless when paddling the boat, holding the rudder and guarding the sail will result in all being consumed by the rolling waves, lost in the middle of a vast sea. Nothing will reach the edge of the land.”*

We are now facing the tsunami of COVID-19 pandemic which not only devastated our country, but the world at large. The impact of COVID-19 does not only affect health, economy and survival of humankind but also civilisation and humanity, the two essence of universal harmony. The peg to remain sustainable is through **Education**. Yes, education is now severely affected by the consequences of COVID-19.

As we are seriously addressing health and economic issues, education must be focused on securing a better future for the country. Solutions and post-pandemic life need to be patterned with intervention and strategic planning from now onwards. I would like to emphasise that in the context of National Recovery, the Education Sector will only regain its former strength if the Government, especially the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education are transparent about sharing data with the

people, be completely inclusive by embracing as many stakeholders and expertise before making any decisions, and committed to **not** repeat policy mistakes made in the last almost two years.

*“Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today.”* Malik Shabbaz (Malcolm X)

Perhaps most of us feel the pandemic is transient, that it will abate after a few months especially after we managed to record zero infections for a few days in the past year. However, the expectation was completely obliterated after Malaysia, like several other countries in the world, had to deal with a series of new waves of the COVID-19 virus.

The pandemic is spreading and becoming more virulent, causing us to face challenging phases such as (PKP) or Movement Control Order (MCO) and *Darurat* (Emergency), things we never expected. International Bodies such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), World Bank, McKinsey & Co. and others predicted that this pandemic will subside by the end of 2021 after many global citizens took the vaccine.

The health, employment, and economic crises have already taken their respective places for debate. But are we seriously discussing the fate of children and education when its short-term action plan is repeatedly overhauled whilst long-term plans, especially post-pandemic actions are yet to be revealed? The situation becomes more convoluted when short-term solutions offered confounds;



one pertinent matter is of online learning session management and the regulation of national examinations. With that articulated, education, without a doubt determines the future of our country through the formation of attitudes and directions of our generation.

In a report released in November 2020, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) painted the worst possible scenario if the education issue is neglected and not given real attention. The disruption of the children's learning process during this pandemic will create a catastrophe called **The Lost Generation**.

This generation cannot survive when a pandemic strikes. They do not have access to quality education driven by technology. They do not understand the need to be educated at home instead of a formal setting. They do not see what is in their learning system. They have no motivation due to an uncondusive learning ecosystem.

The question we should be asking is what will happen to this generation in the future? Chances are the amount of dropouts will escalate, cognitive and emotional development will most likely be disrupted. If not addressed promptly, seriously, holistically and coordinated properly, this will lead to a chain effect and a domino impact on national development. Let us be prepared to face more devastating disasters such as the surge in unemployment, rise in criminal cases, deteriorating mental health and a festering moral crisis if the Government does not address this issue aggressively and effectively.



In my speech debating the Prime Minister during the Special Parliamentary Session on 26 July 2021, it is clear that the education sector did not receive substantial, focused, and targeted attention in the Perikatan Nasional (PN) Government's National Recovery Strategy. From what we heard at the Special Conference, education is not high on the priority list and is linked to other initiatives in the National Recovery Plan. This is calamitous because it shows the lack of commitment of the PN Government towards education.

Health and economic issues do take precedence, but education should also be focused on ensuring a better future for the country. Regrettably, neither the National Recovery Plan nor during the presentation at the Special Parliamentary Conference, no specific proposal was presented by the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) and the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). It is very unfortunate that five education issues which are the future of the people, the future of the country and the nation's civilisation are treated so abjectly.

This book is an uncomplicated one written based on the results of my involvement with education and community members who are knowledgeable and concerned about the future of the country's education. It is a compendium of several articles, speeches and media statements that I have distributed, either individually or with friends from the opposition bloc in Parliament, and also with the Pakatan Harapan Education Committee.

The book is divided into four chapters. The first deals with education issues that arose during the pandemic and recommendations for ways that should have been taken to solve those problems. We do not just present problems; we primarily offer solutions. The second chapter is the presentation of a long-term recovery plan for education issues by presenting a comprehensive solution to face the more challenging world of IR 4.0 and also the post-COVID-19 world that requires a unique and unconventional approach. The third chapter deals with proposal for English proficiency amongst students, as proposed by Majlis Penasihat Pendidikan Kebangsaan to the author in 2019, and chapter four deals with proposal for reform in higher education as proposed by JK Reformasi Pendidikan Tinggi to the author in 2019. The JK was tasked to come out with a holistic reform for higher education from all angles.

It is my sincere hope that what is stated in this book with loads of policy recommendation can be implemented as a way out of the education crisis after the COVID-19 outbreak, and a long-term plan to improve the existing education system. Education is the future, it is the life-blood of a nation.

*“Education for All, Responsibility of All”*

Dr. Maszlee Malik Simpang Renggam, Johor.



# **Chapter One: Educational Issues During The Outbreak And Suggested Solutions**



## Introduction

In tackling the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education and providing solutions, both the Government and citizens need to be based on five key policies that can neither be ignored nor abandoned, and the safety and lives of the people must be given utmost priority.

- Access to quality education for all
- Education is the responsibility of all parties
- There is no single example that can be said to be the best. Innovation efforts need to be constantly underway
- Education is a holistic process of building humanity and potential in the individual

Using pedagogy, curriculum, and conventional approaches designed for the old norms of face to face and in school education to be employed during PdPR is ineffective. PdPR forces teachers, students and parents to adopt new didactics, course of study and approaches. It is not too late to make radical ad-hoc changes in the era of educators to create a paradigm shift to new methods, curriculum and formulation. Teachers and schools need to be given autonomy and flexibility to explore each other's creativity.



Education can no longer be seen in the framework of learning the syllabus through textbooks alone. In times of pandemics, education should be re-aligned with the National Education Philosophy, where the core objective is to produce humane citizens and a balanced physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and social development. Therefore, the application of civic issues, values, skills, thinking and the introduction of the concept of self-learning must be applied.

Based on that, JKPPH has issued a statement reminding the Senior Minister of Education and his two Deputies that education issues during the pandemic and the PdPR are far from resolved. What is even more challenging is the COVID-19 post-pandemic education which is direly needed. We are waiting for a strategic, sustainable and transparent master plan and long-term intellection for education after the pandemic ends. If we look at the partnership of member countries of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) at the UNESCO Minister of Education meeting on March 29, 2021, various out-of-the-box approaches have been used even by Third World countries.

Alas, until this policy statement was written, many issues were raised with the MOE but feedback and answers are yet to be received. In fact, the Senior Minister of Education and his two Deputies appeared to dismiss the voice of the people, teachers, parents, Teachers Unions and society in general. To date, the MOE has never shared data on dropout rates i.e. students who



The pandemic has disrupted student learning and well-being throughout the world. Although the pandemic ended, it was perhaps one of the most challenging year for educators and students in our nation's history.

Analysis shows that students are hugely left behind in mathematics and reading throughout the world, not only in Malaysia. The pandemic widened any gap of opportunities and inequality between students, while having huge impact on mental health and social well being of the students.

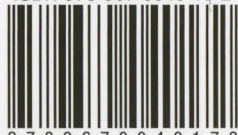
We have learned in the pandemic that we have to continuously innovate to tackle pandemic problems, accumulating experience of being in the education industry for many years, Dr. Maszlee Malik has mix and match the best of traditional and new ideas for the betterment of students.



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