

CURRICULUM BASED LEARNING NEEDS FOR NON-CITIZEN STUDENT: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY AT BAYU RAUDAH EDUCATION CENTER, SABAH

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Abstract	<i>Stateless children often face challenges in accessing formal education due to documentation constraints and the policies of a country. Therefore, Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR) has developed a flexible and inclusive needs-based curriculum to ensure that stateless children receive relevant and effective education. In this regard, this study discusses the key elements in the curriculum suitable for stateless students at Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR). Additionally, the study also examines the appropriate teaching approaches used by the educators at Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR) for stateless students. The research methodology is qualitative, utilizing documentation, semi-structured interviews, and observations as data collection methods. For data analysis, the researcher used thematic analysis. The findings of the study indicate that the curriculum implemented by Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR) emphasizes basic literacy and numeracy skills, Quran and fiqh skills, and life skills. Meanwhile, the teaching approach used by the educators is modular, interactive, and practical, with a focus on utilizing community resources and technology to overcome educational resource constraints. Through the implementation of a curriculum responsive to their needs, stateless students are able to access better learning opportunities, thus improving their quality of life and contributing positively to society.</i> Keywords: <i>Stateless, Students, Curriculum, Approach, Effective.</i>
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INTRODUCTION

Education is the foundation and cornerstone of individual, society, and national development. In Malaysia, the education system offers opportunities for all children regardless of background, ethnicity, religion, or citizenship status to receive inclusive learning. However, non-citizen students often face significant challenges in accessing quality education. These challenges arise due to several factors such as shifting national education policies, legal constraints, lack of birth documentation, poverty, and other socioeconomic issues. This situation requires special and serious attention from the education sector to ensure that non-citizen students are not left behind in the nation's educational development.

One of the key issues that must be addressed is the suitability of the curriculum to be used for non-citizen students. According to Mohd Nazri et al. (2018), the curriculum designed for non-citizen learners should not be traditional or contextual in nature, whether

aligned with or different from the formal education system, nor should it be short-term in scope for students of varying age groups. The curriculum must also incorporate specialised approaches that are sensitive to the unique needs and circumstances of non-citizen students.

In addition, the teaching approach must take into account various aspects such as cultural background, social environment, and the challenges faced by these students in relation to their citizenship status. Therefore, this study aims to explore the key elements of a suitable curriculum and identify appropriate teaching approaches for non-citizen students.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study uses a case study as the research strategy (Attride, 2001), which is suitable for assessing phenomena that are rare or newly occurring (Kausar Alam, 2021). The case study selected is Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR), one of the schools entrusted with managing non-citizen students who lack access to mainstream education due to various constraints. Semi-structured interviews were used as the primary data collection method in this study to obtain clear and comprehensive information from the informants (Ruslin et al., 2022).

Five informants, consisting of educators from the Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR), were interviewed regarding the implementation of a curriculum based on learning needs for non-citizen students. The informants, who were interviewed directly and actively involved, are shown in Table 1. Furthermore, the selection of informants for this study was carried out using purposive sampling. According to Campbell et al. (2020), purposive sampling can help researchers make more accurate inferences about the population of interest and develop more effective interventions or solutions based on their findings.

For the data analysis process, Braune and Clarke (2006) suggested a qualitative method known as thematic analysis. According to Chad (2021), thematic analysis involves identifying recurring patterns presented by the researcher as overarching statements or themes. Therefore, the researcher used thematic analysis as the method for analyzing the data in this study by collecting data, building codes, identifying themes, and ultimately preparing the research report. The data analysis process began by recording the interview findings according to the predetermined methods and system.

Next, the researcher organized the collected data by comparing and classifying it into several sections based on the predetermined research objectives. Finally, the researcher developed specific themes and codes to facilitate the creation of a clear, engaging, and high-quality report. The themes identified and developed focused on the curriculum based on the learning needs of non-citizen students and the appropriate teaching approaches used by educators at the Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR). In addition, to enhance the validity and trustworthiness of the data, the researcher employed triangulation using multiple sources, namely through interviews with informants, observations, and in-depth examination of documents related to teaching and learning at PPBR.

