



MALAYSIA EDUCATION FOR ALL

MID-DECADE ASSESSMENT
REPORT 2000-2007

REACHING THE UNREACHED



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REPORT 2000–2007



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FOREWORD

Minister of Education Malaysia

In the name of Allah the Most Gracious and Most Merciful

In 2000, at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, 164 governments, including Malaysia, made a commitment to achieve the Education For All (EFA) goals by 2015. This commitment was a reaffirmation of the commitment initiated in Jomtiem, Thailand, in 1990 to provide educational opportunities to all children, youths and adults.

Malaysia's commitment to meeting the Dakar goals can be seen in the policies and strategies the Government has initiated as well as the political will and the financial support provided to the education sector and to human capital development as a whole. The Ministry of Education has taken the necessary measures to ensure that all education development plans are practical, realistic and action-oriented, beside being responsive to the needs of the nation. The Education Development Master Plan 2006–2010 (EDMP) continues to concentrate on matters pertaining to educational access and equity while ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of the education system in developing the human capital of the country.

As a means of monitoring the progress and outcomes of the education system against international benchmarks, Malaysia participates in several international surveys such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), the World Education Indicator (WEI) and the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS). Malaysia's performance against these international benchmarks has been commendable.

This report is a showcase of Malaysia's achievements in providing quality education for all. It also serves as a timely reminder of the work to be accomplished and the milestones to be reached. I remain confident that the EFA Steering Committee helmed by the Secretary General and the Director General of Education, Malaysia will achieve the EFA goals within the specified timeframe.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke.

DATO' SERI HISHAMMUDDIN BIN TUN HUSSEIN
Minister of Education Malaysia

PREAMBLE

Secretary General Ministry of Education



In the Name of Allah the Most Gracious and Most Merciful

The government of Malaysia opted to pursue the goals of the Dakar Framework for Action through its existing mechanisms, rather than through a separate stand-alone EFA plan. In fact, Malaysia's previous and current five-year national development plans take into account the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the Dakar Framework for Action advocated by the United Nations in 2000.

In 2001, the Ministry of Education presented the Education Blueprint 2001–2010 which charts the nation's progress and plans of action for education. The Blueprint incorporates UNESCO's efforts in promoting country specific EFA action plans. In 2005, the EDMP 2006–2010 was developed, drawing on the review of the Education Blueprint 2001–2010. The goals stated in both the Education Blueprint and the EDMP go beyond the targets specified in the MDG as well as the targets of the Dakar Framework for Action.

Currently, Malaysia is engaged in the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the Ninth Malaysia Plan (9MP). In line with this, the EDMP is also being reviewed. The EFA Mid-Decade Assessment (EFA MDA) exercise is therefore timely, as it allows for inputs from the EFA MDA to be reflected in the review of the 9MP and the EDMP. In line with Malaysia's commitment to the Dakar Framework for Action, various initiatives and programmes are being planned and implemented to ensure that the learning needs of children, youths and adults are met.

The Government's commitment is further evidenced by the substantial annual budget allocations provided to the education sector and to human capital development. However, the success of the EFA initiatives requires the continued support and cooperation of all involved. I am optimistic that our efforts in realising all six goals of EFA will bear fruition by 2015.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Zulkurnain', written in a cursive style.

TAN SRI DR ZULKURNAIN BIN HAJI AWANG
Secretary General of Education Malaysia

MESSAGE

Director General of Education Malaysia

In The Name of Allah the Most Gracious and Most Merciful

The EFA MDA is a timely and valuable endeavour in the review of Malaysia's current 9MP and EDMP 2006–2010. The Ministry of Education (MOE) has taken note of its shortcomings and various steps have been taken in propelling the MoE towards an improved education system.

By 2007, Malaysia had achieved 96 per cent participation rate at the primary level. Our combined Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) for primary and secondary levels has improved from 85 per cent in 1985 to 92 per cent in 2007. With this development, issues related to and providing for quality education and efficiency in the delivery system are of utmost importance. We are indeed committed to the improvement in providing education to all vis-à-vis achieving the EFA goals. By 2015, we would like to see all primary and secondary school children, urban and rural alike, including more children with special needs having access to quality education.

In responding to UNESCO's focus on "inclusiveness" in the education sector, we are piloting several initiatives in finding the right formula to ensure we have full Universal Primary Education (UPE) – such as "reaching the unreached", increasing participation at the secondary level and addressing issues such as the problem of dropouts among boys. Our efforts toward bridging the gap between the rural and urban primary schools include providing educational and physical infrastructure, professional and qualified teaching staff, and sufficient financial allocations for children in the rural areas and from poor families.

I would like to take this opportunity to urge all those involved in the EFA initiative to renew their commitment to this endeavour and to sustain the momentum in implementing the strategies that will enable us to achieve the targets of EFA 2015.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Alimuddin Bin Haji Mohd. Dom'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

DATO' HAJI ALIMUDDIN BIN HAJI MOHD. DOM
Director General of Education Malaysia

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Director, Educational Planning and Research Division



In The Name of Allah the Most Gracious and Most Merciful

The EFA MDA initiated by UNESCO, is an exercise to assess the level of achievement of national and global EFA targets, identify and locate existing gaps related to quality and equity sub-nationally, and to focus on disadvantaged and underserved populations. It also reviews, identifies and locates problems, issues, policies, strategies, actions and critical factors for success and failure. The results of the assessment are intended to be used to improve performance and to update policies and strategies for attaining the EFA goals and the MDGs by 2015.

In Malaysia, oversight on the progress of achieving the EFA goals and conducting the EFA MDA is the responsibility of the EFA Steering Committee, co-chaired by the Secretary General and the Director General of Education. Senior officials from the ministries linked to the six goals of EFA, UNICEF Malaysia, UNESCO Jakarta and NGOs are members of the committee. The Committee makes decisions relating to the direction of the EFA MDA and assists the EFA Technical Working Groups (TWGs) in conducting the EFA MDA. The Educational Planning and Research Division (EPRD) is the National EFA Coordinator for Malaysia and the Secretariat to the EFA Steering Committee.

The EPRD is honoured to be given the chance to spearhead the EFA MDA for Malaysia. I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to, and to congratulate the various ministries, departments and divisions, the TWGs and my colleagues at EPRD for their cooperation and commitment to produce a report that covers all aspects of education provided in the country. To all individuals, schools and organisations that had contributed photographs in making this report more meaningful, I thank you all. My appreciation also goes to the EFA Steering Committee, UNESCO Jakarta, UNESCO Bangkok, and UNICEF Malaysia, for their advice and support. My special appreciation goes to Mr. Anthony Dewees, Ph.D., the EFA MDA consultant for helping the EFA Secretariat to review and synthesize the six EFA reports produced by the TWGs into the National EFA MDA Report.

DR. AMIR BIN SALLEH @ MOHD. SALEH
Director, Educational Planning and Research Division

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Acronyms

9MP	Ninth Malaysia Plan
ADTEC	Advanced Technology Training Centres
AIM	Amanah Iktiar Malaysia
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nation
CIAST	The Centre for Instructor and Advanced Skill Training
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DOS	Department of Statistics
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EDMP	Education Development Master Plan (2006-2010)
EDP	Education Development Plan (2001-2010)
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EPC	Educational Planning Committee
EPRD	Educational Planning and Research Division
FELDA	Federal Land Development Authority
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrollment Rate
GIR	Gross Intake rate
GNP	Gross National Product
GPI	Gender Parity Index
HDI	Human Development Index
IAB	Aminuddin Baki Institute
ICT	information and communications technology
IKBN	National Youth Skills Training Institute
ISSC	Integrated Secondary School Curriculum
ITI	Industrial Training Institutes
JHEOA	Department of Orang Asli Affairs
JMTI	Japan Centre for Instructor and Advanced Skill Training
KEMAS	Department of Regional and Rural Development
KIA2M	Intervention Class for Basic Reading and Writing
KWAMP	Poor Students' Trust Fund
LCD	Liquid Crystal Display
MDA	Mid-Decade Assessment
MDG	Millennium Development Goals

Acronyms

MECD	Ministry of Entrepreneur and Cooperative Development
MLFS	Malaysia Labour Force Survey
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MOHR	Ministry of Human Resources
MRAT	Ministry of Rural Advancement and Territory
MRRD	Ministry of Regional and Rural Development
MWFCD	Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
MYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
NDP	National Development Policy
NDTS	National Dual Training System
NEP	New Economic Policy
NER	Net Enrollment Rate
NESTLE	Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Company
NGOs	Non-government organizations
NIP	National Integrity Plan
NIR	Net Intake Rate
NOSS	National Occupational Skills Standards
NPE	National Philosophy of Education
NPSC	New Primary School Curriculum
NPW	National Policy for Women
NVP	National Vision Policy
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPP	Outline Perspective Plan
PACOS	Partners of Community Organizations
PERPADUAN	Department of National Unity and Integration
PKMOA	Special Program for Orang Asli School Children
PMR	Lower Secondary Evaluation
PPSMI	Science and Mathematics in English
PROSTAR	Health Programme for Youth
PTA	Parents, Teachers and Associations
PTR	Pupil-Teacher Ratio
RIMUP	Student Integration Plan For Unity
RISDA	Rubber Institute Smallholder Development Authority
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome

Acronyms

SBT	Tuition Voucher Scheme
SEDs	State Education Departments
SENS	Special Education National Schools
SKIPS	Quality Standard for Private Education Institutions
SPED	Special Education
SPM	Certificate of Education
SQEMS	Standard for Quality Education in Malaysia
STPM	Malaysia Higher School Certificate Examination
STPM(R)	Malaysia Higher School Certificate Examination (Religious Education)
SUHAKAM	Human Rights Commission Malaysia
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
TEDP	Teacher Education and Development Programme
TIMMS	Quality Standard for Private Education Institutions
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TWGs	Technical Working Groups
UIS	UNESCO Institute of Statistics
UNESCO	United Nation, Education, Science and Culture Organization
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNICEF	United Nation Children Education Fund
UPSR	Primary School Achievement Test
USD	United States Dollar
WEF	World Education Forum
WEI	World Education Indicators
YBK	Yayasan Basmi Kemiskinan



Executive Summary

GOAL 1:

Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children

There were about 200,000 more children under 6 years of age attending preschools or childcare centres in 2005 than there were in 2000. The Ninth Malaysia Plan is committed to providing educational opportunities to all 5-and 6-year-olds throughout the country by 2010. Special attention to the expansion of preschool and childcare centres in rural areas has been given through public spending priorities. And special programmes for children from indigenous communities have been implemented while other initiatives are still in the development process.

GOAL 2:

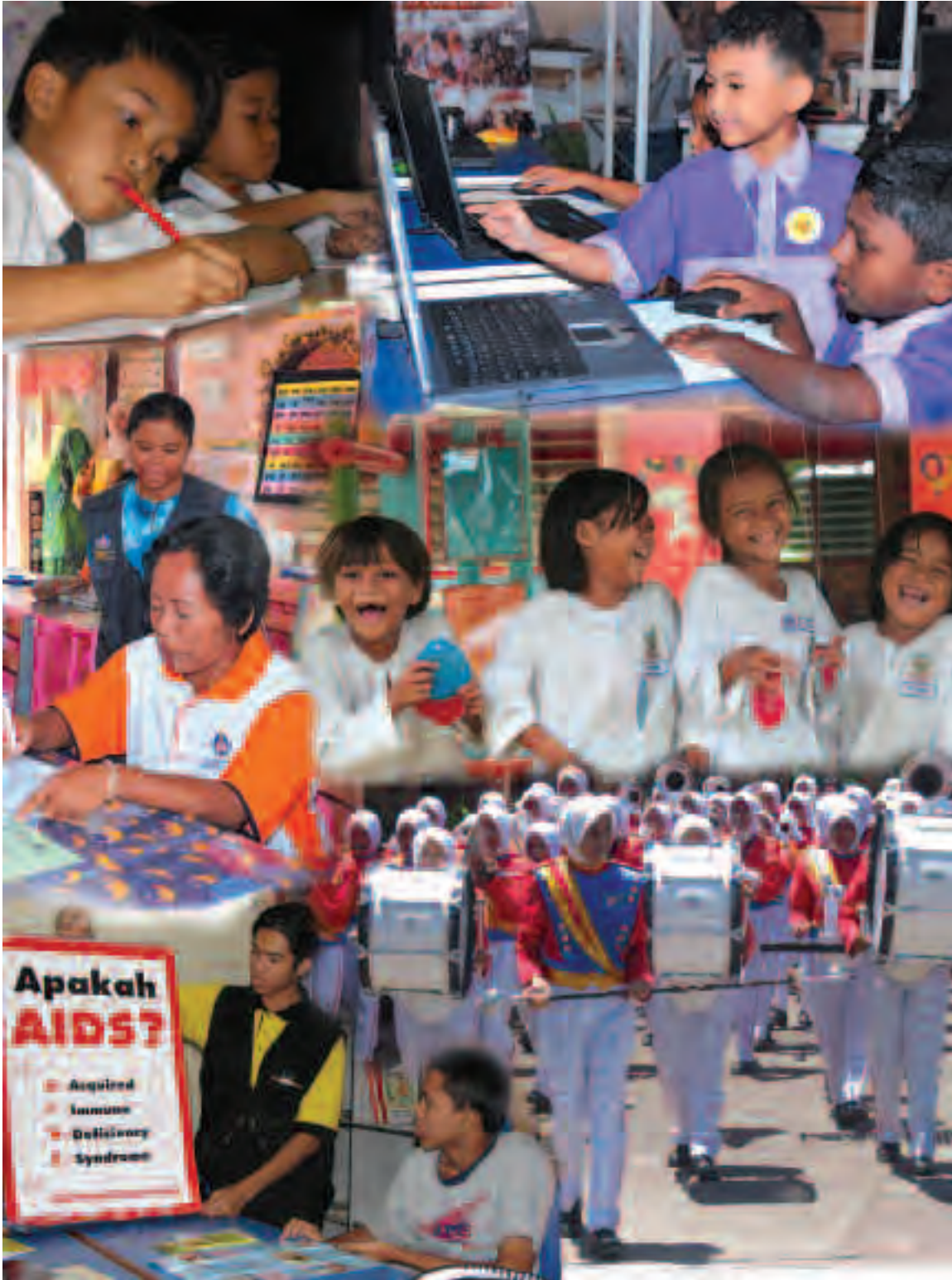
Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality

Primary/Secondary GER has improved by about six percent since 1985 and over 91 percent of the children born in Malaysia and of primary or secondary school age were enrolled in school in 2005. The number of children of primary and secondary school-age not enrolled in school in 2005 decreased by about 150,000 to 200,000 when compared to 1985. In 2005, 98 percent of all children who enter Year 1 in 2000 are still in school at Year 6. A series of five-year national development plans have also rapidly increased student access to school in the country's more remote regions and also for children from indigenous communities.

GOAL 3:

Ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to learning and life skills programmes

In 2005 more than 70,000 students were enrolled in Technical Secondary Schools and a similar number were pursuing certificates or diplomas in vocational/technical studies in the Polytechnics. Also in 2005 about 100,000 young persons participated in one of the various skills and/or entrepreneur programmes provided by the MECD and nearly 10 thousand attended a diploma or certificate level programme of study in the newly established MOHE Community Colleges. The MOHR also provided training to nearly 12,000 participants and administered skills certification exams to over 100 thousand persons. In addition, more than 130,000 students were enrolled in certificate level courses at public and private higher education institutions.



GOAL 4:

Achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults

Investments in education have allowed Malaysia to raise its youth (15–24 years old) literacy rate to 98 percent. High levels of youth literacy are pushing up adult literacy rates to over 92 percent. From 2000 to 2005 between 130,000 and 150,000 persons participated each year in functional literacy classes, skills classes or income generation programmes available for those without a complete secondary education.

GOAL 5:

Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015 with a focus ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality

In Malaysia, gender as a development focus was first mentioned in the Third Malaysia Plan (1976–80), which encouraged women's contribution to the economy and their active participation in development. Later five-year development plans have given greater prominence to gender issues and since the Sixth Malaysia Plan (1991–95), a full chapter of the plan has been devoted to policies and programmes that promote participation of women in national development initiatives. The National Policy for Women formulated in 1989 was a major initiative focused on gender equality and women's empowerment in Malaysia and have formed the basis for many of the subsequent policies relating to women in development.

By 2000 Malaysia had already achieved high levels of participation in primary and secondary schooling and relative parity of participation and outcomes between girls and boys. These achievements have been made possible by combining political will and public resources in equal measure.

GOAL 6:

Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeric and essential life skills.

The Government of Malaysia recognised early on that simply providing schools and teachers did not ensure full access to and participation in a quality education system. Expanded opportunities at all levels of the system in terms of infrastructure, teachers and programmes have been combined with academic support to ensure that all children regardless of their location or economic circumstances have optimal opportunities for success in school. The MOE also demonstrates a serious commitment to a holistic concept of educational quality. This is evident in the provision of per capita grants to schools for co-curricular activities.

Introduction

Country Background



Malaysia is located in one of the world's fastest growing economic regions. Its neighbours are China, Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Philippines, Myanmar and Lao PDR (Map 1.1). Being in the heart of South East Asia, Malaysia had for centuries attracted traders and merchants plying the ancient spice route between India and China. Indian, Arab and Chinese traders made Malacca their sojourn to replenish supplies and engage in the lucrative spice and silk trade in the Malay Archipelago. During these early days the Malacca Sultanate reigned supreme. However, during the sixteenth century the Portuguese, the Dutch and later the British vying for supremacy, established themselves as colonial masters in the region.

Today Malaysia is an independent nation state with a parliamentary constitutional monarchy, administered through a federal Government structure inherited from British colonisation. Malaysia gained independence as the Federation

of Malaya from Britain in 1957 and subsequently, in 1963, the unification of the Federation of Malaya with Sarawak, Sabah, and Singapore resulted in the formation of the Federation of Malaysia. Malaysia as it is today was established following the separation of Singapore from the Federation of Malaysia in 1965.

Malaysia comprises thirteen states and three federal territories spread across two regions separated by the South China Sea (Map 1.2). Peninsular Malaysia comprising the states of Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan, Terengganu, Pulau Pinang, Perak, Selangor, Pahang, Negeri Sembilan, Melaka and Johor, and the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya is connected to mainland South-East Asia via the long, narrow isthmus of Southern Thailand. East Malaysia comprises the states of Sabah and Sarawak, on the island of Borneo, and the Federal Territory of Labuan, an island Southwest of Sabah.

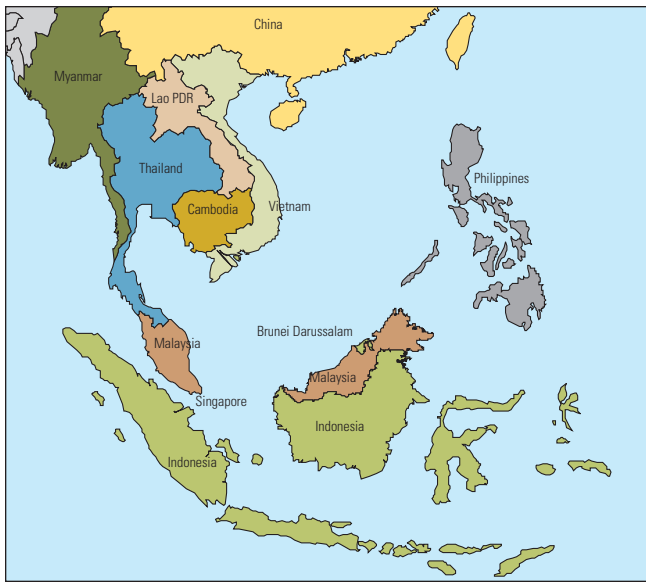
Malaysia is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and

multi-religious society comprising the Malays and other Bumiputera of Sabah and Sarawak (65.9 %), Chinese (25.3%), Indians (7.5 %) and

others (1.3%). The transformation of the demography of the country from a homogeneous indigenous society to a hetero-geneous nature

occurred during the nineteenth century. Under British rule, the Chinese and Indians were encouraged to migrate into the country; the Chinese as tin miners and traders in urban areas and the Indians as rubber plantation or railway workers.

Map 1.1 | Malaysia in the South East Asia Region



Population'

Malaysia's population stands at 26.75 million in 2005 compared to 23.49 million in 2000; recording a declining population growth as a result of the decrease in total fertility rate from 2.88 in 2000 to 2.76 in 2005. In the next five years (2006–2010), the population is projected to increase to 28.96 million, growing at an average rate of 1.6 percent per annum, lower than the 2.6 percent per annum recorded during the 2000–2005 period.

Map 1.2 | Malaysia

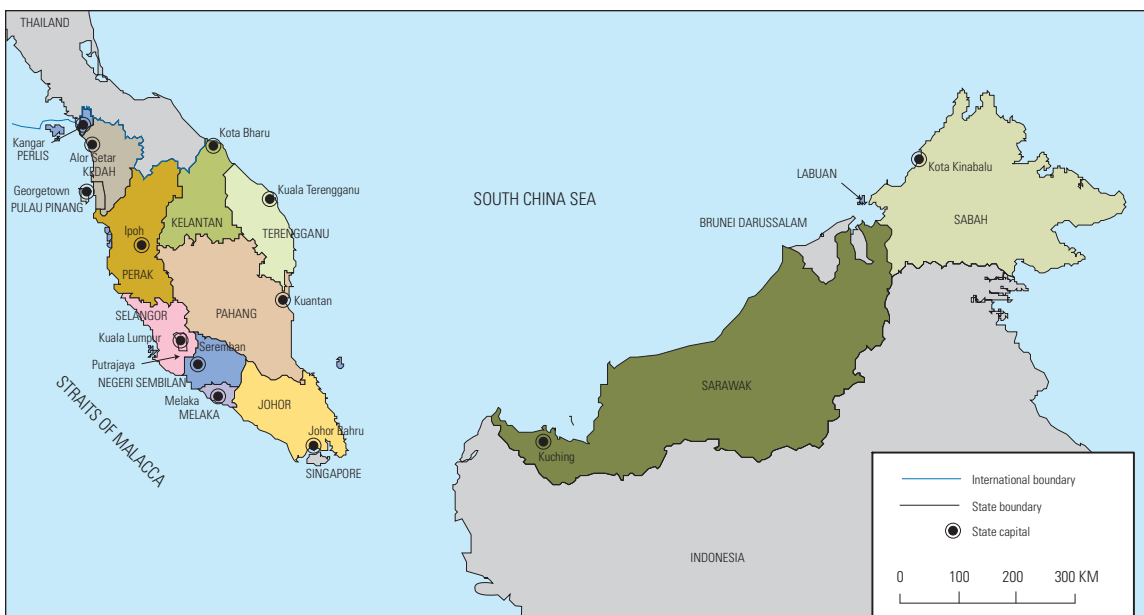
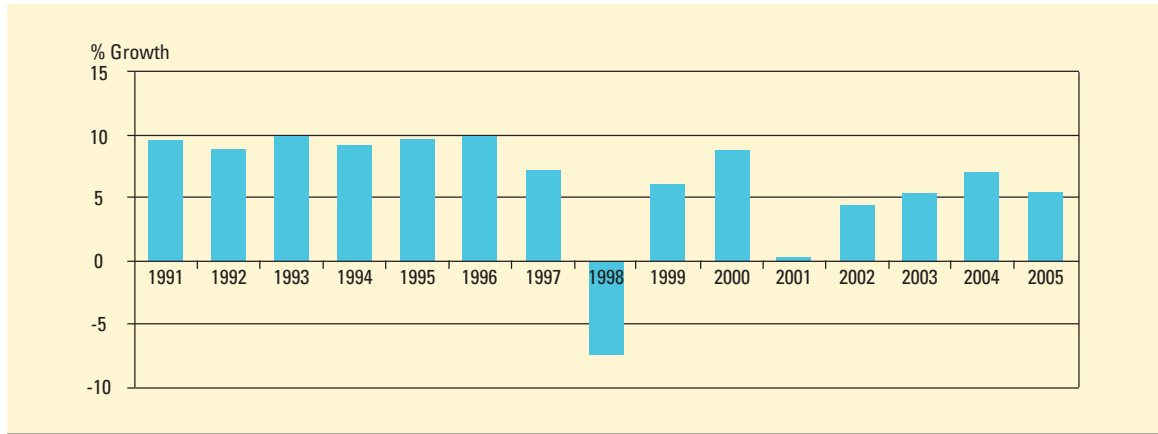


Figure 1.1 | Real GDP Growth, 1991–2005

Source: Department of Statistics (DOS)

Employment²

During the 2001–2005 period, employment in Malaysia increased at an average rate of 3.3 percent per annum and 1.6 million new jobs were created. The services and the manufacturing sectors generated 1,062,800 jobs and 566,300 jobs respectively. In the next five years (2006–2010), employment is expected to grow at an average rate of 1.9 percent per annum, contributing 1.1 million jobs, particularly those requiring tertiary education.

Economy³

The Malaysian economy grew at an average rate of 6.2 percent per annum during the 1991–2005 period, as shown in Figure 1.1. This strong rate of growth was achieved despite the challenges

faced from unprecedented situations such as the 1997–98 Asian financial crisis, the September 11 incident in 2001, wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, outbreaks of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and avian flu as well as increase in world oil prices.

GDP per capita in current prices grew at an average of 7.1 percent per annum to RM18,489 or US\$4,904 in 2005. When adjusted for Malaysia's cost of living, the PPP-adjusted GDP per capita in 2005 doubled to US\$10,318. Compared to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, Malaysia's PPP-adjusted GDP per capita is above Mexico's and below Poland's, as shown in Table 1.1.

¹ Ninth Malaysia plan pp238–250

² Ibid pp 240 - 251

³ Ninth Malaysia Plan pp 5 - 7

Table I.1 Comparison of Malaysia's PPP-Adjusted GDP per capita with Selected OECD Economies

Country	1971–90		Average Annual Growth Rate
	1990	2005 ^a	1991–2005
United States of America	22,921	41,762	4.1
Japan	18,789	31,386	3.5
Korea, Republic of	8,504	21,383	6.3
Hungary	8,949	16,628	4.2
Poland	5,827	13,364	5.7
Malaysia	5,284	10,318	4.6
Mexico	6,098	9,991	3.3
Turkey	4,476	8,137	4.1

Source: National Accounts of OECD, OECD Paris 2005 and EIU database; Note: ^a refers to estimates



National Development

Today Malaysia stands at the threshold of one of the most challenging times in its history. The national development intervention policies and programmes initiated since the 1970s managed to address the controversies surrounding the Pre-New Economy Policy (NEP) period ensuring that growth with equity between the ethnic groups is realised. In just a short span of five decades since independence, the nation has successfully emerged from an agrarian economy to a producer and exporter of high quality products. Amidst the exponential developments in science and information technology, it is gearing itself towards full industrialisation and making its impact in the knowledge-based economy of today's globalised world.

Malaysia's progress is attributed to the systematic planning process in place since the first five-year national development plan (First Malaya Plan: 1956–1960) was conceived. The five-year national development plan is fine-tuned and adjusted to meet the demands of the rapidly changing environment through mid-term reviews of the plan. The five-year national

development plan is a medium term plan within a three-tiered cascading planning framework for development in Malaysia. The Outline Perspective Plan (OPP), a long-term planning framework guides the nation in setting the national agenda for operationalising the five-year national development plan. The OPP, implemented through the five-year national development plan had always identified education as one of the main mechanism for moving the nation ahead. Built into the planning framework is also a short-term plan conducted through an annual budget.

All these plans place the development of human resources, namely, children, youths and adults, as a major thrust in ensuring a sustainable socio-economic growth. The five-year national development plans ensure sufficient funds are allocated to the education sector for the development of the nation's human resource. It is through this process that the Malaysian education system succeeds in responding to issues of access, equity, quality and effectiveness of education. The OPP and the five-year national development plans are presented in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 The Outline Perspective Plan and Five-Year National Development Plan

1960–70	1971–1990	1991–2000	2001–2010
Pre-NEP	New Economic Policy (NEP) OPP1	National Development Policy (NDP) OPP2	National Vision Policy (NVP) OPP3
First Malaysia Plan (1MP) (1966–70)	Second Malaysia Plan (2MP) (1971–5) Third Malaysia Plan (3MP) (1976–80) Fourth Malaysia Plan (4MP) (1981–5) Fifth Malaysia Plan (5MP) (1986–90)	Sixth Malaysia Plan (6MP) (1991–5) Seventh Malaysia Plan (7MP) (1996–2000)	Eighth Malaysia Plan (8MP) (2001–5) Ninth Malaysia Plan (9MP) (2006–10)

Source: *Millenium Development Goals (MDG), 2006*

The Role of Education in the Context of National Development



Vision 2020 – Hopes and Aspirations

“We now take the next step, to begin the second phase towards achieving Vision 2020. We want our country to be developed, imbued with its own unique characteristics. We want progress that is holistic, encompassing all nine aspects as outlined in Vision 2020. We want progress that is enjoyed by all, regardless of religion or ethnicity. We want to build a progressive and developed civilisation that glorifies Islamic and other civilisations, in line with the concept of Islam Hadhari.”

HE Dato’ Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, 2006
(Speech on the Ninth Malaysia Plan, 2006–2010)

Malaysia is currently in the mid-stage of Vision 2020 and entering its second 15-year phase. Throughout the first 15-year phase various developments have been successfully achieved. The rapid global changes today necessitate that Malaysia becomes more progressive. The Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Dato’ Seri Abdullah Hj. Ahmad Badawi introduced a new implementation framework: the NATIONAL MISSION that would propel Malaysia for the next 15 years towards achieving a developed nation status. The National Mission is built on Malaysia’s experiences, values, cultures and the concept of Islam Hadhari



(Civilisational Islam) that emphasises the mastery of knowledge and the balanced development of individual potential.

In Malaysia, efforts to develop human capital have always taken a holistic approach emphasising mastery of knowledge, intellectual capital and the development of technological and entrepreneurial skills. It also takes into consideration the inculcation of progressive attitudes, high ethics and moral values as embedded in the National Integrity Plan (NIP). The development of human capital is enhanced further in the National Mission which focuses on developing Malaysians with a “first class mentality”. To ensure maximum impact from national development, the National Mission outlines five thrusts:

- ~ Thrust 1: To move the economy up the value chain.

- ~ Thrust 2: To raise the capacity for knowledge and innovation and nurture “first class mentality”.
- ~ Thrust 3: To address persistent socio-economic inequalities constructively and productively.
- ~ Thrust 4: To improve the standard and sustainability of quality of life.
- ~ Thrust 5: To strengthen the institutional and implementation capacity.

