11th EFA Coordinator Meeting  
Progress in meeting the EFA Goals, Challenges and Way Forward for Brunei Darussalam

I. Summary of the progress in meeting the EFA goals

- His Majesty, the Sultan and Yang di Pertuan of Negara Brunei Darussalam, Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Muizzaliddin Waddaulah in His Decree at the 19th National Day Celebration, 2003, focused on the quality of education and emphasized that “The National Education should provide a dynamic, forward looking educational programme to provide knowledge and skills required by industries and services without ignoring values”.

- This thrust is encapsulated by the Ministry of Education (MoE) into the educational framework of the country.

- MoE is entrusted with the mandate to produce a generation of citizens capable of upholding the country’s ideology and aspiration in the fast-changing and competitive world of tomorrow.

- The future generation of young citizens will 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 MoE to set in place the framework necessary to realize this Vision.

- The following statement is MoE’s Public Intent and Commitment to the provisions and development of quality educational services both now and in the future. It establishes the efforts of the MoE in the move towards achieving the National Development Plan as outlined under Brunei’s “Wawasan” (Vision) 2035.

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

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

- ECCE in Brunei Darussalam comprises of medical, developmental and educational services extended to children during their most crucial stage of growth and development, from birth to below 6 years of age.

- Through the Child Health and Care Services, the Government of Brunei Darussalam provides free medical care through a large network of hospitals, community health centres and clinics located across the country.
• The comprehensive care provided for mothers and children, has contributed to Brunei Darussalam’s good health indicators where infant and under-five mortality rate in Brunei is at 7.6 and 9.5 per 1000 live births respectively, which is comparatively low in comparison to that of developed countries and is below the world average.

• Brunei Darussalam has achieved targets set by the Millennium Development Goal 4 for child health which is reducing (by two thirds) the under-5 mortality rate, between 1990 and 2015.

• The Government of Brunei Darussalam is fully committed to continuously improve ECCE provisions in the country. Brunei considers funding in all key areas of ECCE as a major public investment in future human development.

• Policies and programmes are constantly developed and reviewed through 4 key strategies:
  (1) Ensuring quality care and education as the focal point of the ECCE strategy,
  (2) Ensuring that provisions for ECCE is accessible to all children,
  (3) Providing welfare assistance and financial aid to families who have socio-economic difficulties, and
  (4) Planning and implementation of programmes which meet the needs of specific groups of children, for example children with special needs and children from low income families.

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

Universal Primary Education

• Universal Primary Education (UPE) in Brunei Darussalam is accessible to all.

• UPE covers children between 6 to 15 years of age attending the course of study at the primary and lower secondary levels in schools.

• The National Education Policy provides 12 years education for all children, that is a year of pre-school, six (6) years of primary education, three (3) years of lower secondary and two (2) years of upper secondary, or vocational / technical education.

• The Compulsory Education Order under the Constitution of Brunei Darussalam was passed in November 2007 which provides the legislative framework for nine-year compulsory education for all children from the age of six (6), covering six (6) years of primary school and three (3) years of lower secondary education.
• Furthermore, a child of compulsory school age is interpreted to be above the age of six (6) years who has not yet attained the age of 15 years and who satisfies such conditions for receiving primary and lower secondary education.

• The policy reflects the Ministry’s desire to ensure that Brunei Darussalam is on track to achieve Wawasan 2035 and in so doing has achieved the Universal Primary Education (UPE) target as stated in the UN Millennium Development Goals.

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

Lifeskills and Lifelong learning

• Active participation and commitment of various key Government Ministries, Departments, the private sector, private institutions and Non Government Organisations (NGOs) have contributed to the development of life skills and lifelong-learning education either through the formal or non-formal route in the country over the past decade.

• The Brunei Wawasan 2035 provides the stimulus for the human resource development (HRD) programmes within the Education Strategy of the Outline of Strategies and Policies for Development (OSPD). This is intended to advance the human resource development on a more systematic and dynamic track.

• The funding allocation for the HRD programmes is the impetus driving this initiative. The revised infrastructure incorporates more life skills and lifelong learning-related programmes within the 21st Century Education System (SPN21).

• The anticipated increase in student numbers over the next few years is the upcoming challenge which MoE through the Department of Technical Education (DTE) is faced with. Plans are in place for DTE to upgrade its current vocational schools and technical colleges, as well as establish a new polytechnic and construct more buildings to increase the current HRD capacity of the Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) institutions.

• HRD programmes in all sectors are prioritized to ensure that the country achieves the goals outlined in Wawasan 2035 for Brunei to be widely recognized for the accomplishment of its educated and highly skilled people and to support the economic development and diversification agenda to achieve a dynamic and sustainable economy with income per capita within the top 10 countries in the world.
Goal 4: Achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

Literacy

- The target of achieving 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy rate by 2015 based on the percentage of the population aged 15 years and above and the literacy rate based on the Brunei population aged 9 years and above in Brunei has been achieved.

