How can Heritage assist People to enhance "Living Together"?

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Abstract

According to Watson and Waterton (2010), in some places, heritage is very strongly linked with leisure activity, something that emerges of the spheres of education and leisure. Most community heritage engagement will take place within that segment of the personal daily schedule that is dedicated to non-work activity and recreation, which is not, of course, to diminish its social and cultural significance. In other locations, community engagement with heritage is more overtly linked with cultural distinctiveness, identity and nationalism, or exists as an articulation of ancestral links with important places, traditions and narratives. Therefore, the aim is to respond to the diversity that is apparent in forms of engagement around the world. Two projects have been selected to reflect on the nature of community engagement as characteristic of contemporary heritage practice.
Thus, this paper examines the possibility of using heritage as a tool to bring people of different races and age groups together with the purpose to collaborate effectively for the benefit of the conservation of heritage. Two own projects are elaborated on their objectives, challenges and problem resolving.

(179 words)

Key Words: Heritage; community engagement; education; lifelong learning

Introduction

Community projects present a practical instrument to supplement (cultural) heritage projects and to support the preservation and use of (cultural) heritage applying community driven development (CDD) approaches. They are bearing good opportunities to bring people together and enhance 'Living Together'.

Definition of Terms used in this Article

Culture is "the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and it encompasses in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, *ways of living together*, value systems, traditions and beliefs." (Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity adopted by the United Nations Economics, Social and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 2002).

Cultural Heritage is "the legacy of physical artifacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations. Cultural heritage manifests itself in diverse forms, from mega-structures like pyramids, medieval cities, monastic complexes and museums, to languages and dialects, songs, art, folk stories, customs, practices and dances." (Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity adopted by the United Nations Economics, Social and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 2002).

Among other things culture is a resource for economic and social development. It is possible for communities to generate income from cultural heritage and this creates employment, promotes tourism, stimulates micro enterprise development, fosters private investment and can reduce poverty. Cultural heritage tourism is a fast growing segment of the tourism industry, creating and sustaining jobs including opportunities for marginalized groups. It also strengthens social networks and cohesion as groups come together for a collective purpose.

The appreciation of people's own culture and heritage has important impacts on social development. Investment in cultural heritage can increase the awareness of a community's own identity, boost confidence and can be a factor in social mobilization and empowerment. Appreciation of cultural heritage may promote inclusion and complement capacity building; sense of local ownership and economic incentives also encourage good governance practice.

In this context, two projects from Malaysia are here presented:
1.   A German Heritage Trail in Penang/Malaysia and
2.   A Botanika Volunteer-Guide Programme (BVG) in Penang/Malaysia.

I would like to share at these examples community-based research, public outreach, and a collaborative project for partnering local community constituencies with government agencies, nonprofit organizations, or regional educational institutions for the documentation, preservation, and interpretation of local heritage across a range of contexts.

To ensure quality of the presented projects, the following criteria have been taken care of:
   • Empowerment of stakeholders (here not the end beneficiaries);
   • Mainstreaming, the ability of the didactic tools used in the project to be replicated to address comparable problems in other contexts/places;
   • Utility, the added value to the end beneficiary, measured in terms of new competencies, knowledge and furthermore how much inspiring and action driven are the resources produced
   • Sustainability, the capacity of the projects to live beyond the financing of the projects.

Some general notes
To make community engagement projects a success, they should include four levels of engagement: Information, Consultation, Involvement and Participation.

Methodology
According to Halton, the following points are important to consider to make the project a success (http://www.haltonpartnership.net/communityengagement/images/stories/engagem ent_toolkit.pdf.):
Flexibility in approach is important so that all possible members of the community, from a range of diverse groups, may be engaged in the process. *Engagement* must take place early, and people must be allowed a genuine opportunity to make a difference.
Principals of Equality and Diversity should be at the heart of everything. Remember that all diverse individuals and communities are unique, and should be heard equally. Think about meeting the different needs of those trying to be reached. It's important to *plan ahead*, including the *monitoring* and *evaluation* stages of the process.
Feedback is a vital part of the engagement process. Existing communication mechanisms can be used, and it is important that stakeholders are informed of outcomes. Feedback must be honest, especially where people are critical.

There are some fairly simple questions which should be part of the planning process:
• Why do you want to engage?
• What is the objective?
• What do you expect to achieve?
• What impact will it have?
• Decide the level of engagement that is appropriate.
• Work out how much time you have, and how long it will take to complete.
• Plan the process out, using the tools available.
• Take advice from others.
• Monitor and review as you go along and provide feedback constantly.
• Evaluate the process and its impact at the end.

