

ELECTIONS '08 DAILY POLICY FACTSHEET #6: EDUCATION

CPPS is pleased to bring to you its “**CPPS Policy Fact Sheet**” as a build-up to the **Malaysian General Elections 2008**. In this daily series between nominations and polling day, we will explore **key policy issues** that we feel are important in informing your voting decision. Policy decisions made by leaders have a direct effect on your life as a citizen, and the elections is this one crucial time you decide on your leaders. We hope these fact sheets will be useful policy briefs as you decide whom to vote for. Here's to an **educated and informed voting public** in Malaysia! To view ALL our policy factsheets in PDF, click [here](#).

BACKGROUND

Overall, Malaysia has been able to **successfully provide primary education** to most of its population. We have a **very high adult literacy rate** and UNESCO's director-general has applauded Malaysia's high commitment to education, with **8% of its GNP towards education**. However, recent indicators show a drop in our universities' rankings while our universities have demonstrated very poor output in research and development. As many developing countries enter the global economy, it is imperative that Malaysia sustains its competitive edge by transforming itself into an innovative k-based economy. Making this transition will require **improving the overall effectiveness of our education system**, particularly our universities.

We need to ensure **education for all** in order to keep unemployment rates down and improve the quality of our human capital. A research study by the World Bank has shown that our universities are made up of 60% Assistant professors/lecturers and a mere 5.32% are full professors (2003-2004). This raises the question of whether majority of our faculty have **adequate research training** to produce quality research and publications. It also raises the issue on **tenure and promotion** in our local universities since the criteria for these are reported to be research publications and teaching quality (World Bank 55). As Malaysia moves towards becoming a knowledge-based economy, it is crucial that **education policies are revisited and proper evaluative mechanisms** are in place to ensure successful implementations.



In The News

- In 2006, the State Health, Social Welfare and **Orang Asli Affairs Committee chairman** Datuk Ishak Muhammad had cited a study that listed boredom and laziness as the reasons for the high drop out rates amongst the Orang Asli.
- Dr Colin Nicholas, co-coordinator of the Centre for **Orang Asli Concerns** highlights that “The authorities should realise that *the odds are stacked against orang asli children from the start and work towards creating a level playing field.*” Read more [here](#)
- UNESCO on tuition classes** in Malaysia: “. . . this extra curricular has by now become such an integral part of the primary education, in the same way as classroom teaching and learning, that one conditions the other, and one cannot function without the other” (UNESCO 1991: 41).
- More Chinese students are dropping out**, The Star reports: with the figure totalling over 100,000 annually.
- In the **Times Higher Education Supplement (THES)** World University Rankings '07: **UM ranked in at 245, USM 307, UKM 309, and UPM 364.**
- In response to **Malaysia's low rankings in the international survey**, Higher Education Minister told the Straits Times that the drop in rankings was also caused by what he called an '**egalitarian education policy**' (making tertiary education accessible to as many people as possible).
- However, **Associate Professor Azmi Sharom of UM's law faculty** said quality will suffer as long as there is the dual entry system. 'It's time to have meritocracy in the proper sense,' he told The Straits Times.

BASIC STATISTICS and FACTS

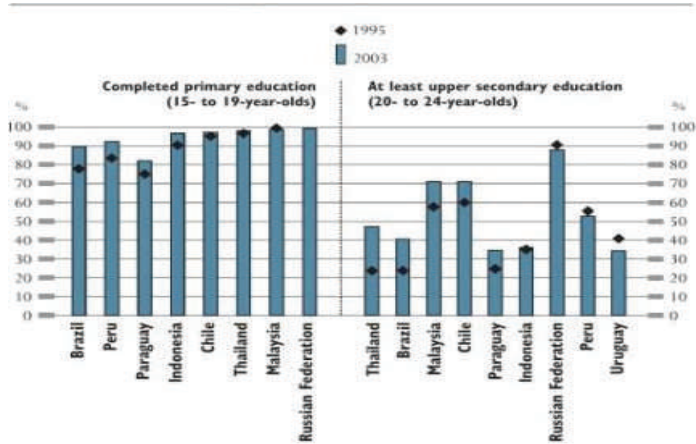
- The 2008 Budget allocates **RM 30 billion** to education.
- Malaysia has recorded the world's highest increase in total education expenditure from 1998-2001, according to the 2005 Education for All Global monitoring Report.
- Malaysia assigns **8% of its 2007 GNP** to education, one of the highest in the world.
- Our country's adult literacy rates are **92% for male and 85% for female**.
- NST reports that Malaysians spent **RM 4 billion** on tuition in the Year 2005.
- In 2006, Malaysian Social Welfare Dept has **197 519 persons with disabilities registered**.
- There are only **768 special integration programmes** in both primary and secondary schools in Malaysia (2007). The numbers are even smaller for special education schools. Please see below.
- The government provision for families with children with disabilities includes:
 - Education allowance RM50 (USD14) for children in CBRs, primary and secondary school
 - RM300 (USD86) for tertiary education.
 - Tax Rebates
 - Free medical treatments for their children with disabilities.



