

Professor stresses importance of life-long learning

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KUCHING – A university professor has likened a person who stopped learning to a stagnant pool where even the fish cannot survive.

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development, Professor Dr Napsiah Mahfoz said learning should not stop after formal education ended. Instead, it should be continued as a life-long process.

She pointed out that in most developed countries like Japan and Europe, learning was imbued as a culture.

“In some countries, like Japan for instance, it is so common to see people reading at railway stations or on steps because these people take their learning process very seriously,” Dr Napsiah said in an interview with *Tribune* yesterday.

In Malaysia, she said, the learning culture had not yet permeated deep into the strata of society. But with



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greater emphasis by the government on life-long learning, the people were beginning to realise its importance, she added.

“Knowledge is becoming an important resource, an asset highly sought after by those in developed countries.”

The professor stressed: “Life-long learning has to become part of our culture, especially in today’s challenging environment where knowledge is expanding very fast. And

those who cannot cope will be lagging behind.”

According to her, a nation endowed with abundant natural resources but lacking knowledgeable manpower will not be able to compete with the rest. Knowledge will also enhance a country’s competitive advantage.

She explained that for Malaysia to realise the objectives of Vision 2020, the people had to be developed first. “Not only must our young change, the workforce must also change or else they will become obsolete and thus no more an asset to the nation,” she said.

Prof Napsiah emphasised that reading was the best way to life-long learning, adding that it had to be nurtured from a young age.

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad called on Malaysians to embrace life-long learning in order to compete in the knowledge-based economy. He said life-long learning would sharpen thinking skills and change the mindset of the people, critical to realise the nation’s Vision 2020.

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