

NARBO Benchmarking Workshop

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By

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PUBLIC AWARENESS PROGRAM - “LOVE OUR RIVER” CAMPAIGN

INTRODUCTION

Rivers are the major source of drinking water for Malaysia. Rivers also offer in fulfilling other uses and purposes such as fisheries activities, recreation, drainage, irrigation and water transportation. Rivers that flow through densely populated areas including towns and housing areas are often polluted with solid wastes and eroded soil such as from uncontrolled development within river basin resulting in degradation of the natural river environment including blockages that cause flash flood and also decline in water quality levels incapable of sustaining aquatic life.

The ‘**Love Our River**’ campaign was first launched in 1993 by the Minister of Agriculture through the effort of the Department of Irrigation and Drainage Malaysia as a starting point to promote public awareness and to educate them on the important of rivers and the environment in our lives while consequently highlighting the critical state of pollution faced by our rivers. To conserve and protect continual degradation of river and it environment, it is vital to create public awareness the impotence and function of the river. The commitment from local communities can play their role in protection and conservation of river environment.

The five main activities of the campaign are **River Adoption, River Watch, River Expedition, Education and Talks and River Beautification** programmes were implemented in all States of Malaysia targeting individuals, corporate bodies and the public sectors. As a result, there is increasing level of local communities awareness by the number of people participate in the conducted activities.

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OBJECTIVE

“Love Our River” campaign emphasizing it’s three (3) main objectives.

1. To create awareness on the importance of rivers in our daily life and to inculcate a desire to conserve and love rivers.
2. To introduce to the public on measures and steps which can contribute towards protecting and preserving the natural beauty of rivers.
3. To increase knowledge in river and catchment management amongst agencies involved in ensuring a sustainable and harmonious development.

“Love Our River” campaign has resulted positive impact to the public through the cooperation and participation given by the relevant government agencies, state government, NGO’s, private sector, mass media and the public. These programmes will further contribute to the rehabilitation and improvement of rivers.

CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

River Adoption Programme

Aimed to encourage the local residents and schools a sense of responsibility through an ‘ownership status’ to take care and adopt part of the river that flows within their areas and even to develop them into recreational centers for their neighborhood with the spirit of community self-help concept. This programme succeeded in creating continuous maintenance, rehabilitation and beautification of a number of rivers throughout the whole country. Conducting national competition and the winner will receive attractive prizes such as cash, certificate and challenge trophy.

Riverwatch Programme

This program aimed to distribute information of water quality and the pollution effect to the public and school children. With the participation of the school children, it will increase the awareness amongst them, on the importance of river and the need to preserve rivers. These activity is educational in nature, focussing on simple water quality monitoring using equipment provided to school. Parameters measured include visual and smell, dissolved oxygen, temperature, colour, pH, suspended solids, flora and fauna, floating debris and etc.

Education and talks Programme

Younger generations should be encourage and to inculcate a desire to conserve and love rivers. Talks were given to students throughout the country. Drawing competitions were also being organized and participation from the schools and education department were tremendous. The continuous implementation of these activity would bring the students to realize and appreciate the importance of environment especially rivers and the objectives to keep rivers clean would be achieved.

River Expedition Programme

Aimed to encourage recreational activity and also to promote rivers for tourism purposes. Participants were taken along the river and cruise within the rapids, limestone cave, forest and as the same time viewing the fascinating unique flora and fauna along the river.

Expedition at federal level known as 'Laluan Penarikan' were held on Mac 99 with the cooperation given by the Department of Muzuem and Anquity. Reception from mass media and electronic media were overwhelming and articles regarding rivers were published after the expedition by the participants and reporters. Response from the public related to environment were increased.

River Beautification Programme

Private sectors and relevant agencies were encouraged to implement beautification works and provision of recreational facilities in and around the vicinity of rivers. River frontage concept was introduced as a guideline and hence would gives new ideas and knowledge to engineers and planners in planning and design works of rivers.

Pollution Rehabilitation Programme

River pollution is caused by sediments from soil erosion, unsatisfactory treatment of sewerage, sullage water and liquid waste from factories, and untreated waste water from markets, restaurants and food stalls.

Residue and sediments not only distrupts lifeforms in rivers but also results in shallow rivers that ultimately causes flash floods. To overcome this problem, the developers are required in controlling soil erosion.

The discharge of untreated sewerage into rivers further increases the level of pollution. Proper treatment of sewerage needs to be more effective and this require the involvement and commitment of the whole nation.

Liquid waste is another form of pollutant as a result of waste disposal from manufacturing plants, processes from agriculture and livestock production, residuals from fertilizer and pesticides used and livestock farm. The factory owners must implement water treatment and recycling programmes or employ any other methods to ensure that the effluents into the river conform with the Environmental Quality Act standard enforced by the Department of Environment (DOE).

PUBLICITY

Information regarding campaign and rivers be kept ready as references and for documentation. Group from mass media have been given full cooperation throughout the campaign by reporting activities and published articles on the importance of rivers in our daily life. Public began to realize about the campaign and these can be evaluated from the articles and complained published in the newspaper.

Booklets, posters and pamphlets regarding rivers have been distributed to the public and schools for information.