- The total number of students registered in tertiary institutions was only about 170,000 in 1985, increased to about 230,000 in 1990, and hit about **730,000** in 2005.
- Malaysian Employer Federation (2006) cites **communication skills** as the skill most local graduates lack in comparison on foreign graduates.
- Jobstreet.com (2006) gives the example of Cyberjaya in need of 1000 fresh grads, but cannot find people with right IT skills or **oral communication** (English language) **skills**.



VISUALS



Countries are ranked in descending order by the percentage point difference between 1995 and 2003.

Table 1.3 Innovation Capability Index 2001

Economy	Innovation Capability Index	Position
Malaysia	0.467	60 th
China	0.358	74 th
India	0.285	83 rd
Indonesia	0.261	87 th
Japan	0.885	11 th
Korea	0.839	19 th
Singapore	0.748	26 th
Taiwan	0.865	15 th
Thailand	0.488	54 th

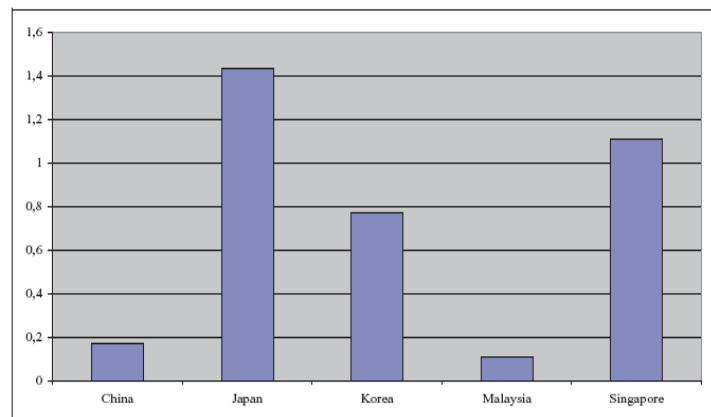
Source: UNCTAD 2005: 114.

Table 1: Public Expenditure on Education (% of GDP)

Country	1990	2000	2002
Malaysia	5.1	6.2	8.1
Singapore	3.1	3.6	4.1
Thailand	3.5	5.2	4.6

Source: World Bank, WDI 2005; OECD/UIS, World Education Indicators 2005; Singapore, Ministry of Education (for 2000 and 2002).

Figure 1.3 Researchers per 1,000 Population (index) in 2004



Source: APEC 2004

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
No. of preschool	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
No. of primary school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No. of secondary school	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
No. of preschool students	0	0	0	0	5	6	5
No. of primary school students	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No. of secondary school students	0	0	0	0	0	0	110
Total	0	0	0	0	5	6	115
No. of preschool classes	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
No. of primary school classes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No. of secondary school classes	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Total	0	0	0	0	0	1	12
No. of preschool teachers	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
No. of primary school teachers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No. of secondary school teachers	0	0	0	0	0	0	28
Total	0	0	0	0	1	1	29

Development of special education schools for persons with learning disabilities in Malaysia: 2000- 2006 (SED, 2006)

Table 4.5 Comparison of Distribution of Faculty by Rank in Malaysian and Canadian Public Universities

Distribution by rank	Full Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor/Lecturer	Other (Tutor, Language teacher)
Malaysian universities (public) (2003-2004)31	951 (5.32%)	3115 (17.42%)	10854 (60.68%)	2966 (16.38%)
Canadian universities (2002)	13,835 (39.61%)	11,624 (33.28%)	7,830 (22.42%)	1,637 (4.63%)

Table 4.5 shows a **skewed distribution** in Malaysian public universities, which demonstrates inadequate research training to produce cutting edge research. Source: Human Development Sector Reports, The World Bank. March 2007, 82.

