

**09**

**COMMUNITY –  
ACTING TOGETHER  
FOR A SUSTAINABLE  
SINGAPORE**



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## COMMUNITY – ACTING TOGETHER FOR A SUSTAINABLE SINGAPORE



Sustainable development is a long-term, ongoing effort. We can continue to achieve growth and a good environment if everyone believes that sustainable development is important and makes an effort to adopt a more environmentally responsible lifestyle. The leaders and activists in the people, private and public sectors can work together to make environmental sustainability part of the Singapore culture.

## Key Recommendations

- 1 The government will make available funding to support the work of NGOs and facilitate more networking among NGOs.
- 2 The Community Development Councils will promote environmental awareness and action to more than 2 million people through programmes under their local district plans.
- 3 The government will use a \$1.5 million 3P Partnership Fund to assist organisations from across the people, public and private sectors to realise worthy ideas on environmental sustainability.
- 4 Schools will step up their efforts in promoting environmental education.
- 5 Public sector will adopt more environmental sustainability practices both as a consumer of goods and services and as a responsible employer.

## PEOPLE SECTOR LEADERSHIP

### Advocacy and Action by Non-Governmental Organisations

The Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Singapore have been actively engaging the community in resource conservation, public cleanliness and nature conservation. These NGOs include the Singapore Environment Council (SEC), a pioneer environmental NGO in Singapore, the Waterways Watch Society (WWS) and Nature Society Singapore (NSS) as well as other youth-centric NGOs such as the Environmental Challenge Organisation (ECO), Singapore Halogen Foundation and SYiNC (a network of youth volunteers who organise events to instil civic consciousness).

For instance, SEC has organised the annual Schools Green Audit Awards since 2000 to encourage students to cut down on energy and water wastage and find ways to reduce and recycle. They have also promoted the use of greener modes of transportation through their Green Transport Week and promoted green consumerism through their Green Labelling Scheme. WWS has organised many programmes to encourage Singaporeans to take care of our water resources. NSS organises free nature walks for the public and 'show-and-tell' sessions for younger children to promote nature education and ecological care of the water body at Kranji wetland. The Restroom Association of Singapore (RAS) developed the Happy Toilet programme to recognise the efforts put in by owners of public toilets to improve their cleanliness standards and launched a national LOO (Let's

Observe Ourselves) campaign to encourage better user behaviour.

- The government will make available funding to help NGOs spearhead new initiatives. The government will also facilitate more networking platforms, both locally and overseas, to promote cooperation among the NGOs and encourage the exchange of ideas on sustainable development. Some examples are the annual National Youth Environment Conference jointly organised by the National Youth Achievement Award Council and the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources (MEWR), and the Youth Habitat portal helmed by the SEC, to engage youths on environment issues through various platforms.



The Plant-A-Tree programme, a collaboration between the Garden City Fund and the Singapore Environment Council, lets the public play a part in greening Singapore



## WATCHING OUT FOR OUR WATERWAYS

The Waterways Watch Society (WWS) has been an active partner in helping to keep the Singapore's waterways clean. Its members patrol the waters in the Kallang Basin or the Singapore River area with an eye on litter almost every weekend. Formed in 1998, the mission of WWS is to gather like-minded volunteers to protect the aesthetics of our waterways and to raise awareness of the

importance of caring for and protecting our environment. As one of the "adopters" under the PUB's "Our Waters" programme, the Society has been providing regular feedback to the government agencies during their river patrols, to help curb pollution at its source. WWS also initiated a learning camp for students, public education roadshows as well as beach/river clean-up sessions.

### Ground Up Initiatives at the Grassroots

At the community level, the Community Development Councils (CDCs) actively encourage residents to get involved in their community and to care for the environment. The CDCs take turns to co-organise the annual launch of the Clean and Green Singapore<sup>1</sup> programme with the National Environment Agency (NEA) to inspire all Singaporeans to care for and protect the environment. The CDCs and grassroots organisations also work with NEA, PUB, Singapore's national water agency, and the National Parks Board (NParks)

to promote energy and water conservation as well as nature appreciation.

In support of this blueprint, the five CDCs have each developed plans, in partnership with their local grassroots organisations, to promote environmental awareness and a more environmentally responsible way of life.

<sup>1</sup> Known as Clean and Green Week before 2007. The Clean and Green Singapore (CGS) Programme consists of educational activities to promote an environmentally friendly lifestyle. CGS begins with a carnival in either October or November each year, and this is followed by a series of environmental events and initiatives held through the next year.

