

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION

NATIONAL REPORT

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

Ministry Of Education

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1 THE EDUCATION SYSTEM FACING THE CHALLENGES OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: AN OVERVIEW

The Ministry of Education (MoE), Brunei Darussalam, has produced a report on the study of the development of education in the country, in retrospect, of the past 20 years. This study ascertained that some milestones of success were achieved, as well as highlighted shortcomings within the present system of education. In an effort to address these issues and concerns, MoE recently laid out an overview of a broad plan for the next 20 years ahead.

In December 2005, the Ministry of Education promulgated its Strategic Plan (2007 – 2011)¹. This outlined the direction which the Ministry of Education would pursue during the 5-year period, particularly in its endeavour to develop the fullest potential of a child through the provision of high quality education.

The introduction of the MoE's Strategic Map 2007-2011 signalled the desire on the part of the MoE for a 'case for change' to upgrade the quality of the teaching and learning in schools with the aim of improving educational achievement and the holistic development of the individual in Brunei Darussalam. The MoE's commitment towards excellence in education is reflected in its Vision and Mission statements. These are seen as imperative values in view of the current climate of rapid change coupled with increasing competition and globalization.

At about the same time, the National Education System Review Committee was formed with the mandate to review and make improvements to the current system. The committee recommended that the present education system be improved and fine tuned, and aligned with the Ministry of Education Strategic Plan (2007 – 2011). To differentiate this incoming new development from the current system, the new education system was named the "National Education System for the 21st Century" or "Sistem Pendidikan Negara Abad Ke 21", in short, SPN 21.

1.1 *Major reforms and innovations introduced in the education system*

The Ministry of Education is committed to review, develop and fine-tune the national educational system in order to ensure a viable and promising future for Brunei Darussalam.

¹ Ministry of Education, Strategic Planning Unit., (2007). *The Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2007-2011*. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

A Committee was set up comprising of various stakeholders to develop the National Strategic Education Plan covering the period 2007 to 2011.

This National Strategic Education Plan is aligned with the strategic plans of the various Ministries of His Majesty's Government. It outlines the scope and direction that the Ministry of Education would adopt during this five year period. In formulating the Ministry of Education's National Strategic Education Plan, the following 8 Education Strategies outlined in the Brunei Vision 2035² were taken into consideration, namely:

1. Investing in early childhood education,
2. Adopting international best practices in teaching and learning,
3. Having first class secondary and tertiary education including vocational schools, that produce experts, professionals and technicians required in commerce and industry,
4. Strengthening the competency in info - communications technology (ICT) for students, teachers and educational administrators, including the integration of ICT in the school curriculum,
5. Devising programmes that promote life-long learning and widen access to higher education,
6. Promoting research, development and innovation both in government-funded institutions and through public-private and international partnerships,
7. Adopting cost-effective methods of educating our people through the use of technology, and
8. Improving the management of all our educational institutions.

The Strategic Plan 2007-2011, provides a broad contextual framework to encompass a range of inter and intra-Ministerial plans which make up the educational provisions of Brunei Darussalam.

The Plan documents the key priorities of the Ministry of Education and serves as a yardstick in raising awareness among the stakeholders. It provides a platform for departments within the Ministry of Education to align and synchronize their action plans, thereby ensuring focused attention on these key national priorities.

The Strategic Plan aims to align and synchronize the relationship between the Vision, Mission, Objectives and Outcomes' statements of the Ministry of Education. This will

² Department of Economic Planning and Development Brunei., (2007). *Brunei Darussalam Long Term National Development Plan: Wawasan Brunei 2035*. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

ensure that a clear and consistent message is conveyed concerning the Ministry of Education’s purpose, role and functions.

This document is also important as a Statement of Public Intent and Commitment by the Ministry of Education to the provisions and development of quality educational services both now and in the future. It establishes the efforts of the Ministry of Education, alongside that of other Ministries, in contributing to the National Development Plan.

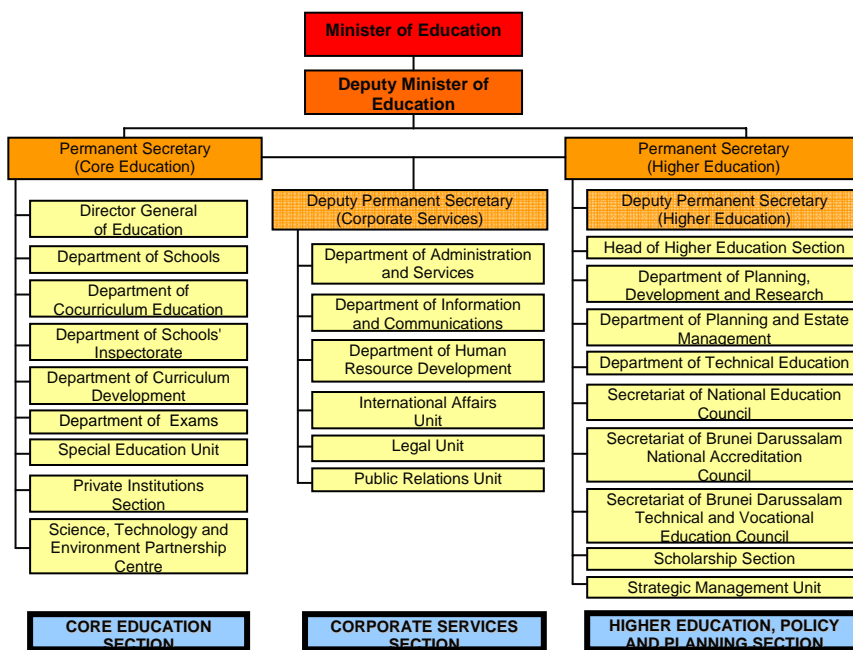
(a) The organization, structure and management of the education system

i) The organization and management of the education system

In Brunei Darussalam, there is a central administrative agency, the Ministry of Education that is responsible for the organisation, implementation and assessment of education. The Minister of Education, who is a member of the Council of Cabinet Ministers in the Brunei government, is responsible for all state organised educational affairs from primary, secondary, vocational and technical to university education.

In implementing policies, managing professional matters and administrating the Ministry of Education and its Departments, the Minister and Deputy Minister are assisted by two Permanent Secretaries and two Deputy Permanent Secretaries as illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 1: ORGANISATION STRUCTURE, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, BRUNEI



The responsibility for the administration of the core education, corporate services and higher education are under the authority of the executive officials, namely the Permanent Secretaries and the Deputy Permanent Secretaries within the Ministry of Education.

Various Heads of Departments report directly to the executive arm of the Ministry of Education and are responsible for various professional and administrative matters.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for formulating educational policies, outlining expectations for translating these policies into developments, and coordinating their implementation. The curricula and syllabuses are developed centrally with input from key stakeholders nationally. School wide assessments are conducted by the schools whereas National Examinations are organised by the Board of Examination.

ii) *The structure of the education system*

The Brunei Darussalam National Education Policy provides 12 years education for all children, that is a year of pre-school, 6 years of formal primary education, 3 years of lower secondary and 2 years of upper secondary, or vocational / technical education.

The SPN 21³ structure provides multiple pathways for students to choose programmes that suit their capabilities, interests, inclination, growth and development, thereby catering to their needs.

The scope of the SPN 21 structure takes into consideration key aspects of Quality Education for Nation Building and Human Capital Development. It aims to achieve Quality Education through the provision of a balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum which is benchmarked against credible quality assurance or assessment systems of International Standards.

An important intention of the SPN 21 structure is to fit the system to the students rather than the other way round, allowing highly capable students the opportunity to complete their secondary education in a shorter period of time (4 years) will be of benefit to the nation in its efforts to optimise human resource development.

This new education structure also reflects the Ministry's desire to ensure that our students will complete at least 5 years of secondary education before embarking on post-secondary

³ Ministry of Education, Curriculum Development Department., (2008). *Ministry of Education: SPN 21*. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

education or employment. The Educational System as formulated in the SPN 21 is represented below.

