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There is still hope, say local authorities

DESPITE the challenges faced in ensuring food operators install grease traps, several local authorities in Selangor are seeing encouraging results.

The increasing amount of used oil collected also means less grease ends up in the drains, as well as better awareness among the public.

One of the more successful campaigns was Sepang Municipal Council's (MPSepang) project that had successfully turned used oil into Aedes Biobased Fuel (ABBF) for a mosquito fogging formula.

Collecting some 1,700kg a month, the oil collected under their "Kutipan Minyak Masak Terpakai" project is sent to the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) to be processed.

The project was introduced at high-rise residences through Joint Management Bodies and at landed properties through their residents associations.

Klang Municipal Council (MPK) successfully involved its staff as well as residents in its project while continuously encouraging food operators.

MPK Urban Planning officer Ruzaana Abdul Rahman said the council started the project in 2010 after realising that grease and food waste were polluting Sungai Kelang.

The council first reached out and educated their own staff, followed by food operators as they were the main contributors to river pollution in urban areas.

MPK also engaged residents through its River Rangers project.

"We realised that the food and grease had formed layers in the drains, causing flood in three main areas surrounding Sungai Pinang, Sungai Udang and Sungai Delek.

"So, we created the River Rangers project for the three villages, where the residents received training and these 'rangers' then help us collect used oil in their neighbourhood," said Ruzaana.

MPK also worked with Universiti Tenaga Nasional and companies, who drew up a collection schedule for the last Friday of every month.

As the number of participants increased, a system called EcoGen was created to help track success rate. The system also awarded reward points to registered users.

"Those interested in exchanging their oil for reward points can do so by registering in this online system.

"We offer various council services for the points collected," said Ruzaana.

> **"In the River Rangers project, residents receive training and these 'rangers' then help us collect used oil in their neighbourhood."**
>
> Ruzaana Abdul Rahman

MPK was also mulling over the plan to offer rebates for taxes, licensing fee and parking coupons as part of the reward system.

The reduced number of flash floods and clogged drains in these areas was one of the success markers the council noted.

While MPSepang and MPK are confident about the success of their project, other local councils such as Kajang Municipal Council (MPKj), Ampang Jaya Municipal Council (MPAJ), Petaling Jaya City Council and Subang Jaya Municipal Council are still assessing the effectiveness of their efforts.

MPAJ, for example, is putting together a grease trap campaign that was introduced via the River of Life (RoL) project to rehabilitate 110km of Sungai Kelang and Sungai Gombak from its current Class III-Class IV water quality (not suitable for body contact) to Class IIB (suitable for body and recreational usage) by 2020.

The council has received a grant worth over RM3mil for the entire RoL project and is in the midst of upgrading grease traps in all its markets and hawker centres.

MPAJ managed to adhere to the state Drainage and Irrigation Department's recommendation of less than 50mg/1 of fat grease and oil in the water discharged into the river.

MPKj is on track with some 7,221kg of used cooking oil collected up to September this year through companies.

Its main focus is to expand the project to various sectors, including residential areas, in the near future especially since the council has been receiving enquiries from the public.

Ruzaana says MPK started the project in 2010 after discovering oil and food particles were polluting Sungai Kelang.

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