



EDUCATION



**CREATING A HOLISTIC  
EDUCATION SYSTEM  
FROM THE GROUND UP**



**YB DATO' SERI MAHDZIR KHALID**  
Minister of Education

Under the NTP, we have identified the need to improve student outcomes to guarantee that our children are able to compete globally and contribute to our national economic growth. As such, we have focused on initiatives that raise the quality of our education system, resulting in a steady stride towards a performance-oriented culture of teaching and learning since 2010. This is a stark contrast to the situation prior to the NTP's Education initiatives in 2009, when it was found that our students were lagging behind their regional peers in ASEAN, based on the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

To ensure that our students are competent in their mastery of the English language, the roll-out of the Dual Language Programme (DLP) and Highly Immersive Programme (HIP) have continued to show positive results. In 2017 alone, the DLP was implemented in 1,214 schools, a tremendous increase from 378 schools in the previous year when the programme started as a pilot project. Moreover, the HIP was expanded to 5,526 schools nationwide (3,693 primary schools and 1,807 secondary schools), giving 2.54 million students greater exposure to the global lingua franca.

Knowing the importance of English language proficiency in teachers as well, the Ministry of Education (MOE) is focused on conducting more rigorous training sessions for English teachers. To date, 34% of English teachers nationwide have attained the minimum C1 level proficiency.

As we sought to provide our children with a proper head-start at an early age, intensified initiatives for pre-schools participation have led to a stellar 84.26% enrolment rate, or equivalent to 884,983 new pre-schoolers in 2017. Although the 5+ age group has almost reached universal enrolment at 90.89%, more can be done to improve the 77.8% enrolment rate of the 4+ age group. The Government thus plans to continue offering fee assistance to eligible families and stepping up awareness efforts on the benefits of pre-school education for the 4+ age group.

Thorough planning and a multi-faceted implementation structure are still imperative to fix systemic issues and nurture a sustainable learning environment for future Malaysians. As we progress towards enhancing our education system, the initiatives under the NTP will require multiple stakeholders to achieve the goals of the Malaysia Education Blueprint (MEB). With this in mind, I am confident that the synergy between the public and private sectors will go a long way in our journey to realise the aspirations of the MEB.



**YB DATO' SERI HAJI IDRIS JUSOH**  
Minister of Higher Education

The NTP has identified the education sector not only as a driver of human capital development and productivity, but also as one of the engines of economic growth through the private education sector. To achieve this, the Education NKEA focuses on strengthening private education services by encouraging private consumption, enabling investments into the sector and expanding our education exports – in essence, establishing Malaysia as a global education hub.

Through the marketing, promotion and other associated activities carried out by both public and private institutions of higher learning (IHLs), Malaysia has become a choice destination for international students, with 170,068 enrolments in 2017 as compared to 70,000 in 2010. Indeed, with 11 renowned foreign IHLs establishing branch campuses and collaborations here, Malaysia is on its way to become a global leader for international education.

In contributing to the development of our talent pool, we have also achieved good progress in the establishment of discipline clusters. These discipline clusters aim to establish a network of academic institutions and industry players to improve offerings and raise standards in specialised education fields by allowing both academic institutions and industry players to collaborate and develop quality curriculum and education programmes for students.

Key discipline clusters that have been developed include hospitality and tourism, Islamic finance and business education, games development and professional accountancy. These discipline clusters have been progressing well, with an increase in enrolment every year.

In addition, Malaysian universities have been ranked top 50 in the world in subject areas such as Hospitality and Leisure Management, Electronic and Electrical Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Environmental Sciences, among others.

Catalysing our private education sector based on our transformation goals has not been an easy job, especially amid stiff competition from other international education centres. This has required us to improve coordination and cooperation with other Ministries, such as the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Health to improve student visa processing and increase international student enrolment. In 2017, we also conducted an International Student Lab with public and private sector representatives to improve international student visa processing and ensure a facilitative environment for them during their studies here. We have also recognised the need to streamline efforts to market Malaysia as an attractive education hub, which Education Malaysia Global Services (EMGS) has been tasked to coordinate.

This collaborative approach to increase coordination and dialogue between the departments, divisions and agencies of the various Ministries involved has been the foundation in delivering outcomes under the Education NKEA and this will continue to be encouraged to promote collegiality and commonality among stakeholders. This alignment with the goals of the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) will ensure our higher education ecosystem continuously improves, in line with our motto, “Soaring Upwards”.



## SUSTAINING FOR THE EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION

The Malaysia Education Blueprint (MEB) was introduced in 2013 as an expansion of the transformation of Malaysia's education system catalysed by the NTP. The Blueprint is currently being implemented in three Waves: Wave 2 of the MEB commenced in 2016 following the completion of Wave 1 in 2015 and Wave 3 is scheduled to begin in 2021.

In Wave 2 of the MEB, continuing innovations in parental, community, and private-sector involvement are being explored through public-private partnership (PPP) initiatives aimed at empowering communities across Malaysia to support and motivate schools to raise their performance. Education PPP can come in different

forms which range from light PPP such as one-off sponsorship programmes, to full PPP whereby the private sector may fully manage a public school. As of 2017, there was a 178% increase in overall sponsors to 4,093 from 1,473 in 2016.

However, currently PPP initiatives are more inclined towards 'private-sector-supported' rather than 'private-sector-led'. As a first step to attract more private sector participation in education programmes, MOE conducted a feasibility study on privately run public schools this year. A new PPP model has also been devised following the PPP Lab conducted in 2016 involving public and private sector representatives. The new model is expected to commence implementation in 2018.

To ensure that participants of the PPP are kept informed on the PPP initiatives, a PPP icon was established as a link in the MOE website in 2017 (<https://www.moe.gov.my>). This acts as an electronic one-stop centre for PPP-related matters.

### Malaysia Education Blueprint (MEB)

Wave 1 of the MEB was focused on delivering quick wins that would kick-start the transformation of the education system. During this period, initiatives were centred on raising teaching quality by upskilling the existing pool of teachers, raising school leadership quality by improving the appointment and training of principals as well as improving student literacy (in both Bahasa Malaysia and English) and numeracy through intensive remedial programmes. The Ministry also sought to strengthen and empower state and district offices to improve the quality of frontline support provided to all schools.

Wave 2 will see the Ministry rolling out structural changes aimed at accelerating transformation. This will include moving all 421,000 teachers and 10,000 principals onto a new career package, providing options for increased English language exposure and introducing revised primary and secondary curricula which address the knowledge, skills and values needed to thrive in today's global economy.