The 9MP is the first of three five-year national development plans under the National Mission. This Plan is vital for the nation to establish a strong foundation to successfully progress to the Tenth Malaysia Plan (10MP) and Eleventh Malaysia Plan (11MP). The strategic thrusts in the National Mission clearly indicate the crucial role education plays in ensuring the successful implementation of the National Mission.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) as the main agency responsible for the provision of education to all is prepared to support and pursue this new national agenda particularly in responding to the Second and Third thrusts. To undertake this enormous challenge the MOE has put in place a comprehensive Education Development Master Plan (EDMP) outlining the focus, key strategies and implementation plans to guide the MOE in executing its role vis-a-vis the National Mission.





Overview of the National Education System

Development of the Education System

The education system in Malaysia has advanced in line with national development. The advancement spreads across the following five periods:

- a) Pre-Independence (prior to 1957),
- b) Post-Independence (1957–1970),
- c) New Economic Policy (1971–1990),
- d) National Development Policy (1991–2000), and
- e) National Vision Policy (2001–2010).

Pre-Independence (prior to 1957)

Prior to independence, the British colonial education system was consistent with their 'divide and rule' policy. Ethnic groups were encouraged to establish their own schools and used their own curricula, books and teachers; and their own languages as the medium of instruction. It was only in the English medium schools that these multi-ethnic children were engaged with each other. The 'divide and rule' policy resulted in the disengagement between the children of the multi-ethnic groups. It was during this period that an awareness to establish a more uniform school system grew. Several Committees set-up to study the school system recommended changes that are documented in

these reports: a) Barnes Report (1951), b) Fenn-Wu Report (1951), c) Education Ordinance (1952), and d) Razak Report (1956).

Post-Independence (1957–1970)

During the Post-Independence (1957–1970) phase efforts were focused on establishing a national education system. The Education Ordinance 1957 was formulated based on the recommendations of the Razak Report (1956) prioritising unity as the thrust of the national education policy. The recommendations of the Razak Report were reviewed by the Rahman Talib Committee in 1960. The recommendations of the Rahman Talib Report became the basis for the formulation of the Education Act 1961 outlining the Malay language as the main medium of instruction at all levels and the use of a common curriculum and examination.

In 1962, democratisation of education was initiated and provision of free education for all at primary school level was instituted. This policy was extended to cover a period of nine years with the abolition of the secondary school entrance examination in 1964. This resulted in an increase of Enrollment in secondary schools.





New Economic Policy (1971–1990)

During the NEP period efforts at strengthening national unity, poverty eradication among all races, and the restructuring of society were further emphasised. Providing equal education opportunities to all became the means to redressing social imbalances. It was during this phase that the education system was consolidated following the recommendations of the Cabinet Committee Report (1979). Substantial changes made to the education system included making Malay Language as the main medium of instruction and English as a second language to be taught at all levels of education. However, Government primary schools and Government-aided schools which used Chinese or Tamil as the medium of instruction were sustained, consistent with the Education Act 1961. Civics was introduced as a subject to inculcate a sense of self-resilience among students. Science and technical education were given greater emphasis aimed at producing skilled workers.

In the 1980s, educational opportunities were

increased in tandem with the expansion of infrastructural facilities, particularly in the rural areas. Educational support programmes such as the Textbook Loan Scheme, Educational TV, fully residential schools, rural and day hostels, scholarships, Supplementary Food Programme and health programmes were enhanced to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor.

Efforts to re-engineer the primary and secondary school curriculum were carried out during this period. The New Primary School Curriculum (NPSC) was formulated and implemented in 1983. Subsequently, in 1989 the Integrated Secondary School Curriculum (ISSC) was introduced in all secondary schools. The NPSC and ISSC were more responsive to meeting the national development agenda of NEP. The National Education Philosophy (1988) was also formulated during this period. It aims to strengthen the direction and goals of national education modelling on a holistic and integrated approach that would nurture well-balanced individuals—physically, emotionally, spiritually and intellectually.



National Development Policy (1991–2000)

It was during the National Development Policy (NDP) period that education legislation was strengthened and amended to provide for a legal framework in implementing newly-introduced education policies. A prominent policy document on basic education introduced during this period was the Education Act of 1996. The 1996 Act, which replaced the Education Act 1961 provides for the institutionalisation of preschool education.

This period also marked Government initiated drives to set up quality educational institutions for capacity building. Rapid changes in response to provide quality education to all were apparent. In making education relevant, education programmes were reviewed and several policy reforms were introduced – including the establishment of smart schools, the upgrading of vocational secondary schools to technical secondary schools and increased usage of ICT in education. This period also saw teacher qualification being upgraded from certificate to diploma; the establishment of matriculation and community colleges; and

the upgrading of a teacher training college (Maktab Perguruan Sultan Idris) to a university (Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris).

Greater access to tertiary education was accelerated to meet the growing demands of the Malaysian economy for larger and better quality human resources. Among the policy reforms and legislations introduced at higher education level were:

- a) the Private Higher Education Institution Act 1996 (aimed to make Malaysia the centre of educational excellence),
- b) the National Council on Higher Education Act 1996 (to determine policy and coordinate the development of higher education),
- c) the National Higher Education Fund Corporation Act 1996 (to increase access to higher education through the provision of student loans and funding schemes),
- d) the Universities and University Colleges Act (Amendment) 1996 (to provide for greater autonomy to public universities in management and finances and in determining programmes for educational excellence), and

e) the National Accreditation Council Act (to ensure high academic standards, high quality assurance and quality control in the provision of private higher education).

National Vision Policy (2001–2010)

Today Malaysia is faced with the challenges of globalisation, liberalisation, internationalisation and the development of information and communications technology (ICT). In responding to these challenges, the NVP period emphasises on developing a knowledge-based economy or k-economy capable of responding to the challenges of the 21st century. As such, the national education system provides programmes aimed at developing citizens who are knowledgeable, ICT- literate, skilled and possess good moral values. In responding to the challenges of the 21st century, further policy improvements were made and the education legislations strengthened to provide an environment that ensures education for all.

These are reflected in the Education Act of 1996 (Amendment 2002) which includes provision for compulsory primary education effective from 2003. Other key changes made were:

- a) the Guidance and Counselling Programme was extended in 2003 to provide one counsellor for every 500 students;
- b) the Teaching and Learning of Science and Mathematics in English was implemented in 2003;
- c) the Poor Students' Trust Fund (KWAPM) was introduced in 2004 to provide financial aid to primary school students from poor households;

d) the Tuition Aid Scheme (SBT), introduced in 2004 provides free tuition to needy primary school pupils (Years 4 to 6) who are weak in Malay language, English, Science and Mathematics (PPSMI);

e) Vocational subjects were introduced in regular secondary schools in 2004;

f) Remedial programmes were extended with the deployment of remedial teachers in schools (2005); and

g) the Graduate Teachers Programme was initiated to ensure that 50 percent of primary and all secondary school teachers are trained university graduates by 2010.

A significant development in the country's education history was the establishment of the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) in 2004. This new set up enables the MOE to focus on issues and challenges in providing quality preschool, primary and secondary education, matriculation and teacher education. The newly established MOHE emphasises on the expanding demands for tertiary and post-secondary education.



Education Structure and Management

Education Structure

Most children between four and six years of age begin their education at preschool set up throughout the country by Government and non-government agencies and the private sector. They enter primary school at the age of six.

Primary education comprises six years of compulsory education, years one-six (equivalent to grades one-six). There are two types of primary schools—the National School with National Language as the medium of instruction and the National Type Chinese Schools and National Type Tamil Schools where the medium of instructions is Mandarin and Tamil respectively.

At the secondary education level the medium of instruction is the National Language. Lower secondary education consists of Forms one-three (equivalent to grades 7–9). At the end

of the third year of lower secondary education students sit for the lower secondary school public examination and proceed to two years of upper secondary education consisting of Forms four-five (equivalent to grades 10–11). At the end of upper secondary education students sit for the upper secondary school public examination. Not all students progress to post-secondary education.

Post-secondary education level may be pursued through a two-year Form 6 programme or through a matriculation programme which is considered a preparatory year for university entrance. Colleges and polytechnics offer diploma level programmes and upon completion, graduates from these institutions may proceed to university or enter the job market.

The education system offers four public

Chart 2.1 | Education and Assessment Structure

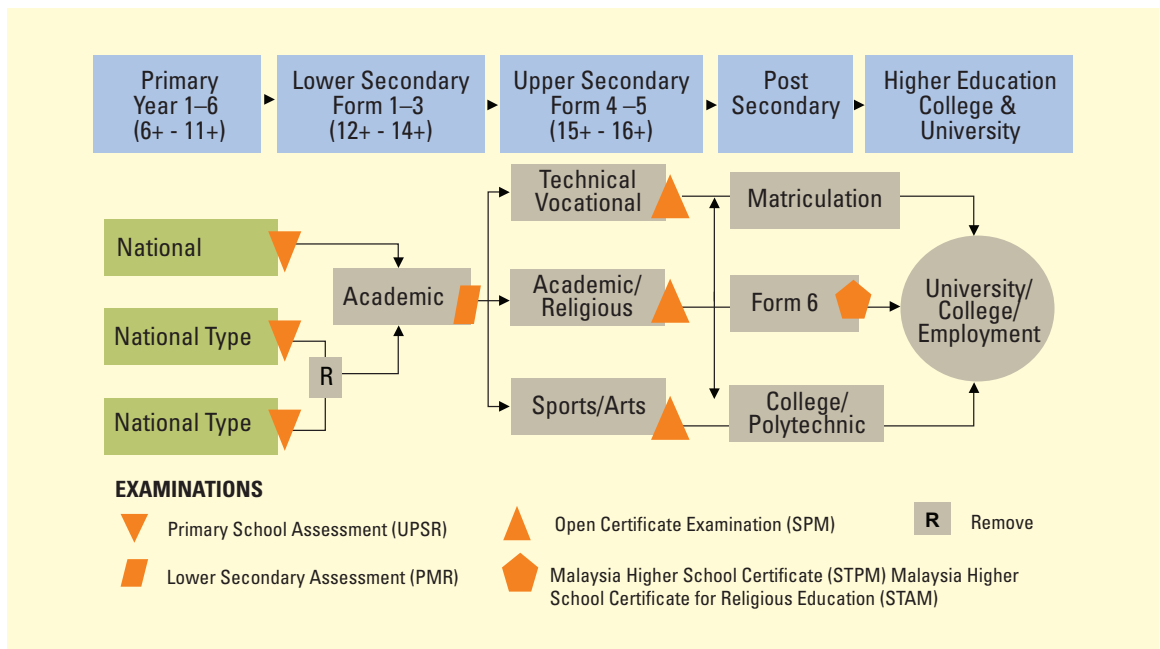
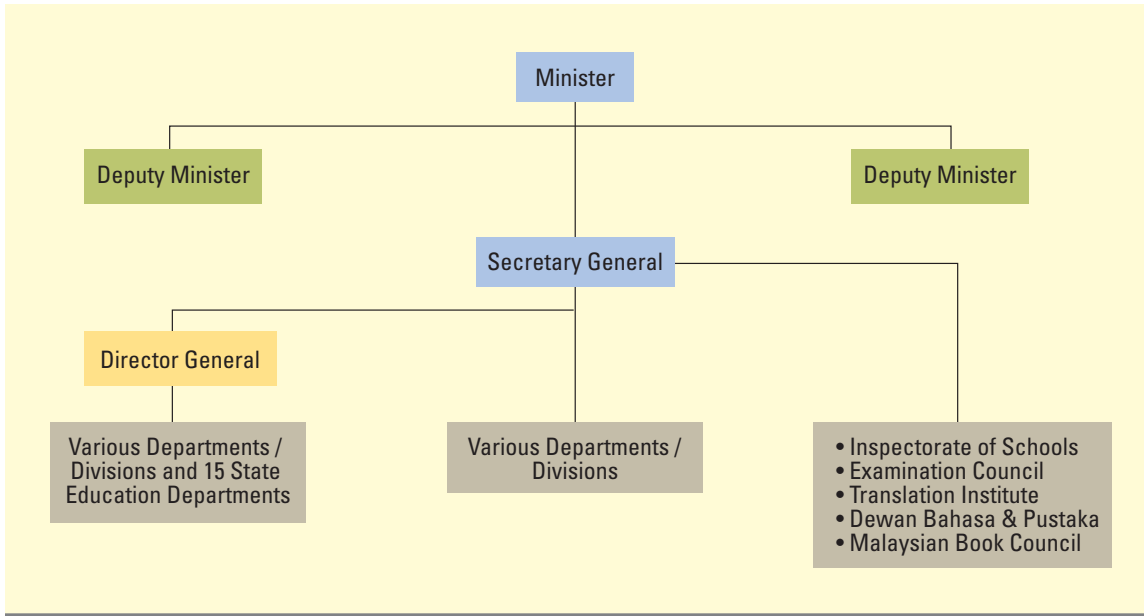


Chart 2.2 | Ministry of Education



examination, namely:

- a) Primary School Assessment Test (UPSR) at the end of Year 6,
- b) Lower Secondary Assessment (PMR), at the end of Form 3,
- c) the Malaysia Certificate of Education (SPM), equivalent to GCE O-level, at the end of Form 5, and
- d) the Malaysia Higher School Certificate Examination (STPM), equivalent to GCE A- level, or the Malaysia Higher Certificate for Religious Education (STAM) at the end of Form 6. Chart 2.1 illustrates the education and assessment structure.

Education Management

The Minister of Education, a member of the Cabinet heads the MOE. The Minister is assisted by two Deputy Ministers who are also political appointees. Administration at the ministerial level is carried out by executive officials from the administrative and the education services. The administrative service is

headed by the Secretary General, and the education service is headed by the Director General. Both the Secretary General and Director General are directly responsible to the Minister. The Secretary General is primarily responsible for administrative affairs and is assisted by two deputies. The Director General is responsible for education matters and is assisted by four deputies.

Decision-making at the MOE is performed through a system of committees. These committees are established to facilitate inter-division and intra-division decision-making. The Education Planning Committee (EPC) chaired by the Minister is the highest decision-making body at the federal level. Policy issues that have wider ramifications are referred to the Cabinet before a final decision is made. However, the ultimate authority on education is the Parliament. The Educational Planning and Research Division (EPRD) serves as the Secretariat to the EPC.

Educational administration in Malaysia is centralised and organised into four distinct



hierarchical levels namely, federal, state, district and school. The institutions representing these four levels are the Ministry of Education, the State Education Departments, the District/ Division Education Offices and schools.

At the ministry, education policies are formulated and translated into programmes, projects and activities. The ministry is also responsible for developing education development plans for the sector. Curricula design and syllabuses, and national public examinations are also determined at this level. Apart from executing its function in decision making and planning the ministry is also responsible to coordinate and monitor the progress and achievement of the education policies and plans.

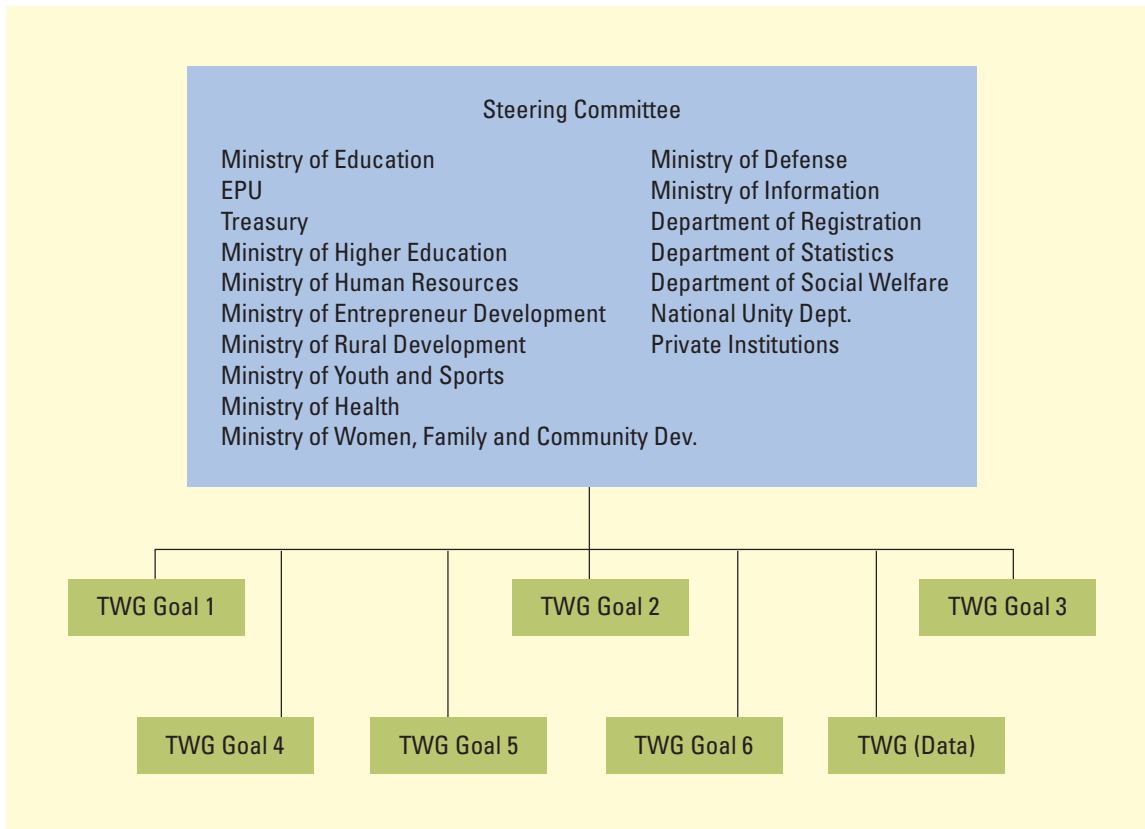
The implementation of education policies and plans made at the federal level are carried out at the state level through fourteen State

Education Departments (SEDs). The SEDs coordinate and monitor the implementation of national education programmes, projects and activities at the state level, besides providing feedback to the federal agencies. The administration of education at the state level is the responsibility of the State Director of Education. District Education Offices were set up in June 1982 to serve as an effective link between the school and the SEDs.

The administration of education at the school level is the responsibility of the principal or headmaster who is both the administrative and instructional leader in the school. The principal or headmaster is assisted by a Senior Assistant and a Head of Student Affairs. The Senior Assistant assists in administrative functions such as the management of school funds, accounts and resources; and planning the timetable and work scheme for teachers. The Head of Student Affairs assists in matters related to student welfare, such as, textbooks loans, discipline, student health and nutrition. Besides this, the principal or headmaster attends to complaints and liaises with parents and the community on matters relating to student well-being. For effective coordination of teaching and learning of the various subjects taught in schools, a senior teacher is appointed as the head or key resource teacher for the different subjects. Schools with two sessions have Afternoon Supervisors to assist school heads in supervising the administrative and instructional activities of the schools. All schools have a Parent-Teacher Association.

EFA Coordination Mechanism

Chart 2.3 | EFA Coordination Mechanism



General oversight on the progress of EFA and the EFA Mid-Decade Assessment (MDA) is the responsibility of the EFA Steering Committee comprising representatives from the line ministries concerned with the six goals of EFA. This Committee is co-chaired by the Secretary General and Director General of Education. Senior officials from the relevant ministries, the UNICEF Malaysia, UNESCO Jakarta and NGOs are also members of the committee. The EFA Steering Committee makes decisions on the direction of the EFA MDA and is advisory to the Technical Working Groups (TWGs). The EPRD is

the Secretariat to the EFA Steering Committee and the National EFA Coordinator.

Implementation of EFA and EFA-Mid Decade Assessment is through six TWGs comprising ministries and agencies implementing programmes corresponding to the six EFA goals and a TWG responsible for managing EFA indicators. The TWGs also monitor the progress of EFA within their responsibility and report to the EFA Steering Committee. The TWGs are chaired by agencies that have the biggest stake in EFA goals.

Data Collection



Malaysia recognises that national development priorities and strategies are closely linked to the availability of data at all stages of the development programmes. It becomes more important during the implementation and completion stages of development programmes where measuring their progress towards achieving specific targets would indicate likely success or failure. While Malaysia recognises data-driven decisions are now imperative in the new globalised economy, it faces many challenges in having a systematic data collection structure in all facets of its administration. In addition, alternative raw data must be accessed, integrated, compiled, and distilled into useful information in a timely manner.

Analysis in measuring Malaysia's progress with respect to EFA, has included data on population, economy and education. These have

provided the socio-economic background from which system-wide changes in the education sector were measured. Greater use of economic, social and education data has provided richer and more comprehensive analyses, for measuring progress made in the education sector towards achieving the six EFA goals.

To this effect, Malaysia has strengthened the roles and functions of the Department of Statistics (DOS). Being the main source of economic and social sector data for public and private consumption, the DOS has increased its use of information technology, reorganised its programmes and work procedures and engaged in capacity building. In addition, the adoption of international statistical methodologies and quality standards in its data collection has added further confidence in the statistical information it provides.

The concern for quality data to enable informed decisions and formulation of beneficial and judicious policies is reflected in MOE's policies with regards to education statistics and its practice in the ministry. The MOE recognises that education statistics have been vital in making available key education indicators which allow policy questions that have a more explicit link between educational inputs and outcomes.

The EPRD is the principal agency managing the Education Management Information System (EMIS) in data compilation, analysis, and the dissemination of education information and statistics. In carrying out its statistical functions, standards of quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information disseminated are observed and standard international methodologies recommended by international world bodies such as UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) are used where possible. Data users are assured of the accuracy, timeliness, relevance, and accessibility to the statistics and information

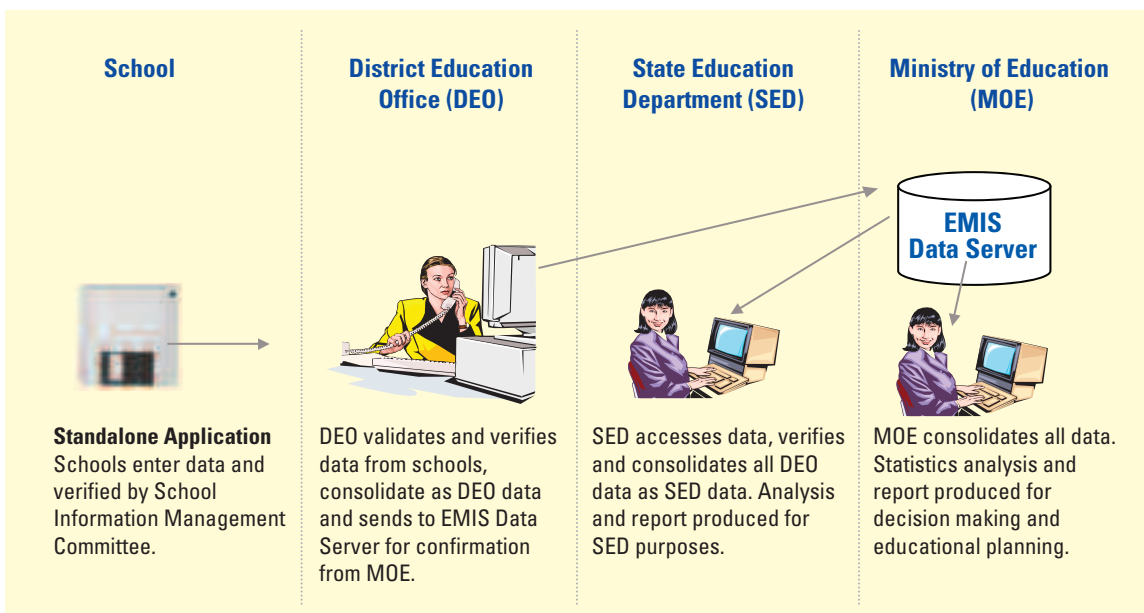
produced by EPRD. In addition, the practice of complying with international frameworks for education statistics has also allowed Malaysia to participate in international studies such as World Education Indicators (WEI) without much difficulty.

Having a solid foundation and ongoing commitment to capacity building in performing its statistical functions the MOE has also increased the awareness of the importance of data collection for all ministries and agencies involved in the EFA effort to help them identify the gaps, measure their progress, conduct impact studies and provide the direction for future policy formulation.

EFA Indicators

The challenge for Malaysia in the EFA monitoring effort is to collect quality data to provide strong indicators of its education performance. The MOE has found that one of the strengths of the EFA indicators is that they provide regular assessments

Chart 2.4 | EMIS Data Collection Flow



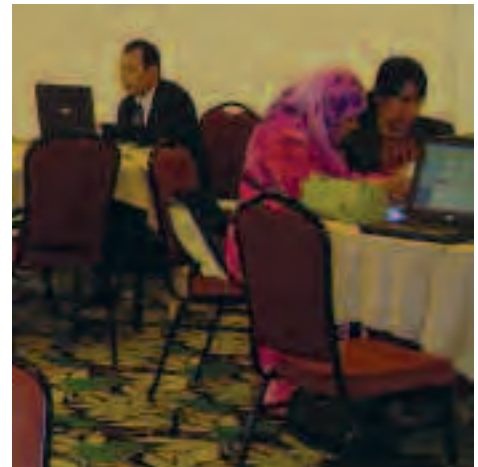
alongside trend analysis of contextual elements and the background of the entity being measured. Another important feature is that they enable comparison of key indicators cross-sectorally as well as cross-nationally in describing education resources (schools, schooling materials, school support and teachers) and various structural (centralisation/decentralisation) and social (urban, rural, indigenous, special) features of schools and classrooms.

In addition, the learning process afforded by the EFA MDA has allowed the MOE to build its knowledge base of the best policy mix that works for the education system. The indicators for example, offer a new framework for thinking about what kind of interventions might be most effective for particular schools or groups based on the argument that certain kinds of interventions are appropriate for different schooling situations depending on the social background of the schools and students. Data and key indicators are starting points for a more thorough analysis of the relationships between schooling outcomes and the inputs and processes that affect these outcomes. Thus, the insights gained through the current assessment of EFA goals had presented the MOE an opportunity to further understand which interventions are better than others.

As routine data collection and assessments progress over time, much of the core elements regarding performance and background of schools, Enrollment and teachers will be consistent across evaluation studies. The next challenge for the MOE is to conduct rigorous analyses of the data collected over the years. The data collected opens up a lot of opportunities for more meaningful analyses and data mining. New measures of school and classroom policy and practice will have to be developed to ensure the 'right' mix of policies for different kinds of situations as the MOE moves its focus from issues of access and equity to quality in education.

New directions in measurement and evaluation

Given high rates of participation and gender parity have already been reached, it is foreseen that the MOE would face difficulties in attaining a 100 percent achievement unless attention is given to the exact 'who' and 'where' the unreached are. This would necessitate new measurements that can help identify the exact location, schools and target groups which require further attention. A more effective framework can inform educational policy makers at the national and local levels to address the particular needs of the disparity or gap identified.



**Progress in
Achieving EFA Goals**

Goal 1: Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children



Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education demand actions in all aspects of a child's development – physical, emotional, social and intellectual. The Government of Malaysia's strategies for promoting access and improving the quality of support for young children are provided by the MOE, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD), the Ministry of Health (MOH), the Ministry of Regional and Rural Development (MRRD) through the Department of Regional and Rural Development

(KEMAS), and the Prime Minister's Department through the Department of National Unity and Integration (PERPADUAN). The private sector also provides early childhood care and education, especially in urban areas. Non-government organisations (NGOs) are focused on providing services to children of migrants working in Malaysia. In addition, other Government strategies to enhance living standards and quality of life also provide important support and benefits for young children.

National goals and objectives for improving

the care of and education for young children feature prominently in the 9MP. The 9MP is committed to expanding access to preschool education to all children aged five and six by 2010 as well as to improve the quality of teaching and learning in preschool by providing adequate number of teachers and teacher assistants. The 9MP also calls for the introduction of public early childcare and preschool education for children aged zero to four with selected pilot projects.

While the 9MP does not include specific targets for child health, a number of provisions have been made to increase support for ensuring the health and physical development of young children. These include further expansion of primary healthcare with special attention to the unreached through mobile facilities in remote regions and in urban areas where traditional expansion is constrained by a lack of space. The Plan also calls for expanding current services for children with special needs and the establishment of a specialised hospital for women and children.



STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL 1 IN MALAYSIA

STRATEGY 1: Ensuring a standard of quality care and education throughout Malaysia

Child Health Services Policies

Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) states that, 'The child has a right to the highest standard of health and medical care attainable. States shall place special emphasis on the provision of primary and preventive health care, public health education and the reduction of infant mortality.' Since the 1950s Malaysia has included a maternal and child health programme in the national health system. Upon adoption of the CRC in 1989, additional child health services were initiated to provide adequate health infrastructure and programmes which are accessible and affordable to all children. Among the services currently available are routine visits and examination for children, immunisation and assessment of nutritional status including growth monitoring. Health education for parents is provided during child health clinic sessions whenever necessary. Child health programmes are continuously improved according to the changing needs of the children.

National Nutrition Policy

The National Nutrition Policy was formulated in 2003 to ensure public access to safe and quality food regardless of location. One of the measures resulting from the policy was the amendment of the Food Regulation of 1985 in 2004 to include the implementation of mandatory labelling of food content with relevant nutrition information to assist consumers in making informed choices when purchasing foodstuff. The Nutrition Plan of Action inaugurated in 1986 included the improvement of food quality and safety, breast feeding promotion and the promotion of appropriate diet and healthy lifestyle.

Childcare Centre Act 1984 (amended 2007)

The Childcare Centre Act establishes a set of minimum quality requirements for all childcare centres and nurseries with regards to nutrition, healthy environment, mental development of children and training for all child minders. The Act requires all providers to obtain a basic childcare certificate and for all child minders to attend a standard training course developed by the MWFC. All providers of childcare/nursery services that charges a fee are required to register with the Department of Social Welfare, MWFC.

In 1982 the then Ministry of Social Welfare with support from UNICEF conducted a study on childcare centres in Malaysia. The study indicated the need to enhance the quality of childcare among the nursery/childcare providers especially in the areas of nutrition, healthy environments, mental development and training for the child minders. In 1984 the Government, with support of the Bernard Van Leer Foundation, established a special unit to draft the Childcare Centre Act. Subsequent support from the Van Leer Foundation was utilised for advocacy about the new Act and dissemination of information to

childcare providers. The Childcare Centre Act was implemented in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur in May 1985 and to the rest of Malaysia, beginning February 1986. Additional support provided by the Van Leer Foundation was used for strengthening registration and enforcement. In 2007, the Act was amended to change the period of validity of registration from 12 to 60 months in order to promote compliance.

