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# PROCEEDING

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“ EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION  
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BASED ON **ASEAN** COMMUNITY  
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# **TEACHER EDUCATION IN BRUNEI DARUSSALAM: TRANSFORMING TOMORROW'S GENERATION THROUGH TEACHER EDUCATION TODAY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In 2009, the Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Education (SHBIE) at Universiti Brunei Darussalam was transformed into a graduate school of education. The Institute of Education which previously offered undergraduate programmes, has undergone a complete overhaul over the past couple of years to focus more on graduate programmes in research and evidence-based practices. SHBIE as a graduate school offers innovative graduate programmes which include Master of Teaching (MTeach), Master of Education (Med) and Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD). Part of the rationale behind this transformation, as in other countries, was a desire to enhance the professional status of teachers in the nation by (i) having a policy that all teachers should in the long-term be qualified to masters level and (ii) ensuring that the education teachers receive provides them not only with basic teaching strategies, but also with the skills to engage in on-going, evidence-based improvements in their teaching throughout their career. This paper will discuss the transformation of SHBIE in the pursuit

of better teacher quality that aims to upgrade the teaching profession in Brunei Darussalam.

This paper begins with a brief background about the national education system in Brunei. It then describes the transformation of teacher education in Brunei Darussalam on realising Brunei's National Vision, known as *Wawasan 2035*. This paper then focuses on how the role of teacher education might play towards quality excellence in education, human development and the well-being in Brunei. This paper concludes the way forward for teacher education in Brunei in striving greater connection, collaboration, and cooperation around projects that foster mutual understanding and well-being of people in ASEAN countries.

## Introduction

**I**n this era of globalisation, Brunei Darussalam, a nation with a small population, like other countries, is always facing new challenges. In order to face these challenges, the Ministry of Education constantly reviews the National Education System to ensure that it remains relevant at all times. The Ministry of Education also needs to ensure that the education system is aligned with the National Vision known as *Wawasan Brunei 2035* which envisions that Brunei Darussalam, by 2035, will be widely recognised for:

- ◆ The accomplishments of its well-educated and highly skilled people as measured by the highest international standards;
- ◆ a quality of life that is among the top 10 nations in the world; and
- ◆ a dynamic and sustainable economy with income per capita within the top 10 countries in the world.

The Ministry of Education is committed to providing an educational system that prepares young people for future adult roles as capable, creative, thinking citizens who can contribute to and benefit their families, community and society. The Ministry of Education

recognizes that globalization, together with increased sensitivity to national, regional and cultural issues affects the individual and group identity. Issues concerning the quality of education must embrace these developments. Education is hence the cornerstone of a prosperous nation within which societies are built, based on peace, equality and democratic practice.

The National Education System for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (*Sistem Pendidikan Negara Abad Ke-21* or SPN 21) was launched in January 2009, as a new educational system that aligns education with the national vision, *Wawasan Brunei 2035*. The national education system in Brunei, SPN21, recognises the need to contribute in enhancing the well-being and livelihood of ASEAN people. SPN21 recognises the need to prepare individuals to meet the social and economic challenges of the 21st Century. The Ministry of Education's commitment is, to provide quality education in ensuring that the Sultanate preserves its relevance and secures its role in the world. This necessitates changes pertinent to the enhancement of the education environment so that the country's education system can successfully produce individuals with valuable and marketable skills of international standards, capable of contributing to the country's economic development and establishing long-term participation in the global economy.

### **Teachers and Teacher Education**

Teacher education needs to have a future orientation to realise the national vision. This therefore demands transformation, and this can only be realised through quality teachers. In other words, the national vision and policies are realised through education. The challenge for teachers and teacher education is having the kinds of teacher who will be able to develop students' competencies, skills, and values that are demanded to realise the national vision 2035. To achieve this, the traditional ways of teaching therefore need to be interrogated. With the transformation of the national education system to meet the different

challenges in the 21st century, the ministry of education realised that ‘*quality teachers*’ are needed.

The Ministry of Education envisions the selection of ‘Quality teachers’ as following:

- ◆ The minimum requirement for teaching as a profession to be a Master Degree. This has begun with Initial Teacher Preparation in 2008.
- ◆ Targeting Brunei’s best and brightest to form the teaching force. Brunei sends the brightest of its students overseas on scholarships bonded as educators.

Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Education (SHBIE) has successfully provided ample preparation for future educators for over 50 years that accentuates the importance of global communication through the use of English as the primary medium of instruction and at the same time maintaining the Bruneian identity through the Malay Islamic Monarchy (MIB).