- Since the formalisation of education in 1912, the literacy rate in Brunei Darussalam has made remarkable strides. The literacy rate has increased progressively from 69% in 1971 to 80.3% in 1981 and from 89.2% in 1991 to 93.7% in 2001.

- The recent data published by the UNESCO Global Education Digest 2009 indicates a further progress in the literacy rate in the year 2007: youth literacy rate (aged 15-24 years of age) was at 99.6% and adult literacy rate (aged 15 and above) was at 94.9%.

- The improvement in literacy rate among women as indicated by the literacy gender parity index was 0.85 in 1981, 0.91 in 1991 and 0.96 in 2001. In 2007, this index increased to 1.0 for youth and 0.96 for adult.

- The analysis of the next Brunei Darussalam’s Population Census Survey is only available in 2011 and this percentage is expected to improve even further.

- The enactment of legislation such as the education orders emphasized compulsory education along with the introduction of strategic education policies in a series of National Development Plans have paved the way for improvement in the literacy rates among children, adults as well as children with special needs in the country.

- Other developments in ensuring access to basic and continuing education included the Bilingual Education Policy which was introduced in 1984 to ensure that learners attain high levels of proficiency in both the Malay and English languages.

- RELA project to develop fluency in the English Language was introduced in 1989 as a value added project.

- Another value-added project was the English Project for Pre-school (EPPS) in 2005.

- The development of literacy skills was also emphasized through the Reading Programme which was linked to the Virtual Library Information System (VILIS) Project. This led to the formulation of a set of comprehensive national policies and plan on the promotion of a reading culture in the schools and the community at large.

- Brunei Darussalam has indeed shown remarkable achievement as indicated by the high literacy rate of both genders.
• Brunei Darussalam realizes that good literacy is essential for successful life and work in the 21st century. A high level of literacy throughout the population is a fundamental prerequisite in achieving Brunei’s “Wawasan 2035”.

• The way forward for Brunei Darussalam is to optimize the levels of literacy to enhance the nation’s knowledge, competencies and skills, thereby developing a more responsive and stable economy and providing employment opportunities for all.

• The SPN21 plays an important role in sustaining the high literacy level. The curriculum and other programmes and projects provide value-added skills and competencies which have been introduced to further improve not only the literacy rate of the Malay and English languages but also other languages, as well as Digital-Age Literacy competency.

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

Gender Disparity and Equality

• Brunei Darussalam has achieved the goal of eliminating gender disparities in both primary and secondary education as of 2004.

• MoE has succeeded in providing equal education opportunities to all children in Brunei.

• This gender equality may have contributed to the increase in the number of women working in the labour force: an increase of 9% from 60,432 to 66,000, from 2001 to 2005. It was reported that the number of women in the civil service increased by 11% from 18,246 in 2001 to 20,314 persons in 2005. The general opinion of parents and teachers is that stereotyping of school subjects still exists and the way forward is to continuously educate parents and the public as well as students, that all students irrespective of gender can study subjects such as Design and Technology and/or Home Economics.

• The SPN21 and other related programmes offered by other stakeholders are initiatives to enable Brunei to sustain and improve the GPI further.

• In the light of this progress, Brunei Darussalam is on track to achieve 100% gender equality at all levels of education.

• Brunei eliminated gender disparity in the preschool, primary and secondary education even before the year 2005. The consistent GPI trend over the next 4 years indicates that there is no gender disparities in Brunei Darussalam.

• The GPI for NER in pre-school, primary and secondary education for the year 2004 to 2008, indicates that Brunei Darussalam eliminated GPI for NER in the year 2006.
NER at the pre-school level in 2008 is 0.97. The GPI for NER at primary education in 2008 is 0.99. The GPI for NER at the secondary education in 2008 is 1.00.

**EFA Goal 6:** Improving all aspects of quality of education and ensure excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills

**Quality of Education**

**Quality Assurance**

- To sustain the high standards of education in schools, MOE introduced Quality Assurance Instrument of educational institutions in 2007 known as School Self Evaluation (SSE). This is to assess the total quality management and the performance standards of schools and other institutions of learning within the purview of the MOE. The SSE assesses schools across four dimensions: Leadership and Management, Learning and Teaching, School Ethos and Students’ Support and Students’ Learning Outcomes.

**Trained Teachers**

- Brunei has always emphasised upgrading teachers’ professional qualification at all levels of education and facilitating their further education at reputable universities around the world to ensure the knowledge transferred to the students is of high quality.

- In addition to their professional qualifications, all government teachers are required to attend 100 hours of professional in-service development as stipulated by the Prime Minister’s Office which in turn has improved the quality of the teaching workforce in the Ministry of Education.

