

City's trash-sorting campaign makes progress as expats join in

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Shanghai has made remarkable progress in its trash-sorting campaign since its garbage classification regulations went into effect on July 1, 2019, with waste separation becoming a way of life for both local residents and expats.

At Gubei International Garden in downtown Changning District, Michelle Wang, a Filipino expat who has been living in Shanghai for 23 years, 15 of them in the community, meticulously put different types of trash into corresponding bins one by one yesterday afternoon.

"I had the habit of doing it on my own before the garbage classification regulations went into effect, and I have the awareness to separate my own garbage," she said.

More than that, she also got involved in promoting awareness about

trash classification among local expat groups.

"I think it is a very good project, and I was there to support it," she told Shanghai Daily. "I helped in the discussions and promotional activities. Overall, I think it is good because it is very environmental friendly."

Wang has perceived tangible changes under the campaign.

"I think people are very much conscious today, and are more disciplined about hygiene. It starts from small habits and it starts at home, which is a good discipline," she noted.

"Shanghai is very clean, and all this starts from home."

Wang is an epitome of expats' active participation in Shanghai's garbage classification efforts.

The Gubei complex is home to 1,200 residents, about 40 percent of them expats. Promotion materials and garbage classification manuals were translated

into Japanese, Korean, and English to cater to their needs, along with multilingual signs for disposal guidance.

The community has also upgraded temporary disposal spots, adding lights and hand-washing facilities.

"Foreign residents played an active role in our volunteer work as they spared no effort in promoting trash classification and the disposal mode to other expat neighbors," Xu Lan, a neighborhood committee official, explained.

Sun Bingchao, a community garbage sorting volunteer, has witnessed the improvement in residents' trash-sorting habit over the past four years. His duty is checking whether trash is disposed of in the right bins.

"The accuracy rate of trash classification among residents of the complex has now hit over 90 percent, and they are very active and willing in waste sorting as they already separate the trash at home before disposal," Sun told Shanghai Daily.

At the beginning, he said he found recyclable waste was often mixed with dry trash, which, four years later, has been stamped out.

"Through education and communication over the past years, trash sorting has become a habit among residents, and expats are also doing an excellent job," Sun observed.

The complex will soon introduce an intelligent garbage collection machine to collect and recycle paper, plastic, textile, metal and glass waste.

It can automatically weigh trash and exchange cash for residents as reward based on weight.

When the trash amount approaches the spillover level, the machine will send an automatic alarm for clearing and transportation.

The Shanghai Greenery and Public Sanitation Bureau said that over 95 percent of local residential complexes now meet trash-sorting standards.

The city sorted 8,843 tons of wet trash daily in the first five months of this year, up from 6,950 tons in June 2019, before the law took effect, according to latest bureau figures.

From January to May, 16,915 tons of



Michelle Wang throws waste in the disposal spot in her community, Gubei International Garden, in Shanghai's downtown Changning District on October 16. — All photos by Dong Jun



Michelle Wang, an expat from the Philippines, listens to a neighborhood official in front of her community's bulletin board.