



Saturday morning may generally be better suited to a snooze but FAN members and 15 outstanding participants had other ideas on the 11th November 2006. The **No Education: No Freedom, No Opportunity** seminar held at the CitiBayview Hotel Penang was the final seminar of its kind for the year 2006.

This seminar was facilitated by Ms. Ng Yeen Seen, Treasurer, and Mr. Cheah Kah Peng, Southern Coordinator of FAN Malaysia, and supported by Dr. Busarin from the Friedrich Naumann Foundation. Ms. Ng has recently revisited the International Academy for Leadership in Gummersbach, Germany for **No Education: No Freedom, No Opportunity** seminar, where she was offered to moderate some sessions. Mr. Cheah Kah Peng apart from being a committee member of FAN Malaysia, he is also a member of the Supreme Council of Malaysia.

This seminar aimed at providing a healthy platform for participants to share their knowledge and experience on

educational issues and policies. As in the two previous seminars, this session on education adopted the participatory approach so as to promote and encourage participants to have an interactive discussion.

The one day intensive session focused on some key issues on Liberal Education. Topics covered were:

- The Liberal concept of Education: a concept for the challenges of the 21st century?
- How do we learn?
- What is the purpose of learning—seen from a liberal point of view?
- How do Liberal concepts of knowledge and learning differ from other concepts?
- What should education for citizenship be and how should it be promoted?
- Does Liberal democracy and civil society require a separation of education and religion?
- What are our political priorities as liberals in the field of education?
- Strength and weakness of the current education system in Malaysia
- Education for the poor.
- Private Education as a viable proposition
- The brain-drain: Freedom and opportunity at the expense of responsibility?
- Life-Long learning—why and how?
- Early Childhood Learning: What should we aim for and why?

A few propositions were agreed upon during the seminar. Together we believe that *Education for all is a must, given the right to education, principles of rule of law, the liberal principle of maximizing opportunities for all and the need to secure a living in a highly competition, technology-based an globalizing world. No one, no member of any minority, should be excluded. Education for all means pre-school, primary and secondary education for all.*

People need preparation for the diverse challenges of their adult lives, knowledge, skills, habits et cetera. Some of this preparation must be geared to occupational requirements: and perhaps more could be done to marry

classroom and job experience in this process. The central task of education, however, is not simply to produce spare parts for the economic process, but to develop human abilities by opening them up for various choices rather than streamlining them towards alleged requirements. This is hence why the educational preparation of young people should be wider rather than narrow, general rather than specialized, and above all not too long. The accent of education in the improving society should also be on something different: on offering a diversified set of formative opportunities for people with a variety of educational and economic backgrounds at all times of their lives. Education is one dimension of the unique activity which makes up people's social lives.

Participants found the one day seminar very useful particularly on the plenary discussion where thoughts and ideas are shared and the practice of mutual respect among participants. Some felt that they require a workshop on Liberal values and many recommended that a similar seminar to be organized again but over a longer period of time so as to be able to further immerse into the discussion.

FAN Malaysia will conduct more seminars in the future. Further details on FAN training will be updated on this website.

