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UniSeY and Swiss university students team up in solid waste project

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Students from ETH Zurich and the University of Seychelles (UniSeY) will be conducting a three-week intensive research programme which is a transdisciplinary case study on assessment of solid waste management in Seychelles.

The project falls under a recently signed agreement to promote education and research between the UniSeY and Transdisciplinary Lab (TdLab) of ETH Zurich.

This case study is geared to understand our waste infrastructure system, to uncover potential opportunities in waste management and provide a potential dissertation project for bachelor students.

The 18 ETH Masters students who have a variety of backgrounds in engineering, agricultural and environmental science will engage in fieldwork at the landfill mainly.

During a short ceremony yesterday at the UniSeY they were paired with 19 UniSeY students, all of whom are Bachelors students in the Environmental Science programme.

Co-directors of TdLab ETH Zurich Dr Pius Krütli and Professor Michael Stauffacher gave an overview of the transdisciplinary case study 2016.

They said this research is also a way of teaching science in a non laboratory setting.

Project members are expected to conduct interviews, collect waste data, run cost estimates, and work alongside stakeholders to tackle the topic from different angles, including policy, technology, and consumer behaviour.

They will work in close collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, Sustainability for Seychelles (S4S), and other key stakeholders from administration, business and civil society.

The relationship between ETH and the government of Seychelles dates back to 1997 and at that time the projects were mainly about nature conservation and throughout the years over 50 publications have emerged.

This exchange programme is the continuation of a long-standing collaboration.

ETH student Lisa Haemmerli said she is eager and looking forward to their research. After her case study she said she will be staying here for vacation.

Her colleague David Müller, who arrived in the country last Friday, said he is excited to be here on this beautiful island and for the collaboration between ETH Zurich and UniSeY.

He said he is prepared for the case study as they conducted research in Switzerland before coming and he is looking forward to meet the different stakeholders.

At the end of their project a presentation will be held at the UniSeY on July 13 to provide conclusions from the research.

While welcoming the students, UniSeY vice-chancellor Professor Dennis Hardy said it is a very exciting moment and quite a landmark for UniSeY as they have been discussing for a long time about developing an international dimension to the university.

"This is the first project with really big impact that we have experienced and we wanted to do this because we're quite a small community and we will benefit enormously from people like you as you bring a different experience. We have a different experience and we will share this. Working in a real project like this, well, who knows in three weeks what will come out of it," he said.

They visited the landfill later during the day.

Two ETH Masters students, Mélanie Schmutz and Stéphanie Massy, also presented their thesis project of vegetation monitoring and human impact assessment of the Baie Lazare water catchment area.

They thanked all the organisations and individuals who supported them during their three months here working on the ecosystem based adaptation (EbA) to climate change in Seychelles.



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