SPN 21 Education Structure

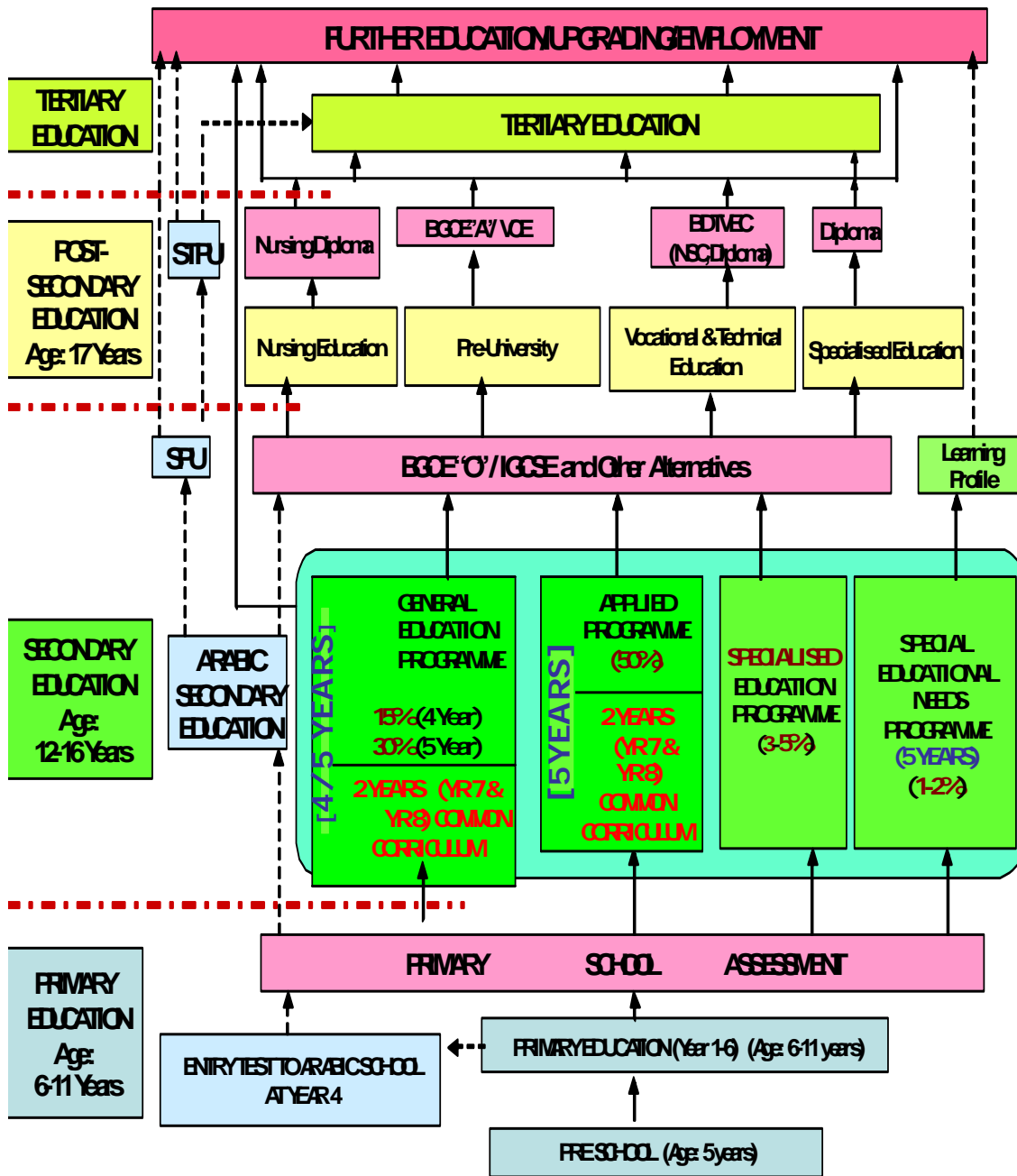


Figure 2: Diagram of Education System in Brunei Darussalam

(b) The aims and purposes of education at each level

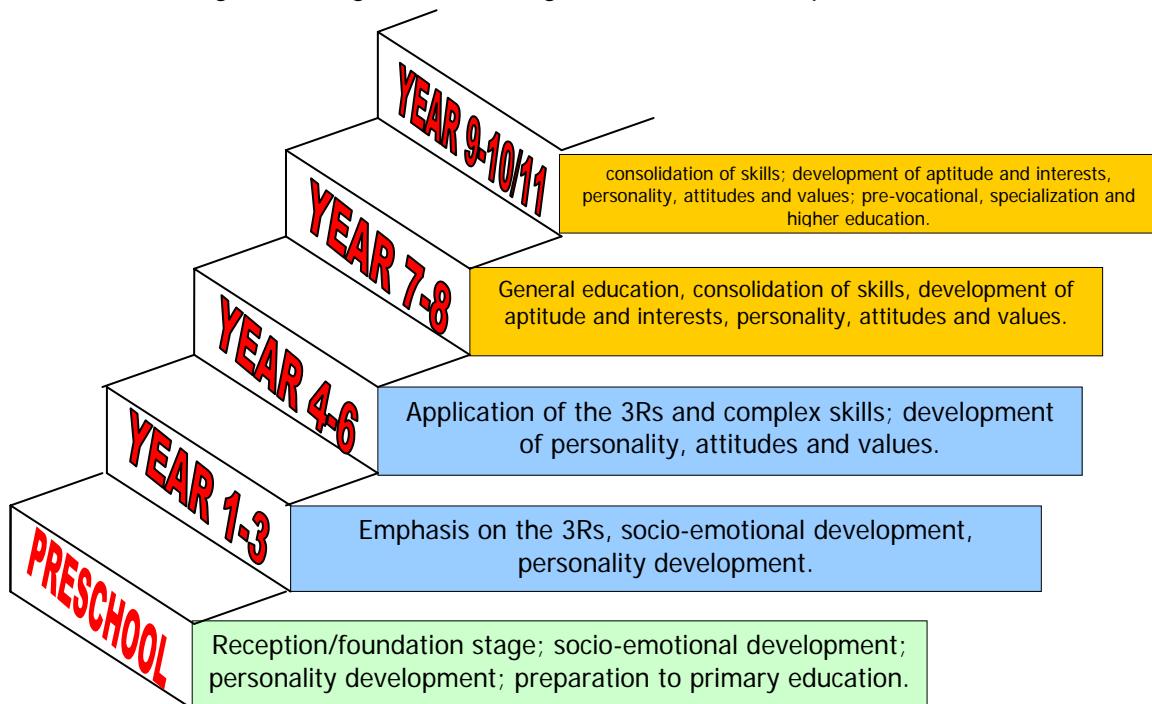
The Ministry of Education is entrusted with the mandate to produce a generation of citizens capable of upholding the country's ideology and aspirations in the fast-changing and competitive world of tomorrow. The overarching aim is for students to be life-long learners who are confident and creative, connected, and actively involved in the quest for knowledge. This future generation of young citizens must be equipped with the dynamism, knowledge and skills necessary to compete and be successful Bruneians and World citizens contributing positively to the infrastructure of the country, be it in the socio-economic, technological or other arenas. Hence, the onus rests on the Ministry of Education to set in place the educational framework necessary to realize this Vision.

The goal of the SPN 21 curriculum is based on the premise that the individual student learner is at the centre of all the teaching and learning. The curriculum model aims to provide:

- an all-round development of the individual;
- opportunities to enhance individual strengths and abilities;
- a well-balanced education which allows students to draw on a wide range of knowledge areas and learning experiences.

The SPN 21 curriculum paves the way for a smooth transition and continuous curriculum from preschool to primary and secondary levels of schooling in a developmentally appropriate setting as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Stages of Schooling and Student Development



i) Pre-School and Primary Education

Formal schooling begins at the pre-school level at the age of 5. From the age of 6 onwards, the pupils follow 6 years of primary education, after which they proceed to the secondary level. All pupils will follow a common curriculum and at the end of Year 6 they will sit for the Primary School Assessment (PSR). Students who obtained 5 “A” grades in their PSR at the end of their primary education will be selected for admission to the science schools.[E1]

At the pre-school level the focus is on key competencies such as socio-emotional development, personality development, and school preparedness skills necessary for pursuing Primary Education. At Year 1 to Year 3, the curriculum emphasis is on the 3Rs, the socio-emotional and personality development. At Year 4 to Year 6, the focus is on the application of the 3Rs, key essential skills as well as knowledge, development of personality, attitudes and values.

The aim of education in the early primary school years is to give children a firm foundation in the basic skills of writing, reading and arithmetic as well as to provide opportunities for their personal growth and character development.

ii) Secondary Education

On completing their primary education, the students move into secondary education. Secondary education consists of two phases: the lower secondary and the upper secondary level. The duration of schooling at this level is either two or three years. At the secondary level, students may access a 4-year (Years 7-10) programme or a 5-year programme (Years 7-11). Students following a 4-year (Year 7-10) programme will sit for their Brunei Cambridge General Certificate of Education (BC GCE) ‘O’ Level at Year 10, while those in the 5-year programme will sit for their BC GCE ‘O’ Level at Year 11.

At Year 7 to Year 8, all students offer a common curriculum which consolidates the essential skills learnt, develops awareness on pre-technical education, develops aptitude, interests, personality, attitudes and values. At Year 9, 10 and 11, the curriculum focuses on the consolidation of skills in the following areas: pre-technical education, development of aptitude and interests, personality, attitudes and values, career specialization and higher education. It is intended that the secondary curriculum nurtures well rounded students, raises achievement, develops life-long learning skills and prepares students with valuable and competitive real world skills.

Highly capable students will have the opportunity to complete their secondary education in a shorter period of time (4 years). This will undoubtedly benefit the nation in its efforts to

optimise human resource development. This decision also reflects the Ministry's desire to ensure that students complete at least 4 years of secondary education before embarking on post-secondary education or employment.

(c) Curricular policies, educational content and teaching and learning strategies

i) Curricular policies

The SPN 21 curriculum will be broad, balanced and relevant, and provides for differentiated learning experiences. It takes into account each individual's strengths and capabilities whilst making provision for progression and continuity. It is intended to be responsive to the changes in the society and the economy, and will lead students towards life-long learning. The SPN 21 curriculum places the learner at the heart of teaching and learning process based on an appreciation of the students' individual needs. Optimal opportunities will be provided to accelerate individuals who can progress faster whereas special guidance will be given to individuals who need learning support.

The SPN21 curriculum framework provides an overview of the curriculum design. It is built upon a commitment to the vision and mission of the Ministry of Education that learning is continuous and that the essential purpose of schooling is to nurture well rounded students, raise school improvement, develop life-long learning skills and prepare students with valuable and marketable skills. The differentiated curriculum comprises of eight key learning areas. The key learning areas provide the platform and broad knowledge domain for the development of knowledge, skills and values.

The SPN 21 will bring about changes in three main areas, namely a) the Structure of the Education System, b) Curriculum and Assessment, and c) Technical Education. This helps to ensure that the Bruneian education system remains relevant at all times, is of high quality and provides the best possible educational infrastructure necessary to fulfil national needs

The curriculum as an entire planned learning experience is underpinned by a broad set of common values and purposes. All students need appropriate knowledge, understanding, and the acquisition of key skills and values to participate and prosper in a changing world and in the new millennium. The embedding of Malay Islamic Monarchy (MIB) philosophy and ethics within this framework is essential in contributing to the students' sense of pride in themselves, their school, their environment and their country.

ii) *Educational content*

In secondary education, students are provided with multiple pathways or avenues to curricular programmes according to their level of needs, interest, inclination, capabilities and competencies through the provision of four broad based educational programmes.

These are:

- General Education Programme;
- Applied Education Programme;
- Specialised Education Programme; and
- Special Education Programme

General Education Programme

This programme is designed to meet the needs of students who would benefit more from pursuing an academic focussed curriculum, studying subject electives such as the Pure Sciences, History, Geography or other relevant subjects. Most students will complete 5 years of secondary education before sitting for the GCE 'O' Level examinations. A selected number of students will complete 4 years of secondary education before sitting for the GCE 'O' Level examinations. Students in the 5 year programme will have the option of sitting for the GCE 'O' Level examinations at Year 10 for certain subjects (e.g. Bahasa Melayu Language, Art, and Islamic Religious Knowledge).

Applied Education Programme

Students in this programme will offer electives focussing mainly on *technology* and *business*-oriented subject combinations. These students will also be exposed to more practical and hands-on teaching and learning approaches. Work appreciation awareness attachments will be incorporated into the programme.

