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بِوَسِيْلَتِي اِسْلَامُهُ اَنْبَارًا يَجْنِبُنَا مُلْكِيْنَا

AWARENESS AMONG LOCAL AUTHORITY
OFFICERS TOWARDS LOCAL AGENDA 21
(LA21):
CASE STUDY OF CITY HALL KUALA LUMPUR
(DBKL)

BY

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INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the level of awareness among local authority officers towards LA21. The City Hall of Kuala Lumpur (DBKL) is selected as a case study due to its vision to make Kuala Lumpur “**A World-Class City**”. LA21 is defined as “a participatory, multi-stakeholder process to achieve the goals of Agenda 21 at the local level through the preparation and implementation of long-term, strategic plan that addresses priority local sustainable development concerns”. From the underlying concept and principles of LA21, a few criteria are derived for assessing the level of awareness and understanding towards LA21. Those criteria are the meanings of sustainable development, familiarity of local programmes under sustainable development or LA21, participatory process, building partnership, transparency, consensus decision, equity and justice as well as accountability. The method used to collect data is stratified random sampling through combinations of qualitative and quantitative methods. The research is designed with the assumption that planners are more aware on LA21 as compared to non-planners. The respond rate of the survey is almost 60% which is considerably good. There are 55% planners and 45% non-planners involved in the survey with two categories of local authority officers namely deputy directors and officers within ten departments located under DBKL Headquarters at Jalan Raja Laut, Kuala Lumpur. The findings showed variation in level of awareness among the DBKL officers for various criteria. The major constraints impeding the development of LA21 in DBKL are lack of expertise, lack of information, lack of monitoring and feedback, lack of linkages with international processes and institutions, and lack of decision making power. Recommendations are given to enhance the level of awareness among the DBKL officers and those recommendations are categorized into three namely Administrative, Awareness Campaigns and Good Practices of Urban Governance.

ملخص البحث

تقوم هذه الدراسة بتقييم مقدار الوعي بالبرنامج المسمى "LA21" (جدول أعمال محلي 21) لدى موظفي مجلس بلدية من البلديات المحلية. وقد اختير مجلس بلدية كوالا لمبور (DBKL) نموذجاً للدراسة بالنظر إلى توجهه إلى جعل كوالا لمبور "مدينة على المستوى العالمي". وبرنامج "LA21" عبارة عن عملية إشراك المعنيين من جهات متعددة على المستوى المحلي في تفعيل الأعمال لتحقيق الأهداف المرسومة تحت "جدول أعمال 21"، وذلك بإعداد خطة استراتيجية بعيدة المدى لتنفيذ أعمال تهدف إلى تنمية مستدامة على حسب الأولويات المحلية للتطوير والتنمية. وعلى هذا، فقد استنبطت عدة معايير من مفهوم LA21 ومبادئه، لغرض تقييم مقدار ما عند موظفي البلدية من وعي، وفهم لهذا البرنامج. والمعايير المستنبطة هي معاني التنمية المستدامة، ومقدار الإلمام بالمشاريع المحلية المندرجة تحت مبادرة التنمية المستدامة أو LA21، وعملية إشراك المعنيين في التخطيط، وبناء التحالف، والشفافية في العمل، والقرار الجماعي بالإجماع، والإنصاف والعدل، والشعور بالمسؤولية. وقد جمعت المعلومات باستخدام عينات مختارة بالطريقة العشوائية التطبيقية، ووظف في ذلك منهج التحليل الكمي والكيفي معاً. والفرضية الجارية هي أن الموظفين الذين لهم ارتباط بالتخطيط لبرنامج LA21 يكونون على وعي أكبر بهذا البرنامج من الموظفين غير المكلفين بالتخطيط. والاستجابة للمسح الذي قامت به الدراسة جيد حيث تم استعادة ما يقرب من 60% من الاستبانات الموزعة على العينات. وتتكون العينات المتناولة في المسح من مجموعتين: 55% من المسؤولين عن التخطيط و45% من غيرهم. أما من حيث مناصب الموظفين، فإن العينات تضم نواب المديرين، ومن دونهم من الموظفين في عشرة أقسام من بلدية كوالا لمبور الواقعة بشارع راج لاءوت. وأظهرت نتائج الدراسة تبايناً في مقدار الوعي بالمعايير السالفة الذكر لدى الموظفين. كما أظهرت عدداً من عوائق تحول دون تفعيل برنامج LA21 في إطار بلدية كوالا لمبور. وهذه العوائق هي قلة الخبرة، وشحة المعلومات، وقلة المراقبة والمتابعة، وضعف الصلة بالمؤسسات العالمية، والعمليات المعترف بها دولياً، وانحصار سلطة اتخاذ القرار في دائرة ضيقة. وبناء على ذلك، قدمت الدراسة عدداً من التوصيات لرفع مستوى الوعي والإدراك لدى الموظفين في بلدية كوالا لمبور. وقد قسمت هذه التوصيات إلى ثلاثة أصناف: مبادرات إدارية، وحملات التوعية، وممارسات جيدة في إدارة المدن.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Urban and Regional Planning.

