

Some are still going to bed hungry

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PETALING JAYA: Food banks are seeing a greater demand for help as more Malaysians are pushed into food insecurity, say non-governmental organisations involved in the movement.

The Lost Food Project general manager Mohd Syazwan Mokhtar said there was an urgent need for everyone to reflect on the food consumption culture as “we are already wasting higher than the global average per household, while some in the community are still going to bed hungry”.

“And for food banks like us, this means a greater demand for food assistance as more people are pushed into food insecurity.

“At the same time, we waste about 24% or 4,005 tonnes of food which are still edible. This is sufficient to provide three meals to 2,970,000 people for a day,” he told *The Star*.

The amount rises between 15% and 20% during festive periods like

the recently concluded Hari Raya Aidilfitri holiday, said Mohd Syazwan.

He also shared that The Lost Food Project, a not-for-profit organisation that “rescues” surplus food and finds it a new home with people who need it most, has been able to increase the amount of “lost” food it rescues per month.

“This is mainly due to an increase in food donor partnerships that we have accumulated over the past two years, which is an indication that more people and industry players are willing to be part of the solution.”

The Lost Food Project has been able to rescue 99,943kg of food per month so far this year, which amounts to 318,090 meals.

This is up from its average monthly amount in 2020 and 2019.

In 2020, The Lost Food Project could rescue 38,211kg of food monthly, which added up to 109,175 meals while in 2019, its monthly average was 39,152kg or 127,414 meals.

Last year, the average per month was 103,263kg or 339,706 meals.

Mohd Syazwan also spelt out ways for Malaysians to cope amid the rising prices of food.

“Growing your own food is also another great alternative to reduce spending at the grocery store and take some of the weight off your pockets,” he said.

He added that food waste was a collective problem which required a collective solution.

“Everyone needs to do their part to reduce waste and again, reflect on our lifestyle while also looking at those among us who do not have the same privileges we have.

“NGOs, the corporate sector, the government and even the masses need to realise the role that each of us play in this regard and work towards creating a sustainable future.”

Kechara Soup Kitchen operations director Justin Cheah said with the rising food prices, more of the less fortunate would resort to seeking help from food banks, thus the soup kitchen's cost to provide meals will be higher.

In light of the soaring prices,



Noble effort: The Lost Food Project regularly collects and distributes surplus fruits and vegetables from Pasar Borong KL, the nation's largest wholesale supplier, preventing fresh produce from being thrown into a landfill to rot.

Cheah advised Malaysians to stop food wastage and choose more pocket-friendly options such as eating at home and buying alternative ingredients and local products.

He also said to be on the lookout for special offers at hypermarkets, which tend to put items with shorter life span for sale towards the end of the day.