National Preschool Curriculum

In the 1960s and 1970s nearly all early childhood care and education was provided by NGOs, religious bodies and private kindergartens. In the early 1970s the first publicly provided preschools were initiated by KEMAS. By the 1980s a number of other Government entities such as the Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA), the Rubber Institute Smallholder Development Authority (RISDA), PERPADUAN, religious bodies, and the education wing of the Police and Armed Forces were providing preschools while the number of private preschools continued to expand. To ensure standards of quality across the preschools, the MOE drew upon experiences from the pilot programmes supported by the Bernard Van Leer





Foundation and UNICEF to produce the first formalised preschool curriculum document in 1986 (*Buku Panduan Prasekolah Malaysia 1986*). In 1992 this document was reviewed and a package of preschool curriculum guide books was produced. In 2003 a national curriculum for preschool was formalised and circulars were sent to all public and private preschools notifying them that they were now required by law to follow this National Preschool Curriculum for children aged five plus. The National Preschool Curriculum ensures a uniform standard of quality in preschools throughout the country.

National Education Act 1996

The National Education Act of 1996 formally incorporates preschool education into the national education system and rests authority for regulation of the sector (public and private) with the MOE. Complementing other Government policies on national identity and social cohesion, the Act requires that all preschools include at least 2 hours per week of formal instruction in Bahasa Malaysia. In acknowledging the rights of its people with regards to mother tongues, preschools can be conducted in the languages used by the people

in Malaysia, which are Malay, English, Chinese and Tamil. Programmes seeking to include additional content not specified in the national preschool curriculum are required to seek approval from the MOE.

While the National Education Act did not make preschool education compulsory it raised the visibility of the sector and established an institutional framework for expanding state support to programmes for young children. The Act marks the beginning of a significant expansion in the provision of public preschool, especially in rural areas.

Early Childhood Care and Development Policy 2007

The MWFCDD has forwarded to parliament for approval an Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Policy and an action plan for implementing the policy. The policy advocates holistic development and quality care for new born to 8 year old children. The policy aims to concretise and complement other existing national policies on early childhood care and development. This policy will be monitored through the establishment of laws, regulations enforcement mechanism and a special accreditation body for childcare centres for children aged 0–4 years. The purpose is to ensure quality in the training and in the services provided for early childhood care and development.

The objective of the 2007 ECCD policy is to “prepare quality care facilities and services in a conducive environment to stimulate early development of each child so that he or she can achieve optimum development in line with national aspirations.” Among the activities in the action plan are the provision of minimum standards of childcare services in accordance to the Child Act 2001 and Childcare Centre Act of 1984 (amended in 2006) as well as the Code of Ethics for Childcare Centres based on the CRC

and other related acts. Other elements of the action plan include the establishment of more childcare centres and community-based rehabilitation centres through grants and subsidies. Also included are the expansion of outreach programmes to educate and raise the awareness of parents, the community, family members, childcare providers and operators and the society at large and the establishment of a comprehensive monitoring system for child development.

National Child Protection Policy

Under Article 19, 20, and 22 of the CRC, state parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of maltreatment by parents or others responsible for the care of the child. The Child Act 2001 (Act 611) provides that every child is entitled to protection and assistance in all circumstances regardless of any distinction, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, social origin or physical, mental or emotional disabilities.

Consistent with the objectives of the policy a number of entities have been established. These include:

- Court for Children
- Child Protection Teams
- Child Activity Centres
- Orphanages
- Rehabilitation Centres/Schools

Reports by the public on maltreatment are to be investigated by the Department of Social Welfare.

National Policy on Disabled Children

Article 23 of the CRC recognises the rights of a disabled child to special care, education and training to help him or her enjoy a full life in dignity and achieve the greatest degree of self-reliance and social integration possible. The Division on Persons with Disabilities under the Department of

Social Welfare is responsible for the database on disabled persons as well as for setting up community based rehabilitation centres providing diagnosis and rehabilitation services.

National Policy on Indigenous Child

Article 30 of the CRC stipulates that children belonging to minority groups or the indigenous children have the right to enjoy their own culture, profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language. Curricula of the native languages such as Iban, Kadazan-Dusun and Semai have been formulated and offered as subjects in schools in the native communities.

The Aboriginal Peoples Act 1954 (Act 134) places the responsibility for the general administration, welfare and advancement of Orang Asli on the Commissioner of Aboriginal Affairs. Various programmes such as 'Woman Motivator' (Penggerak Wanita) (since 2000), and Orang Asli Preschool (since 1992) have been implemented.

Permata Early Childhood Care and Education Centres

The Permata Early Childhood Care and Education Centre is a model for the care and education of children aged 4 years and under that is being explored by the Government of Malaysia. Four centres with a total of 94 children have been in operation since March 2007 and an additional centre began operating beginning May 2007. A decision was made on 31 Oct 2006 by the Deputy Prime Minister and Chief Ministers that, one Permata centre will be built in each state before the end of 2007. At the end of two years an evaluation report will be sent to the Cabinet to decide upon the possibility of its expansion to the entire country.

Permata centres provide integrated quality care and early education services based on the needs of the local community for children below 5 years of age and for their families. Permata



centres adopt the community-based integrated approach practised in the United Kingdom under the Sure Start Programme. When fully operational these centres will also provide an out-reach programme, parenting courses, counselling, and healthcare services to help the local communities promote a healthy and safe life style. Services would include a community resource centre and a library and the services of speech therapists and nutritionists.

STRATEGY 2: Expanding access to quality care and education

The relevant ministries and departments have expanded or are expanding formal provision of care and education to young children. These include:

Ministry of Rural and Regional Development

KEMAS was the first Government entity to provide preschool education in Malaysia beginning in 1972 and is currently the largest Government provider especially in rural areas. In 2007, KEMAS provided services for approximately 198 thousand children – including approximately four thousand children under 5 years of age.

Ministry of Education

Since the incorporation of preschool education into the national education system, the MOE has implemented preschool classes for five- and six-year-olds as an annex to existing primary schools especially in rural areas. By 2007, the number of children benefiting from public preschools reached nearly 148 thousand.

Prime Minister's Department

PERPADUAN initiatives focus on urban and suburban multi-ethnic neighbourhoods. The programme applies the National Preschool Curriculum but also includes a specific component for promoting harmony, neighbourliness, unity and nationality among the children from the different ethnic communities as well as among the parents of the children. The programme initiated in 1977 currently (2007) provides preschool education to nearly 39 thousand children in 1,496 sites.

Workplace Childcare Centres

Responding to the rapid economic expansion in Malaysia and increasing participation of women in its economic activities the MWFCDC is

promoting the establishment of childcare centres in the workplace. As an incentive for expanding the number of workplace childcare centres, 112 private companies and 86 state agencies were provided a grant for renovation and furnishing of their workplace childcare centres. State agencies employees with low income also receive a monthly subsidy for fees associated with the centres. The Government is promoting the establishment of workplace childcare centres in the private sector by granting tax exemptions to cover the costs of construction, renovation and furnishing such centres.

Community Childcare Centres

Accessibility and affordability are the primary constraints to quality childcare for lower income Malaysian households. The MWFCDC is currently engaged in promoting and demonstrating a model of Community Childcare Centres for providing quality childcare (0 to 4 year olds) to low income families in urban and rural areas. These Community Childcare Centres are defined as childcare centres with 10 or more children that is managed by an organisation appointed/ approved by the Government and assisted by the Federal or State Government. All centres use the curriculum set by the MWFCDC and as a benchmark to the other childcare centres. The Community Childcare Centres model is based on

the active participation of the local community, parents, children, Governmental agencies as well as private organisations. The MWFCDC envisions that these Community Childcare Centres would be managed by voluntary associations in collaboration with or as a joint venture with the private sector. The MWFCDC plans to expand the programme through support of an initial grant for capital expenditures and with subsidies provided for children from low income households.

QUALITY ASSURANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Malaysia has in place a number of planning and review processes both across and within sectors that facilitate periodic assessment in providing quality care and education to young children. These processes include:

National Development Planning and Review

Expanding and improving care and education for young children requires actions within and across various sectors. Development planning in Malaysia results in the elaboration of successive five-year national development plans. In this planning process, information about needs and priorities is determined in a top-down and bottom-up manner with the bottom up



component largely managed by line ministries. The process also includes the formation of temporary Interagency Planning Groups to focus on thematic issues such as care and education for young children that cut across line ministry responsibilities. A key element in the planning process is the formal mid-term review where each individual Government entity involved in the implementation of the plan conducts its own review and participates with other sectors in joint reviews of the programmatic “thrusts” of the current Malaysia Plan.

Surveillance of Nutritional Status and Childhood Disease and Mortality

At regular intervals the MOH collects and analyses weight-for-age data for children below age 5 who visit Government health clinics, as a means of monitoring the nutritional status of children. The MOH regularly reports prenatal mortality, infant mortality, toddler mortality and maternal mortality. The MOH also regularly monitors the oral health of children through the Health Management Information System.

Tracking the Expansion of Preschool Accessibility

The MOE assesses Enrollment gains in ECCE through the Annual Schools Survey and data provided by the Private Education Division (MOE), KEMAS and PERPADUAN. The MOE assesses the growth in Enrollment in preschools and the net Enrollment ratio for the 5–6 age groups.

Ensuring Quality in Curriculum Development

To ensure the quality of the curriculum for preschools (and all curriculum areas), the curriculum development process has to comply with the criteria established in the Quality Manual ISO 9001 developed by the Curriculum Development Centre (MOE).

Monitoring the Quality of Teaching and Learning in Preschools

The Inspectorate of School (MOE) leads an annual collaborative inspection of preschools with participation of other departments within the MOE, namely, the EPRD, the Curriculum Development Centre, the Schools Division, Special Education Division, and the Private Education Division. This inspection combines detailed observations of teaching and learning in classrooms and observations of school operations to provide direct feedback and recommendations to staff on the day of the visit.

To strengthen the monitoring process for childcare centres, the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System is currently in development. A set of national indicators have been developed and field tested. It is expected that this instrument will be adopted in 2007 and used by the state level Department of Social Welfare (MWFCD) during visits to childcare centres up to four times per year.

Monitoring from a Human Rights Perspective

The Inspectorate Unit in the Ministry of Rural Advancement and Territory (MRAT) regularly gathers information on the status and development of indigenous people and the Department of Orang Asli receives and addresses complaints from indigenous people. The committee on the National Children Plan meets twice a year to monitor and report on the status of children.

The human rights group SUHAKAM monitors human rights complaints in Malaysia and UNICEF supports the Government’s initiatives in monitoring and addressing child development issues in the country. The advocacy groups, Association for Orang Asli of Peninsular Malaysia and the Centre for Orang Asli Concerns, monitor and highlight the concerns of indigenous people in Malaysia.



POLICIES AND STRATEGIES TO REACH THE UNREACHED GROUPS

Difficult-to-reach children in Malaysia are generally those from very poor households, in remote areas, with special needs and from the indigenous communities. Reaching all young children with quality care and education requires specific interventions to address the needs of difficult-to-reach children both in terms of dedicating resources to expanding access and to the development of customised approaches and programmes for children with diverse needs.

Specific policies, programmes and interventions to increase the participation of these children in quality childcare and education include:

STRATEGY 3: Financial assistance to the households of poor children

Established in 1946, the Department of Social Welfare has formulated various policies and programmes for the social development and welfare of the people. Two types of assistance benefit poor children – Child Support Assistance (Bantuan Kanak-kanak) and Schooling Assistance (Bantuan Sekolah). Child

Support Assistance is given to low income families with children to support living expenses. Schooling Assistance is given to school-going children from low income families for school fees, school uniform, bus fare etc. In 2005, a total of USD12,841,376 was provided as Child Support Assistance to a total of 19,346 households.

STRATEGY 4: Expanding preschool places for children with special needs

The national policy is to provide special education in MOE institutions for children with a single disability. Currently there are 28 preschool classes in special schools and 32 integration classes. Children with multiple disabilities are referred to the MWFC. The EDMP 2006 – 2010 calls for the establishment of an additional 100 preschool classrooms for the integration of children aged 5 and 6 with single disability (usually learning disabled). This expansion includes preparing the necessary preschools teachers and teacher assistants. The provision to amend the Special Education Regulations Act of 1997 to accept students with two disabilities is also included in the EDMP.

STRATEGY 5: Expanding access to preschool for children residing in rural and remote areas

A total of 3,143 preschool classes will be provided in the 2006–2010 period of the 9MP. Of these, 80 percent or 2,436 classes will be in rural areas. The Government also plans to raise the per capita grant for preschools. Children in the rural areas of Sabah and Sarawak are served by preschools provided by KEMAS, the MOE, and PERPADUAN. With the expansion of preschool classes under the MOE, the number of indigenous children enrolled in MOE preschools has increased more than three-fold from 6,922 in 2000 to 24,817 in 2006.

STRATEGY 6: Expanding public support for early childhood care and education to indigenous communities

Both the Department of Orang Asli Affairs (JHEOA) and KEMAS have expanded public supported care and education for young children (0–4 years old) in indigenous communities. The Women Motivator initiative of JHEOA trains and supports women motivators to promote awareness to mothers in the indigenous communities of the importance of education. The women motivators also conduct programmes that bring children and parents together in learning activities. The initiative has increased from six sites and 80 children in 2000 when it was launched in 28 sites and 529 participating children in 2006. KEMAS also began to provide support for programmes for children under 5 in indigenous communities in 2005 with 226 children. In 2006 the KEMAS childcare programme provided support to 317 children in the indigenous communities in peninsular Malaysia.

Since 1992, KEMAS has been providing preschools (5–6 years old) for the indigenous communities of Peninsular Malaysia. Participation has increased from about 3,800 children in 2000 to more than 4,900 in 2006.

NGOs have also made important contributions in expanding access to quality ECCE for children from indigenous communities, particularly in difficult-to-reach areas. Many of these NGOs provide support to ECCE as a component of a more comprehensive community-based support programme. One of the largest providers of ECCE in indigenous communities is the PACOS Trust. PACOS supports community organisations in 12 districts involving 25 geographical areas in Sabah. Currently it has 17 ECCE centres in the interior of Sabah involving 2020 children and 71 teachers and caregivers. Working with the

Association of Kindergartens of Sabah PACOS provides basic training to their preschool teachers on a yearly basis. PACOS preschools are mostly built through sponsorship from international bodies and companies such as RALLY and NESTLE in joint efforts with the local communities. The programme has also resulted in increased awareness among parents and local communities on the importance of community health, child care and education. Other NGOs also provide ECCE to indigenous children in Sabah.

STRATEGY 7: Customising approaches to better incorporate unreached children

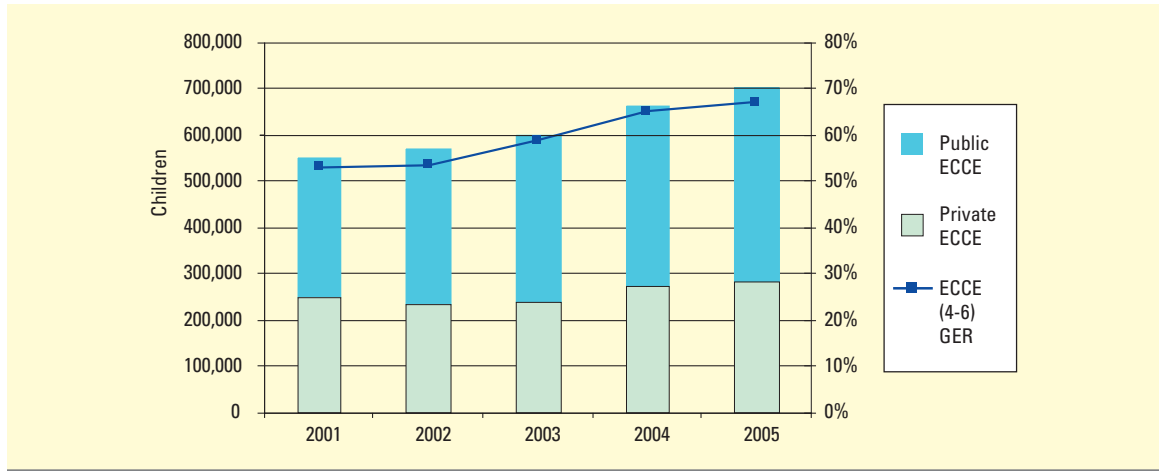
Reaching difficult-to-reach children often requires alternative approaches in addition to expanded capacity. The MOE has adapted the National Preschool Curriculum for the visually impaired, the hearing impaired and learning disabled. A modified curriculum for indigenous children is under development. The Women Motivator initiative also represents an approach specifically developed for the conditions and culture of indigenous communities.

PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING EFA GOAL 1

Figure 3.1 presents the number of children 4 to 6 years of age registered in public or private preschool programmes. The number has increased from approximately 340 thousand in 2000 to nearly 630 thousand children in 2005. As indicated in the graph the majority of this new enrollment has been the result of increased public provision of ECCE. The enrollment of 4 to 6 year olds in ECCE increased from 40 percent in year 2000 to 67 percent in 2005.

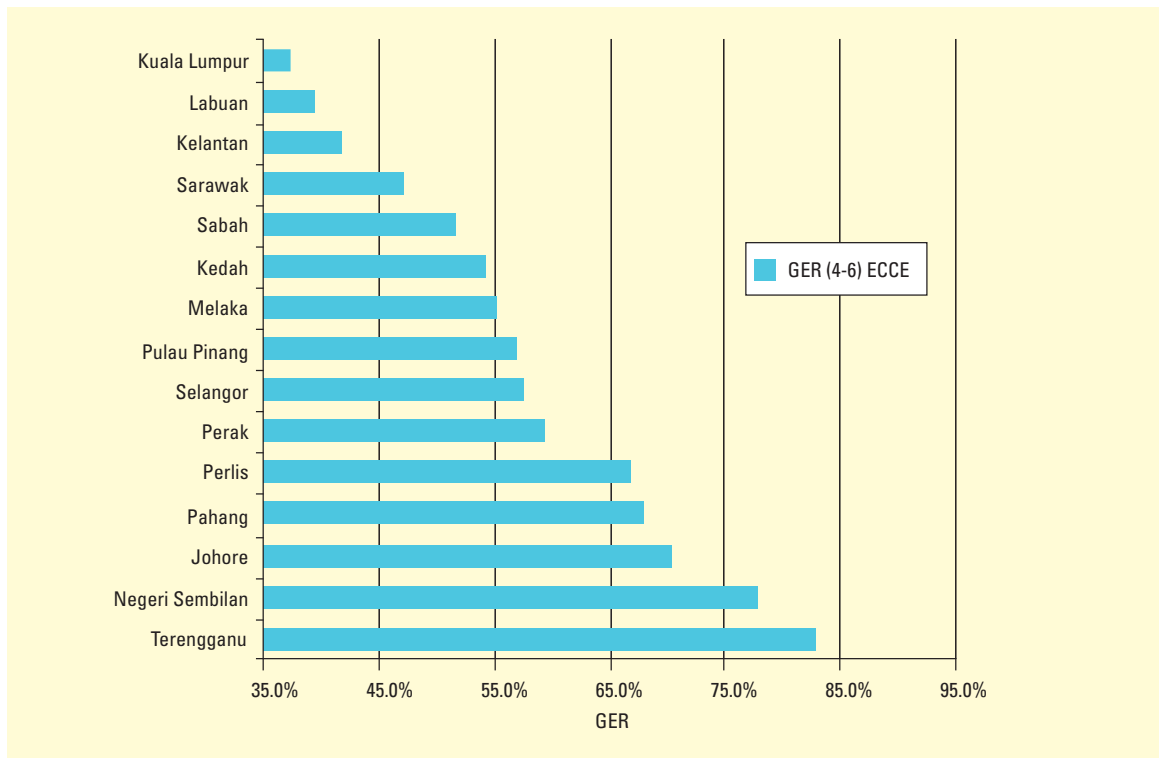
It is important to note that some 4 to 6 year olds are enrolled in private centres and “Mind

Figure 3.1 GER and Enrollment for ECCE 4–6 years old, 2001–2005



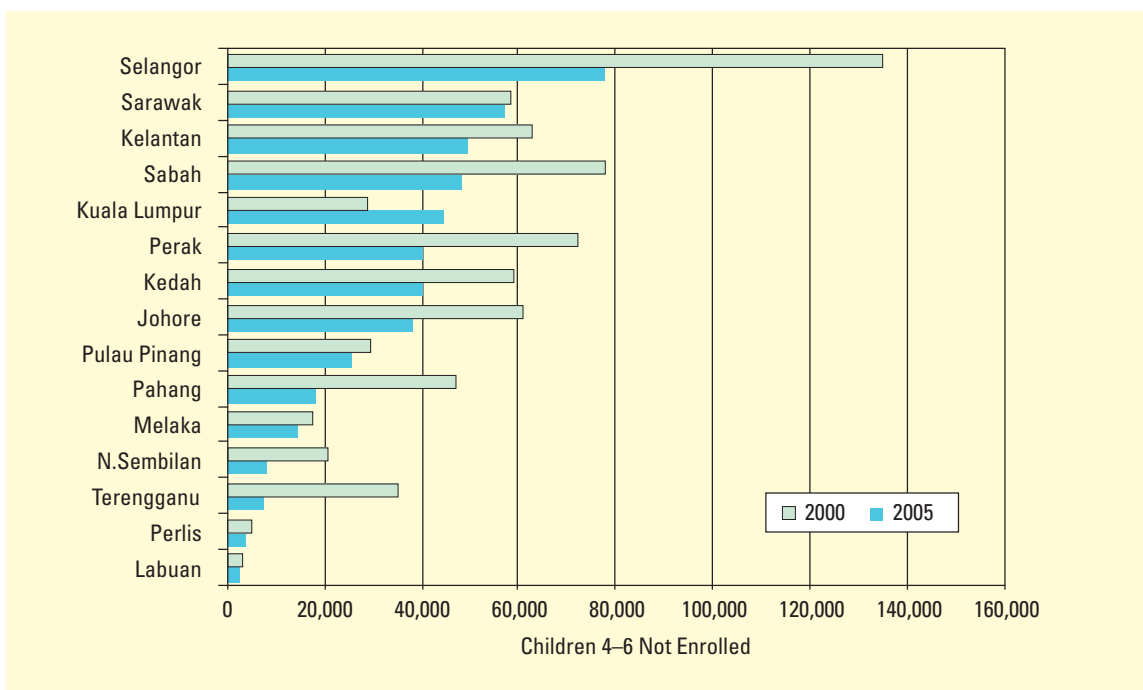
Sources: EMIS, EPRD, MOE (2001–2005)

Figure 3.2 GER for ECCE 4–6 years old, by State, 2005



Sources: EMIS, EPRD, MOE (2005)

Figure 3.3 | Children 4–6 years old not Enrolled in ECCE, by State, 2000 & 2005



Sources: EMIS, EPRD, MOE (2000 & 2005)

Development Centres” that do not report ECCE enrollment because they are not registered as education centres. A study conducted by the Curriculum Development Centre (MOE) in 2007 reported that about 94 percent of year one entrants in public schools have attended some kind of preschool.

Figure 3.2 presents the estimated ECCE GER for 4 to 6 year olds by state. The estimated GER varies considerably by state ranging from 37 percent in Labuan to about 83 percent in Terengganu. Since state populations differ significantly the similar GERs can have drastically different consequences in terms of the number of children still not accessing ECCE

Figure 3.3 presents the estimated number of children 4 to 6 years of age not participating in ECCE by state. The figure shows the states of Sabah, Kelantan and Sarawak having relatively

larger numbers of children 4 to 6 years of age not participating in ECCE. Current policies of prioritising rural areas with new ECCE initiatives are consistent with eliminating these persisting rural urban differences.

Surprisingly, the estimate of children not accessing ECCE is highest for the larger more urbanised state of Selangor. This observation has several possible explanations. The estimates are based on reported public and private ECCE Enrollment and the use of live births to estimate the size of the 4 to 6 year population. One possible explanation is that a significant number of children in Selangor do not have legal status to enrol in schools in Malaysia. Another possible explanation is that a large number of children in Selangor attend ECCE in private centres that are not registered and do not report or not required to report their enrollment to the MOE since they

are not considered as education centres. The possibility that some segments of the Selangor population still face barriers to participation in ECCE cannot be ruled out without additional research into this issue.

The trend in participation in ECCE (4 to 6 year olds) for indigenous children is illustrated in Figure 3.4. The number of indigenous children participating in ECCE has increased nearly three fold between 2000 and 2005. Most of the growth in enrollment since 2000 has been the result of Government's efforts to prioritise investments in ECCE for rural communities.

Children with special needs are also prioritised in Government investments in ECCE. Figure 3.5 presents the trend in participation of children with special needs in ECCE between 2000 and 2005. The growth has been significant – especially for children with learning disabilities. Significant investments are made under the 9MP

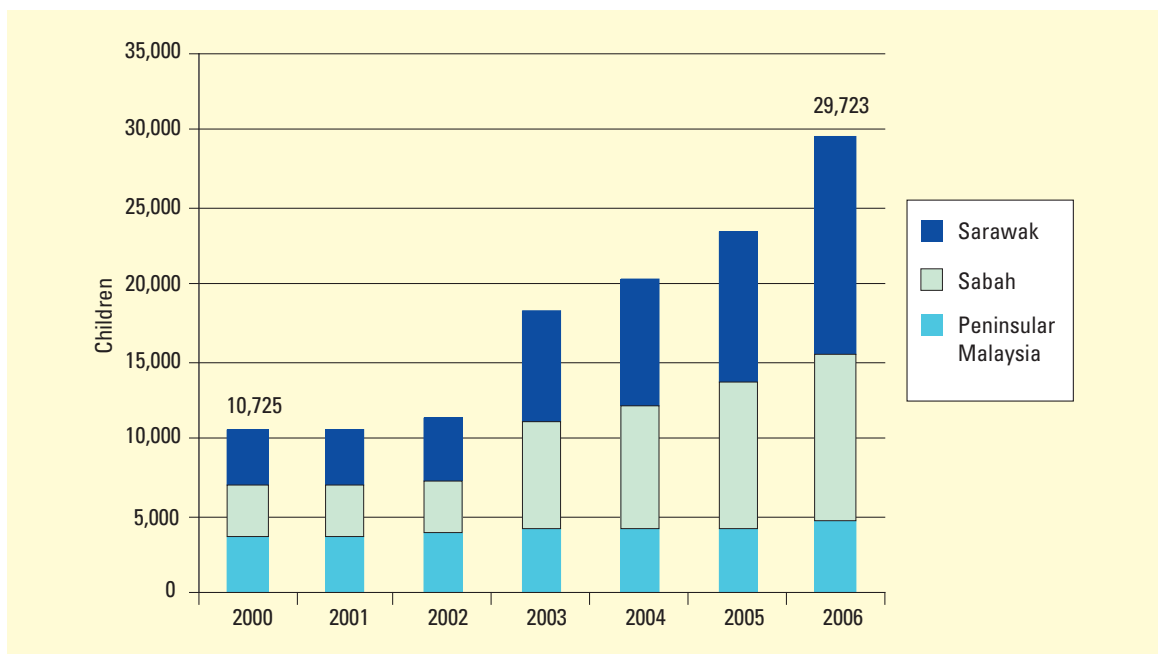
in furthering efforts required across different ministries to address the needs of young children with special needs.

SUCCESSSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN IMPLEMENTING EFA GOAL I

A new policy and legislative framework for the care and education of young children has been evolving in Malaysia. In 2007, Malaysia implemented a number of policy and legislative changes to make the law and practices consistent with the CRC. In addition, the promotion of a national preschool curriculum and standards of service for private ECCE providers encourage a high standard of care and education for young children.

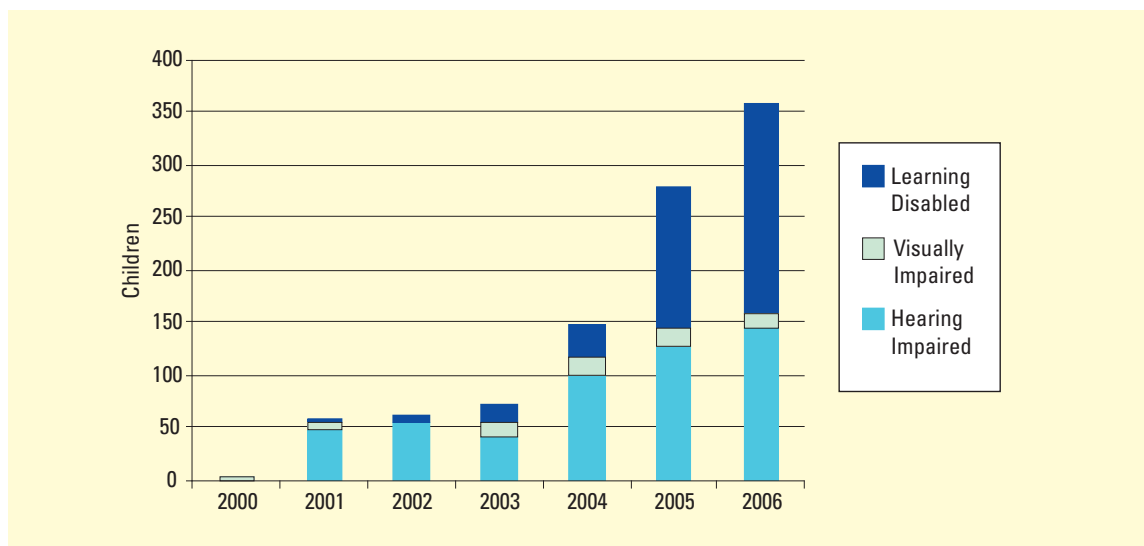
The 9MP continues with investments in addressing socio-economic disparities and

Figure 3.4 | Indigenous Children 4–6 years old Enrolled in ECCE, 2000–2006



Sources: EMIS, EPRD, MOE: DOS (2000–2006)

Figure 3.5 | Special Needs Children 4–6 years old in ECCE, 2000–2006



Sources: EMIS, EPRD, MOE (2000–2006)

access to social support due to rural-urban differences. A number of these investments – most notably the prioritisation of investments in ECCE in rural areas have promoted the well-being of young children. Special ECCE programmes have been implemented that capitalize on indigenous cultural practices for the holistic development of indigenous children.

Since 2003, ECCE for 4 to 6 year olds has been officially recognised as a component of the national education system. The incorporation of ECCE into the national system has resulted in a standard curriculum, and the systematic and specific training of teachers and child minders, and the setting of standards for private providers. This has been accompanied by initiatives specially oriented towards difficult-to-reach children especially those in remote areas, from indigenous communities and children with special needs. The 9MP commits the Government to begin the provision of care and education for children 0 to 4 years and a pilot programme (Permata) is currently being implemented. New mechanisms are being applied to encourage workplace and

community initiatives in the provision of services for children 0 to 4 year olds.

