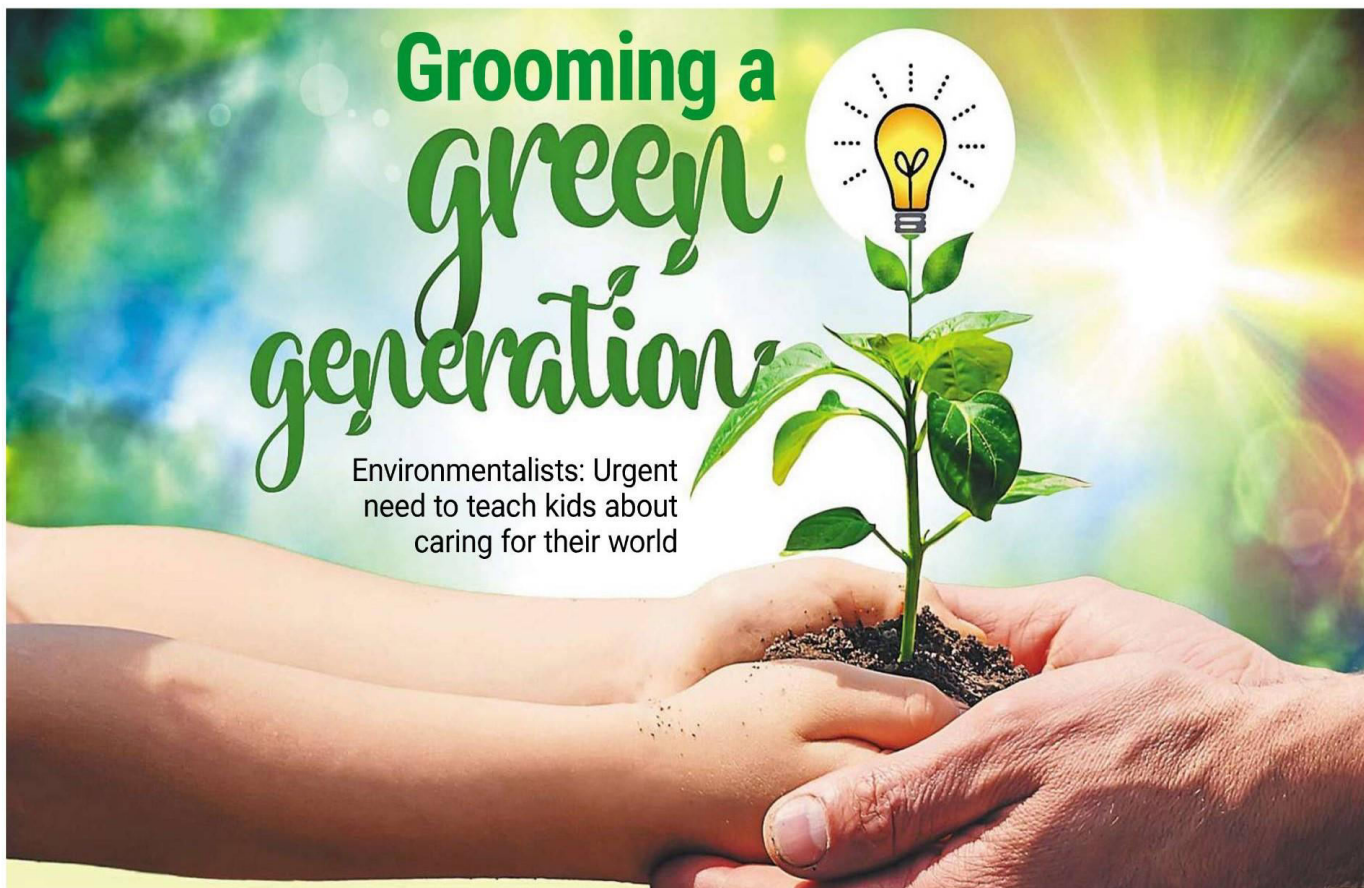


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## THE ISSUE

THE recent floods and erratic weather which saw several states, including the Klang Valley, submerged in water are a wake-up call for more to be done to combat climate change.

And this needs to start in schools. Children need to be taught the importance of caring for the planet.

Academy of Sciences (ASM) council member Dr Helen Nair said environmental sustainability and planetary health need to be part of almost every subject taught in schools.

"They need to be embedded in the subjects not just in schools, but in universities, as well," she told *StarEdu*.

She said elements of planetary health and sustainability must be discussed in different forms and contexts so that "it gets into the soul of the student".

Giving an example, she suggested these be part of Economics taught at secondary and tertiary levels so students can learn to weigh the risks and benefits of economic activities to the environment and nature.

Lessons on the environment can also be embedded in religious studies, languages and even mathematics, she said.

"This will bring environmental problems to the forefront so that students can be fully immersed in learning and loving nature.

"Allow them to understand and protect nature for the next generation as well as for themselves. This is what we want.

"A complete change in mindset has to be introduced and this can-

not be captured in just one subject, lesson or module," said Helen.

Citing climate change as also a factor for flood disasters in the country, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob, on Feb 4, announced that a subject on disaster management at school, college and university levels could be introduced to enable the Malaysian Family to adapt to the new norms.

Yayasan Khazanah alumnus Syed Malek Faisal Syed Mohamad said it is important to continue the effort in nurturing climate change and sustainability from an early age via formal or informal education.

He said students can participate actively in programmes or events organised by any organi-

sations or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on climate change action and sustainability.

"This could include creating awareness campaigns, organising fundraising activities, promoting recycling, planting trees, and cleaning rivers," said the 2011 scholar with a strong passion for sustainability and climate change.

Syed Malek Faisal has delivered talks and presentations at various national and international events on new energy including the Smart Cities Asia 2020 and the APAC Solar Energy Digital Event last September.

He said the younger generation

now have more information with most of them being active on social media.

"With all this knowledge, they would have seen the impact of what humans have done to the environment.

"The devastation from excessive deforestation can clearly be seen through global warming and flooding," he said, while calling on the younger generation to leverage technology and social media to create awareness of climate change.

This, said Syed Malek Faisal, who is now Petronas New Energy head of business development, encourages youth activism, making them agents of change. — **By REBECCA RAJAENDRAM**

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