

Side Views

ISIS not involved in compilation of results of WEF survey — Mahani Zainal Abidin

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APRIL 6 — I refer to your article of April 2 entitled “Pua: Study proves local school system inferior to West’s”. In that article the Member of Parliament for Petaling Jaya Utara, YB Tony Pua, is reported to have said that the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia, as one of “two government-linked agencies “commissioned by the World Economic Forum (WEF) to carry out the survey (Global Competitiveness Report or GCR)... suggests the biasness in the study’s outcome.”

For the information of your readers and YB Pua, ISIS Malaysia’s responsibilities in the execution of the Executive Opinion Survey (EOS) component of the GCR include, first, identifying invitees based on the criteria established by the WEF Centre for Global Competitiveness and Performance (WEF-CGCP). The WEF-CGCP also has its own list of invitees, which forms an independent control group.

Second, we invited more than 400 organisations to participate via post, facsimile or online survey. Third, we forward all completed questionnaires that are returned to us to the WEF in Geneva, Switzerland. Alternatively, respondents may choose to submit the completed survey questionnaires directly to the WEF.

We obviously do not need to do anything for those who responded via the online survey. Where surveys are completed less than 80 per cent, however, we contacted the participant to explain the situation and advised the participant to answer more questions so that the survey is useable.

At no point, does ISIS Malaysia discuss the questions with respondents or try to influence answers in any way. We are not — nor have we ever been — involved in the tabulation or compilation of results of the EOS. This is done by the WEF alone.

Confidentiality and integrity are essential in the proper conduct of surveys and to hint at the possibility of bias is something that we must take very seriously. ISIS Malaysia believes that helping the WEF to conduct the EOS is our small contribution to the nation and the international community. To suggest that there is unfairness does a disservice not just to ISIS Malaysia but also the organisations that take the time and trouble to participate.

*** Datuk Dr Mahani Zainal Abidin is chief executive of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia.**

** This is the personal opinion of the writer or publication. The Malaysian Insider does not endorse the view unless specified.*