An area where progress has not been satisfactory is the inclusion of special needs children in ECCE. One difficulty in making provisions for children with special needs is the relative lack of information about the number of children with special needs, the kinds of disabling conditions that afflict them, their location and the barriers they experience to full participation in ECCE. The MWFCDC collects some information on people with disabilities as they register for disability grants but the information is not readily available by age and type of handicap. Many stakeholders consulted during the EFA MDA reporting process indicated a need for a database of special needs children. This valuable information source could be developed by augmenting the information collected and facilitating access to information from the current grant registration system or as one of the components of the child monitoring system proposed in the action plan of the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy.



The current MOE policy of accepting only children with a single disability limits access to ECCE for children with special needs. Identification of the process and the criteria for offering publicly subsidised ECCE must be reevaluated to meet the needs of more children for inclusive or specialised ECCE.

Improving identification and implementing a more inclusive selection criterion requires new capacity in the area of assessment and programme planning. The new capacity required is in the form of additional professionals with advanced training in assessment and programme development as well as suitable environments for comprehensive evaluations of children with special needs like “one stop” centres where health, cognitive, physical/motor and behavioural characteristics can be evaluated. Improving access for children with special needs to a reasonable level will also require the training of sufficient teachers and modifying support levels

(per capita grants) to reflect the greater costs of providing the small class sizes that are required when special needs students are included.

Many of the elements of a comprehensive approach to provide care and education for young children are available in Malaysia. Perhaps one of the biggest challenges in maximising the impact of the systems and resources is that of coordinating actions across the social, health and education sectors – including the private providers of ECCE. While the formal development planning process incorporates cross-sectoral planning, operational planning and implementation tends to be done in isolation within the various line ministries. The establishment of a coordination mechanism for delivering comprehensive care and education—including the full registration of private providers—would help ensure the efficient use of resources and better provision of services for all young children.



Cikgu Aminah teaches preschool class in SK TanahAbang, Mersing. She hails from the west coast of peninsular Malaysia. The school is approximately 100 km from the small town of Mersing at the South-east of peninsular Malaysia. She has been teaching in this school for 3 years. Her students are 100% orang asli and stays in the orang asli villages around. The government has helped set up these villages equipped with water and electricity supply as well as roads.

Though some of the parents works in the plantation, many still depends on the jungle for their livelihood, a life style pass down from generations which they find it difficult to give up. The parents are mainly illiterate. However more of them realise the importance of education for their kids now compare to 10 years ago. Cikgu Aminah looks forward to seeing her students every day, they are an enthusiastic lot and takes great delight in things in the nature. Cikgu Aminah's class attendance is good, most of her students come to school daily, but the

other classes in this school are not so lucky, many do not come to school regularly, some children would follow their parents to the jungle for 2 to 3 months in search of rattan and food.

Generally orang asli do not like formal kind of teaching and learning, the preschool curriculum attracts them due to the thematic approach and non-formal atmosphere where students have more freedom to move about in the classroom. In order to attract them to school the Ministry of Education has formulated an adjusted curriculum and modules for the lower primary orang asli school. The curriculum taps on the methodology used in preschools where modules are used and parents are invited to school to participate. Food is provided during this activities and food such as flour and bread are distributed to these children and parents after the activities. This is important since one day without work means one day without food supply. With the implementation of these modules more orang asli children are attending schools regularly.

Goal 2: Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality



Malaysia has made great progress since independence in providing access to quality basic education with total Enrollment in primary and secondary education growing from about 3.5 million in 1985 to over 5.3 million in 2005. Political commitment for education has been consistent and accompanied by resources required to fully achieve the goal of every child completing quality basic education by 2015. This level of success would be possible because of the sizeable expansion in the number of classrooms and teachers, an ambitious system of material and academic support for students and innovation in curriculum and delivery methods.

The percentage of children of primary school

age who remain outside the education system is relatively small. However, the fact that these children have not been reached despite the expansion in school places and support for students suggests that to successfully incorporate them into the education system is a challenge that will require more resources, greater innovation and more targeted approach.

The central framework guiding actions to reach these remaining children is the 9MP and the EDMP. The 9MP maintains the country's commitment to continuously address socio-economic inequalities by ensuring that all citizens receive fair and equal educational opportunities regardless of location, race, ability

or ethnic background. The EDMP outlines the Ministry's actions for realising the goal of eliminating these imbalances by ensuring that all students master reading, writing and arithmetic skills and that no student drops out of the system due to poverty or location. More specifically, the MOE sets the objectives of achieving a GER of 100 percent and eliminating attrition at the primary and secondary level.

Quality assurance and monitoring

Outcomes at the primary and secondary level are measured by centralised national tests. The Primary School Assessment Test or Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR) tests student achievement in literacy, numeracy and scientific skills at the end of primary education. This examination is conducted in the medium of instruction (Malay, Chinese and Tamil) used and this depends on the type of school. Since 2003, the Mathematics and Science examination questions have been provided in two languages – in the instructional language of the school and in English. There is also a centralised examination at the end of lower secondary, the Lower Secondary Assessment or Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR). The centralised exam at the end of senior secondary school, the Malaysian Certificate of Education or Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) serves as an entrance qualification to post-secondary education and the job market. Students are assessed on a set of six core subjects and a selection of elective subjects. Open certification since 2001 enables students to be certified in particular subjects rather than the aggregate of all subjects. School-based assessment is carried out for a number of subjects at the primary and secondary level.

The MOE regularly reports on outcome and quality indicators. These include GERs, survival rates, student-class ratios and student-teacher ratios. These indicators are also analysed disaggregated by state and gender.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE EFA GOAL 2 IN MALAYSIA

STRATEGY 1: Make basic education free and compulsory

Ensuring that all children in Malaysia complete a quality basic education begins with the commitment to ensure that basic education is free. The legal framework for education in Malaysia, the Education Act of 1996 and its subsequent amendments, make primary and secondary education free in Malaysia. The act further strengthens the ability of the Government to promote full participation by making primary education compulsory since 2003.

The system of free and compulsory primary education also recognises the opportunities and the challenges presented by Malaysia's cultural diversity. Free and compulsory education extends to National Schools, where Malay is the language of instruction and to the National Type Schools where the language of instruction can be either Chinese or Tamil.

STRATEGY 2: Continue to expand opportunities for a quality basic education

By 2007, MOE will provide basic infrastructure to schools that still lack 24 hour electricity and clean water supply. More than 23,900 classrooms are to be built or replaced in the 2006–2010 period. This will increase single-session primary schools from 86 percent to 90 percent and reduce class size from 31 to 30 students per classroom. Single-session secondary schools will increase from 65 to 70 percent and class size will be reduced from 32 to 30 students per classroom. To address rural-urban differences, 68 percent of primary classrooms and 57 percent of secondary classrooms to be constructed in the 2006–2010 period will be in rural areas. The MOE is also focused on reducing the urban-rural digital gap. The challenge for the MOE is to ensure that

adequate infrastructure, hardware, software and training are given to schools in rural and remote areas that are less exposed to ICT.

To ensure that all children have access to quality education, the national curriculum is used in all public and private primary and secondary schools. The MOE aims to improve teacher qualification so that all secondary teachers and 50 percent of primary teachers are university graduates by 2010. To this end, teachers are provided financial support including tuition fees and stipend and funds are provided to replace teachers on study leaves with contracted substitutes.



STRATEGY 3: Reduce the impact of poverty and location on school attendance and performance by providing support to vulnerable students

Recognising that access to school may not be sufficient to guarantee that children from poor households enrol and regularly attend school, the Government of Malaysia has in place, a comprehensive set of education support measures. These include the Textbook Loan Scheme that furnishes textbooks on loan for poor

children, the Supplementary Food Programme that provided breakfast for nearly 707 thousand children in 2006, the School Milk Programme that provided milk in school to nearly 570 thousand students in 2006, scholarships that support 230 thousand students at the secondary level, and the Poor Students' Trust Fund that provided assistance valued at 29.4 million USD to 857,319 primary and secondary students in 2005.

STRATEGY 4: Ensure that all children regardless of their background have opportunities for success in school

Not all children come to school prepared for success. The rapid expansion of public preschools will increase the number of children who are more prepared for formal schooling. While preschool education is not compulsory, in the 9MP the Government of Malaysia has committed to ensure that all children aged five to six years have access to preschool.

Initial difficulties in learning to read and write can condemn a child to failure in school and possible early abandonment of education. The Early Intervention Reading and Writing Class (KIA2M) is a programme that identifies children with reading and writing difficulties in the first year of primary school and provides them with additional intensive tutoring by teachers with training in special education. The programme was introduced in 2006 and extends to all public primary schools in Malaysia.

The Tuition Aid Scheme ensures that poor students having difficulties in school obtain the extra support they require. The scheme provides funds for extra tuition in Mathematics, Science, National Language and English for students in Year 4, 5 and 6 who demonstrate low achievement and come from households that fall below the poverty line. In 2006, about 480 thousand primary students received aids totalling nearly 52 million USD.

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES TO REACH THE UNREACHED GROUPS

Policy and programme initiatives for targeting unreached children in Malaysia focus on children in isolated rural areas, in indigenous communities and children with special needs.

STRATEGY 5: Continue to address rural urban differences in access and quality of education

Education development spending under the 9MP continues to prioritise the building and upgrading of infrastructure in rural areas; especially in Sabah and Sarawak. Because of rural/urban income disparities, resources for education support also tend to favour rural children. More than 40 percent of the students in Sabah and Sarawak receive support from the Poor Students' Trust Fund, while the percentage overall for the country is about 28 percent. This pattern is also observable in the Supplementary Food Programme where nearly 50 percent of the students in Sabah benefit from the programme while the overall country-wide average is 22 percent. In the more urban areas like Selangor and Kuala Lumpur, the rates of beneficiaries are about seven and three percent respectively.

To ensure acculturation of ICT in rural and remote schools, the MOE has established broadband Internet access with the cooperation of

the Ministry of Energy, Water and Communication. The ICT infrastructure and hardware are linked via local network or wireless technology. Teachers are trained to enhance competency in integrating ICT in the teaching and learning process. At the same time school administrators are trained in the use of ICT in management.

STRATEGY 6: Develop and implement approaches tailored to the needs of children from indigenous communities and isolated rural areas

The education support programmes focusing on rural areas – especially in Sabah and Sarawak, also address the needs of children in indigenous communities. In Peninsular Malaysia, the MOE provides a year of remedial schooling between years 2 and 3 for Orang Asli children who need additional tutoring to improve their chances of completing primary school. The MOE is currently developing a more flexible curriculum with a minimal but adequate syllabus based on the New Primary School Curriculum for children from these indigenous communities.

Material support for Orang Asli students is also provided by the JHOEA. In 2005, USD3,296,070 was provided to Orang Asli students for school uniforms, transportation, school activities, food, allowances and scholarships.

STRATEGY 7: Increase the capacity of schools to address the needs of children with special needs

Students with special needs are provided education opportunities in special schools and in integration programmes in regular schools. As of 2005, there were 28 special education national schools (SENS), two special education secondary schools, two special education vocational secondary schools and 973 schools under the Special Integrated Education Programme to make schools more disabled friendly.



Only children with a single disability are currently registered into MOE schools. The provision to amend the Special Education Regulations Act of 1997 to accept students with two disabilities is included in the EDMP. Providing transportation for students with special needs through cooperation between the ministries (MOE, MOH, MHR, and MWFC) is also included in the plan.

PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING EFA GOAL 2

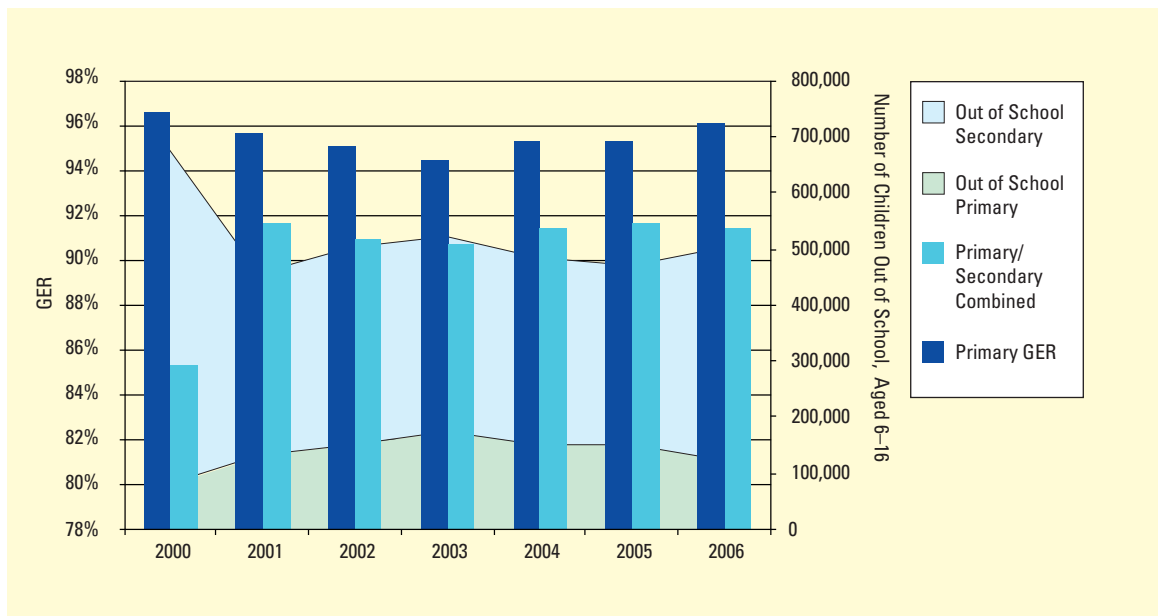
Since 2000, between 95 and 98 percent of children aged 6 have enrolled in school – most of them after having completed preschool education. In 2005, it was estimated that more than 96 percent of primary aged children were enrolled in school. In the same year, more than 90 percent of primary and secondary school age children were enrolled in school. The retention

rate for children who entered school in the period 2000–2005 was between 95 and 98 percent.

The GER for 2000 to 2005 was estimated using reported public and private school enrollment at the primary level and an age 6 to 12 cohort estimate based on live birth data in Malaysia. Using this method, the primary GER varies year to year between 94.5 and 96.1 percent, as illustrated in Figure 3.6. This is comparable to the estimate of 96.5 percent in 1985.

At this high level of coverage, very small differences in the estimated size of the age cohort can create the impression that GER is declining when in fact it is being maintained or improved. Slight changes in the number of children who attend private or religious schools that may not be reporting Enrollment to the MOE could also create a false impression of the trends in primary GER. As the GER estimate using the conventional methodology approaches 100 percent, it will become increasingly sensitive to

Figure 3.6 GER for Primary and Combined Primary and Secondary, 2000–2005



Sources: EMIS, EPRD, MOE: DOS (2000–2005)

small measurement errors and imprecision in the estimate of cohort size. These built-in limits to the precision of conventionally measured GER means that new strategies for promoting and documenting full participation (100 percent) will need to be developed and implemented.

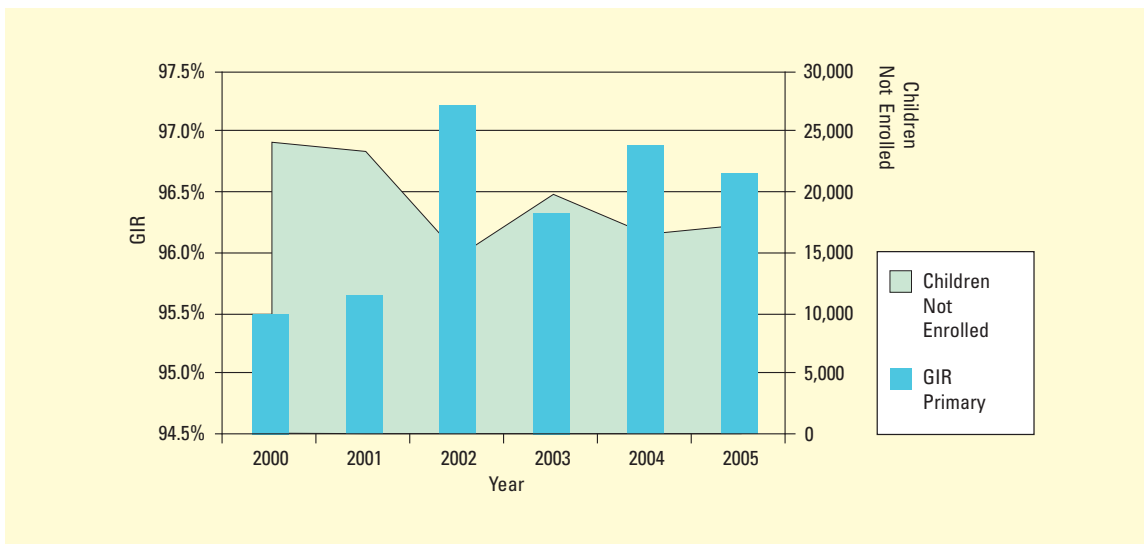
Even at Malaysia's very high levels of primary school participation, the small percentage of out of school children is not an insignificant number. The average estimate of children aged 6 to 12 not participating in primary school varied from about 125 thousand to 150 thousand each year between 2000 and 2005. Since these children did represent such a small percentage of children of primary school age, identifying and addressing the issues that kept them from full participation despite the expansion of the system and the substantial material support provided, will be an important challenge for the sector.

As Malaysia has reported a high primary GER since the 1980s, a combined primary and

secondary GER was estimated for 1985 and for the years 2000 to 2005. This expanded GER better reflects both Malaysia's progress and the human resource demands of a globalised world. The combined GER, improved from just over 85 percent in 1985 to over 91 percent in 2005. About 180 thousand fewer children and young persons between 6 and 18 years of age were out of school in 2005 than in 1985 despite the large increase in population during that period.

The percentage of 6-year-old children entering primary school (Gross Intake Rate) was determined using year one public and private enrollment and an age cohort estimate of live birth data. Between 2000 and 2005, the estimated GIR varied from 95 to 97 percent. The same cautions mentioned in interpreting trends in gross enrollment rate (GER) apply to the GIR figures presented in Figure 3.7. (Apparent variation may be due to imprecision in estimating the age 6 cohort).

Figure 3.7 | GIR for Primary and Number of Children Not Enrolling in Year I, 2000–2005



Sources: EMIS, EPRD, MOE: DOS (2000–2005)

In Malaysia as many as 15 thousand children do not enter primary school. Finding these children and developing appropriate support mechanisms so that they can fully participate in education will be challenging precisely because they represent such a small percentage of children aged 6 in the country.

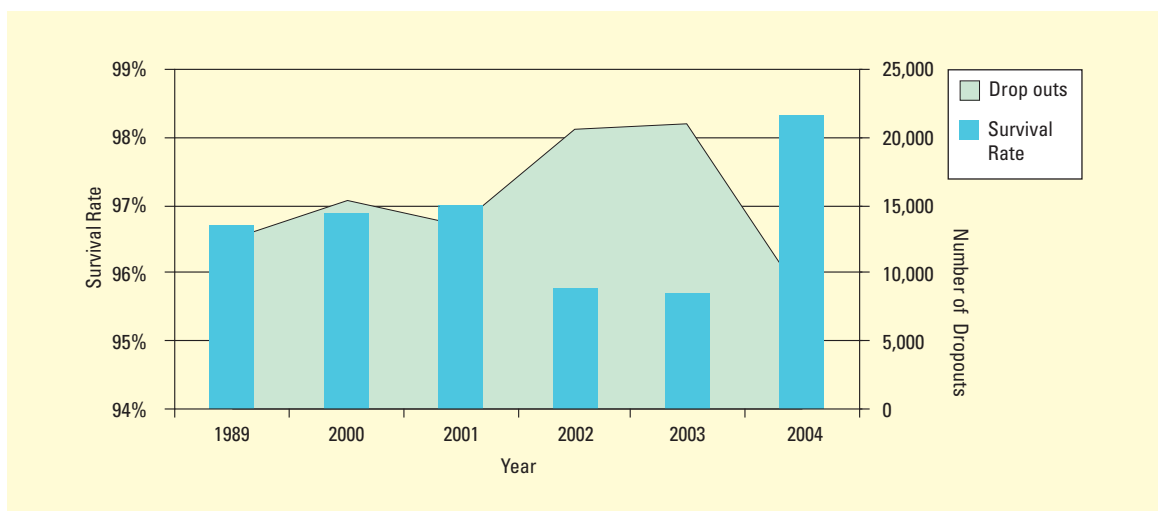
The percentage of children who enter year one and successfully reach the year six had improved from 96.7 percent in 1989 to 98.1 percent in 2005. This is illustrated in Figure 3.8. This improvement in retaining children is relatively small as a percentage but with the expanding number of students incorporated into the system, the 98.1 percent represents a reduction in the number of children who drop out of primary school before year 6 i.e of about 7,100 children and compares favourably with the numbers recorded in 1989.

As a first step in identifying the children still not participating in primary schooling in Malaysia, the number of children out of school in each state was estimated by subtracting the number of children enrolled in public and private primary schools from



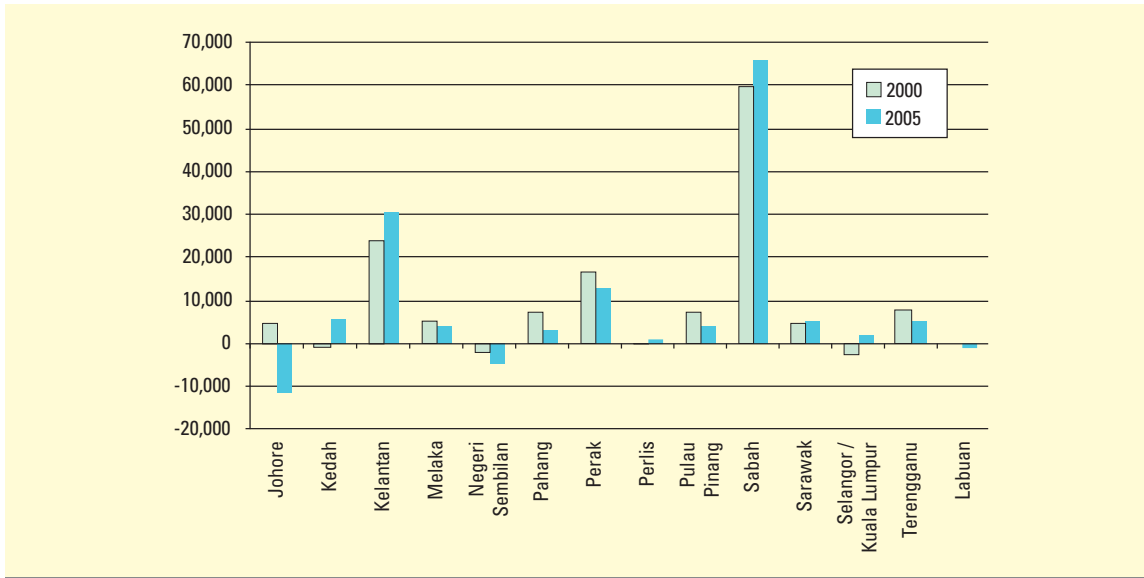
the age 6 to 12 cohort estimated using live birth data. This method reveals that the largest number of children not participating in schooling were from the states of Sabah and Kelantan (Figure 3.9). While

Figure 3.8 | Survival Rates to Year 6 and Primary School Dropouts, 1989–2004



Sources: EMIS, EPRD, MOE (1989–2004)

Figure 3.9 | Number of Out of School Children in Primary School, by State, 2000–2005



Sources: EMIS, EPRD, MOE: DOS (2000–2005)

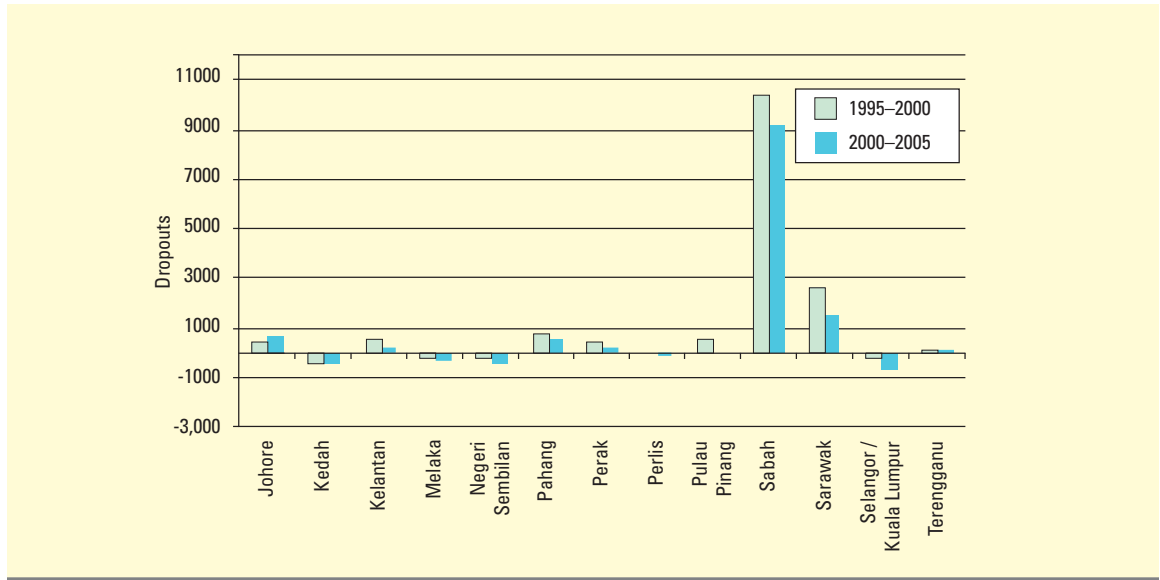
this is not an unexpected result, it is important to keep in mind that the live birth data captures all children born in Malaysia – including children who may not have proper documentation to attend school in the country. The profile would also be affected by the migration of children across state boundaries between birth and entering school at 6 years of age.

Figure 3.10 indicates the estimated number of children who drop out of school before year five. In 2004 and 2005, the overwhelming majority of these children were located in Sabah. Again it is important to mention that these apparent dropouts could have shifted to a private school or migrated to another state. All of the states that showed a negative number of dropouts were states where year six Enrollment was greater than year one enrollment five years earlier. These states have a net in-migration of children during their primary school years.

Figure 3.11 indicates that between 2002 and 2005, the number of children with special needs attending an integration class in a regular primary

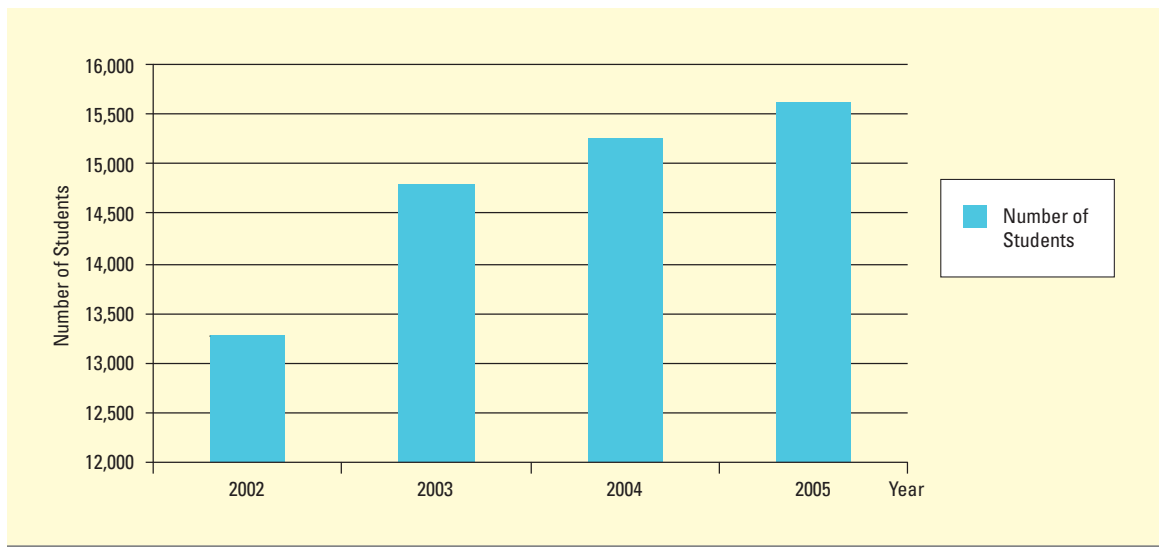
school had increased by about 2,400. Without a better estimate of the number of children with special needs, it is difficult to assess the percentage of such children who have been successfully incorporated into regular basic education environments. Some children with special needs who have not been formally assessed are also currently included in primary school classes where they may not be receiving appropriate support. Generally accepted worldwide estimates are that two to three percent of school age children are moderately or severely disabled. In an OECD report in 1990, it was estimated that 15 to 20 percent of students will have special education needs at some point in their schooling. The high enrollment rates for basic education in Malaysia and the fact that integration class enrollment is much less than one percent of total primary enrollment raises questions about the status of special needs children that must be addressed. As mentioned in the review of Goal 1, a first step in better meeting the needs of children with special needs

Figure 3.10 | Number of Children Who Enter School and Abandoned Before Year 6, by State, 1995–2000 and 2000–2005 Cohorts



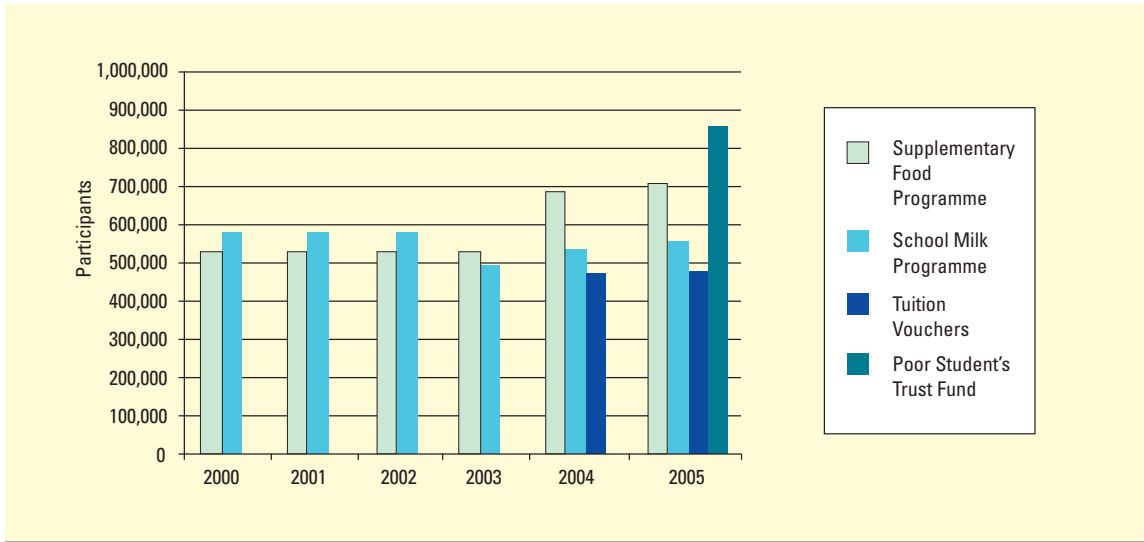
Sources: EMIS, EPRD, MOE (1995–2005)

Figure 3.11 | Number of Special Needs Students in Inclusive Programmes in Regular Schools, 2002–2005



Sources: EMIS, EPRD, MOE (2002–2005)

Figure 3.12 | Number of Children in Education Support Programme, 2000–2005



Sources: EMIS, EPRD, School Division, Scholarship Divisions, MOE (2000–2005)

is the development of reliable estimates of the number of children requiring support.

