Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research 22 (1): 18-25, 2014 ISSN 1990-9233 © IDOSI Publications, 2014 DOI: 10.5829/idosi.mejsr.2014.22.01.21898

Rural Land Management in Malaysia: Referring to the Role of Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA)

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Abstract: Rural land development in Malaysia started in early 1970s as part of New Economy Policy (NEP) designed by the Malaysia government. In general the main target of NEP was to narrow down the income gap between urban population mostly Chinese and rural population who were mainly Malay. Specifically, NEP was designed to modernize and urbanize the low-income rural Malays. Under this program FELDA (Federal Land Development Authority) and FELCRA (Federal of Land rehabilitation and Consolidation Authority) were set up to develop land for cultivation and create new economic opportunities. Over one million acres of land were opened up during the Second Malaysia Plan and given to the poor settlers throughout the Malay Peninsula. Within the period of 1971-1980 both FELDA and FELCRA resettled 43,000 and 16,600 families. The program managed to develop rural areas and played major role in agriculture development in Malaysia. The production of palm oil and rubber were good and by 1985 and until now Malaysia has becomes world larger palm oil producer. After more than 50 years the program has been operated, at present there are 275 plantations opened up by FELDA with 103,156 settlers and developed about 477,578 hectors of land. FELDA could be the only one rural land management authority in the developing country that has been succeeded in developing and modernizing rural land and its population. This paper attempts to share the FELDA experiences to develop rural land.

Key words: Land Development • New Economic Policy • Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

Felda after 50 Years: FELDA or Federal Land Development Authority was established under the Land Development Act of 1956 in July 1956 [1]. In the early stages, FELDA operated through financial sources that were obtained via loans from the Federal Government, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Kuwait Government Funds and Saudi Arabian Development Funds [2]. FELDA has now reached the age of 54 years and at the same time it has managed to pay-off all of the loans that it has took.

The next phase, after reaching 50 years [3], FELDA has become independent and self-reliant in terms of managing and administering its own financial resources. It has managed to generate its own financial resources. This developmental phase is extremely important for FELDA's survival in the future. If one takes a close look, the emphasis of this second stage focuses on the development of its future human resources. By owning

professionally qualified workers from the settler community itself, the goal of having professionally qualified workers can be achieved successfully. The numbers of families that benefit from this program are 112,635 families [4].

The Table Shows the Number of Settlers Based Region	n:
Number of Settlers Based on Region	

		Number of	Settlers		
Region	Number of Plans	Palm-oil	Rubber	Total	
Raja Alias	49	6,846	9,583	16,429	
Johor Bahru	42	17,304	247	17,551	
Kuantan	42	15,049	0	15,049	
Mempaga	36	11,815	1,303	13,118	
Jengka	37	13,636	1,320	14,956	
Segamat	36	7,980	3,440	11,420	
Terengganu	21	7,133	330	7,463	
Trolak	21	5,876	1,967	7,843	
Alor Star	13	108	3,934	4,042	
Gua Musang	11	3,115	0	3,115	
Sahabat	9	1,649	0	,649	
Total	317	90,511	22,124	112,635	

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From the 112,635 settlers, a total of 91,161 settlers or 81.0 percent have managed to pay-off their loans [5]. The remaining 21,471 settlers have not yet finished paying-off their loans. A total of 73,807 people or 66.0 percent of the settlers have received their letter of ownership from the State Government compared to 72,009 in 2009 [6]. The number of settlers that receive their ownership title is as follows:

Number of Settlers that receive their ownership title						
		Number o	Number of Settlers			
	Number				title received	
State	of Plans	Palm-oil	Rubber	Total	2008	
Pahang	115	40,500	2,623	43,123	33,060	
Johor	73	24,483	3,158	27,641	17,371	
Negeri Sembilan	49	6,846	9,583	16,429	9,595	
Terengganu	21	7,133	330	7,463	4,225	
Perak	17	4,154	1,760	5,914	3,860	
Kedah	10	108	3,077	3,185	1,957	
Kelantan	11	3,115	0	3,115	627	
Sabah	9	1,649	0	1,649	0	
Melaka	5	801	529	1,330	1,330	
Perlis	3	0	857	857	0	
Selangor	4	1,722	207	1,929	1,782	
Total	317	90,511	22,124	112,635	73,807	