- Trained teachers in both primary and secondary levels are teachers who hold a professional teaching qualification such as a Diploma or Certificate in Education and other qualifications deemed relevant and accredited by the Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council on top of their academic qualification. At the primary school level, the percentage of trained teachers ranges from 77.3% to 79.8% from the year 2005 to 2008.

- At the secondary level, the percentage of trained teachers ranges from 92.1% to 98.7% over the same period.

- In line with MOE’s commitment to continuously upgrade the quality of all the teachers, the emphasis is to ensure that the remaining percentage of these teachers also acquires a teaching qualification.
Pupil:Class & Textbook:Pupil Ratio

- The ratio between pupil and teacher, pupil:class ratio and textbook:pupil ratio are other ingredients towards quality education. The PTR in primary education from year 2005 to 2008 is at an average of 12. The PTR in the Government Primary schools in 2008 according to districts are 13 for Brunei Muara, 8 for Tutong, 12 for Belait and 7 for Temburong. The average PTR in a small school with a 200 student’s population located in rural areas is 7.

Expenditure on maintaining quality education

- The Government of Brunei Darussalam is committed to continuously provide educational facilities and resources in schools. A total of BND9.5 billion was allocated during the RKN 2007-2012 period, to finance the implementations of development projects and programmes. This allocation represents an increase of 30 per cent from the previous RKN.
- A sum of 8.7% and 3.1% of the budget was allocated for Education and HRD respectively. This is testimony of the desire to maintain quality education and to enhance the accessibility to education and improving the life-long learning culture in the country.
- Various departments within the Ministry of Education coordinate and collaborate with relevant stakeholders to ensure that the provision of school facilities and educational resources in schools are appropriate and adequate. This is vital to the delivery of high quality education for all children to maximize their learning potential. The education facilities and resources provided are the physical infrastructure, Model Inclusive Schools providing Excellent Services for Children and the incorporation of Information and Communication Technology facilities in schools.
- The Ministry strives to ensure that all schools are equipped with facilities such as libraries, ICT laboratories/rooms, science laboratories, home science and art rooms, multi-purpose halls and sports amenities, all of which are intended for a holistic and balanced education.
- In her continuous efforts to upgrade and modernize all government schools, the Ministry of Education embarked on the Building Improvement of School and Infrastructure (BISAI) project. BISAI aims to upgrade the infrastructure of the schools from modernising the schools to improving the school compound and surroundings. BISAI has since completed upgrading work in 24 primary and 22 secondary schools throughout the country. The accessibility facilities in the existing schools are also being upgraded and constructed so as to improve further the accessibility for students with special needs. This is done in phases and most schools will eventually have ramps for wheelchair access and toilets for children with special needs.
- The Ministry is also taking steps to ensure that accessibility features in the future construction of new schools are considered at the outset and schools are accessible to all. This would enable students with special needs better access to school facilities, thus improving the inclusion of these students in the overall school environment.
• In 2008 and 2009, ten primary and secondary schools were selected as pioneer schools for the *Model Inclusive Schools providing Excellent Services for Children* building project. These schools are equipped with the necessary school facilities, specialized learning equipment and resources and specialised support services to deliver quality inclusive education to meet the diverse learning needs of a wide range of students who require a high level of support.

• Brunei Darussalam has been promoting the awareness and the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the public and private educational institutions. Since the year 2000, Government schools have been equipped with computer laboratories which were implemented in phases. With the incorporation of ICT, new technological device such as Interactive Whiteboard, the launching of the Mobitel project which saw the supply of MacBooks to all government schools and the introduction of School Network Infrastructure project that equips all schools with Network Infrastructure, to ensure that the teaching and learning environment in schools is more interactive and accessible. The private schools have also kept pace with ICT developments in the Government schools.

II. The Way Forward in meeting EFA goals and addressing marginalization in education

1. Early Childhood Care and Education

Brunei Darussalam is committed to strengthening the ECCE infrastructure. We also recognise the need to focus attention in the following areas:

• Better interagency coordination between the health, community development and the education sectors.
• Stronger and more effective resource capacity at all levels needs to be built by training all service providers to become effective ECCE deliverers.
• Enhance qualitative improvement in ECCE sectors of the community by regulating and monitoring the quality of working practices through systematic procedures and strong legal measures.
• Enhance human resource capacity within key agencies to further develop planning, implementation and monitoring of ECCE provisions.
• Initiate and maintain partnership with private and non-government organisations to encourage further development of ECCE in Brunei Darussalam.
• Establish standards and processes for efficient data collection on the state of ECCE provision in Brunei Darussalam. A national database and registry will be a valuable source of information and greatly assist in decision making and planning for ECCE in Brunei.
• Improve registration and systematic collection of data of children aged 0-5 years, in particular children with special needs and children from low income families.
• Undertake research on ECCE provision in Brunei Darussalam, which includes examining the long-term impact of ECCE on children’s development and school achievement.
• Expand and improve ECCE provision in Brunei, with particular concern and consideration for children who are disadvantaged, vulnerable and/or have special needs.
• Ensure that all children will have their needs met through an equitable opportunity to quality ECCE.

