Initial Findings on Knowledge Transfer Practices towards Sustainable Development at Malaysian Local Government

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Abstract—The infrastructure development managed by local governments which starts from pre-construction to the occupation of the building needs a sustainable development approach for sustainability. Since the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, all sectors of society have been in the process of pursuing sustainability within their specific contexts. Development planning involved various stages and design inputs from various design consultants such as architects, town planner and engineers. Therefore, local governments’ staff should have a better understanding of sustainable development. Accordingly, this research focus is aimed on the role of the Local Governments with regards to knowledge transfer practices towards sustainable development. Another intended study is to provide an in-depth and better understanding the strength and weaknesses and other relevant factors that promote or hinder the implementation of Sustainable Development. This study is to contribute to the enrichment of knowledge on the role of Local Governments in Sustainable Development.

Keywords—sustainable development; local governments; knowledge transfer

I. INTRODUCTION

The general perception is that the introduction of sustainable principles will increase costs and reduce profit. Local Governments are now experiencing continuous challenges in term of implementation of sustainable development as in the environmental, economic and social aspect [1] & [2]. The need to make additional investments in machinery, equipment and training is very often an excuse not to comply with standards and practices based on principles of sustainability. Accordingly, those issues are a major concern in local governments globally when dealing with development of a country. Essentially, the sustainability in local government’s practices needs to be shown in providing the services to the public. In this study, the objective is to understand the knowledge transfer practices towards sustainable development at local governments.

II. BACKGROUND STUDY

Public and local governments should be able to understand this and the awareness is important to minimize the hazardous environment to earth. When the activities are not properly managed by the local governments, the negatives impact as in flooding are imminent and it will cause hazards to society, economy and environment [3]. Conventional way of development entails a lot of wastages and creates hazardous environment to living things. Therefore, Local government authorities must protect and properly utilize the environment for sustainable development [4]&[5]. Sustainable development thus requires the participation of diverse stakeholders and perspectives with ideal and subsequent coordination of mutual action to achieve multiple values. The importance of Local Governments to acknowledge sustainable development especially in issues related to it and can be resolved accordingly. While the sustainability concept is being emphasised, managing knowledge at all levels in Local Government continues to fall short of knowledge when unmanageable waste of construction site, poor river management and unsustainable public sanitation are issues that community experienced for decades now [6],[7]&[8]. This means, without proper and adequate knowledge of sustainable development when dealing with the approval of planning development, those scenarios are the scenes that will continue for years to come. In this study, the focus will be aimed at Local Governments and it factors in the implementing sustainable development. This study is to contribute to the enrichment of knowledge on the role of the local government towards sustainable development.
The knowledge transfer practices use specifications that are gathered through recent study as in [9], [10] & [11]. It shows the practices in terms of the explicit and tacit side of the practices towards sustainability.

III. METHODOLOGY

Before the method involved conducting a literature review, desk research and interview. Information is gathered from academics journal, publication, related articles, and documentary and government reports where available. [12]&[13] highlight research styles as in experiment, survey, action research, ethnographic research and case study. Moreover, it depends on the study’s need as well as the researcher ability to rationalise it with the research objectives. A detailed literature review, including a Web-based search and a review of academic and industrial literature, was undertaken. As has been mentioned before, this research seeks to know what is happening in the Local Government with regards to sustainable development. Moreover, it looks into the factors in implementation of sustainable development. In other words, this research is interested in knowing the factors in causation of that implementation. Literature reviews inform researchers of the background to their research projects and provide context and ideas for their studies.

The preliminary information gathering was conducted by reviewing relevant literature, which helped the researcher to understand and gain a wide view of possible research problems [14]&[15]. There are good reasons for spending time and effort on a review of the literature before embarking on a research project. These reasons include; to uncover the gaps in the literature, to carry on from the point others have already reached (reviewing the field allows the research to build on the platform of existing knowledge and ideas), to identify information and ideas that may be relevant to the research, and to identify methods that are relevant to the research. Since this research is only in the preliminary stage, the interview conducted only to gain the views from selected staff to satisfy the questions for further investigation and to gather information based on the literature reviews. There are 3 staff from Kuala Lumpur City Council involved and 2 senior lecturers from International Islamic University Malaysia and Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia.

IV. RESULTS

After this research achieved the following objectives:

1. To identify knowledge transfer practices towards sustainable development in local governments.

The respondents selected at city council/municipal/modified local government are based on the unit/division/department related to the issues or agenda in sustainable development. Factors in generating knowledge of sustainable development at the Local Governments are important as awareness of the scope of social, economic, and environmental problems grows. Local Governments need to act accordingly in ensuring adequate knowledge transfer of sustainable development. The selection is based on the factors that influence the understanding of sustainable development, forms of sustainable development and its implementation issues locally and globally as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Factors that influenced the Implementation of Sustainable Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Working experience</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Through network/ordination</th>
<th>Political influence</th>
<th>Sending staff to seminar/training/workshop</th>
<th>Initiative/program</th>
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Hence, the factors for this study are based on the selection of literature on social, environmental and economy. [16] stated that knowledge is very important and [17] agreed with the education as the factors as well. [18] and [19] agree with the political influence not affecting the factors for knowledge transfer practices. [20] and [21] agree that initiative or program towards sustainable development is irrelevant and [22] viewed working experience as not important factor for knowledge transfer practices. Overall, from the derivation
from recent studies and preliminary interviews, the factors, namely, education, training, support from appropriate sources, resources (budget & expertise), appropriate knowledge, needs (social & economy), incentives, environment issues, policy existence, human resource, technology and networking are the knowledge transfer practices towards sustainable development.

Since early 2002, many efforts were carried out by various authorities at the federal, state and local levels, such as introducing the concept of a healthy city, livable city harmonious city and many other concepts in the planning and development of towns and cities in the country. Sustainable development has added new dimensions to the management in Local Government. With ever increasing dependency on fossil-fuels and a diminishing supply of resources, human need innovative, cutting-edge approaches and technologies to make a real difference. The sustainable development concept relates the development objectives with planning that emphasis on the preservation and conservation of environmental resources without jeopardising the people to meet their social, cultural and spiritual needs as well as their economic needs. All countries should not repeat the mistakes by generating wealth only and ignore the negative impact on social, environment and economy. Innovators, leaders and decision makers should create a vision to educate and train everybody in order to create the next generation that have positive impact socially, economically and environmentally. Hence, the factors in generating sustainable development at Local Governments are crucial to be acknowledged.

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