The focus of Wave 3 will be on accelerating the performance improvement of Malaysia's education system, moving it into the top third internationally. To embark on the journey to excellence, the Ministry will focus on increasing operational flexibility to cultivate a peer-led culture of professional excellence, capable of innovating and taking achievements to greater heights by enhancing school-based management and autonomy around curriculum implementation and budget allocation for most, if not all, schools. The goal is to create a self-sustaining system that is capable of innovating and taking achievements to greater heights.

## Highly Immersive Programme Raises Students' Exposure to English

The Highly Immersive Programme (HIP) supports the development of a highly-immersive English language environment in schools, and features four main activity types: In-Class, Out-Of-Class, Extra-Class, and Outreach. The English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC), as part of the MOE, acts as the HIP secretariat. It oversees HIP implementation as well as programme monitoring and sustainability. Moreover, ELTC conducts support visits and evaluates the success and impact of the HIP. It engages with state- and district-level English language officers in problem-solving HIP challenges and discussing the way forward. These language officers also assist ELTC in monitoring HIP in schools.

As Work Stream Leader for the programme at ELTC, Dr. Kalminderjit Kaur d/o Gurcharan Singh's role is four-fold: planning the funding, activities and rollout of the programme in schools; providing orientation to schools; planning strategies for monitoring and evaluation; and organising engagement activities such as colloquiums, symposiums and discourses which serve as a platform for HIP schools to meet and share best practices as well as discuss strategies for long-term programme sustainability.

Dr. Kalminderjit, as she is commonly addressed, believes that the success of HIP at any individual school depends on the commitment and support from the school head, teachers, students and the surrounding community. "We must ensure that the correct information about HIP is received by schools. Then, the entire school community must buy into HIP for its success. This means that school heads and teachers especially must be committed to the programme's outcomes. Additionally, continuous monitoring must be carried out at the state and district levels."

Dr. Kalminderjit believes that HIP has been showing positive results. "It has seen the development of an immersive, language-rich environment in the implementing schools. Students have developed confidence and a positive attitude in using the language in a fun and non-threatening environment. The entire school community is engaging in English

language activities in and out of class and parental involvement in students' language-learning activities in school has been enhanced."

Through the various HIP activities, students are now more exposed to the English language. "Studies have shown that increased contact to a language directly impacts language proficiency improvement," Dr. Kalminderjit points out, adding that increased student participation in activities involving the English language signified that students are more confident in using English.

There are, however, some aspects of HIP that could be further improved. Dr. Kalminderjit believes that the students' use of English could be better tracked, and that the school heads who spearhead the programme could demonstrate greater continuous and sustaining support.

"My hope is that our education system produces students that are able to communicate competently in English internationally, demonstrating critical and creative abilities using the language."

## Speech and Drama Course Gives Innovative Spin to Learning English

One hallmark of the HIP is its use of innovative ways to keep students engaged in learning English. Among these innovative activities is a speech and drama course conducted in a non-classroom setting with students in 20 schools across four states. Enfiniti Academy of Musical Theatre & Performing Arts (ENACT) in collaboration with the Sime Darby Foundation brought this week-long workshop to students who would otherwise have little exposure to using English. ENACT is part of Enfiniti Vision Media, an internationally-recognised production company.

Enfiniti Vision Media Course Director, Joanna Bessey, designed the workshop and is one of its instructors. According to her, the workshop was designed to enhance communication and soft skills, and to present exercises that boost the students' confidence to speak in English. "ENACT's highly-experienced teachers and methods as well as our award-winning theatre professionals ensure students can follow the specifically-designed drama toolkit," Bessey explains.



The drama toolkit is part of a speech and drama activity workbook that Bessey also developed. The workbook acts as a teacher’s guidebook while the workshop is conducted. “With the book, schools can eventually establish their own speech and drama clubs to continue the programme,” Bessey enthuses.

As part of the workshop, the students plan, produce, and put on their own skits. In the process, the students learn how to adjust to change, work together as a team, deal with time pressure, share their own ideas, tell stories and speak grammatically-correct English – all with clarity, confidence, and emotion. “And they do all this while having fun,” says Bessey.

Mohd Jamil bin Ismail, father of Nurul Huda Najihah who is a student of SK Pengkalan Baharu in Perak, agrees. “My daughter found that this workshop made it easy for students to learn English. She enjoyed herself attending the workshop.” SK Pengkalan

Baharu is one of the 20 schools that participated in the ENACT workshop, and Mohd Jamil thinks that the workshop is a valuable programme which he hopes can be extended and be held after school hours as well. “Although her English is good, my daughter does not have many opportunities to speak in English. This workshop gave her a great chance to be able to express herself in English.”

Richard Mark s/o Ricky, a student from SK Runchang in Pahang, found the workshop enjoyable and wishes there could be more such activities in English. “Most of my English practice is in speaking with my school friends, but we don’t do that often,” he explains. His adoptive mother, Rohaya, believes that he has shown definite signs of improvement in his English skills. “He never used to sing in English, but now I hear him doing so every so often at home.” Rohaya hopes that he will be able to better understand English through this and other initiatives in school.



Students enjoying activities by Enfiniti Academy of Musical Theatre & Performing Arts.

## STRENGTHENING THE EDUCATION MODEL

An individual's road to learning begins almost from infancy and Malaysia's education system has been designed to cater to that need through its efforts to encourage enrolment in early childhood care and education (ECCE). These initiatives also aim to complement efforts that will enable women to return to the workforce after entering motherhood, which are currently carried out under the Human Capital Development Strategic Reform Initiative.

**“The national childcare enrolment rate rose from 4% in 2010 to 6.92% in 2017, accounting for 177,228 out of 2.5 million children aged 4 and below.”**

Fee assistance makes up the Government's key initiative in encouraging ECCE enrolment. During the year, the Government allocated RM3 million for fee assistance for private childcare, helping to alleviate childcare costs for 1,030 families. It also channelled RM18 million in fee assistance to 32,378 children from low-income families to enrol in private pre-school centres where there are no public pre-schools available. Additionally, RM88,521 was provided to the ECCE Council and RM20,000 to the National Child Care Association to conduct advocacy programmes and registration drives.