A projected increase in the number of students joining technical education is also anticipated. This move is intended to reduce the problem of early attrition among students, as well as provide adequate time to nurture students to become more mature individuals before they leave the school system.

Specialised Education Programme

This is a programme designed specifically to meet the needs of the gifted and talented students who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of exceptional performance in general or specific ability areas.

Special Educational Needs Programme

Students who are physically, intellectually or cognitively challenged, as well as those having visual or auditory impairments and specific learning difficulties and have been assessed to be more suited for this education programme will be given the option to attend this programme.

iii) Teaching and Learning Strategies

The teaching approaches focus on students with different abilities and the use of diagnostic assessment to identify students' capability and weakness. Appropriate intervention and remedial learning activities will be part of the repertoire of teachers in the classroom.

The curriculum framework establishes the learning focus, learning areas, pedagogy or learning approaches, learning outcomes and assessment expected of all students from preschool to year 10/11. Rather than being prescriptive, the Curriculum Framework will be used by schools to develop and implement their teaching and learning programmes according to the needs and characteristics of their students.

The SPN 21 curriculum aims to ascertain that within broad learning areas, students will develop the required essential skills, knowledge and understanding with the right attitudes and values to ensure their holistic development. Students will learn content within the context of 21st century skills.

Knowledge and Understanding

Knowledge and understanding covers the content-based subject disciplines to ensure students have a good foundation in content across different areas of studies.

Essential Skills

The essential skills (Communication Skills, Numeracy Skills, ICT Skills, Thinking and Problem Solving Skills, Self-Management and Competitive Skills, Study and Work Skills, Social Skills, Physical Skills and Aesthetic Skills) have been identified as the skills for the 21st Century which, when combined with relevant knowledge and the inculcation of proper attitudes and values, will provide the basis for lifelong learning and employability in a progressive and challenging world.

Attitudes and Values

Values are qualities that students will develop as principles for conduct and decision making (e.g. rights and responsibilities, commitment, honesty, the MIB philosophy and

national identity), while attitudes are personal dispositions needed to perform a task well. Values and attitudes are closely linked and they affect each other.

Values and attitudes are not new to our school curriculum yet these still have room for improvement to be successfully and deliberately developed in students. The SPN 21 Curriculum aims to inculcate the correct attitudes and values in students by providing them with a philosophy of living, thereby facilitating their overall growth and development so that they may integrate well into the community with purpose, respect and confidence.

(d) The legal framework of education

Internationally, Brunei Darussalam as one of the signatory countries on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 have subscribed to its pledges. The right to education is listed as one of the basic rights of every child in this document. This right is highlighted in the Brunei Darussalam National Education Policy, 1992, where at least 12 years education provision is offered for all children. The policy strives *“to give all Bruneian children the opportunity to achieve at least an upper secondary or vocational education”* and *“to provide opportunities for all children in Brunei Darussalam to develop their full potential, so that they play a useful role in the development of the country.”*⁴ This provision of 12 years of education for every student covers 7 years of primary education including a year of pre-school, 3 years of lower secondary and 2 years of upper secondary or vocational or technical education.

Following on from this, the Education Order dated 31 December 2003, spells out the formal legislative framework of the educational system under the Constitution of Brunei. According to this legislation, *“Subject to any requirements of the National Education Policy, the minister shall ensure that a child of school-going age is given the opportunity to attend primary school and secondary school and complete the course of study provided therein.”*⁵

The most recent Compulsory Education Order 2007 ensures that all children receive at least 9 years of formal education. It is aimed to ensure that children in Brunei Darussalam between the ages of 6 and 15 years receive education, either in government or private schools.

⁴ Ministry of Education., (1992). *National Education Policy*. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

⁵ Brunei Darussalam Government Gazette, p. 996. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

(e) Objectives and principal characteristics of current and forthcoming reforms

The crux of the Ministry of Education's Strategic Map for 2007-2011 promulgates "A Quality Education towards a Developed, Peaceful and Prosperous Nation". This Vision Statement is the catalyst for the Ministry of Education's SPN 21. The Ministry of Education intends to achieve its vision by "Providing Holistic Education to Achieve the Fullest Potential For All" (as emphasised in the Mission Statement of the Ministry of Education)".

1.2 *Main policies, achievements and lessons learned especially as regards:*

(a) Access to education

The Ministry of Education has a policy of providing a minimum of 12 years of education. This comprises 7 years in primary education (inclusive of 1 year in pre-school) and 5 years in secondary school.

Recently, the Compulsory Education Order 2007 under the Constitution of Brunei Darussalam, was passed in November 2007. This Order provides nine-year compulsory education for a child from the age of 6, covering 6 years of primary school and 3 years of lower secondary education.

This policy reflects the Ministry's desire to ensure that Brunei Darussalam will achieve its Universal Primary Education (UPE) target as stated in the UN Millennium Development Goals and seeks to extend the schooling period to at least 3 years of secondary education.

(b) Early childhood intervention (as a means to support children's development, transition to primary education and learning)

In Brunei Darussalam, early childhood intervention focuses on the health, social and developmental growth and early education of young children. The Brunei Government and other local authorities have the responsibility of ensuring that children under 5 years of age undergo developmental programmes to help them achieve their optimum potential growth in these key areas.

Early childhood intervention services are provided for children with special needs from birth. The components of early childhood intervention include education, health services,

therapy, inclusion support in early childhood services, formal and informal family support, and the provision of information and support for children's transition into the school system. The pre-school education provision is provided in government schools through the Ministry of Education for children at the age of five years. Children aged between 4-5 years may enter the private schools, whilst children under 3 years old are catered for by the Community Development Department at the Ministry of Welfare, Youth and Sports.

For children with special needs or children at risk, early childhood intervention services are offered by a range of personnel including, special education teachers, physio-therapists, occupational therapists, speech pathologists, child psychologists, social workers, doctors, nurses, audiologists and others, depending on the needs of the child.

Early childhood intervention services are delivered in a variety of environments including: the family's home, early childhood intervention centres, pre-schools, day care centres or hospitals.

Service providers include:

The Maternal and Child Health Services (for all ages of children)

This is one of the components of the Primary Health Care Services at the Ministry of Health that provides antenatal care, postnatal care, child health care, health education, treatment of minor illness, domiciliary midwifery services and home nursing/visits. The Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) is incorporated into the Maternal and Child Health Services and School Health Services.

School Health Services

The school health service of the Ministry of Health aims to ensure that the best possible level of health is achieved for the school-going population including preschoolers, enabling them to reach their maximum educational potential. It is carried out through the provision of general medical examinations and screening, immunization, minimum primary care for students' health education and conducting home visits and follow-ups. These services are provided to all government and private schools in the country.

The Child Development Centre (for children with special needs or children at risk)

The Centre began its operation in 1999 and offers services under the Ministry of Health in clinical psychology, speech therapy and treatment for those with hearing impairment. The Centre also conducts an Early Development Programme to cater for children with special needs and multiple disabilities. This programme is for children below 5 years of age and

aims to improve a child's developmental progress so that they may enter the mainstream education institutions. They will be examined, diagnosed and treated if necessary.

The Community Paediatric Clinic

This is located at the Child Development Centre. It provides community paediatric services aimed at early identification of developmental problems so that intervention can be provided. The clinic provides and supervises services for children referred to the centre for follow-up actions. The Community Psychiatric Day Care Centre is responsible for various rehabilitation programmes.

Department of Community Development

The Department of Community Development is one of the government agencies responsible for the welfare of children. This Department under the Ministry of Welfare, Youth and Sports is tasked with providing welfare assistance to children from needy families to promote their well-being and ensure their survival, growth and development.

The Government of Brunei provides legal safeguards to protect the well-being and interest of these children in the country. The Child Care Centre Order 2006 ensures that quality care is provided for the well being of children in childcare centres throughout the country.

(c) Learning outcomes, particularly concerning the efforts to improve learning achievement and reduce inequalities

SPN 21 is intended to be a more balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum that caters to students with different abilities to meet the 21st Century knowledge and skills. It is hoped that the intended learning outcomes of this new education system will achieve the following:

- Smooth transition and continuous curriculum from primary level to secondary level
- Co-curriculum activities that complement the school curriculum to achieve holistic education
- Emphasis on patriotism, social and ethical values, in line with the Malay Islamic Monarchy (MIB) philosophy
- Development of manpower that can compete globally
- Integration of IT and Entrepreneurship across the curriculum to equip students with:
 - Marketable skills
 - Entrepreneurship skills for a knowledge-based economy
 - Lifelong learning skills
 - ICT skills for more creative learning

*(d) Pre-service teacher training, recruitment, deployment, working conditions
and in-service professional development*

One of the institutions that provide a pre-service teacher training is the Sultan Hassanah Bolkiah Institute of Education. The Sultan Hassanah Bolkiah Institute of Education is one of the faculties at Universiti Brunei Darussalam. The Institute's main purpose is the preparation of primary, secondary and technical school teachers and educational administrators. In addition, it provides introductory courses related to more specialized educational roles such as guidance and counselling, remedial teaching and curriculum design.

The Institute's teaching programme is guided by the belief that the professional education of teachers is an on-going process. It begins with the pre-service or initial phase of training and continues throughout the teachers' careers, through their participation in upgrading and in-service courses. The Institute therefore also gives high priority to the upgrading of teacher's qualifications and the provision of short in-service courses.

The main objectives of the Institute are as follows:

1. *Human Resource Development:* By continuing to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching and learning, the Institute will endeavour through pre-service as well as in-service and postgraduate teacher education, to develop skilful, informed and reflective educators who will be responsible for preparing future citizens to be entrepreneurial and communitarian in outlook.
2. *Curriculum Development:* Through collaborative research and evaluation, the Institute will contribute to the progressive development of curricula, not only for schools and colleges but also for teacher education itself that would be relevant to the future needs of society.
3. *Community Development:* Through community-oriented activities, such as parental education, the Institute will help create an awareness within the community of the changes that education and teacher education are likely to undergo as well as adjustments that need to be made at home and in the community to complement and supplement these changes.
4. *Technological Development.* Through active and proactive exploration and exploitation of the rapidly accelerating advances in education and information technology, the Institute will contribute towards the development of a future generation that will have the right attitudes to keep up with, if not to stay ahead of, the technological revolution that has

already begun. The Institute of Education offers programmes at degree, post-graduate and certificate levels.

