Kg Tudan proves sustainable devt always possible, says Jica-SDBEC

Healthy organic vegetables grown in a sloping patch at Kampung Tudan.

Kan Yaw Chong

SOIL fertility and slope stability remain largely intact even after generations of traditional cultivation on steep slopes in Kg Tudan!

So, wow, Jica-SDBEC (Japan International Co-operation Agency-Sustainable Development for Biodiversity & Ecosystem) experts concluded that these hill farmers must have done something right, these traditional farmers of Kg Tudan, located inside the buffer zone of the Crocker Range Park, in Upper Tuaran. It's one rare antidote to the common notion that steep slope land use necessarily means erosion and slope failure.

The secret apparently lies in faithful practice of traditional slope planting technology used for centuries.

So it's a very good living example that developing a sustainable society in harmony with nature is always possible !

But Tudan folks can always improve, in terms of relationship with their environment.

Convinced about this, Jica-SDBEC picked Kg Tudan to develop a pilot project learning site to showcase to all that sustainable development is very much possible even in the most challenging environment, when people relate to their stock of ecosystems with understanding and wisdom!

In particular, Jica-SDBEC assures this exemplary hamlet that they can raise sustainable use and protection of their resources to new heights by encouraging members of the local community to get actively involved in the governance and management, research, education, training and monitoring of their stock of natural capital that had formed the central natural means of production of their sustainance for ages .

A report to *Daily Express* three weeks ago prepared by Jica makes this poignant message clear.

Cleaning organic leeks with free flowing mountain free water.

Above: Young community researchers updating satellite imagery.

Left: Heard of biochar? A farmer holding a handful of biochar produced from bamboo used fertilise organic plots.

Tapping power of science to improve relationship between human & environment

What's new is science. Jica–SDBEC has thrown in the combined power of natural and social sciences with traditional knowledge to further improve an already friendly relationship of Tudan folks with their environment.

So it will be interesting to see whether this combined practice of proven traditional cultivation technology and modern technology boost an even more sustainable yield of the desired flow of products and services deep into the future , through sustainable use of resources and the conservation that cannot and would not deplete the stock of natural capital that form the basic means of production for livelihood needs.

Recycle, revive old knowledge

How does the Jica-SDBEC project plan to turn Kg Tudan into a living example of a sustainable society in harmony with nature?

One, recycling of local materials and entrench it as a system , which nature has done for billions of years.

Two, revive and restore the use of traditional knowledge , recognising that this is a traditional, local-based technology that works in practice .

At the same time, add more punch to it by integrating traditional knowledge with very appropriate and innovative technology into one branding technology.

To convert this lofty goal into practice, Jica-SDBEC supports capacity building to equip the village folks with additional understanding and skills , through awareness and educational programs.

" We recognise that community empowerment is a driving force towards a sustainable society," said Jica-SDBEC Chief Advisor, Kazunobu Suzuki.

Carefully listening to all

"In the meantime, Jica-SDBEC pays careful attention to the decision making process at the village," he noted.

" SDBEC is carefully listening to people and facilitating the process of community-based transparent decisions , and all possible opportunities shall be given to all people equally and fairly while gender balance is important," Suzuki said.

"But Jica-SDBEC as a facilitator believes it is important to build up the connection between government and the village to narrow the communication gap between agricultural extension staff and village folks and we organised training for this," Suzuki noted. "Jica-SDBEC is willing to explore opportunities and occasions for village people to develop their sustainable society in a community-based manner," Suzuki added .

Recycling System for livelihood improvement

"The result of soil survey indicates that the soil at Kg Tudan is relatively short of phosphorus (P), potassium (K) and calcium (Ca)," Suzuki noted.

"Considering this, SDBEC initiated compost demos and making compost (organic phosphorus) and biochar where all materials used are natural local resources , such as bamboo, rotten fruits, kitchen wastes , weeds and so on, to improve the soil condition in the village," he added.

"In short, SDBEC aims at realizing a society in harmony with nature by developing a recycling system at Kg Tudan," Suzuki pointed out.

"In addition, SDBEC will help the Tudan community to test compost for their daily agriculture in the future.

We cannot wait to see whether this can improve productivity," Suzuki said.