As a result, the national childcare enrolment rate rose from 4% in 2010 to 6.92% in 2017, accounting for 177,228 out of 2.5 million children aged 4 and below. Moreover, the national pre-school enrolment rate rose from 72.4% in 2010 to 84.26% in 2017, which represents 884,983 children aged 4+ and 5+. Enrolment across the age groups is however still uneven with only 77.8% of children aged 4+ enrolled in pre-schools, while the enrolment rate among children aged 5+ is almost universal at 90.89%. In an effort to address this disparity, MOE will prioritise easing the registration process, rules and regulations to set up new private pre-schools and continue providing fee assistance.

In addition to financial aid, the Government is focused on raising the standards of pre-school education and in 2016 announced a new policy requiring diploma qualifications or higher in ECCE for pre-school teachers. 32.85% of 34,740 private pre-school teachers now meet those requirements. The policy will take full effect by 2020, whereby all teachers will be required to meet those qualifications. This will not only improve the quality of pre-school education, but is also expected to spur public and private institutes of higher learning to provide ECCE diploma courses. The Government will support private pre-school teachers in the process of obtaining their ECCE diplomas by 2020 by utilising Teacher Training Institutes (Institut Pendidikan Guru, IPG) capacity to train private pre-school teachers. MOE and the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) will also ensure that private institutions of higher learning (IHLs) offer high-quality ECCE diplomas.

Additionally, the development of an integrated ECCE hub in Kota Kemuning by SEGi Education Group will assist with providing the required education and training for ECCE professionals. Development of the hub now is underway following approval from the Public Private Partnership Unit (Unit Kerjasama Awam Swasta, UKAS) in 2017.

The National Pre-school Quality Standard self-assessment is another measure introduced by the Government to ensure high-quality pre-schools. Since its introduction in 2015, 23,285 pre-schools have participated in the assessment in 2017, of which



**The Ministry aims to ensure all students are literate and numerate.**



98.86% have met the minimum quality standards. The Inspectorate of Schools (Jemaah Nazir dan Jaminan Kualiti, JNJK) together with other agencies – namely the Department of Community Development (Jabatan Kemajuan Masyarakat - KEMAS) under the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, the Department of National Unity and Integration (Jabatan Perpaduan Negara & Integrasi Nasional, JPNIN) and MOE's Private Education Division – coordinated verification activities of the self-assessment tool on 95 private pre-school centres. Of these, 82 or 86.32% met the minimum quality standards.

At the primary school level, the Literacy and Numeracy Screening (LINUS) programme, which aims to ensure all students obtain basic literacy (Bahasa Malaysia and English) and numeracy skills by end of Year 3, has run for eight years. The 2017 rates for Bahasa Malaysia literacy, English literacy and numeracy were recorded at 98.3%, 95.7% and 98.8%, respectively. Its implementation over the past eight years has made the programme an integral part of classroom teaching and learning. To expand on this and ensure that all primary school students master literacy and numeracy skills not only at the basic level but also at a more advanced level, a new programme will be developed in 2018 with the aspiration of providing students from Years 4 to 6 the required literacy and numeracy skills in line with the school syllabus.

## TRANSFORMING MALAYSIAN STUDENTS INTO GLOBAL CITIZENS

As part of the efforts to nurture globally competitive Malaysians through a high level of English proficiency, in 2016 the Government introduced the Dual Language Programme (DLP), where a pilot programme was implemented involving Year 1, Year 4 and Form 1 students in 378 schools. The programme has since expanded to 836 more schools in 2017 bringing the number of schools implementing DLP to 1,214 schools (consist of of 585 primary schools and 629 secondary schools). To date, a total of 129,859 students have participated in the DLP.



**YB Dato' Seri Mahdzir Khalid launched the new ELTC campus and the second HIP Colloquium on 14 August 2017.**

A comparison of DLP students' achievement in their 2016 year-end assessment and their 2017 mid-term assessment showed that 36.38% of 14,794 primary school students and 46.4% of 22,965 secondary school students demonstrated an improvement in their English examinations.

In an effort to ensure effective implementation of the DLP, the English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC) conducted an online teacher training course to support Science and Mathematics teachers in delivering these subjects in English. By the end of 2017, a total of 709 DLP teachers completed the online modules. Additionally, several private education institutions collaborated with the MOE to support a few schools where teachers and students found the programme challenging. This initiative included the Teach English and Create Hope (TEACH) programme conducted by Universiti Putra Malaysia's Faculty of Educational Studies for SK Bandar Tasik Kesuma and SK Saujana Impian, an English support programme by the International School of Kuala Lumpur (ISKL) for DLP teachers in six Kuala Lumpur schools, English teacher training by Berjaya University College of Hospitality for two DLP schools and a DLP support programme by Sri UCSI for two schools in Selangor.

To expand the DLP further without risk of dilution, the MOE will select more schools based on the fulfilment of four criteria, namely, the institutions must have sufficient resources, competent teachers, parental consent for the implementation of the DLP and meet or exceed the national average in Bahasa Malaysia (BM) scores.



Moving forward, the DLP programme will also focus on expanding to more schools in rural areas. Hence, priority will be given to train DLP teachers to ensure competency in teaching Mathematics and Science in both BM and English. Additionally, there is an urgent need for secondary schools to start offering DLP to ensure that DLP students from primary schools can seamlessly transition to a secondary school where the programme is offered.

The Highly Immersive Programme (HIP) is another effort to increase students' English proficiency and provides increased immersion in the English language through in-class and out-of-class activities, extra classes and outreach programmes. In 2016, Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the HIP was rolled out, with 58% of schools involved achieving an immersiveness level of 3 and above. Phase 1 of the HIP was implemented in 94 primary schools in six states beginning March 2016, namely: Perlis, Pahang, Perak, Negeri Sembilan, Sabah and Sarawak. Meanwhile, Phase 2 started in July 2016, involving a total of 1,106 schools nationwide. Phase 3 was rolled out in 2017, with 4,326 schools enrolling in the HIP, bringing the total number of schools enrolled to 5,526. By 2018, the Ministry targets for 10,000 schools to enrol in the HIP.

To improve the effectiveness of the HIP, the second HIP Colloquium was conducted at the ELTC in August 2017, serving as a platform to discuss HIP best practices in schools, its impact, challenges and way forward. Strategies on increasing the involvement of the whole school, parents and the community to maximise students' outcome in English were also discussed. 178 schools across the country as well as 11 outreach partners involved in the programme participated in the colloquium.