2. **Universal Basic Education**

Brunei Darussalam has shown significant progress in providing access to quality basic education with an increase in the total enrolment of students in the Primary and the Secondary schools. Generally, figures have increased by 13.12% over a 10 year period from 61,803 students in 1999 to about 69,916 in 2008\(^1\). The provision of quality primary education is stated in the National Education Policy under the Education Order 2003.

The National Education Policy provides 12 years education for all children, that is a year of pre-school, six (6) years of primary education, three (3) years of lower secondary and two (2) years of upper secondary, or vocational / technical education. The Compulsory Education Order under the Constitution of Brunei Darussalam was passed in November 2007. This Order provides the legislative framework for nine-year compulsory education for all children from the age of six (6), covering six (6) years of primary school and three (3) years of lower secondary education. Furthermore, a child of compulsory school age is interpreted to be above the age of six (6) years who has not yet attained the age of 15 years and who satisfies such conditions for receiving primary and lower secondary education. This policy reflects the Ministry’s desire to ensure that Brunei Darussalam is on track to achieve Wawasan 2035 and in so doing achieve the Universal Primary Education (UPE) target as stated in the UN Millennium Development Goals.

All children regardless of their ethnicity are provided with free and compulsory basic education. Children who belong to ethnic minorities come from various geographical locations, specifically from the rural, outskirts and urban areas within the four districts in Brunei Darussalam. These children are of various races/ethnicity and include ‘Iban’, ‘Dayak’, ‘Penan’ and ‘Kelabit’.

The categories of children who are considered as being in difficult circumstances in schools in the Brunei Darussalam context include the following:

- Children with special needs,
- Children with medical and health issues such as those requiring intensive medical support,
- Children who are underprivileged such as those from low income families,
- Children under the Brunei immigration act such as those who may not have been registered with the Immigration and National Registration Department.

These children are also provided with free and equal access to UPE.

All children are able to access schools in the country, as schools are well distributed throughout the country. Schools are located within residential areas. All residential areas are pooled into different school catchment areas. Free transportation or a transport allowance is provided for students whose schools are more than 8 kilometers away from their home.

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Bandar Seri Begawan Brunei Darussalam
The National Education Policy\textsuperscript{2} advocates education for all through the provision of quality education and ensures the participation of learners from diverse backgrounds and learning needs. The Compulsory Education Order 2007\textsuperscript{3} enforced in November 2007, ensures that all children receive at least nine years of formal education from the age of 6 to 15 years. The Special Education Policy\textsuperscript{4} provides the framework for the development of an education system, which serves the needs of all children, including those with diverse learning needs. This further strengthens the Ministry of Education’s commitment to ‘education for all’ with the implementation of inclusive education in 1997, whereby all school age children with varying diverse needs learn together with their peers in the regular classroom.

Various departments within the Ministry of Education coordinate and collaborate with relevant stakeholders to ensure the provision of appropriate and adequate school facilities and educational resources in schools vital to the delivery of high quality education for all children to maximize their learning potential.

Brunei Darussalam aims to achieve Quality Education through the provision of a balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum delivered and supported by various learning support and services. The Ministry of Education ensures that quality education is accessible to all students including students with diverse learning needs so that every student can achieve their maximum potential. Some of the approaches to achieving this quality education include:

\textit{(i) Multiple Pathways in Secondary Education}

SPN 21 provides multiple pathways to accommodate the diverse learning needs of learners. It allows students choice to opt to study various education programmes according to their individual capabilities, interests, inclination, growth and development. The curriculum is designed to be broad-based and offers a seamless pathway to higher education from schools and vocational institutions.

The various pathways are as follows:

- The General Secondary Education programme is for students who are orientated towards a study of academic subjects. For this programme, student will complete either the 4-year or 5-year programme before sitting for the BC GCE O’Level Examination.

- The Applied Secondary Education Programme is a 5-year Programme which caters for students whose strengths are in the \textit{technological, vocational or business} fields of study.

- The Specialised Education Programme is a programme for the gifted and talented students who exhibit outstanding abilities and are capable of exceptional performance in general or specific ability areas. The curriculum designed for these students focuses on

\textsuperscript{2} Ministry of Education (1992). \textit{Education Policy}. Bandar Seri Begawan: Ministry of Education
\textsuperscript{3} Brunei Darussalam Government Gazette (2007). \textit{Supplement to Government Gazette Part II}. Bandar Seri Begawan: Brunei Darussalam
\textsuperscript{4} Special Education Unit (1997). \textit{Special Education Policy Guidelines}. Bandar Seri Begawan: Ministry of Education
differentiating the content, process, product and/or the learning environment with increased breadth and depth of the subject matter.