If it is carefully reviewed, the establishment goal of FELDA is to help place landless citizens in a group of agricultural programs. This goal has been successfully achieved. The landless settler community has been successfully removed from the poverty line and moved into the fixed income group. FELDA is the only group agricultural program that has been successfully managed up till now.

The second developmental phase of FELDA is more challenging as it focuses on the development of its own second generation. The success and failure of FELDA depends on the readiness and quality of its second generation as its heir. Thus, the government under the leadership of Dato' Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak is prioritizing the development of the youth in the land schemes [7]. The current development policies of FELDA include to remain as competitive as a major player in the world palm-oil producing market and to produce rural communities that are middle-income earners.

Enact Land Specific Laws: For the purpose of mega-scale agricultural development, the parliament has approved the drafting of specific laws. The law referred to is the Land (Group Settlement Areas) 1960 [8]. This Act was tabled in Parliament by Tun Abdul Razak Hussein on April 27, 1960 [9].

This Act is a reform in the concept of ownership of agricultural land in Malaysia. The Act provides that land under the supervision of FELDA cannot be held by more than two people, the land's boundaries may not be split, may not be leased at all and crops that have been set by the government cannot be altered [10]. Under this act, any successful settler is provided a 10-acre farm land and a quarter acre of site. At the same time the settlers are given permission to farm / use any idle land that is available [11].

Replanting: One of the most important aspects to successfully managing large-scale farming is the process of replanting. FELDA with all the experience and technology conducts the replanting process in an orderly manner. Welfare of the settlers is not forgotten.

Oil palm and rubber have a certain life span. To ensure that the settlers continued to enjoy the revenues, a special program was introduced which was the replanting [12]. The replanting program was implemented in 1984. So far there are about 171 pieces of land programs around the country that are involved in the replanting program which involves the settler's palm-oil and rubber. Until December 2008, FELDA has implemented programs for replanting in an area of 306.591 hectares of palm-oil crops and 42.910 for rubber. Replanting plan was made after the settlers meet the following conditions:

Terms of the Replanting of Palm-oil Plan [13]:

- Settlers have completed payment.
- JKKR approved.
- Settlers' income is less than RM800/month or less revenue from 13.6 tons per hectare per year.
- Committee approval from the Headquarters of Replanting and FELDA if not qualified with reasonable excuse.
- Tree height exceeds 50 feet (15 meters) and
- Age of trees harvested more than 25 years.

Terms of Rubber Replanting Program:

- Settlers have completed payment and if payments are not completed, it should be deducted from the sale of the rubber wood.
- JKKR approved.
- Settler's income is less than RM800/month or less revenue from 1000 kilograms per hectare per year.
- Committee approval from the Headquarters of Replanting and FELDA if not qualified with reasonable excuse.
- Panel score on the tree is severe and there is no place to be tapped after the exploitation of results.

To ensure that the settlers continue to have the income to support their family expenses, FELDA provides financial assistance for the replanting process until the results can be harvested. The deposit given is a debt due by the settlers after their garden has bear fruit. The diagram below represents advance payments based on crop type and land area [14].

Remuneration Rates for Participating Settlers in the Replanting Program

ear Rate per acre/month		Notes
Palm Oil		
1	RM100	Living costs
2	RM120	
3	RM130	
4 till 5	RM140	Revenue Advancement
6 till 8	RM150	
Rubber		
1	RM100	
2	RM120	
3 to 6	RM130	

The total area planted again until 2010[15].				
Category	Hectares	Settlers		
Palm Oil	34,577.59	7,429		
Rubber	6,283.62	1,606		
Total	40,861.21	9,035		

New Generation Education: To ensure the well-being of the community of settlers, development programs were being implemented by the government through FELDA. Intensification activities cover the aspects of education, family welfare, health, spirituality and strengthen the family institution. It also focuses on the development of new generation of settlers as well as making public examples of successful rural communities, promote competitiveness and prevent social ills.