Several educational bodies and companies within the private sector have facilitated intervention programmes for HIP schools that needed assistance with seeking outreach partners to carry out English-language activities. These programmes included a six-month English Programme conducted by SOLS 24/7 for SMK Seri Tasik and SJKT Vivekananda; the English Speech and Drama Programme conducted by Enfiniti Academy and sponsored by Yayasan Sime Darby for 20 HIP schools in Selangor, Perak, Negeri Sembilan and Pahang; an English drama

programme conducted by Taylor's University, sponsored by Mah Sing in collaboration with The Edge Education Foundation; and English, Science and ICT programmes conducted by Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) for SK Sungai Lesong, Perak, which is both a DLP and HIP school.

***“Several educational bodies and companies within the private sector have facilitated intervention programmes for HIP schools that needed assistance with seeking outreach partners to carry out English-language activities.”***

To ensure teachers meet language proficiency requirements, MOE has set a target for all English teachers to meet a minimum proficiency level of C1, based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). To date, approximately 34% of 42,105 English teachers have attained C1 level proficiency. Regulations setting a minimum English language proficiency criteria of Band C1 for new English teachers will be put in place by 2020.

MOE is also continuing its efforts to increase the proficiency of in-service English teachers who do not meet the minimum requirements by providing the Professional Upskilling of English Language Teachers (ProELT) course. 16,000 teachers have been trained under the course since 2012. In 2016, the Ministry commenced the course internally through the ELTC. Currently, the centre's capacity for teacher training is 650 teachers annually.

The ProELT programme is not planned as a permanent initiative as the Government seeks to introduce minimum English proficiency requirements for new teachers by 2020. In 2017, 60% of teachers graduating from IPG achieved C1 before their postings. IPGs have also tightened selection criteria to require a minimum of 5As in the SPM (Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia), with English pre-service teachers required to obtain an A or A+ for the English examination.



## Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

LEVEL		GENERAL DESCRIPTION
<b>Proficient user</b>	<b>C2</b>	Mastery Highly proficient - can use English very fluently, precisely and sensitively in most contexts
	<b>C1</b>	Effective Operational Proficiency Able to use English fluently and flexibly in a wide range of contexts
<b>Independent user</b>	<b>B2</b>	Vantage Can use English effectively, with some fluency, in a range of contexts
	<b>B1</b>	Threshold Can communicate essential points and ideas in familiar contexts
<b>Basic user</b>	<b>A2</b>	Waystage Can communicate in English within a limited range of contexts
	<b>A1</b>	Breakthrough Can communicate in basic English with help from the listener

## EMPOWERING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) STUDENTS

In 2016, the YAB Prime Minister launched an action plan for persons with special needs covering 10 main strategies. One of these is to empower the economy of persons with special needs by involving them in vocational training and administrative jobs provided by the Government, NGOs and the private sector. In support of this, a mini-lab was conducted in May 2017 to develop a framework to help SEN students transition from the completion of secondary school to employment.

The framework divided SEN students into two categories, namely those with a Disabled Person (OKU) card and those without. The lab suggested that the two transition modules for primary and secondary SEN students be developed in 2017 and implemented in May 2018, championed by the Ministry of Human Resources (MOHR) and supported by MOE, MOHE, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Department of Social Welfare and JobsMalaysia.

## EQUIPPING STUDENTS WITH WORLD-CLASS LEARNING TOOLS

The MOE introduced 1BestariNet in 2011 to equip schools with the Frog Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), an integrated platform allowing teaching, learning, collaboration and administrative functions through the internet. Phase 2 of the programme kicked off in 2016 and continued through 2017.

To encourage take up of the VLE platform in schools, the Ministry has been working to boost connectivity by reducing the number of schools connected to the slower internet connection systems of Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line (ADSL) and Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) and instead connect all schools to faster internet speeds between 2-10 Mbps by 2020. In 2017, 92.6% out of 9,732 schools were connected to internet of speeds between 2-10 Mbps, whilst the number of schools connected to ADSL and VSAT combined has been reduced significantly to 3,357. The improvement in connectivity has resulted in an increase in the use of VLE among students. This year, a monthly average of 865,738 number of students utilised VLE in at least one lesson session per week, as compared to the targeted monthly average of 660,000 students.

The Ministry will develop more learning content to encourage more students to utilise the Frog VLE platform. The Ministry is also studying the possibility of introducing policies and guidelines allowing students to bring mobile devices to school to enhance VLE usage.



Frog VLE supports 21<sup>st</sup> century learning in schools.

## THE ROLE OF PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

In line with the MEB - Higher Education's (MEB (HE)) aspirations to embrace public and private IHLs to enable Malaysia to compete globally, the private sector is considered as the engine of growth for Malaysian higher education. This is because private IHLs host approximately 693,322 students from the total of 1.34 million tertiary students enrolled in the country.

Private IHLs are integral to the Malaysian higher education system. In the NTP, private IHLs have been identified as the key drivers of the initiatives under the Education NKEA. MOHE, through MEB (HE), envisions a harmonised higher education regulatory framework for both public and private IHLs through policies that support the expansion of higher education especially via high-quality undergraduate programmes at private IHLs. In other words, the Ministry promotes institutional growth without compromising the quality of the private higher education sector.

There are many strategies and initiatives that are relevant to both public and private IHLs, for example, the Redesigning Higher Education initiatives that consist of key initiatives from the MEB (HE). There is also greater focus on outcomes, performance and quality standards through the use of rating instruments such as SETARA and MyQuest. The focus on performance and outcomes is used as part of the criteria for policy decisions such as obtaining licences to recruit international students by private IHLs.

## ESTABLISHING MALAYSIA AS AN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION HUB

In making Malaysia globally prominent by attracting quality international students, MOHE has rolled out an extensive plan as laid out in Shift 8: Global Prominence of the MEB (HE). Under MEB (HE), MOHE pledged that it would improve the coordination of all activities related to the management of international students to enhance Malaysia's capacity to host international students with the target of 250,000 students by 2025. In 2017, 170,068 international students enrolled in programmes offered in Malaysia (136,293 in IHLs, 33,031 in schools and language centres and 744 in technical and vocational institutions).

The Ministry will collaborate with all stakeholders, from IHLs to the Immigration Department, to ensure a seamless experience for students from the time they apply through to the completion of their studies. The Ministry also seeks to build greater global visibility and trust in the Malaysian higher education brand. To achieve the former, the Ministry will partner with relevant agencies to develop and implement high-impact promotional activities. The latter will be achieved through the provision of high-quality innovative programmes that appeal to a wider student base and the enrichment of student experiences.