Table 1: Informant Demographics

No	Position	Gender	Teaching Experience
P1	Mathematics/Malay Language teacher	F	1 year 6 months
P2	Quran/Fiqh teacher	M	1 yeas
P3	English llanguange teacher	F	2 years
P4	Jawi teacher	F	1 years
P5	Quran teacher	F	1 year 6 month

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Establishment of the Bayu Raudah Education Center

The Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR) is an initiative established by the Bayu Raudah Welfare Organization to provide free educational opportunities and learning access to marginalized and out-of-school children in Sabah. Founded in 2022, PPBR offers basic education to underserved children by focusing on the 4M learning areas: reading, writing, arithmetic, and Qur'anic recitation (*mengaji*). This education center caters to children who have been left behind in their studies, both boys and girls, aged between 7 and 17 years old. As stated by informant TP7:

"Providing educational services for out-of-school children, especially those without documentation who face difficulties enrolling in schools due to high fees. With the establishment of PPBR, it is able to benefit them".

The findings of the study show that, to date, the Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR) has 180 students and 7 teachers. According to Informant TP9, PPBR is divided into two levels: the Pre-Class and the Integration Class. The Pre-Class or Foundation Level is further divided into three proficiency levels — proficient, less proficient, and not proficient — with a total of six classes. The Pre-Class is also divided into two sessions. The morning session (Abu Bakar as-Siddiq, Umar al-Khattab, Uthman al-Affan) runs from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Meanwhile, the afternoon session (Ibnu Sina, Ibnu Khaldun, and Ibnu Rusyd) is held from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. These sessions are conducted from Monday to Thursday only. On Fridays, all students gather for a *Halaqah Jumaat* (Friday study circle).

The majority of informants stated that the generation of financial resources for the administration and operations of the Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR) is primarily sourced through public donations and *infaq* (charitable contributions), as well as proceeds from programs related to Qur'anic reflection classes (*tadabbur al-Quran*), Qur'anic lectures, "Soul to Soul" seminars, celebration events, and outreach gatherings.

These programs are conducted across Sabah, the Federal Territory of Labuan, and Peninsular Malaysia, typically involving small to medium groups of 100 to 1,500 participants. The most prominent and largest program organized by the Bayu Raudah Welfare Organization Sabah is the Festival Soul to Soul: "An Islamic Festival for the Whole Family", which has been held twice at the Sabah International Convention Centre (SICC). The event features a variety of beneficial activities from morning until night. This aligns with the interview findings from Informant SP4:

"To raise funds so that the Bayu Raudah Welfare Organization can continue its operations, several activities have been carried out. For example, Festival Soul to Soul 1.0: Tadabbur al-Qur'an Motivation Seminar – Mahabbah Muslimah 1.0, Tadabbur al-Qur'an Motivation Seminar: Amazing Hijrah 2, Tadabbur al-Qur'an Motivation Seminar: Mahabbah Muslimah 2.0, Mahabbah Muslimah 3.0, as well as small-scale classes and lectures in Kuala Lumpur, Tawau, and many other places".

Since its establishment, the Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR), operating at Royal Plaza Putatan, has received strong support from the community and parents who send their children to school there. This is because, according to Informant P1, these children previously had no place to continue their education due to various issues, including poverty, lack of identification documents, the need to help their families work, and some being involved in social problems.

In fact, a few irresponsible members of society took advantage of their vulnerability by forcing them into illegal activities. The findings also reveal that the ultimate goal of establishing the Bayu Raudah Education Center is not merely to provide them with basic 4M education (reading, writing, arithmetic, and Qur'anic recitation), but more importantly, to equip the children with the ability to be independent and self-sufficient when they face the outside world.

