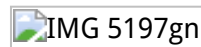


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LEADING SUSTAINABILITY: VIEWS FROM AN OUTGOING USM-CGSS EXPERT



USM, PENANG, 25 March 2016 – After being in service at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and the USM Centre for Global Sustainability Studies (CGSS) for the past seven years, it is now time for Professor Dr Kanayathu Chacko Koshy, 68, to bid farewell to the post which has helped USM to be recognised as a major player in addressing issues relating to sustainability issues through educational approaches.

With his vast experience in academics and wealth of knowledge from prior postings at State University of New York (SUNY), University of the West Indies and University of the South Pacific, he was part of the team that produced the Sustainability Fact Sheet and Sustainability Roadmap, USM Policy on Sustainability as well as many other publications to date, to highlight and provide better understanding of the concept of and the push for sustainability from the perspective of USM.

He has been involved in various aspects on the promotion of sustainable practices on and off-campus; doing community-based sustainability research, being part of an international network in a postgraduate teaching programme, conducting trainings on sustainability, offering consultancy services, being involved in global networking and in 'think-tank' activities on the development of sustainable models and practices.



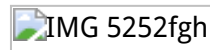
During a recent interview at his office in CGSS, he said that he was attracted to come to USM as the sustainability concept that USM promoted differs from the others.

"USM has a more integrated, comprehensive approach. It was about trying to come to a balance between focusing on 'internal sustainability' and 'global sustainability', which not many universities are focusing on at the moment," he said.

Furthermore he said that, there should be a balance between economic growth and how it affects society and the environment. When such a balance can be achieved, that is when mankind can sustain the stability in relation to their lives and the surroundings.

"Mankind need to be mindful of the limits as the consequences of their actions would have long-term effects on generations," stressed Koshy.

When USM was awarded the APEX status by the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia in September 2008, it was on the basis of 'transforming higher education for a sustainable tomorrow'.



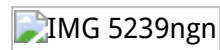
Koshy said that, it then became a necessity for USM to integrate elements of sustainability into the teaching/research/community-based activities, for the idea to be shared and to be spread widely.

According to Koshy, at the same time there was also the need for a means to monitor the amount of content relating to sustainability that has been integrated into those activities. Thus, the Sustainability Assessment Methodology (SAM) came into being, which is made more convenient through computerisation.

He also mentioned how USM is promoting the idea of sustainability. In one way or another he said, there are currently more activities which have elements of sustainability incorporated into them.

"The RCE-ESD Penang (Regional Centre of Expertise in Education for Sustainable Development) appointment, the 'University in a Garden' concept, 'Kampus Sejahtera' and even 'Program Siswa Lestari' are some of the activities with sustainability elements in them," Koshy explained.

"There are two ways to promote better understanding of the idea of sustainability to the younger generation; the formal and the non-formal methods," Koshy said further.



The former could be done through planned academic lessons, which could be used to reorient their views and understanding. 'Experiential learning' was what Koshy stated as an example.

The latter would be via other activities, some of which could even be planned on their own, as seen by the 'White Coffin food packaging' campaign initiated by the students. The university then can monitor and ensure that elements of sustainability would be incorporated in a proper way.

"When it comes to the issue on sustainability, we should not have a neutral stand," reminded Koshy.

"Being supportive of it would result in a win-win situation that would make one a better person or even a leader; to be against it would mean that it would be harder to justify such actions to those in the right mind.

USM can continue to lead in issues of sustainability by having the right elements incorporated into all its activities, and also in implementing all the related programmes," he said.

In ending the interview, Koshy hopes to return to his home state of Kerala, in south India where he would continue with his other non-formal pursuits in areas of management, training or education, and perhaps even to find time to play football and tennis, the two sports that he loved.

Koshy had served as a visiting professor in CGSS, USM from 23 March 2009 to 22 March 2016.

The University is grateful for all his valuable contributions and wishes him all the best in his future endeavours.

Text: Mazlan Hanafi Basharudin / Photos: Mohd Fairus Md. Isa



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