

ASIA RESPONSIBLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARDS 2010

NESTLÉ WRITE-UP FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AWARD SUBMISSION

Empowering Women in Setiu Wetlands: A Sustainable Development Programme

Nestlé, a respected household name in over 100 countries worldwide, is the world's leading Food, Nutrition, Health and Wellness company. In Malaysia, Nestlé employs 5,000 people and manufactures as well as exports over 300 Halal products. Some of the world's most recognised and ubiquitous brands are part of the Nestlé family and this includes brands like MILO, NESCAFÉ, MAGGI, NESPRAY and KIT KAT; all of which have become trusted household names.

Creating Shared Value – A fundamental part of Nestlé's way of doing business

Nestlé's commitment to corporate social responsibility is inherent and very much at the heart of its business. The Company's philosophy of corporate social responsibility – known as Creating Shared Value (CSV) – focuses on three areas namely; Nutrition, Water and Rural Development.

Creating Shared Value is a fundamental part of Nestlé's way of doing business that focuses on specific areas of the Company's core business activities where value can best be created both for society and shareholders. Nestlé believes that in order to deliver long-term value to its shareholders, its approach to corporate social responsibility must go beyond a mere commitment to comply with laws, sustain the environment and conserve energy. As articulated by Nestlé Malaysia's Managing Director, Peter R. Vogt – company must support development, which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. "Our basic business philosophy is that we will build a successful business by creating value for shareholders and society; and it goes beyond philanthropy and sustainability as we are environmentally responsible, and we aim to bring greater contribution by creating new and greater value."

Nourishing the Environment and the Community

Under the pillar of Water and Rural Development, Nestlé (Malaysia) Berhad embarked on a partnership with WWF-Malaysia (World Wide Fund for Nature) in 2006, to equip the local community in Setiu, Terengganu, in particular the women, with skills and knowledge to participate in sustainable development activities that could offer new income opportunities and improve their livelihoods. This is in addition to assisting them to spearhead conservation awareness activities and eventually become the environmental guardians of the area. The project would help conserve the Setiu

Wetlands, which is home to the world's largest remaining population of critically endangered painted terrapin and nesting ground for the endangered green turtle. The Setiu Wetland also boasts a rich repository of fauna and flora and is an important breeding ground for freshwater and marine fish.

The project in Kampung Mangkok, Setiu, a coastal village in the state of Terengganu, kicked-off with a survey which identified the critical needs of the local community. In November 2007, PEWANIS (Persatuan Wanita Kampung Mangkok Setiu) also known as the Setiu Women Entrepreneurs, which comprises local women from the village was established. Together with Nestlé and WWF, the Group embarked on their quest for new income opportunities, sustainable livelihoods and conservation awareness efforts to preserve the wetlands.

In 2009, the group started a cottage industry business producing and selling traditional banana chips to generate new sources of income. In addition to mentoring the women on how to improve their cottage industry business, employees from Nestlé would regularly visit Kampung Mangkok to share some of the company's know-how on good manufacturing practices, product packaging and marketing. In addition to the workshop and dialogue sessions, Nestlé also presented the Group with a computer and printer to help them with their marketing and book-keeping.

Motivated with a new sense of confidence, the women of the Setiu Wetlands have now progressed using their basic entrepreneurial knowledge and environmental awareness. Along with better communication skills, the women are able to be involved in small economic activities and assume a bigger role in the development of the local eco-tourism industry. Being more independent and financially stable has improved the confidence levels of the women substantially.

From their humble beginnings in a small hut, the Group is now housed in the 'Pink House' – activity centre-cum-production house, which also doubles up as a centre for free English classes for the local children.

PEWANIS has also been the driving force behind the planting of more than 3,000 mangrove seedlings since the project commenced. Today, the Setiu Wetlands has been rejuvenated with an increase in the flora and fauna while turtle and environmental conservation awareness is at an all time high amongst the local community. The Group also organise environmental-related activities for the local children.

The "Empowering Women in Setiu" Project is in line with Nestlé's CSV philosophy and has encouraged the local women to move beyond their realm of existence and explore new opportunities, which have in turn yielded results in many areas. As the initiatives have a clear and direct impact on their livelihoods, there is a strong motivation to continue helping protect the Setiu Wetlands, which was not too long ago in danger of disappearing.

Ends.