Global enterprise delivers help to restore mangroves

Efforts alongside local NGO at Pulau Carey empower Mah Meri community to protect their livelihood

A MULTI-PHASE mangrove rehabilitation effort on Pulau Carey in Klang, Selangor, seeks to restore vulnerable coastal ecosystems while empowering the Mah Meri Orang Asli whose livelihoods depend on them.

Malaysia's mangrove forest cover declined from 629,038ha in 2017 to about 586,548ha today, caused by a combination of coastal erosion and human-induced factors, said transportation giant Federal Express Corporation (FedEx).

For the Mah Meri living in Pulau Carey, mangroves were a foundation resource, used for traditional roofing, handicrafts and fishing practices that have been passed down for generations, FedEx said in a media statement.

The latest chapter in a four-year collaboration between FedEx and non-profit organisation (NGO) Treat Every Environment Special (TrEES) involves 21 employees across two phases of rehabilitation work.

In the first phase, volunteers prepared young mangrove seedlings for the nursery, gaining hands-on experience in propagation and a deeper understanding of how these ecosystems protect coastlines.

Seedlings were then nurtured at Kampung Orang Asli Sungai Judah until they were ready for replanting.

In the second phase, volunteers planted 180 api-api trees (*Avicennia*), 60 bakau kurap (*Rhizophora mucronata*), 210 bakau minyak (*Rhizophora apiculata*) and 50 nipah (*Nypa fruticans*) along river reserves.

Across both phases, community members from the village guided volunteers with traditional ecological knowledge shaped over generations through their close relationship with the forest.

"We believe sustainability has to be rooted in the realities of each community we serve," said FedEx Malaysia managing director Woon Tien Long.

"Being welcomed by the Mah Meri has given our team members the chance to learn directly from the community and contribute in ways that create lasting value.

FedEx volunteers planting a mangrove seedling as part of rehabilitation efforts at Pulau Carey, carried out with the aim of empowering the Orang Asli community. — Handout

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>
> Woon Tien Long

"We remain committed to supporting community-driven efforts that strengthen both people and the environment.

"Partnering with TrEES on this rehabilitation goes beyond planting trees.

"It is about standing alongside the community as they work to protect what sustains them and making sure our team plays a direct role in that effort," Woon said.

TrEES director Leela Panikkar said the initiative demonstrated how meaningful outcomes could be achieved when multiple stakeholders, including environmental organisations, local communities, companies and government agencies, worked together towards a shared goal.

Through the support of partners like FedEx, and involvement of the Drainage and Irrigation Department, they were helping to ensure that mangrove rehabilitation efforts were both effective and sustainable, she said.

Healthier mangrove forests also contribute to food security through small-scale fisheries, create new ecotourism opportunities and build stronger local stewardship for long-term climate resilience.

Past efforts in the Pulau Carey collaboration included rebuilding a kindergarten perimeter wall using 1,500 ecobricks, which was carried out in 2022.

In 2023 and 2024, volunteers helped plant, harvest and distribute fresh produce through a 93sq m community vegetable garden in the Klang Valley, promoting food security among underserved urban families.

The mangrove rehabilitation project is the most ecologically ambitious chapter of FedEx Cares, the company's global community engagement programme.

The corporation said it was one way FedEx lived out its purpose of connecting people and possibilities, as well as its ambition to make the world a better place through in-kind shipping, volunteering time and expertise, and charitable giving.