George Town World Heritage Site
The recognition by UNESCO in 2008 created awareness from all levels and soon, George Town World Heritage Site will regain its image of the *Pearl of the Orient*. Penang not only celebrates cultural diversity but includes a re-discovery of Penang's place in local, regional and global history. Therefore, it is not surprising that, besides the British, other Europeans also left their traces in Penang. This is so with the Germans. They contributed and still contribute to Penang's heritage (Retrieved on 1 August 2011 from http://www.penangheritagecity.com/).
Over the last 222 years, a unique way of life based upon East-West exchanges has developed here. The influences of Asia and Europe have endowed the city with a specific multicultural heritage. In order to enrich the knowledge of the George Town World Heritage Site, the history of the German community in Penang from the 19th century until World War II is highlighted in the *German Heritage Trail in Penang*.

Project 1: A German Heritage Trail in Penang / Malaysia

Figure 1: German Heritage Trail in Penang, Brochure Cover. German Heritage Trail in Penang. 2012. Penang Heritage Trust

About the project

The German Heritage Trail comprises ten stops, which are indicated in Figure 2. They can be visited in 2½ - 3 hours on foot.

The German Heritage Trail in Penang is an example of making the heritage of George Town visible, so that stories can be told in a variety of ways such as, storytelling, interviews, testimonials, and photos. The project brings together the German Embassy in Malaysia, the Penang Heritage Trust (a non-government organisation), researchers, citizens, associations, artists, librarians, teachers, translators, etc. The German Heritage Trail in Penang establishes a link of solidarity between the people of George Town and German people in Malaysia through its co-production of content about the German history of Penang. The Trail highlights the territory and its inhabitants. It also showcases the expertise about the collaborative project.

Figure 2: German Heritage Trail in George Town, Penang/Malaysia (Map Source: German Heritage Trail in Penang. 2012. Penang Heritage Trust, p.4-5)

In what ways is this project unique and creative

The German Heritage Trail in Penang is a project of building awareness for the German community in Penang and social appropriation, which focuses on residents, associations and international bodies. This project builds social ties and increases the visibility of many facets of the community and the human and cultural heritage of George Town.

The German Ambassador to Malaysia, Dr. Günter Gruber, introduces the German Heritage Trail in Penang as follows:

"From the 17th to the early 19th century, many Germans left their homeland to settle elsewhere. First, it was due to religious persecution and later, economic challenges such as competition from cheaper British products and high unemployment rate at home became the main reasons of emigration. Lured by the success stories of adventure in distant lands, German traders began to sail to faraway places to seek their fortune and a better life.

One such place was Penang. Its strategic location as a safe harbour drew traders from all over the world and made it an attractive place for Germans to start new ventures. Once a regular shipping route was established between the German seaports and Penang, non traders such as missionaries, engineers, administrators, photographers and even writers also came ashore in search of new experience.

Although Germans have settled in Penang since the 19th century, their continued presence has been interrupted by two world wars, during which they lost much of what they had built for themselves over the years. After each defeat, the Germans worked even harder to re-establish themselves. The present German community in Penang is the third wave of Germans establishing a community here which continues to contribute enormously to the economic development and enriches the cultural scenes of Penang.

The early presence of German community in Penang remains largely unknown today. This brochure is intended to raise the awareness of their story and landmarks in Penang." (Gruber, G., 2012. German Heritage Trail in Penang. Penang Heritage Trust, p.2)

What is the social value of this project

The German Heritage Trail in Penang addresses the issues of cultural diversity and cultural heritage as well as multiculturalism and interculturalism. The project aims to contribute to the promotion of George Town, Penang and its inhabitants. This is an information tool for inhabitants of George Town, but also for visitors who wish to discover the life and history of the town. The project also promotes community network and introductory workshops for tourist guides on the content and on how to convey the content to local and German speaking tourists. Thus, workshops on how to acquire some basic German vocabulary of the keywords used in the German Heritage Trail are planned as well.

What is the potential of this project to expand and develop

Given its territorial dimension, this project can be reused and adapted to a number of areas, for example: German Heritage in East Malaysia, in whole Malaysia or a Swiss, Dutch, French or Japanese Heritage Trail in Penang.

