

Plastic Pollution and Marine Conservation Environmental Education Programme between UMS and Hokkaido Sapporo Keisei High School, Japan

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How much are we polluting the ocean with plastics? What kinds of plastics are we polluting our ocean with? Are we collaborating enough to work out a global solution to plastic pollution? In order to address these questions, an environmental education and public awareness programme, the first for the year, was successfully carried out on January 10th, 2019 (Thursday) between UMS (via the EcoCampus Management Centre) and Hokkaido Sapporo Keisei High School (a designated Super Science High School) at UMS.

The programme commenced with a morning session of microplastic sampling at ODEC, UMS Beach. A total of 8 students from Japan, 8 students from SM All Saints KK, and 6 students

from UMS joined hands to sample for microplastics from the beach at ODEC using the quadrat sampling method.

The sampled sand was later sorted for any plastic debris smaller than 5mm, which was classified as microplastics. Sorting included visual separation, floating, and burning. The data was eventually tabulated and compared with results gathered from Japan (Itanki-hama & Dream Beach) and Australia (Sunshine Coast).

A highlight of the programme was the ‘Sustainability Pledge Signing’ Session between UMS and Hokkaido Sapporo Keisei High School cordially led by Prof. Dr. Ismail Ali, UMS Deputy Vice Chancellor (Student Affairs & Alumni) representing UMS Vice-Chancellor and Mr. Hiroshi Nakahara from Hokkaido Sapporo Keisei High School. The pledge highlighted our joint commitments towards building a sustainable future for everyone for now and the future in tandem to the aspirations of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (UNSDGs 2030).

Subsequently, all invited guests and students also signed the pledge. The framed pledge was to be kept at UMS and Hokkaido Sapporo Keisei High School each for continuous reminder and motivation. The pledge signing session was carried out at the Seminar Room, Borneo Marine Research Institute.

During the session, Hokkaido Sapporo Keisei High School contributed kind sponsorship to 3 youth-based environmental sustainability NGOs too, namely Little Feet Initiative (LiFe), Seagrass Guardians, and UMS FEE Committee under the EcoCampus Management Centre.

These youth-based NGOs are actually established by UMS alumni/students, further showcasing the extension of UMS EcoCampus Agenda beyond campus life and proving that UMS alumni/students are able to make impactful changes to the society and world.

The programme presentations that followed was started by a talk on EcoCampus Agenda at UMS by Mr. Kueh Boon Hee, Deputy Director, UMS EcoCampus Management Centre, inclusive of brief talks from Little Feet

Initiative (Mr. Elyas Eric Huil), Seagrass Guardians (Mr. Michael Yap) and UMS FEE Committee (Ms. Ivy Wong). Next was a talk on the microplastic survey by students from Hokkaido Sapporo Keisei High School.

Present during the programme were also Prof. Dr. How Siew Eng, Director, EcoCampus Management Centre, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ejria Saleh, Deputy Director (Academic and International), Borneo Marine Research Institute, Dr. Jakaria Dasan, Deputy Director (Corporate Communication), Centre for Strategic Management and Corporate Communication, and Dr. Nobuyuki Tsuji and Mr. Toshimi Oshima from the Hokkaido Sapporo Keisei High School.