

## **Education for All – Disabled or Otherwise**

Our Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and the Education Ministry have repeatedly invited public feedback on the revision of our education system. We value this request and many of us have responded.

The National Early Childhood Intervention Council (NECIC), a registered coalition of parents, therapists and professionals from a large variety of NGOs and government agencies advocating for children with special needs, has written a memorandum with 60 other NGOs and presented it to the Education Ministry and Minister more than 4 months ago.

The memorandum strongly advocates for inclusive education as national policy as research has proven that inclusive education benefits all students, not just those with special needs. Malaysia has ratified the UN-Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Article 24 of the UN-Convention stipulates that “persons with disabilities shall not be excluded from the general education system on the basis of disabilities”. This has also been enacted in Clause 28 of the Malaysian Persons with Disabilities Act 2008.

Unfortunately there is no indication that the Minister of Education or Education Ministry officials have considered its contents. We suspect this may also be the case with others who have forwarded suggestions on improving our education system.

An important issue, such as the revision of our education system, should not be carried out behind closed doors and then presented to the public as a completed package to be implemented on our children. It is essential that there is meaningful on-going dialogue, with opportunities for change, involvement, critical review, and holistic challenge. Too many of our recent initiatives have been flawed because of a lack of a meaningful dialogue.

Preliminary plans should be provided to the public and concerned organizations for critical review and opportunities for change before they are implemented as law.

The NECIC, on behalf of children with disabilities and their parents, appeals to the Education Ministry to listen and, respond to feedback from the public on the education system.

In this 55th year of our independence as a nation, may the new education system liberate and empower our children, including those who are disabled, to be who they truly can be and not hinder their growth.

Thank you.

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National Early Childhood Intervention Council (NECIC)

(Note: This statement was prepared collectively by NGOs represented in the NECIC)

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