

Language main barrier to grads getting jobs (Updated)

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Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan. — Sunpix

PETALING JAYA: Lack of proficiency in the English language, and not just the mismatch of jobs, is one of the main barriers facing graduates in search of employment.

Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan said although most graduates can understand the language, they are unable to communicate their views orally in a proper manner.

"Some even have a problem constructing proper sentences, and employers are unlikely to hire such people," he said when commenting on the issue.

Shamsuddin agreed the issue of mismatch also exists, as there are graduates who face difficulty in finding suitable jobs that match their qualifications.

This leads to many being employed in fields they are not qualified in, citing for example, chemical engineering graduates working in marketing or public relations jobs.

The downturn in the oil and gas industry, he added, had also resulted in graduates being unable to get their preferred jobs.

"Some graduates simply wait for their dream job in the field they studied, although there may be no jobs available in that sector," he added.

As such, graduates should be given access to training which will allow them to adapt to the changing job market environment.

Shamsuddin advised graduates to try and get any kind of work experience that will help them when they apply for other jobs later.

For example, the "2u2i" programme that requires undergraduates to study on campus for two years and intern in industries for another two, will help them gain practical experience and expose them to the job market.

Shamsuddin said with the 4.0 industrial revolution even employers have difficulty identifying jobs that will be available in the near future, even over the next five years.

Last Wednesday, Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia chairman Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad claimed that the government's failure to provide jobs for the people was evident from the number of graduates not employed in the fields they were trained for.

The former premier said it was shameful that many graduates had to work as Uber drivers or sell nasi lemak, and the media should not portray this as a success.

However, Deputy Defence Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Johari Baharum praised graduates who did so for being independent and unashamed of such work despite their high academic qualifications.

Johari said people should look down upon them but should instead show them support for not banking on office jobs.

Today, Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin echoed the view, saying while some may be doing so due to dire circumstances, there may be those who prefer to be entrepreneurs as it gives them more flexibility.

"We cannot always encourage our youth to be wage-earners and work from nine-to-five daily. We must also encourage youths to become entrepreneurs," he said.

"No doubt, there are some who do it by force of circumstances, but some might prefer to have the flexibility where they sell nasi lemak in the morning and drive Grab or Uber later in the day," he said at the Rapid Bus Academy in Cheras Selatan here.