### Attracting globally renowned names in academia

In line with the aforementioned strategies, the number of international schools operating in the



country has now reached 132. Both MOE and MOHE strictly monitor the performance of these schools and institutions and have also adopted a more stringent approach towards approving new licences to ensure the presence of only renowned and established operators. The updated guidelines for the establishment of new international schools are now available on MOE's website.

To further support the country's status as an education hub, the Government facilitates the entry of Tier One institutions to establish foreign branch campuses in the country. Malaysia is currently home to world-class university branch campuses from Australia, China and the UK. From the UK alone, there are five institutions: Nottingham University, Reading University, Newcastle University of Medicine, Heriot-Watt University and Southampton University which is its largest outside of the UK. Malaysia is also home to the Asia School of Business, a collaborative set-up between the Malaysian Central Bank and MIT Sloan School of Management. Its inaugural MBA class began in September 2016 and out of 47 students, 31 are foreign students from all over the world. The presence of these international branch campuses shows external confidence in the higher education system and the potential of Malaysia as a higher education destination.

**“Malaysia is currently home to world-class university branch campuses from Australia, China and the UK.”**

Meanwhile, the EduCity@Iskandar (EduCity) initiative, Asia's first multi-varsity educational complex, further marks Malaysia's strategy to distinguish itself as an education hub at the tertiary level, housing universities and higher learning institutions, academia, industry action and R&D centres, student accommodation, recreational and sports facilities in a single location that is the first of its kind in Asia. Conceived in 2011, EduCity now counts over 4,500 students and 600 alumni in its ranks. In 2017, EduCity saw an enrolment of over 4,393 students. Efforts are ongoing to ensure that EduCity continues to attract students to study within the education hub.

Infrastructure and facilities upgrades will continue at EduCity to ensure it continues to attract students. A number of infrastructural plans aimed at enhancing the student experience are now in the pipeline, including a student union centre expected to commence construction in mid-2018 and a planned expansion of its gymnasium in the first quarter of 2018. Other upgrades include a rugby field which started preliminary work in late 2017. Following feedback on the Student Village (the student hostel) received from residents and partners, a phased refurbishment and enhancement of the Student Village will also be undertaken.

To widen its reach for potential students, EduCity collaborated with Education Malaysia Global Service (EMGS) to hold roadshows in Kazakhstan, Indonesia, China and South Korea. The roadshows received 57 potential entrants for the 2017/2018 academic year and their applications were forwarded to respective universities. Marketing efforts will be a key driver to increasing student enrolment within EduCity in the years moving forward.

### **Facilitating Malaysia's international education hub**

EMGS is Malaysia's umbrella organisation for higher and tertiary education, operating under MOHE to market the Malaysian education brand as well as manage applications, processing and renewals of international student visas.

EMGS received 51,464 new visa applications from public and private IHLs, language centres and accredited training centres as of 2017. The overall turnaround time for the issuance of Visa Approval Letters (VAL) once visa application documents have been reviewed and verified has been significantly reduced from 20 working days in 2016 to seven working days in 2017 for complete applications. This is primarily due to a task force established at the Cyberjaya Immigration Office from 24 January to 8 February 2017 to clear a backlog of over 7,000 applications.

The Immigration Department also hired additional officers to process VAL applications. With the addition of these new officers, the total visa processing time, i.e. from visa application to visa issuance for inbound international students was reduced from a maximum of 77 days to 14 days. This is a significant reduction as lengthy visa processing was a significant barrier for the enrolment of international students in previous years.

EMGS has also implemented Big Data Analytics (BDA) through its Business Intelligence Dashboard. This tool provides MOHE and other stakeholders such as the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Immigration Department with greater insight into international student trends in Malaysia by enabling convenient access to data on students and institutions. EMGS's big data tool currently has real-time data available for 646,153 application records. EMGS has also customised a dashboard using BDA for MOHE which provides greater insights into its daily operations.

**“EMGS has implemented Big Data Analytics to gain greater insight on international student trends in Malaysia.”**

To verify student identities during pre- and post-arrival medical screening, EMGS has implemented biometric authentication measures (fingerprint readers) across all 108 EMGS panel clinics within Malaysia. This ensures the validity of the medical screening results, avoiding fraudulent activities at the clinics such as students standing in for each other and reducing the risk of the spread of communicable diseases. It also ensures that the student who arrives in Malaysia is the same individual who attended the medical screening overseas. As of end August 2017, EMGS has captured 26,672 sets of biometric data for registration and future verification in Malaysia.

Currently, the pre-arrival medical screening in EMGS Panel Clinics is only compulsory for Indian, Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan students, which may lead to non-compliance amongst students of other nationalities in undergoing the medical screening thus posing a health risk. Medical Examination Report (MER) forms submitted by students from other countries are either incomplete or submitted in languages other than English. In some instances, students' fingerprints are not captured and clinics in Malaysia are unable to verify them during post-arrival medical screening. Moving forward, EMGS will review the need for all international students to conduct their medical screenings at EMGS Panel Clinics only. This will ensure that all MER submissions are complete as EMGS will ensure that the clinics adhere to its standards for submission.

In August 2017, an International Student Lab was held to identify ways to improve Malaysia's competitiveness and attractiveness as an international student destination. The Lab was attended by more than 80 representatives from the public and private sectors.

The recommendations of the International Student Lab included:

- Improving health screening processes;
- Introducing a student profiling mechanism;
- Allowing international students to work in Malaysia during their studies;
- Improving international student identification (iKad);
- Allowing automatic visa extension upon graduation for international students; and
- Implementing coordinated marketing efforts among education institutions and relevant agencies.

Moving forward, marketing initiatives for EMGS in 2018 will involve more vigorous student recruitment activities through participation in over 60 international events, such as the British Council's Going Global 2018 event which will be co-hosted by MOHE in May 2018. The coming year will also see solo roadshows being held in key markets like China, Indonesia and India which will allow for a higher branding visibility. EMGS will also intensify engagements with professional education consultants and recruitment agents via international platforms like ICEF in Germany, Brazil, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam; and St. Alphe in Thailand and Russia as a means to tap into new markets, while maintaining the traditional focus markets on Indonesia, China, Central Asia and South Asia.

EMGS will also take the lead in coordinating marketing efforts between Ministries, departments and agencies, such as MATRADE and MOTAC, with the education institutions to ensure synergy in promoting Malaysia as a hub for international education. EMGS will be working to ensure that the educational institutions involved move from promoting their own bodies towards adopting a holistic approach to promote Malaysia as an attractive education hub.



