Suggestions pour in for schools for hardcore poor students

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KUALA LUMPUR: There needs to be targeted action by the Education Ministry, such as building quality hostels, when it comes to the proposal for a new type of school for students from hardcore poor families, says an educationist.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Centre of Education and Diversity senior lecturer Dr Anuar Ahmad said hostel living could help shape a student's personality not only through learning, but also through communication between students made up of various backgrounds, races and religions.

He added that poverty can cause a dropout problem or academic decline, made worse by a lack of learning facilities at home.

"As such, the government's proposal would be more practical and effective if there are better hostels with various facilities to attract their interest," he told Bernama yesterday.

Anuar also suggested that the government develop special programmes in schools nationwide with certain funds for students from poor families.

"For example, there are poor students who are interested in sports – (look into) how can schools help them through special programmes to achieve success in those fields instead of us building special schools for them," he said.

"This is to avoid any perception or labelling that can have psychological effects on the students."

National Union of the Teaching Profession president Aminuddin Awang said the Education Ministry could also think of other methods to increase pupils' interest in learning.

“Skills should also be emphasised, not just focusing on subjects. Also, let’s not forget that there are also urban poor groups and hopefully the government can look at helping this group too,” he said.