1.3. *The role of the education system in combating poverty as well as other forms of social exclusion and cultural marginalization*

The report on the Brunei Darussalam Millennium Development Goals and Beyond states, *“In Brunei Darussalam extreme poverty and hunger are a rare phenomena, although there are inequalities in levels of income and standards of living. These correlate closely with educational achievement, participation in economic activity, health status and the ability to invoke personal choices and opportunities, especially for women... For the poorest households, poverty is more than a lack of income: it is multidimensional. Poverty is associated with underutilization of facilities providing basic education, health services and information, shelter, clean water, and sanitation⁶.”*

2. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: THE WAY OF THE FUTURE

2.1 *Approaches, Scope and Content*

(a) How is inclusive education conceptualised? What is the current vision of inclusive education in your country?

In Brunei Darussalam, national education policies and practices aimed at attaining quality education for all are built upon the philosophy underlying Inclusive Education.

In line with world trends on inclusive education, Brunei Darussalam embraced the concept of inclusion in 1994. Brunei Darussalam’s National Education Policy reflects the Ministry of Education’s commitment to ‘education for all’ and the implementation of inclusive education by educating all school age children with varying learning and special needs together with their peers in the regular classroom. Brunei Darussalam supports the vision of quality inclusive education which highlights the principles of excellence for all and equality of opportunity.

⁶ Department of Economic Planning and Development., (2007). *Millennium Development Goals and Beyond 2005*. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

At the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, it was agreed that education be enshrined as a basic right for children. In Brunei Darussalam, His Majesty's Government is committed to this principle and to the UNESCO's policy of 'Education for All'. The implementation of inclusive education is an integral part of this process.

The current vision of inclusive education in Brunei Darussalam focuses mainly on students with learning difficulties and special educational needs in the school system, namely:

- students with learning difficulties who are on a Remedial Education Plan (students who have been identified as requiring learning support to cope with schoolwork. This includes students who were not in schools but have been admitted and provided with learning support as part of their educational programme), and
- students with high support/dependency needs who are on an Individual Education Plan (students with intellectual, sensory, physical, emotional, behavioural, and other medical/health conditions/impairments who require an adapted/modified individualised education programme).

The participation rate of students with special needs in the national education system is approximately 4% of the total school population. This figure does not include students with other learning needs who may be provided with learning support in schools.

Our development in inclusive education is in line with the world trends towards inclusion. Brunei Darussalam embraced the concept of inclusion in 1994 and interpreted the inclusive education philosophy then as the provision of "*an appropriate learning environment*" and "*the inclusive school as one that provides appropriate instruction for all children based on their level (of learning need)*"⁷.

The Inclusive Education Policy further emphasised that "*A student requiring a special education programme will be provided with a programme appropriate for the student's needs, age and level of educational achievement*"⁸.

In Brunei Darussalam, each child in the community is valued. We believe that all children are entitled to an education that addresses their individual learning needs and helps them to realise their potential.

In December 2005, the Ministry of Education promulgated its Strategic Plan (2007 – 2011) which outlined the direction for the 5 year period, particularly our endeavour to develop the

⁷ Ministry of Education., (1992). *Education Policy*. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

⁸ Ministry of Education, Special Education Unit., (1997). *Special Education Policy Guidelines*. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

fullest potential of the child through the provision of high quality education. The inclusive orientation is a strong feature in the National Education System for the 21st century that was introduced in 2007. It has specifically included possible pathways for children with diverse needs. This is derived from the belief that Brunei's future is influenced substantially by how well the children are educated. The education system upholds the belief that each child is unique, each child must be valued, each child can learn and all children have an equal right to education. While some have special needs, all children have the potential to become contributing members of society and it is crucial that educators recognize this.

The vision of quality inclusive education in Brunei Darussalam, which highlights the principles of excellence for all and equality of opportunity, is translated by policy makers as:

- All children in the community are valuable and have an equal right to education.
- All children are entitled to an education that addresses their individual learning needs to enable them to realize their potential.
- The school is to provide quality inclusive education by creating a learning environment that meets the educational needs of individual children.

i) International Influence

In 1994, Brunei Darussalam joined representatives of 92 governments, and 25 international organizations to endorse the provision of Inclusive Education as stipulated in the Salamanca Statement. The statement produced in Clause 3 of the 1994 Salamanca Statement states,

“We call upon all governments and urge them to adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in regular schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise”
(UNESCO, 1994).

Brunei Darussalam supports and recognizes the Convention on the Protection of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities⁹ with regard to education. Article 24 of the Convention highlights

“the right of persons with disabilities to education. With the view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, State Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and life-long learning”.

⁹ United Nations., (1989). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. New York: United Nations

ii) Local Policies

This inclusive orientation is a strong feature in the National Education System for the 21st century that was introduced in 2007. It has specifically included possible pathways for children with diverse needs.

Historically, the National Education Policy (1992)¹⁰ strives:

to give all Bruneian children every opportunity to achieve at least an upper secondary or vocational education” and “to provide opportunities for all children in Brunei Darussalam to develop their full potential so that they play a useful role in the development of the country (p.7)

The policy provides the framework for the development of an education system, which serves all children, including those with diverse needs. Brunei Darussalam is unique in the sense that it had never had a history of segregated and separate special education for children with special needs.

Further, in line with the world trends towards inclusion, Brunei Darussalam embraced the concept of inclusion in 1994 and its philosophy as stated in the Special Education Policy Guidelines¹¹.

All children are able to learn given an appropriate learning environment. Appropriate learning environments can be created within the inclusive school. The inclusive school is one that provides appropriate instruction for all children based on their level (of ability).

(b) Challenges for Ensuring Educational and Social Inclusion

i) Continuum of provision of resources, support and services

In Brunei Darussalam, the Ministry of Education continues to work hard to ensure the provision of appropriate teacher training, accessible school facilities, adequate resources and appropriate support services in local schools. Various Departments within the Ministry of Education have been coordinating and collaborating with relevant stakeholders to ensure the provision of appropriate teacher training, school facilities, educational resources and specialist support services. These aspects are vital to the delivery of high quality education

¹⁰ Ministry of Education., (1992). *National Education Policy*. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

¹¹ Ministry of Education, Special Education Unit., (1997). *Special Education Policy Guidelines*. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

for all children which provides the opportunity for them to maximize their potential and become independent, life long learners.

The Special Education Unit, Ministry of Education has been mandated to become the focal agent in addressing the needs and implementation of inclusive education in Brunei Darussalam. Ensuring support for the different at-risk groups, poses a challenge in terms of man power, resources, information, understanding and acceptance.

The continuum of support for these groups are established and maintained through close collaborative partnerships with other government agencies providing support to them at each stage of their lives. Different services within the Special Education Unit as well as professionals in the Ministry of Health are actively involved in providing support to the children in schools. One such example would be the Interagency Student Progress Meeting which is attended by representatives from the Special Education Unit, Ministry of Education, Child Development Centre, Ministry of Health and Department of Community Development, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports.

This multi-disciplinary approach is adopted to provide relevant services to students at-risk in close collaboration with other affiliated agencies including non-government organisations. The input from all these affiliated agencies may also be sought to help create an appropriate educational environment to promote student's learning in inclusive schools. The Special Education Unit attends to the needs of the children during the school aged years, the Child Development Centre is the primary agent for early intervention as well as medical needs for the identified children with disabilities and the Department of Community Development seeks to support them, where appropriate, with financial aid as well as vocational training needs. At this level, the students' welfare, educational and social needs are addressed.

Parents and guardians of individuals with high support needs (HSN) may opt to attend special centres run by non government organizations (NGOs). NGOs conduct some informal training programmes such as early intervention, life-skills and basic vocational training programmes for children with special needs. SMARTER, an NGO, has a support programme for children with autism spectrum disorders. The KACA Centre offers "play and socialization support" for children with special needs. The Ministry of Education through the Special Education Unit works collaboratively with these affiliated agencies.

In 2005, the Ministry of Education approved the employment of classroom teacher aides/assistants to support teachers who are working with students who have very high support needs. For such children, participation in classroom activities is often not possible,

without one to one support. This initiative is intended to enhance the students' learning in schools and to ensure that teachers are better equipped to address their specific educational needs in the classroom.

The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports through its Rumah Al-Hidayat, caters for the group at-risk of social exclusion, supports their continuing education, emotional well-being, physical and social development of this group. Their educational needs are provided within the establishment as well as at local schools. At the moment The Old Age and Disability Pensions Act (1984)¹² under the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports is undergoing a review to include up-to date information and to reflect the actual needs of the individual's with regards to financial support.

ii) Accessibility for students with special needs in schools.

The physical structures in some of the existing schools require adaptation and modification to improve accessibility for some students with special needs in order to promote mobility. Modification and renovation to the existing schools' physical structure to ensure accessibility will be carried out in phases through the Ministry of Education's renovation of school buildings under Project BISAI. This includes the setting up of ramps for wheelchair access and the building of toilets for individuals with special needs where required.

Currently, the Department of Estate Management under the Ministry of Education, took on the responsibility of ensuring accessibility and mobility for students by designing accessibility features at the outset, to ensure that the infrastructure would be in place in the near future. This would allow students with special needs to access school facilities which in turn improves the inclusion and active participation of these students in the overall school environment.

Accessibility to the curriculum poses real barriers to some children. Alternative arrangements to access the curriculum have recently been made available for them. Its widespread accepted use in the general classroom would need further planned intervention and training both for teachers and administrators alike.

iii) Promote expertise by equipping teachers and personnel with relevant qualifications and expertise in various fields

In Brunei Darussalam, many teachers and personnel will need to complete specialist training in order to provide quality services in accord with national policies. The areas of

¹² Ministry of Law., (1984). *Old Age and Disability Pensions Act-R (1984)*. Government Printers, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

study include assistive technology, design and technology, vocational-technical education, early intervention, assessment, language/mathematics remediation, intellectual impairment, gifted and talented education, behaviour management, visual impairment, hearing impairment, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, dyslexia, dyscalculia, counselling, career guidance, and other such specialisations.

Over the past years, selected teachers and officers have been awarded full government scholarships to obtain post graduate qualifications. The Ministry of Education has continuously been providing opportunities for teachers and personnel to complete specialist training in order for Brunei Darussalam to have a pool of local specialists to disseminate specialised knowledge to other educators and provide more opportunities to all students with diverse needs.