Figure 3.12 indicates that the recipients of the Supplementary Food Programme increased from just over 500 thousand in 2000 to nearly 700 thousand in 2005. The number of recipients of the School Milk Programme remained relatively stable at around 525 thousand during the same period. The Tuition Aid Scheme became operational in 2004 and provided funds for extra tuition to about 480 thousand poor children in 2004 and in 2005. In 2005, the Poor Students' Trust Fund provided grants for more than 857 thousand students. Not included in the Figure is the Textbook Loan Scheme which provided textbooks on loan to more than 80 percent of primary and secondary students per year between 2000 and 2007. Beginning 2008, all students would be eligible for the textbook loan scheme.

Education support programmes represent a sizeable investment on the part of the Government of Malaysia in ensuring that economic circumstances and location do not create barriers to participation and success



in schooling. As illustrated in Figure 3.13 total spending on the Supplementary Food Programme, School Milk Programme, Textbook Loan Scheme, Tuition Aid Scheme, Poor Student

Trust Fund, Scholarships, and Special Support for Orang Asli children totalled a little more than USD182.5 million or roughly USD34 for every student in Government primary and secondary schools.

SUCCESSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN IMPLEMENTING EFA GOAL 2

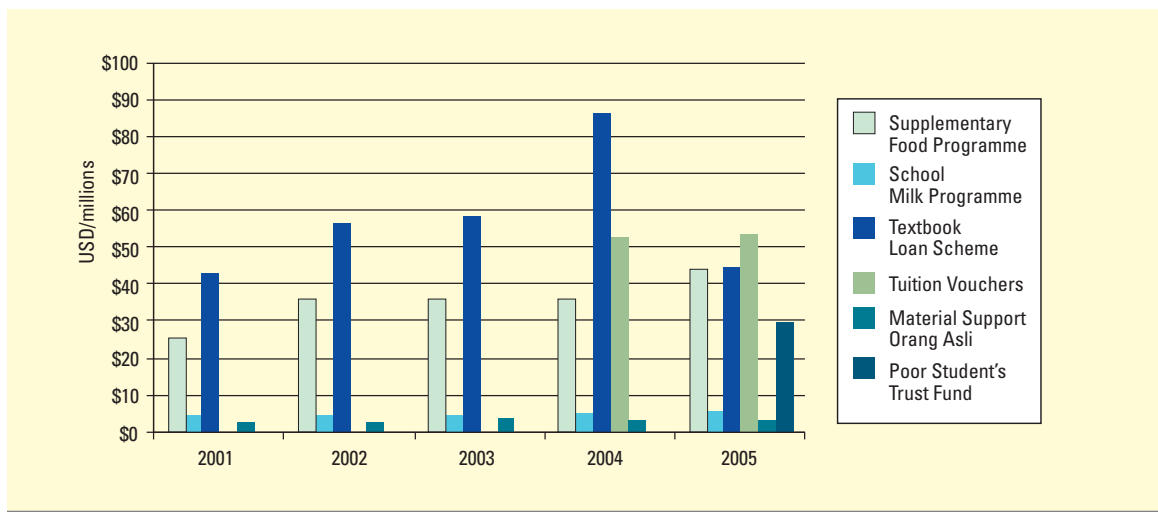
Most Malaysian parents are committed to sending their children to school. The political and financial commitments of the Government of Malaysia have complemented the efforts of households by reducing the barriers to schooling caused by differences in economic circumstances and the location of households. These investments support the thrusts of the National Mission which is to reduce socio-economic differences, enhance knowledge and innovation capacity, and nurture a first class mentality.

Over 96 percent of children born in Malaysia

enter primary school – the majority with some amount of preschool. Of those that enrol, over 98 percent complete the final year (year six) of primary school. A large majority of those who enter primary school continue on to secondary school and the combined percentage of primary and secondary school age children enrolled in school in 2005 was a little over 91 percent as illustrated earlier in Figure 3.6.

The Government of Malaysia recognises that simply providing schools and teachers do not ensure full access to, and participation in quality education. Significant financial resources are invested in support programmes for students such as the Textbook Loan Scheme, the Supplementary Food Programme, the Tuition Aid Scheme, and the Poor Students' Trust Fund. These reduce the barriers to access and participation in education by children from poor households. Significant resources are also expanded to provide other specific kinds of support for difficult-to-reach children including those from indigenous communities.

Figure 3.13 Annual Spending on Education Support, 2001–2005



Sources: Scholarship Division, School Division, Textbook Division, MOE (2000–2005)

Infrastructure investments in the current five-year development plan are heavily oriented towards rural areas in an effort to eliminate the remaining rural urban gap in education.

Investments in promoting higher standards of quality education are made on an on-going basis. These investments include the upgrading of teacher qualifications and physical conditions in schools, a formalised set of remedial interventions designed to address learning difficulties at an early age in all schools and specific study programmes that are tailored to the needs of children with special needs, children from rural and isolated areas and children from indigenous communities.

The high level of participation in education in Malaysia is an achievement the country is proud of. At the same time, these very successes pose a set of challenges for reaching the unreached. It is estimated that about 125 thousand primary school age children and about 380 thousand children of secondary school age were not enrolled in school in 2005. These groups of children and youth have not been successfully integrated into the education system despite the large investments in expanding school infrastructure to all parts of the country and providing support programmes to students. The conventional method of tracking participation — GER — is no longer sufficiently sensitive to provide guidance for policies and programmes to reach the remaining groups of children and youth. The high reported GERs do not provide information about the specific barriers that keep these children from schooling. It cannot answer questions like: Are they non-citizens?; Are they extremely poor?; Are they disabled in some manner?; Do they come from single-parent households?; and other such questions vital to elaborating an effective response.

The use of GER also does not provide sufficient information about where these children and youth are located. In the state by state

estimation of out-of-school children, it was clear that Sabah had the highest number of children and youth not enrolled in school. However, an effective plan for promoting participation would require more detailed information about location. Even disaggregating to the District level may not provide relevant insights into location, especially since district of birth data used to estimate the school age population and the district that the child or young person actually lives and would attend school may be different.

The effective implementation of Malaysia's strategy of using human capital investment as one of the primary engines for promoting economic and social development rests on continually upgrading the country's human capital. With the high levels of participation in education, improvements in human capital will no longer be possible by simply expanding the education system. Human capital development will become more dependent on evaluating, refining and modifying programmes and policies to be more effective. For example, it is not enough to merely increase the enrollment of indigenous children in primary school. They should progress and succeed in school. Anecdotal accounts report that absenteeism is quite high and academic achievement is low among these children. Without well defined monitoring and evaluation of such programmes, it will be impossible to make the refinements necessary to produce optimal results. The questions that would need answering include: whether the number of schools (rather than the number of classrooms) for indigenous children are sufficient and whether they are located in places that facilitate attendance, the kinds of outreach to parents and communities that have been effective or ineffective in promoting school attendance, and whether teachers have unreasonably low expectations of these children.

Since independence, progress towards improving access and quality in basic education



in Malaysia has been rapid and comprehensive driven by political will and financial commitment. While successes in the education system have been made through dramatic increases in school places, teachers and support for students, the final realisation of the goal of providing a quality basic education for every child will require more refined and informed decisions regarding the types of investments and the targeting of those investments. This assessment echoes the findings of the World Bank's evaluation of its own programme of support for basic education globally – investments in access cannot be translated into improving learning outcomes without a significant emphasis on strengthening management. An increased emphasis on managing for results will place new demands on the MOE's systems and capacity to generate and appropriately analyse and evaluate information about student outcomes rather than system inputs. These improved systems and capacity

will enable the MOE to better identify investments to fully realise Malaysia's national priorities and aspirations.

Enhanced systems and more resources for analysing, monitoring and evaluating education will not produce the outcomes required by Malaysia's national aspirations unless they are complemented with changes in practice at the district and school level. Moving from the current level of success to even higher levels of performance is dependent on higher levels of skills and achievement for greater numbers of children and youth. This can only be promoted by providing resources and, more importantly, a carefully constructed set of incentives and expectations that encourage all schools and districts — even those that are currently seen as successful — to take new steps to reach out to those students who may not be in school or are not currently successful in school.

This more refined policy oriented monitoring

and evaluation is also critical for meeting Malaysia's goals of ensuring equality of opportunity. For example, school dropout rates are regularly estimated and typically presented at the national and state level. This kind of reporting provides an indicator of the system's performance but it does not provide information relevant for potential policies or actions that would improve retention of students in schools – to know that the dropout rate is two percent is quite different from knowing how to reduce it further. One step would be to analyse dropouts on a school-by-school basis to determine whether the incidence of abandoning school is concentrated in particular schools or types of schools. This analysis could be followed up with a more detailed analysis at the student level to identify the factors and differences between students who drop out and those that successfully complete their schooling.

Given Malaysia's existing high levels of quality in education, further improvements are likely to be quite costly. This necessitates that investments be well targeted and that programme and policy costs be more routinely a component of policy-oriented research and evaluation. The current systems for financial analysis and reporting tend to be oriented toward projections for planning and for accountability rather than policy-oriented analysis and evaluation.

Expenditure for the various programmes are carefully collected and regularly reported. But other possible questions and assessment that

will inform investment policy could also be considered. For example, the less frequently practiced policy-oriented assessment that include a financial component such as the analysis of relative cost-effectiveness of the various education support programmes or an examination of the relative rates of return in the various vocational specialisations can also be considered. Incorporating more investment-oriented policy analysis would require greater access to disaggregated financial data and improved capacity for this kind of analysis in the MOE.

Some policy-oriented analyses do take place in the MOE. Capacity with respect to highly trained professionals also exists within the ministry. What may need to be strengthened is the link between existing research and evaluation efforts and policy analysis/refinement so that the research and evaluation agenda is routinely part of the policy process. It may also be the case that the effort to improve on already relatively high levels of quality will require a mechanism to establish and coordinate a policy-oriented research agenda that ensures clear priorities are established across the education sector rather than be driven by agendas in particular sub-sectors or programmes. This prioritised sector-wide policy research and evaluation agenda would also facilitate the incorporation of other valuable resources into efforts to improve the quality of education.

BOX 2

Goal 2: Indigenous Pupils Special Programme (PKMOA)



PKMOA has been approved through Education Development Committee meeting in 1997. This programme is aimed for indigenous pupil who hasn't acquired basic reading 3M skills (reading, writing, and counting). Those whose marks are 30% below in mathematics and Bahasa Melayu will be selected to be in this programme.

PKMOA was first launched with a pilot group consisting of 39 Indigenous schools in Johor, Kelantan, Pahang, Perak and Terengganu in 1999. And the number of schools involved were increased to 55 schools. Curriculum development centre (CDC) is responsible for the curriculum materials whereas Teachers Education Department is responsible to train the teachers. But in the latter implementation,

CDC will be responsible for the materials and training of teachers.

According to the Education Act 1996 (Act 55), Section 29, the school structure for PKMOA is different from ordinary school. The duration of schooling is 6 years for ordinary school and for schools with PKMOA programme the duration of schooling is 7 years, where one year is added after completing year 2, for those selected and they will proceed to year 3 after undergoing the PKMOA programme.

This programme has showed success in upgrading the achievement of pupils especially in Bahasa Melayu and Mathematics. Findings also showed that their attendance to school has increased and consistent.

Goal 3: Ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to learning and life skills programmes



Education for All Goal 3 requires all member countries to take further steps to ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes. For the purpose of this report, the definition of young people is “those between the ages of 15–24 years who are not enrolled in higher education” while life skills refer to:

- Basic skills, which comprise literacy, numeracy and the ability to use information and communication technology;
- Psycho-social skills, which encompass reflective, personal and interpersonal skills including problem solving, critical thinking, and communication;
- Practical or contextual skills, which, consist of technical or vocational skills, income generation, health, gender, family, environment, and civics; and
- Living skills orientation and mobility, manipulative skills, behaviour management, self management, self-care, home living and leisure.

Malaysia's OPP3 emphasises the development of knowledge workers in an effort to achieve the status of "developed nation" by the year 2020. The ability of the country to achieve the goals of these long-term plan depends on the development of trained and motivated human resources infused with values and life skills that contribute to individual development and the development of the country.

KEY STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMMES

STRATEGY I: Provide a quality holistic education

Basic education in Malaysia is free at the primary and secondary level. It is compulsory at the primary level. Early intensive intervention programmes are available in all schools for children having difficulties with literacy and numeracy. Additional academic support is provided for children from indigenous communities (see Goal 2 strategies). The Government of Malaysia also provides

comprehensive support to poor students to remove barriers to school participation.

The concept of educational quality implemented in Malaysian schools combines an emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills with a more holistic view of human capital development. The MOE supports the implementation of co-curricular activities with per capita grants as a means of developing these non-academic outcomes for students.

In Malaysia the promotion of national cohesion and unity must be considered as part of this wider concept of quality. At the primary level, Malaysia has piloted the "Vision School" that places National and National Type (Chinese and/or Tamil) schools in a school complex that allows the sharing of a common canteen, play field and other facilities as a means of promoting tolerance, respect and understanding among children of different ethnic groups. In addition, the Students Integration Plan For Unity (RIMUP) enables primary and secondary students from various ethnic groups to participate in co-curricular activities among schools.



STRATEGY 2: Provide multiple opportunities to improve specific livelihood skills at the secondary and post secondary level

Ministry of Education

At the secondary school level there are 90 MOE technical secondary schools. These schools provide three types of programmes namely a technical programme that combines a secondary school certificate with training in specific technical areas to prepare students for entering a post secondary technical programme, a vocational programme that combines a secondary school certificate with vocational training that enables students to enter Polytechnics, Community Colleges and a programme for vocational certification.

Demands for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in the country remain high. Due to the MOE's promotion efforts, and provision of boarding facilities for girls, an increase in female participation in technical education is evident. Prior to 2000, the ratio of male to female students in technical education was 70:30 but the ratio has improved to the current 60:40. There are schools where the ratio has reached about 50:50.

Ministry of Higher Education

There are currently 23 Polytechnics and 35 community colleges throughout Malaysia under the MOHE. Polytechnics accept only those who complete secondary school while community colleges provide diploma and certificate level courses as well as short-term courses to meet the needs of the community (refer to Goal 4 – for a more complete report).

Polytechnics and community colleges provide broad-based technical education and training to secondary school leavers equipping them with skills and knowledge to become competent technicians and technical assistants in various fields of engineering and

communications technology as well as junior and middle level executives for commerce and service industries. These institutions also provide students with relevant technological and entrepreneurial education and training to enhance their basic skills. They also engage in collaborative programmes with the private and public sectors in areas of training, research and development, and consultancy.

In an effort to ensure polytechnic and community college graduates are employable in their fields of study, the curricula are broad-based and developed based on input from industries. The structure of the curricula, regardless of institutions and levels of study, consists of three main components: general, core and electives for which modules are offered. Modules are designed with the theory-practical mix set at 50:50 for polytechnics and 25:75 for community colleges. In addition, "soft skills modules" are embedded across all subjects. These are the "non-technical skills" – abilities, and traits that are promoted to improve chances for success in future employment. Some examples of soft skills are problem solving, oral communication skills, and teamwork skills.

Ministry of Human Resources

The Ministry of Human Resources (MOHR) is the lead public agency in the development and management of the Malaysian workforce. The Department of Skills Development under the MOHR is responsible for developing National Occupational Skills Standards (NOSS) and for implementing programmes under the Malaysian Skills Certification System. NOSS have been developed for about 800 jobs encompassing a wide-range of industry sectors including the automotive, woodworking, electrical and electronics, ICT, metal machining, welding and metal fabrication, foundry, textile, plastics, tourism and travel, hospitality, cosmetology as well as agricultural fields. The NOSS ensures that

skills training programmes match the actual requirements of the Malaysian industry. To date, 1,171 accredited centres have been approved and offer 6,768 training programmes leading to the Malaysian Skills Certificate (Level 1, 2 or 3), the Malaysian Skills Diploma, or the Malaysian Skills Advanced Diploma. In 2006, 804 private sector training institutions provided 3,935 training programmes accredited by the Department of Skills Development.

The National Skills Development Act came into effect in September 2006. It aims to promote through skills training, the development and improvement of the competencies and capabilities of Malaysians in seeking better livelihoods. The MOHR has also been entrusted to implement the National Dual Training System (NDTS) starting with 500 apprentices in 2005. The NDTS is targeted to produce 31,500 skilled persons by the year 2010. Within the NDTS, training takes place in two learning environments — practical training in the workplace of a participating company, and mastery of theory in the training institution. The main objectives of this new training initiative is to produce a new generation of skilled workers who are better prepared to meet the fast-changing demands of today's workplace. This is in line with Malaysia's economic development goals and developmental needs as well as to improve the competitiveness of the workforce.

The MOHR, through the Manpower Department also provides training programmes including 21 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) that offer training courses for skilled workers up to technician level. The ITIs offer certificate level qualifications for those under 26 years of age. The courses are provided free of charge. The duration of the courses is between 6 and 36 months. The Centre for Instructor and Advanced Skill Training (CIAST) provides training for vocational instructors for both the public and private training institutions. The Centre also conducts skills

upgrading courses. The duration of programmes for instructor training is 24 to 36 months. The Japan-Malaysia Technical Institute (JMTi) started from a cooperative project between the Governments of Japan and Malaysia and it offers advanced technology courses in manufacturing technology, electronics, computer and mechatronics. In addition, four Advanced Technology Training Centres (ADTEC) provide opportunities for pre- and post- employment training in the area of advanced technologies. Upon completion, participants are awarded a diploma level qualification (Malaysian Skills Diploma) and there are plans to upgrade the training to the Malaysian Skills Advanced Diploma qualification. The ADTEC programmes are 24 to 36 months in length and are fee-based.

Ministry of Youth and Sports

The Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS) is another important provider of skills training to youth aged 17 to 25. The Ministry's efforts to mould and produce competent individuals in various skills areas/fields are in line with the National Youth Development Policy and contribute to the national industrial sector. Through its Skills Department, the MYS provides training to youths in various fields and through various approaches, such as short and long-term training as well as institutionalised and non-institutionalised training.

The MYS also provides institutionalised training through part-time skills courses conducted at the National Youth Skills Training Institutes (IKBN) located throughout the country. Various skills areas are offered, such as mechanical, automotive, electric, electronic, civil engineering, hospitality, textile and apparel and personnel services. The Skills Department also offers non-institutionalised short-term modular training. This is of various durations and conducted in various types of premises. The National Youth Apprenticeship Scheme is

another form of training provided by the MYS. The apprenticeships involve cooperation between the private and public sectors. Through this scheme, the employer sponsors apprentices and provides on-the-job training while the Government provides advisory services and incentives. Participants must be between 16 and 26 years of age. The participants receive a small monthly stipend during the six to twelve month apprenticeship period.

Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Cooperative Development

The Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Cooperative Development's (MECD) provides continuous training and guidance to create entrepreneurs with the characteristics to face local and global challenges in the business world. Through the National Entrepreneurial Institute, the MECD provides training in basic business development for school-aged children and young adults in various programmes like the Young Entrepreneur Programme, the Undergraduate Entrepreneur Programme, the Basic Business Programme, the Business Promotion Training Scheme, the Entrepreneurship Creation Training, and the Graduates Entrepreneur Scheme.

The MECD also provides vocational and

technical skills through a number of advanced training institutes: the German–Malaysia Institute, the British–Malaysian Institute, the Malaysia– France Institute, the Malaysia–Spanish Institute and the Malaysia Institute of Aviation Technology. These institutes offer diploma courses for skills training graduates and secondary school leavers.

The Cooperative College of Malaysia under the MECD provides training in management of cooperative enterprises to members of the cooperative.

Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry

The Agricultural Institutes of the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry offer the Certificate in Agriculture to secondary school leavers in fields which include: vegetable and fruits cultivation, landscaping, livestock rearing, fisheries, aquaculture, food processing and marketing. This qualification is recognised and is equivalent to a certificate from the Polytechnics. This programme is accredited under the National Skills Development Act. Those who have obtained the Certificate in Agriculture can further their studies at diploma level at Universiti Putra Malaysia.





Ministry of Defence

In addition to supporting military personnel in pursuit of formal higher education, the Ministry of Defence runs an Army Apprentice Trade School as well as Regional Learning Centres where military personnel can study for their secondary school certificate.

STRATEGY 3: Ensure that children and young people with special needs or living in remote areas have opportunities to continue to develop life skills and to improve their livelihoods

Children have the right to receive the best education possible regardless of their background, religious orientation, race and location. In part, this requires that quality teachers be available. More than 29 thousand TVE teachers or administrators throughout Malaysia received new skills through participation in training programmes between 2000 and 2005.

Life skills in special education have been introduced as early as in preschool and carried through the secondary school programme. Vocational skills among students with special needs have also been emphasised in the 9MP and the EDMP. Students with special needs have also been admitted to secondary level TVET programmes and Polytechnics.

There are 90 secondary technical schools throughout the country to ensure rural youths have access to skills and life skills programmes.

STRATEGY 4: Support the holistic development of children and youth with opportunities to improve life skills

Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health provides a number of health promotion activities for children and youth. The Young Doctor Programme initiated in 1989 was further improved in 1991 with the objective of promoting healthy lifestyles among students through involvement of young doctors in health related activities in schools.

In 1991, the Healthy Lifestyle Campaign was launched to raise awareness and knowledge of health care and healthy lifestyle choices in efforts to encourage Malaysians to adopt a healthy lifestyle. The Campaign is organised around themes and by 2003 it had focused on themes like healthy eating habits, physical activity, say 'no' to smoking and stress management. Modules and health education materials were developed for different target groups including children and youth. The dissemination of materials is through various channels such as forums, exhibitions, health talks, quizzes and competitions and takes place in a variety of settings, including schools.

In May 2006, the MOE, recognising the popularity and importance of the programme in promoting healthy lifestyles among students included it as a co-curriculum activity in all Government primary schools. In 2006, children from 585 primary schools benefited from the programme.

PROSTAR, formerly known as Healthy Without AIDS Programme initiated in 1996, was renamed Health Programme for Youth in 2007. The revised programme focuses not only on HIV and AIDS but on a wider set of health care and healthy lifestyle issues among youth. PROSTAR is a peer education programme that encourages youth to educate other youth to practise healthy lifestyles. Since its inception in 2006, 81,956 peer educators were trained to conduct various activities for other youth and over 800,000 youth have participated in the programme. PROSTAR clubs have also been established in 104 communities and 1,395 schools.

Ministry of Defence

The Malaysian National Service was first implemented in 2003. Originally, it was conceived for all youth at a particular age but the logistical and financial implications of the programme necessitated it be scaled down to a three-month programme for a random selection of Malaysian youth. The purpose of the programme is to foster national identity and harmony among the racial groups of the country. The programme has four components: Physical Module (survival training, hand-to-hand combat, camping, orienteering, etc.), Nation Building Module (classroom training in history, Malaysian and international affairs, Citizenship, etc.), Character-Building Module (classroom based programme intended to instil values, self confidence, leadership, etc.) and Community Service Module (activities like restoring public amenities, reforestation, environmental protection, etc.). In 2003, the first year of implementation, about 85 thousand

randomly selected youths participated in the programme. In 2007, the programme was expanded to 100 thousand participants chosen at random from youth born in 1989.

National Youth Development Action Plan

The National Youth Development Plan was launched in 2004. The action plan emphasised on eleven core elements in youth development including the economic and social well being of youths, capacity building, leadership qualities, and participation in the Young Friend (Rakan Muda) programme, social integration and political awareness. By 2005, more than 400 thousand youths had participated in leadership training programmes focusing on communication skills, negotiation skills, social interaction techniques and other character building activities.

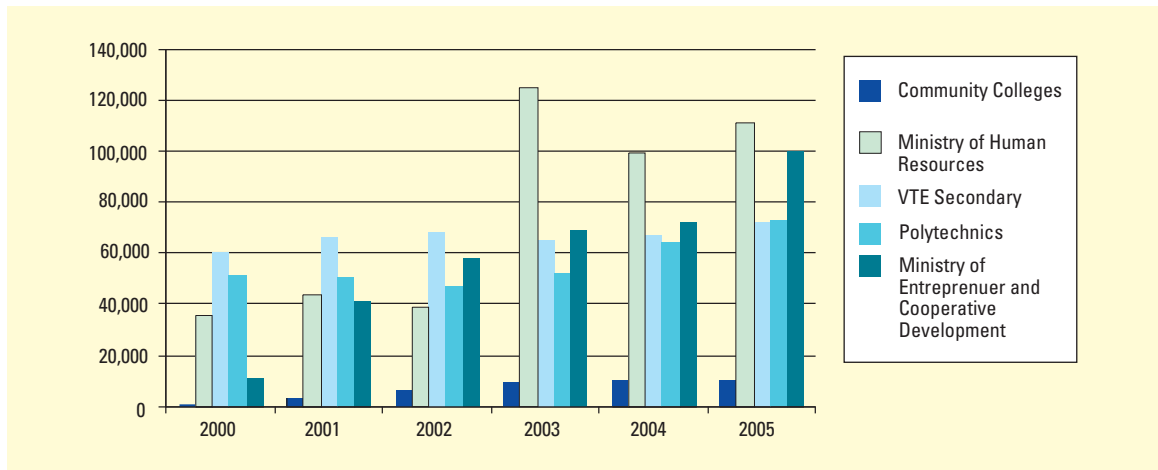
PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING EFA GOAL 3 IN MALAYSIA

Figure 3.14 shows that since 2000 the number of secondary TVE students and secondary school leavers pursuing additional skills training has increased from about 160 thousand to more than 360 thousand. This total includes secondary school leavers who are enrolled in the MECD training programmes, the MOHR provided training programmes and private sector training participants who register for the Malaysia Skills Certificate as well as students in secondary TVE schools.

SUCCESSSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN IMPLEMENTING EFA GOAL 3

The future of Malaysia as a prosperous nation depends greatly on its education and training systems. These systems develop and prepare children and young people with appropriate life

Figure 3.14 Further Skills Training for Secondary School Students and Secondary Completers, 2000–2005



Sources: Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resources, Ministry of Entrepreneur and Cooperative Development, MOE (2000–2005)

skills and knowledge that would enable them to participate fully in a productive and competitive economy. To ensure that the life skills and skills-training programmes conducted by the various ministries and agencies are of acceptable quality, Malaysia has in place the National Occupational Skills Standards (NOSS) that regulates skills training programmes and qualifications.

The Government has invested heavily on the development of this budding human capital through numerous programmes conducted by various ministries and agencies. A database on these life skills and skills training programmes exists within the designated ministries and agencies. As such there is a need to establish a mechanism that could integrate the existing databases on life skills and skills training programmes. A more structured mechanism would be better able to recognise the strengths and weaknesses of the programmes offered. It would also be able to inform decision makers on enhancing and improving the quality of the programmes delivered or terminating programmes that can no longer respond to

the current job market requirements. The mechanism would also be able to respond to the demands for life skills and skills training programmes from all sections of the community.

In order for the country to progress further towards achieving a developed nation status by 2020 more technical and skilled human resources are required. At present, policies and strategies to expand life skills and skills training opportunities for young people, especially those with low academic achievement, are already in place. However, there is a small section of the community that perceives skill training qualification as incapable of ensuring stable economic returns. These perceptions exist because of a lack of awareness of the benefits of the training programme. As such, another challenge for Malaysia is to create awareness among the communities and youths with low academic achievement, awareness of the benefits of acquiring skills training qualifications and promoting aggressively, skills training programmes at all the training institutes.

Goal 4: Achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults

Adult literacy rate is defined as the percentage of the population aged 15 years and above who can read and write with understanding a short simple statement related to everyday life (UNESCO, 1978). The definition of literacy adopted by Malaysia in the 2000 Census was based on the percentage of population aged 10 years and above who were attending or had attended school (DOS, 2002). As a result of the significant expansion of opportunities for basic education since independence, the percentage of the population considered illiterate by this Malaysian definition has fallen from about 42 percent in 1970 to just nine percent at the time of the census in 2000.

More recent measures of literacy subsequent to the last census rely on the sample from the Malaysia Labour Force Survey (MLFS) and use the 2000 census definition of literacy – “having attended or currently attending school”. The MLFS indicates that the number of persons aged 15 and above who were considered illiterate had fallen to about eight percent by 2005. Policies of free basic education and compulsory primary education have resulted in a literacy rate of more than 98 percent for persons 15–24 years of age. With these policies in place, basic illiteracy will continue to decline as new cohorts move through the education system.

A 2006 study of first-year secondary school students in Government schools in Malaysia found that students had generally high levels of basic literacy defined as “the ability to read and write in Bahasa Melayu” (95.2 percent) but



exhibited lower levels (71.2 percent) of critical literacy defined as “the level of skills needed to enter tertiary education or to perform tasks with the level of complexity common to white collar jobs”. Differences in literacy and critical literacy skills were found to be associated with location (lower levels in rural schools) and the socio-economic status of students’ households (disadvantaged students exhibiting lower literacy skills).

Given the generally high participation (enrollment and retention) in basic education, literacy initiatives in Malaysia focus on an expanded functional or critical literacy that

corresponds to the thrusts or goals set out in the 9MP. These are:

- To move the economy up the value chain;
- To raise capacity for knowledge and innovation and nurture a 'first class mentality';
- To address persistent socio-economic inequalities constructively and productively;
- To improve the standard and sustainability of the quality of life; and
- To strengthen institutional and implementation capacities.

While skills and knowledge for all Malaysians regardless of their level of educational attainment are important components for achieving any of these goals, initiatives to improve the skills and knowledge of persons outside the regular formal academic education system are most relevant to the goals of raising the capacity for knowledge and innovation and addressing socio-economic inequalities.