Academic Field (Basic Learning Needs)

The findings show that the Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR) plays a vital role in developing a 4M learning curriculum for out-of-school children, particularly those who are unable to access formal education. Accordingly, based on the interviews conducted, in order to ensure these children receive quality educational access, PPBR has structured a 4M learning curriculum that is inclusive and sensitive to their unique backgrounds. The 4M learning curriculum (reading, writing, arithmetic, and Qur'anic recitation) is further strengthened with the integration of 3A: al-Qur'an, Adab (manners), and Academics. The following are the key elements of the 4M learning curriculum implemented throughout the school sessions at the Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR):

Curriculum Focused on Literacy and Numeracy (3M)

The findings indicate that the Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR) places strong emphasis on the teaching of basic 3M skills (reading, writing, and arithmetic) in a practical, easily understood, and accessible manner for its students. This aligns with the study by Rahman et al. (2018), which emphasized that literacy and numeracy education in alternative schools should be tailored to suit the skills and context of the community. There are three main subjects highlighted throughout the implementation of the 3M learning program: Malay Language, English Language, and Mathematics. This finding is consistent with the views of Informant P2:

"These three subjects are very important for the students here because they serve as the foundation for their learning development and help them grow and become independent in their daily lives".

The informants responded that each teacher must prepare a comprehensive lesson plan every week before the teaching sessions begin. The lesson plans should cover several key aspects, such as the subject chapters, teaching aids (BBM), and the target achievements to be accomplished during the teaching session. For the subjects of Bahasa Melayu and English, there are eight and nine main chapters, respectively, that must be taught and learned by the students.

These chapters serve as the foundational knowledge necessary for students to develop skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking, ultimately enabling them to master grammar accurately. This is in line with the recommendations by Juppri et al., (2018), where students need to master five key components of literacy: language and communication, print concepts, phonemic and phonetic skills, reading and narrative comprehension, and early writing. Tables 1 and 2 show the Malay Language and English teaching syllabus applied at Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR):

Table 1: Malay Language Learning Syllabus

Chapter	Syllabus	Content Standard
1	Vowel Letters	1.1 Listening and responding 1.2 Speaking to express ideas and information 1.3 Basic reading and comprehension 1.4 Basic writing
2	Open and Closed Syllables	2.1 Reading and constructing syllables 2.2 Reading skills
3	Writing Skills (Spelling)	3.1 Writing correctly 3.2 Writing based on given material
4	Writing Words and Sentences	4.1 Ability to write with discipline
5	Common Nouns	5.1 Understanding and using noun groups correctly in context

6	Proper Nouns	6.1 Understanding and using noun groups correctly in context
7	Pronouns	7.1 Speaking, chatting, and expressing requests about something from various sources in formal and informal situations
8	Classifiers	8.1 Using appropriate classifiers in Malay sentences

Table 2: English Language Learning Syllabus

Chapter	Silibus	Standard Kandungan
1	Revision alphabets letter and its phonics sounds	1.1 Letter name (Aa-Zz)
2	Blending Words (Spelling)	2.1 Letter name (Aa-Dd) to (Xx-Zz)
3	Nouns	3.1 Definition and its parts
4	Short sentence	4.1 Name, things, places and animals
5	Verbs	5.1 definition and its parts 5.2 Action word
6	Tenses	6.1 definition and its part
7	Synonyms	7.1 definition and its part
8	Punctuation marks	8.1 definition and its part

The curriculum for each subject at Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR) is developed by the teaching staff based on the needs and local context. According to Mix et al., (2002), to improve literacy skills in the phase of mathematical thinking, students need to master the pre-calculation phase, calculation phase, and written symbol phase.

This approach has been adopted at Pusat Pendidikan Bayu Raudah, where the interviewed informants explained that the mathematics syllabus applied at PPBR focuses on basic skills that can be used in their daily lives. As a result, the researcher found that there are nine main topics emphasized throughout the learning process, as shown in Table 3:

Table 3: Mathematics Learning Syllabus

Topic	Syllabus	Standard Content
1	Time and Date	Naming days and months 1.2 Telling and writing time
2	Shape and Space	2.1 Identifying three-dimensional shapes (3D) 2.2 Identifying two-dimensional shapes (2D)
3	Number Concept	3.1 Number combinations 3.2 Number sequences
4	Numbers in Words	4.1 Writing numbers between 50-100 4.2 Writing numbers between 100-500 4.3 Writing numbers between 500-1000 4.4 Writing numbers between 1000-5000
5	Place Value and Digit Value	5.1 Recognizing and identifying place values 5.2 Recognizing and finding digit values
6	Number Order	6.1 Identifying smaller and larger number values
7	Rounding Numbers	7.1 Rounding whole numbers
8	Addition Operations	8.1 Identifying number pairs to form related numbers 8.2 Identifying symbols
9	Subtraction Operations	9.2 Identifying symbols

Curriculum Focused on Islamic Education

The findings of the study revealed that the Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR) not only focuses on academic learning but also provides early exposure to students on Islamic education subjects. According to the informants interviewed, the subject of Islamic education is essential to be instilled in students to shape their moral values, identity, and serve as a moral guide in their daily lives.

