

From Simon Pugh Jones of Writhlington School UK

We would like to introduce you to the MRSM, SARORSO, Mendip, Writhlington Orchid Project.

The project partners are:

MRSM School, Kuching, Sarawak

Sarawak Orchid Society

Mendip and Writhlington Schools, UK.

The project aims to develop orchid conservation and education in Sarawak by linking local schools in Sarawak with Writhlington and Mendip Schools in the UK where students have developed internationally recognised expertise in orchid propagation, science, conservation and orchid education over the past thirty years. The project also links the schools to the local community and support through the Sarawak Orchid Society.

In July 2019 the first team of students from the UK travelled to Sarawak to set up and commission an orchid propagation laboratory at MRSM School, Kuching. The UK students specified, ordered and delivered the laboratory as well as training MRSM students in basic laboratory techniques including media making, seed sowing and relating seedlings.

The team of MRSM students then presented their learning at the Asia Pacific Orchid Congress (Kuching) to show propagation techniques and highlight efforts for orchid conservation in Sarawak.

They presented the aims for the projects as:

- To set up Sarawak's first orchid propagation laboratory
- To develop orchid propagation skills
- To propagate Sarawak orchid species from seed in-vitro
- To develop research skills and experimental skills to support the effectiveness of the project.
- To conserve the orchid species of Sarawak
- To share knowledge and experience for the benefit of the community
- To enhance science and conservation education in schools
- To develop innovative ex-situ conservation initiatives in the community
- To develop a model that can be shared with other communities
- To recognise the potential and empower young people in Sarawak to become the leaders in conservation in the future
- To develop transferable skills for future careers in biotechnology and related industries

In October 2019 a group of 12 students travelled from Mendip/Writhlington to Sarawak (aged 14-16) and each delivered a workshop on orchids, botany, field techniques, threats to biodiversity, propagation techniques, deflasking etc, to the now larger student group at MRSM school.

Real progress is being made in the MRSM laboratory, in the new MRSM shade house, and in developing a growing community interest in Sarawak Orchids and their conservation.

Pulihara bunga orkid



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KUCHING: Projek pemuliharaan orkid pertama yang diusahakan oleh Projek Kelab Orkid mendapat sambutan menggalakkan terutama dalam usaha memelihara dan mempelajari lebih mendalam akan jenis orkid di negeri ini.

Projek usaha sama pelajar MRSM dan Sekolah Writhlington itu diperkenalkan pada Julai selepas pengasasnya Tengku Auvaroz Tengku Abraham menghadiri persidangan orkid di Paris.

"Di sana, saya menjumpai beberapa spesies orkid yang hampir pupus di Sarawak. Malah, saya menemui beberapa pelajar Sekolah Writhlington yang menjalankan projek memelihara orkid

tersebut," katanya. Kongsinya lagi, beliau bertanya kenapa pelajar berkenaan kaedah yang digunakan untuk menjaga orkid tersebut.

"Lebih mengejutkan, mereka berjaya menghasilkan orkid orkid itu hanya daripada biji benih yang dibeli.

"Setelah segala usaha untuk menjaga dan membesarkannya, mereka berjaya menghasilkan lebih banyak orkid melalui biji benih tersebut," katanya.

Terlintas dalam fikiran Tengku Auvaroz untuk membawa idea tersebut dan diilaksanakan di Sarawak.

"Saya berfikir, jika pelajar tersebut mampu melakukannya, sudah pasti pelajar kita juga dapat menyukseskan projek tersebut.

"Secara tidak langsung, kita juga dapat membantu untuk meningkatkan ekosistem di negara kita.

"Paling penting, kita turut dapat menambah baik orkid-orkid yang terdapat di Sarawak agar tidak pupus," jelasnya.

Berikat usaha Dr Simon Pugh bersama-sama pelajarinya dari Sekolah Writhlington, projek itu berjaya membantu memelihara dan memulihara orkid di negeri ini. Tambah Tengku Auvaroz, Dr



MILIK KITA... Pelajar MRSM Kuching dan pelajar Writhlington bertukar-tukar pandangan dan hasil carian mengenai pemuliharaan orkid sambil diperhatikan oleh Dr. Simon Pugh-Jones dan Tengku Auvaroz Tengku Abraham. Foto SWRAMIDI SUBARI

Simon membawa pelajar-pelajarinya untuk mengajar pelajar MRSM akan kaedah penjagaan orkid.

"Projek ini mampu memberi banyak manfaat kepada kita. Kerjasama antara kedua-dua belah pihak mampu menjaga ekosistem demi masa hadapan.

"Tanpa orkid, ekosistem kita

mampu terjejas kerana ia merupakan jenis tumbuhan terbanyak di Sarawak," ujarnya.

Menurut Dr Simon, projek ini telah diusahakan selama 30 tahun di United Kingdom.

"Detik permulaan yang menggalakkan adalah pada tahun 1994 dengan kejayaan menghasilkan

orkid daripada biji benih.

"Projek ini amat penting demi menjaga tumbuhan orkid di Sarawak agar tidak pupus.

"Justeru, kami dengan rela hati berkongsi ilmu bersama-sama agar dapat menjaga tumbuhan ini demi kepentingan bersama," katanya.

I attach posters designed by the MRSM students and used to share their learning with the rest of the school cohort through a very enjoyable expo event which was also attended by the public. The next steps for the project are exciting, challenging and we hope will make a significant difference to Sarawak awareness of orchid conservation and education by engaging with the wider school community and through school communities, the wider community in Sarawak.

1. Embed the MRSM, SARORSO laboratory and ensure success in producing sustainable orchid seedlings for education and conservation.
2. To apply to the authorities to involve other schools in other communities, to work with the sustainable plants being raised at MRSM School, develop educational materials linked to the science curriculum and focused on the importance of biodiversity conservation, and broaden the range of orchid science and conservation activities taking place.
3. Embark on experimental reintroductions of sustainable orchids to cultural centres and oil palm areas with a view to enhancing biodiversity in areas where the forest has been lost and provide a positive model for environmental enhancement

In practical terms the project is coordinated by Simon Pugh-Jones (Teacher and lead of the Writhlington. Mendip orchid Project and Tengku Auvaroz Tengku Abraham, founder of the Sarawak Orchid Society.

The schools involved are not for privileged students. Writhlington and Mendip Schools are UK state comprehensives serving the communities of Radstock and the surrounding villages in South West England. MRSM school, Kuching, is a charitable school providing a specialist Science curriculum to mainly underprivileged students with identified p[potential in science)