Sustainability in Quality Education for Rural Learners: Case Study of Icare Utm-Kejora Project

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A B S T R A C T

Academicians around the world have been encouraged to support United Nations’ sustainable development goals (SDGs) through their research projects and related courses also known as service learning or community service. Achieving sustainability in related SDGs for any community projects requires strategic partnerships among related stakeholders with specific funding to materialize the expected goals and objectives. There are many challenges in sustaining such efforts for a long period. This work reports the case study of a rural community project known as Centre for Advancement in Rural Education Informatics (iCARE) that has a strategic partnership between Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) and Southeast Johor Development Authority or KEJORA, a rural agency that is responsible to develop rural areas in Southeast Johor, Malaysia region. The ten-year partnership that has supported research and human capital development in the KEJORA region through several related intervention programs focus on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in education. The project outcomes have shown that despite the challenges, the activities conducted have given certain impacts to the selected rural learners and achieved the fourth SDG that is quality education for rural learners. Besides, the related programs can indirectly support the achievement of the tenth SDG that promotes reduced inequalities between rural and urban community.

Keywords: *Rural Education Informatics; Information and Communication Technology; Community Project; Service Learning; Community Service; Quality Education*