**Enhancing Sustainable Living within Universiti Sains Malaysia   
and its Neighboring Community**

*1. Short description of the action/programme/initiative/network (300 words)*

The project “Enhancing Sustainable Living within Universiti Sains Malaysia and its Neighboring Community” was launched in April 2011 and lasted for a year. Reducing solid waste that goes to the landfill through recycling and composting activities was the main focus of the project and the objectives of this project were:

1. to promote and disseminate sustainable lifestyle from within Universiti Sains Malaysia to the neighboring communities;
2. to encourage participation from all level of communities in the sustainable agenda;
3. to create an environment that is focused towards sustainable community; and
4. to identify challenges and barriers to implement a comprehensive sustainable lifestyle.

The approach taken in the implementation of this project takes into account involvement of multidisciplinary experts and different groups of the communities within 8 kilometers in radius surrounding Universiti Sains Malaysia. The activities conducted in this project were divided into three phases;

* Phase 1) In this phase, a situational analysis was conducted to determine existing recycling and composting practices, identify the potential stakeholders and partners to be involved in this project, and to conduct logical framework analysis with the stakeholders to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats [SWOT] to implement the activities. The baseline information gathered in this phase was important in planning and designing the next Phase of the project.
* Phase 2) This phase included the university-community engagement activities which involved meetings and discussions, logical framework analysis with stakeholders and community outreach initiatives. The community outreach activities carried out were sustainable lifestyle awareness campaigns, knowledge transfer programs and hands-on composting demonstration.
* Phase 3) The main aim of this phase was to improve and also to address the challenges in implementing the activities. Monitoring and evaluating the project was another major aim of this phase.

*2. Description of the context in which the projects/programmes were undertaken*

As early as 1993, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government of Malaysia has launched recycling programme as one initiative to overcome waste management problem. However, according to statistics by the Ministry, less than 5% of waste was being recycled by Malaysians while approximately 95% of waste including rubbish, bottle and paper were sent to the landfills around the country. Penang is a highly urbanized and industrialized island with very limited land located in the northern region of Peninsular Malaysia and the amount of land allocated for landfill is very limited and the existing space is nearing full capacity. Therefore, reducing the amount of waste reaching landfill is crucial in this region. Furthermore, university activities generate significant amount of waste in Penang Island.

In this context, a project was initiated by the Centre for Global Sustainability Studies to enhance sustainable lifestyle through recycling and composting within the university campus and its surrounding neighborhood. This approach adopted the inside out approach which capitalized on the knowledge and capacity of the university for the benefits of the community.

*3. Main partners and their roles*

The main partners of this project were as follows: 1) Centre for Global Sustainability Studies, USM (as leader), 2) School of Industrial Technology, USM, 3) RCE Penang, 4) Penang Municipal Council, 5) Solid Waste and Public Cleaning Management Corporation, Penang, 6) Bukit Jambul, Bukit Gambir and Datuk Haji Mohd Nor Ahmad Secondary Schools, 7) Sungai Gelugor, Minden Heights, and Bukit Gambir Primary Schools, 8) Residents’ Associations of Jalan Akuarium, Taman Tun Saardon, and Sungai Gelugor, 9) Giant Hypermarket, Bayan Baru, Penang, 10) Cincaria Sdn Bhd, 11) Green Crusaders [community-based recycling activists], and 12) Consumer Association of Penang, CAP [NGO].

The budget for the initiative was 350,000 MYR (~112,000 USD), provided as a research grant from USM. The target learners included the USM community, students of the mentioned schools, residents of the mentioned neighbouring, and workers of the mentioned SMEs. The mentioned NGOs provided the project with relevant expertise and educational/training materials. The initiative covered non-formal education, civil society, business and private sectors. The main themes addressed included; protection of the environment, climate change education, corporate social responsibility, economy, sustainable production and consumption, sustainable urbanisation, and civil responsibilities in local and global contexts.

*4. Contribution of your project (300 words)*

The concept of transferring the academic knowledge by the university students and researchers to address the needs and challenges of the community can be considered as one of the most important innovative aspects of this project. This project was conducted to foster a more sustainable lifestyle in some selected urban communities through the means of education for sustainable development. This included training the students and residents on skills such as composting and recycling. Understanding the system and how individual actions affect the system (reducing waste and prolong life of landfill) and impact to the community are important components of the module. In long term, this project helped the communities to generate income through recycling and composting, incorporated sustainability agenda in different levels of the community and reduced the amount of waste heading to the landfills.

Being a “multi-stakeholder partnership” can be considered as one of the important factors contributed to the success of the project. This partnership provided the research fund, expertise, knowledge transfer, information sharing and the space for the project to function better. At the same time, since the concept of sustainability is a trans-disciplinary concept and this project was specifically dealing with a wide range of different expertise, coordinating and synchronizing these different fields of expertise was one of the major successes of the project in terms of governance.

However, a sustainable lifestyle is about changing a series of old unsustainable practices and changing old practices is not easy. The resistance against changing old unsustainable practices can be considered as one of the main challenges faced by the project. In terms of institutional barrier, the main challenge is transferring the management of infrastructure and facilities provided or developed by the project (such as recycling bins and composting unit) to the relevant authorities e.g. university management, schools or local authority. The project team will continue to provide capacity building and awareness to empower the community towards sustainable lifestyle.

*4. Upscaling of project results*

In general, all the sustainability related activities or initiatives should be tailored for the target society or community however, there are some elements which can be used universally for any community in the world which is willing to take up a similar initiative. These universal elements in case of this project can be explained as:

1. Knowledge-based learning elements:
   1. to make the community realizes the importance of recycling to reduce waste
   2. to make the community realizes the importance and the process of composting to reduce waste
   3. to make the community realizes the concept of degradation of material
   4. to make the community realizes that different material has different degradation rate
2. Skill-based learning objectives are:
   1. to develop the skills within the community to identify recyclables and non-recyclables
   2. to develop the skills within the community to manage recyclables
   3. to develop the skills within the community on different methods of composting
   4. to develop the skills within the community on composting processes involved in different types of composting
3. Value-based learning objective
   1. To make the community realizes that sustainable lifestyle starts with the individual within that community
   2. To make the community realizes that it plays an important in promoting sustainable lifestyle
   3. To promote sustainable consumption among the community members

Based on the discussion with partners and observations, it can be concluded that this initiative has achieved to a certain extent its objective to promote sustainable lifestyle through multidisciplinary and partnership approach in ESD.

Prepared and submitted by

**RCE PENANG**

**Contact:**

Dr. Asyirah Abdul Rahim

*Coordinator*   
Regional Centre of Expertise [RCE Penang]  
c/o Centre for Global Sustainability Studies  
Level 5, Hamzah Sendut Building   
Universiti Sains Malaysia  
11800 Penang, MALAYSIA  
Tel: (+604) 653 5428 Fax: (+604) 653 5273

Email: [asyirah@usm.my](mailto:asyirah@usm.my); [asyirah@yahoo.com](mailto:asyirah@yahoo.com)