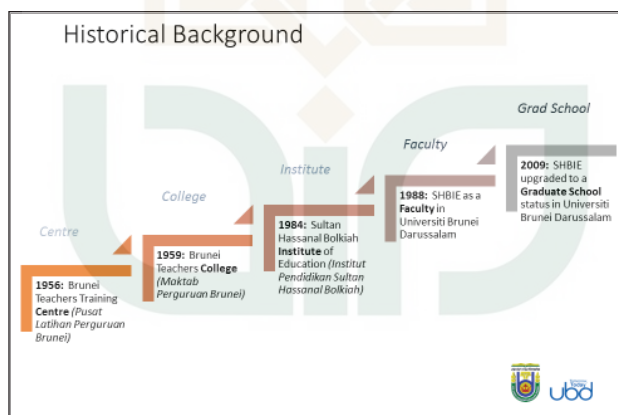


Figure 1:

*Historical Background of Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Education*

As a response for the changes in the needs of the community and the needs of the school, SHBIE has been transformed into a graduate school in 2009. SHBIE is fully dedicated in providing postgraduate studies in the field of education, and is the premier teacher training institute

in Brunei Darussalam which boasts an international professional education faculty with various expertise in teaching and research. Consequently, SHBIE is very committed to educating its students to become highly qualified teachers that apply best practices in their classroom practice.

- ◆ Vision:

SHBIE’s vision is to develop itself into a First Class Graduate School of Education with a distinctive national and international identity.

- ◆ Mission:

SHBIE’s mission is to strive towards excellence in Teacher Education through the provision of high quality instruction and research, consultancy and community services to provide high caliber educators.

- ◆ Values:

SHBIE upholds accountability, connectivity, excellence, integrity, and inclusiveness as its core values.

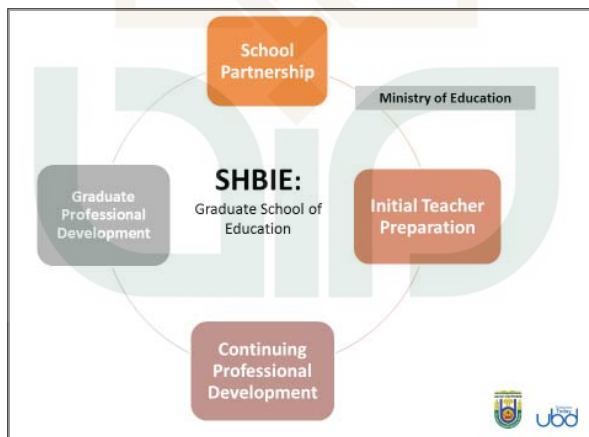


Figure 2: SHBIE as a Graduate School of Education

In striving towards excellence in teacher education, SHBIE transformed its initial teacher preparation into an innovative postgraduate programme. This programme is named as the Master of Teaching or Mteach. The Master of Teaching has been designed

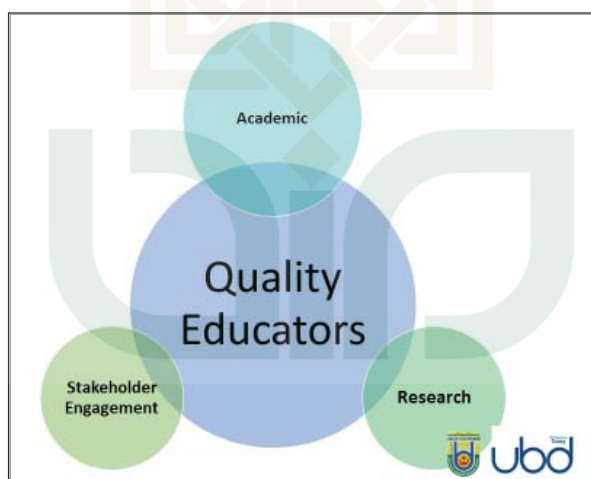


specifically to reap high quality teachers. Accordingly, the effort is to satisfy the aspiration of producing a highly capable manpower in line with Brunei's Vision 2035. MTeach programme emphasizes the importance of practical exposure to prospective teachers. Hence, SHBIE has applied this in the MTeach programme in which the development of their knowledge and techniques in the field of teaching are guided and monitored by experienced Mentors, Clinical Specialists and Subject Specialists during the programme.