According to Aliff Nawi et al., (2023), Islamic education emphasizes teaching the Qur'an and the basics of religious lessons, which include Aqeedah, Ibadah, Sirah, and Akhlak. Therefore, from the researcher's observations, the Bayu Raudah Education Centre (PPBR) has introduced and implemented several Islamic education curricula for both pre- and integration students, including the Smart Solat, Smart Hufaz, Qur'an, and Jawi lessons.

At the Bayu Raudah Education Centre (PPBR), students are emphasized on the importance of performing the five daily prayers in their everyday lives. They are guided by trained teachers on the significance of prayer, ablution, and how to perform prayers correctly, as well as instilling discipline and moral values through the practice of prayer. This can be supported by an interview with Informant P3:

"The emphasis on prayer is very important for the students here so that they can understand the concept of divinity, gratitude, and most importantly, dependence on Allah SWT. This is because at this school, we have students from diverse backgrounds, and their lives are quite difficult and challenging. That is why we need to instill this understanding of prayer in them".

The Smart Solat syllabus is taught to students in the Pre-school level, ranging from Stage One to Stage Three. This syllabus was developed to help students learn the prayer (solat) systematically, which not only includes theoretical knowledge but also practical learning. As a result, this can be observed in the following Table 4:

Table 4: Smart Solat Learning Syllabus

Topic	Syllabus	Content Standards
1	Introduction to Solat	1.1 Definition, importance, and prayer times 1.2 Benefits of solat 1.3 Intention (niyyah) for prayer 1.4 Practical
2	Preparation for Solat	2.1 Conditions for valid solat 2.2 How to perform ablution (wudhu') 2.3 Practical
3	Solat Recitations and Movements	3.1 Pillars (rukun) of solat 3.2 Recitations during solat 3.3 Practical
4	Complete Solat Practice	4.1 Solat practice 4.2 Practical assessment

Previous studies such as Haziyah & Masitah (2018), Siti Mursyidah (2018), and Mohd Zamri & Mohd Walid (2016) have explained that various Quranic learning techniques have been employed, including the Al-Baghdadi, Iqra', and Al-Matien methods. These techniques aim to ensure that students are able to read and understand the Quran effectively. Therefore, the study found that the Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR) also places strong emphasis on Quranic education.

According to one of the informants, PPBR has developed a special Quran learning module known as the Ar-Raudah Method, which focuses on a simple and effective technique to help students recognize letters and learn basic Quranic reading, especially for those who do not have prior knowledge of reading the Quran. This method emphasizes the correct pronunciation of Arabic letters, as illustrated in Diagram 1:

