

Educated youth take up 3D jobs, too

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GEORGE TOWN: If you think young Malaysians will not do the 3D (dangerous, dirty and difficult) work, just look around and see who are keeping the city clean.

Dressed in yellow shirts and sweating under the sun with brooms in hand, young men are taking their task seriously to keep our city clean.

Out of the 887 general workers in the Penang Island City Council (MBPP), 291 of them are below 30 years old and quite a few are degree and diploma holders too.

One of them, Mohammad Zulfadli Muhammad, 28, is an electrical engineering degree holder.

He joined over a year ago and his first task was to sweep the roads and clean the drains in Minden Heights, Gelugor.

"At first, I felt a little embarrassed," he said with a laugh.

He recalled feeling self-conscious when passers-by looked at him as he lowered himself into a large drain to clear up the rubbish.

"But after a while, I got used to it. And now I love it," he said.

Mohammad Zulfadli said he found great satisfaction after sweeping up a dirty street or clearing a clogged drain.

"I try to sweep up every little bit of rubbish on the road. After I am done, I love to admire how clean everything looks," he declared.

He reports for work at 6.30am and ends before 4pm. On Fridays, the work ends at 12.15pm and they are off on Saturdays and Sundays.

"I am healthier and stronger since I became a council worker. We get to sweat it out five days a week.

"The task is different each day. Sometimes, we sweep. Other times, we are cleaning street litter bins or washing something. We never get bored," he grinned.

Mohammad Zulfadli said on top of his basic salary, he gets three allowances for housing, cost of

They take tasks seriously to keep streets clean



Satisfying work: Mohammad Zulfadli sweeping in front of the City Hall building at the Esplanade as other young MBPP workers clean a restroom near the food court along Gurney Drive in George Town.

living and public service. Add overtime to it and he said his income is enough to help him and his sister care for their aged parents.

He said those who are willing to wade into monsoon drains and clean up the filth get an extra 3D allowance.

MBPP disallows public disclosure of its staff income, but the take-home pay of MBPP general workers revealed to *The Star*, including overtime, is more than the typical pay of a fresh graduate.

Mohammad Zulfadli said after graduating, he could not find a job that matched his degree, and he could not stay jobless because he had to support his parents.

"When MBPP has a vacancy that needs someone with electrical engineering knowledge, I will surely apply. But for now, I don't mind this work," he said.

His colleague Mohd Anuar Mat,



38, joined nine years ago when he was 29.

"I was a bank despatch clerk before this. I joined MBPP because of the added benefits. Road sweeping is honest and satisfying work," he said.

MBPP Urban Services Department executive officer Mohammad Arif

Azhar said in the last two years, he began seeing more youth applying to be general workers.

"This boils down to the council's efforts in changing the perception of 3D jobs, providing opportunities for general workers to climb up the career ladder and helping them

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with self-development.

He said technology has made urban services work more appealing to the younger generation.

"In the past, all the work was done manually. Now with machines and better cleaning chemicals, the work is less exhausting and council workers work efficiently and with fewer hazards," he added.

Mohamad Ariff said the worker's medical care is extended to their family members too.

"They can also get a low interest loan to buy a motorcycle," he added.

Three times a year, he said MBPP takes some of the general workers on trips to visit other local authorities in Malaysia.

"This is to expose them to the different systems and methods that the others use," he said.

Mohamad Ariff said the council also tries to create a good environment for its workers.

"We have many sports clubs that are active in football, futsal, hiking, biking and even dancing," he said.

Mayor Datuk Yew Tung Seang said the council was glad for the dedication of the general workers.

"But I want to remind Penangites not to take them for granted.

"Our environment and cleanliness are everyone's responsibility. We have great general workers, but that doesn't mean you should expect them to clean up after you," he said.

Over at the Seberang Pra Municipal Council (MPSP) on the mainland, 856 of its workers are below 30, from the total workforce of 4,035 workers.

Its president Datuk Rozali Mohamad said the rest of the 1,746 workers were aged between 31 and 40, 977 workers aged between 41 and 50, and 456 workers aged 50 and above.

"The youngest is a 21-year-old woman. We also have 36 people who are disabled and aged between 35 and 54," he said.