.....
Mansor Ibrahim
Supervisor

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Badriyah Binti Zakaria

.....

Date

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AWARENESS AMONG LOCAL AUTHORITY OFFICERS TOWARDS
LOCAL AGENDA 21 (LA21):
CASE STUDY OF CITY HALL KUALA LUMPUR (DBKL)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBOs	Community Based Organisations
DBKL	City Hall Kuala Lumpur
EPU	Economic Planning Unit
ICLEI	International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives
JPBD	Town and Country Planning Department
LA21	Local Agenda 21
LESTARI	Institute of Environment and Development, UKM
MBSA	Shah Alam City Council
MDK	Kerian District Council
MDKS	Kuala Selangor District Council
MHLG	Ministry of Housing and Local Governments
MPK	Kuantan Municipal Council
MPM	Miri Municipal Council
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
PSKL 2020	Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2020
SD	Sustainable Development
SSDA21	Strategy for Sustainable Development and Agenda 21
UNCED	United Nations Conference for Environment and Development
UNDP	United Nations for Development Programmes
UNEP	United Nations for Environmental Programmes

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In 1992, 178 countries attended the Earth Summit, a United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro and adopted Agenda 21 as a Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development. This global action plan for the 21st century contains 40 chapters which outline all key human development and environmental areas of concern that can be grouped under four sections namely:

- i. Social and economic dimension,
- ii. Conservation and management of resources for development,
- iii. Strengthening the roles of major groups, and
- iv. Means of implementing Agenda 21.

Under section (iii) of “Strengthening the roles of major groups”, Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 called on local authorities in each country to undertake a consultative process with their residents to establish a local version of Agenda 21 for their communities. In short, this Local Agenda 21 or simply called LA21 is a programme aimed at promoting participation and forging partnerships between local authorities, communities and businesses in order to plan and then to act together on sustainable development issues that affect their lives.

Since the Earth Summit, there has been increasing awareness of the fundamental importance of local governments and their communities in responding to the sustainable development agenda (ICLEI, 2002). A survey undertaken by

International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) in preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 at Johannesburg showed that 6416 local authorities in 113 countries have either made a formal commitment to LA21 or are actively undertaking the process. Malaysia, in particular, being one of the countries who attended the Earth Summit started to implement its localizing Agenda 21 in the year 2000, eight years after the birth of Agenda 21. In year 2006, out of 144 local authorities in Malaysia established under Local Government Act 1976 (Act 171), only 47 local authorities are showing commitments towards implementing LA21. However, among those 47 local authorities, merely 16 local authorities have their action plans ready for implementations. Unfortunately, City Hall Kuala Lumpur (DBKL) being one of the powerful local authorities in Malaysia is not one of them.

There are a number of success stories from developed countries where Agenda 21 principles are implemented at both national and local levels, and where LA21 programmes are being developed such as in the United Kingdom and Europe. However, the idea of sustainable development and the principles of Agenda 21 are still not widely known by the public in all parts of the world. There are informed individuals in the NGO community and in other sectors, but in general there is still a great lack of knowledge and awareness on this issue (Dodds, 2002). This is in fact, one of the barriers towards the successful implementation of LA21. As mentioned by Dodds, it is rare to find people who are not directly connected to development programmes or environmental protection know about Agenda 21. This is because the idea of sustainability is not discussed in the mass media, nor included within the curricula of schools and universities. Thus, to apprehend this, Chapter 36: Education, Training and Public Awareness, a chapter of Agenda 21 meant to ensure that everyone in the community is aware of relevant issues in order to make informed choices,

leading to a behaviour which benefits the whole community through social, economic and environmental activity.

1.2 STATEMENTS OF PROBLEM

More than a decade has elapsed since heads of governments adopted Agenda 21 at the first Earth Summit. ANPED (2001), the Northern Alliance for Sustainability to the UN Commission on Sustainable Development reported that the most universal issue which creates barriers impeding the successful implementation of sustainable development stressed in Agenda 21 is a continuing lack of awareness at every level of the principles of sustainable development and the issues related to these principles. Thus, there is a clear and paramount need to tackle this lack of awareness towards Agenda 21. The report further clarified that any strategy to tackle the awareness gap needs to be based on good quality information, good access to that information and structures that permit the information to be put to use by local practitioners.

Victoria Elias in her article “Who is Aware of Agenda 21? Missing Conditions: Three Major Barriers” (Dodds, 2000), significantly mentioned that in general, low access to information and low awareness of sustainability issues are two of the major barriers creating a serious roadblock for implementing Agenda 21. Furthermore, **the awareness towards Agenda 21 is not only low among the general public, but sometimes even among officials.** It has been acknowledged that at the state level, in countries in transition, there are a number of officials who take little consideration of Agenda 21 and the principles of sustainable development. At the same time, a lack of information and knowledge is visible already at the next stage – in local and sub-regional government.