What was the triggering factor of this project

Going through the streets of George Town, one can be aware of names like Jalan Gottlieb, Lebuh Katz, Huttenbach, Bausum, Those German traces in George Town aroused the researcher's

interest to start research activities on the German history in Penang. In 2004, the researcher created a teaching unit based on this topic in order to promote German traces as part of her students' own historical background. In a class project a first German Heritage Trail in Penang was created together with the researcher's students of German-as-a-Foreign-Language at Universiti Sains Malaysia. This heritage trail addressed eight stops. The German embassy distributed 1,000 pieces of flyers; some of them appeared also in universities in Germany. In 2011, the German embassy picked up this draft again and suggested to make the early German presence in George Town known in public. The Penang Heritage Trust was approached for assistance to put up signboards in town to make it part of the World Heritage Site. The German Heritage Trail in George Town was launched on 3rd October 2012, the German Unity Day, by Dr. Günter Gruber, the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, and Lim Guan Eng, the Chief Minister of Penang.

What is the business model of this project
The project provides the platform for generating income for various stakeholders involved in the programme and also bookstores and souvenir shops.
- Bookstores:
  Selling books (e.g.: Khoo Salma Nasution. 2006. More than Merchants. A History of the German-speaking Community in Penang. 1800s – 1940s. Areca Books. Penang
- Souvenir shops & Penang Heritage Trust:
  Selling additional souvenir items (e.g. games, postcards, key chains, bookmarks, T-sirts, etc.)
- Penang Tourist Guide Association & Penang Heritage Trust:
  Providing a tour guide to explain more details about the historical German personalities involved in the German Heritage Taril. Part of the fee will go to the tour guide; the other part will receive the organiser.
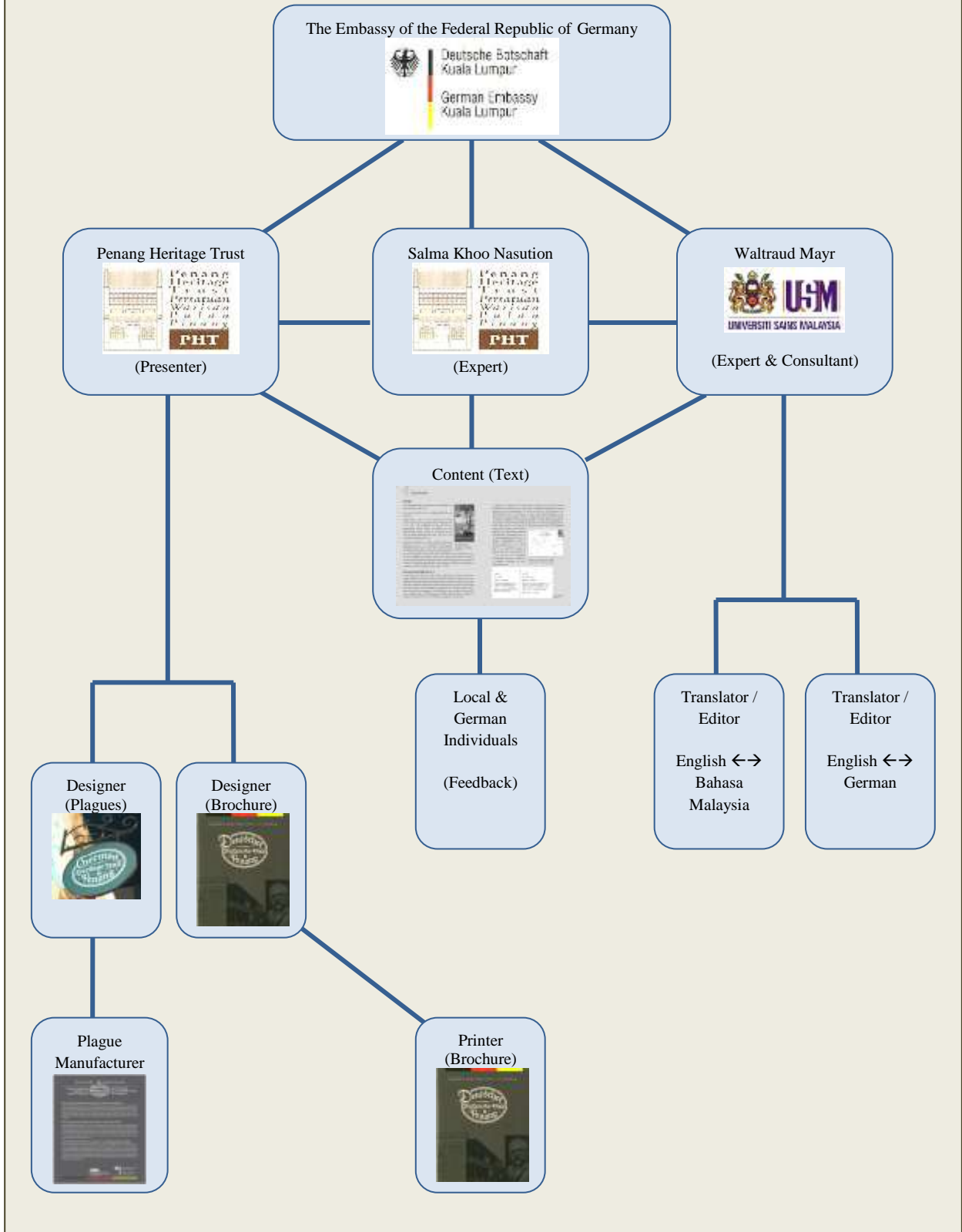
Processing the project
In the planning process, the German Embassy identified who will be involved in the project and how the various stakeholders will be invited. Additionally, the Embassy planned its briefing process. In the following, round table workshops were initiated by the German Embassy. These workshops focused on involving key players in that particular area to generate a vision and strategy to go for this project. The process brought people together to discuss issues of concern and brainstorm ideas for action. The workshops helped to build relationships with different individuals and their purpose was also to avoid hierarchies.

