

Green Radio: Educating, empowering urbanites

Without much fanfare, Jakarta-based Green Radio 89.2 FM has consistently positioned itself as an environmentally conscious radio station. Green Radio zeros in on classic urban ecological matters — from waste, floods to air pollution — through its on- and off-air shows to facilitate environmental awareness among Jakartans.

“Green Radio focuses [its programs] on environmental issues in order to raise people’s awareness on such matters. We also encourage our audience to take part in restoring and maintaining the environment within their own neighborhoods,” Green Radio managing director Tosca Santoso told The Jakarta Post. Green Radio provides campaigns on environmental issues through news items, public service announcements, radio documentaries and features as well as talk shows. The station’s audience comprises mainly of people in their 20s.

Songs with pro-environmental messages as well as environmental-conscious musicians are a staple of the station’s music selection as well as welcomed guests. “We just celebrated our sixth anniversary recently, and during the celebration party we invited Navicula, a band that promotes environmental conservation,” said Tosca. Green Radio, which is part of Radio KBR68H group, was established as a result of the flooding that hit about 60 percent of Jakarta in 2007, and has been a reliable information center regarding ecological matters ever since.

“Initially, in KBR radio, we had a special segment that focused on Jakarta. But, we then decided to develop the segment into a radio station of its own, specifically aimed at helping Jakartans during severe flooding,” said Tosca. The management team came to the conclusion that the perennial flooding was a result of environmental damage, which has had a negative impact on the quality of life in Jakarta. He said that on flood awareness, Green Radio programs — both on-air and off-air — promoted that creating biopori or mini water catchments in private residences as well as encouraging Jakartans to plant trees in upstream areas to stem the flow of floodwaters heading toward Jakarta.

On Feb. 4, he said Green Radio invited Jakarta Governor Joko Widodo to plant trees in around Puncak peak in West Java. “The program shows that we’re not only airing pro-environment programs but also events that support our mission to encourage sustainability and environmental awareness in order to provide a better world for future generations.” While it has increased its environmental activism and community programs, the station itself has never veered from its primary objective of broadcasting positive messages and promoting solutions for flood mitigation, waste management, renewable energy as well as forestry issues.

“Jakarta is slowly improving with regards to flood management. However, flooding is still a serious problem for us. Therefore, we’re encouraging people to be more active in planting trees, especially in Hambalang, Sentul and Mega Mendung [Bogor, West Java] areas. “Those areas are vital water catchment areas,” explained Tosca. Concerning waste management, the station recently began collaborating with Waste4Change in promoting basic waste management principles — reduce, reuse and recycle. Waste Change, a community-generated waste management service, was initiated by youths aiming to endorse simple techniques to clean up urban areas. As for new energy, Green Radio is all up for bright ideas on new energy to avoid the country’s dependency to fossil fuel in order to reduce gas emission. The radio building even applies sun-generated electricity.

Green Radio loves to work with young people with positive ideas. “We fully support young people with great ideas and initiatives, including Waste4Change. Our station is a place for them to spread their messages and inform the public about their activities,” Tosca says. “Green Radio will never walk alone because we always walk hand in hand with environmental communities toward the goal of providing a better quality of life for all.” Besides Waste Change, the station also works with organic farming communities and environmental organizations such as the Indonesian Forum for the Environment (Walhi) and Greenpeace. Reaching out to the private sectors, the radio station has also been working closely with several environmentally conscious companies, including The Body Shop, Astra International, Toshiba, Sharp and Allianz Insurance.

“This year, we started working together with MRT Jakarta to update the public on the ongoing developments of the project,” said Tosca, adding that he believed an integrated public transportation network was the solution to traffic congestion in Jakarta. “We’re attempting to change the mind-set of people in Greater Jakarta,” Green Radio cannot ignore the congestion problems in Jakarta since poor system has a direct contribution to the city’s air pollution. As a country with the third-largest tropical rainforest in the world — more than 160 million hectares, Indonesia faces various challenges in managing its forests. Forest fires in Riau, for example, has become regular news headline as it triggers thick haze, which affects as far as neighboring countries. Keeping the problem in mind, Green Radio opens a branch in peat-rich Riau capital Pekanbaru, which is located in the heart of haze problem, to help raising awareness of the issue. “In Riau, we work together with several non-governmental organizations that care about peatland. With them, we’re trying to figure out on how to manage peatland without burning them,” Tosca says.