

Education for Water Sustainability: GEC's Environmental Education Programme

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Malaysia is one of the twelve mega-diverse countries in the world. Over 15,000 known flowering plants, 1,500 terrestrial vertebrates and 150,000 invertebrates are found in the diverse terrestrial, marine and other aquatic habitats in the country. However, like other countries in the world, Malaysia is now facing problems of environmental degradation, which left unchecked, will threaten the well-being of the people. Malaysia has developed their own initiative to tackle these problems. Conservation, rehabilitation and protection have become preferred actions in handling environmental degradation as 'prevention rather than cure' is now the main concept. This was achieved through proactive Environmental Education.

Global Environment Centre (GEC) is a Malaysian non-profit organization which coordinates local and global programme activities addressing key environmental problems. GEC has been very active for the past 20 years in the conservation of natural and man-made resources through Environmental Education within their three main programme areas: River Care Programme, Forest & Conservation and Peatland Programme. GEC has developed and promoted Civic Science and HEART approach as a tool to engage stakeholder (community/youth/students) participation in local actions. These approaches are about helping people to develop an emotional bond with the environment. This can happen through GEC's environmental education programmes such as the SMART Ranger (Start Managing All Resources Today: focusing on solid waste), RIVER Ranger (Water resource management), DRH2O (water management) and Flood Ranger (flood preparedness). All these programmes and their modules follow the concept of Civic Science that involves the process of enhancing awareness, providing knowledge and skills which will lead to ACTION in addressing environmental issues.