For *devolving decision-making*, it took the partner who holds power (here: the German Embassy) to challenge traditional thinking and shift power so that it is shared or devolved in the engagement process. Elected representatives were at the heart of community engagement and this was not replaced or by-passed by devolving decision-making. Two different ways that power was devolved, were:
• Transfering the allocation of budget to the Penang Hertage Trust as a result of the consultation.
• Using the technique of Participatory Appraisal that develop the skills of communities involved to take the leadership role in the engagement.

Flow Chart
A German Heritage Trail in Penang

The Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany

Deutsche Botschaft
Kuala Lumpur
German Embassy
Kuala Lumpur

Penang Heritage Trust

(Presenter)

Salma Khoo Nasution

(Expert)

Waltraud Mayr

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

(Expert & Consultant)

Content (Text)

Local & German Individuals

(Feedback)

Translator / Editor

English ←→ Bahasa Malaysia

Translator / Editor

English ←→ German

Designer (Plagues)

Designer (Brochure)

Plague Manufacturer

Printer (Brochure)

What were the challenges of this project

After devolving decision-making, the people involved in this project were facing the following challenges:

- Limited time allocation (9 months)
- Limited funding
- Limited knowledge
- Limited active man power
- Different views

How was the conflict management

- Working with minimal number of meetings because of limited availability of the people involved. Their core occupation had priority, the project was on voluntary basis. Networking via the internet facilitated the communication among the stakeholders and was essential.
- Working around the allocated funding (German Heritage Trail plagues in town, brochures, allowances for the individuals involved, e.g. consultant, researcher, designer, printer, translator English – German and vice versa, editor, etc.)
- Consulting experts in the field (Salma Khoo Nasution, President of the Penang Heritage Trust and Waltraud Mayr, Initiator of the German Heritage Trail in Penang and a German native speaker)
- Working with only three individuals to ensure continuity of the bochure and plague texts and completeness of the project in time
- Different views on the design of the German Heritage Trail plagues and brochure and the presentation of Germany were expressed by the suggestion of various additonal designs by the German representative in the committee but unfortunately, those ideas were not forwarded to the German Embassy. Only the initial design was presented as the only and final version. "The Germans have no say in this project, they only give the money." was one comment to be heard during the process.

  This shows, that among the local stakeholders in Penang, the principles of Intercultural Education, especially the third principle, did not work well:

  "Intercultural Education provides all learners with cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills that enable them to contribute respect, understanding and solidarity among individuals, ethnic, sicial, cultural and religious groups and nations."

Project 2: The Botanika Volunteer-Guide (BVG) Programme in Penang / Malaysia

About the project

The Botanika Volunteer-Guide Programme is a programme developed under the auspices of the Friends of the Penang Botanic Gardens Society (FOPBGS), a non-government organistion, and the Penang Botanic Gardens (PBG). Their mission is to provide visitors with programmes that focus on the historical and cultural heritage of the gardens, the plant collections, natural landscape and rich diversity of flora and fauna. Lastly, as a service to the

Figure 3: The Friends of the Penang Botanical Gardens Society (FOPBGS) Logo

community, they aim to provide advice and education related to botany, environmental awareness, horticulture and landscaping. By their various initiatives in distribution, conservation, research and education, they help people to better live with nature. Therefore, the aim of the programme is the support of the development and enhancement of the Penang Botanic Gardens and their surroundings. The programme optimises the local resources, providing an avenue for the Penang public to come forth and play its role in developing, enhancing and maintaining high standards for the natural public asset. Developed with the underlying theme of 'Penang Botanic Gardens – By the people, for the people', the BVGs play a crucial role in returning public realm for the people of Penang.