The World Bank Country Summary of Higher Education (2006) identified the following issues for Malaysia:

Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited space in admission may limit the chances for the most qualified students to enter HEIs based on their choice.
Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation of women in higher education needs to be increased. There is no common entrance examination. Recruitment and promotion practices for the faculty do not favor all equitably.
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need to increase the number of faculty with highest credentials. More senior researchers and academics need to be involved in teaching. An oversight body to examine the performance of the QA bodies is necessary.
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The unemployment of young graduates is considerably high (over 12%). There is a weak linkage between higher education and industry.
Financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding for research needs to be increased. There is misconception that all private HEIs are well-funded. Some need financial support through direct public funding instead of incentives. The level of repayment for the student loan is low.
Governance/ Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HEIs have weaker governance under insufficient autonomy and accountability mechanisms. The government has the authority to appoint professors and researchers, allocate students to HEIs, and fix teachers' salary scale. There are no managerial incentives without any performance-based budget allocation mechanism. Public and private HEIs operate under different regulatory and financial rules without a unified higher education system.

National Education Blueprint: Snapshot

- The **National Education Blueprint 2006-2010** TWO main thrusts are:
 - to complete to complete unfinished tasks laid out in the Eighth Malaysia Plan (2000-2005) that sought to provide everyone access to education and create a level playing field for all students
 - to exploit fully schools' potential by having clusters of excellence so as to enable teachers and students to raise the standard of the system of learning in the country to be world class
- The blueprint has **SIX** core strategies to further strengthen the national education system:
 - 1) build the nation and people**—To give focus to the building of the nation and its people through education. The ministry aims to develop citizens from their early school stage to be global and patriotic apart from appreciating and upholding the nation's cultural heritage and arts
 - 2) Develop Human Capital**—The ministry will give attention to value systems, disciplinary aspects, character, morals and resilience of students. This is to produce students who are competent in Science and Technology, innovative and creative and marketable.

- 3) Strengthening National Schools**—The ministry will strengthen national schools (primary and secondary) so that they become the schools of choice. In connection with this, national schools will be adequately equipped with facilities, including ICT facilities and enough trained teachers
- 4) Narrow Education Gap**—There shall be emphasis on narrowing education gaps between locations, school types, races, gender, socio-economic levels and students' capabilities. This is to ensure an across-the-board level playing field and check drop out rates.
- 5) Make Teaching a Prestigious Profession**—This is to ensure the profession is respected and held in high regard in line with the trust and responsibility placed on it to build future generations
- 6) Make Excellence a Culture in Educational Institutions**—Efforts will be made to make excellence a culture in educational institutions by forming "school clusters of excellence" that will be based on academic, co-curricular and sports achievements or in specific fields

PARTY MANIFESTOS *

* Since education is an important issue to all parties, please see their manifestos for the complete version at our website.

Parti Keadilan Rakyat

- Universal access to education
- Government scholarships based on merit and need.
- Teachers' salaries, allowances, and benefits to increase by at least 15%
- Institute continuous professional development programs for teachers
- Increase budget allocation for the maintenance and upkeep of schools, especially in the rural areas,
- Upgrade the facilities of all rural schools, especially in East Malaysia
- Alter the curriculum of schools to reflect the latest research in education.
- Free the selection of Vice Chancellors and other leaders of institutions of higher learning from being tied to political or other interests.
- Immediately repeal repressive laws that restrict the right of students to exercise their social and political rights such as the University and Colleges Act.
- Free academic research from any form of censoring.

