

INTRODUCTION

In 1978, World Health Organization (WHO) launched a major public health movement called "Health for All" (HFA) at Alma Ata. The initiative is based on six important principles:

- i. Reduced inequalities in health
- ii. Emphasis on health promotion and prevention of diseases
- iii. Inter-sectoral cooperation
- iv. Community participation
- v. Emphasis on primary health care
- vi. International cooperation

Then, in 1991, the International Conference on Health Promotion in Sundsvall called for creating supportive environments and "settings for health". This "settings for health" concept was further elaborated in 1997 at the International Conference on Health Promotion in Jakarta. The WHO strongly supports and promotes the healthy settings approach – including healthy cities, healthy villages, healthy islands, healthy workplaces, healthy schools, healthy hospitals, healthy market places, and healthy districts. Malaysia is one of the countries in the world that adopts and adapts to this approach.

WHO advocates a Healthy Work Approach defined as "a continuous process for the enhancement of the quality of the working life, health and well-being of working populations through work environmental (physical, social, organizational) improvement, and personal empowerment and growth" as part of the healthy workplace settings concept.

In 1999, for example, an initiative called "Healthy Public Building" was launched and pioneered by the Government of India under the Ministries of Health and Family Welfare, and Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation; and the WHO Representative's Office in New Delhi, India. This is a unique activity under the Healthy Work Approach. It provides an example of how different partners, working together for a common goal, can truly "make a difference" in improving the health and safety of the working environment.

WHAT IS A HEALTHY CITY?

A Healthy City is defined by the WHO as

an urban community that is continually creating and improving those physical and social environments and expanding those community resources which enable people to mutually support each other in performing all the functions of life and in developing to their maximum potential.

Although the definition provides a frame of reference, it may not be so practicable in developing activities.

More practically, a healthy city is characterized by

- a clean and safe physical environment of high quality (including quality of housing);
- a stable ecosystem that is sustainable in the long term;
- a strong, mutually supportive and non-exploitative community;

- a high degree of participation and control by the public over the decisions affecting their lives, health and well being;
- the meeting of basic needs (for food, water, shelter, income, safety and work) for all the city's people;
- access to a wide variety of experiences and resources, with extensive opportunity for contact, interaction and communication;
- a diverse, vital and innovative urban economy;
- the encouragement of connectedness with the past, with the cultural and biological heritage of the city's inhabitants and with other groups and individuals;
- an urban layout that is compatible with, and enhances, the preceding characteristics;
- an optimum level of appropriate public health and care services, accessible to all; and
- high health status (high levels of positive health and low levels of disease).

Although these features define a desirable 'state' of a healthy city, a healthy city project is a 'process' of developing such a state (i.e., "continually creating and improving physical and social environments and expanding community resources" as in the above-mentioned definition of a healthy city).

The countries' experiences in the healthy city projects have outlined the following common features which are significant to the success and achievement of the goals:

- Commitments of individuals and groups in the city to health
- Political decision making for public health
- Inter-sectoral action
- Community participation
- Innovative methods and approaches to problems
- Public policies that create healthy settings (e.g., homes, schools, workplaces, etc.) in which to live

WHAT IS A HEALTHY SETTING?

The meaning of 'setting' refers to physical or geographically-demarcated location, where people live and work. Healthy settings could be conceptualized as an **approach** or a **process**. According to the WHO,

A healthy setting is one that is continually creating and improving those physical and social environments and expanding those community resources which enable people to support each other in performing all the functions of life and in developing themselves to their maximum potential.

"Healthy setting" as emphasized, is merely a generic term that takes into consideration the many types of community development actions being undertaken in society at large, which in effect are actions being carried out in community settings. It was further stated that the health status of any setting is determined more by the quality of the environmental

conditions and risk factors than by the health care facilities that are provided. The hierarchical nature of settings is clarified as each being a subset of the other. These may be called contextual setting and elemental setting, respectively.

Betterment of health and well-being of the community thus become one of the goals of community development. Community development actions could either be issue based or target population based, and could take the form of campaigns, donor-initiated development projects, government programmes, NGO community efforts or a combination of one or more of these actions. The target population-based community action can be viewed in the form of a community development programme, such as taking up of a slum area, mother and child health, disadvantageous groups, etc. The action will depend upon the needs of the country and on the way the policy makers view the problem.

A Healthy Setting is achievable through the practical application of the principles of health promotion. Health promotion constitutes a preponderance on public health rather than on individual health (i.e., private health); focuses on causes of ill health; uses a multitude of approaches; involves active participation of the public; and ensures the critical role of public health care staff. The success of the programmes will largely depend upon good strategic planning and issue prioritization; effective managerial mechanisms, and community participation.

RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES OF A HEALTHY CAMPUS

A campus can be considered as a community or a 'state' which has various departments (e.g., health, development, administration, students' affairs, finance, hostel and accommodation, etc.) that is equivalent to a state which is governed by a group of administrators and politicians, and has its own operational budget to manage the state and other departments with its own activities and responsibilities (e.g., state health department, hospital, state government department, municipal council, etc.).

USM's operational budget for 2004 was approximately RM183,975,810. USM's *Current Indicator 2005* stated that the number of students and the number of staffs in the three campuses (Main, Engineering and Health) is 27,006 and 6,938, respectively. In total, it has 25 schools (not including centres) within an area of 441.81 hectares (all the three campuses). These basic figures clearly show the importance of a healthy community or settings approach to be applied in the Campus.

The Healthy Campus is a programme concerned about and places emphasis on a healthy life as the path to the acquisition of knowledge. A campus can become healthy, comfortable, secure and peaceful if it is based on the concept of a healthy living. Among the aims of the programme are:

- To increase the standard of security and safety within USM

- To further improve the quality of social, physical and environmental aspects
- To improve and strengthen the current health care system
- To create awareness in the quality of health among the people in Campus through the learning process
- To increase the capability of USM in improving the quality of health through the participation and coordination of every section and department
- To create the spirit of cooperation and togetherness among people in Campus

The Healthy Campus projects and programmes are planned and conducted with the ideas, advice and cooperation from experts within USM. Among the aspects and programmes which have been conducted or are currently being focused on are:

- The well-being and health of students and staffs as well as human relations
- The quality of food (including nutrients, water and the cleanliness of eating areas)
- The quality and standard of accommodation and living area
- The quality of sports and recreational facilities
- The quality of the landscape and ecosystem

- The quality of the road and transportation systems
- The quality of the environment and infrastructure
- Campus development
- Workplace environment
- Infrastructure and social support for the handicapped
- Safety and security
- Communication and documentation

In the early stages of the Programme, there was a central committee made up of 16 members from various departments with various expertise, assisting the University in carrying out programmes relating to the Healthy Campus Programme. As a continuation of this, several discussion sessions were held to outline a strategic plan of action in order to develop a Healthy Campus. The University has since set up a Healthy Campus secretariat which is made up of a coordinator and a few members as an advisory panel to help the University in carrying out relevant programmes and activities as well as making policy recommendations. Starting with only 16 members, the Programme is now made up of hundreds of staffs and students who voluntarily came forward to lend a helping hand and to share their expertise in assisting the University in various aspects. All Campus members feel a sense of membership, ownership and kindred spirit. They are able to cooperate with and support each other to maximize their capabilities.

The Healthy Campus Programme hopes to be able to increase the capability of USM to produce a conducive environment through the sharing and widening of responsibilities among the academic, administrative and supporting staffs as well as students in particular. It is the aim of USM that such a programme will be able to produce excellent graduates. In addition, the Programme hopes to be able to create an exemplary model of a community to people at other universities as well as to the public.

FOUNDATION OF USM AS A HEALTHY CAMPUS: CONCEPT AND PRINCIPLE

The concept of Healthy Campus emerged from the realization of the importance of peace and the quality of health as well as the spiritual, social, physical, emotional, mental and environmental aspects. Health which is a holistic concept is more than the absence of disease, emphasizing the interaction between its physical, mental and social dimensions. It is a dynamic process where development and enhancement processes are undertaken by utilizing internal resources and expertise; the campus community undertakes daily duties and functions with voluntarism, cooperation and teamwork with a high degree of commitment to utilize available potential to the maximum. One of the main factors in trying to enhance learning is the quality of students' health in a much broader context. According to WHO, being healthy is a level of total physical, mental and social well-being. It is a state of being not only without illness or without disability.

A Healthy Campus can be characterized as a campus that is constantly strengthening its capacity as a healthy setting for living, learning and working. It does this by

- fostering health and learning with all the measures at its disposal;
- engaging health and University leaders, staffs, students, and alumni in efforts to make the campus a healthy place;
- striving to provide among others a healthy environment, health education and health services along with campus community projects and outreach, health promotion programmes for staffs, environmental safety programmes, opportunities for sports and recreational activities, programmes and facilities for the disabled and, social support and mental health promotion;
- implementing policies and practices that respect an individual's well-being and dignity, provide multiple opportunities for success, and acknowledge good efforts and intentions as well as personal achievements; and
- striving to improve the health of University personnel as well as students.