- The Special Educational Needs’ Education Programme is for students who have been identified as having special needs and require an individualised education programme that has been developed to meet their needs.

(ii) Support services for children in difficult circumstances.

Brunei Darussalam is continually striving to make schools inclusive and accessible to all students including those with special needs. The Special Education Unit, Ministry of Education has been mandated to uphold the implementation of inclusive education in Brunei Darussalam. Learning assistance and support services are provided for children with special needs through specialized education programmes, professional support and services. Table 6.13 shows the number of students with special needs attending primary and secondary schools. These figures do not include children with learning difficulties and those on remedial education plans who are provided with learning assistance support by the schools themselves. These students with special needs represent 4% of the total school population attending UPE.

3. Goal 3: Life Skills and Lifelong Learning

There has been comprehensive restructuring and realignment of the technical and vocational education programmes within MoE to ensure a highly skilled and educated workforce. This has been the major focus of the Department of Technical Education (DTE). Preparations have been ongoing to ascertain that planned and adequate technical and vocational education programmes at all levels are introduced and implemented in January 2012 for students who have completed their secondary education (Post-UPE). Several strategies have been adopted at TVE and in collaboration with other government agencies and the private sector at large to ensure that the workforce has the requisite work skills to drive the economy. Some such action and strategies are in the following areas:

- With the cooperation of various working committees, DTE aims to introduce relevant technical and vocational courses / programmes for SPN21 which are accredited by the Brunei Darussalam Technical & Vocational Education Council (BDTVEC).
- In order to ensure the smooth implementation of the technical and vocational education (TVE) programmes for SPN21, the DTE will expand its infrastructure including the construction of new schools and upgrade its current school buildings, enhance and develop its curriculum and increase the number of its teaching and support staff.
- The new 3-Tier Qualification System for TVE to be introduced by DTE aims to provide multiple pathways to higher education. This is done by providing a variety of technical and vocational programmes which meets the capabilities of the upper secondary students after they have completed their studies. This is to ensure that students are given a suitable learning timeframe to acquire an in-depth knowledge and a high level of competency.
• This new system will consolidate and streamline the existing system, and will be comparable and similar to other international systems.

• The Entry Requirements and Educational Pathways to TVE are provided for those students coming from within the TVE system and the mainstream school system starting from the day they completed their secondary education right through after they completed their pre-university education. The entry into each level and pathway depends on their achievement at ‘O’ and ‘A’ level examinations and this includes students who are not academically inclined.

• The drastic increase in student numbers is expected within the next few years to come. DTE intends to continuously strive to upgrade its current vocational schools and technical colleges and construct more buildings to increase the current capacity. Teaching and learning resources are being updated and human resource development is being accelerated with new recruitments are in process.

• Partnerships with the communities and industries are being pursued and enhanced further.

• The establishment of a new polytechnic by 2012 and the construction of two new TVE Institutions by 2012 as well as another two Skills Institute are expected to be ready by 2017. This shows a firm commitment by MoE to realize the plans to equip its workforce with adequate work skills and competencies to promote life-long learning.

• The establishment of Centres of Excellence in the areas of IT, Hospitality and Tourism, Automobile Engineering, Business, Marine Engineering and Aircraft Engineering within the next five years are being planned.

• New programmes such as Arts, Graphic Design, Multimedia Technology and Mechatronic will be introduced.

• The Continuing Education of DTE is being expanded to cater for more life-long learning courses and hence provide more opportunities for the young and adults. The expansion is also looking into bridging the courses in the continuing education to enable the students to enter the TVE mainstream schooling system.

4. Adult literacy

The way forward for Brunei is to raise the level of literacy beyond the UNESCO’s definition that is “those who can read and write with understanding a short simple statement related to everyday life”. By raising the levels of literacy we will be enhancing the nation’s skills, developing a more responsive and stable economy and providing employment opportunities for all.

• Brunei Darussalam has shown a remarkable achievement in literacy rate in both genders.
• The SPN21 will play the major role in developing a society with high literacy level. While the progression of our literacy rates showing a positive trend, the main task for now is for the concerned authorities to work together in order to raise the level of literacy for Brunei citizens.
In the SPN21, the curriculum and other value-added skills and projects were introduced to improve further not only the Malay and English languages but also other languages. The SPN21 curriculum specifies nine key learning areas aimed at nurturing learners so that they become intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced individuals. One of the learning areas is enriching the level of literacy.

