

NEWS CLIPPING

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Boost for river rehabilitation initiative

GAB Foundation together with Global Environment Centre (GEC) and Department of Irrigation and Drainage (DID) conducted a workshop recently for JPS officials as part of their Urban River Rehabilitation Handbook initiative. Launched by DID director-general Datuk Ahmad Husaini Sulaiman, the workshop aimed to provide DID officials with first-hand knowledge on how to utilise the handbook to their best advantage, with community engagement as a key focus.

The handbook titled *A Handbook on Urban River Management Through Local Community Participation*, launched in April this year, highlights key learnings and best practices developed during the three-year urban river rehabilitation project spearheaded by GAB Foundation and GEC.

The river rehabilitation project is a key initiative under the Foundation's W.A.T.E.R Project (Working Actively Through Education & Rehabilitation) which aims to engage and empower various stakeholders to make the choice to conserve our water source.

To-date, the W.A.T.E.R Project has

received excellent support and recognition from numerous government agencies including the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry, DID Selangor, Lembaga Urus Air Selangor (Luas) and the Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ).

The full-day workshop held in Subang Jaya saw a turnout of 70 representatives from GAB Foundation, GEC and DID representatives across the country.

Some of the highlights at the workshop included an introduction of the W.A.T.E.R Project and achievements of the Sungai Way Rehabilitation Project by GAB Foundation management committee director Renuka Indrarajah and a talk by GEC's River Care Programme coordinator Dr K Kalithasan, who presented a comprehensive explanation of how the handbook can be used as a guide to community involvement and why it is crucial for the people to be part of the project.

Speaking at the workshop, Ahmad Husaini said: "The main source of drinking water comes from our rivers and we all have a role to play in protecting and conserving it.

"I'm pleased that GAB Foundation has taken the lead in involving the local community in its river rehabilitation efforts as this is in line with DID's 'One State One River' programme which is targeted at restoring selected rivers in each state with full stakeholder participation."

According to Renuka, community participation was a key factor in ensuring the success of the Foundation's Sungai Way rehabilitation project.

"The success of the project is the culmination of hard work, support and collaboration from various stakeholders. Now that the three-year project is completed, we would like to share our learning and experiences with DID officials and help them adopt and adapt some of the best practices in their respective river rehabilitation projects," she said.

To help DID officials get the most out of the workshop, a field excursion was organised for participants to visit the Sungai Way river site, Desa Mentari's composting area and the River Care Education Centre.