

5.2 Education

Education Committee position paper:

The Malaysian education system is divided into three levels: primary, secondary and tertiary. Most Malaysians have completed the second level, and the Malaysian government aspires to increase the number of students aged between 17 and 23 in higher education from 30% to 40% in 2010. In 2007, Malaysia hosted 20 public universities and 524 private colleges and institutes of higher education. The education sector is one of the key sectors in which the Malaysian government has decided to invest, in accordance with the goals set by the Vision 2020 project. The government wants to position Malaysia as an international centre for high quality education, therefore it is an important sector for investments, also in light of the fact that more Malaysians are trying to acquire further knowledge and skills. For these reasons the Malaysian government has committed itself to improve the education supply. Education has been included in the Industrial Master Plan 3 (IMP3) period, which is 2006 - 2020, as a service sub-sector in which to boost growth and development. The priority areas are focused on improving the business environment, raising the quality and the standards of education, increasing training capacities, promoting investments and encouraging the export.

Education is also a key area of the Ninth Malaysian Plan (2006 – 2010), as it is the recipient of about RM50 billion investments addressed to enhance its infrastructure. Another initiative of the Malaysian government in the education field was taken in August 2007, when it launched the 'Higher Education Strategic Plan'. It is aimed at producing first class human capital through the improvement of the higher education institutions.

The Malaysian government has allocated RM12 billion of the 2008 budget for higher education projects, including the enhancement of research, development of the main research universities operating in the country and the establishment of new colleges. The creation of the Multimedia Super Corridor is another factor pushing towards the improvement of the Malaysian population technology skills, as more technologically literate workforce will be needed. This leaves space for the creation of technologically advanced schools, where the information and communication technology will be applied for teaching, learning and staff training and management.

Issue

Poor employability of fresh University graduates, difficulty for EU companies to find suitably equipped work force.

Recommendations

EUMCCI, by MOHE recommendation, has started 'Bridging the Gap between Academia and Industry' project. The key elements of this project include:

1. Academia-Industry placement, where academia staff are placed in industry;
2. EUMCCI Industry captains as advisors at Curriculum Boards;
3. encouraging industry leaders to give talks to students;
4. encouraging site visitors and assist in placement of graduates.
5. Strengthen and support internship program.

Additionally, EUMCCI will assist in the process of commercialisation of R&D by encouraging faculty to establish linkages with industry through participation in selected Committees e.g. Oil and Gas, ICT and EEGT.

To address the employability of young Malaysians, EUMCCI through its logistics committee member company, UTi Worldwide (M) Sdn Bhd and partner, German-Malaysian Institute, has launched an innovative 2-year Apprenticeship Programme modelled on the highly successful German accredited programme targeted for the Logistics Sector. This is a good example of a model that can be replicated by different sectors in industry.