The outcomes of the consultation process and interviews done in the United Kingdom on the level of awareness among officers who directly involved in the LA21 process in eight identified areas showed very low level of awareness on LA21 process (Scottish Executive, 2005). There was a perception among officers there that LA21 is almost invisible, and that it is an internal function within the council. It was also reported that even the interviews with council officers there showed that the level of awareness was not particularly high, and overall there appears to be a lack of profile and transparency associated with the LA21 process.

Similarly, the result of the survey conducted on 25 representatives of top ranking officers from government agencies within the State of Selangor, Malaysia to reflect the view on their respective government policy as published in “Agenda 21 Selangor: Selangor’s Commitment to Sustainable Development” in 2000, showed that only 35% of the respondents demonstrated high degree of understanding and awareness on sustainable development (JPBD Selangor, 2000) and a high percentage of the respondents does not understand the contents of the agenda under sustainable development. This report proved that there is a low understanding and awareness on sustainable development among government officials, which in turn reflects the low level of awareness towards LA21.

Mary Pattenden, Director of Development for the ICLEI (<http://www.iclei.org>) quoted if local governments are to be successful in their efforts to implement LA21 processes, they will have to overcome local barriers to success. One of the barriers mentioned is the lack of general understanding of sustainable development principles and process by local elected officials, staff, and stakeholders in the community.

From the afore-mentioned issues, it can be generally said that there is a low level of awareness among officials or officers in local governments on sustainable

development and LA21 process. This lack of awareness would jeopardize the successful implementation of LA21 or vice versa. Once the agendas of sustainable development as been encapsulated in LA21 are understood, most people will act responsibly and make sincere efforts to promote sustainable behaviour because commitment comes through awareness and understanding. Accordingly, the local authorities can translate their visions and commitments into meaningful and actionable policies and programmes.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

Based on the issues raised in the statements of problem, the aim of the study is to evaluate the level of awareness towards LA21 among officers in the local authority.

Hence, to achieve this, several objectives are formulated as following:

- i. To identify the suitable criteria in assessing the level of awareness and understanding among officers in the local authority towards LA21
- ii. To assess the extent of awareness and understanding of the local authority officers towards LA21
- iii. To highlight the challenges or constraints impeding the development of LA21 in the local authority
- iv. To outline some recommendations in order to raise the level of awareness on LA21 among the local authority officers

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the objectives of the study, a few research questions have been identified as the following:

- i. What are the criteria/attributes needed to assess the awareness and understanding towards LA21?
- ii. What is the level of awareness and understanding among local authority officers towards LA21?
- iii. What are the challenges or major constraints impeding the development of LA21 in the local authority?
- iv. What are the possible solutions for the local authority to raise the level of awareness on LA21 among its officers?

1.5 DBKL AS A CASE STUDY

The rationale of selecting DBKL as a case study is due to its Vision to make Kuala Lumpur ‘**A World-Class City**’ that benefits its people, entrepreneurs, businessmen and visitors (PSKL 2020, 2004). The vision of ‘A World-Class City’ encapsulates the ambition to make Kuala Lumpur a city that will assume a major global and sub-global role for the benefit of all its inhabitants, workers, visitors and investors. Thus, Kuala Lumpur strives to improve the quality of living as well as working and business environments.

In order to achieve all these, good city governance is important. This is in-line with one of the development vision for Kuala Lumpur which is ‘A World-Class City Governance’. As claimed by DBKL, a world-class city governance is necessary to ensure all the ingredients that go to make up a world-class city are provided, sustained and continuously upgraded so as to keep pace with the best in the world.

Recently in June 2006, DBKL has set-up its committee for the preparation of LA21 Action Plans within Kuala Lumpur. As the level of governance closest to the people, DBKL shall play a vital role in educating, mobilizing and responding to the

public to promote sustainable development. As of year 2006, DBKL and in conjunction with other 46 local authorities under the directive of Ministry of Housing and Local Governments (MHLG) are committed to implement LA21 under the LA21 Phase 2 Programme. However, DBKL is yet to prepare its action plans for LA21. It is appropriate to evaluate the awareness of its officers towards LA21 since DBKL is going to embark on LA21. Local authority officers are the ones who promulgate city laws, maintain the rule of city laws, regulate social-economic standards, develop social and physical infrastructure, ensure social safety nets, civic protection and inclusionary measures to help mainstream and marginalized, the disadvantaged and excluded in the city (Yap & Chatterjee, 2004). In order to follow through with local governance programmes such as the preparation of action plans for LA21 Programmes in this case, DBKL's officers should have the required level of competence towards concepts and underlying principles of LA21. Hence, it is hoped that this study will help chart the direction for the DBKL towards the successful implementation of LA21 in Kuala Lumpur.

1.6 SCOPE OF STUDY

The study will focus on several important aspects regarding LA21. However, the main focus is related to the awareness and understanding among the local authority officers towards sustainable development and the underlying concept and principles of LA21. The underlying concept and principles of LA21 is that it emphasizes on developing partnerships and promoting participation while striving towards sustainable development. The participatory process allows for inclusive decision making which is the heart of good urban governance (Lewis & Mioch, 2005). This study will look into the meaning of sustainable development and the sets of identified