The learning area, “Language”, is intended to achieve the following learning outcomes:
- An appropriate level of mastery over grammar, spelling conventions, pronunciation and intonation, with the correct and appropriate use of vocabulary and structure to fulfill the purpose of the language learned whether as an official language, a second language or a foreign language.
- Develop the ability to read and understand information that is stated and implied for the purpose of gaining knowledge, by emphasizing a variety in reading techniques to ensure reading efficiency, and the inculcation of a love for reading.
- Develop and increase writing efficiency in order to express ideas from various disciplines and subjects, as well as being able to express one’s feelings.
- Enhanced critical and creative thinking skills through the use of language.
- Develop linguistic efficiency in understanding, interpreting, manipulating as well as responding to information heard, viewed and written in order to fulfill the requirements of daily needs, expansion of knowledge for lifelong learning and career demands.
- Develop effective communication skills in a number of languages to enable learners to participate, interact and contribute actively in a cultured-based global community and in the socio-cultural, economic and political contexts.
- Building up learners’ capability to master aspects of literacy to help them develop appreciation for the beauty and intricacy of literacy works so that they are motivated to produce their own creative work.
- Incorporate the use of multimedia particularly information technology for the purpose of accessing/obtaining, creating/designing, processing and delivering information in various forms in order to fulfill a range of needs, situations and purposes.
- Develop and cultivate an attitude of open-mindedness to diverse sources of information and evaluate as well as filter information that is useful.

Another aspect integrated into the nine key learning areas is Digital-Age Literacy. In the 21st Century, Digital age literacy serves as a crucial tool and is an essential skill for teaching and learning. Students need to attain certain levels of mastery in the field of science, technology and culture, as well as acquire full understanding of any information
that they require through various means, including Information Communication Technology (ICT).

- This aspect is aimed at enabling students to achieve the following learning outcomes:
  - ICT skills for creative learning
  - Obtain information
  - Analyze and process information
  - Present information
  - Communicate electronically through the local and global network.

- Therefore, with the implementation of value added skills like “Language” and Digital-Age Literacy and value-added projects like RELA and EPPS, children are not only given an opportunity to strengthen their basic literacy but also to enhance their computer literacy.

- The SPN21 curriculum provides opportunities for students to be innovative and creative in their approach to learning such as solving real world complex problems. It is designed to equip students with 21st century skills that will enable them to compete with workers in other countries worldwide. This means, utilizing the 21st century tools (technologies and multimedia) as the vehicles to implement the curriculum.

5. Gender Parity and Equality

- Having achieved successes in GPI and Gender Equality by 2005 at preschool, primary and secondary education, MoE strives to maintain and further improve the gender disparity and gender equality index not only by 2015 but also in the 21st century and beyond.
- SPN21 provides various education programmes to cater for individual student’s needs through the development of multi-skills to suit the students’ capabilities, interests, inclinations, growth and development through the various pathways for all children.
- The provision of these various programmes aims to accomplish MoE’s efforts to ensure that all students complete at least five years of secondary education and that every student attain at least 12 years of education.
- SPN21 is introduced to further enhance the capacity of youth for employment and achievement in a world that is increasingly competitive and knowledge-based.

6. Quality Education

MoE strives to be responsive in order to keep up with the changes around us and worldwide. SPN21 which commenced in January 2009 aims to bring about three main changes to ensure that the Brunei education system stays relevant at all times and is of high quality. The three main changes are the Education Structure, Curriculum and Assessment and Technical Education.

- SPN21 was designed with the firm commitment of the ministry to ensure that:
- It will bring the best out of students, in and out of the school system, and into the world of work. The intention is to fit the system to the students, rather than the other way round.
- It allows highly capable students to complete their secondary education in a shorter period of time (four years). This will benefit the nation in its efforts to optimise human resource development.
- To provide multiple pathways for students to choose programmes that suit their capabilities, interests, inclinations, growth and development; thereby catering to their needs.

- SPN21 sets out clear guidelines for teaching and learning as aspired by the country’s education vision and mission.
- It spells out what students need to know and are able to do in order to become lifelong learners who are confident and creative, connected, and actively involved in the quest for knowledge.
- It highlights the desired values that are to be encouraged, modelled, and explored and determines how the students’ performance will be assessed and reported.
- SPN21 gives teachers, students, parents, employers and the society a clear and shared understanding of the knowledge, skills and desired values to be gained at school. Through the school curriculum, the students are offered the most effective and engaging learning experiences possible to support them to achieve to their highest potential and become successful citizens of Brunei Darussalam in the 21st Century.