Various programs carried out on the land targets the participation of the settlers. The focus of this activity is on education, health, spirituality and strengthening the family institution. To ensure that the community of settlers become role models, aspects of education at all levels is made a priority by FELDA. Among the fields of education that are given priority are:

Center for Community Rehabilitation (CBR): CBR established to provide a place for special children in the program and they will learn about life skills. Facilities provided include buildings, equipments, appropriate equipments, teaching staff and qualified nannies. In this way they are taught to manage themselves and interact directly with one another

Starting from 2007 FELDA has allocated RM2, 000.00 for each CBR to help all parents who have a problem to go to the CBR. In 2007 there were 66 CBR centers with the total involvement of 2205 persons with disabilities. The number of centers increases yearly. Up till 2010, there are 78 centers of CBR across the country with a total of 2473 disabled participant[16].

Family Literacy Centers (FRS): FRS was established as an early learning center for the settler children aged between three and five years. This program aims to encourage them to interact as a preparation to enter school life.

Children at this age should be given early exposure to education in order to stimulate the mind through various learning activities such as painting, writing, storytelling, reading, counting, etc. Activities such as creativity develop personality, social skills and interaction skills within the child[17].

In 2007, there were 234 FRS with a total student enrolment of 4,280 students[18]. Up till March 2010, a total of 4,917 children attended the FRS and this constitutes 44.6% of children aged between 3 to 5 years. A total of 358 teachers and reading encouragers were involved in the FRS[19].

Felda's Semai Bakti Hostel: FELDA's Semai Bakti Hostel was established in 1975 in order to house the new generation of students of the FELDA settlers and staff. The students housed in the hostel consist of form one to form five students in order to give them the chance to obtain an education. The Semai Bakti Hostel is also built to give them education opportunities in major cities [20].

Students who are placed in FELDA's Semai Bakti hostel will receive education in selected schools in the city. Apart from accommodation, FELDA also provides transport services to schools, extra classes, motivation, etc. The cost of the placement of students in the Semai hostel service is fully funded by the FELDA. Each year, FELDA allocates about RM10 million in order to finance the placement of FELDA generation students in the hostels.

A total of 12.651 students have benefited from FELDA's Semai Bakti Hostel since its inception in 1975 until December 2009[21].

FELDA's hostel has produced intellectuals and professionals among the settler communities throughout the country. Up till recently, FELDA has produced 1,576

PhD graduates, 1,258 Master's graduates, 21,871 Bachelor's degree graduates and 42,412 Diploma and Certificates graduates. FELDA's professional workforce consists of 4,254 engineers, 742 doctors, 1,367 accountants and 323 lawyers. Besides these, there are 18,044 professional officers, 18,212 teachers and 14,868 entrepreneurs in various fields [22].

Felda Tuition Scheme (FTS): The aim of the FELDA tuition scheme us to increase the academic performance of students from the settler community in national exams such as Primary School Achievement Test (UPSR), Lower Secondary Assessment (PMR) and Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM). FTS program was initiated in October 2004 in all primary and secondary schools in the FELDA schemes to form 3 and 5 students. In 2005, the STF is extended to students from standard 5 and 6. A total of 370 schools involved and from this number consists of 100 secondary schools and 270 primary schools. Each year FELDA allocates RM20 million to finance the FTS program. A total of 332,003 students have benefited from the FTS program [23].