- South West CDC (SWCDC) engaged grassroots organisations within its districts to develop ECo (Environment & Community) Plan South West – themed “Tomorrow Starts Today”. The Plan envisions a high quality living environment and a community that is engaged and responsible. Together with corporate and community partners, SWCDC is seeking to reach out to 220,000 households to achieve five ECo Goals. These are (i) reduce energy consumption for 80,000 households by changing to energy efficient light bulbs; (ii) appreciate nature by planting 1 million native plants (iii) maintain public health and a clean environment by engaging and training volunteers from 20 schools to assess the cleanliness of public toilets (iv) recognise individuals who display social graciousness and kindness in the community through awards; and (v) facilitate active citizenry by recruiting an annual target of 1,600 Junior Environment Ambassadors to champion environmental and public health issues in the community.
- North West CDC (NWCDC) has embarked on a 3-tier Green Plan involving programmes at the School, Community and National levels to reach out to 124,000 residents a year. The NWCDC Green Plan aims to strengthen people-private-public sector partnership, provide opportunities for students and the community to organise innovative environmental protection projects and to increase awareness of students and the residents on sustainable development. NWCDC also aims to help 4,500 households reduce energy and water consumption through the Energy Audit and 10 Litre Challenge programmes.
- Central CDC targets to reach out to 800,000 residents to raise their awareness of environmental and public health issues. It will provide opportunities for the community to come forward and champion public health initiatives and live out environmental friendly lifestyles. One example is SWITCH (Simple Ways I Take to Change My Habits) which aims to educate and enable residents to reduce their energy consumption.
- North East CDC (NECDC), through its Public Health & Environmental Watch Group’s 2008 / 2009 Environment Work Plan, seeks to promote greater awareness and community action to care for the environment. The Environment Work Plan has an intended outreach of about 700,000 residents. To facilitate their outreach, NECDC will be working with NEA to design and build a mobile exhibition bus that will reach out to 78 schools and also Grassroots Organisations (GROs) in the district.
- South East CDC plans to reach out to 150,000 residents and engage schools, grassroots organisations and Voluntary Welfare Organisation (VWO)s’ to care for the environment. Caring for the environment can also serve a dual purpose and help those in need. An example is the ‘Recycling actions by Caring Hearts@South East’ programme where participating schools will target to collect 50,000 pieces of clothing and used books for recycling and reuse by families in need.



## BUILDING RESPONSIBLE PRACTICES: CDL

City Developments Limited (CDL), a pioneering property developer in Singapore, has been incorporating sustainable business practices and promoting green outreach programmes as an integral part of its corporate social responsibility policy since the late 1990s. Today, eco-friendly features such as energy saving lights, pneumatic waste disposal system and multiple recycling corners have become the cornerstone of all CDL residential developments.

Beyond building and managing properties with environmental sustainability in mind,

CDL has gone the extra mile to influence its consultants and contractors to do their part for the environment. CDL's Environment, Health & Safety Policy was established in 2003 to help promote a "safe and green" corporate culture. CDL monitors the environmental impact at the worksite, as well as influences its employees, consultants and contractors to adopt eco-friendly practices. CDL has also actively supported efforts by governmental agencies, Non-governmental Organisations, the youth, and the community at large to promote environmental awareness.

## PRIVATE SECTOR LEADERSHIP

Over the years, many companies have adopted business practices which reduce the environmental impact and improve the resource efficiency of their operations. For example, United Microelectronics Corporation optimised their chiller system and improved its efficiency by 12%, achieving estimated cost savings of over \$200,000 per month. The Regent Singapore, a certified Water-Efficient

Building, adopted the Reduce, Replace and Reuse approach to water management, and reduced its water consumption by some 16%.

Some companies have also actively encouraged environmental participation within the company and partnered NGOs and schools to promote environmental awareness. For instance, more than 170 companies have participated in NEA's Corporate and School Partnership Programme (CASP) which is a platform for companies to work with schools on environmental education.

Through the programme, students are encouraged to find solutions to environmental issues and in the process, they develop a sense of ownership towards the environment. Since its inception in 2004, the number of such partnerships has grown from 4 to over 100. More and more companies are also participating in PUB's programmes such as the Friends of Water and Our Waters programmes.

Some companies have also co-organised or sponsored environment-related awards and events. Some of these include the Sembawang Shipyard's Green Wave Competition, Senoko Power's National Weather Study Project, Bayer South East Asia's Bayer Young Environmental Envoy Programme, and HSBC's Seashore Life Programme.

At the industry level, industry organisations such as the Singapore Manufacturers Federation (SMA) have sought to promote resource efficiency. For instance, SMA is working with the SEC to promote resource conservation and Eco-Office among SMA members.

The government will continue to facilitate business participation in environmental sustainability. For example, NEA provides a seminar-style platform for companies to network and share their best practices in environmental sustainability through its Corporate Environment Champions Programme.

## PUBLIC SECTOR LEADERSHIP

### Environmental Education in Schools

We have to educate people from young on the importance of sustainable development and the environmental impact of the choices they make. Schools play a vital role in this effort. Hence, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has made environmental education part of the school curriculum. Environmental education is also one of the criteria in the School Excellence Model, which is used to appraise the overall performance of schools.