According to Professor Dato' Dzulkifli Abdul Razak, the Vice-Chancellor of USM, the Healthy Campus Programme is a platform to enable every individual of the University to

participate in the development of the Campus through inculcation of five main thrusts:

- i. Volunteerism
- ii. Working together in a team
- iii. Based on data and information
- iv. Insourcing
- v. Complete documentation

USM AS A HEALTHY MODEL: ACHIEVEMENT 2000–2005

Along the way in implementing the Healthy Campus projects and programmes, many success stories and challenges can be shared with others. Judging from the enthusiasm expressed so far, the idea of a healthy campus is likely to become very popular and well accepted in the University. Since establishing the Healthy Campus Programme, more than 30 reports on projects and programmes have been produced, of which 11 have been published in the form of monographs.

Healthy Campus projects must be able to provide demonstrable evidence of the outcome of their efforts. The success of Healthy Campus projects would ideally be measured by the extent to which they have improved the health of students and staffs, and integrated health into the culture, structure and processes of the University. Projects and activities were implemented in groups, clusters and as a team. Individuals are able to put their time and energy to the projects even though they are busy with their routine activities. People come knocking at the door or phone to offer

their expertise or voice their concerns. It works on the spirit of volunteerism.

Things are not always "smooth sailing". In the process of project's implementation and discussion, there were a few matters and obstacles that are considered minor aspects but need serious considerations such as financial aspect, policy, regulations and guidelines, time and differences among individuals. These are some of the factors that hindered the movement and successful implementation of projects. As the initiative becomes "mature", these obstacles are able to be handled rationally and effectively.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND HOPES

Different sectors of the Campus community should cooperate to ensure that people have access to the prerequisites for health and are protected from environmental risks. Community participation is essential. Health care from the broader perspective must focus on primary health care and health promotion that provides accessible and affordable services where students and staffs live and work. Inter-departmental cooperation should be encouraged and used to address health problems that transcend departmental boundaries. The Healthy Campus Secretariat will continue to promote healthy public policy within the University setting, creating supportive environments, strengthening community participation, improving personal skills and reorienting health services.

Successful Healthy Campus projects must work for greater awareness of the aspiration of the University, principles of

health for everyone in the Campus and understanding of the meaning of their application in practice. More efforts should be made to increase awareness such as increase in information access, accessibility of project assistance from the Secretariat, initiatives from the departments are well supported, availability of funding to carry out projects or programmes, medial relations, etc. It is essential for projects to promote strategic health planning such as through environmental evaluation, health impact studies, etc. The Secretariat will continue to find ways to mobilize inter-departmental action strategically, and this will be one of the work priority. Community's participation will continue to be encouraged. For example, people participate in health through their lifestyle choices and their use of health care (e.g., Anti-smoking Clinic and Weight Management Clinic).

Healthy Campus operated on the basis of volunteerism. Working with individuals or groups as volunteers is important because they make a direct contribution in improving health and living conditions. Easy access to projects and community needs' assessment and identifying people preferences provide the groundwork for participation. The Secretariat will also promote innovation and creativity in several areas related to healthy setting concepts. Achieving success through innovation depends upon creating a climate that supports change. This will involve spreading knowledge of innovative programmes and practices to the community. Successful examples should be extended to other areas of practice. Among the approaches that can be used to foster innovation are open style by requesting the community and project team members to propose new initiatives and generate innovative thinking, comparing experiences by providing opportunities for formal and informal exchange of experiences, providing

financial support and other forms of reward and recognition, and development of evaluative methodology (e.g., basic health impact studies).

Last but not least, an important matter that needs to be mentioned as one of the key factors of success of a Healthy Setting programmes or projects is the political commitment and support from the top management of the University. The main thing that helps the Healthy Campus programmes ongoing is the moral support and commitment from the Head of the University.

USM HEALTHY CAMPUS 2010

In January 2005, the Healthy Campus Secretariat in collaboration with the Training Unit conducted a two-and-a-half-day workshop to evaluate past achievements, challenges and obstacles in carrying out Healthy Campus activities, as well as looking at future directions: USM Healthy Campus 2010. Approximately 50 participants from various departments, students, administrative staffs and academia attended the Workshop. The meeting was carried out to support the mission and vision of the University in its way to be a healthy campus.

Specific objectives of the Workshop were:

- To understand and appreciate the University's aspiration and the Vice-Chancellor's annual speech which are related to the Healthy Campus development

- To determine the best approach, strategy and action plan that are appropriate to support sustainability of health, environment and physical developments
- To discuss the needs for networking and cooperation between departments to develop a Healthy Campus through smart partnerships

Not less than 50 activities and priority areas were suggested by the participants, and among others were to produce a blueprint on the Masterplan and Concept Paper of a Healthy Campus.

CONCLUSION

The University's aim and aspiration in creating a healthy campus will require a strong commitment, volunteerism and resolute responsibility among the Campus community for it to be a success. Thank you to everyone who has contributed ideas, time, energy and information.

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