

Need to retain and revamp remove class

HAVING a transition year between primary and secondary education for students from vernacular schools is crucial in developing and enhancing their language and communication skills.

The relevance of such a transitional period when vernacular school students are placed in a special class known as the "remove class" was the topic discussed at forum organised by the Educational Welfare and Research Foundation (EWRF).

Participants at the forum were unanimous in their view that the remove class be retained in schools but they wanted a revamp based on research and facts.

The participants who included a panel of educationists, NGO representatives, teachers in vernacular and national schools, as well as students who had themselves been through the remove class system, discussed and shared their concerns at individual roundtable meetings before presenting their findings.

EWRF president Datuk A Yogesvaran said: "There is something wrong with the current system today.

"Most of those who are placed in remove classes are already weak students, and because of the perception of remove class and the stigma attached, it is almost as if remove class is a punishment for the weak students, rather than an



Yogesvaran: Some students cannot even read and write after completing primary school.

avenue to help them move from one teaching medium to another."

He added that while the remove class was initially set up as a transition period for a student to switch learning from his or her mother tongue to Bahasa Malaysia, society was now facing a secondary issue — of illiterate students being placed in remove classes.

"Some students cannot even read and write after completing primary school, and it is not possible to



Periasamy: Feedback from the forum would be compiled and presented to the ministry.

teach them everything within a year. Remove class was not set up for this purpose," he said, adding that something had to be done even from a primary school level.

There was also a comparison made between Tamil and Chinese vernacular schools.

SMJK Chong Hwa, Jalan Gombak principal Chai Chit Chuin, who was also a representative from Plan of Action for Malaysia, said that many Chinese schools put in their own



Chai (left) and Ng Yap Wah from Plan of Action for Malaysia addressing participants at the forum.

resources to ensure that students get the most out of their primary school education.

"Parents also put in a lot of effort and are generous with financial assistance," he said, emphasising that it was important to have dedicated and passionate teachers in remove classes.

Other suggestions brought up at the forum include having bilingual

teachers teach in remove classes, and to reward dedicated teachers in remove classes since they faced bigger "challenges."

The foundation's research unit head Shanthy Periasamy said that feedback from the forum would be compiled and presented to the Education Ministry for further action to improve the system. — **By ALYCIA LIM**