Learning Journal: 2

1. Local Community Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Programs in Singapore

Singapore has implemented impressive "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" programs aligned with the EPA's initiative. The National Environment Agency (NEA) oversees a comprehensive waste management system. In my neighborhood, we have centralized recycling bins for paper, plastic, glass, and metal in every Housing Development Board (HDB) block. The NEA also organizes regular e-waste collection drives (NEA, 2021a).

Singapore's unique approach includes the pneumatic waste conveyance system in newer estates, which efficiently separates recyclables from general waste. The city-state has also implemented a mandatory packaging reporting framework for businesses to reduce packaging waste (NEA, 2021b).

1. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle at Home in Singapore

In my HDB flat, we actively participate in recycling by using the blue recycling bins provided. We've adopted several habits to reduce waste, such as using reusable shopping bags (especially important since the recent implementation of carrier bag charges at supermarkets), and opting for reusable containers for takeaway food from hawker centers.

To reuse items, we repurpose glass bottles for storing homemade sauces and use old clothing as cleaning rags. While composting is less common in Singapore due to space constraints, we try to minimize food waste by planning meals carefully and freezing leftovers.

1. Potential New Programs for Singapore

While Singapore has robust recycling programs, there's room for improvement in the "reduce" and "reuse" aspects. One potential program could be a more widespread implementation of reverse vending machines that offer incentives for recycling bottles and cans, similar to the pilot project at Our Tampines Hub (NEA, 2021c).

Another possibility is establishing more repair cafes across the island, where residents can bring items for repair instead of discarding them, promoting a culture of reuse and extending product lifespans.

1. New Learning and Application

This week, I learned about Singapore's approach to water management, particularly the NEWater initiative. This innovative system of treating and purifying wastewater for reuse has significantly enhanced Singapore's water security (PUB, 2021).

This knowledge has made me more conscious of water usage in my daily life. I've started collecting air-conditioner condensate water for watering plants and cleaning, contributing in a small way to water conservation efforts.

1. Course Reflection

The course has been exceptionally relevant and engaging, especially when viewed through the lens of Singapore's unique environmental challenges and solutions. The material provides a global perspective while allowing me to draw parallels to local initiatives.

I find the content on urban sustainability particularly fascinating, given Singapore's status as a city-state. The course has enhanced my understanding of how Singapore balances development with environmental conservation, as seen in initiatives like the Park Connector Network and the transformation of Marina Bay.

The assignments have encouraged critical thinking about environmental issues in the Singaporean context. For instance, discussing the implications of land reclamation on marine ecosystems has been thought-provoking.

Overall, the course is helping me appreciate Singapore's environmental efforts while also recognizing areas for improvement. It's inspiring to see how environmental science principles are applied in our highly urbanized, tropical setting.

(Word count: 521)

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