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 **earth matters**



Pupils at Dubai's Kindergarten Starters put cooking oil in a collection bin so it can be recycled into biofuel. *Antonie Robertson / The National*

## Pupils energised by used cooking oil plan

### Youngsters teach friends and family about recycling

**Mahak Mannan**

Pupils at UAE schools have been collecting used cooking oil from their homes to recycle it into biofuel.

The programme was set up by the Blue waste management company in Dubai and has involved pupils from nursery age through to high schoolers.

Delhi Private School in Sharjah collected 162 litres of used cooking oil, and its pupils taught their parents about the benefits of recycling oil they would usually throw down the drain.

"When we started collecting

the oil, it turned out only 40 per cent of pupils knew you could re-use or recycle cooking oil," said one pupil, Rohan Kapur.

"By the end of our campaign, 98 per cent of us were collecting used cooking oil and we spread the word about it.

"We spoke to our parents, neighbours and restaurants to collect used cooking oil."

Mathilde Allard Khalifa, corporate social responsibility coordinator at Blue, said many families were unaware that used cooking oil could damage the environment.

"We usually collect 190,000 litres of used cooking oil a month from 2,000 restaurants in Dubai to convert it into biofuel," she said.

"But many households are not aware of the damage that is done by throwing away used oil.

 **Many households were not aware of the damage done by throwing away the oil**

"It blocks the drains, goes into the ground and pollutes the environment.

"Sometimes it is released in the water, causing water pollution, and it can even make it back to the food chain through pipes and drains."

The campaign to collect used oil started as a limited-term competition between five schools. However, now there are permanent collection bins for children to contribute whenever they can.

"This way we can reach out to household too."

The five schools that participated were Little Flower English School, Elite English School, Kindergarten Starters, Gems New Millennium Schools and Delhi Private School.

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