Divisio	n of STF Stu	dents 2004-201	0[24].		
		Secondary		Secondary	
	Lower	School	Upper	School	
Year	Year 5	UPSR	PMR	SPM	Total
2004	-	-	16,631	18,319	34,950
2005	16,658	17,849	18,507	18,356	71,370
2006	12,386	16,958	15,725	15,174	60,243
2007	15,765	16,177	15,859	14,941	62,742
2008	10,617	11,787	13,742	13,786	49,932
2009	-	13,704	12,931	12,031	38,666
2010	-	8,100	3,000	3,000	14,100
	TOTAL	SUM			332,003

Science Learning Center (CLS): FELDA with the co-operation of the Ministry of Education (MOE) have established the Science Learning Center in 2008. The CLS is a special project in order to help FELDA students to be enrolled in the pure science stream in schools. The CLS is carried out through the co-operation between MOE and FELDA. MOE provides the infrastructure such as schools, dormitory, teachers and syllabi. FELDA, on the other hand, is responsible to finance the education costs such as teacher's allowances, motivational programs, trips and personal development.

The CLS provides a better organized science learning program with the provision of hostels and tuition schemes from form 4. Tuition classes for two hours a week is provided for pure science subjects which are physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics, additional mathematics and English [25]. In 2009, a total of 14 normal schools and boarding school have been chosen for the program; six schools in the FELDA compound and six school outside of the FELDA compound. Up till December 2009, a total of 1,803 students have benefited from the CLS program. Form that total, 1,166 students are children of the FELDA settlers and the remaining 637 students are children from the outside community [26].

Mara Junior Science College Felda (MRSMF): MARA Junior Science College FELDA (MRSMF) is located in Feldajaya, North of Trolak in Perak. The MRSMF buildings is the biggest school building in the country with many amenities such as hostels, lecture halls, laboratories, libraries, large halls, mosque, stadium, cafeteria and others. The school has a capacity of 1,050 students and this means that it can hold at most 210 students for each form (form 1-5) at any one time.

The MRSMF building was completed in 2009 with the cost of RM123 million and this does not include the cost of furniture, laboratory equipment and others.

FELDA provided the finance in order to support the administrative and operating costs. MARA provided the teachers and the teaching and learning materials. For 2010, FELDA allocated RM11.25 million in order to finance the cost of administering and maintenance costs of MRSMF.

The MRSMF building is the land mark of FELDA's awareness in providing educational facilities which are modern and complete.

The student admission criterion into MRSM consists of 80% of students who are the children of FELDA settlers and 20% of students from the public.

MRSMF had begun operation from 2010 and up till March 2010, the number of students in MRSMF is 742 students. From this number, 144 students are in form 1, 253 students are in form 2, 160 students in form3 and 185 students in form 4 [27].

Grants and Loans for Further Studies to IPTA / IPTS: In addition to educational facilities, FELDA also provides assistance and loans to eligible students who excel in their education. The various forms of assistance provided are intended as help and encouragement for the students to get the highest possible educational qualification.

FELDA provides three types of help to excellent students which are Help with Higher Education, FELDA's Higher Education Loan Scheme and FELDA Group's Scholarship.

Higher Education Assistance: Higher Education Assistance given to the children of settlers who are qualified and able to continue their studies to the Public1 Institutions of Higher Learning (IPTA) or Private Higher Educational Institutions (IPTS) that are recognized by the government. The educational assistance is used to fund full-time Diploma and Degree studies. This assistance is provided to ease the financial burden and encourage them to pursue studies at a higher level [28].

Number	Level	Grant (RM)
1	Diploma	500.00
2	Degree	1,000.00
3	Overseas Degree	1,500.00

For 2009, a total of 3,055 students have received the intensive help to institutions of higher learning. From the total of 3,055 students, 1459 pursued a diploma, 1,555 students perused a degree and 41 students pursued an overseas degree. The total allocation for the intensive help is RM2.3 million [29].

Felda Higher Education Loan Scheme (FHELS): This scheme is given in order to help the settler's children finance their education at institutions of higher learning. This higher education loan scheme is available to all the children of the FELDA settlers who are enrolled in public higher learning institutions or private higher learning institutions throughout the country. This scheme is also offered to those who did not receive any financial aid from any party [30].