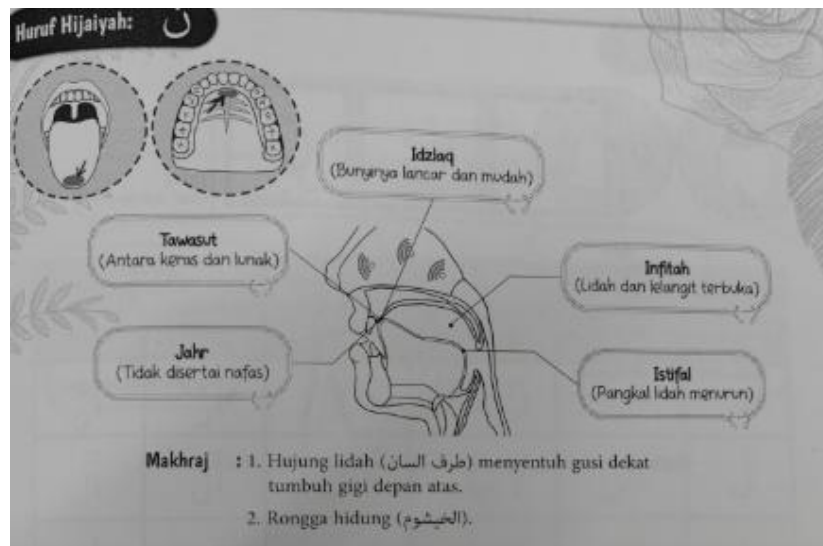


Figure 1: The Ar-Raudah Method

Next, the informants interviewed stated that once students are able to recite the Quran fluently and correctly, they will move on to the Smart Hufaz Module. This module integrates effective memorization techniques, understanding of meanings, and repetition to ensure long-term retention of memorized verses. For this module, Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR) has divided the students into two groups: Pre-school (Pra) and Integration level (Integrasi) students. For pre-school students, Quranic memorization focuses on short surahs from Juz 30, while integration level students concentrate on longer surahs from the Quran. Tables 5 and 6 show the surahs emphasized in the Smart Tahfiz Module:

Table 5: Smart Tahfiz Module – Pre-school Level

No	Surah	Activity
1	Surah al-Fatihah Surah An-Nas Surah al-Falaq Surah al-Ikhlâs Surah al-Masad Surah al-Nasr Surah al-Kafirun	Memorization, understanding the meaning, and fluent recitation

Table 6: Smart Tahfiz Module – Integration Level

No	Surah	Activity
1	Surah al-A'la Surah Al-Kahfi Surah al-al-Imran Surah al-Baqarah Surah al-Mulk Surah al-Waqiah Surah ar-Rahman	Surah introduction, <i>Talaqqi</i> (guided recitation), memorization, and <i>Tasmi'</i> (oral recitation evaluation)

Skill Based Learning

Findings from the study indicate that the Bayu Raudah Education Centre (PPBR) also provides skill-based learning. According to the teaching staff at PPBR, this type of learning is delivered based on the students' needs. Several interviewed informants mentioned that students have previously been given basic photography classes. According to them, photography classes can be a valuable skill for the students and allow them to express themselves. This is supported by the view of Informant P4:

"Students at PPBR are able to use their smartphones to learn and develop photography skills, which can be useful in their daily lives and help them generate income".

For this course, students at Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR) are given a basic introduction to photography, such as an introduction to photography equipment including cameras, lenses, and how to use smartphone cameras. In addition, students are taught the fundamental components of capturing images, such as composition, lighting, and focus. Various types of photography are also emphasized, including teaching techniques for taking pictures of people, nature, and more.

Next, these students are also exposed to activities that can help stateless students hone their skills with the local community, build relationships, and increase their involvement within the community. The study found that volunteer activities have become a platform for encouraging PPBR students to give back to the surrounding community. This aligns with the perspective of one of the informants, P1:

" Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR) has provided early exposure to all its students, where whenever there are programs involving the community and society, such as the Maulidur Rasul and Soul to Soul programs, we bring them along so that they can contribute and hone their skills."

The study found that through the skill-building activities conducted for students at PPBR, it helped foster better relationships with the local community, improved social and leadership skills, and had a positive impact on students by keeping them away from unhealthy behaviors such as hanging out aimlessly, stealing, and taking drugs. These skills also helped them adapt to new environments and simultaneously developed a stronger sense of social responsibility within themselves.

Approach to Teaching at PPBR

The teaching approach suitable for stateless students requires special attention due to the various challenges they face in accessing education, legal matters, and social rights. Therefore, the study found that there is a teaching approach implemented by Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR), which is the flexible teaching approach. This approach focuses on accommodating the unique needs of the students, allowing for personalized learning that is responsive to their circumstances.

It aims to provide a more inclusive and adaptive learning environment that empowers the students to overcome the barriers they encounter in their educational journey. The flexibility allows the students to progress at their own pace while ensuring that they receive the support they need to succeed academically and socially.