The local university, Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) plays an important role in the preparation of primary and secondary school teachers and educational administrators. Since its establishment in 1985, it has now grown to offer disciplines like the sciences, business, economics and policy studies, engineering, medicine and social sciences. The Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Education (SHBIE) is a faculty within UBD which offers initial teacher training as well as in-service teacher training programmes. The Institute offers a range of programmes at certificate, degree and post-graduate levels in both the English and Malay medium and these include the areas of Educational Management, Science and Mathematics Education, Art and Social Science Education, Language Education, Guidance and Counselling, Special Education and Early Childhood Education.

The work to have more specialised teachers and professionals is an on-going process. Government Ministries are acting actively to ensure that the national targets of the Vision 2035 are reached.

(c) Regulatory Framework

i) Legislative background

Key legislation introduced within the last 5 years further supports both the existing National Education Policy and Special Education Policy of Inclusive Education. It further stresses the Ministry of Education's commitment to 'education for all' through the implementation of inclusive education whereby all school age children with varying diverse needs learn together with their peers in the regular classroom.

ii) *Children at risk of exclusion*

UNESCO defines children who may be at risk of exclusion as¹³:

- Children with Disabilities;
- Children and young adults with HIV/AIDS and Health Issues;
- Children and young adults from a minority group (ethnic, language, and religion);
- Migrant/Refugee children;
- Children who have been socially excluded;
- Children and young adults disadvantaged due to their gender and
- Children and young adults who have survived any natural disasters.

In Brunei Darussalam, the needs of the above groups are addressed by various inter-ministerial agencies. Aggressive action, supported by legislative changes and adaptations, has made it possible to further include these individuals at risk of exclusion into our education system. The statistics shown below only reflects the number of students with special needs/disabilities and learning difficulties collected from schools.

Table 1. Summary of Students with Special Needs recorded
under the Special Education Unit

No.	STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS	TOTAL
1	Students referred to the Educational Psychology Services since 1996.	2 760
2	Students identified with speech and language impairment	224
3	Students identified with visual impairment	110
4	Students identified with hearing impairment	168
5	Students identified with High Support Needs on an Individual Educational Plans (IEP)	305
6	Students identified with learning difficulties on the Remedial Education Plan (REP)	1 677
7	Students enrolled in the Pre Vocational Programme in Secondary Schools	224

In June 2007, at a local HIV/Aids forum, the Ministry of Health reported the highest surge in numbers of individuals living with Aids in Brunei in the first five months of the year, giving a total number of 36¹⁴. With a total population of 380,000, this number represents 0.009% of the total population, a percentage much lower in comparison to other countries worldwide. As the number of individuals with HIV/Aids is low, this suggests that the number of possible

¹³ UNESCO,, (2008). *Papers on the Regional Preparatory Conference on Inclusive Education*. Bali, Indonesia.

¹⁴ Za'im Zaini., (2007). *Brunei Sees Biggest Spike in HIV/AIDS Cases*. Retrieved 23 September 2008, From Penyinar: The youth division of BDAC. Website: http://www.freewebs.com/bdac_penyinar/news

children affected with HIV/Aids may also be low, if at all in existence. There have not been any reported cases of children entering school with HIV/Aids, as measures would need to be taken to ensure the child's safety and best interest.

In the case of Malaria, Brunei Darussalam was reported to be at a "non endemic" level,¹⁵ whereas for incidences of Avian Flu, SARS cases, Yellow Fever cases, Brunei Darussalam was reported to have had a very low, if any, incident rating.

There are several ethnic minorities residing in Brunei Darussalam. The 2006 Key Indicators¹⁶ census showed a population of 84,800 individuals originating from different ethnic backgrounds. Most of the individuals are indigenous to the rainforest and choose to preserve their own way of living. The Ministry of Education deploys qualified teachers to these areas and ensures the schools are also equipped with technology and modern equipment equal to their urban peers. Two such schools exist, catering to a school population of 15 and 4 respectively¹⁷.

To date there is no available data with regards to Migrant/Refugee Children. Individuals affected by Social Exclusion are addressed by government run "houses" under the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports.

With regards to gender disparity, education statistics from the Department of Schools (2008) shows a student population of 16630 male students to 15002 female students in the government primary schools. Leete (2008)¹⁸ reported similar findings for enrolment into primary and secondary schools where the numbers were nearly equal but there is a marked contrast when it came to tertiary education. In the tertiary level, the ratio favoured the females rather than the males.

Brunei Darussalam's geographical position is unique whereby natural disaster is infrequent. Incidences as a result of natural disasters such as floods caused by heavy downpour do happen. However, due to the country's relatively manageable population size, immediate and swift action is provided to ensure that children affected thus do not stay out of school more than necessary.

¹⁵ Global Health Facts., (2007). *Data by Topic: Malaria*. Retrieved 23 September 2008 from Malaria Case Rate per 1,000 population. Global Health Facts.Website <http://www.globalhealthfacts>

¹⁶ Prime Minister's Office, Department of Statistics, Department of Economic Planning and Development., (2006). *Brunei Darussalam Key Indicators*. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

¹⁷ Ministry of Education, Department of Schools., (2008). *Monthly Statistics on Government Schools Nationwide and Data on Teachers*. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

¹⁸ Leete, R., (2008). *Wawasan Brunei 2035: Beyond the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) and High Human Development*. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

Given the varied scenarios above, the following public policies given below are relevant and pertinent in the Brunei Darussalam setting.

2.2 Public Policies

a) Indicators and data used to inform inclusive education policies

Brunei Darussalam advocates Education for All and aims to provide quality inclusive education to ensure the participation of learners from diverse backgrounds and needs. Statistics published by the Management of Education Data Section and Student Pass Unit¹⁹ reflects students' enrolment in nursery, pre-school/kindergarten, primary and secondary schools for both male and female since 2006 till 2008. These students include those from various geographical locations; comprising students from the rural to urban areas, within the four districts of Brunei. These children represent those from various religious backgrounds such as Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Hindu, indigenous beliefs and others. Their parents come from varied social and economic backgrounds .

Table. 2. Students' enrolment from 2006 to 2008

Year	2006			2007			2008		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Nursery	496	497	993	585	628	1213	474	448	922
Pre-School / Kindergarten	6044	5655	11699	5979	5761	11740	6015	5840	11855
Primary	24105	21980	46085	24055	21917	45972	23515	21610	45125
Secondary	19992	18576	38568	19921	18630	38551	20168	18525	38693

These children are of various race and ethnicity and include Brunei indigenous communities of Malay, Kedayan, Tutong, Belait, Bisaya, Dusun and Murut including students from Chinese descent. Other children of different nationalities such as Indian, Nepalese, Pakistani, Australian, British, Malaysian, Singaporean and others make up 3.6% of the total student population. The provision of learning programmes or support services are accessible to all students regardless of their race, ethnicity or nationality.

The drop out rates for 2006, 2007 and 2008 was published in the Education Statistics. In 2006 the student drops out rates were 0.17% in the primary and 2.16% in the secondary²⁰. In 2007, the drop out rate for the primary school was 0.08% and 2.99% in the secondary.

¹⁹ Ministry of Education, Department of Schools, Student Pass Unit., (2008). *Data on Foreign Students Studying in Brunei Darussalam*. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

²⁰ Ministry of Education, Management of Data Section, Department of Planning and Development., (2008). *Education Statistics 2006, 2007 and 2008*. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

These students are referred to the Student Counselling Unit and consultations are conducted by the Unit with the parents and children. School aged students who requests re-admission into schools are referred to the Counselling Unit and the Special Education Unit who assess their learning needs and work with the schools to facilitate their placements back into schools to plan appropriate educational programmes to meet their needs.

However with regards to curriculum preferences, the data indicated that males preferred to opt for the Technical-Vocational route rather than the Higher Education pathway, with the proportion reversed when it came to females. Higher Education refers to Colleges of Higher Education and Universities.

Table 3. Gender Distribution in Technical-Vocational and Tertiary Education

Year	Higher Education		Technical/Vocational	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
2006	1687	3138	1678	782
2007	1815	3177	1754	1131
2008	1790	3227	1796	1202

The Special Education Unit, Ministry of Education has a data bank on learners with disabilities/special needs and students with learning difficulties who are currently attending schools. This includes information on the children's particulars and diagnosis. Children with a medical diagnosis of high support needs (HSN) are referred by the Child Development Centre, Ministry of Health, to the Special Education Unit, Ministry of Education, prior to their placements in schools.

The data on children with disabilities on early intervention programmes at the Child Development Centre, Ministry of Health, is also available. These children are less than six years of age.

The Special Education Unit is currently undertaking studies to track students identified with special needs who have left the education system.

Table 4. Students with special needs after leaving secondary pre-vocational programme.

	At Home	Working with Gov't	Working in Private Sector	NGO Sheltered Workshop	– Sheltered Workshop, Department of Community Development	Others (Rehab Centre)	Deceased	No Info
Total Number	188	56	174	4	9	2	3	153
%	31.02	9.24	28.71	0.66	1.49	0.33	0.50	25.25

(b) Inclusive Education Issues which are relevant for educational policies in Brunei Darussalam

i) In the area of language

The national education system prioritises the use of the Malay Language as the official national language and the use of the Malay and English languages as the media of instruction. For most children, the English Language may be their second or third language and hence, some may have difficulties in coping with the lessons.

ii) Improvement of service provisions

Teachers and education personnel professionalism and specialisation through continuous regular professional development in the form of conferences, seminars, sharing sessions and workshops on inclusion practices so that they will be kept abreast with best inclusive practices need to be promoted. In this way, they can refine their skills and knowledge and develop new ones in the pursuit of quality inclusive education.

iii) Alternative modes to learning

There is a real need to optimize teachers' teaching and students' learning outcomes through the provision of assistive technology such as computers, multimedia, interactive boards, special software and adapted devices. At present the Ministry of Education provides government funding to update schools' learning resources and this is also augmented by charitable donations from local companies. Students with high support needs require access to suitable learning resources to meet their individual learning needs.

iv) Commitment from community and schools

Quality school inclusion requires on-going support from the community. There needs to be positive action to promote commitment from schools, parents and relevant agencies in working collaboratively to establish an appropriate educational system which includes everybody, respect differences, supports learning for everyone and responds to individual needs.

v) Role of school leaders

Principals and head teachers as school leaders play an active role in ensuring the successful implementation of inclusive practices in schools. Alus (2001) and Pang (2001), found that teachers and school principals who had attended inclusive education and special education courses or workshops have more positive attitudes towards the inclusion of students in the regular classrooms than those who did not attend such courses or workshops.

vi) Redefining the roles of classroom teachers towards inclusion

In Brunei Darussalam, classroom teachers play a pivotal role in the implementation of inclusive education. There is a need to provide them with the necessary training to promote positive inclusion. Their continued professional development would greatly facilitate the inclusion of learners with diverse needs and ensure the full participation of all learners in the classroom.