Number	Level	Rate of the Loan per year (RM)
1	Diploma	4,500.00
2	Degree	6,000.00

For the year 2009, a total of 123 applications were received and granted. From this total, 67 were for diploma studies while 84 were for degree studies. The total value of the loan given was RM2.04 million [31].

Special Scheme for Excellent Students: In the year 2008, FELDA had offered 20 places for the Special Scheme for Excellent Students 2008 to SPM 2007 leavers who consist of the children and staff of FELDA.

In 2008, FELDA. From the allocated total, only 14 students were qualified and were sent to follow preparation programs in a few institution as follows [32]:

Number	Institution	Program	Program
1	UWC	IB Diploma	Engineering
2	KYUEM	A-Level	Engineering Accountancy Biotechnology
3	KMB	IB	Engineering Biotechnology

In 2009, FELDA had started sending students overseas. A total of 36 students have been sent to pursue their studies in the United States of America, United Kingdom and Ireland starting from August till October 2009. The division of students according to country is as follows:

Number	Country	Number of Students	Intake	Course
1	United States of America	3	August	Engineering
2	United Kingdom	32	September /October	Engineering Biotechnology Medicine Accountancy
3	Ireland	1	September	Medicine

Skills Training for the New Generation of Felda: The Skills Training for the New Generation of FELDA was conducted from 2005[33], especially for the new generation of SPM leavers who don't have any stable jobs and are still in FELDA. This program is held in order to train the new generation in order to train them in multiple fields so as to prepare them to get suitable jobs after the training had been finished. Each year, FELDA allocates a total of RM50 million for the program.

Certificate (6-24 months)	Diploma (21/2 – 3 years)	High Profile Courses
Courses Offered		
Computer Breeding Technician	■Nursing	Licensed Aircraft Maintenance Engineer (LAME) - 5 years
■Multimedia	■Maritime	■Trainee Junior Technician (TJT) – 2 years
 Farm Mechanization 	 Entrepreneurship 	■Pilot Cadet – 1 year, 9 months.
 Mechanical Engineering 	 Creativity and Innovation 	
 Information Technology 	 Mechanical Gas 	
 Automotive and others 	Farm Management	
	 Shipping 	
	 Electric Technician 	
	 Accountancy and others 	
Entry Requirements		
Passed the SPM examination with a minimum	Passed the SPM examination and fulfill	
requirement of passing Bahasa Malaysia.	other requirements stipulated by the field	1
	of study and the particular institution.	

Assistance and Loans for Settlers: The sacrifice and contribution of the settlers cannot be forgotten. In order to help the settlers increase their living standards and make them middle class people, FELDA provides them with various assistance and loans[33].

Settler's Welfare Fund: This fund was introduced in July 2005 with a total of RM500, 000 in funds in 2007. In 2008, the fund had been increase to RM1.5 million.

This fund was created in order to help the settler community to cope with:

- Chronic illnesses.
- Natural disasters.
- Support Materials.

This contribution is given in order to ease the burden that they need to cope with [34].

In 2007, a total of 280 applications had been received from the settlers and 207 applications that were worth RM1.06 million were approved. Up till March 2010, a total of 1,003 settlers have received a total of RM5.26 million from the fund[35].

Recipients of the Settler's Welfare Fund [36]

	Chronic	Natural	Support		Cost
Year	illnesses	disasters	Materials	Total	in RM
2005	13	-	3	16	97,844
2006	138	21	52	211	848,114
2007	148	25	82	255	956,165
2008	138	20	56	214	1,760,851
2009	159	19	72	250	1,285,632
2010 (March)	37	5	15	57	312,607
Total	633	90	280	1,003	5,261,213

Settler's Home Enlargement Fund: FELDA is also generous in offering housing loans to the settlers. The reason for this loan to be established in 2005 is to give the convenience to the settlers to build/modify their homes in FELDA [37].