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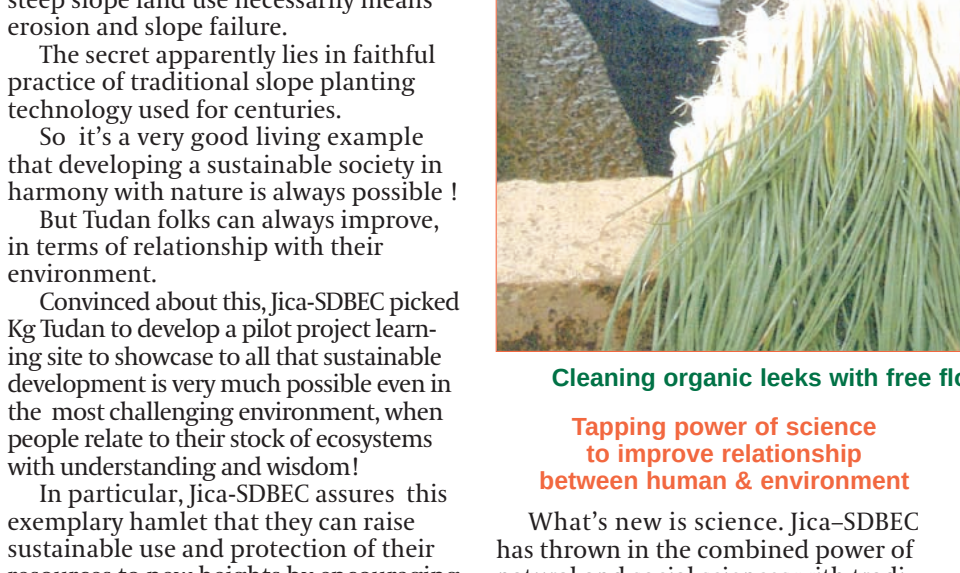
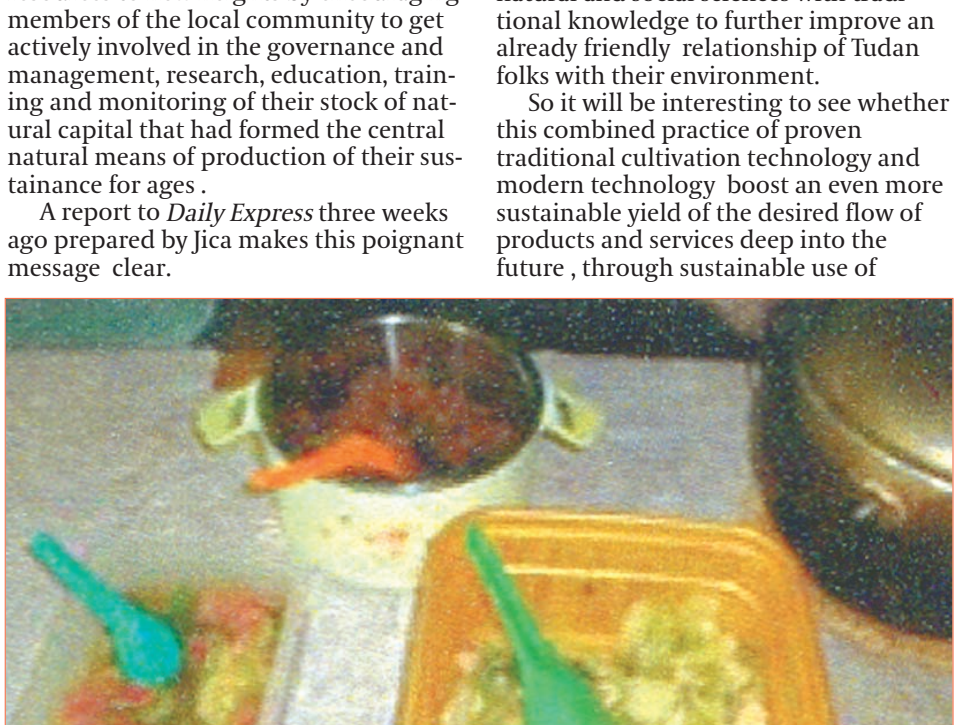


Nutritious Kampung fare from freshly-harvested vegetables.



Community researchers preparing household survey.

Above: Active motivated women support group of Kg Tudan who play a key note in producing pesticide, free leafy crops.

Left: Participants of a training workshop on Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) held in Kg Tudan on August 27–28.