

# The importance of environmental health

WORLD Health Organization (WHO) defines environmental health as the assessment and control of those environmental factors that can potentially affect health. It is targeted towards preventing disease and creating health-supportive environments.

Simply put, it is the sub-area of public health that deals with all the environmental stressors that can impact our physical and mental well-being.

Environmental health in Malaysia has emerged since the early day of Independence.

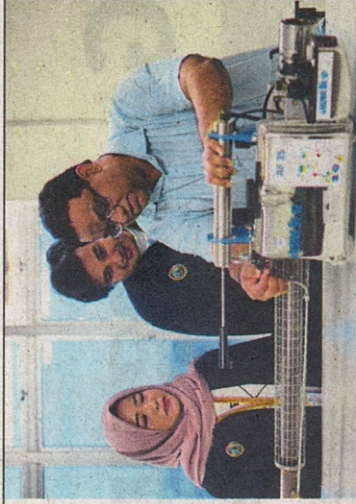
The Ministry of Health, including the Local Authority has designated a post of "Environmental Health Officer" (EHO), formerly known as the "Health Inspector". The profession has evolved and they are responsible for many environmental health- and safety-related matters.

The EHOs tend to matters from hygienic food preparation, water

quality and sanitation, environmental pollution control, noise control, air quality control and management, pest and vector control, general surveillance, waste management and prevention of communicable diseases. It is a multidisciplinary field, which focuses on environmental protection, disease prevention, health education and industrial hygiene.

However, many students are unaware of the career pathway and job opportunities in this area. It is not only in the government sectors as the demand from various industries are increasing. For example, in the construction industry, the company has to hire at least one Environmental Officer on site and demand is expected to grow with multiple mega projects in the pipeline.

"We would like to encourage the younger generation to enrol in the



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Environmental Health programme so our nation may overcome the shortage of manpower in Environmental Health sector," said UniKL MESTECH Environmental Health section head, Mohamed Zul Fadhli.

One of the initiatives is through education and training in environmental health programmes. Currently, UniKL MESTECH offers three bachelor's degree programmes - Environmental Health, Biomedical Laboratory and Occupational Safety and Health. UniKL MESTECH's intake is in September.

■ For more details, call 03-8739 5894.