As a major tourist attraction, the Penang Botanical Gardens are part of the history and heritage of Penang. The *history of the Penang Botanic Gardens* (also commonly known as Waterfall Gardens) is closely linked to the economic activities of the early European colonisation, not only in Asia but globally. Fruits and spices of the east became an important source of revenue to the European powers and the need to stock the seedlings of these products for commercial growers led to the establishment of the Botanic Gardens. In Malaysia, the first official Botanic Garden to be established was at Penang in 1798, twelve years after Penang was established as a trading port of the East India Company. Thousands of seedlings from all over South East Asia, but predominently the Moluccas, were imported and grown with the view to providing planting stock for distribution far and wide when these matured. Francis Light had imported plants to Penang as early as 1787 and with the establishment of the Calcutta gardens the same year an ongoing exchange of plants commenced.

Figure 4: Entrance of the Penang Botanical Gardens

Figure 5: The old rain tree at the entrance of the Penang Botanical Gardens

Figure 6: Water Lilies in the Gardens

Figure 7: The original attraction of the Gardens
The 30m Waterfall

Today, the Gardens' main objectives include conservation programmes, provision of a clean, safe and conducive public recreation environment, education and raising of public awareness in the appreciation of nature and gardening. In the research area, the Gardens also collaborate with others in the development and implementation of botanical and ecological research programmes both nationally and internationally.

It is the common wish of the Botanic Gardens Department and FRIENDS to collaborate to promote the interests of the Botanic Gardens and the educational programmes on the environment to the public. (Retrieved on 12 November 2012 from http://www.botanika penang.org.my/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9&Itemid=7)

Objectives

Picking up this aim, the project *Botanika Volunteer-Guide Programme* was carried out to enhance community engagement and capacity building in environmental education and environmental protection amongst the Penang public. An important part of community engagement is relationship building and empowering. According to Halton, the keys to successful relationship building and empowering include communicating, listening, being flexible, open minded and having long-term commitment. Capacity building includes confidence and skills development. This means that throughout the project, those people participating develop their skills and confidence to participate within this project, but also engage community in the future. So, developing a pool of volunteers for the Friends of the Penang Botanic Gardens Society and implementing activities and programmes to the public are important objectives.

In the long term, it is an significant way to engage with all groups of people, children, young people and older people. Thus, in the programme involved were 24 male and female participants in the age range from 20 to 65 years. The number of older people in society is increasing. While engaging older people who have a big pool of experiences, but we also have to consider possible barriers:

- inflexibility and processes, within organisations, that move at a pace that doesn't suit the older generation;
- use of jargon and acronyms; and
- negative attitudes and sterotypyes.

When engaging with older people it has to be confirmed that information is accessible (always check before using IT).

It is also recommended to ensure an even split between genders, both with participants and facilitators.

Programme Design

The programme was designed to reach out to participants aged 18 and above.

The programme required the candidates to fulfil the following:

- 24 hours of module training (indoors/outdoors)
- 30 hours of voluntary services with the Friends of Penang Botanic Gardens Society within a year
- 8 hours advanced training annually

In return, the participants were given the following benefits for capacity development:

- o Unlimited access to literary resources from the Friends of the Penang Botanic Gardens Society and Penang Botanic Gardens**.**

       o   Participation on activities from Friends of the Penang Botanic Gardens Society, at members rate

(Retrieved on 12 November 2012 from http://www.botanikapenang.org.my/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9&Itemid=7)

In what ways is this project unique and creative
When challenges confronting the planet puts our lifestyles in question, the Botanika Volunteer Guide Programme's vision is to stir emotions through nature, explain what nature is and instigate changes in behaviour towards nature. The programme brings together researchers and the general public – science and emotions, biodiversity and city life. The Botanika Volunteer Guide Programme is a creative project – a movement for those who are motivated in one way or another to rethink their relationship with nature, with the environment.
My personal expectations of this programme were:
- Gaining more knowledge about this beautiful, magic tropical rainforest so that I would be able to explain it to my kid and other people with the hope that through my help they could appreciate Mother Nature same as me and preserve it for the next generation.
- Getting to know friends who share this love for nature and the aim to preserve it.

What is the social value of this project
Biodiversity and humanity are two notions that are inseparable. When we talk about one, we cannot ignore the other. Therefore, this volunteer-guide programme is a co-creation that citizens participate in. They are encouraged to get involved in protecting biodiversity and show their imagination accordingly … and with enthusiasm!

Community involvement is a key component for the programme. Education, involvement and solidarity are without a doubt the route to follow so that every person feels responsible for the future of the planet and know enough to be concerned and act accordingly. The natural environment is a legacy for Georgetown's World Heritage Site. The Penang State Government took already many initiatives to make the island cleaner and greener, e.g. non-plastic bag days have been introduced and were quite well accepted by the population so that now every day is a non-plastic bag day.