## Perak Primary School Rises to the Challenge to Increase Students' English Proficiency

A rural school in the district of Batang Padang, Perak, Sekolah Kebangsaan Sungai Lesong (SKSL) was a pilot school for the Dual Language Programme (DLP) and the Highly Immersive Programme (HIP). Former SKSL headmaster, Zamri bin Abdul Rani, took on the challenge of implementing both initiatives positively. "It required a paradigm shift by all stakeholders, especially the students, to see English as a viable language to be taught outside of urban and suburban schools," he says.

As the school's chief administrator, Zamri did not find it easy to build up confidence among teachers and parents. Financing the DLP and HIP initiatives was also a challenge: SKSL had to approach the Parent-Teacher Association for assistance to purchase the necessary teaching and reference materials.

Zamri recounts providing constant help and support to his teachers, right down to attending their classes to demonstrate solidarity and show his commitment to them. "I had to expose them to the bigger picture, academically speaking." He also brought the students' parents around, calling them in for meetings and discussions to convince them that those learning Science and Mathematics in English have a brighter future.

He attributes the initiatives' success to the help and support of the district education office and the state's education department. He pointed out that following a visit from the HIP Secretariat, the English Language Teaching Centre, SKSL was connected to Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, which also provided significant assistance.

SKSL rose to the challenge, becoming the third-best HIP school nationwide in 2016, by having the students use English beyond the classroom. "We've used Scrabble as a basis for our Word Attack game to help increase student vocabulary; we've also created a 'HIP-Zonia' area with all sorts of English

educational games for students to play with during recess and other break times." In 2017, SKSL had DLP classes in Year One, Two, Four, and Five, and 2018 will see the inaugural DLP class sitting for the UPSR. The DLP classes have a 100% pass rate for English and Science, while the official weekly school assembly is conducted exclusively in English.

Personally, Zamri feels these initiatives are important towards achieving Malaysia's goal of becoming a developed nation by empowering students with proficiency of the English language to face the challenges of a more globalised world. However, financing the HIP could be further improved. "In order to create an environment that is conducive towards learning English in an immersive manner, rural schools require adequate financing, so that they can provide sufficient English materials to the students."

It is Zamri's hope that HIP and DLP can be further extended and expanded to all schools, and that these programmes can be made more self-sufficient.



**Zamri (middle), former headmaster of Sekolah Kebangsaan Sungai Lesong, actively engages the Ministry and parents to support HIP and DLP activities.**

## BUILDING A COMPETITIVE TALENT PIPELINE THROUGH DISCIPLINE CLUSTERS

The establishment of private higher education clusters aims to develop a pool of talents in specialised areas. The initiative ensures Malaysia possesses a highly skilled talent pool in line with the country's high-income aspirations by leveraging on the existing networks of education institutions, international institutions and related industries to co-collaborate and develop relevant academic offerings.

### Islamic finance and business education cluster

The Islamic finance and business education cluster is being developed through the leadership of the International Council of Islamic Finance Educators (ICIFE). Under its new President appointed in March 2017, the Council is focused on strengthening both local and foreign memberships among individuals and institutions, with the objective of formalising a professional body of accredited Islamic finance educators comprising academics and industry professionals.

To boost its membership, ICIFE participated in various regional Islamic finance conferences, such as the 14<sup>th</sup> Kuala Lumpur Islamic Finance Forum 2017 (KLIFFF) and the 5<sup>th</sup> Global Waqf Conference in Indonesia, both of which were held in October 2017. Following participation in these conferences, a total of 16 bodies and institutes applied for ICIFE membership.

ICIFE also worked on refining the current curriculum on Islamic economics and finance by holding the 2<sup>nd</sup> Roundtable on Islamic Economic and Finance from 21-22 September 2017. Attended by academics, heads of departments and deans of faculties from 18 universities across Malaysia and Indonesia, the objective of the Roundtable was to improve the content and design the best practices in the implementation of the curriculum.

### Health science education cluster

The UCSI University Teaching Hospital (UCSI Hospital) is being built to provide medical students with state-of-the-art facilities and opportunities to work with world-renowned medical experts

to optimise their practical experience and ensure employment upon graduation. The construction of the UCSI Hospital reached 80% completion as of December 2017, with construction estimated to be fully completed at the end of March 2018. Built in phases, UCSI Hospital is expected to receive its first patients in July 2018 and will begin with a capacity of 130 beds. During its initial operations, UCSI Hospital's core services will include internal medicine, cardiology, accident and emergency medicine, general surgery, orthopaedics, gynaecology, as well as plastic and reconstructive surgery.

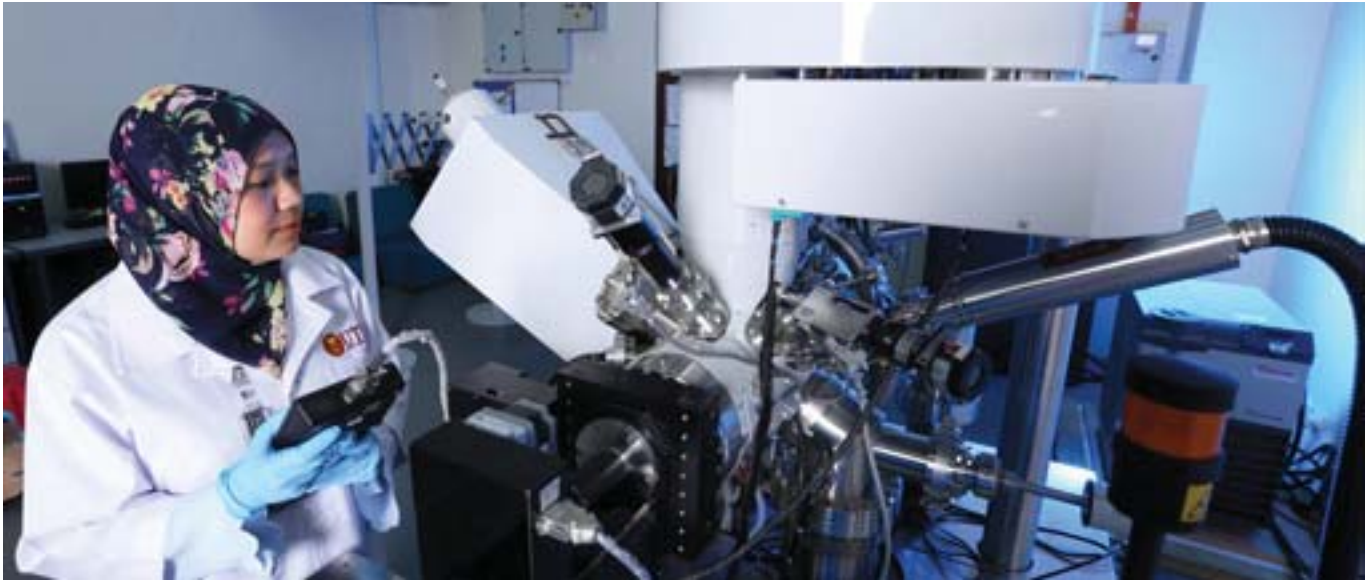
***“UCSI Hospital is collaborating with world-renowned medical professionals to bring expert knowledge to its students.”***

