



World Youth Foundation has joined one the world largest environmental campaigns "Clean Up the World", a community based environmental campaign that inspires and empowers communities from every corner of the globe to clean up, fix up and conserve their local environment.

The "2nd Annual Clean Up Melaka 2008" campaign held on December 6, 2008 was supported by CIMB Bank and CIMB Foundation, SWM Environment, Melaka Historic City Council, Melaka River and Coastal Development Corporation, Renaissance Melaka Hotel, Red Crescent, students from Manipal Medical College and others. The clean-up covered the area along the banks of Melaka River.

Melaka River known in history as a leading trade gateway in the region dubbed as "Venice of the East", but its importance soon diminished with the silting of mud, making it accessible only to smaller boats. However, with the continuous initiative from the State Government and City Council, Melaka River is now given a fresh picturesque appearance. On July 7, 2008, Melaka was inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage List by the World Heritage Committee.

### **Play our part to preserve the environment**

Tzu Chi Melaka was one of the volunteering organizations invited to participate in the activity. More than 100 Tzu Chi volunteers were mobilized for the event. An exhibition booth was set up to display environmentally-friendly dining utensils and food containers. The booth also displayed pictorial posters on environmental protection and recycled bins.

The Centre for Humanistic Buddhism Malacca participated by promoting the garbage enzyme. Garbage Enzyme is not only applicable as a washing detergent, but it also produces ozone which can reduce the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, thus reducing global warming.

At 9 am, some 300 volunteers were divided into four groups, of which three were led to Bunga Raya, Kg Jawa and Kg Hulu to pick up rubbish and recyclables. The fourth group was given the task of planting trees. As it is imperative that great effort be taken to maintain the cleanliness of the river, workers from Melaka Historical City Council could be seen fishing out rubbish from the river in a sampan.



### **Recycling is part of environmental protection**

Mr. Raphakrishan, who was in charge of the tree planting activity, demonstrated the steps of planting a tree so that it could grow healthily. He said, "One must nurture the flower seedling like nurturing a baby. We must provide a suitable amount of fertilizer according to its needs; our movement has to be tender too..."

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He put a small quantity of fertilizer into a hole before putting in the Bougainvillea seedling and then covering the hole with soil. Two Bougainvillea seedlings were planted, one on each side of a big tree. Raphakrishnan told the group, "Just imagine how beautiful it would be when the Bougainvillea plants climb up the big tree with their flowers in blossom." He also mentioned that more than 400 Bougainvillea trees will be planted along the river bank to beautify the city.

CIMB staff, Ms Chen, came well-prepared with a trash picker. With her son in tow, she took the opportunity to educate him on the importance of not littering. Another participant, Ms Mo, said as she picked up the rubbish, "Picking rubbish is tiring; so we better don't simply throw away rubbish."

Ruzaidah, one of the participants, heard about Tzu Chi for the first time at this event. She was very happy to know that Tzu Chi helps disaster victims all over the world, regardless of race or religion. As such, she would also like to be a Tzu Chi member. She said Tzu Chi had also widened her view, as she had never known that recycled PET bottles could be turned into blankets to save many people. She declared that she would not treat PET bottles as rubbish anymore.

Environmental protection is not restricted to just doing recycling, but it also includes purifying of our minds. This was what Mr Sim, the Master of Ceremony for the event, found out from a Tzu Chi volunteer. He too was amazed to see a blanket made from recycled PET bottles and Tzu Chi environmentally-friendly dining utensils.

Gajah Berang School's teacher, Shao Bi Xuan, brought along five girl guides to serve on that day. She said she brought students to serve the flood victims in 2006 as she wanted them to "Do a good turn everyday", a motto for the scouts and guides. She bought each of her students a tumbler sold at Tzu Chi booth.



The organizer also chose disposable plates made of tapioca, which can be dissolved in 28 days, as an action taken to protect the environment. This product is natural and made in Malaysia.

### **We have to start as an individual**

Assemblyman Datuk Abdul Latiff Tamby Chik (local government and environment) delivered the speech of YAB Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam, the Chief Minister of Melaka and the Chairman of World Youth Foundation. He said that while climate change is a global problem, individual and community-based action is an essential first step.

For the sake of our future generations, it is imperative that we take serious action in our community to reduce the impact of climate change taking place in the world today. It is a common notion that the problem is so big that an individual action will not make a difference. But it does, and every little bit helps.

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Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam also hoped that Melaka would be one of the cleanest cities in the world.

By Hew Kwee Heong and Tan Siew Chern