

JPS Officials across Malaysia learns new ways to engage community at GAB Foundation River Rehabilitation Workshop

SUBANG JAYA, July 18, 2011 – GAB Foundation together with GEC (Global Environment Centre) and JPS (Department of Irrigation and Drainage Malaysia) conducted a workshop today for JPS officials as part of their Urban River Rehabilitation Handbook initiative. Officiated by Yang Berbahagia Dato' Ir. Hj. Ahmad Husaini bin Sulaiman, Director-General of JPS Malaysia, the workshop aims to provide JPS officials with first-hand knowledge on how to utilise the handbook to their best advantage, with community engagement as a key focus.

The Handbook titled “A Handbook on Urban River Management Through Local Community Participation”, was launched in April this year, highlights key learnings and best practices developed during the three-year urban river rehabilitation project spearheaded by GAB Foundation and Global Environment Centre (GEC). The river rehabilitation project is a key initiative under the Foundation's W.A.T.E.R Project (Working Actively Through Education & Rehabilitation) which aims to engage and empower various stakeholders to make the choice to conserve our water source. To-date, the W.A.T.E.R Project has received excellent support and recognition from numerous government agencies including the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, JPS Selangor, Lembaga Urus Air Selangor (LUAS) and the Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ).

The full day workshop held at Holiday Villa saw a turnout of 70 representatives from GAB Foundation, GEC and JPS state representatives across the country. Some of the highlights at the workshop included an introduction of the W.A.T.E.R Project and achievements of the Sungai Way Rehabilitation Project by Renuka Indrarajah, Director of GAB Foundation Management Committee, and a talk by Dr K Kalithasan, River Care Programme Coordinator of GEC, who presented a comprehensive explanation of how the Handbook can be used as a guide to community involvement and why it is crucial for the people to be part of the project.

Speaking at the workshop, Yang Berbahagia Dato' Ir. Hj. Ahmad Husaini said, “The main source of drinking water comes from our rivers and we all have a role to play in protecting and conserving it. I'm pleased that GAB Foundation has taken the lead in involving the local community in its river rehabilitation efforts as this is in line with JPS Malaysia's 'One State One River' Programme which is targeted at restoring selected rivers in each state with full stakeholder participation.”

According to Renuka, community participation was a key factor in ensuring the success of the Foundation's Sungai Way rehabilitation project.

“The success of the project is the culmination of hard work, support and collaboration from various stakeholders.

Now that the three-year project is completed, we would like to share our learning and experiences with JPS officials and to help them adopt and adapt some of the best practices in their respective river rehabilitation projects,” she said.

To help JPS officials get the most out of the workshop, a field excursion was organised for participants to visit the Sungai Way river site, Desa Mentari’s composting area and the River Care Education Centre.

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About GAB Foundation:

GAB Foundation was established in 2007 to carry out Guinness Anchor Berhad’s (GAB) corporate social responsibility initiatives in three core areas – environmental conservation, education and community. Within these three key areas, the Foundation strives to identify causes that not only contribute significantly to empowering and enriching the lives of deserving Malaysian individuals and communities, but also resonate with GAB’s corporate values of striving for excellence, acting with integrity and having a genuine respect for people, society and its diversity.

The management and administration of the Foundation is governed by a board of trustees made up of senior members of GAB’s management team and independent nominees.

For more information on the GAB Foundation please visit www.gabfoundation.org .