The Mission of Master of Teaching (MTeach):

**To Produce Quality Educators**

- ◆ to produce educators with graduate level competencies as stated in the Brunei Darussalam Qualification Framework equivalent to Level 7 of Quality Assurance Agency (UK)
- ◆ to produce high quality professionals as defined by the Brunei Teacher Standards documents



*Figure 3: Quality Educators*

The MTeach programme has five specialist streams; Early Childhood Education and Care, Primary Education, Secondary Education, Vocational and Technical Education and Higher Education. The MTeach degree will provide prospective educators

with the necessary professional qualification for entry into the teaching profession respectively. The MTeach degree prepares graduates to make a real difference in the classroom as they draw upon their disciplinary knowledge and critical analytic skills. With a deep understanding of what and how students learn, and confidence to innovate, teacher graduates will be ready to take the first step on a rewarding career path.

The key features of the MTeach programme are:

1. Integration of the disciplinary knowledge of graduate entry candidates with Master's level study of educational theory, research and practice (for example case – based instruction, lesson study, problem based and inquiry learning, action learning and research)
2. Practical experience in schools throughout the programme and a series of Professional Practice Seminars with emphasis on reflective practice
3. Mentoring by experienced professional partner schools
4. Research exercise to improve critical and reflective thinking and learning in the candidates' major learning area

In general, the strength of the MTeach programme lies in the pedagogical development, the strengthening of the knowledge on the subject and fostering core values such as commitment to teaching, and highlighting the importance of evidence-based and research-based teaching and learning which contributes towards quality excellence in education, human development and the well-being of the community.



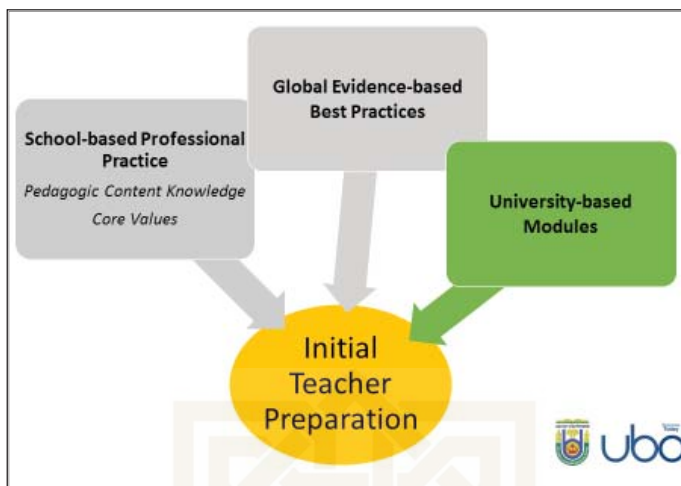


Figure 4: Initial Teacher Preparation

In fostering quality teacher education, SHBIE offers the assurance that the depth of learning through its programmes and the relevance of its research will raise the teaching standards and support effective school systems. SHBIE is continuously innovating the quality and efficiency of its programmes delivery through:

- ◆ Recruitment of high quality academic staff
- ◆ Admission of high quality graduate students
- ◆ Internationalisation

SHBIE is dedicated in shaping the future by educating its students to become educators of highest quality trained in the best practices. The Master of Teaching programme is designed towards excellence preparation for teaching.



Figure 5: SHBIE's Initiatives 2014-2015

Subsequently, the Master of Education (MEd) degree provides graduate educators the opportunity to further develop their knowledge of and skills in education. In addition, studies within MEd provide opportunities to develop critical analytic skills through engagement with cutting edge international research in education. The research modules in the programme are designed to enhance practice and provide a foundation for doctoral studies in education.

#### **MEd's Specialisation Areas:**

- ◆ Arabic Language Education
- ◆ Curriculum, Pedagogy & Assessment
- ◆ Early Childhood Education
- ◆ Educational Technology Education
- ◆ Mathematics Education
- ◆ Physical Education & Sports Studies
- ◆ Science Education
- ◆ Special Education
- ◆ Islamic Education
- ◆ Inclusive Education
- ◆ Leadership and School Improvement

- ◆ Language & Literacy Education (Malay/English)
- ◆ Visual Arts & Design Education
- ◆ MIB Education (Malay Islamic Monarchy)

SHBIE's Masters and Doctorate research programmes aim to raise graduate educators' careers to the next level of performance and satisfaction. These programmes provide graduate candidates with an opportunity to gain intensive training in educational research methodologies while undertaking an in-depth research study in their respective field of education. In addition, SHBIE offers comprehensive and professional development consultancies for local, regional and international stakeholders. Hence, SHBIE provides a supportive, collaborative and stimulating international environment where all are able to achieve to the best of their potential.

