

## UK-MUC NEWSLETTER SPECIAL ISSUE: Inaugural Student Conference 2023

Welcome and Selamat Datang to this special issue of the UK-MUC newsletter, featuring our Inaugural Student Conference held in July 2023 plus two new opportunities from the British Council exclusively for UK-MUC Members.

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### OPEN FUNDING CALL: UK-Malaysia Partnership Grant for Student Mobility 2023

Building on the learnings and success of the UK-Malaysia University Consortium's inaugural Student Conference themed "*Intercultural Perspectives on Sustainable Development and Equality in Higher Education*", the British Council is delighted to publish a restricted grant call for UK and Malaysia higher education institutions who are members of the Consortium to submit joint proposals in response to the UK-Malaysia Going Global Partnerships Grant for Student Mobility 2023.

#### What funding is available?

A total grant value of GBP90,000 has been allocated to support three higher education collaborative projects (GBP30,000 each) between the UK and Malaysia Consortium member institutions for developing innovative and sustainable student mobility initiatives

that enhance student outcomes and competencies for participants from the UK and Malaysia.

#### Who can apply?

**This is a restricted grant call** for higher education institutions which are part of the UK-Malaysia University Consortium to submit joint proposals for developing innovative and sustainable student mobility initiatives between the UK and Malaysia.

#### What is the focus?

The overarching objective of UK-Malaysia Going Global Partnerships Grant for Student Mobility 2023 is to support lead institutions from the UK and Malaysia to develop innovative and sustainable student mobility initiatives. The initiative(s) should include activities that combine both virtual and physical mobility components, and address the following objectives:

1. Develop transdisciplinary mobility modules that provide students with opportunities for Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), cultural exchange and research-based learning, with the objective of tackling specific challenges (e.g., those linked to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals or other societal challenges identified by the institutions).
2. Develop strong links with industry partners in the region which would lead to opportunities for UK students to grow their understanding of Malaysia and the South East Asian Region through initiatives such as internships opportunities and work-based learning. The ultimate aim is to develop a cohort of UK students who are more 'Asian-literate.'
3. Devise a flexible mobility approach that is open to students from various study disciplines and at any level (bachelor, master and doctoral levels), as well as accessible to those from diverse backgrounds and circumstances.
4. Strengthen capacity in developing mobility initiatives in higher education institutions and share best practices for embedding student mobility sustainably within the curriculum to enhance student outcomes and competencies.

## How to apply

[Click here to find out more and download all the required documents:](#)

Submit your completed application and other requested documents via this [clickable email link](#)

**The deadline is 29 September 2023 at 23:59 UK time.**



## The Bidding For The GREAT Scholarships 2024 Is Open Now!

All UK-MUC Members based in the UK are invited to submit a bid as a partner institution for the GREAT Scholarships 2024 and to offer postgraduate scholarships next year, with Malaysia as a top priority.

In 2023, the GREAT Scholarships programme was an essential vehicle of the Study UK campaign, offering two hundred scholarships in partnership with forty-nine higher education institutions (HEIs) across the UK. The scholarships were promoted through social media channels and a paid search campaign, generating over 4.4 million clicks to the Study UK's GREAT Scholarships pages and over 321,000 clicks to UK HEI websites.

The GREAT Scholarships are jointly funded by the UK government's GREAT Britain Campaign and the British Council with participating UK higher education institutions. British Council MY is keen that with support from our UK Consortium Members, we can offer these post-graduate scholarships to more Malaysian students from our member universities and beyond!

The deadline for submitting the bidding form is **4th September 2023**.

UK institutions interested in this opportunity are requested to complete the online via this [link](#).

For further information, please [email](#) Nataliya Khrushch

## Benefits for Member Universities

This initiative will provide a great opportunity for UK higher education institutions to raise their profiles and increase exposure in the scholarship markets.

In addition, the British Council will bring:

- experience of managing the GREAT scholarships and working with funding partners
- a strong alumni engagement element to a scholarship programme, leveraging the potential of the existing Study UK Alumni Awards and other alumni activity
- a proven track record with other scholarship programmes.

All scholarships that are funded under this initiative will be named as '**GREAT – [X University] Scholarship – [Country Name] 2024**' and will be promoted in integrated marketing campaigns running in the scholarship markets for six months from October 2023 to March 2024.

The campaign will cover:

- Global online marketing activities - GREAT Scholarships page on Study UK website; paid advertising; social media and email newsletter
- National marketing campaigns in the scholarship markets from autumn 2023
- Offline marketing activities and events that the British Council plans for these markets from autumn 2023, including education exhibitions, education agent workshops and regional digital campaigns.

