



UCSF-SWCS INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH ENGAGEMENT OF FRIENDSHIP & CULTURAL EXCHANGE WITH JAPANESE SCHOOLS

KOTA KINABALU, FEB 2022: With the world becoming more connected, global accessibility has become much easier. Hence, strategic outreach initiatives are an important feature for any organisation which seeks to gain its global presence by expanding its networking, leveraging on its resources, collaborative and cooperative capacities. University College Sabah Foundation (UCSF) and Sabah Wetland Conservation Society are two Sabah-based organisations, which share among others a common goal of aspiring to promote active environmental awareness, especially a strong commitment towards building a greener and healthier ecosystem for the inhabitants of Planet Earth.

Despite prevailing conditions that are challenging, travelling and borders of many countries being closed as preventive measures against the Covid-19 pandemic, it has not restrained the two green partners from getting together and working creatively to promote their sustainability efforts to the world's community. Most recently, across consecutive weeks, beginning in mid-January 2022 up to mid-February 2022, UCSF and SWCS have been actively engaged two Japanese Junior High Schools. It was a 3-days online engagement with Aitokyu Gakuen Junior High School, and a 2-days with Yokohama Jogakuin Junior High School. Both events involved over 100 Japanese student participants, their respective English teachers and Japanese translators

This International Outreach Programme was entitled “*A Workshop on Nature, Culture and Society.*” The workshop encompassed a talk on the topic of ‘The Value of Nature’. It focused on understanding the underlying Green Concept and Philosophy of UCSF based on an eco-centric worldview which encompasses sustainability and harmonization within an ecosystem. Topics on Conservation of Nature and Multiculturalism were also delivered by the various discipline experts of UCSF from the fields of natural science, developmental and cultural science, and eco-tourism.

SWCS provided the basic background information on the wetlands and shared their conservation efforts as well as educating the Japanese students about RAMSAR sites, especially the one located in Kota Kinabalu. The engagement also involved UCSF students as well as SWCS' interns, who were actively involved, playing the role of tutors facilitating the various mini workshops and interactive sessions with the Japanese students.

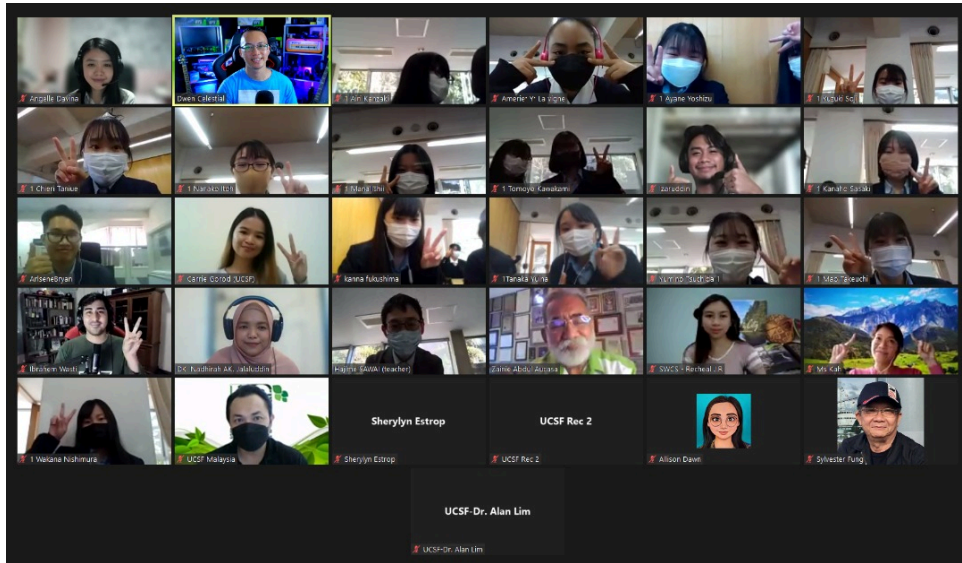
The sessions were conducted in English. Each student was required to converse in English with their workshop tutors, as well as taking part in group presentations, also done in English. “The Japanese students were shy initially but opened up with excitement as they gained confidence interacting with UCSF student tutors. As is the usual case, they knew little about Sabah initially, but over the workshop with their active participation, they gain much about Sabah and its natural assets. More interestingly, they also got to know more about Japan as well when they began comparing Sabah and Japan. Most certainly they enjoyed this online experience. This was conveyed by their English teachers, especially from the Aitoku Gakuen Junior High School

“The engagement has not only been very educative but a revelation, as the online engagement has also made the Japanese students realised the value of their own Japanese culture, which is both rich and deserved to be conserved for posterity” said the lead English teacher from Yokohama Jogakuin Junior High School. The events were conducted fully online and one of the highlights was the Japanese guests got to learn the Sumazau dance led by the students of UCSF. The Japanese counterparts thought it was fun and entertaining.

“I enjoyed facilitating the workshop especially the Sumazau dance. I never imagined that I would be acting as an ambassador of Sabah spreading the Sumazau when I joined UCSF. This is definitely an experience I never expected!” joked Calvin Jonathan Sapian, a student tutor of UCSF.

Apart from the certificate of appreciations being awarded by both UCSF and SWCS to the Japanese schools, the best presentation groups were also given gift tokens from UCSF Nature Inspiration Art Gallery, which houses the handiworks of art trainees in UCSF. “The thrust of our joint International Outreach Programme is to extend our hands of friendships and cooperation with other endeavouring entities especially in sharing our Green Concept and Philosophy with the youths of the world, so that, together, we can build respect and deep appreciation for the beautiful diverse cultures we find around the world.” said Dr. Mohamed Haleem, the Vice Chancellor of UCSF.

“We find UCSF ideal and hope to continue to work creatively with UCSF, because it is through an active collaborative working relationship that we can achieve more and the effects will be far more reaching.” said Datuk Hj Zainie, the President of SWCS. This unique experience was made possible through an international collaborative effort which involved Global English Centre and Ryugaku Journal. For the time being these engagements will be conducted online until the borders between countries reopen. We believe when the participants visit Sabah they will get to really enjoy an enriched immersive experience of the local rich diversity, culture and environment.



Screenshot photo during the online engagement with Japanese High School students.

PREPARED BY:

Corporate Communication & Marketing Department,
University College Sabah Foundation,

Tel. No : 088-511 133

Email : ccd@ucsf.edu.my

Date : Feb 2022