To boost its national and international standing, UCSI Hospital has begun communicating with Harvard University to establish clinical collaborations in the fields of cardiology, cardiothoracic surgery as well as plastic and reconstructive surgery. UCSI is also working on avenues for research collaboration with Harvard. Both parties are already collaborating on other fronts: to date, five UCSI University students have been selected to advance high-impact research at Harvard on year-long arrangements.

UCSI Hospital is also collaborating with world-renowned medical professionals to bring expert knowledge to its students. For example, Professor Dr. Gordon Harold Williams – a world-renowned endocrinologist who leads the Hormonal Mechanisms of Cardiometabolic Injury Programme at Harvard's Brigham and Women's Hospital and has published more than 500 papers in top journals – is serving as a visiting professor at UCSI University's Faculty of Medicine and Social Sciences. UCSI has also secured the expertise of leading academics from King's College London and the Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute as visiting professors.

### Hospitality and tourism cluster

The NTP aims to support the tourism industry by increasing the number of hospitality and tourism graduates from 20,000 in 2009 to 50,000 to 2020. Through initiatives led by The Malaysia Centre of



**Higher education clusters aim to develop a pool of talents in specialised areas.**

Tourism and Hospitality Education (MyCenTHE), 24,280 students enrolled in hospitality and tourism courses in private institutions in 2017 against the target 26,000.

In 2017, MyCenTHE, together with Sunway University, Taylor's University and KDU University College, formed the EPP10 Committee to jointly plan and execute the National Awareness Campaign on Hospitality and Tourism. The campaign was executed to market and increase awareness of hospitality and tourism courses to spur student enrolment. It also sought to address issues on hospitality and tourism graduate employability by advocating a focus on developing transferable skills, as it is generally accepted that poor marketing as well as low salaries offered by the private sector discourage interest in the hospitality and tourism industry.

MyCenTHE has also seen an expansion in its membership, growing from 15 members and seven cluster leaders in 2016 to 19 members, nine cluster leaders and four discipline leaders from institutions across Malaysia in 2017, demonstrating yet again the close partnership between the Government and the private sector in developing Malaysia's education ecosystem. With more leading institutions on hospitality and tourism courses joining forces under MyCenTHE and the EPP10 Committee, it is expected that an increasing number of institutions will start participating and that there will be a significant increase in enrolments in hospitality and tourism courses.

### **Games development cluster**

In an effort to ensure a continuous flow of talent into the game development industry, engagement activities have been identified as an important tool to penetrate the student and school audience through school career talks, workshops and events. This is aimed at educating school counsellors on the global and local game development industry as well as opportunities within the industry.

Since 2013, institutions such as KDU University College, Tunku Abdul Rahman University College, Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka and Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) have engaged with secondary school counsellors in the Klang Valley and Melaka. Activities included providing school counsellors the opportunity to visit the Kuala Lumpur office of Streamline Studios, a major US-based game development studio, and Codemasters Studios KL, one of the oldest games development studios from the UK. This allowed the counsellors to gain insights into games development while enabling the games development cluster project champions to visit secondary schools and engage directly with students.

As part of activities under this cluster, secondary school engagements via workshops and competitions are also held to raise student awareness on the game development industry and its processes and to demonstrate that game



development is a technical career with great growth possibilities. One of the biggest events of this nature is TableTop, an activity geared at educating and equipping secondary-school students with knowledge about the game development pipeline using board games. Using a given theme, participants would be tasked with creating a table-top game that is fun and innovative. Similar exposure activities include the Global Game Jam, a game development workshop for secondary-school students, and the Smartmob Mobile Game Competition which has been held in Selangor and Melaka annually since 2015.

These competitions and workshops have sparked the interest of secondary-school students and have given them the opportunity to try their hands at the game development process: in 2017 alone, 36 schools and 251 secondary school students were involved in the events under this discipline cluster. Since the introduction of the TableTop competition in 2013, 718 students have participated from 128 schools. The trend shows a yearly increase in the number of students participating.

A key challenge to the development of this discipline cluster lies in gaining the initial support from both the schools and district education offices for these engagement activities due to the lack of awareness on the games development cluster. However, support has usually been overwhelming once the officers are made aware of the opportunities within the discipline cluster. Moving forward, the initiatives of the games development cluster will be expanded to other states, beginning with Penang and Sabah in 2018.

### Accounting cluster

Championed by Sunway TES Sdn Bhd, the Sunway TES Centre for Accountancy Excellence (CAE) is aimed at building the accountancy talent pool by incorporating professional accounting qualifications into existing accounting degree programmes offered by public and private institutes of higher learning.

In November 2015, Sunway TES CAE began collaborating with the Polytechnic Education Department (Jabatan Pendidikan Politeknik, JPP) to upgrade the quality of the syllabus for the three-year Diploma in Accountancy and ensure the qualification aligns with industrial requirements. This is an aspiration to bridge polytechnics' teaching methodologies to be on par with professional

certification programmes and to enhance students' readiness for employment. On 14 June 2016, an MoU was signed between Sunway TES CAE and JPP.

Following the signing of the MoU, Sunway TES CAE developed a teaching model, which it then deployed at Politeknik Port Dickson to start with. The teaching model incorporated a one-week Train-the-Trainers (TTT) programme, where the trainers had their paradigms shifted from an academic to a professional perspective. The teaching model also included a two-week Intensive English programme to enhance students' English proficiency in preparing to study ACCA F5 (Performance Management) and F6 (Taxation) subjects; a six-month study course of ACCA F5 and F6 subjects with on-going Intensive English classes to ensure students remain ready to study the ACCA subjects; and a module to teach students how to write in the ACCA F5 and F6 final examinations.