The British Council will work with participating HEIs and use both digital and print media channels to ensure all scholarship opportunities are effectively promoted to target students.

All participating HEIs are expected to further promote the scholarship opportunities through their own channels.

## Timeline

**4 September 2023:** Deadline for submission

**11 September 2023:** Bidding institutions informed of results.

**29 September 2023:** Institutions to confirm scholarships details and promotional content.

**October 2023:** Production of campaign promotional materials and landing pages

**23 October 2023:** Launch of the GREAT Scholarships campaign 2024.

**January and February 2024:** Grant agreements signed.

**February and March 2024:** Grant funding issued by British Council

**30 June 2024:** Scholarships issued for the 2024 autumn intake.

**June 2024:** Provision of contact details and consent for contacts to be contacted for pre-departure services, alumni engagement, evaluation and impact assessment from participating institutions.

### UK-MUC Inaugural Student Conference: 17 to 21 July 2023, Malaysia



In July 2023, over eighty students from the UK and Malaysia came together in the magnificent capital city of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur over five days to discuss issues and identify solutions based around United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and Equality in Higher Education via a mixture of guest lectures, hands on workshops and cultural activities. Simultaneously, UK-MUC Members participated in a full day Research Networking Workshop, a Sustainability Forum, a face-to-face Project Board meeting plus other activities and informal networking opportunities.

*"We arrived in Kuala Lumpur and were greeted so warmly by the friendly University Malaya student representatives. The opening ceremony was truly special as we were gifted with beautiful Batik textiles and Bunga Telur, traditional tokens of fertility given at weddings.*

*From there, it was all about collaborative work, discussing UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in our COIL groups. It was eye-opening to see how different perspectives can shape solutions for a better future.*

*Later, we had a thought-provoking well-being session, delving into the cultural nuances of mental health in the UK and Malaysia.*

*And as if that wasn't enough, we got to explore the iconic KL twin towers and enjoy a magical water fountain show at night".*

*Gabriella, University of Gloucestershire*

**June and July 2024:** British Council contact scholars and invite them to pre-departure briefings.

**September 2024:** Commencement of programmes

### COIL Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Challenge, ESD and Reflective Learning: Associate Prof. Dr. Wan Zuhainis Saad (UPM)

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) aims to:

- Prepare young people to meet the challenges of the 21st century
- Promote global citizenship
- Promote sustainability competence
- Foster critical thinking and innovations
- Help students understand and value the importance of sustainability

#### Introduction to COIL

- Globally networked learning and virtual exchange
- A teaching and learning paradigm that promotes the development of intercultural competence across shared multicultural learning environments.
- Through Internet-based tools and innovative online pedagogies exchanges between university-level teachers and students with peers in geographically distant locations and from different linguacultural backgrounds

#### Benefits to Students

- Specifically designed to link students who have different cultural and geophysical perspectives and experiences.
- Engages students in learning course content both through their own unique cultural lens and also by exchanging their cultural and experiential lenses as they move through the learning material together.
- Students reflect with each other, partnering instructors will be facilitating a cross-cultural dialogue that brings a global dimension to course content.

Reflective learning is a crucial aspect of a university education, both in the UK and Malaysia. It involves critically analysing one's experiences, connecting theory with practice, and learning from mistakes. By reflecting on what we have learned, we can enhance our

understanding and develop new perspectives. The COIL SDG challenge led by Prof. Madya Dr. Wan Zuhainis Binti Saad, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) encouraged students to apply what they learnt in class and translate it into innovation ideas to solve current problems.



Through this experiential learning, students developed diverse skill sets including analytical thinking, problem solving and sense making.

In groups, students:

- Identified real-life issues related to 21st Century Global Challenges.
- Proposed solutions to solve the issues.
- Included specific SDG goals to be achieved.
- Developed a mock-up on the proposed prototype and pitch solutions to a judging panel.
- Worked collaboratively and trans-disciplinary.



### **Buddy Scheme and Intercultural Communication: Associate Prof. Dr. Abdul Latiff Bin Ahmad (UKM)**

Intercultural communication plays a pivotal role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by fostering global understanding and collaboration

among diverse cultures. Specifically, it facilitates the exchange of ideas, knowledge and perspectives essential for addressing cross-cultural challenges such as poverty, gender inequality, and environmental degradation. By understanding diverse perspectives and fostering open dialogue, students worked collectively towards achieving the SDGs.