The Botanika Volunteer-Guide Programme in Penang is a social appropriation project. It relies on the citizens and the involvement of minorities in the society. For orphans and physically or mentally handicaped children, this project means they have the opportunity to a meaningful outing where they are able to engage with nature. This is an appreciated interruption in their daily routine during their life in a youth institution. For the organisers it is a more rewarding experience than they would get on a conventional children programme.

What is the potential of this project to expand and develop
The Botanika Volunteer-Guide Programme is a community project for Penang and an inspiration for communities nationwide. It enriches Penang's cultural heritage. It helps position Penang as an innovative and authentic island that is engaged in environmental issues. Thus, it sets a sign for the development of environmental consciousness in whole Malaysia.

What was the triggering factor of this project
The triggering factor of this project was the need to improve Malaysians' attitude towards the natural environment combined with the desire to maintain social connections, respect cultural values, solidarity and social integration in communities. Together, the organisers' and volunteer guides' commitment was stated to be "moved by nature, explain what nature is, change behaviour towards nature".

What is the business model of this project
The project "Why do we need leaves" came up in the course of the Botanika Volunteer-Guide Programme and is the lever for the social mobilization of children ecological awareness development since it allows them to do own decisions on different kinds of leaf uses and to discuss their decisions. This is also building up their critical thinking skills as well as their knowledge about the importance of leaves for the survival of mankind on earth. The project holds the potential to be offered to primary school children to enhance their appreciation of plants and of nature in general. Thus, the NGO Friends of Penang's Botanical Gardens Society (FOPBGS) will be able to generate a little income through a participation fee.
The business plan focuses on growing the institutions' self-generated revenue and self-financing due to additional meaningful projects.

Processing the project
In the planning process, the Friends of the Penang Botanical Gardens Society in collaboration with the Penang Botanical Gardens authorities planned this project for capacity building. The FPBGS promoted the programme on their website and through emails. After the participants' enrollment the following activites were carried:
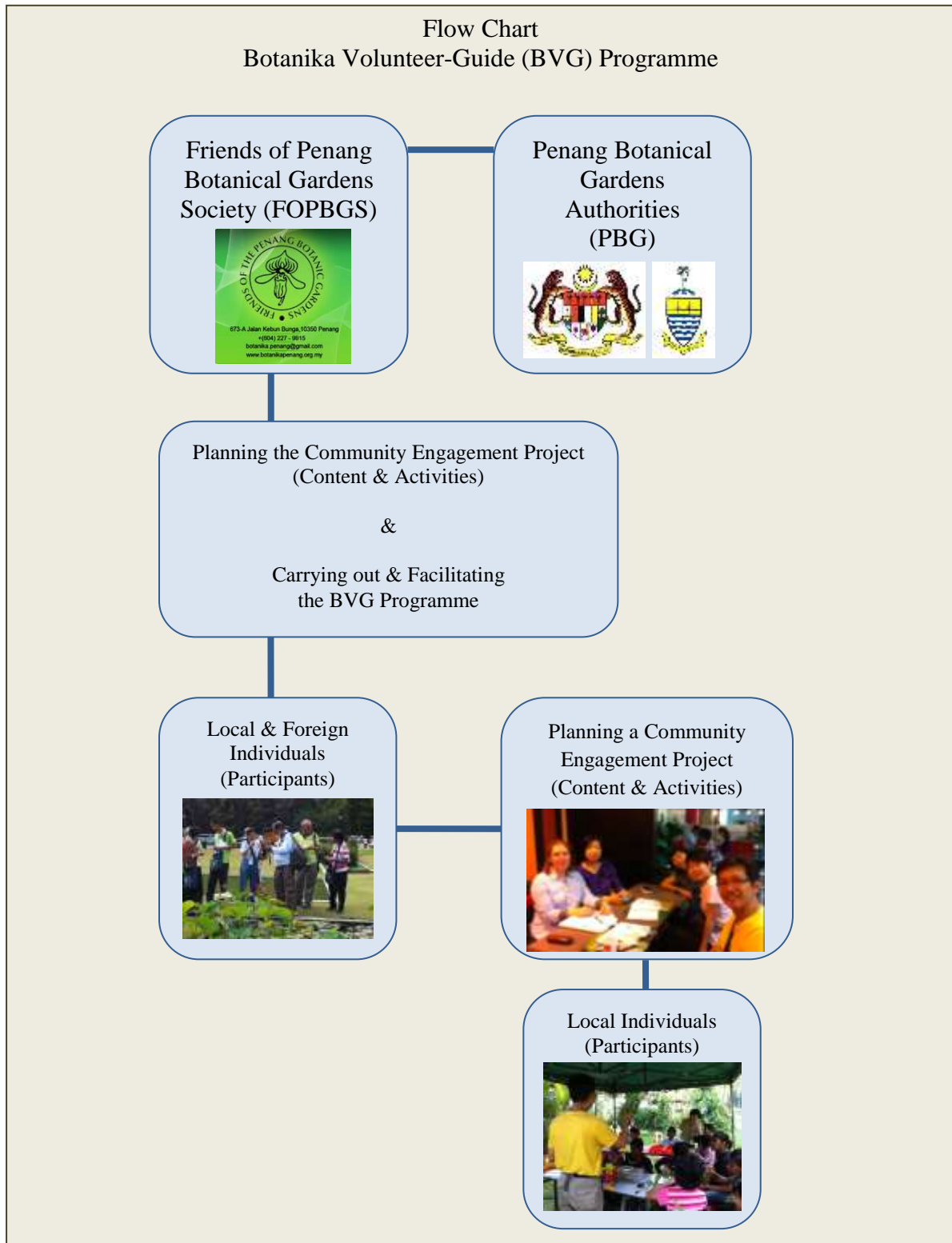They were separated into three distinct sets, each one designed to expose participants to the various means of capacity development and knowledge enhancement:
- o Short term design – Projects and activities lasting for one of two session. Each of the module was designed to expose the participants to the various activities conducted by the FOPBGS, and also to encourage participants to explore different angles for designing and developing programmes according to the aims of FOPBGS and PBG.
- o Long term project – Two long term projects that ran from session one up to session eight. The projects were designed to encourage teamwork, and foster better understanding and cooperation between team members in the group. The teams presented their findings at the end of the training session (Session 8). One of the tasks was to plan a project to build awareness among the people of Penang about the importance of the natural environment. This planning process required the following steps from the teams:
  - • Identify what sort of project you want to do and why.
  - • Plan the scale of it, who it will be with, for example young people, or ethnic groups and where it will be.
  - • Identify how you will carry out monitoring and evaluation.
  - • Identify how you will contact people who could be involved.
  - • Be clear on the benefits for them to be involved. What are they going to get out of it? What will you get out of it? Why are you doing this?
  - • Identify the need for any assistance, for example will you need any skilled facilitators in particular areas for training and capacity building.