- The Department of Technical Education (DTE) plays a very important role in the SPN21. Full comprehensive preparations are made so that the planned technical and vocational education programmes will be introduced and implemented as from January 2012 onwards for students who have completed their Year 10 (4-Year programme) or Year 11 (5-Year programme) in secondary education. With the cooperation of various working committees, DTE aims to:
  - Introduce relevant technical and vocational courses / programmes for SPN21, that are accredited by the Brunei Darussalam Technical & Vocational Education Council (BDTVEC).
  - Embark on infrastructure expansion such as the construction of new schools, upgrade its current school buildings, fine-tune its curriculum and increase the number of its teaching and support staff in order to ensure the smooth implementation of the technical and vocational education (TVE) programmes for SPN21.

- SPN21 will bring about significant changes to the TVE system in the country. Currently, the TVE programmes cater primarily for secondary students who have completed Form 3 or Penilaian Menengah Bawah (PMB) to enable them to progress further to the National Vocational Certificate (NVC)/National Trade Certificate 3 (NTC3) programmes. Those who have completed Form 5 can progress to the Pre-National Diploma (PND) or the National Diploma (ND) programmes. With the phasing out of the PMB in the year 2010, the NVC/NTC3 programmes will be revised in anticipation of this development. In addition, over the years, feedback from relevant employers and committees had indicated
that Form 3 education and the duration of 1½ years of NTC3/NVC are insufficient for progression onto higher TVE qualifications such as NTC2.

### III. Key policies targeted at unreached, underserved and marginalized groups

**ECCE:**
The Government of Brunei Darussalam is fully committed to continuously improve ECCE provisions in the country. Brunei considers funding in all key areas of ECCE as a major public investment in future human development. Policies and programmes are constantly developed and reviewed through 4 key strategies: (1) Ensuring quality care and education remains part of the ECCE strategy, (2) Ensuring that provisions for ECCE be accessible to all children, (3) The provision of welfare assistance and financial aid to families who have socio-economic difficulties, and (4) The continuous planning and implementation of programmes which meet the needs of specific groups of children, for example children with special needs and children from low income families.

- The health sector will continue to emphasise the provision of high quality primary health care based on a wide range of prevention, promotion, cure and rehabilitation health care and support services to meet the needs of all children in Brunei.
- Comprehensive pre-school programmes are also in place to support the development of children.
- The Government of Brunei Darussalam has made efforts to reach all children in this country by providing services for ECCE in both urban and rural areas. In the effort to reach all children, both health services and government pre-school education programmes are established in rural schools.
- The commitment made by Brunei Darussalam on the widespread delivery of health and education has contributed in equitable access to all young children to ECCE across the nation.
- There has been a substantial development in legislative and regulatory frameworks and guidelines. Amongst some are the; Report to the Convention on the Rights of the Child 2003, Education (Non-Government School Act) 1984, Women and Girls Protection (Place of Safety) Rules, 2001, Education Order 2003, Education Regulation 2004, Child Care Centre Order 2006, Child Care Centre Regulation 2006, Children Order 2000 and the Children and Young Person’s Order 2006. The establishment of regulatory processes aims to uphold the standard and quality of services provided by the schools and centres.
- Brunei Darussalam acceded to the Convention on The Rights of the Child (CRC) on 23rd December 1995. Even prior to acceding to the CRC, Brunei Darussalam had begun drafting laws to enhance the position of children in a wide range of areas. After acceding to the CRC, Brunei Darussalam passed the Brunei Darussalam Children Order 2000 to protect the welfare of children, particularly the abused and neglected children. This order also provides that the best interest of the child shall always be the paramount consideration when any question arises with respect to the welfare of the child. The 2000 order has since been replaced with the Children and Young Person’s Order 2006.
- **Children of ‘the state’:** The Department of Community Development is one of the main government agencies responsible for the welfare of children particularly children from
families of low socio-economic status. Brunei strives to create a caring society that places a strong emphasis on the well being of its children. There are several welfare programmes that are implemented; for example, low-income families can apply for welfare assistance and monthly education allowances. The department is a focal point for child-related matters and on an international level acts as the Secretariat for the implementation of the United Nations Convention on The Rights of Child (UN-CRC), of which Brunei has became a signatory to in 1995.

- The Government of Brunei Darussalam has provided several legal safeguards to protect the well-being and interest of children in the country. Provision is also available for children who are not receiving adequate care, or are victims of neglect, abuse or have been abandoned. The Department of Welfare takes an active role in protecting and caring for these children and serves as “Protector” under the Children and Young Person’s Order 2006.

- Financial aid and support: Brunei Darussalam provides a welfare assistance scheme for low-income families. Families who qualify, are provided with either financial aid or services. For children who are in schools and/or at ECCE centres, welfare assistance make take many forms, for example; the Department of Community Development provide low income families with daily living expenses and school allowance. Other financial aids and services are also provided by other organisations such as the ‘Baitul-Mal’ at the Ministry of Religious affairs and the Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Foundation.