The EDMP hence defines these expanded literacy goals for the education sector as:

- Offering greater opportunities and access to quality education, training and lifelong learning;
- Strengthening national unity and developing a society that is progressive and possessing exemplary value systems;
- Increasing incomes for the lowest 40 percent of households by improving productivity through human capital development; and
- Bridging the rural – urban divide among states and territories through sustainable income generation and improved access to basic needs including education.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE EFA GOAL 4 IN MALAYSIA

With the high rates of Enrollment and completion of primary education in Malaysia, generally, most government-supported initiatives prioritise remote rural areas, especially in the states of

Sabah and Sarawak, and the indigenous communities of Peninsular Malaysia. The 2000 census found more than 91 percent of the population of Malaysia literate. However, the figures for the rural areas of Sabah and Sarawak were significantly lower, at 79 percent and 72 percent respectively. Government efforts for literacy are consistent with this profile as the allocation of resources and the numbers of publicly provided alternatives in the area of literacy are concentrated on the states of Sabah and Sarawak.

Another population group exhibiting lower literacy levels consists of indigenous communities of Peninsular Malaysia. The Action Plan for Educational Development for Indigenous People 2001–2010 (Cabinet Paper 2/2001) sets the objective of increasing the literacy rate among indigenous communities from the 51 percent measured in 2001 to 70 percent by 2010. Both the JHEOA and KEMAS are involved in providing opportunities to poor rural communities and to indigenous communities.

STRATEGY I: Make Basic Education Free and Compulsory and Achieving Literacy a Priority

High levels of adult literacy are best achieved by ensuring that all children have access to a quality basic education. The Government of Malaysia policies for free public education at the primary and secondary level as well as the policy of compulsory primary schooling provide guaranteed access to schooling. These policies are combined with significant investments in promoting educational quality and equity to ensure maximum opportunity for all children to become literate.

At the school level, children having difficulty with reading in Year 1 in any Malaysian public school are provided with extra tutoring through the KIA2M programme. For children from indigenous communities who may experience



added difficulties in becoming literate in the National Language, the PKMOA programme offers the option of an additional year of study focusing on language and literacy between Year 2 and 3. Students who complete study in a primary school where the language of instruction is not the National Language have access to a transition year programme to strengthen their literacy skills before beginning their lower secondary school programme. In addition to specific literacy interventions at the school level, the MOE has developed a new primary school syllabus for indigenous children. The purpose of the new syllabus is to incorporate indigenous culture into the syllabus to better prepare children from indigenous communities for success in primary school. All schools participate in the “Reading Habit is the Key to Knowledge” programme introduced in 1998. The programme encourages students to read through a system of reporting on books read and through competitions.

The MOE also carries out research on literacy and is developing a research agenda on literacy in order to better target literacy initiatives and establish appropriate benchmarks for measuring progress. This framework and agenda will also facilitate international comparisons and

exchange of information and practices with other countries and across sectors in Malaysia.

STRATEGY 2: Provide opportunities for improving literacy skills linked to acquiring opportunities for generating income

The Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Corporate Development and other relevant ministries provide:

- Basic literacy programmes;
- Skill-based programmes;
- Income-based programmes; and
- Formal settings and learning facilities for the training programmes.

The community development agency under KEMAS operates 4,847 training facilities throughout the country. These facilities provide skill and functional literacy training programmes such as: Education for Family Well-Being, Functional Literacy Education, Computer Literacy Education, Education for the Acquisition of Skills and Community Resources Centres. Among the income-generating and skill-based programmes are Business and Entrepreneurship Training, and Rural Information and Information Technology Management. The objective of these programmes is to encourage participation and increase the competitive advantage of groups like the poor, the indigenous people and women - particularly single mothers. The Government is also committed in enhancing ICT skills among the people in rural areas. Seventeen training centres for ICT (Medan Info Desa) have been built throughout the country in order to close the digital divide between the rural and urban communities (Ministry of Rural and Regional Development Annual Report, 2004).

Young people who leave school before completing secondary school also have access to skills training centres (Pusat Giat Mara) under the MECD. These centres offer training to young

people aged 15 and above that ranges from basic skills like sewing to special skills in areas such as building-construction, electronics, electrical engineering, automotive, business and others. Students who complete Pusat Giat Mara training programmes can gain entrance to MECD Skills Training Institutes around the country and pursue a diploma level technical qualification. In addition to the Pusat Giat Mara, the MECD also provides short-term skills training under its entrepreneurship programme. These one- and two-week courses in areas such as basic business skills, contracting, and ICT, are offered to individuals 18 years of age and older.

A new type of educational institution has recently been added to the education system. These MOHE Community Colleges provide the local community with training and skills and provide secondary school leavers the opportunity to improve their prospects before entering the job market or continuing their education at tertiary level in the fields of technology, business and industrial services. Community Colleges are seen as the 'catalyst' for lifelong learning and provide short-term courses for upskilling and reskilling in addition to the diploma and certificate courses. To further encourage participation in the short-term courses, the fees charged are minimal and the courses are provided in a flexible manner. As of 2007, 37 Community Colleges were operational and 60 colleges are planned to be operational by 2010.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) also play an active role in promoting functional literacy for disadvantaged groups. The Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM or the 'Malaysian Effort Trust') is a public-private partnership which combines micro-credit with training and skills development for poor households to transform them into entrepreneurs. AIM has established 2,397 centres covering 2,803 villages and has registered 60,650 members throughout the country.

Yayasan Basmi Kemiskinan (YBK) or the

Foundation for the Eradication of Poverty is a NGO established in the states of Perak, Kelantan, Pahang and Selangor. One of the pilot projects undertaken by YBK Selangor, "Desa Kasih" (Caring Village), was created through the development of 20 acres of land specifically for 110 poor families. Each family is given a house with basic utilities and is supported by skills training through a Community Learning Centre.

STRATEGY 3: Provide literacy training linked to the specific needs of the community

The "Women Motivator" initiative by JHOEA for indigenous communities provides skills to parents of young children through activities that involve both parent and child. The programme addresses literacy by raising awareness and the skills of parents in encouraging reading in their children and increases knowledge about health practices and community development.

The KEMAS Functional Literacy programme for rural and indigenous communities provides specific types of support to indigenous groups. For example, the economic component of the functional literacy programme provides skills relevant to particular regions like sewing, crafts and agricultural skills appropriate to the agricultural potential of that region. The programmes are provided free to the communities. Facilities are provided and the salaries of teachers, paid by the Government. Teachers receive training in pedagogical skills, sewing and culinary skills. Programme durations ranged from six to twelve months and each centre is governed by a committee.

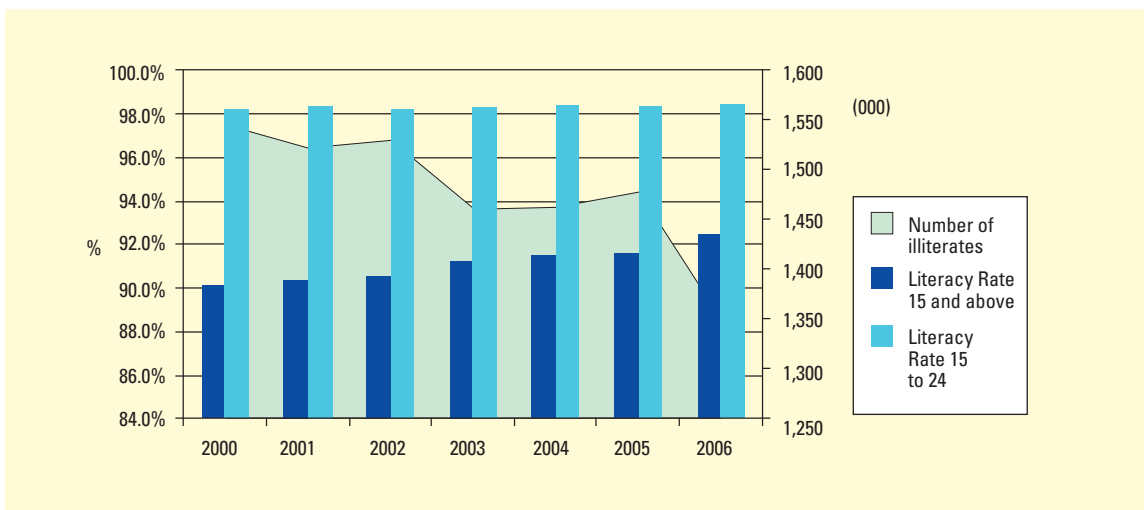
The Government of Malaysia has provided increased opportunities for functional literacy training as part of its national effort to reduce rural-urban disparities. Over 85 percent of the 1,977 new literacy centres provided since 2000 have been established in the states of Sabah and Sarawak.

PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING EFA GOAL 4 IN MALAYSIA

Figure 3.15 indicates that the overall literacy rate for persons 15 years and older in Malaysia has improved about one percent since 2000 and the

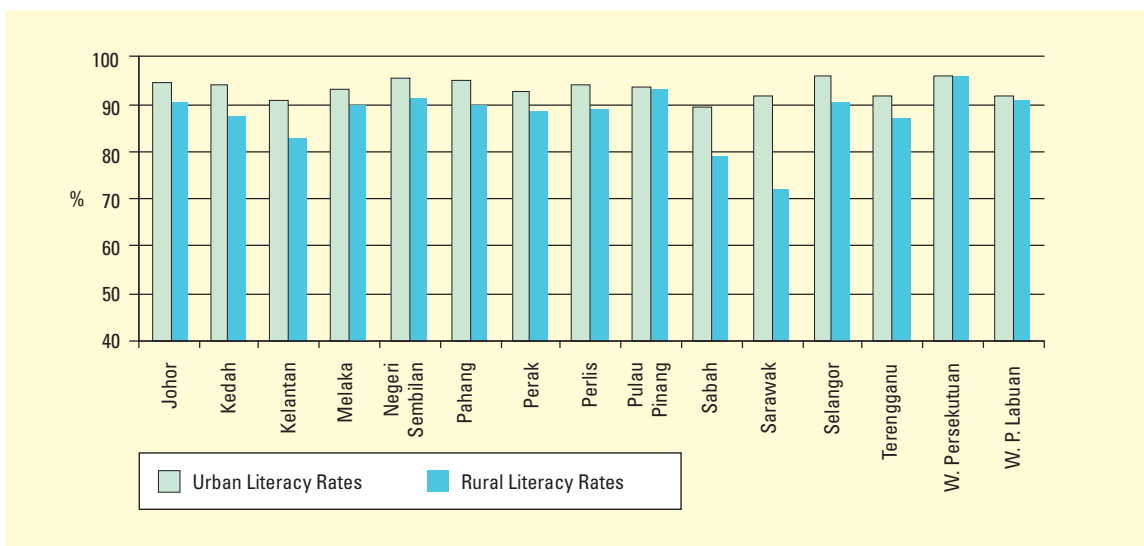
estimate of the absolute number of illiterates in Malaysia has fallen by about 200 thousand persons. The high enrollment and survival rates in primary school have resulted in more than 98 percent of the 15 to 24 year olds meeting the

Figure 3.15 Literacy Rates and Number of Illiterates, 2000–2006



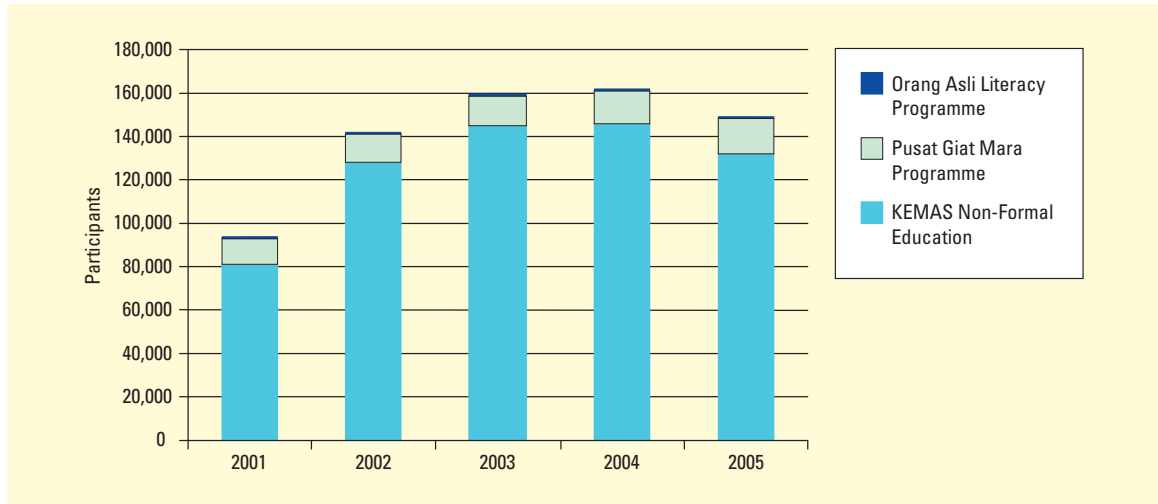
Sources: DOS (2000–2006)

Figure 3.16 Urban and Rural Literacy Rates, by State, 2000



Sources: DOS (2000)

Figure 3.17 Participants in Literacy Programmes and Non-Formal Education, 2001–2005



Sources: Ministry of Rural and Regional Development (KEMAS), Ministry of Rural and Regional Development (Department of Orang Asli), Ministry of Entrepreneur and Cooperative Development, (2001–2005)

Malaysian definition of “literate” (currently attending or having attended school).

Figure 3.16 indicates that low literacy levels are concentrated in specific communities – namely the rural populations of Sabah and Sarawak. Since 2000, the largest share of public resources for literacy training has been dedicated to these two states. Reliable, more disaggregated measures of literacy are not yet available. Improving literacy rates from the relatively high current level will require a means to identify the characteristics of those failing to achieve literacy in order to better target appropriate responses.

Figure 3.17 summarises trends in participation in literacy or skills courses that are available to Malaysians without formal school qualifications. Many of these courses reflect the Government of Malaysia’s efforts to promote functional literacy that also includes basic livelihood skills. Typically, between 130 thousand and 150 thousand people have participated in these programmes each year

between 2001 and 2005 with the largest number represented by participants in the various types of KEMAS literacy programmes. Not included in the figure are the more than 70 thousand participants in short-term courses provided by the MOHE community colleges.

SUCCESSSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN IMPLEMENTING EFA GOAL 4

The high participation rates in formal schooling at the primary and lower secondary level suggest that literacy rates – defined as “having attended school” or “being able to read and write” – will continue to rise in Malaysia. Significant resources for programmes like KIA2M, PKMOA and the optional transition year between primary school and lower secondary school ensure ample support for mastering basic literacy and numeracy skills at the primary school and lower secondary level.

Despite this positive trend, two challenges

persist. One challenge is to be able to better identify children and youth who are not fully participating in the formal primary and lower secondary systems and are at risk of failing to become literate. As mentioned in the discussion for Goal 2, the high participation rates in Malaysia means that typical methods for measuring the number of children out of school will not provide a sufficiently sensitive measure and more innovative and creative means of identifying these children and youth will need to become part of the regular MOE supported exercises. As discussed in Goal 2, these more creative initiatives involve supporting schools to be “child seeking” institutions.

The second challenge is to provide improved life chances for those children and youth who, for one reason or another, leave the formal academic stream and ensure that they have what is needed to effectively contribute to the development of a progressive and cohesive society. The evolution of the Malaysian and global economy requires a functional or critical literacy that exceeds the simple standard of being able to read and write; effective participation in public life in a complex multi-ethnic, rapidly-developing society places ever increasing demands on the critical thinking skills of all Malaysians. The goals of the 9MP to move the economy up the value chain, to raise the capacity for knowledge and innovation, to address persistent socio-economic inequalities, to improve the standard and sustainability of quality of life and to strengthen the institutional and implementation capacity cannot be achieved unless even those who do not complete formal secondary school have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to contribute to the national development process.

This wider concept of functional literacy focuses attention on Malaysian youths and young adults. For struggling adolescent learners

in schools, the objectives of any literacy improvement strategy must be centred on accelerating students’ reading and academic learning in subject matter areas and finding ways to make use of their out-of-school interests in computers and the media to foster their in-school subject matter learning. On the other hand, literacy improvement strategies for school dropouts and young adults with low levels of literacy must emphasise the development of literacy skills that will help them gain employment and access to community services such as medical facilities, skills training and continuing education.

These kinds of knowledge and skills require much more than a primary level education – or just being able to read and write. Even standard secondary education will be insufficient without additional opportunities either within the standard secondary school or in alternative settings. While enrollment in and graduation from functional literacy programmes and related initiatives are regularly reported, there is a lack of rigorous ongoing assessment of the impact of these programmes on the lives of participants and their overall contribution to the social and economic development of the country. This lack of critical assessment seriously limits the ability to prioritise investments that are successful and to respond to the regularly changing needs of a dynamic society and economy.

Perhaps the major obstacle to ongoing assessment and effective planning of functional literacy initiatives is the lack of a common definition of functional literacy and a national framework for literacy advocacy and programming for all of the important Government, non-government and private sector stakeholders. Without this framework there is no common understanding of the criteria for assessing the success of current initiatives or for identifying modifications of

current initiatives and areas where new efforts are required. This national framework should provide concrete definitions for literacy – including new literacies arising from the evolving technologies of global communications as well as illustrate how literacy is manifested in a multi-ethnic society. This common definition and framework would facilitate the coherent cross-sectoral planning necessary for functional literacy efforts that improve the life chances of participants and the cohesiveness and resilience of the Malaysian economy and society. A national framework would also serve to orient private sector literacy and skills initiatives to well-defined national goals and priorities as well

as to reshape individual teachers' thinking, awareness and practices with respect to literacy for children and young adults.

The elaboration of a common definition of functional literacy and a national framework should be informed by a cross-sectoral research agenda on literacy that assesses the social impact of current initiatives and policies. Additional research and evaluation capacity necessary to implement the research agenda must also be developed. Once established, this improved cross-sectoral research capacity can ensure that the definition, national literacy framework and ongoing assessment evolve to meet Malaysia's social and economic needs and aspirations.

BOX 3**Goal 4: Infodesa Programe by Ministry of Rural and Regional Development**

Local leaders and the community at any age are given hands on ICT training at Medan InfoDesa centers (MID). MID centers are provided by the government to impart ICT skills among the communities of the rural and remote areas in reducing the digital gap among the society. Training programme packages

include computer literacy, Internet browsing and computer hardware maintenance. Other aims of the government are to create a networking society among the community and updating the community data by the local leaders. Acquiring ICT skills will enable the community to engage it in conducting business or becoming an ICT entrepreneur.

Research done by the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development has shown a positive inclination towards the ICT programmes. Almost two thirds of the participants (64.5%) wanted to be seriously involved in the MID activities. Thus there is an indication that the government should continuously support the MID to enhance its contribution to ICT development in the rural areas.

Goal 5: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015 with a focus ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality



The assessment of the “Gender Goal” only becomes meaningful when there is a clear understanding of what is meant by “gender” and “gender equality”. According to the UNESCO Gender Toolkit, gender refers to “the roles and responsibilities of men and women that are created in our families, our societies and our cultures. The concept of gender also includes the expectations held about characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviours of both women

and men”. It is clearly distinguished from sex, which describes the biological differences between men and women. “Gender equality” — means “women and men have equal conditions — for realising their full human rights and for contributing to, and benefiting from, economic, social, cultural, and political development”. It is therefore the equal valuing by society, of the similarities and the differences and the roles they play.

Gender as a development focus was first mentioned in the Third Malaysia Plan (1976–80), which encouraged the active participation of women in development and their contribution to the economy. Later five-year development plans have given greater prominence to gender issues and since the 6MP, a full chapter has been devoted to policies and programmes that promote women in development. The National Policy for Women (NPW), a major initiative affecting gender equality and women's empowerment in Malaysia was formulated in 1989. Its contents were incorporated into the Sixth Malaysia Plan and have formed the basis for many of the subsequent policies relating to women in development. The NPW's primary objectives are: to ensure equitable sharing in the acquisition of resources and information as well as opportunities and benefits of development for men and women; and to integrate women in all sectors of national development in accordance with their capabilities and needs in order to eradicate poverty, ignorance and illiteracy, and to ensure a peaceful, harmonious, and prosperous nation.

In Malaysia, male and female children have equal access to education. There is no discrimination against female students in terms of legislation, policy, mechanisms, structures or allocation of resources. Each child receives education as an individual and not according to gender. They are all taught the same curriculum and sit for the same public examinations. All curriculum, textbooks and teaching materials are carefully evaluated to ensure that the contents do not stereotype females as inferior to males, or females are incapable of receiving higher education, or incapable of holding important posts either in the private or public sectors. This is important in nurturing positive values in children.

Education is one of the key factors in achieving the national mission and teachers play an important role in ensuring this success. Teachers need to understand and possess a high

degree of commitment in implementing education initiatives and new approaches for improving the quality of education. Therefore, those recruited into the teaching profession must be highly committed and with the right qualification and attitude. Teacher training institutes managed by the MOE admit both men and women. However, the trend shows that more women than men are interested in applying into the teacher education institutes. The drop in the number of male teachers in both primary and secondary schools over the past years has intensified MOE's efforts to encourage males into the teaching profession. The media has been capitalised to encourage males to apply for training, but it appears that the recruitment of more males continue to be a challenge to the MOE.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE EFA GOAL 5 IN MALAYSIA

The Malaysian National Education System provides primary, secondary and tertiary education with the aim of creating a united, disciplined and skilled society. The provision of primary and secondary education, democratisation of educational opportunities, special assistance for the disadvantaged groups, enhanced technical education, and diversification of educational opportunities, especially in the sciences and technical fields are strategies employed to achieve the aims. These strategies apply equally to males and females. However, there are interventions that address gender issues.

STRATEGY 1: Encourage Female Students to Opt For Technical and Engineering Based Courses

Under the National Curriculum, students in secondary schools are allowed to choose technical/commercial subjects and courses based on their interests and potentials. For the Living Skills Subject, a student has the option to choose

one of the four elective components namely, Additional Manipulative Skills, Home Economics, Agriculture and Commerce and Entrepreneurship Skills. Based on the trend in the high number of female students opting for Home Economics as compared to Additional Manipulative Skills, it is apparent that gender stratification exists in the choices of courses the girls made. The large number of girls pursuing courses offering traditionally female oriented or entrepreneurship skills as opposed to courses offering technical skills is probably due to deeply ingrained social and cultural values. The MOE is stepping up efforts to encourage female students to opt for Additional Manipulative Skills as an elective.

STRATEGY 2: Raise Awareness on Issues Such As Gender Discrimination and Stereotypes in Career and Vocation

Career and vocational guidance are provided in schools and students are free to choose their career regardless of their gender. Information on career opportunities and higher education is available in schools through schools resource centres. The School Division of the Ministry of Education has produced six volumes of books on careers to assist school counsellors in advising students on career choices. The books also raise awareness on issues such as gender discrimination and stereotypes.

STRATEGY 3: Encourage Female Students into Technical and Vocational Secondary Schools

Technical and vocational schools offer education at the upper secondary level. At present, there are 90 technical schools. The technical schools provide basic knowledge and skills in technical and vocational fields which are essential to the trade and industrial sector. The courses offered are: civil engineering, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, agriculture, commerce, home economics and technology. Female students are also encouraged to enter these technical and vocational schools.

STRATEGY 4: Encourage Female Students to Participate in Sports and Physical Education

Female students are encouraged and given the same opportunities as male students to participate in sports and physical education. There are no regulations or prohibitions to hinder the participation of females in sports and physical activities. Male and female students have equal access to sports and physical facilities. For example, the involvement of female athletes in various high performance games during the Malaysian Schools Sports Council (MSSM) meets for the past five years was almost equal to that of their male counterparts. This is in accordance with the National Sport Policy that



“all students should be encouraged to strive for excellence in sports”.

STRATEGY 5: Raise Awareness in Gender Issues Through School Text Book

Textbooks play a vital role in eradicating discrimination and stereotyping of women by promoting positive portrayals of women. The MOE has drawn up guidelines to writers and publishers, emphasising, the need to avoid issues related to the discrimination of women. The guidelines ensure that the content, presentation of materials and graphics in textbooks are not gender biased. The panel of evaluators are selected among teachers with a minimum of five years teaching experience.

The materials in textbooks such as texts, passages and activities take into consideration the interests of both genders and present equal portrayals of both sexes. In terms of illustrations and graphic presentations, which play a functional role in clarifying the content of the textbook, women are depicted in active and dynamic roles such as doctors, engineers, lawyers and scientists instead of the stereotype role of a housewife, teacher or nurse. The indiscrimination of women portrayed in the textbooks would uplift the morale of women in the new millennium and eliminate any form of discrimination against them.

STRATEGY 6: Introduce Vocational Subjects in Regular Secondary Schools to Encourage Boys to Stay Longer in Schools

To meet the demands of students who are inclined towards vocational skills, vocational subjects were introduced in Regular Secondary Schools (RSS) in 2002. In 2006, there were a total of 556 schools (746 workshops) which offered 22 vocational subjects in the field of manufacturing, construction, home economics, agro-technology



and computer applications. In addition, vocational subjects are also offered to students with special needs under the Integrated Special Education Programme. In 2008, two vocational subjects, namely, catering and agriculture for hearing impaired students will be piloted in Sabah.

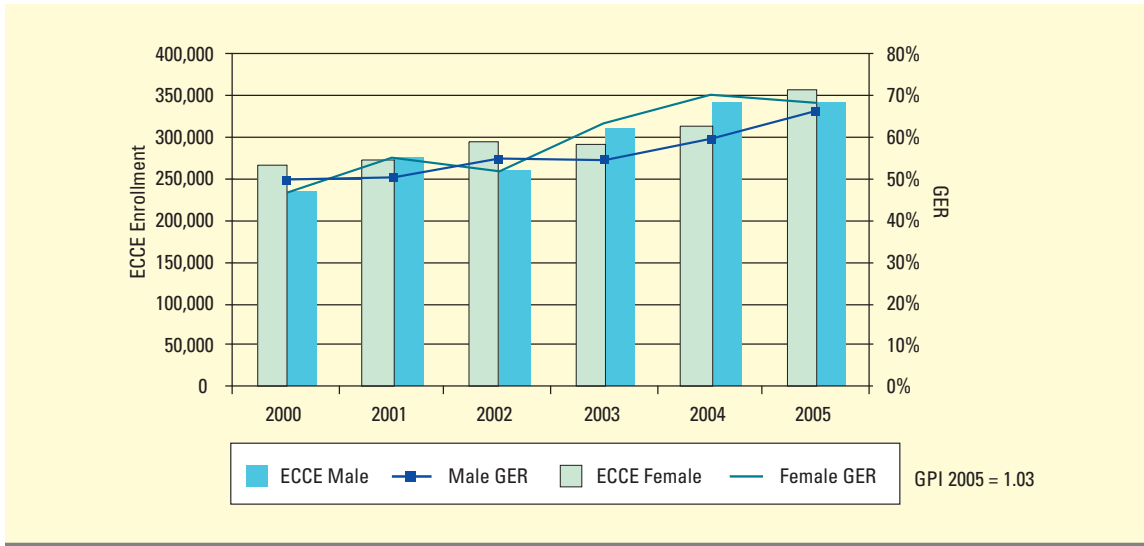
PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING EFA GOAL 5

Figure 3.18 shows that girls and boys participate in ECCE in roughly equal numbers. The GER for preschool aged children (4 to 6 years old) is 66 percent for boys and 68 percent for girls. The gender parity index at the preschool level is 1.03.

While boys enrollment is greater than girls enrollment at the primary level, it is a function of relatively higher numbers of boys in the primary school age cohort. Figure 3.19 shows that the GER for girls is routinely about one percent greater than that for boys each year 2000–2005. The gender parity index for primary level in 2005 is 1.01.

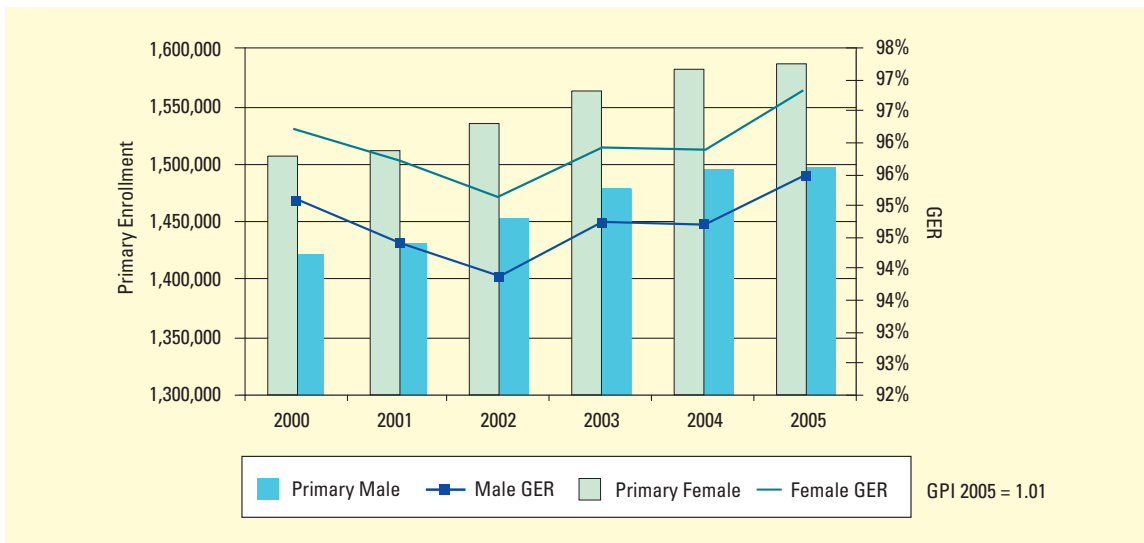
The percentage of secondary school age girls enrolled in secondary school is greater than that for boys. This is especially true at the senior secondary level. The gender parity index for secondary level is 1.07 as illustrated in Figure 3.20.

Figure 3.18 GER and Enrollment for ECCE 4–6 years old by Gender, 2000–2005



Sources: EMIS, EPRD, MOE: DOS (2000–2005)

Figure 3.19 GER and Enrollment for Primary Education by Gender, 2000–2005



Sources: EMIS, EPRD, MOE: DOS (2000–2005)

The number of children not enrolled in primary or secondary education has remained stable in the 2000 to 2005 period – although the number is about 2000 less than it was in 1985. As highlighted in Figure 3.21 girls represent only

about 35 percent of the out of school children of primary and secondary school age cohorts.

