

Praise for project to reduce waste at market

By **IMRAN HILMY**

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Teh (in white) posing with the participants of Project WE at Chowrasta Market in Penang. — Photos: LIM BENG TATT/The Star

TRADERS at Chowrasta Market in George Town, Penang, have lauded the effort by the state government to reduce organic waste at the market in the hope of becoming the greenest state in Malaysia by 2030.

They said the way they dumped waste from their stalls has changed since they participated in the programme called Project WE organised by Arts-ED, a Penang-based non-profit organisation, in May.

Fish trader Mohamad Koya Syeikh Abdullah, 48, said at first he felt it was troublesome to separate the waste but after a few months of guidance from the volunteers, he started to get used to it.

“We have to separate our normal waste and organic waste in different containers.

"After that, we have to bring the containers to the loading bay.

"The waste will then be collected every week for compost by a group of farmers," he said when met at the Project WE: Sharing and Appreciation Ceremony event at the market recently.



Chan serving a customer at Chowrasta Market.

Koya, who has been selling fish at the market for the past 10 years, said he would gather the normal waste from his stall by himself before throwing it into a specially designed roll-on roll-off (RORO) bin located within the market compound at the end of the day.

Another fish trader, Chan Kok Seng, 42, said waste separation was easy for him.

"There is no fuss at all," said Chan.

His colleague Mohd Yasin Haja Moideen, 50, described the programme as good for traders in the market.

"This project has taught us how to improve the working environment in the market.

"At the same time, we are able to learn new things," he said.

Project WE is a bottom-up effort by the community at Chowrasta Market in reducing waste via a creative approach in the hope of achieving economic sustainability.



Visitors at Chowrasta Market watching a video during the event.

The ongoing project, which involved 35 traders, saw 180kg of organic waste being collected every day since it was implemented in May.

Komtar assemblyman Teh Lai Heng, who was at the event, said 1.9 tonnes of waste per day, or 58.9 tonnes per month, were generated at Chowrasta Market.

“Waste separation and minimising organic waste are supposed to be practised by Penangites.

“This practice can help the state government to minimise pollution to the environment,” he said.

Khairuddin Ahmad Khalil, who is the manager of IMG Global northern branch, the management company responsible for managing the market, said they would always support whatever programme or plan organised at the community or state-level for the benefit of the traders.

Besides being organised by Arts-ED and supported by IMG Global, Project WE is also supported by the Penang Island City Council.

This initiative is made possible with support from community partner Yayasan Hasanah .