### **The Provision of High Quality Research**

SHBIE's research strength is in design-based research in education, which involves the creation, enactment, and refinement of educational tools - curricular materials and instructional strategies – and the development of explanatory frameworks about the process of learning and the factors that support it. The outcomes of this research are of international interest. Design-based research combines theory and practice from a range of perspectives. Action research methodology involving teachers and researchers in developing systematic bodies of pedagogical knowledge offers the opportunity to contribute to the field of design while simultaneously improving the quality of national education systems for the 21st Century. All areas of the curriculum at all levels of the education system are available as contexts for study with SHBIE to develop reliable explanatory frameworks to improve the processes of learning and teaching.

SHBIE offers a breadth of research supervision options. The types of research supported include national and comparative empirical studies; detailed studies of learners, classrooms and teaching; research

on policy, ideas, and innovation in educational design and school leadership; action research and qualitative studies. Research includes collaborative research with schools and education departments and consultancy research. All research undertaken is relevant to the improvement of educational systems and articulates with cutting edge international research developments. Therefore, the way forward for SHBIE in striving greater connection, collaboration, and cooperation around projects that foster mutual understanding and well-being is by developing quality research capacities.

Major Institutional Projects:

- ◆ **21<sup>st</sup> Century Teaching and Learning (21 CTL)** in collaboration with SRI International, USA
- ◆ **Community Engagement in Education: *Early Childhood Education, Special Education and Counselling***
- ◆ **SABER (Systems Approach for Better Education Results) Benchmarking**, World Bank
- ◆ **ASEANness Citizenship** with Oita University, Japan
- ◆ **1:1 Computing in Model Schools**
- ◆ Curriculum Development with **Virtual University for the Small States of Commonwealth (VUSSC)**

## Conclusion

The challenge for Brunei is that with a small population, Brunei is heavily dependent on a non-renewable resource for growth and stability. Education, therefore plays a critical role in equipping the country with the human resource needs to support its economic diversification agenda and enhanced well-being of people. The needs for economic diversification has made it imperative for the Ministry of Education to take on reformation and restructuring efforts with respect to education policy, structure, curriculum, assessment and qualifications, and professional development in support of the nation's drives to achieve Brunei Vision 2035 (Wawasan Brunei 2035). In

realising this, SHBIE transformed itself into a graduate school of education in 2009 with a role to produce educators as high quality professionals with integrity and core values. This was highlighted by His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddien Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in his titah:

*“Beta ingin mengingatkan supaya UBD akan lebih memelihara dan mengekalkan identiti Brunei. Selain dari kualiti pembelajaran, para pelajar juga hendaklah dilengkapi dengan kualiti rohani dan nilai-nilai keperibadian yang berteraskan **“Melayu Islam Beraja”**. Tetapi ini, janganlah bermain dibibir sahaja tanpa mengotakannya. Dibibir itu memang lazimnya indah, tetapi belum tentu dalam bentuknya yang nyata.*

*Dalam usaha menghasilkan generasi berkualiti ini, pendidikan adalah teras utama. UBD melalui Institut Pendidikan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah yang telah dinaiktaraf menjadi sebuah ‘Graduate School’, adalah berperanan untuk melahirkan tenaga pengajar atau guru-guru yang berkualiti. Peranan ini mestilah ditunaikan dengan sebaik-baiknya, sebagai amanah, untuk melahirkan generasi masa depan yang cemerlang”.* (Titah of His Majesty during the 25th Anniversary of the Establishment of UBD, 15th October 2011, Chancellor Hall.)

SHBIE is unwavering in its commitment to contribute towards ASEAN well-being and livelihood of the people: (i) the accomplishments of its well-educated and highly skilled people, (ii) the quality of life, and (iii) the dynamic, sustainable economy. As the premier teacher training institute in Brunei Darussalam, SHBIE is guided by the belief that the professional education of teachers is an on-going process. The transformation of SHBIE as a teacher training institute gives high priority to the upgrading of teacher's qualifications. 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. Hence, this transformation of quality education has provided Brunei Darussalam to become a developed, peaceful and prosperous nation that can contribute to the well-being and livelihood of ASEAN countries.

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