- According to the statistics from the Department of Economic Planning, Brunei Darussalam has approximately 17,500 children in 2006, 17,475 in 2007 and 17,725 in 2008 in the age group of 3-6 years. The estimated coverage within ECCE programmes for children within this age group is above 70 (GER in ECCE). In order to extend the benefits of ECCE, the Ministry of Education is currently planning innovative strategies to ensure that ECCE will be able to reach the current and projected population of children within the age of 3-6 years.

Goal 2: UPE

Universal Primary Education in Brunei Darussalam is accessible to all. It is intended for children between 6 to 15 years of age who undergo a course of study in the primary and secondary schools. To ensure that all children receive primary and secondary education, the Compulsory Education Order 2007 under the Constitution of Brunei Darussalam, was passed in November 2007. This Order provides the legislative framework for nine-year compulsory education for a child from the age of six (6), covering six (6) years of primary education and three (3) years of lower secondary education. A child of compulsory school age is above the age of six (6) years and has not yet attained the age of 15 years and satisfies such conditions for receiving primary and lower secondary education\(^5\). This policy reflects the Ministry’s desire to ensure that Brunei Darussalam develops a pool of well-educated, highly skilled, knowledgeable, disciplined and motivated workforce, capable of meeting future challenges and steering the nation forward, in line with the national education strategy in achieving Brunei’s Wawasan 2035. In so doing Brunei Darussalam has also met its Universal Primary Education (UPE) target as stated in the

\(^5\) Government Gazette Part ii 2007
UN Millennium Development Goals. Brunei Darussalam extends this secondary schooling period to a further 2 years of secondary education.

Goal 3: Lifeskills and lifelong learning
Active participation and commitment of various key Government Ministries, Departments, the private sector, private institutions and Non Government Organisations (NGOs) have contributed to the development of life skills and lifelong-learning education either through the formal or non-formal route in the country over the past decade. The Brunei Wawasan 2035 provides the stimulus for the human resource development (HRD) programmes within the Education Strategy of the Outline of Strategies and Policies for Development (OSPD). This is intended to advance the human resource development on a more systematic and dynamic track.

Goal 4: Literacy
The enactment of legislation such as the education orders emphasized compulsory education along with the introduction of strategic education policies in a series of National Development Plans have paved the way for improvement in the literacy rates among children, adults as well as children with special needs in the country. Other developments in ensuring access to basic and continuing education included the Bilingual Education Policy which was introduced in 1984 to ensure that learners attain high levels of proficiency in both the Malay and English languages. The Reading and English Language Acquisition Programme (RELA) a project to develop fluency in the English Language was introduced in 1989, another value-added project was the English Project for Pre-school (EPPS) in 2005. The development of literacy skills was also emphasized through the Reading Programme which was linked to the Virtual Library Information System (VILIS) Project. This led to the formulation of a set of comprehensive national policies and plan on the promotion of a reading culture in the schools and the community at large. Brunei Darussalam has indeed shown remarkable achievement in the high literacy rate of both genders. Good literacy is essential for successful life and work in the 21st century. A high level of literacy throughout the population is a fundamental prerequisite in achieving Brunei’s “Wawasan 2035” (to produce an educated, highly skilled and accomplished people). The way forward for Brunei Darussalam is to raise the levels of literacy to enhance the nation’s knowledge, competencies and skills, thereby developing a more responsive and stable economy and providing employment opportunities for all. In this respect, the SPN21 plays an important role in sustaining this high literacy level. The high literacy rates in Brunei Darussalam shows a positive progression, nevertheless the main task is for the respective authorities to work together to raise the level of literacy for all Brunei citizens. In the SPN21, the curriculum and other value-added skills and projects have been introduced to further improve not only the literacy rate of the Malay and English languages but also other languages, as well as Digital-Age Literacy competency.

Goal 5: Gender
Brunei Darussalam has achieved the goal of eliminating gender disparities in both primary and secondary education as of 2004. This is evident from the data presented. MoE has succeeded in providing equal education opportunities to all children in Brunei. The SPN21 and other related programmes offered by other stakeholders are initiatives to enable Brunei to sustain and improve
the GPI further. In the light of this progress, Brunei Darussalam is on track to achieve 100% gender equality at all levels of education in the very near future.

Goal 6: Quality
The Ministry of Education (MoE) recognizes that growing globalization, together with increased sensitivity to national, regional and cultural issues affects the individual and group identity and that this places fresh demands upon the education system and challenges assumptions about the purpose and functions of education. The educational reforms espoused in SPN-21 are built on these developments. Education is seen as the cornerstone of a prosperous nation within which societies are built, based on peace, equality and democratic practice. Quality education is central to Brunei Darussalam’s march towards *Wawasan Brunei 2035*. The Government of Brunei Darussalam has set up an education system that has the capacity for preparing programmes and services that assist all of its citizens at all stages of their lives.