- Will your project be long term, or a one off initiative and how will this be communicated to participants?
- What budget will be needed and, especially if the project is long term, how will it be.

o Assessment – These two modules were designed to assess the capability and learning process of the participants. The first module was based on self and team analysis, while the second one was a general assessment conducted by the trainers.

Flow Chart
Botanika Volunteer-Guide (BVG) Programme

Friends of Penang Botanical Gardens Society (FOPBGS)

Penang Botanical Gardens Authorities (PBG)

Planning the Community Engagement Project (Content & Activities)

&

Carrying out & Facilitating the BVG Programme

Local & Foreign Individuals (Participants)

Planning a Community Engagement Project (Content & Activities)

Local Individuals (Participants)

What were the challenges of this Botanika Volunteer-Guide Programme
During the project, the people involved were facing the following challenges:
- Time constrains (After the completion of the official programme, the teams faced the difficulty to allocate time for the organisation of the requested project.)
- Participants are not committed enough to follow up in what the facilitators initiated
- Limited application of the new learnt knowledge in their daily routine
- Limited funding

How was the conflict management
- On the initiative of the facilitators, the teams met up again in order to organise and carry out the projects.
- The facilitators should ckeck more thouroughly on the participants' improvement on botanical knowledge.
- The busy daily schedule prohibited the implementation of the new ideas given in the programme. A 'to-do list' could help the participants to change their lifestyle towards a more environmental friendly lifestyle. In other words, to become a role model.
- Working around the allocated funding including bearring the costs personally as volunteers (charity for the support of the NGO and for the minorities involved)