*"The Buddy programme organised by Abdul Latiff Ahmad was a dynamic and immersive chance for us to relax into a new context and connect deeply with students from different backgrounds."*

*"It allowed me to value the power that intercultural exchanges have in enhancing cultural understanding and the importance of going beyond our differences to work collaboratively towards a common goal."*

*Lara, Bournemouth University*

*"The conference offered remarkable insights through its panel sessions and sharing. It was inspiring to hear from experts and passionate individuals working towards positive change in various fields. We've returned with a wealth of knowledge and fresh perspectives."*

*"Above all, the connections made were the true gems of the event. I'm grateful to have met and befriended so many like-minded young people from different backgrounds. The power of unity and shared dreams was evident throughout the conference!"*

*Cathryn, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)*

## Global Culture Poster Competition

Students collaborated to craft a poster called Global Culture, engaging in asynchronous teamwork as they coordinated with their peers and allowed their imaginations to run wild while crafting their own designs. The finished poster was DIN AO size (841 x 1189mm), in a vertical PDF format with pictures in CMYK colour scale with a resolution of at least 150 dpi, and they had one week to complete the task. Ten of the posters were selected to be presented in person at the Closing Ceremony on Friday, July 21st, with exclusive medals presented for the best design.



## Student Wellbeing Sessions

### Five Ways to Wellbeing: Alex Lacey, Study Abroad Coordinator (UCLan)

This session concentrated on the five methods to a thriving lifestyle and discussed on how students can embed these five practices in their daily life, which began with ten minutes of mindfulness that helped students to relax. They then explored how students in the UK and Malaysia comprehend mental health, which was followed by a lively debate on how the two distinct cultures perceive it. The session also looked at different psychological wellness conditions, the methods to discern if someone is affected by these conditions and

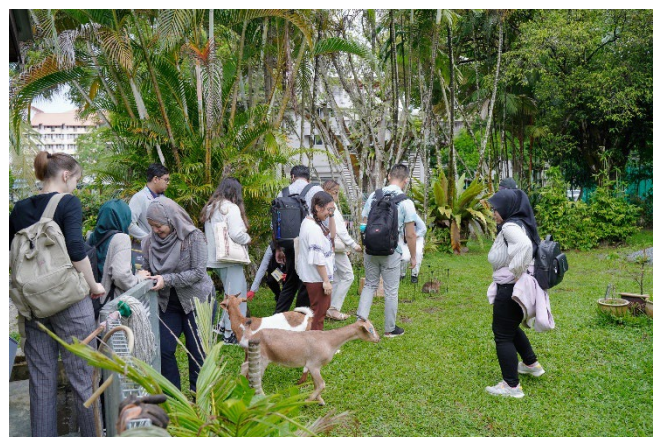
the techniques to lend assistance. There were lots of opportunities for interactive dialogues, group projects and students were able to speak openly about individual encounters in a safe space and they particularly loved the wellbeing bingo!



## Tai Chi

Taijiquan, commonly known as Tai Chi, is a Chinese martial art that is believed to have originated thousands of years ago. Drawing its name from the ancient Chinese philosophy of understanding theories of boxing, Tai Chi involves a series of slow and purposeful movements that both improve physical and mental well-being. Practitioners of this art often describe it as a kind of “moving meditation” as they are required to stay mindful and follow the internal rhythms of their bodies. Currently, five main schools of Tai Chi have been preserved, the Chen style, the Yang style, the Wu(吴) style, the Wu(武) style and the Sun style. The Chen style is the oldest and most well-known, focusing on the principles of softness, agility, slowness and versatility which has allowed it to become popular amongst many.

## Visit to UM Mini Farm



On Thursday morning, student delegates visited the UM Mini Farm for a getaway from the daily routine and immersed themselves in nature! The farm offers a unique experience where enjoy various activities and interact with adorable animals can be enjoyed.

There was a farm tour to five checkpoints, featuring fish, chicken, goats, sheep and rabbits and the delightful opportunity to feed the animals. As well as the mini petting zoo, where they played with the fluffy rabbits and charming kid goat trio, Jockey, Milah, and Tompok!

The UM Mini Farm is managed by the Institute of Biological Science, Faculty of Science in collaboration with student volunteers from the Biotech Club.

### **Mindfulness and Multiculturalism: Guest Speaker, Associate Prof. Dr. Vishalache Balakrishnan**

Associate Professor Vishalache Balakrishnan's guest lecture focused on the relationship between mindfulness and multiculturalism. It highlighted the importance of self-compassion and how it is frequently overlooked in many cultures. Studies have demonstrated that adolescents with more self-compassion are more willing to challenge themselves and strive for growth. This lecture discussed the essential tools of self-compassion and how it enables us to take positive steps towards changing the aspects of ourselves that we dislike. Ultimately, it provided valuable insights on how understanding self-compassion and multiculturalism can help people maintain a healthy lifestyle balance.