(c) Groups considered most vulnerable to various forms of exclusion from and within education

i) Children with mother tongue language other than Malay

These children need to develop their fluency in their own mother tongue prior to acquiring competency in their second language, Bahasa Melayu, in order to be able to transfer successfully the language acquisition skills necessary to acquiring fluency in the English Language at a later stage in their education. These children usually encounter literacy problems which directly impacts on their learning progress in school.

ii) Students with special needs who have completed school

There is a need to set up formal Transitional Work Training Programmes after secondary schooling for secondary students with special needs. These students require vocational

skills training to be able to access the world of work. Vocational Skills Training provisions need to be established for them to successfully acquire job skills training for employment. Legislation to facilitate the employment of this group of young adults is also needed in order to facilitate meaningful independent living as well as to lay the foundations for positive inclusion in the community at large.

(d) Current educational reforms addressing inclusive education

i) Setting up Model Inclusive Schools providing Excellent Services for Children

Promising learning progress for students on Individual Educational Plans (IEP) has recently been made with the establishment of Model Inclusive Schools providing excellent services for children. A few selected primary and secondary schools have been allocated additional funding and support to ensure that they have the necessary school facilities, special learning equipment and teaching resources, specialist support services, and school based teacher training programmes to provide quality inclusive education services and support for students with a wide range of diverse needs. As far as possible, learning support for children identified as requiring individualised learning support is provided in the classroom. Some children may require highly intensive focussed learning support initially. This structured learning support is provided in learning centres/rooms at regular intervals. The aim is to equip the child with the relevant learning skills so that they have the necessary competencies to be with their age peers in the classroom.

Students enrolled at these schools requiring a high level of support will have an IEP designed to address their specific learning difficulties. Their individual learning needs will be met through adaptation and/or modification of the curriculum. Appropriate facilities and assistive technologies are to be provided. Those with hearing, visual or communication problems will have access to specialized equipment and software/s that will enable them to carry out reading, writing and other learning tasks that were previously difficult or impossible.

These students will be supported by members of the School Based Team (SBT). This team includes Special Education Needs Assistance (SENA) Teachers, regular classroom teachers, teacher aides, resource teachers, special educators, educational psychologists and other relevant specialist personnel.

In the New Education System for the 21st century, SPN 21, the following inclusive education goals are intended to be achieved:

- to acknowledge, respect and celebrate individual differences in children: age, gender, ethnicity, language, disability and the recognition differences as part of the inclusion process,
- students' individual differences to be seen as resources to support learning, and
- to accept that all children can learn and that children with diverse needs must have their basic needs met in order for them to gain from education.

ii) Raising public awareness

The provision of resources and support is a reflection of the understanding that the whole community should be involved in the education of the child. In order to realize such commitment, there is a need to raise public awareness about the benefits of education for children with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms.

Government, business and community organizations all have a valuable role to play in the education of those with diverse needs. The private sector and school communities throughout Brunei Darussalam have made many contributions each year to provide additional resources for children with special needs. Additional donations have enabled the purchase of specialist resources.

(iii) Promoting positive attitudes towards inclusive education

The training of all teachers, school administrators, and Ministry staff as well as raising awareness in the community to promote and support the implementation of inclusive education is crucial. Support from head teachers and principals is essential to successful school inclusion. School heads are directly responsible for establishing the School Based Team (SBT), chairing it, inviting parents to participate and convening meetings to finalize the Educational Plans. Through the SBT they ensure that students with diverse needs receive appropriate education as well as adequate provision of support, resources and facilities in the inclusive classrooms. This will enable the teachers to implement instructional adaptations according to the individual needs of the students.

iv) National Education system for the 21st Century

The SPN 21 system provides multiple pathways to accommodate the diverse learning needs of learners. The curriculum is designed to be broad based and offers a seamless pathway to higher education from mainstream schools and vocational institutions.

2.3 Systems, Links and Transitions

(a) *What are the main barriers (e.g. economic, political, and social) to inclusive education*

i) Curriculum

In the past, records showed that children with special needs have been accepted in primary schools for many years. Although Brunei Darussalam has a long history of accepting students with diverse backgrounds in government primary schools, many students with special needs do not succeed within the education system as it is strongly orientated towards academic performance (Ahmad, 1995²¹; Abu Bakar, 1999²²).

Currently, with the implementation of the 21st century Education System, the Ministry of Education is in the midst of reforming and restructuring the curriculum and developing assessment practices in line with inclusive education.

ii) Attitudes of teachers

Teachers are regarded as the key agents of change in education and it is their feelings of frustration and inadequacy that may pose as potential barriers to inclusive education (Bradshaw and Mundia, 2006²³). Bradshaw and Mundia (2006) reported teachers who had completed at least one course exposing them to special and inclusive education had a much better attitude towards people with disabilities. This study suggests a greater and crucial role of teacher training whether pre-service or in-service. The Special Education Unit and the UBD have continuously been involved in the training of all teachers, school administrators, and the Ministry of Education staff as well as raising awareness on inclusive education in the community. This is crucial in the implementation of positive inclusive education. Such training will equip teachers with the competencies, understanding, knowledge and skills to facilitate the development and implementation of inclusive education. Hopefully, such training programmes will enable teachers to meet the diverse needs of students and to become life-long learners. This is in line with the Dakar Framework for Action on World Education Forum (2000) Statement No. 44 which stipulates

²¹ Ahmad bin Haji Jumaat, Yang Mulia Dato Seri Laila Jasa Dr. Haji., (1995). In *Special Education Newsletter No.3, February 1995*. Special Education Unit, Ministry of Education. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

²² Abu Bakar bin Haji Apong, Yang DiMuliakan Pehin Orang Kaya Putera Maharaja Dato Seri Laila Jasa., (1999). Where are we now and how far we have to go to serve the educational needs of all students in the inclusive school? In *Conference Proceedings of the Second National Conference on Special Education* (pp. 8–14). Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

²³ Bradshaw, L. and Mundia, L., (2006). *Attitudes to and Concerns about Inclusive Education: Bruneian In-service and Pre-service Teachers*. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

that a “*successful education programme requires well-trained teachers and active learning techniques*” (World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 2000)²⁴.

iii) Need for In-Service Teachers' Training

The need for in-service training was voiced by different groups of Bruneian teachers during a focus group forum undertaken by Koay, Sim and Elkins (2004): Regular teachers reported that they require basic knowledge and skills in teaching students with special needs. Primary and secondary teachers with experience in teaching students with special needs commented that they require training on how to collaborate with SENA teachers and requested attachment to successful IEP programmes. The SENA teachers require more knowledge and skills, especially in working with students with high support needs and also on collaborating with regular classroom teachers.

iv) Increase cooperation and collaboration between the members of School Based Team (SBT)

Cooperation and collaboration must be promoted through the SBT which includes not only class teachers, SENA teachers, Home Room teachers, support staff, head teachers or principals and parents but also outside agencies such as the specialists and personnel from the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, where necessary. The provision of adequate resources, support and other aspects such as instructional needs could thus be addressed in greater detail through the SBT. In the consultative process for SBT, the members can identify the kind of needs that are required in the inclusive setting. The team work and successful partnerships generated by the SBT would help promote decision making and shared responsibility and facilitate the development of a flexible, well considered learning environment for all students.

The role of parents also has to be enhanced as they have the most valuable information about their child. This is important to assist school personnel in understanding how their children can best be taught and in establishing appropriate learning goals and objectives for them. Parents are the most important partners in education and have a meaningful role to play in the planning process for children with diverse needs.

(b) Most Important Facilitators of Inclusive Education

i) School Based Team (SBT)

²⁴ UNESCO., (2000). *World Education Forum*. Dakar, Senegal.

In Brunei Darussalam's Inclusive Education System, the establishment of the SBT is crucial as it gives a major impact to the learning intervention programmes for students with diverse learning needs. The SBT is the team responsible for planning and delivering learning support to the students. The SBT is a problem solving group and its members comprise of school heads, SENA Teachers, Class/subject teachers, parents and/or specialists if necessary. Members of the school's SBT collaborate and discuss ways to ensure the provision of appropriate resources and support for pupils with learning needs at the school level. The teamwork and successful partnerships generated by the SBT helps promote decision making and shared responsibility, thus translating inclusive education into reality.

ii) Teacher Aides

The recent addition of teacher aides into the education system has been greatly beneficial for the inclusion of the learners with diverse needs. The intensive support given to these learners have helped to enhance their participation in the school environment.

There are currently 55 teacher aides in both government primary and secondary schools.

c) Approaches and measures to make the education system more inclusive

Since its establishment in 1995, the Special Education Unit, Ministry of Education has been working continuously to plan, design, and implement appropriate educational programmes and ensure that the provision of suitable learning support services are set up to meet the diverse needs of the learners in the inclusive school.

The following briefly details the implementation of the programmes and services undertaken by the Special Education Unit:

i) Special Educational Programmes

1) The Learning Assistance Programme.

The Learning Assistance Programme (LAP) is a whole school based approach to providing learning assistance to students with diverse learning needs in primary and secondary schools. The majority of these students have learning difficulties. They experience difficulties in the basic skill areas of reading, writing and in mathematics.

Special Education Needs Assistance (SENA) teachers have been trained to meet the learning needs of these students and to carry out the following relevant tasks in their schools:

- (a) Identify pupils with special needs.
- (b) Prepare an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) or Remedial Education Plan (REP) in collaboration with the classroom teachers and parents.
- (c) Submit the IEP and REP to the School-based Team (SBT) for approval; each SBT consists of the head teacher/principal, class teachers, SENA teacher, teacher aides, parents of the students concerned and/or other relevant agencies.
- (d) Implement, monitor and evaluate the IEP and REP.

