

L a n d s c a p e
Architecture

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Social Innovation
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People perceive innovation in many ways. Innovation can be one of the 'heavy-duty' terms with different interpretation or innovation can also be an exclusive plan for corporate development. In the Department of Landscape Architecture, we define innovation as simple as "ideas that works for the life of our society". The department has gone through a very challenging year of 2013 especially by incorporating the idea of innovation in landscape teaching and learning. Innovation; the term that gradually gains premium to us since 2011, has been one of the main important factors outlined in our FRSB Transformation Vision 2011-2014 (Ibrahim, R. 2011). Innovation is a global challenge; and implementing it in our department is indeed, a real challenge in UPM. We drive this mission in our curriculum reviews, teaching and learning programs, research and services. The department continues its tradition to elevate the landscape architecture program of UPM into an exceptional level. We focus to develop our team—the academia, administrative officers and students—to engage in the Culture of Social Innovation. In brief, Social Innovation Europe (2013) defines social innovation as:

... "new solutions (products, services, models, markets, processes etc) that simultaneously meet a social need (more efficiently and effectively than existing solutions) and lead to new or improved capabilities, assets and/or relationships. In other words, social innovations are both good for society and enhance society's capacity to act".

Stanford Graduate School of Business (2008) expresses a meaning of Social Innovations as:

"Any novel and useful solution to a social need and or problem, that is better than existing approaches (i.e., more effective, efficient, sustainable or just) and for which the value created (benefits) accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than primitive individuals"

We believe that social innovation through landscape design projects have taken place in the department for quite sometimes but it was not really been seen as "A Product of Social Innovation" or maybe, it is still in its infant level which may require further systemic innovation. Similarly a research by the author investigating meaning and values of altered landscape in urban residential area reveals the voice of community who look forward for social and cultural innovation (Ismail, 2013). With this understanding, the department looks forward to strive more on social innovation as tangible and intangible products for the society. It aims to be the champion in this area among local universities in Malaysia, and, eventually, at international level.

Works that are presented this year shows collaborative efforts to create designs that constitute of a formula: Divergent + Convergent

Thinking = Social Innovation. Mulgan (2006) explains divergent thinking encapsulates creative, qualitative, possibilities and conceptual ideas. Design solutions are developed through random, intuitive, synthesizing, subjective and holistic. On the other hand, convergent thinking refers to analytic, quantitative, constraints and specifics. Works by the students in either studios or researches by the lecturers and staffs required us to have sequential, rational, analytical, objective and detail oriented. The department believes in empowering both divergent and convergent thinking into landscape design solutions and proud to present our works in this publication.

The department has also gone through a challenging moment in the effort of establishing official Landscape Alumni Club by the name of Kelab Alumni Senibina Landskap (KASEL), which was materialized in February 2013. Registered under the Registrar of Society of Malaysia, KASEL's objective is to be one of our intelligent partners in elevating the standard and quality of our graduates. Programs that have been conducted by KASEL include; series of Alumni Talk Show, BLA Dinner 2013, Majlis Berbuka Puasa Alumni UPM and numbers of students consultation and career development. Our students make headway with mobility program to Bogor Agricultural University, IOWA States University and in return, the department received inbound students from Bogor Agricultural University. Landscape architecture students had gone for their internship program in Japan, Brunei, Shanghai, Indonesia and Singapore. Our students received an Honour Award for Students Competition

Category organized by Malaysia landscape Architecture Award (MLAA) organized by the Institute of Landscape Architects Malaysia (ILAM) and participated in the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA), FLORIA Putrajaya and various other students competition. Finally, the department of Landscape Architecture look forward to the year of 2014 with passion to embark powerful motion towards SOCIAL INNOVATION.

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