#### **About Dr. Visha**

Currently Dr. Visha Coordinator of Service Learning Malaysia-University for Society (SULAM) is an innovative idea to bring higher education students towards society and help improve their life in every aspect, which she's been initiating in line with SDG203: Pillar 17 focussing on global partnership for sustainable development for over 10 years. Service learning is a strategy that integrates meaningful experience, teaches civic responsibility and strengthens communities. The Ministry of Education (MOE) Malaysia has included service learning as one of the requirements for university students to undergo before they pass out as full-fledged graduates.

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*"Being a Malaysian, I felt proud to share my country's rich cultural heritage with the international participants. During cultural immersion activities, we introduced the UK students to various aspects of Malaysian culture. Witnessing their enthusiasm and willingness to learn about our traditions was heart-warming. It reinforced the significance of preserving and celebrating our unique cultural identities."*

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*Ammar, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)*

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## **Cultural Activities Programme**

### **1) Batik Painting**



Batik is an art to decorate cloth with wax as resist method an inherent part of Malaysian identity. Derived from the Javanese words, amba (to write) and titik (dot), batik is an old form of art which loosely translated means to dot or wax writing or drawing with a broken line. Batik is a crafted fabric that needs to undergo the delicate and repeated process of waxing, dyeing and boiling. Wax is used as a mean of colour blocking in the colouring process, whereby every part of the fabric that remains untouched by a certain colour has to be covered with wax.

### **2) Chinese Calligraphy**



Chinese calligraphy is the stylized artistic writing of Chinese characters and the written form of Chinese that unites the languages (many mutually unintelligible) spoken in China. It's an ancient art of writing that evolved from Oracle bone inscriptions, Chinese bronze inscriptions to Seal script and Clerical script, to cursive script, regular script, and running script that were finalized in the Eastern Han, Wei, and Jin Dynasties. Chinese calligraphy is an original art of expression created by the Han nationality and is known as poetry without words, dance without lines, painting without pictures, music without sound. Chinese characters are an important factor in Chinese calligraphy and relying on these is the main symbol that distinguishes Chinese calligraphy from other types of calligraphy.

### 3) Malay Dance: Joget

Joget is a traditional Malay dance that originated in Malacca during the colonial era, and it was influenced by the Portuguese dance of Branyo. One of the most popular types of Joget is called "*Joget Lambak*", which is usually performed by a large crowd together in social functions. With its infectious rhythm, vibrant movements and joyful atmosphere, Joget has become synonymous with celebrations and festive occasions throughout the country. Costumes for Joget vary but they usually feature colourful attire with traditional elements, reflecting the cultural diversity of Malaysia.



### 4) Malay Dance: Zapin

Zapin is a traditional dance form that holds deep cultural significance in Malaysia. Known for its gracefulness, rhythmic movements and vibrant music. Zapin has captivated audiences for centuries, becoming an integral part of Malaysia's cultural heritage. It is believed to have influence from Middle East culture and was performed exclusively for religious ceremonies but over the years it has become a form of traditional entertainment and the participation of female dancers is allowed. There are more than twenty types of Zapin around Nusantara regions especially Malaysia and the dancers often wear colourful traditional costumes, such as the baju Melayu for men and baju kurung for women, adorned with intricate embroidery and accessories. Zapin stands as a testament to Malaysia's multicultural identity and the vitality of its traditional arts. It continues to enchant and inspire with its graceful movements, captivating music and profound cultural significance, serving as a bridge between the past and present and is a source of pride for many Malaysian people.

### Visit to the British Council Offices, Kuala Lumpur (KL)

We were warmly welcomed at the British Council offices in KL, where our hosts curated two distinctive sessions for each group of students. Students from the UK met

several Brits in Malaysia to understand the challenges and opportunities of working and living in the country. We thank Tom Shepherd, Political Counsellor at UK in Malaysia, Martin R Haeger MBE, Director of HL Design Group AND Professor Sarah Metcalfe, Interim Provost and CEO of UM for being part of the panel. The students from Malaysian universities learned about post-graduate options in the UK and the post-graduate pathways through alumni sharing. We thank British Council Alumni UK member Ooi Suan Kim, who is a Barrister, Advocate and Solicitor of the High Court of Malaya for sharing about her experience studying in the UK with the participants.