SENA teachers assist the class teachers by working with students with diverse needs, in individually or in small groups, either in the classrooms or the Learning Assistance Centre (LAC) for short periods each day. The LAC is a place where the SENA teacher conducts specialized teaching and keeps various teaching resources. The SENA teacher also collaborates with class teachers and teacher aides by advising, demonstrating teaching techniques and monitoring the success of the student's programme.

2) *The Pre-Vocational Programme.*

The Pre-Vocational Programme is a programme designed to meet the needs of selected students with High Support Needs (HSN) in the secondary schools. The programme is designed to provide opportunities for those students with moderate to severe learning needs to achieve their full potential and to learn various independent living skills. The more able among this group of students may acquire some basic academic skills, living and social skills, basic vocational and work skills which will equip them for the world of life and work after school. The programme is delivered over a five year period with distinct educational goals for each year;

- Year 1, 2 and 3 : Career Awareness, Exploration and Preparation;
- Year 4 : Career Placement and
- Year 5 : Career Specialization and Follow-up.

3) *Gifted Education Programme.*

The Ministry of Education is committed to creating a climate for educational innovation to ensure that services for all students focus on the student learning needs. The National Education System for the 21st Century outlines multiple pathways in the educational provision for students. This is to improve the quality of the education provided for our students, including those who are gifted and talented.

Brunei Darussalam intends to embark on a formal gifted and talented education programme for students in our school system to provide them with opportunities to excel, so that those with exceptional potential are able to have their gifts and talent developed to become valued, contributing members of society. The Ministry of Education recognizes that individuals with naturally occurring high abilities must have access to educational programmes that are designed to meet their individual needs and that they require specialized support in their learning for them to develop their gifts and talents.

This specialized support includes an appropriate educational programme, suitable identification instruments which identify and assess the performance of individuals for giftedness and talents, using best practices, qualified and trained lead teachers in gifted education, and adequate resources in order to plan, develop and deliver services to uphold the nation's high expectations and provide them with numerous opportunities to reach their potential.

ii) Support Services for Students with Special Needs

At the Special Education Unit, a multi-disciplinary approach is adopted to provide services for students with special needs. Students with a medical diagnosis of HSN are also referred to the Special Education Unit either by their parents, SENA teachers, classroom teachers, head teachers/principals or medical officers. The various support services are as follows:

1) Educational Psychology Services.

The educational psychologists provide assessment, consultation and training services to schools, SENA teachers, class and subject teachers, head teachers and principals, parents and other relevant agencies to address the psycho-educational needs of students with intellectual, learning, socio-emotional and behavioural difficulties or disorders.

2) Support Services for Students with High Support Needs (HSN).

The Support Services for students with HSN work very closely together with other relevant learning support agencies to help create an appropriate educational environment to promote student's learning in the inclusive schools. This is done by providing direct and effective support to the classroom teachers so that students with HSN can participate meaningfully in learning activities in regular classrooms.

3) Support Services for Students with Hearing Impairment (HI).

The support services for students with HI include conducting on-going staff development to equip classroom teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the learning needs of these students. Workshops on Sign Language are conducted regularly for teachers and parents of students with HI in order to facilitate communication and learning progress.

4) Support Services for Students with Visual Impairment (VI).

Selected SENA teachers have been trained as resource teachers to work with students with visual impairment and are competent in the Malay and English Braille Code. These teachers are able to conduct training for students with visual impairment on orientation and mobility and daily living skills; and are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to address the learning needs of students with VI in the classroom. Services pertaining to the use of various forms of assistive technology (e.g. screen readers, screen magnifiers etc) to further cater to the reading and writing needs of visually challenged students have also recently been carried out.

5) Support Services for Students with Speech and Language Impairment.

Support services are provided by the speech therapist for students with speech production and communication difficulties. These students have been referred by the schools. Services include the gathering of data through interviews, and observation. Following this, assessments will be carried out to determine the nature of the problem. The speech therapist then collaborates with the members of the SBT by discussing the appropriate learning support intervention to be provided through the IEP. The speech therapist also assists and trains SENA teachers, regular teachers and parents to implement the strategies recommended in the IEP.

At the Special Education Unit, a multi-disciplinary approach is adopted to provide services to students with diverse needs. Students with a medical diagnosis of HSN are also referred to the Special Education Unit, either by their parents, SENA teachers, classroom teachers, head teachers/principals or medical officers.

(d) Approaches and Measures to make the education system more flexible to support those who have dropped out or have not attained appropriate qualifications

i) Continuing Education

Everybody deserves a second chance. Since 1958, the Continuing Education Section of the Department of Technical Education, Ministry of Education has been the focal point in addressing the educational and vocational needs of adult learners. Previously known as the Adult Education Classes, its initial purpose was to eradicate illiteracy. The emphasis now has shifted towards the improvement of general education, the acquisition of vocational and technical skills and the provision of enrichment programmes for adults as part of their leisure activities and lifelong learning competencies. It offers course which are academic based, skills based and short term specialised courses. While the department is a government-run establishment, privately run educational establishments are also available catering for adult learners interested to improve or gain further qualifications.

The Continuing Education Section also addresses the needs of special children and rehabilitation centres. Since 1998 the Section funded the organisation of classes in various places such as rehabilitation centres and in the prison setting.

ii) Vocational Schools

Sultan Bolkiah Vocational School, Nakhoda Ragam Vocational School, Mechanical Training Centre, Business School and Wasan Vocational School were established to provide a variety of vocational courses to students completing Secondary Three and showing potential and ability in craft and vocational skills. The main objective of these schools is to produce a skilled labour force to meet the nation's man-power needs in line with modern challenges and technologies. Courses on offer include Electrical and Electronics, Clerical Studies, Furniture Making, Plumbing, Hairdressing, Carpentry, Bricklaying and Concreting, Painting and Decorating, Crops Production and Fish Husbandry.

2.4 Learners and Teachers

(a) New approaches to teaching and learning to increase educational opportunities for all, improve student learning outcomes and reduce disparities

The Ministry of Education supports the development and implementation of life-long educational programmes which promotes learning throughout life in a variety of contexts, from pre-school to tertiary. The impact of globalization has provided the impetus for us to reform our educational system with particular reference to the wider utilisation of information technology, and placing an emphasis on research and development. There is an urgent need for the education system to respond to changes in society and the demands of the market economies.

The intent of the Ministry of Education in investing in the SPN 21 is to develop a knowledge infrastructure with quality institutions, a flexible curriculum at all levels of education, new kinds of teacher training, as well as embed the use of ICT in the educational infrastructure to enhance the teaching and learning process. Students will be encouraged to learn by doing and discovering. There will be flexibility in the education system to accommodate the students' needs as well as provide efficient assessment capability in ways that can maximize the learners' potential.

i) Initiatives taken by the Ministry of Education

The Curriculum Development Department engages in works which respond to the needs and requirements of the Ministry of Education in providing education to all levels and groups of students. Improvements and adjustments were made to revamp the existing subject curricula in response to social changes and needs. New curricula were developed for civics, history, science and mathematics. Many projects were introduced to further improve instruction and learning in schools. Some of these projects have been fully integrated as educational programmes into the school curriculum.

1) *Reading and Language Acquisition (RELA) Programme*²⁵.

The bilingual policy was introduced in 1984 in schools to enable the child to acquire fluency in the national language, Malay, as well as to be proficient in the English Language. Proficiency in the latter enables the child to access a greater mass of information in this globalised world. The Curriculum Development Department, Ministry of Education, placed a strong emphasis in the Reading and Language Acquisition (RELA) programme to improve the English language proficiency of learners in primary schools.

The Reading and Language Acquisition (RELA) project was first introduced in 20 primary schools in 1989 and was initially implemented in selected primary 1 classes. After a series

²⁵Ministry of Education, Department of Curriculum Development., (1993). *Education in Brunei*. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

of evaluation studies had shown positive results, it was extended to all government primary schools in the lower and upper levels.

The aims of the programme are:

- to incorporate the ideas of integrated language learning into the English language curriculum;
- to develop communicative and interesting classroom activities;
- to raise the children's level of achievement in listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in the English Language;
- to develop lifelong reading habits by fostering children's interest in books; and, to improve the methods of language teaching.

The RELA programme has laid a strong foundation of teaching and learning English Language in the lower primary classes which maximises the learning potential of the children when they reach upper primary. Furthermore, RELA methods have brought interest, meaning and genuine communication to Bruneian Primary classrooms.

2) *The Thinking Skills Programme*²⁶

In response to the societal demands for higher-order thinking individuals who are able to (a) think critically and rationally about issues, (b) approach any problem creatively and (c) make sound decisions, the Ministry of Education introduced the Cognitive Research Trust (CoRT) Thinking Project in 1993 in six government secondary schools and one private secondary school. In 1997 and 1998, the project was expanded to all government secondary schools.

The Thinking Skills Project originates from research conducted by the CoRT in Cambridge, United Kingdom. The Thinking Skills project is based on the concept that thinking can be taught as a skill which can be improved upon with practice. Students are taught to use these thinking strategies in learning activities to help them develop better thinking skills. The project also teaches them to absorb and classify information, and expand and broaden their ways of thinking.

The aim of this CoRT Thinking Skills programme is to improve and enhance the overall quality of the students thinking, using simple systematic approaches to the way information is handled, processed and decided upon. The programme consisted of lessons that

²⁶ Ministry of Education, Department of Curriculum Development., (1993). *Education in Brunei*. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

encourage learners to stop and consider the views of other people involved in the situation. Each CoRT lesson comprised of a set of thinking tools. These CoRT tools can be used to solve problems which are related to situations outside school, and across the curriculum in subjects such as social science and language arts.

3) *English Project for Pre-School (EPPS).*

The English Project for Pre-school (EPPS) was the outcome of the study in 2003 on English Language Proficiency at Primary Level by a special task force set up to investigate students' achievements in various subjects²⁷. Based on their findings the task force recommended that the basic oral and literacy proficiency skills of pupils at pre-school level be improved.

The project has two main aims. The first aim is to develop the English Language skills of pre-school children. This is achieved by building a strong foundation in oral skills; to build on the existing English language component of the pre-school syllabus by providing clear learning outcomes in each of the skill area through the provision of an appropriate learning environment and conditions for achieving these outcomes. The second aim is to develop the language teaching skills of local Lower Primary teachers. The training strategy used is the appointment of local primary teachers as co-operating teachers who will "shadow" the main teachers. At the beginning of the project the main teachers were mostly expatriate native-speakers of English. Through a period of professional training, mentoring and evaluation, qualified co-operating teachers 'graduated' to take on the role of the main teachers.