The six-month study course was conducted from January to June 2017 by Sunway TES CAE and 18 students from seven polytechnics were selected to study in this special programme in preparation for the final exams in June 2017. Following the study course, the pass rate for the F5 and F6 exams was 1% and 41% respectively, with one student not having entered the final exam. Challenges identified by lecturers as reasons for this sub-optimal result included poor discipline among the students and their lack of language skills. Subsequently, from 4 to 8 August 2017, a TTT Programme was provided to 10 lecturers of Politeknik Port Dickson on the F5 and F6 syllabi.



**The Government collaborates with IHLs to champion the education discipline clusters.**



## CREATING ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PATHWAYS

The Malaysian Government has consistently championed Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to provide alternative pathways for students to attain professional qualifications. This focus area aims to rapidly scale up and increase the quality of private skills-training institutions and attract international vocational students. This will be achieved by increasing PPPs with technical and vocational schools, and facilitating industry investment in training to provide students with an alternative option for learning and to establish closer ties with the industry.

In 2017, under the 18 different agencies tracked, a total of 8,380 students were trained through an industry-based approach. This helped to minimise skill gaps and contribute to higher employment rates for TVET graduates. Moving forward, the Government

will continue to support PPPs to ensure that TVET graduates are industry-ready.

Efforts are also focused on ensuring the quality of TVET instructors based on six e-profiling competencies. To date a total of 15,471 TVET instructors have completed a competency evaluation on the e-profiling system. The Centre for Instructor and Advanced Skill Training (CIAST) under MOHR is currently monitoring and coordinating the agencies involved to implement staff training through provisioning and upskilling assignments based on the results of competency analysis conducted in e-profiling to ensure that truly necessary training is carried out.

MOHR has also taken steps to increase TVET levels, namely by requiring at least 30% of the total intake in all public skills training institutes to undergo the National Dual Training System (NDTS), having industry-led bodies to become supervisors to NDTS training modules and raising financial incentives for apprentices from RM300 to RM500 to increase the number of students trained under the NDTS.



Table-setting demonstration by Mercure Kota Kinabalu to students from Ascot Academy.

## MyCenTHE Rebrands for Greater Industry Relevance

According to Professor Dr. Kashif Hussain, Dean of UCSI University's Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Malaysia currently earns over RM100 billion in tourism receipts, which is expected to grow to RM168 billion by 2020 and RM295 billion by 2027. "In 2016, the hospitality industry directly supported 639,500 jobs, and indirectly supported 1,700,500 jobs or 12% of total employment. By 2027, the industry will directly lead to the employment of 956,000 people (5.4% of total employment) and indirectly support 2,564,000 jobs (14.5% of total employment).

As part of the initiative under the NTP to build a hospitality and tourism cluster, the Malaysia Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Education (MyCenTHE) was launched in 2010 with the aim of equipping Malaysia's expanding tourism and hospitality industries with quality human capital. Its primary objectives are to increase the annual output of tourism and hospitality personnel to 50,000 by 2020, and increase the share of graduates with diplomas or degrees in the industry to 50%. UCSI University was appointed by MOHE to lead this initiative.

Currently, 24 private institutes of higher learning (IHL) in Malaysia are working together with MyCenTHE to promote tourism and hospitality education, with nine cluster leaders representing the states of Sarawak, Penang, Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, Sabah, Johor, Pahang, Kedah, and Perak. Dr. Kashif, who is also the President of MyCenTHE, points out that the hospitality and tourism cluster is a diverse field. "Educational institutions offering tourism and hospitality education have a great opportunity to develop new and unique programmes, equipping graduates to work in hotels and resorts, F&B outlets of all classes, airlines and other transportation enterprises, cultural venues and venues catering to the events industry, amongst others."

MyCenTHE aims to see an increase in the industry's average monthly salary from RM2,000 to RM4,000 so that graduates may have sustainable careers and better livelihoods ahead. This entailed ensuring that tourism education is relevant to the needs of the tourism industry. "All of the MyCenTHE cluster leaders have implemented work-based learning in their offered curriculums. This approach has provided students with the required professional skills in accordance with industry trends, real-life experience, and viable employment opportunities, which has significantly increased graduate employability and industry engagement," Dr. Kashif notes.



**Dr. Kashif Hassan, Dean of UCSI University's Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management and President of MyCenTHE.**

In 2017, MyCenTHE, along with its IHL partners, established a working committee of the four major players of the education sector (UCSI University, KDU University College, Sunway University and Taylor's University) to raise the quality of the workforce with the combined efforts of its member institutions across the nine states. "We reorganised our key strategies and plans moving forward. We also increased our branding and promotion efforts by running a National Awareness Campaign 2017, as well as reaching out to the youth and public using social media to create heightened awareness regarding the future of the hospitality and tourism industry, as well as related career areas," Dr. Kashif explains.

The National Awareness Campaign 2017, with its "We Want You In Hospitality and Tourism Industry" tagline, took place in October and November 2017 in Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Penang, Kedah, Perak, Pahang, Negeri Sembilan, Johor, Sabah and Sarawak. "The objective of the nationwide campaign was to promote the hospitality and tourism industry to 3,000 students from 100 local schools, bringing them to various hotels, resorts, theme parks, convention centres and tourism companies in order to allow them to explore the nature, working lifestyle, and culture of the industry. We hoped that through this campaign, we would be able to help bridge the gap between academia and the industry."

"As higher education providers, we need to ensure that we produce the best graduates not only in the industry, but for the industry. The industry demands quality human capital that possesses the ability to anticipate and exceed their customers' or 'guests' needs, and deliver high quality service. We are keen to ensure that hospitality and tourism education does not only positively impact the national economy but also help nurture our existing and upcoming talent pool."



## MOVING FORWARD ▶▶

A more thorough approach to policy formulation and de-clogging processes will be crucial to take the Government's NTP education initiatives, such as ECCE enrolment, upskilling of teachers and promotion of the DLP and HIP forward following the achievements and challenges faced in 2017. The rakyat can also expect an exciting year ahead with the implementation of new guidelines and outcomes from the various labs held this year, most notably from the special education needs students mini-lab and the International Student Lab.

In terms of promoting Malaysia as a premier destination for education, international marketing activities with relevant stakeholders will be enhanced and processes improved to make Malaysia globally competitive. Each discipline cluster will focus on improving marketing and branding by consolidating and creating new partnerships between industry players and education providers to increase enrolment in the disciplines and raise awareness on the opportunities within the related industries. Meanwhile, EduCity@Iskandar will continue to improve its infrastructure and step up its local and international marketing activities to increase enrolment of local and international students into EduCity institutions.

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