*"This experience has truly been life-changing, and I am deeply grateful for the opportunities, knowledge, and connections it has provided. I leave the conference with a strengthened resolve to continue striving for a sustainable and equitable future."*

*Malak, University of Central Lancashire*

*"The conference reminded me of the power of unity in addressing global challenges. By embracing cultural diversity and working together toward sustainable goals, we can create a more inclusive and harmonious world."*

*Ammar, Universiti Putra Malaysia*

## Research Networking and Sustainability Workshop

### *'Sustaining the Research Network Beyond the Consortium: Developing a Strategy for Long-Term Success'*

Thirty-five UK-MUC Members participated in the workshop led by Dr. Hsiao Wei and Prof. Yatimah on 18 July 2023 at Universiti Malaysia (UM). The workshop aimed to share experiences in international collaboration, identify effective strategies and develop a concrete action plan for sustaining the UK-MUC research network beyond the end of the consortium. The objective was to provide participants with the opportunity to discuss potential challenges and opportunities, identify best practices and develop a sustainable plan that ensures long-term success. Presentations were given by Professor Jin Wang, LJMU and Dr. Ruffin Relja, Senior Lecturer In Marketing, Gloucestershire Business School, University of Gloucester. Participants formed four groups to discuss strategies for sustaining UK-MUC beyond the end of the current Consortium funding period (March 2024) and to formulate an Action Plan to implement the strategies.

### **Main Workshop Outputs: Creating and using synergy including key goal(s) and objective(s) to formulate new partnerships or research programmes for International Research Collaboration (IRC):**

- Platforms to meet & discuss.
  - Organize International conferences, webinars, Sharing sessions to meet and interact face to face (f2f) to generate trust and understanding.
- Finding the right partners
  - More events such as TED talk, PPRN coordination, pitching sessions to gain visibility.
  - Create a research cloud to enable research data sharing.
  - Connected by mutual research area (conference, publication), goal & aims (form a team for research projects, varying area)
  - Focus of the strength of each partner
- Cultivate broader mindset through entrepreneurship education.
  - Promote trans-disciplinary mindset among early/young researchers.

- Supervisory supports (Postgrad/Postdoc)
  - Initiate collaborations earlier.
  - Possibilities of research internship/attachment programme at other University or Collaborator
- Activity & initiatives among Ministry/University targeting to funding and initiating platforms such as UK-MUC.
  - Improve the visibility of the field experts and researchers between the universities by providing informative university websites.
  - Offer of matching grant to initiate research collaborations.
  - Staff/student exchange program
- Expedite the MoU/MoA process or having an intermediate process that can help initiation of grant application.
- Cultivate the mindset to include service learning.
  - How to contribute to society?
  - Entrepreneurship/Techno-preneurship is taught but not applied.
- Strategy to synergize and sustain collaborations and partnerships:
- Understanding, trust and mutual benefits - Complimentary but equal & define role in responsibility.
- Transparency, data sharing & inclusive decision-making.
- Celebrate the Success!





## UM Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Mobility Program



Fifteen students from Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) participated in this two-week programme held from 24 July 2023 to 4 August 2023. The programme covered a wide range of sustainability topics, including an introduction to the Sustainability@UM, Regional Centre of Expertise on ESD, EcoCampus living labs, citizen science and actual sustainability intervention in different contexts.



The programme aims for participants to:

- Gain exposure to intellectual exchange and better understand the localization of ESD in Malaysia from the experience of Universiti Malaya.
- Foster networking among international participants and local communities while exploring future engagement opportunities in various forms.
- Better understand the fundamental sustainability knowledge (both theory and practical) on Education for Sustainable Development.

Learn the uniqueness of sustainability practices in Malaysia through the localization of the sustainable development agenda.

[Click to visit the website](#)

## University of Surrey and Animal Neighbours Project (ANP) Summer Programme



Over four weeks in July and August 2023, students from the University of Surrey participated in this annual programme, which provides the opportunity to work with ANP in Malaysia on urban wildlife coexistence. They explored field sites, worked on creating awareness and visited Malaysia's attractions. On the last day of the programme, the students had a panel session hosted by the British Council Malaysia with Mr Andrew Diamond and Mrs Sylvia Vu, who shared their insights on the Malaysian-UK relationship and their personal experiences of living in Malaysia.

ANP is a community-based project initiated by Dr. Sharmini Julita Paramasivam. The project focuses on educating people about harmoniously coexisting with wildlife and mitigating human-wildlife conflict in urban areas. ANP became an official project at the University of Surrey's School of Veterinary Medicine in 2016, continuing to research and advocate in Malaysia while expanding its education programmes in the UK on responsible tourism and wildlife appreciation. The project is always open to forging new collaborations to further research and educate on this topic.

[Click to visit the website](#)

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