The rate of the loan allowed is a minimum of RM10, 000 and a maximum of RM40, 000. Through this loan, the settlers can enjoy a better lifestyle. This no-interest loan is open to settlers who are qualified and not more than 70 years of age at the time the loan is approved. The administrative charge of 2.5% is only administered once throughout the entire loan payback duration to cover administrative costs. The maximum payback duration is 15 years.

Up till March 2009, a total of 21,550 settlers had their combined total of RM591, 778,000.00 loans approved for the enlargement/modification of their homes.

Recipients of	of the Set	ler's Hom	e Enlargemen	t Fund	[38]
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Year	Number of Borrowers	Value (RM)		
2005	320	7,295,000.00		
2006	739	16,675,000.00		
2007	7,223	195,015,000.00		
2008	7,929	185,512,000.00		
2009	3,346	116,958,000.00		
2010 (March)	1,993	70,323,000.00		
Total	21,550	591,778,000.00		

Settler's Computer Loan Scheme: FELDA hopes that the settlers are also computer-savvy. Thus, the Settler's Computer Loan Scheme was created in order to increase the computer-savviness of the settlers in information technology. This loan scheme had been created in 2005. This interest-free loan that is valued at RM2, 400 per individual in order to buy one unit of computer together with the necessary software is reserved for qualified settlers [39]. The payback period is 35 months. Through this package, the settlers are involved in the mainstream world of information without borders and at the same time not be left behind despite being in a rural area.

Up till December 2009, a total of 3,640 settlers had a combined total of RM9.09 million loans approved. For the period of January till March 2010, a total of 26 settlers had a combined total of RM62, 400 loans approved [40].

Felda Settler's Housing Project (FSHP): The FSHP program is carried out in order to help the settlers and their children to own an affordable home which is comfortable and perfect for them while at the same time develop the FELDA villages in an orderly manner. This also helps the government's efforts to speed the development of low-cost housing to the people. Up till recently, FELDA had carried out the FSHP program in Taman Mempaga Utama, Taman Bukit Goh Perdana, Taman Lepar Hilir Saujana and Taman Desa Keratong Pahang.

FSHP Project 2008

	Number of Housing Units				
	RKR	RKSR	Total number	Shops	
Project Name	Built	Built	of houses	Built	
Taman Mempaga Utama, Pahang	161	47	208	-	
Taman Bukit Goh Perdana, Pahang	338	139	477	4	
Taman Lepar Hilir Saujana, Pahang	192	58	250	5	
Taman Desa Keratong, Pahang	214	208	422	5	
Total	905	452	1,357	14	

		Number of Housing Units			
		RKR	RKSR		Shops
Project Name	Project Status	Built	Built	Total number of houses	Built
Pasak, Johor	Have started	423	339	762	11
Jengka 19, Pahang	Have started	186	83	269	-
Triang 3, Pahang	Have started	192	112	304	4
Jengka 11, Pahang	Site Approval Process	105	23	128	4
Chiku 5, Kelantan	Site Approval Process	277	121	398	4
Neram 1, Terengganu	Site Approval Process	111	28	139	4
Chini 3, Pahang	Site Approval Process	437	187	624	8
Total		1,731	893	2,624	35

New FSHP Projects That Are Currently Carried out

Besides that, FELDA also carried out commercial housing development in order to build homes for staff in a 3.42 hector area in Desa Semarak, Bandar Muadzam Shah, Pahang. This project had begun in 2006 and involved the building of 125 low-cost housing units with an estimated total project cost of RM9.4 million.

CONCLUSION

Various efforts are currently done and had been done in order to make sure that the welfare of the settlers are taken care of. Starting from the FELDA plan in Lurah Bilut, Bentong, Pahang, FELDA had moved fast and developed throughout the country and even the world. Hundreds of thousands of families had benefited from the opening of the organized development of land. FELDA as a government agency didn't only focus on the first generation of settler but also the second generation. The proof is that various programs had been arranged in order to make sure that the welfare of the second generation of settlers are not overlooked. This is done through the replanting program and the focus on the educational aspects at all levels in order to make sure that the following generations could obtain a stable and profitable income.

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