

English language key to enhancing human capital

Proficiency in the English language has also been touted as a vital skill to improve one's job employability and an employee's skills.

In a recent survey, JobStreet.com had highlighted that the English proficiency levels in Malaysia continues to be of concern as based on its survey, 64 per cent of the respondents said that poor command of English was the second reason behind unemployment of fresh graduates.

It pointed out, being the main language of business communication, more employers are taking into account the importance of hiring candidates with a good grasp of

English.

Therefore, Chief Minister Tan Adenan Satem's declaration of the usage of the English language as an official language in the state, besides Bahasa Malaysia, has overall been viewed positively by Sarawakians.

Of note, Adenan had recently declared the usage of the English language as one of Sarawak's official language in order to improve the level of English proficiency among Sarawakians to match demands in the job market.

Meanwhile, Ang commended the government's initiatives such as the Dual Language programme and Highly Immersive programme to enhance Bahasa Malaysia and

to strengthen the English Language.

However, there is still more that needs to be done to improve the language proficiency level in the nation. She commented, "As much as we can introduce innovative and critical thinking in primary and secondary school curriculums, the crux of the matter is to start the change from within the system."

Ang further stressed, "We cannot compromise with the level of language proficiency we seek to achieve. However to start, we can at least assess to where we are at the present.

"For example, a review of competency levels of the teaching fraternity, the teaching

facilities and other key areas that need to be taken into account for a holistic assessment.

"This together with external support will lead us to the desired results."

She also highlighted that there is a need to have an independent assessor to ensure that there is progress in the initiatives introduced by the government. She added, there must be baselines to start with and benchmarks to aspire to in assessing the extent of our progress.

"An independent assessor from the private sector can be a game changer, especially in providing different perspectives," Ang suggested.