

# Riding towards a greener campus

## Beverage brand and varsity celebrate successful recycling project

COCA-Cola Malaysia and one of the country's largest and greenest universities – Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) – got together in 2013 to create a fun, unique project that encouraged students to recycle and reduce carbon emission while adopting an active lifestyle.

Since then, it has acted as a catalyst to propel UPM towards becoming an even greener campus with some 7,000 bicycles now owned by the students through an instalment payment scheme.

Named "Recycle to Cycle" or R2C, it was the first of its kind in Malaysia and encouraged students to recycle PET bottles and aluminium cans in exchange for bicycle transport on campus while fostering the behaviour of an active lifestyle incorporated easily into their daily activities.

Students participated in the programme by recycling empty PET bottles and aluminium cans, which can be exchanged for the use of bicycles and safety helmets.

Proceeds from the sale of the PET bottles and aluminium to a recycling centre will be reinvested into the programme to make it sustainable.

To get things going in 2013, UPM received a US\$250,000 (RM1.06mil) grant from The Coca-Cola Foundation with the funds to be used towards the bicycles and equipment,

recycling centres, project material and overall running of the project.

Now, after almost three years, the project has been successful in contributing to UPM's efforts of becoming a green campus by helping to reduce the use of private motor vehicles and increasing the use of the lanes created for cyclists when the R2C programme was launched.

The original fleet of 200 bicycles is still available for lease via the recycling mechanics, managed by UPM's Department of Biology, which is headed by Prof Dr Ahmad Ismail.

"Seeing UPM turn into a green campus and the success of the R2C programme as part of that transformation is very heartening.

"Today's event is a celebration of that success, and we look forward to more collaborations such as this that will help the environment and reduce mankind's impact on it," said Coca-Cola Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei Region general manager for The Coca-Cola Company Gill McLaren.

"We are very proud to be part of UPM's efforts to become the nation's greenest campus and especially to see it in done in a way that also promotes physical exercise," added McLaren.



The cyclists being flagged off by Dr Mohd Ali and Prof Datuk Dr Mohd Fauzi. McLaren is on the far right.

The next phase of R2C will see recycling and emissions reduction efforts intensified with the launch of the "Red Cube", an environmentally-friendly building funded from the initial grant from by The Coca-Cola Company.

The "Red Cube" features a self-sustaining rainwater harvesting system that provides water that flows continuously over the roof to cool the building along with fans and exhaust vents.

Other design elements that keep the building green include specially designed windows for circulation that take advantage of the natural air flow that will later be complemented by plants outside these windows to cool down the air and fully solar powered lights, fans and exhaust.

It does not consume any electricity and can be used as a student activity centre, with a capacity for 50 people in its flexible interior space.

Following the introduction of the R2C campaign, UPM has reduced number of buses on

campus and the existing buses are now powered by NGV.

UPM also encourages the students to use bicycles or walk to academic zones and a special scheme has been introduced to help students own their own bicycles through a collaboration with the UPM Cooperative (KUPUTRA).

UPM has also reorganised the student accommodation so that they stay in colleges closer to their faculty, and has provided covered walkways for pedestrians from colleges to the academic zones and between faculties.

"As a green campus, we are pleased with the outcome of the R2C activities that have contributed to reducing carbon emissions. We are very serious about having a green campus and this is another positive step forward," said UPM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Mohd Fauzi Ramlan.

The event was launched by Natural Resources and Environment Ministry deputy secretary-general (Natural Resources) Datuk Dr Mohd Ali Mohamad Nor.