Flexible Teaching Approach

The study found that Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR) has implemented a flexible teaching approach to meet the needs, abilities, interests, and learning styles of the students. One of the flexible teaching methods employed is providing opportunities for students to engage in play-based learning (Rozila et al., 2023; Norshidah & Teo, 2022; Kamariah, 2022).

According to the informants of the study, this teaching approach is applied with the goal of giving students more freedom in how they learn. It also provides space for teachers to adjust their teaching methodology according to the circumstances and context at PPBR. This allows for a more individualized and student-centered learning environment, where teachers can cater to the specific needs of each student while fostering a more engaging and dynamic classroom experience.

In line with this, through the flexible teaching approach, the teachers at PPBR have emphasized diversity in learning activities to ensure all students are engaged and can reach their potential. The teachers at Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR) have adapted teaching topics or activities based on students' interests. Additionally, teachers provide students with choices in the form of projects that align with their interests and learning styles. This is in line with the viewpoint expressed by informant P5:

"The students at Bayu Raudah Education Center have different learning interests. So, we, the teachers here, try to adjust each topic we teach with activities they enjoy, for example, they like lessons that include music and games. As for completing assignments, we provide them in the form of writing, presentations, or projects".

Hidayatul Ajmal et al., (2023) states that project-based learning (PBL) is a constructivist approach that emphasizes child-centered learning with a focus on real-life situations and the school environment. Therefore, students at Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR) are exposed to project-based learning. According to informant P2, this learning approach gives them the opportunity to explore academic topics taught in the classroom in a more tangible way. This teaching approach also provides students with the opportunity to collaborate, share ideas, and learn socially.

As a result, it enhances collaboration and communication skills among students. This aligns with studies conducted by Ismail et al., (2023) and Rosli et al., (2023), which show that students involved in project-based learning can improve their mastery of language, particularly in spelling and sentence structure. This is in line with the response from informant P4 explained:

"Considering that some of the students at Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR) are still not fluent in Malay, and to improve their understanding of the Malay language, students are given projects to create short stories. Afterward, these students will present their stories to their classmates. With such activities, students are able to master basic words that are useful in their daily lives".

In addition to academic learning, the teachers at Bayu Raudah Education Center (PPBR) also focus on a practical skill-based teaching approach that is important for students' lives, such as communication skills, problem-solving, and teamwork skills. Therefore, the findings of the study show that the flexible approach used and tailored to the students gives them the space to choose, innovate, and develop at their own pace and style.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study indicate that the non-citizen students at Bayu Raudah Education Center have unique and complex learning needs. Most of them lack a formal educational background and face challenges in mastering basic literacy and numeracy skills. This situation demands a curriculum that is flexibly adapted to the actual proficiency levels of the students. The existing curriculum at Bayu Raudah Education Center is structured based on the initiatives of the school and the teachers, who tailor the teaching according to the suitability of the students. This approach provides room for the content to be adjusted according to the students' current needs.

Therefore, teachers play a crucial role in adjusting their teaching approaches to accommodate students from diverse backgrounds. However, without specific pedagogical training for non-citizen students, teachers may be less prepared in terms of psychosocial approaches and learning recovery strategies. This can result in a lack of proper development in students' emotional and cognitive growth. In this regard, teachers involved in non-formal education should be provided with appropriate training, including managing classrooms with students at various levels, trauma-informed pedagogy, and literacy recovery methods. Such training can be conducted through collaborations with higher education institutions, NGOs, and government agencies.

Therefore, this study provides a clear picture of the urgent need to develop an alternative curriculum that is responsive to the realities of non-citizen students, focusing on basic literacy, language proficiency, civic values, social understanding, and practical life skills. In addition, educational resources such as textbooks, teaching aids, and teacher training should be provided by NGOs and supported by government agencies through corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs or special allocations for alternative education.

Overall, this study proves that a curriculum based on the learning needs of students is crucial to ensure that non-citizen students are not left behind in the field of education. The development of an inclusive, adaptive curriculum grounded in the actual needs of students not only provides them with better future opportunities but also contributes to social harmony and community development. Continuous efforts from all parties, including the government, NGOs, and society, must be united to realize the right to education for all, regardless of citizenship status.

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