“LOVE OUR RIVER” MONTH

The month of September was chosen as the “Love Our River” month, with the understanding that all rivers in Malaysia will kept ready for the monsoon season. Many activities have been organized and carried out throughout the whole month of September such as exhibition, water sport activities, talks to school, expedition and cleaning programme.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Developed cooperation between the government departments/agencies and public communities through the activities implemented.
- Developed participants creativity, capabilities and seriousness to create natural and attractive river environment.
- Developed solidarity between society, student and mass-media.
- Developed new recreation area and introduce clean river as an alternative.
- Developed understanding and self-awareness to maintain and keep the river as it natural, not just as drainage system and cheap transportation.
- Generate economic activities through natural resources and created bussiness and work opportunity.
- Restored natural and created attractive places to outside society.
- Back to self-help concept.

CONCLUSION

In order to tackle environmental related issues government requires support and public involvement through river rehabilitation and restoration programmes in order to maintain the natural river environment for our future generation.

After all the effort made in this champaign includes other activities and programmes directly or indirectly reduced pollution in the river basin. It was 25 river basin being polluted in 1997 and reduce to 14 in 2002 and further reduce to 9 in 2003.

However, the Department of Irrigation and Drainage as ‘river manager’ will continou the existing champaign programme and focus on the area of managing the pollution at source such as food waste from food stalls and restaurants, oil and grease from automobile workshop.

River Adoption Programme



Riverwatch Programme



Education and talks Programme



River Expedition Programme



River Beautification Programme



Questionnaire

For the reference to the NARBO message and voice of Asia from now on, we hope to hear your opinion below. Please fill each question.

Each opinion is not opened to public directory.

In Asia region, many peoples in each country has been conducting the water-related management based on the traditional rule and community, and evolved the system on water management. Due to the population increase and change of society etc., a lot of difficult situations are occurred.

1. What is the key point of water related issues in Southeast Asia/South Asia and your country?

- Too much water (flood), Too little (drought) water and aggravation of environment are supposed to be common topics in Asian region.

* Please describe the situation of these issues and future strategy.

As other country in this region, Malaysia experiencing two main season; wet (November to February) and dry (the rest of the year). During the wet season, the east coast of the Peninsular of Malaysia experiencing more critical flood compare to other area. Beside that some of the major town e.g. Kuala Lumpur facing flash flood problem due to insufficient carrying capacity of the river, even during heavy downfall. The flood problem also as a result of uncontrolled disposal of solid wastes into waterways in which constricts the flow of water.

To overcome the problem, government has agreed to implement comprehensive flood mitigation project e.g. Stormwater Management and Road Tunnel (SMART), bypass channel, converting existing mining pond to storage pond (detention / retention).

Since 98% of the total national water use originates from surface water resources, the water supply services are easily affected by polluted water and long dry spells. Therefore, groundwater resources need to be explored and sustainable developed especially in water stressed and isolated area as an option.

Adoption of structural and/or non-structural approaches in managing the issues seems to be the best solution. In relation to that, government has agreed on 1st January 2001 to adopt new Stormwater Management Manual. Basically, the manual introduce on quality and quantity control at source for new area to be developed. Numbers of method and technique introduce and apply in order to fulfil the manual requirements. All government building has been instructed to install rain-harvesting facilities for sanitation used. Development along the river includes the river reserve guideline also being prepared.

- **About Social, legal and institutional problem**
E.g. About budget, non-structural and structural matter, countermeasure for IWRM in terms of technical level, capacity/number of staffs, productivity, installation of infrastructure
* Please describe the situation of these issues and future strategy.

Under the Malaysian Constitution, matters related to natural resources such as land, mines, forest and water fall under the jurisdiction of states. Water becomes a federal matter only if dispute arises in the case of a river basin, which crosses state boundary. Each individual states are responsible for water management including the gazettelement of the water catchments.

At the federal level, a National Water Resources Council was set up in 1998 to pursue effective water resources management and water supply services through formulation of Integrated River Basin Management Master Plans for all the river basins nationwide, based on priority.

The first step towards IWRM in Malaysia was realised with the formation of Selangor Waters Management Authority responsible for management and enforcement agency. Under the new ministerial set up and to strengthen the national water sector, Water Supply Branch in the Public Works Department, Ministry of Works is transferred to Ministry of Energy, Water and Communications. The Department of Irrigation and Drainage in the Ministry of Agriculture that is responsible for surface water resources, which include the management of National Hydrological Network, rivers, floods, urban drainage/stormwater runoff and coastal zone, is transferred to Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

River rehabilitation programmes are carried out on polluted rivers which involve the construction, maintenance and desilting activities, education and beautification programmes, relocation of squatters, rehabilitation of aquatic life, treatment of animal waste and installation of water pollution control.

- **As regards Capacity development/system of IWRM**
For the reference of future NARBO training, let us know please what/which capacity developments are needed for your organisation and country.
* Please describe the situation of these issues and future strategy.

A National Study for the Effective Implementation of IWRM in Malaysia is being planned with the overall objective of promoting the implementation of IWRM principles and practices. The study is an essential contribution towards sustainable management of water resources through creating awareness and generating advocacy in IWRM nationwide, developing capacity building of implementing agencies and developing best management practices within Malaysia context.

In the context of capacity development in Malaysia, our higher learning institution has agreed to conduct and provide facilities for Master Degree in water sector related areas.

- **Others**
Please write your opinion freely.

Water resources are to be regarded as national heritage and will be passed to future generation in good or much more better condition. There is also a need to streamline urbanization and industrialization based on the carrying capacity of the river basin or new water resources must be identified.

The objective of IWRM only can be achieved through partnerships and it is everybody's business and responsibility.