

i-CATS Diploma in Plantation Management Programme Focuses on a Sustainable Approach to Modern Agriculture and the Role of Graduates in Transforming Communities

At the International College of Advanced Technology Sarawak (*i-CATS*), the overarching theme of the Diploma in Plantation Management programme centres on a sustainable approach to modern agriculture and the all-important role of its graduates in transforming communities as they progress along their careers.

Commenting on the programme, Mr. Clement Empaling, Head of the *i-CATS* School of Plantation shared that, “The Diploma in Plantation Management programme adopts a Best of Both Worlds Approach, where academia and industry work as one to produce graduates who are able to contribute positively, throughout their careers, to advances in modern agriculture and at the same time, transform their communities. In this respect, it is indeed an honour to have on board, a team of Industrial Advisors. They transform the students’ learning experience through their sharing sessions.”



*Mr. Clement Empaling
Head of School
School of Plantation*

He added, “During the two-and-a-half-year programme, students take subjects such as Principles of Crop Management, Estate Management, Estate Mechanization, Introduction to Agriculture Marketing, and Soil Science. In addition, during the course of their studies, they will have many opportunities to develop effective oral, written and interpersonal communication skills as well as critical thinking, decision-making and team building skills. During their final semester, students will undergo a 4-month internship. This will enable them to have relevant hands-on experience and develop new skills. An important aspect of the internship is the opportunity to learn directly from the industry.”

i-CATS

The Diploma in Plantation Management programme at *i-CATS* prepares students for a wide range of careers in industry. In this respect, Mr. Clement highlighted that, “Graduates of the Diploma in Plantation Management programme can apply for the following positions in the plantation industry: Supervisor, Cadet and Junior Assistant Manager. In addition to the palm oil industry, there are many career opportunities in other agricultural sectors (Cocoa, Pepper, Rubber and Sago). For those aspiring to develop and manage their own businesses, an exciting option is to become an agropreneur. Diploma graduates may also further their studies in a range of degree programmes.”

Visit to i-CATS West Campus by YB Gerald Rentap Jabu (third from left), Assemblyman for Layar and Industrial Advisor for the i-CATS Diploma in Plantation Management Programme



At *i-CATS*, a major point of pride is the fast-growing number of alumni, with their diverse contributions across the length and breadth of industry. For example, Gabriel Asher Wan Jok who graduated with the *i-CATS* Diploma in Plantation Management (Class of 2016), is the co-owner of Gabriel Asher Enterprise which manages a smallholding for oil palm cultivation. When met recently, he shared that, “I can apply what I have learnt in the Diploma in Plantation Management programme to my oil palm operations. I am also grateful for the opportunity to undergo Industrial Training during my student days at *i-CATS*. This facilitates the transition from student to agropreneur.” He also highlighted that he does research on ways to increase oil palm yields.



Mr. Gabriel Asher Wan Jok
Class of 2016

Indeed, *i*-CATS alumni are making their mark, contributing positively to the progress and vibrancy of the agriculture sector. In Sarawak, up to two million hectares of land can be developed for agriculture. In this respect, the government is encouraging youths to take advantage of the state's vast lands to run modern agriculture or aquaculture projects. Recently, Minister of Human Resources Datuk Seri Richard Riot Jaem highlighted that this would also enable Malaysia to reduce its dependency on food imports in the long run.

As highlighted by the Malaysian Palm Oil Council (MPOC) on its website, Malaysia currently accounts for 39 percent of world palm oil production and 44 percent of world exports. The Malaysian government has also implemented various initiatives to transform the palm oil industry through mechanization, science and innovation. In addition to expansion plans in its traditional overseas markets such as China, India and the European Union, plans are also underway to expand Malaysia's palm oil export market to the Middle East, South America and African countries. These positive developments are expected to generate a host of career opportunities for Malaysia's youths.



EcoFarm Project at i-CATS



Students' visit to an oil palm estate



PLANTATION LAB

Enrolment to the Diploma in Plantation Management programme is now ongoing for the March 2017 session. Students who have completed SPM/SPMV with a minimum of three credits including one science subject and a pass in English are eligible to enter the *i*-CATS Diploma in Plantation Management programme. Applications will also be considered for those who have completed the Sijil Kemahiran Malaysia (SKM) Level 3 Senior Estate Conductor (or related field), and passed SPM with at least 1 credit. Those who have completed an MQA Accredited Certificate in a related field with a minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average of 2.0 are also encouraged to apply.

For further information, you are invited to visit:

i-CATS West Campus
Jalan Stampin Timur
Kuching

or call 082-570888/451533.

Information can also be obtained from *i*-CATS's website:

www.icats.edu.my

