

Do not commercialize education

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Jakarta (Republika: (22/03/07) Private school managements are asked not to focus on commercial aspects only. Because, the mission of education foundation are very different to those of corporates which have been created to generate profit. The message was conveyed by Vice President Jusuf Kalla while he opened the first National Working Meeting of Private Schools' Council (BMPS) at the Vice Presidential Palace on Wednesday (21/3). "Commercialization is allowed, but there is a limit and it should serve education quality improvement," said the vice president. 150 members from regions participated in the BMPS National Working Meeting.

According to the vice president, the education should be under the responsibility of the government. However, he admitted that the government cannot take care of everything without the support from the communities and private sectors. The Vice President realizes that private education institutions have been well-managed and based on the spirit of nationalism. Therefore, he guarantees the government's equal treatment for private and state education institutions.

However, the Vice President sees the necessity of a corridor or a special regulation to direct private institutions. "To make sure that the education is directed to efforts to develop the nation's intellectuality," he added. Jusuf Kalla reminded educators to improve education quality evenly across the nation. The Golkar Party Chairman expressed concern that the education in under-developed region will be lagged behind. For that reason, the government set the national education standards whose implementation is evaluated by national examination. "A national standard is required to prevent disparities," he asserted.

The president also put emphasize on ethics in education. He acknowledged that there are many frauds in education. For instance, a student who should stay in class because he failed in exam can go to a higher class after being transferred to another school. "If the student should stay in class, then he should," he criticised. The vice president believes that education is absolutely necessary if Indonesia want to develop. Education is the main basis to master technology and to achieve prosperity. "Education should be able to accommodate all the students," he said.

Meanwhile, State Minister for cooperatives and SMEs Suryadharma Ali inaugurated the Education Society Cooperatives (Kocika) at the General Soedirman University in Purwokerto, Central Java. The government disbursed Rp 5 billion of capital assistance for 10 universities in Indonesia, including General Soedirman University. Each Kocika gets Rp 500 million. The cooperatives will enable students to get loans to pay their tuition fee and to get a working capital to set up their own business. Moreover Kocika also offers job opportunities for fresh graduates.