

Research Summary

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GOVERNANCE AND PRACTICES BETWEEN JAPAN AND MALAYSIA

After several month of literature survey, the researcher found that the above topic is more interesting to investigate in comparison to original topic. The core substances of the research remain the same namely the policies, institutions involved and actual activities and program that have been carried out in relation to education for sustainable development. Only the general direction and focus is the governance aspect is introduced more useful framework at the end of the research.

The researcher has visited a number of institutions in Japan and Malaysia and conducted several interviews and meeting with them. These visits have given more hands-on experiences and information in comparisons to the literature surveys done previously. Among the institutions visited are:

- United Nation University Institute of Advanced studies (which is the main promoted of ESD in Japan)
- Environmental Education Unit of the Ministry of Environment
- Institute of Global Environmental Studies
- UNU Global Environmental Information Centre
- National Institute of Education Research
- Ministry of Education, Sports, Culture and Science
- Katahirachou Elementary School
- Miyagi University of Education and their affiliated Primary School
- ESD-Japan
- Asia Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO
- Ferris University, Yokohama (university that promotes sustainable environment)

For the Malaysian fieldwork, visits are made to:

- Ministry of education
- Ministry of Higher education
- Friends of the Earth
- Malaysian Nature Society
- Sabah Department of Environment

And a number of individuals considered as expert and practitioner of education for sustainable development especially from environmental perspective.

Based on these visits, analysis were made and among the important findings are:

1. The governance of ESD in Japan is more structured and established than the Malaysia. Japan has already drafted a specific plan to promote ESD known as “ESD Action Plan for Japan”. Japan is the only country that has produced such specific plan in addressing the subject, In Malaysia, the basis for

action and program for education for sustainable development is derived from the Malaysian Development Plan framework through Ministry of Education Planning. With such loose linkage it is expected that many programs are rather re-active in nature, lack of coordination and low synergy among each other in order to create better impact. As such governance mechanism becomes much more complicated.

2. The definition of sustainable development is very broad and in both countries the search for common and easily understandable and practical definition is the task that is still ongoing. Both countries subscribe to the concept that sustainable development encompasses mainly three main pillars, ecology, socio-culture and economic pillars. However, based on the research conducted, it is found that educations for sustainable development program are predominantly represented by ecological program especially in Japan. It is observed that the Japanese ESD activists have reached the general consensus that for thing to get started and implemented more effectively, emphasis should be given on example from tangible aspect like ecology. While in Malaysia, the struggle is to promote the related understanding and program that go beyond ecological aspect to imply the more comprehensive concept of sustainability.

3. An important factor in education for sustainable development is networking. Governing actors from diverse interest area but common objective require sharing of information to strengthen impact and avoid overlapping. In Japan, actors of education for sustainable development are well networked locally but still lack in national coordination. In Malaysia, the existing actors are networked predominantly through environment-based alliance and only few group working towards the broader definition of sustainable development.

4. The general lesson for each other is for both countries to work together on collaborative project since sustainable development require both local initiative and international cooperation program.