People's Declaration on Education

- Provide more scholarships and other financial assistance on the basis of need
- Guarantee access to compulsory and free and compulsory education at the primary and secondary levels;
- Improve standards and facilities for schools in the interior, especially in Sabah and Sarawak;
- Recognise the right to study the mother.
- Guarantee the autonomy and standards of universities and other institutions of higher learning by establishing a Universities Commission as an independent supervisory body
- amend the University and University Colleges Act to ensure the fundamental rights of the academic community, including students;
- Widen the scope of the National Accreditation Authority to monitor, investigate and propose recognition of certificates, diplomas and degrees outside the national education system.

DAP

- RM43.3 billion is allocated for education and training, accounting for 26.3% of the overall 2008 Budget.
- Of 250 new schools to be built, 60 and 15 will be Chinese and Tamil schools
- More teachers will be deployed
- RM9.4 billion is allocated for primary education, RM8.7 billion for secondary education, RM14.1 billion for higher education and RM11.1 billion for training programmes.
- A special allocation of RM250 million to ensure that they (rural schools) will enjoy these very basic amenities
- A tiered incentive-based salary revision scheme for teachers ranging from 10% - 25%.
- university academics and lecturers will have their pay de-linked from the civil service pay scale and structure.
- ensure that student loans are made available to any and all student who qualifies for tertiary education.

PAS

- Equal opportunities for the physically handicapped persons (OKU)
- Empowering "Democratization of Education" by providing options, including the Sekolah Agama Rakyat (SAR) and the SJK both Chinese and Tamil. Per Capita contribution based on students' population shall be put in place for both the SAR and the SRJK.
- Opportunity for students of SAR to be admitted to full-board schools.
- Allocate funds for Parents-Teachers Association in the rural areas to help improve educational achievement.
- Provide autonomy to schools' administration to regulate and manage disciplinary issue
- Awarding scholarship to deserving students based on merits.
- Increase the seats availability at the public universities.

MCA 9-Point Platform Action Plan :

- Emphasise research and publication
- Work with bookstores to offer preferential and discount programmes.
- Improve our libraries
- Support continuing Education centres.
- Effectively use ICT to set up online learning courses and facilities.
- To reduce drop-out rates, MCA will promote the Not One Less campaign.
- Will emphasise the training and re-integration of early school-leavers.
- Will increase, expand, and relocate Chinese primary schools.
- Will fund the training of more Chinese primary school teachers
- Will consolidate and upgrade Chinese Language education.

Barisan Nasional 2008

- Equitable distribution of quality opportunities in income generation, employment, business and education to all parts of Malaysia.
- Raise teachers' minimum qualifications and provide more training opportunities
- Continue to make national schools the school of choice by, among others, expanding the teaching of Mandarin and Tamil.
- Safeguard the position of national-type schools
- Enhance national unity by fostering student interaction
- Provide more scholarships at the undergraduate level for poor but deserving students regardless of race
- Identify apex universities and provide more autonomy and resources for public institutions of higher learning to attain world-class standards
- Raise investment in science and technology particularly in indigenous R&D

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A **rigorous evaluative mechanism** should complement our education blueprint to ensure it is translated into action.
2. **Merit** should be the main criteria for student recruitment into institutions.
3. Promotions of academicians should be based on **performance and research publications**. This is to ensure that our universities are at the forefront of research.
4. Scholarships should be given based on a **dual criterion of merit and need**. 60% of scholarships should be based on excellence, while 40% should be given on basis of need to a means tests.
5. **Annual cash allocation** for books should be made available for those in the teacher profession as incentives for reading and publication.
6. There is a need for restructuring of curriculum and more resources allocated for **Special Education** to overcome problems of unemployment and high dependency by persons with disabilities.
7. The gaps between **rural and urban schools** need to be urgently addressed.
8. The Ministry of Education should allocate more of its funds on the "Software" (i.e. teachers, syllabi, course structures) rather than on the "Hardware" (school buildings, new equipment, etc).

How Well Do You Know Your Candidate?

- i. What measures or policies would you like to see take place in terms of improving the quality of our national education? Has the party/candidate given specific outlines to this end?
- ii. Has the candidate/party outlined specific measures that will improve international rankings of our local universities? Will these measures also increase research and development in the universities?
- iii. Has the candidate/party shown great sensitivity to the education needs of the rural and the disabled? Have concrete strategies been made to address these gaps in the education system?
- iv. Is the candidate able to debate on education policies and make wise decision at Parliament level?