Everyone can play a part to keep our environment clean

## POWERING THE GREEN DRIVE: SENOKO

Senoko Power Limited, Singapore's largest electricity producer and retailer, has made caring for the environment its business. The company pioneered the use of natural gas for electricity generation purposes in 1992, and replaced its less efficient oil-fired plant with high-efficiency, gas-fired Combined Cycle Plant. This resulted in a reduction of approximately 2.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) per year. In addition, recognising the growing concern of climate change, Senoko launched a National Weather Study Project (NWSP) in 2005 to promote awareness of weather patterns, climate change and global warming among the youth in Singapore. By the second year of NWSP in 2007, two-thirds of all Singapore schools contributed a total of 372 projects.

Within the company, Senoko engages all employees and business partners in waste reduction and recycling programmes. It invested in a desalination plant at Senoko Power Station



to achieve self sufficiency in its water needs. Senoko has also adopted Sungei Sembawang and brought 10 schools on board to join in the regular clean-up of the river.

MOE has incorporated environmental topics such as recycling, energy and water conservation into the formal curriculum of subjects like geography, social studies and science. Several schools have also gone one step further by developing additional dedicated environmental education modules. Marsiling Secondary School, for example, introduced a 30-hour module that integrates topics on the environment while Nanyang Girls' High students are required to take a compulsory 25-hour programme on environmental science. NEA assists teachers

and students to develop and implement these additional environmental education initiatives.

NEA and PUB also encourage and train teachers and students to develop and implement their own environmental initiatives. A network of Environmental Education Advisors has been established within schools to act as a key point of contact and to promote better communication between teachers and NEA. More than 2,000 student "Environment Champions (EC)" are appointed to act as role models or "advocates"



## COMMONWEALTH SECONDARY SCHOOL

Commonwealth Secondary School converted the school pond into a Constructed Treatment Wetland to recycle used water for watering the plants in the school compound. The school introduced an Environmental Education Curriculum to help secondary one students understand the importance of water as a strategic resource and why it is crucial for Singapore to be self-sufficient in water. The school also adopted Sungei Pandan and Pandan Reservoir.

to assist their teachers in implementing school-wide and community initiatives. NEA trains youths to conceptualise and implement projects through the Youth Environment Envoy (YEE) programme. To date, more than 200 youths have been trained as YEEs. Similarly, PUB has initiated the "Water Ambassadors" programme that has already trained and equipped more than 2,000 students from uniform groups like the National Cadet Corps and Scouts Association with the knowledge and skills to spread the message of conserving, valuing and enjoying our waters to their schoolmates, families and friends.

PUB and NEA have also developed programmes to help students learn about environmental sustainability outside of classrooms. For example, they conduct "Learning Journeys" for students to the NEWater visitor centre, Marina Barrage, incineration plants, Semakau landfill and meteorological stations. Under PUB's "Our Waters" programme, students learn to take care of our waterways by conducting

activities such as patrols and clean-ups to ensure the cleanliness of their "adopted" waterways.

Going forward, schools will play an even bigger role in promoting environmental education.

- MOE will review and update the curriculum of environment-related subjects to generate more academic interest in and shape future careers relating to sustainable development, e.g. in clean energy and water technology.
- NEA and PUB will actively engage the school leadership to develop more environmental education programmes and disseminate best practices on environmental education among the local network of schools.
- BCA will work with MOE to study the development of a prototype "sustainable school" that will yield resource savings and provide a conducive and healthy learning environment. The campus itself will also serve as an educational platform

for students to learn about and even experiment with green building technology.

### 3P Partnership Fund

The public sector facilitates and participates in people-private-public sector partnerships on sustainable development.

- NEA will leverage on a \$1.5 million 3P Partnership Fund to assist organisations from across the people, public and private sectors that may lack the financial resources to realise worthy ideas on environmental sustainability. Through this fund, NEA hopes to forge even more intra- and inter-sector partnerships amongst individuals,

organisations, and companies to promote sustainable development.

### Public Sector Walks The Talk

Finally, the public sector will show leadership in environmental sustainability both as a consumer of goods and services and as a responsible employer. Public servants will be agents of change by using energy and resources more judiciously, and playing their part to improve the public sector's performance in resource efficiency. The government will also lead by example by using its substantial procurement spending to effect change and demonstrate the benefits of environmental sustainability. Please see Appendix 1 for details.

## CONCLUSION

Since early 2008, thousands of individuals and representatives of organisations have contributed their ideas and support to develop this blueprint. Now is the time for us to act together to turn our ideas into reality and achieve our aspirations for Singapore. With a strong common vision and joint action by the people, public and private sectors, we can together make Singapore a vibrant and liveable city we are all proud to call home.