Conclusion
The presented projects are examples for different types of community engagement:
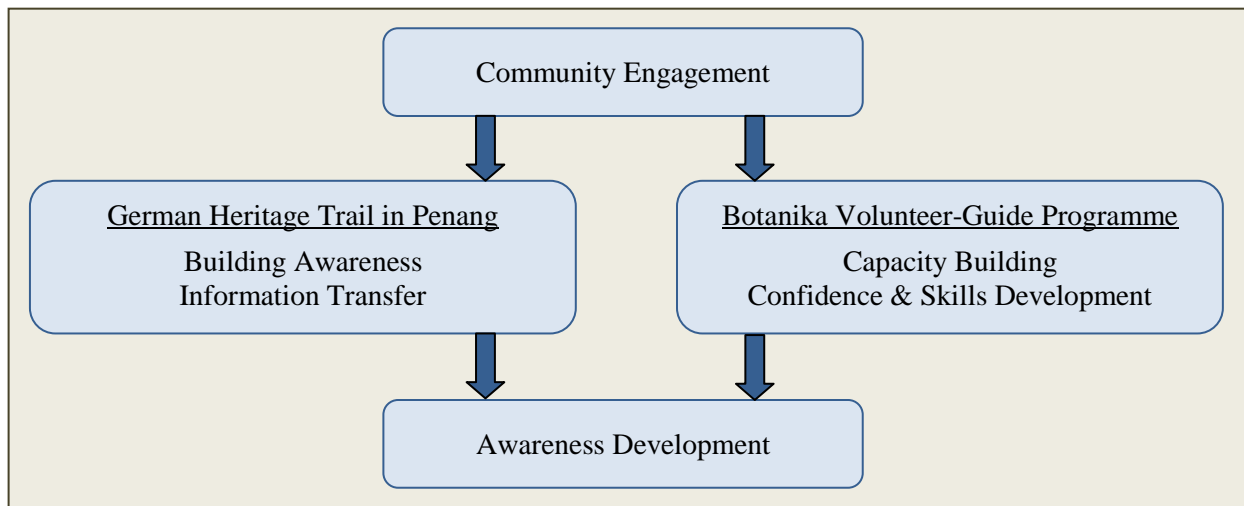
Both show two main challenges for 'Living Together' in harmony; that is the intercultural communication and the commitment. Therefore, it is of crucial importance to actively empower the community in the planning and delivering process of projects in order to create ownership. Making the project to one's own responsibility will improve the commitment of the people involved. Secondly, building relationship among the stakeholders will decrease intercultural communication issues. The knowledge from each other is the basis to better understand and respect each other.

Malaysia is well known for its harmony among people of various ethnic groups. Different races are peacefully living together over many years but their way of living is more a way of living beside each other than living with each other. Thus, in Malaysia teams should be arranged in '1-

Malaysia' order because brain storming with different races (Chinese, Malay, Indian, etc.) brings the people of Malaysia closer and they also understand each other's way of thinking better. This will enhance 'Living Together' as one society, as true Malaysians.

Lastly, let me add another example from Malaysia. For a new project, the Penang Heritage Trust is now looking for volunteers who are able to communicate in various languages spoken in Penang so that the Trust will be able to gather information about traditional craftsmanship in the old streets of Penang. This information will help to keep the heritage of George Town alive or to revive it. This activity shows how various ethnic groups live together and enrich the heritage of a place in many ways: variety of languages and craftsmanship, etc. At the same time, it also highlights the fact that they do not understand each other. Wouldn't it be nice to have one common language? Although Bahasa Malaysia is the official language and English is widely spoken, the family languages are still the languages of family's origin.

In this globalised world, apart from Malaysia, there is an increasing need of applying community action skills. There is a special need for intercultural education, also often requested from multinational companies, to address issues that are not voiced out but cause misunderstandings among partners.

The skills pyramid below illustrates in general, the range of skills required to successfully implement community engagement activities. Effective community engagement is built on a foundation of solid personal skills and specific sets of management skills. The difficulty consists in getting people to focus on understanding the distinctive skills required for successful community engagement. A varied programme of pilot and demonstration projects may be required, undertaken and jointly funded with national and local partners, building on existing experience and resources, in order to show the relevance and possibility of learning for community engagement at different levels and in different settings.

Figure 8: The Skills Pyramid
(Source: Retrieved on 12 November 2012 from http://www.onlinelearning.qld.gov.au/materials/ce/online/ce/info/learning/guide/t8s1.htm)

About the Author
Waltraud Brigitte Mayr obtained her Bachelor's degree and Master degree in Science from University of Cologne (Germany). She later obtained a postgraduate Diploma in Teaching German-as-a-Foreign-Language through a far distance study programme with the Goethe Institute and the University of Kassel in Germany. She has been teaching and lecturing for 30 years in Germany as well as in Malaysia and her experience includes teaching science as well as a foreign language. This includes material design and development and information and communications technology in German language learning. She has also designed and conducted several short-term courses for adult learners from both the public as well as the private sector. She is currently attached to the School of Languages, Literacies and Translation, Universiti Sains Malaysia as a lecturer and holds the chairperson's post for the German language programme at the School.

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