The EPPS project has made steady progress from the time it was implemented in 2005, beginning with 15 schools in the first phase. That number has increased to 27 schools in the second phase and by 2008, it has expanded to 44 schools. Local teachers have gained much by way of professional development and experience. With more local teachers coming on board, it is hopeful that the project will see continued development and success in the coming years.

4) *Secondary Vocational Programme (PMV).*

At the start of their secondary education, students are streamed according to their abilities to either follow the full National Curriculum or the Differentiated Curriculum, also known as

²⁷ Ministry of Education, Department of Schools, Department of Curriculum Development and Centre for British Teachers (CfBT) services., (2005). *End of Year Report: English Project for Pre-School (EPPS)*. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

the Secondary Vocational Curriculum (PMV). The different curricular emphasis caters to the different learning abilities and inclinations. It is the aim of the lower secondary education to prepare students for upper secondary and vocational or technical education and training. The majority of students will proceed to offer the BCGCE 'O' level following the full National Curriculum whilst the PMV caters for those who are inclined towards a vocationally-oriented curriculum.

The PMV curriculum is devised as an alternative education programme for students who are more inclined towards vocationally-oriented studies. It is designed to enable students to explore their abilities and develop their vocational or technical potential. The PMV curriculum consists of core and optional subjects.

Education at the upper secondary level is general in nature with provision for specialisation in the science, arts and technical fields. As of 2006, apart from the National Vocational Certificate (NVC) in Clerical Studies, other options available to PMV students are the National Trade Certificate Grade 3 (NTC3) in various vocational subjects. The upper secondary level of PMV programme spans a period of 18 months, which includes a 6 months foundation course, a one-year NVC/NTC3 course and work attachment. All subjects are taught in English except for three subjects, namely Kemahiran Bahasa Melayu (Malay Language Skills), Tarbiah Islam (Islamic Religious Knowledge) and Bimbingan Asas Etika Kerja (Basic Work Ethics).

Students who have successfully completed the PMV will be awarded a certificate in BDTVEC NVC or NTC3 which is recognized by the National Accreditation Council and the Public Service Commission.

ii) Programmes in Schools for students with special needs

In schools, students with special needs, depending on the level of support required will either follow an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) or a Remedial Education Plan (REP).

The following describes the implementation process involved. The SENA teachers are directly involved in performing the following tasks in their schools:

1) Identify students with special needs.

First, the SENA teacher identifies students who have special learning needs by collecting information from teachers, classroom observations and tests or examinations. Students "at risk" with learning difficulties and those identified as having special needs are referred for

further consultation and/or assessment to the SENA teachers, as the agents of intervention at the first level.

Once these pupils are identified, the SENA teacher will assess their abilities to determine what the student's individual educational needs are. The SENA teacher transfers this information to a draft educational plan in collaboration with the class teachers and parents.

Prior to the placement of children with a medical diagnosis of high support needs (HSN) in schools, the child is referred by the Child Development Centre (CDC), Ministry of Health, to the Special Education Unit. These students are those with intellectual, physical, visual, hearing, speech or language impairments, inappropriate behaviour and Autism Spectrum Disorders. If the SENA teacher is unable to assess the student who is currently attending school, due to specific hearing or visual impairment, significant development delay, severe intellectual difficulties or behavioural disorders, the student is then referred to the Special Education Unit.

2) Prepare an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) or Remedial Education Plan (REP) for students with special needs in collaboration with the class teachers and parents.

The IEP is developed and implemented for students that are identified as (HSN). IEP is a written plan which describes the strengths and needs of the individual student and their learning objectives, goals, and teaching strategies used to achieve these goals. It outlines adaptations and/or modifications to the curriculum content, the development of teaching strategies, relevant resources or/and support services needed. The educational needs of students with HSN are identified during assessment by the educational psychological services from the Special Education Unit. This assessment provides a basis for determining an appropriate educational programme.

The Remedial Education Plan (REP) is developed and implemented for students with learning difficulties. These students experience difficulties in the basic skill areas of reading, writing and in mathematics. An REP is a written plan which describes the learning objectives and goals of the student and is tailored to meet the needs of the individual student in improving his/her academic attainment.

3) Submission of the IEP or REP to the School Based Team (SBT) for approval.

The draft IEP or REP is presented to the SBT which consists of the head teacher/principal, class teachers, SENA teachers, teacher aides, parents of the students concerned and/or other relevant agencies. The Head teacher/Principal of the school is responsible to establish the SBT. The SBT is a problem solving group that meets to discuss how to meet

the student's specific learning needs and to create a learning environment conducive to learning for all students with diverse needs. The SBT will ensure that the student on an IEP or REP receives an educational programme that meets his or her individual learning needs through adaptation and/or modification of the curriculum.

4) Implement and monitor the IEP and REP in collaboration with members of the SBT.

After the SBT meeting, SENA teachers will work with the students, individually or/and in small groups, in the Learning Assistance Centre (LAC). Some students are allocated time slots when they move from the regular classroom to the LAC. Other students remain in the classroom with their peers and learning support is provided via a co-teaching approach with the regular subject teacher in the classroom for short periods each day.

(b) Curriculum Design and organization.

The aforementioned National Education System for the 21st Century caters to the diverse needs of our current learners and as the title suggests, the curriculum aspires to equip our students with the necessary skills to succeed in the 21st century. These skills encompass educational skills, social skills, technical and vocational skills, ICT skills and other such 21st century competencies.

Students with diverse learning needs may require support and/or changes to one or several of the following: the regular curriculum, assessment, staffing, instructional and evaluation strategies, material resources, facilities and equipment, and health care services. For instance, students with hearing impairments may require hearing aids and/or instruction in sign language; students with visual impairment may require reading materials in large print or Braille; students with physical disabilities may need special equipment; those with emotional or behavioural disorders may need less or more highly structured classes. Additional services such as physical and occupational therapy, speech therapy, medical treatment and counselling may also be built into these students' educational programmes.

(c) Instructional hours per year dedicated to learning reading in the early primary grades

The Department of Schools estimates that schools spend at least 2 hours a day on the acquisition and expansion of literacy skills in both languages of Malay and English. This practice operates from pre-school to primary 6. The literacy skills consist of lesson activities in reading, speaking, writing and listening skills.

(d) Teacher Training

a. Pre-Service Teacher Training

In order to enhance teachers' pre-service training in special education, Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) offers a core course in *Inclusive Education* to all students in the 3-year Diploma in Primary Education, the 4-year Bachelor of Arts in Primary Education and the 4-year Bachelor of Education in Primary TESL.

b. In-Service Teacher Training

1) Certificate in Special Education Programme.

Since 1995, the Special Education Unit, Ministry of Education and UBD have jointly organised an in-service Certificate in Special Education Programme to equip regular trained teachers to become SENA teachers. The Certificate of Special Education Programme equips teachers with basic knowledge and skills to identify and assist learners with special needs. SENA teachers act as a resource to the classroom teachers and are the key persons in the delivery of Special Education programmes and services in the inclusive school system in Brunei Darussalam. To date, 254 SENA teachers at the elementary and secondary levels have been trained and 210 of them have been placed in both the primary and secondary schools state-wide²⁸. The rest of them are attached to the Special Education Unit and various departments within the Ministry of Education.

2) The Bachelor of Education (Special Education).

The Bachelor of Education (Special Education) is an in-service teacher training programme providing a continuing process of professional upgrading for SENA teachers. It enables SENA teachers to acquire additional knowledge and skills on special needs and learning assistance. In 1999, the B. Ed. in Special Education had its first intake of 23 upgrading SENA teachers. To date, 67 SENA teachers have graduated while 23 of them are still undertaking the course.

3) The Masters of Education (Special Education).

The Masters of Education (Special Education) is a continuation to provide further upgrading and professional development of special education personnel for the nation. The course provides advanced knowledge and skills in the field of special education, and course work

²⁸ Koay, T.L., (2008). *Unpublished Report on Teacher Training on Special Education Courses*. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

on local projects and research are encouraged. It aims to equip graduates with effective managerial and consultative roles within the Ministry of Education and the Special Education Unit. To date, eight officers had completed the Masters in Special Education.

4) Introductory course on inclusive education.

An introductory course on inclusive education comprising of 20 lecture/workshop sessions (42 hours) is offered annually by the Special Education Unit. It is organised by the Special Education Unit in collaboration with UBD. It aims to enhance the implementation of inclusive education in private schools.

c. Teachers' Continuing Professional Development

The Ministry of Education organizes monthly in-service workshops, meetings, discussion sessions and seminars for SENA teachers to keep them abreast of the latest skills and knowledge on Inclusive and Special Education. A 'Train the Trainer' model is used and the SENA teachers are encouraged to provide relevant support and professional development activities for classroom teachers within their respective schools.

Many other inclusive and special education workshops and seminars are also presented each year for teachers from government and private schools. The workshops are designed to help teachers refine existing skills and knowledge and develop new inclusive strategies.

d. Other Training Activities

School principals and head teachers are invited to participate in presentation and workshop sessions on inclusive and special education. These include the concept of inclusive education, and the roles of the SBT. School principals and head teachers have a key role to play by promoting inclusive education, organising relevant professional development for their staff and enhancing the SBT.

National Conferences on Special Education were convened in 1996 and 1999 and the 1st and 2nd International Conferences on Special Education were held in 1997 and 2005 respectively. In addition the 1st and 2nd National Seminar and Workshop on Inclusive Education were held in 2006 and 2007 respectively. During these sessions, participants were exposed to new knowledge and learnt how to apply the knowledge that they have gained in their respective workplaces. They were able to review the practices and teaching techniques used to support students with diverse learning needs.

Conclusion

The agenda for inclusive education in Brunei Darussalam is an essential element of the drive for education for all. The emphasis in inclusive education is to respond to the needs of all students, including students identified as having special needs and students with diverse learning needs. In Brunei Darussalam, a multi-disciplinary approach is adopted to provide services to students with HSN in the school system. The educational psychologists and the support services for students at the Special Education Unit work very closely together with other relevant agencies from other government ministries to help create an appropriate educational environment to promote student's learning in the inclusive schools.

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