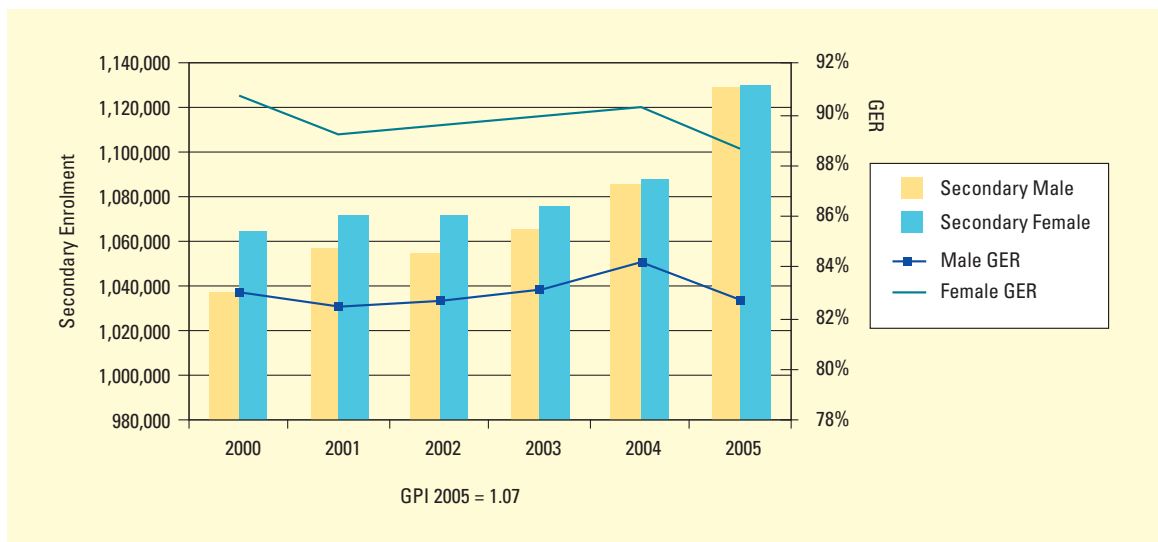
Table 3.1 presents students achievement by gender at primary, lower secondary and senior secondary level, a higher percentage of girls

achieve minimum standard mastery in Malay Language, English and Mathematics than boys who sit for the same national examinations in 2003.

Figure 3.22 shows the enrollment figures according to gender at Teacher Education Institutes (TEI) from 2000 to 2005. Female enrollment is higher than male in every year as

indicated in the table. The decreasing enrollment of male in the teacher education institutes from 38.7 percent in 2000 to 29.8 percent in 2005 is a growing concern of the MOE and less qualified males are applying into the teacher education institutes and becomes great challenge for the MOE to attract better qualified males into the teaching profession.

Figure 3.20 GER and Enrollment for Secondary by Gender (public and private), 2000–2005



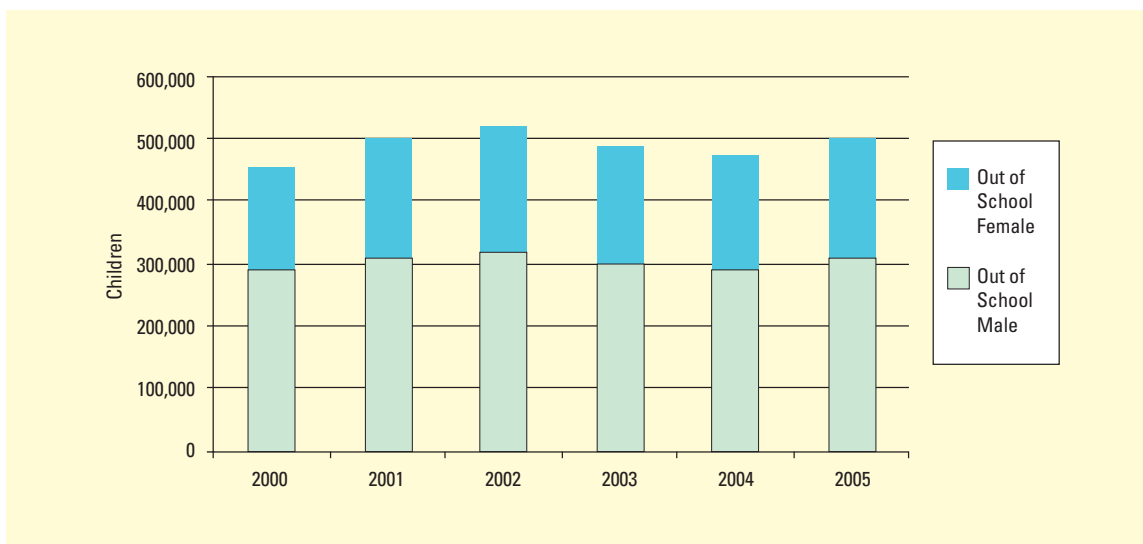
Sources: EMIS, EPRD, MOE: DOS (2000–2005)

Table 3.1 Student Achievement by Gender, 2003

	Primary Achievement Test		Lower Secondary Achievement		Malaysia Senior Certificate Examination	
	Percent Passing with A, B or C		Percent Passing with A, B, C or D		Percent Passing with A, B or C	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Mathematics	81.0%	89.3%	88.8%	94.0%	65.3%	76.3%
English	58.7%	74.9%	60.5%	75.7%	57.7%	74.0%
Malay Language	81.2%	89.8%	92.4%	97.5%	83.7%	92.0%

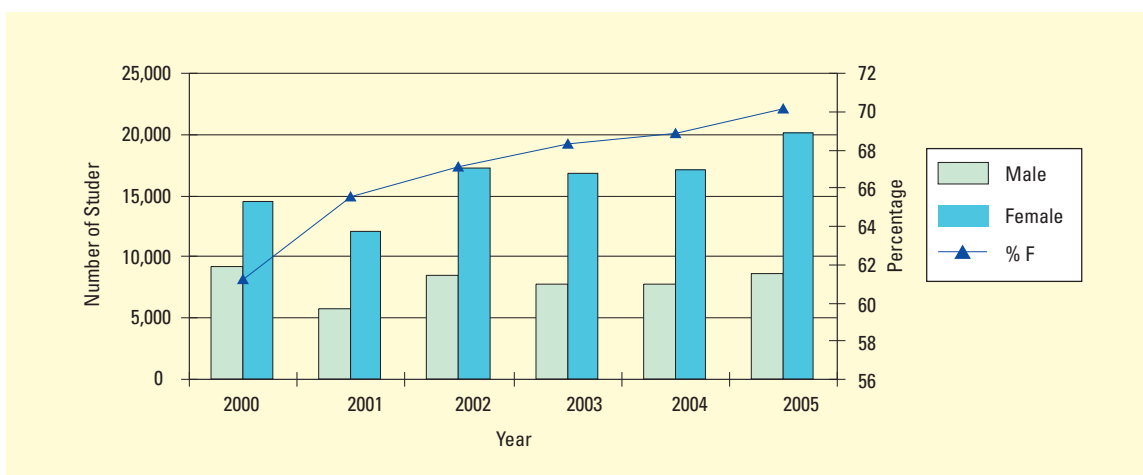
Sources: Examination Syndicate, MOE (2003)

Figure 3.21 | Number of Primary and Secondary Age Children Out of School by Gender, 2000–2005



Sources: EMIS, EPRD, MOE: DOS (2000–2005)

Figure 3.22 | Enrollment in Teacher Education Institutes by Gender, 2000–2005



Sources: Teacher Education Division, MOE

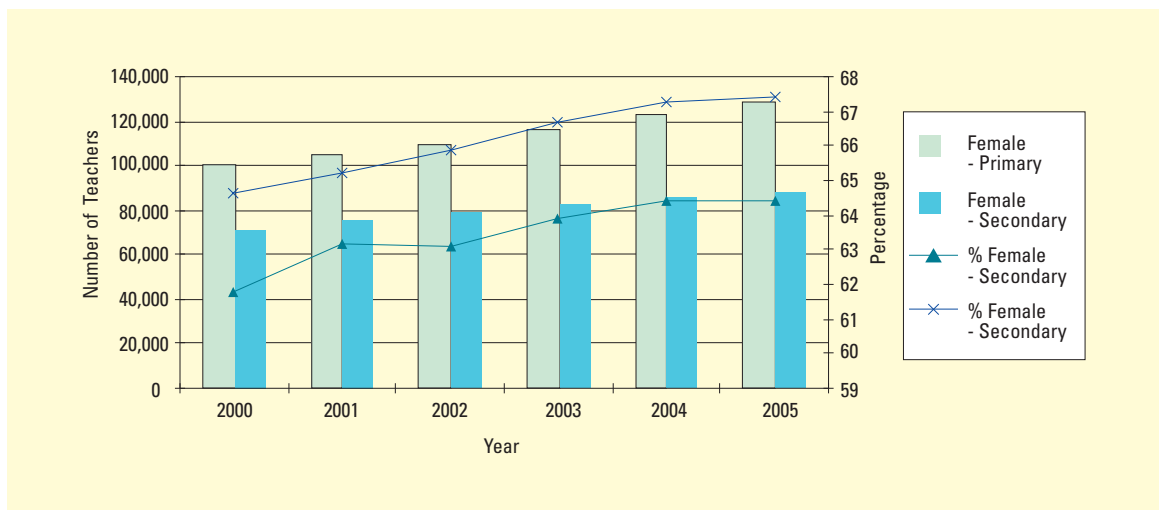
The low enrollment of male in the teacher education institutes has resulted in a small percentage of male teachers in schools. Between the 2000 to 2005 period, male teachers at primary and secondary schools comprise only about 30 percent to 37 percent as shown in Figure 3.23.

Figure 3.24 also shows the total number of lecturers in the TEI and polytechnics. In these institutes, the number of male lecturers is higher than female lecturers during the 2000 to 2005 period. The number of female lecturers increased from 36.1 percent in 2000 to

40.9 percent in 2005. However, the trend is not the same in the polytechnics. In the polytechnics, the female lecturers have outnumbered the male lectures in recent years. Figure 3.24

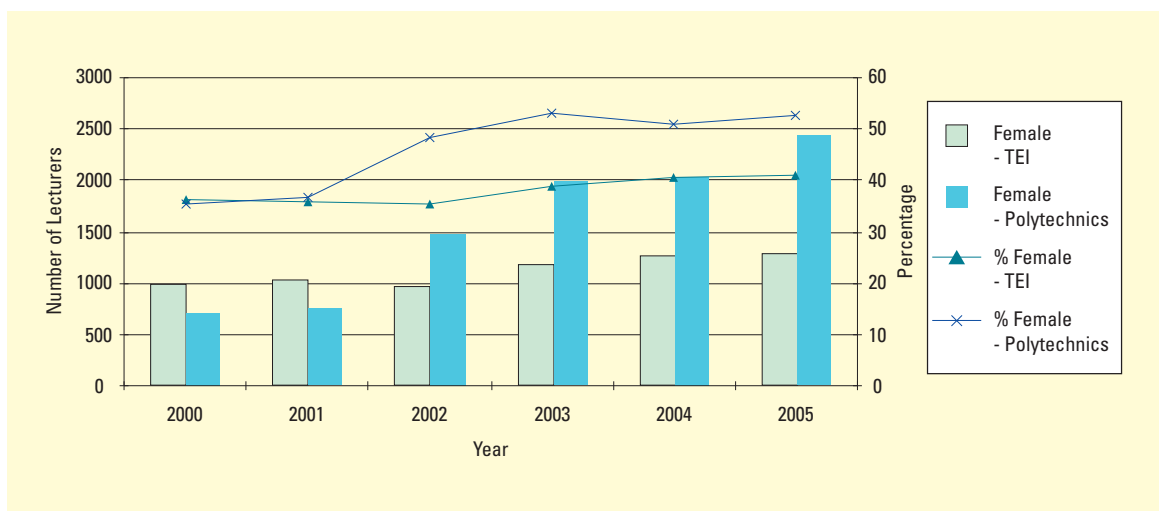
shows the higher percentage of female lecturers in polytechnics as compared to their male counterparts.

Figure 3.23 | Number of Teachers in Primary and Secondary School by Gender, 2000–2005



Sources: Teacher Education Division, MOE (2000–2005)

Figure 3.24 | Number of Lecturers in Teacher Education Institutes and Polytechnics by Gender, 2000–2005



Source: Teacher Education Division, MOE, Polytechnics (2000–2005)

SUCCESSSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN IMPLEMENTING EFA GOAL 5

In Malaysia there is no particular gender bias in sending children to schools. Malaysia has generally achieved gender parity in education in 2005. This is evident by the high participation rate of over 96 percent Malaysian children in public and private primary schools and 88 percent in secondary schools. The dropout occurrences during the primary level although minimal in percentages, in absolute number it represents about 10,000 primary school children per year. Malaysia's participation rate at secondary level of over 88 percent in 2005 must be improved. Especially alarming is the fact that there is a growing trend that boys are at a disadvantaged in terms of participation compared to girls. A higher enrollment of female to that of male at this level indicates education at this level favours females over males. This trend places Malaysia in a unique situation as compared to many other developing countries that recorded higher male participation. Should this trend persists, Malaysia's achievement in meeting the MDGs and Education for All (EFA) goals by 2015 would be affected.

Conventional measures of gender parity in education in Malaysia indicate that participation and educational outcomes in the system are as good as or better for girls. The only area of which female participation rate is disproportionately low is in the technical and engineering field. Choices by girls and women as to their career paths are individual decisions made within the context of a larger cultural setting. Efforts are being made to address this issue and the Ministry of Education is

considering ways to encourage female students in schools to choose elective subjects such as Additional Manipulative Skills at the lower secondary school level, which will hopefully lead them to choose technical and engineering related subjects or courses later on.

The imbalance in the ratio of male to female teachers in Malaysia is brought about by a relatively lower number of males interested to take up teaching as a career. This trend apparently exists in most countries around the world. To address the issue of imbalance in the ratio of male to female teachers in Malaysia, the MOE is increasing its efforts to make the teaching profession more attractive.

Women in Malaysia, have made remarkable achievement in education and continue to progress in most fields of studies. However, women are decidedly under-represented among top decision makers in both the private and public sector. Choices by girls and women as to their career paths are individual decisions made within the context of a larger cultural setting. These decisions do have an effect on the larger society when, for example, women feel they don't have support to relocate when they are required to take progressively more responsible positions. In this case it is the entire society that pays the price of the loss of these talents – not just the women themselves. While a wholesale adoption of patterns from other countries is not desirable it would be wise to examine what contribution the education sector can make (along with other stakeholders) for enabling the country to take full advantage of the talents of Malaysian women consistent with a consensus view of Malaysian cultural values.

Goal 6: Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.



“Quality has become a dynamic concept that has to constantly adapt to a world whose societies are undergoing profound social and economic transformation. Encouragement for future-oriented thinking and anticipation is gaining importance. Old notions of quality are no longer enough... despite the different contexts there are many common elements in the pursuit of a quality education, which should equip all people, women and men, to be fully participating members of their own communities and also citizens of the world” (Ministerial Round Table on Quality Education, UNESCO, 2003, p.1). Quality in education is central to Malaysia’s march

towards developed nation status. The 9MP commits the education sector “to raise the capacity for knowledge and innovation and nurture first class mentality”. The National Education System rests on the foundations of the National Philosophy of Education and it executes its mission through actions described in the Education Development Plan (2001–2010).

National Philosophy of Education (NPE)

Education in Malaysia is a continuous effort to develop the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner. The system aspires to

produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious, based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. These characteristics prepare individuals to assume the full role of Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards, and who are responsible and capable of achieving a high level of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the harmony and betterment of the family, society and the nation at large. The NPE is realised through promoting a learning culture; encouraging creativity and innovation among students; inculcating a research culture in science and technology; promoting lifelong learning; providing an efficient and world-class education system; establishing Malaysia as a centre of educational excellence; and raising the professionalism of the teaching profession to a level consistent with international norms.

The Education Development Plan 2001–2010

The EDP describes the education sector's strategies for furthering the National Vision of building a resilient nation and just society that has globally competitive human resources and a knowledge economy capable of sustainable economic growth and maintaining sustainable environmental development.

The implementation of the EDP is intended to ensure that all citizens regardless of socio-economic circumstances, ethnicity and location have the opportunity to complete eleven years of quality education. The plan also emphasises strengthening the capacity of tertiary education to produce the knowledgeable and skilled workforce described in the NPE. The plan complements the strategies of the OPP3 and the 9MP to increase the nation's economic growth in support of efforts to build a united, just and equitable society as well as meeting the challenges of globalisation and to creating a

developed nation with its own unique Malaysian characteristics.

The EDMP unveiled in January 2006 is a mid-term realignment of the EDP. The EDMP focuses the sector's energies in the remaining five years to support the National Mission through the prioritisation of the six thrusts of the blueprint for education. The six thrusts are:

- Nation Building;
- Developing Human Capital;
- Strengthening National Schools;
- Bridging the Education Gap;
- Elevating the Teaching Profession; and
- Accelerating Excellence in Educational Institutions.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE EFA GOAL 6 IN MALAYSIA

STRATEGY 1: Continue to improve physical conditions in schools – especially in regards to eliminating rural-urban differences

The 9MP commits the Government to constructing more than 13,000 classrooms by 2010. These classrooms will lower primary student classroom ratios from 31 students per classroom to 30 students per classroom at the primary level and from 32 to 30 students per classroom at the secondary level. The additional classrooms will also permit an increase in the percentage of single session primary schools from 86 percent to 90 percent and from 65 percent to 70 percent for secondary schools. Additional investments are being made to rehabilitate schools to ensure that all remaining primary and secondary schools have 24 hour electricity and clean water and sanitation by 2010. The largest share of the investment in school infrastructure is directed to rural areas to address the remaining rural urban differences.



STRATEGY 2: Support a holistic concept of quality with appropriate school level inputs and diverse programmes for different types of learners in schools

The Government of Malaysia is committed to developing children and youth in a holistic manner with emphasis on both the acquisition of skills and the promotion of a strong spiritual, emotional and physical foundation for life. The characteristics and preparation of human resources (teachers and counsellors) and the adequacy of physical inputs at the school level as well as the variety of programmes on offer in a school are key elements in overall educational quality in this holistic framework.

Well trained, knowledgeable and committed teachers are clearly key elements contributing to quality at the school level. In addition to regular pre-service and in-service programmes, the MOE is currently investing in tuition support and living stipends to allow non-graduate teachers to complete first degrees. The goal is to increase the percentage of primary teachers who are first degree graduates from 10.5 percent in 2006 to 50 percent by 2010. Similar support is being provided to secondary teachers with the goal of

ensuring that all secondary teachers are first degree graduates by 2010. The ability of schools to provide attention to students in a holistic manner is being further enhanced through the creation of full time counselling posts at both the primary and secondary levels. The target is to provide one counsellor for every five hundred students in the system.

In addition to improving teacher qualifications, the number of teachers in public primary schools has also been increased by more than 35 thousand between 2000 and 2005. This increase in teachers lowers student-teacher ratios from 19 students per teacher to 16.4 students per teacher. Student-teacher ratios have also been lowered at the secondary level during the same period from 17.7 to 16.2.

Early and intensive intervention and support for primary school students having difficulties in reading is provided in all Malaysian schools in year one through the KIA2M programme. For children from indigenous communities an optional additional year of primary schooling is available for children having difficulties between years two and three of primary school (PKMOA) as well as an optional “transition” year between primary school and lower secondary school.

To ensure that Malaysian students have the

best possible access to global developments in science and technology, the use of English as the language of instruction for Science and Mathematics was implemented beginning in 2003. This policy is supported by significant investments in training to improve the English proficiency of teachers as well as through the provision of instructional materials such as courseware, textbooks, activity books, and ICT facilities including computer laboratories, notebooks, and LCD projectors. The process has also been supported by more than 13,000 school visits by the Inspectorate of Schools since the inception of the policy to monitor results and provide feedback and guidance.

The Government of Malaysia has made significant investment in harnessing ICT for supporting the delivery of the curriculum. Significant investment has also been made in utilising ICT as a means of expanding the horizons of students beyond the academic offerings of the school and to foster the development of skills in using electronic media for gathering information. The MOE “Access Centre” programme provides hardware, software and connectivity to rural schools for the establishment of cyber café style internet access where students can pursue individual interests and maintain contacts with other young people in Malaysia and beyond.

The MOE has recently further diversified the school programme at the secondary level by offering a limited number of vocational/technical courses in regular secondary schools. These courses are intended to provide skills for students who do not plan to continue their studies and to motivate non-academically oriented students to remain in senior secondary school and complete their secondary education.

The MOE has recognised the importance of combining high levels of academic skills with positive values, morals and self-discipline as part of a more comprehensive view of human capital.

An important component in developing these “soft skills” is co-curricular activities. Currently the MOE officially recognises and sanctions more than 300 types of co-curricular activities that include clubs, sports, cultural activities, debate competitions and many more. The recognition of the importance of these activities as critical components of a quality education is demonstrated by the increase in per capita grants to schools for these activities in 2006 and by the formal inclusion of co-curricular activities as a component of the admission criteria to higher education. Traditional school and student award programmes also now include awards for exemplary performance in co-curricular activities.

In a multi-ethnic society such as Malaysia promotion of national cohesion and respect for the national ethnicities must be considered as part of this wider concept of quality. At the primary level Malaysia has instituted a pilot programme – the “Vision School” that links adjacent National and National Type (Chinese and/or Tamil) schools allowing the sharing of common canteens, play fields and other facilities thereby creating an environment for promoting understanding among ethnic groups. In addition, a formal programme that links school participation in co-curricular activities across ethnicity is also part of the Malaysian school programme at both the primary and secondary levels.

STRATEGY 3: Expand the variety of programmes and institutions in the system to reach more children and youth

In addition to promoting a holistic education by expanding what is provided in mainstream schools, the MOE has also expanded other types of institutions and programmes. These additional programmes or institutions are specifically designed to reach children who may experience barriers to full participation in the regular academic programme of primary and

secondary schools. One such group constitutes children with special needs. Special education services are provided to students who have visual or hearing impairment or learning disabilities. Special education is implemented through special schools for visual and hearing impairment or learning disabilities. For students who can function in a regular school the Integrated Special Education Programme is

made available in mainstream primary and secondary schools as well as in technical/vocational secondary schools, which adopt inclusive teaching and learning approaches. A special programme has been implemented in secondary vocational and technical schools to extend educational opportunities for students with special needs. Through these programmes, students follow the

BOX 4**Goal 6: SQEM (Standard for Quality Education in Malaysia)**

Ms Zainab Hasan was appointed as a school principal in 2005 in SK Bellamy. Students performance in the school is considered moderate and as a new school principal, Ms Hasan would like to improve the situation but find the task rather challenging.

Prior to her appointment, Ms Hasan worked as a school inspectorate at the IOS Wilayah Persekutuan. Ms Hasan understands how the Standard for Quality Education in Malaysia (SQEM) can help school to improve as she had the experience of using the instrument to evaluate schools that she visited when she was at the IOS. Among her first task as a school principle was to form a special committee that would oversee the implementation of the SQEM. The committee – consists of senior administrators, resource teacher, data teacher and counselor - provides a forum for the school administrator to review the performance of the school.

According to Ms Hasan, SQEM helps her to scan the school environment as it also serves as a check list in managing her school. The instrument enables her to make objective evaluation of her school and determines the

gaps that exist. With the instrument, Ms Hasan was able to plan programmes properly rather than being reactive.

Although, it is still too early to see marked improvement in student achievement in Ms Hasan's school, at least the school information system is now in place and well organised. A major setback to SQEM, according to Ms Hasan, is that it requires enormous amount of efforts to collect the needed data at the initial stage of its implementation. Only school heads who belief in the role and the value that SQEM will benefit from it. Others who implement the SQEM for the sake of just submitting the required information to IOS will not gain much from it.

Ms Hasan suggested that continuous monitoring of and support for the utilization of SQEM in schools should be carried by IOS and State Education Department (SED). The SED should adopt the SQEM as an instrument of choice for school evaluation. The SQEM should be further improved to make it less taxing for new users.

inclusive or consolidated programme offered by the National Vocational Training Board.

The Education Act of 1996 formalised preschool as part of the National Education System. While it is not considered compulsory, its provision for all five and six year olds in Malaysia has been included in the 9MP. To realise this goal, all primary schools will include a preschool class by 2010. These additional opportunities will supplement existing KEMAS, PERPADUAN and MOE classes as well as those provided by private providers. The quality of public and private preschool programmes for children between the ages of 4 and 6 is ensured through the provision of a National Preschool Curriculum prescribed by the MOE. However, KEMAS has the responsibility of ensuring the quality of programmes for younger children below the age of four.

In collaboration with MOE's efforts to promote school attendance among children from indigenous communities, the JHEOA provides school transport, uniforms and other material support to these communities. The MOE is currently developing an adaptation of the Integrated Primary School Curriculum that will utilise indigenous cultural content to promote learning.

The MOHE community colleges have been added to the public education system since 2000. These colleges provide new opportunities for young persons to further develop basic knowledge and technical skills. By 2010 the number of community colleges will have increased from about 35 in 2007 to 222. These colleges provide full time certificate and diploma programmes with a technical orientation for secondary school graduates, and short-term courses intended to improve the livelihoods of those who do not successfully complete secondary education. The number of schools for the performing arts and sports are also being increased for those inclined to these disciplines.

STRATEGY 4: Monitor Results and Strengthen Management Systems and Capacity

Both public and private schools at the primary and secondary levels offer curricula prescribed by the MOE. All students are required to sit for a set of formal nation-wide examination based on these curricula at the end of primary, lower secondary and at the end of upper secondary school. Analysis of results is by country, state and school.

The upper secondary examination, since 2000, has been implemented as an "open certification examination". Open certification permits students to be evaluated on the basis of performance in individual subjects rather than across all subjects. Open certification also encourages students to choose subjects of relevance and interest and higher education institutions in Malaysia now take specific subject performance into consideration for admission.

In addition to the formal testing system, the MOE has developed school-based assessment instruments as well as the capacity for assessment at the school level. These school based measures allow schools to more closely track the performance of students before the formal examination results. The vocational subjects taught in regular secondary schools are also assessed at the school level through competency based assessments at the end of each module or set of modules.

A primary concern of the MOE is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the educational delivery system through the development of personnel in education leadership and management at all levels. The Aminuddin Baki Institute (IAB) is the training institute for education leadership and management for the MOE. Between 2000 and 2005, 3,256 head teachers and principals participated in the institute's training programmes.

To ensure quality education is delivered in schools, regular inspection of educational

institutions is essential. This responsibility is entrusted to the Inspectorate of Schools – an independent entity within the MOE. In 2000, the instrument for Standards for Quality Education for Malaysian Schools (SQEMS) was developed to assess the total quality management and the performance standards of schools and other institutions of learning within the purview of the MOE. The SQEMS assesses schools across four dimensions: Leadership Direction, Organisational Management, Educational Programme Management and Pupil Accomplishment. SQEMS is also used by educational institutions for self-appraisal to assess their performance. In 2006, 6,091 out of 9,641 schools provided the MOE their self assessment results, with about 21 percent of the schools reporting rating themselves as excellent or outstanding, 46 percent as promising and 33 percent as mediocre or weak.

Emphasis on results is also encouraged through a system of awards for schools and teachers. Annual school awards, such as Promising School Award and the Minister of Education’s Quality School Award, are based on the SQEMS standards. Teachers can also apply to be evaluated for nomination as “master teachers”. Successful candidates provide support to other teachers and have more rapid progression through the teacher career path.

The MOE also sponsors primary and secondary school teachers in Malaysia to conduct action research. The programme stimulates professionalism among teachers and encourages innovation in teaching methodologies, thereby enhancing school achievement.

In the drive to realise the EDMP goal of making the country an educational center, it is vital for the MOE to monitor the quality and the standards of private schools. The Quality Standard for Private Education Institutions (SKIPS), an instrument to evaluate the quality and standards of private schools, was introduced in 2006. SKIPS was formulated with reference to

the Education Act 1996 and the SQEMS. To ensure that private education institutions deliver quality education, they are required to obtain approval from the MOE on the curriculum to be used. Privately-run schools are permitted to teach subjects from the National Curriculum and/or subjects from the curriculum in International Schools, and prepare their students for examinations under the respective curricula. The quality of private schools is assessed every two years by the Private Education Division, MOE.

To better monitor the implementation of the EDMP the Minister of Education required that a “report card” for periodic assessment of implementation of the plan be developed and that progress be measured twice yearly. The first assessment using the report card was presented to the Minister and to the country through the press in June 2007. As a means of monitoring the progress and outcomes of the system against international benchmarks, Malaysia participates in several international surveys such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and World Education Indicator (WEI). Malaysia is also participating in the OECD’s Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS). This effort is intended to establish research-based indicators of quality teaching and school leadership practice.

STRATEGY 5: Support Education Goals with Adequate Financial Resources

Operational and development priorities in the Malaysian education system have been supported by substantial financial resources for their realisation. One important component of the overall public support for education has been the provision of significant levels of material support to children and their families to enable even the poorest students to participate in education. As described earlier (Figure 3.13) the

sum of material support for students was more than USD182 million in 2005.

Total annual education expenditure expressed in Malaysian Ringgit in the 2000 to 2005 period averages about 100 percent greater than total annual education expenditure in the mid-1990s (1995). On a per student basis and converted into USD at the prevailing exchange rate, the 1995 expenditure was USD847 per student while the average in the 2002-2004 period was approximately USD1,180 per student – a nearly 40 percent increase in USD equivalent expenditure per student over the 10 year period. As a percentage of GNP, total education expenditure ranges from just under 5 percent in 1995 and 2000 to between 5.3 and 7.4 percent in the period between 2001 and 2005. These figures place total expenditure on education as a percentage of GNP one percentage point or more above the worldwide average for countries reporting in the UNESCO database. These figures are also roughly equal to the averages of 18 European countries including the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

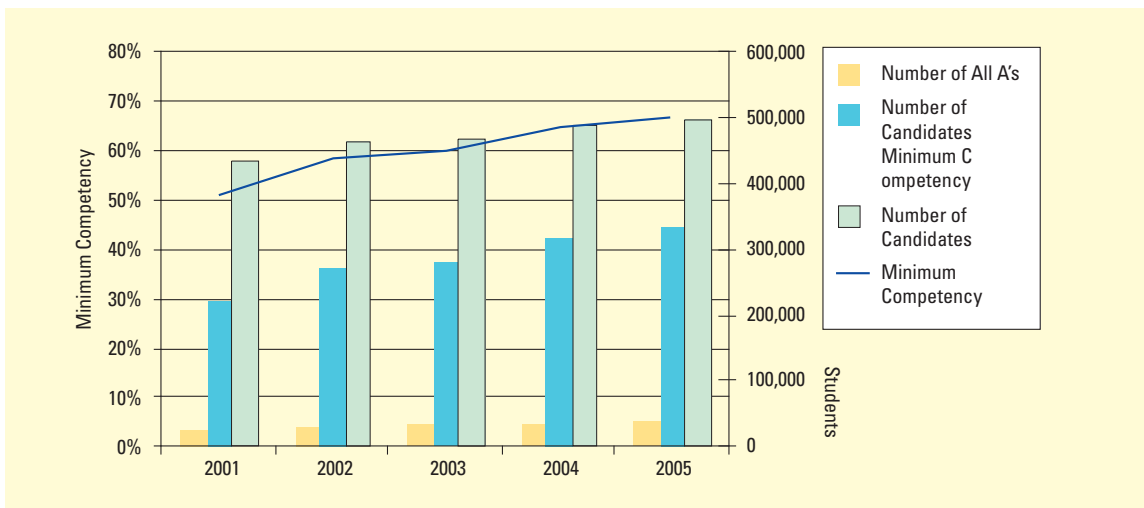
Per student recurrent expenditure as a percentage of per capita GNP was 10.4 percent at the primary level and 14.8 percent at the secondary level in 2005. Per student recurrent expenditure in the period between 2000 and 2005 averaged about USD394 at the primary level and about USD532 at the secondary level.

PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING EFA GOAL 6 IN MALAYSIA

Figures 3.25 and 3.26 present student achievement in the primary and lower secondary national examinations. In both cases the percentage of children reaching at least the minimum standard increased in the period 2000 to 2005.

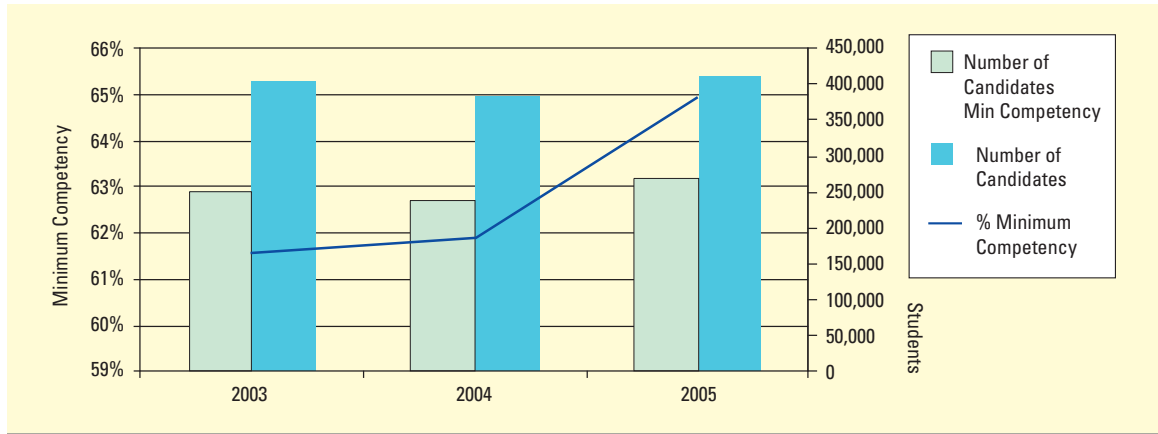
While financial resources do not guarantee educational quality, expenditure and quality are often closely related. Figure 3.27 presents total education expenditure (recurrent and development) for the year 1995 and for the period 2000 to 2005. Total expenditure on education was greater in the years between 2000 and 2005 than in 1995. In general, total

Figure 3.25 | Primary School Achievement Test, 2001–2005



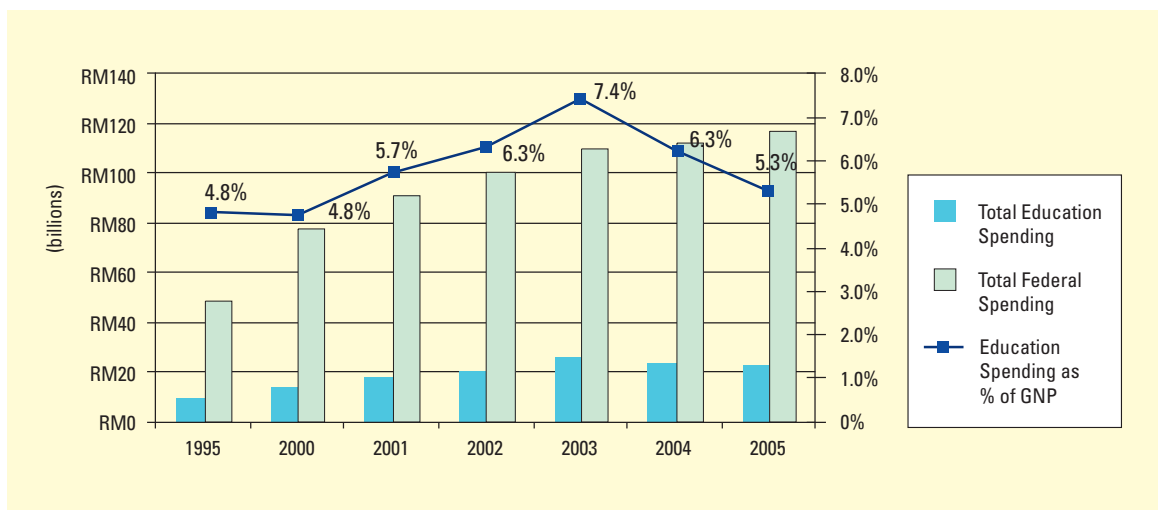
Sources: Examination Syndicate, MOE (2001–2005)

Figure 3.26 Lower Secondary Assessment, 2003–2005



Sources: Examination Syndicate, MOE (2003–2005)

Figure 3.27 Total Federal Spending, Total Education Spending and Education Spending as Percentage of GNP, 1995–2005



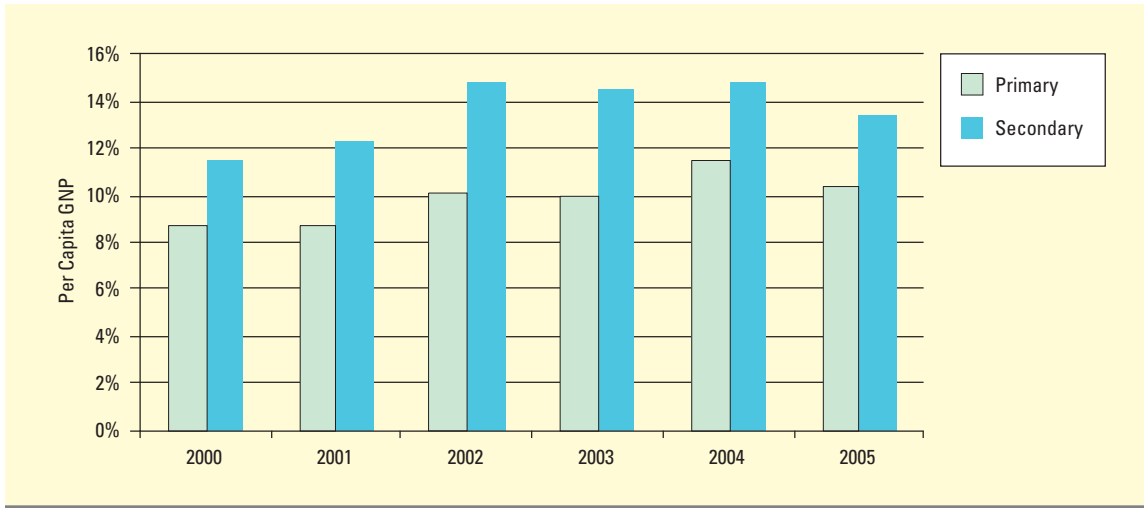
Sources: Finance Division, MOE (1995–2005)

education expenditure was at or above five percent of GNP in all years.

Figure 3.28 presents recurrent spending per student at the primary and secondary level expressed as a percentage of per capita GNP. Per student recurrent spending in the 2000 to 2005 period averaged about USD394 at the primary level and about 532 at the secondary level.

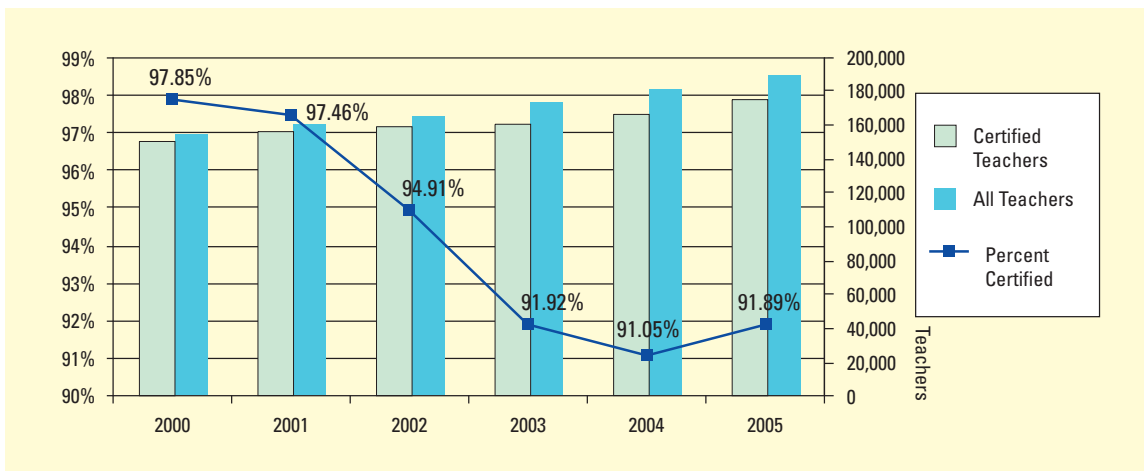
The percentage of teachers that are certified is nearly 100 percent as shown in Figure 3.29. The recent decline in the percentage of certified teachers is due to the large number of teachers going on study leave to complete their first degrees. Even with this increase in slightly less qualified substitutes, over 90 percent of teachers are certified and 100 percent of teachers meet the

Figure 3.28 Recurrent Spending Per Student as a Percentage of Per Capita GNP, 2000–2005



Sources: Finance Division, MOE (2000–2005)

Figure 3.29 Number and Percentage of Certified Teachers in Public Primary Schools, 2000–2005



Sources: EMIS, EPRD, MOE (2000–2005)

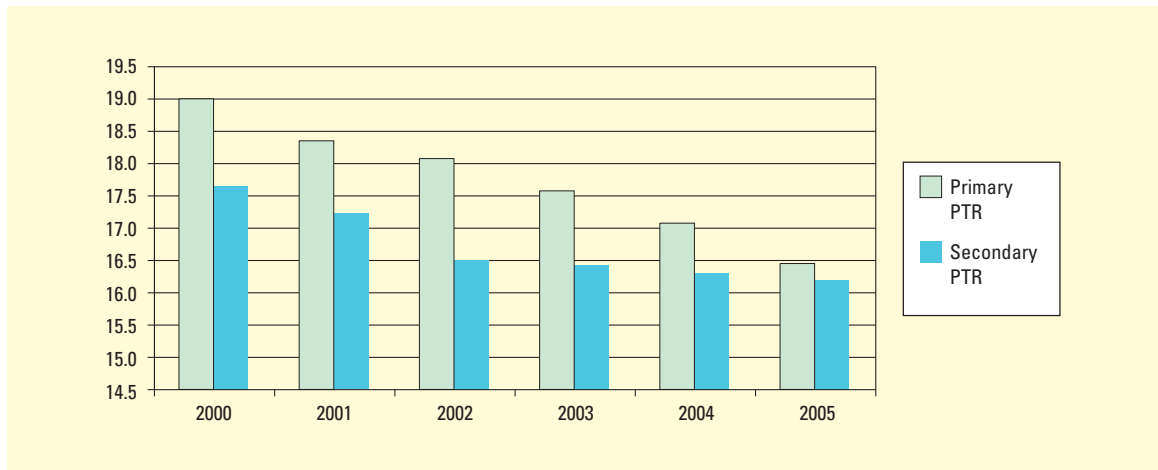
minimum standards as defined by Malaysian law.

Figure 3.30 shows the teacher-student ratio in primary and secondary schools in Malaysia also improved during the 2000 to 2005 period.

Student classroom ratios have improved slightly from already favourable levels. This is

shown in Figure 3.31. More importantly, marked differences in student classroom ratios across states largely disappeared during the 2000 to 2005 period. The highest student classroom ratios in 2005 were in the comparatively more urban states.

Figure 3.30 Pupil Teacher Ratios in Public Primary and Secondary Schools, 2000–2005



Sources: EMIS, EPRD, MOE (2000–2005)

SUCCESSSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN IMPLEMENTING EFA GOAL 6

The successes in the Education System with respect to EFA Goal 6 are many and complement the successes with respect to the other EFA goals. Since independence, Malaysia has recognised the key role of education in national development and significant political and financial commitment have been marshalled in support of education. The system today provides a higher quality of education to more students than ever before. Participation rates in primary and secondary education are high and academic achievement as measured by international benchmarks is commendable.

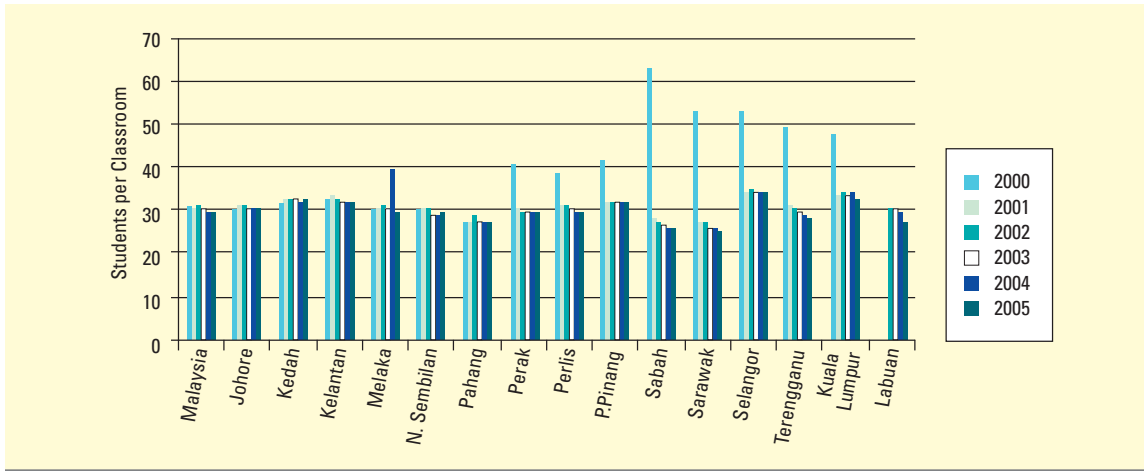
The MOE has upgraded and continues to improve the quality of inputs at the school level. The overwhelming majority of teachers have proper certification and new investments are being made in ensuring that teachers exceed the standards of certification by providing scholarships and stipends to in-service teachers to allow those without university degrees to complete a first

degree. The policy of teaching science and mathematics in English has been accompanied by a significant investment in ensuring that teachers of those subjects acquire an appropriate command of the language and have adequate teaching and learning materials.

Development expenditures on infrastructure and ICT have greatly reduced urban rural differences with respect to education infrastructure and narrowing the digital gap that exists among these areas. Approximately 80 percent of planned infrastructure investment and 70 percent of planned ICT investment for 2006 to 2010 is specifically intended for rural areas to continue the process of eradicating these remaining gaps.

Malaysia has implemented a programme that equates quality with the holistic development of the individual. While investments in developing academic programmes, materials and improving skills of teachers are significant, the system also values the acquisition of positive values, behaviours and self expression through programmes like co-curricular activities and those priorities are also supported by significant public resources. An emphasis on school level results is

Figure 3.31 Student Classroom Ratio in Public Primary Schools, by State, 2000–2005



Sources: EMIS, EPRD, MOE (2000–2005)

encouraged by formal recognition in the form of awards for both schools and teachers.

As a means of promoting accountability and performance measurement in service delivery the Government of Malaysia has implemented a “report card” system of results reporting across all ministries. The MOE recently presented its first biannual report card to the people of Malaysia.

As was the case with regards to the significant successes in promoting access to education, the achievements in educational quality in Malaysia pose a new set of challenges and demands. Human capital is critical to the Government of Malaysia’s efforts to integrate its economy into the global system on favourable terms and to strengthen national cohesion by fostering new and better opportunities for all Malaysians. The importance placed on the development of human capital demands that improvements in education quality be continuous – even accelerated – despite the significant levels of quality already achieved.

This demand to continually improve quality generally and to ensure equality of opportunity for students from different economic

backgrounds and geographical locations requires a systematic ongoing analysis of results closely linked to refining policies and actions. MOE reporting systems are well established and provide transparency and accountability for the use of public resources and tracking of outcomes against policy goals. However, these systems often do not provide the type of refined, disaggregated analysis required as inputs for the refinement of policies and actions.

For example, documenting that a high percentage of participants completed a particular TVE course of study demonstrates that the delivery of the programme was efficient and that efforts to ensure that students had the necessary material and technical support to complete the programme were successful. However, that the programme was efficiently delivered does not necessarily mean that this particular course of study should continue to be provided or whether another programme would produce better results for the student and for Malaysia. This type of policy-oriented analysis would require capturing and analysing labour market information regarding the impact of the programme on the likelihood of finding

employment as well as whether the programme was associated with a wage premium compared to other forms of training (alternative programmes).

For academic subjects, primary and secondary exam results are reported at various levels of the system (nationally, by state, by districts and by school) but the results are not routinely assessed from the perspective of refining policy or practice. A more thorough examination of results combined with collection of complementary information could indicate the relationships between school practices/management and achievement, between teacher preparation and achievement, between socio-economic status and achievement or other details relevant to improving policies and practice.

This more refined policy-oriented monitoring and evaluation is also critical for meeting Malaysia's goals of ensuring equality of opportunity. For example, school dropout rates are regularly estimated and typically presented at the national and state level. This kind of reporting provides an indicator of the system's performance but it does not provide information relevant to potential policies or actions that would improve retention of students in schools. To know that the dropout rate is two percent is quite different from knowing how to reduce it further. One step would be to analyse dropouts on a school-by-school basis to determine whether the incidence of abandoning school was concentrated in particular schools or types of schools. This analysis could be followed up with a more detailed analysis at the student level to identify the relevant differences between students who drop out and those that successfully complete their schooling.

With Malaysia's existing high levels of quality in education, further improvements are likely to be quite costly. This necessitates that investments be well-targeted and that programme and policy costs be more routinely a

component of policy-oriented research and evaluation. The current systems for financial analysis and reporting tend to be oriented toward projections for planning and for accountability. While the reporting and accountability functions are important, financial information is not typically applied to policy-oriented analysis and evaluation.

Expenditures for the various programmes are carefully collected and regularly reported. Examples of less frequently practiced policy-oriented assessments that include a financial component would be an analysis of the relative cost – effectiveness of the various education support programmes or an examination of the relative rate of return to the various vocational specialisations, among many other possible policy investment questions. Incorporating more investment-oriented policy analysis would require more access to disaggregated financial data and improved capacity for this kind of analysis in the MOE.

Some policy-oriented analysis clearly does take place in the MOE. A great deal of capacity with respect to highly trained professionals also exists within the Ministry. What may need to be strengthened is the link between existing research and evaluation efforts and policy analysis/refinement so that the research and evaluation agenda is routinely part of the policy process. It may also be the case that the effort to improve on already relatively high levels of quality will require a mechanism to establish and coordinate a policy-oriented research agenda that ensures clear priorities are established across the education sector rather than be driven by agendas in particular sub-sectors or programmes. This prioritised sector wide policy research and evaluation agenda would also facilitate the incorporation of other valuable resources into the efforts to improve the quality of education.

**Conclusion and Policy
Recommendations**

Conclusion and Recommendations



By 2000, Malaysia had already achieved high levels of participation in primary and secondary schooling and relative parity of participation and outcomes between girls and boys. A series of five-year national development plans were also rapidly increasing access to school in the country's more remote regions and for children from indigenous communities. With high levels of enrollment and completion and a well-established national planning process the Government of Malaysia opted to pursue the achievement of the EFA goals through its existing mechanisms rather than through a separate stand alone EFA plan. Efforts in achieving the goals of EFA are well-featured in the 8MP, EDP (2001–2010), 9MP and the EDMP (2006–2010).

Malaysia's national mid-decade assessment of progress toward EFA goals shows continued improvement. Participation as measured by a combined primary/secondary GER has improved

about six percent since 1985 and over 91 percent of the children born in Malaysia of primary or secondary school age were enrolled in school in 2005. The total number of children of primary and secondary school age not enrolled in school in 2005 was 150 thousand to 200 thousand less than in 1985 and 98 percent of all children who entered year one in 2000 were still in school at year six in 2005.

The number of children under six years of age attending preschools and childcare centres has expanded by about 200 thousand just since 2000 and the 9MP is committed to providing preschool opportunities to all 5 and 6-year-olds throughout the country by 2010. New models of attention for children four and under are also being tested. Special attention for the expansion of preschool and childcare centres has been given to rural areas through public spending priorities, and special programmes for children



from indigenous communities have been implemented and still others are in the development process.

The Government of Malaysia recognised early on that simply providing schools and teachers did not ensure full access and participation in a quality education. Significant financial resources are invested in material support for students such as the Textbook On Loan Scheme, the School Supplementary Food Programme, and the Poor Students' Trust Fund. These support measures reduce the barriers to access and full participation for children who come from poorer households. Significant resources are also expended to provide other specific kinds of support for hard to reach children such as those from Malaysia's indigenous communities. Infrastructure investments in the current five-year national development plan are heavily oriented toward rural areas in an effort to eliminate remaining rural-urban differences in access and quality of education.

Expanded opportunities at all levels of the system in terms of infrastructure, teachers and programmes have been combined with academic support to ensure that all children regardless of their location or economic circumstances have the maximum opportunity for success in school. An early intervention programme for children with reading difficulties in year one is available in all schools in the country. Children from indigenous communities have access to additional academic support in the form of an optional additional year of primary schooling between year two and three and an optional transition year between primary and lower secondary school. Low income students with academic difficulties have access to subsidies for extra tuition.

Academic outcomes as measured by international comparisons, such as TIMSS have been commendable. The MOE also demonstrates a serious commitment to a holistic concept of educational quality by providing

resources for more than 300 types of officially recognised co-curricular activities. Participation in co-curricular activities is included in the selection process for student placement in higher education institutions and official school and individual student awards programmes also include consideration of performance in co-curricular activities.

These investments have allowed Malaysia to raise its youth (15–24 years old) literacy rate to 98 percent. High levels of youth literacy have over time, improved adult literacy rates to over 92 percent. Between 2000 and 2005, approximately 130 thousand to 150 thousand persons participated each year in functional literacy classes, skills classes or income generation programmes available for those without a complete secondary education. These include functional literacy programmes provided by KEMAS, specific literacy programmes for indigenous communities provided by JHOEA and the short-duration skills classes provided through MECD (Pusat Giat Mara). In addition, the expanding MOHE Community College system also provides short-term skills classes for persons without secondary school certificates. In 2006, over 70 thousand young people attended short courses provided by the 34 (at that time) community colleges. The number of community colleges will expand to over 200 by 2010.

Young persons in secondary school or those who have completed secondary education have a variety of options available for continuing their education or for building livelihood skills. In 2005, more than 70 thousand students were enrolled in Technical secondary schools and a similar number were pursuing certificates or diplomas in



vocational/technical studies in the Polytechnics. Also in 2005 about 100 thousand young persons participated in one of the various skills and/or entrepreneur programmes provided by the MECD and nearly 10 thousand attended a diploma or certificate level programme of study in the newly established MOHE Community Colleges. The MOHR also provided training to nearly 12 thousand participants and provided skills certification exams to over 100 thousand persons. More than 130 thousand students were enrolled in certificate level courses at public and private higher education institutions.

These achievements have been made possible by combining political will and public resources in equal measure. Investment in education has been one of the pillars of Malaysia's pragmatic development policy and remains critical to the Government of Malaysia's efforts to integrate its economy into the global system on favourable terms and to strengthen national cohesion through fostering new and better opportunities for all Malaysians. Total education expenditure has consistently been at or above five percent of GNP since the 1980s. Education investment in Malaysia also includes a

comprehensive system of material support for students to ensure that location and economic circumstances are not barriers to full participation in a quality education system. In 2005, this education support spending amounted to USD182.5 million. The investments in education have been managed by the public entities with a high degree of efficiency, transparency and accountability. As a means of further promoting accountability and performance measurement in service delivery the Government has implemented a “report card” system across all front line ministries with the MOE presenting the first of its twice yearly report cards to the public in June of 2007. The prudent management of these educational investments is one reason why public support for education spending has remained strong.

In remarks at a public gathering celebrating Malaysia’s approaching 50th year of nationhood, the Prime Minister Dato’ Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi cited the country’s “non-ideological” development policy as one of the foundations of Malaysia’s rapid development. Since 1957, Malaysia has chosen to avoid committing to one side or another of the “state versus market debate” and has adopted a mix of public and private sector-led initiatives to move the country



towards developed country levels of well-being for its people. In education the state has played a key role in leading the development of the economy and society by producing an ever more skilled workforce and educated citizenry. Large developmental (capital) budgets have generally been executed on time and operations (recurrent) resources have steadily increased coverage, improved quality and reduced disparities.

As suggested throughout the report, the development model in the education sector and the management systems linked to that model have produced significant and undeniable success. However, these successes create new set of challenges and demands for the sector – demands that will require Malaysia to exercise its abilities to modify its approach to meet these new challenges.

The coverage of the education system as measured by GER is admirable. However, the estimated small percentage of children not participating in education represents about 125 thousand primary school-aged children. When primary and secondary school-aged children are considered together, this figure rises to about 500 thousand. Malaysia recognises that conventional measures of access like GER provide little if any information that would be required to develop an appropriate response for integrating these



remaining children into the education system. These conventional measures do not provide information as to what particular barriers to schooling still remain, how those barriers manifest themselves for different kinds of children, where these children are located, or even to what degree measurement error in the population estimates or issues related to the documentation status of children misrepresent the true rate of coverage or to what degree these children are children with special needs who have not been identified.

Conventional measures of gender parity in education in Malaysia indicate that participation and educational outcomes in the system are as good as or better for girls than for boys. However, women are decidedly under-represented among top decision-makers in both the private and public sector. Choices by girls and women as to their career paths are individual decisions made within the context of a larger cultural setting. These decisions do have an effect on the larger society when, for example, women feel they do not have support to relocate when that is required to take progressively more responsible positions. In this case it is the entire society that pays the price for the loss of these talents – not just the women themselves. While

a wholesale adoption of patterns from other countries is not desirable it would be wise to examine what contribution the education sector can make (along with other stakeholders) for enabling the country to take full advantage of the talents of Malaysian women consistent with a consensus view of Malaysian cultural values.

In the areas of literacy and lifelong learning, evaluating student outcomes or the effectiveness of policies and programmes is especially difficult. Numerous programmes are provided in skills training, basic literacy and other types of activities to enhance livelihoods by various Government entities. Large numbers of young people participate in these kinds of programmes and Government spending on those programmes is substantial. However, without an operational framework that more clearly defines what constitutes an acceptable type of literacy in Malaysia or identifies clear priorities with respect to the kinds of outcomes that are priorities in life long learning, it is impossible to compare the relative merits of any of the programmes and identify clear directions for investing the country's resources.

Programme analysis clearly does take place in the MOE and within many of the operational units. A great deal of capacity with respect to





highly-trained professionals also exists within the Ministry. What may need to be strengthened is the link between existing research and evaluation efforts and policy analysis/refinement so that the research and evaluation agenda is routinely part of the policy process—especially research on outcomes for students. One means of strengthening this link is the development of a sector — wide evaluation plan or strategy on an annual or bi-annual basis. Having a formalised sector — wide evaluation plan would assist in the gathering of necessary information that may be sourced across different sections of the ministry, across different levels of the system (national, state, district, school) or in other entities such as the Department of Statistics and the Department of Human Resources. A formalised plan also provides a framework for identifying more completely the relevant policy questions from multiple perspectives as well as linking particular analytical tasks to the professionals within the MOE with the appropriate specialised knowledge and/or contracting private firms or higher education institutions to undertake parts of the sector research agenda.

While policy development based on sound research and evaluation can improve the

performance of the education system, the improvements will be limited unless the incentives faced by front line managers at the state, district and school level also support higher standards of performance. For example, a manager asked to report on enrollment will make choices about where to invest resources and energy to maintain or increase enrollment. If that manager is asked to report on attendance, completion or achievement, the actions taken may well be different. Adding classrooms to an existing school might be the most cost-effective means of increasing enrollment but the more costly option of building a new school to decrease distances for children may result in a lower cost when measured in terms of the total cost for each child that completes primary school.

A set of incentives that are more consistent with producing the required results will only be effective if new actions that require additional resources are supported by the MOE. If, for example, schools, and districts were to be assessed on attendance rather than enrollment or on their efforts to identify and incorporate out-of-school children, they may need additional financial resources, new training, or new ideas from the central level.

Finally, Malaysia's ability to provide a stable and prosperous environment for its people is inextricably linked to the conditions of its closest neighbours in the region. South East Asia has large flows of people across national borders — both official and unofficial — pursuing what they perceive as better life chances. Sometimes adults crossing national borders bring children with them and other times children are born during a stay in the non-resident country. Further complicating matters these children can also be the result of unions between citizens and non-citizens or between two non-citizens from different resident countries. Whatever their particular origins these children present a dilemma to education authorities – denying those



children education runs counter to commitments to child rights but providing such services has the potential to create additional incentives for irregular uncontrolled migration and threaten stability in local communities.

While it is possible that some significant portion of out-of-school children in Malaysia do not have regular documents, ad-hoc reporting suggests that some children without proper documentation do attend schools in Malaysia and even benefit from education support initiatives like the textbook on loan scheme and supplementary school feeding programme while other children without documents are excluded from education. There are also some NGO initiatives in areas of the country, where the population of children without regular documents is concentrated, that provide alternative education opportunities for those children.

This complex issue cannot be resolved by an

individual state. Malaysia and its neighbours have developed some bilateral responses and multilateral efforts for promoting a more comprehensive regional effort are beginning to take shape. In 2006, an agreement with the Government of Indonesia resulted in the provision of 109 Indonesian teachers for Humana Learning Centres located in an area where many Indonesian migrants are working on palm oil plantations. Enhancing cooperation in the education sector is currently being explored by the Government of Malaysia and Thailand. ASEAN has also initiated a process for developing a regional human rights mechanism that would provide a framework for internationalising a protective environment for children across the region. Continuing to develop productive collaboration among the states in the region with respect to children's issues will further enable each state to fully achieve EFA.



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EFA MDA Technical Working Group Goal 6

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