

Residents commit to saving power and water

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Dubai: It is as easy as switching off the lights in most cases and once you start, everyone around you will start too. That is what happened to Tarané Ali Khan, 22, a public relations officer from India, once she pledged to reduce her energy consumption through the Heroes of the UAE campaign.

Thousands of people have pledged to reduce their energy consumption in the UAE through the local campaign launched earlier this year which aims to educate residents on the country's depleting energy and water resources.

More people are being urged to change their habits to make a huge impact on the environment by the Emirates Wildlife Society in association with WWF (EWS-WWF) and the Environment Agency of Abu Dhabi (EAD) who launched the pledge in mid-February.

At the Ali Khan residence, the air conditioning has gone down a few degrees and the lights are switched off more often than before.

"We also switch off the plugs of our appliances," said Tarané. "We asked our building if it would be possible to get some light sensors installed in the corridors as well.

"They told us they would think about it but a few of us will keep asking them. It really is the small things that make a difference," she said.

So far, with more than 2,000 pledges made during the first phase, enough energy has been saved to power 700 apartments for one year, EWS-WWF said.

Tarané said: "I took part in the Earth Hour with my family. My dad kept asking if the hour was over but it started a good discussion at home. The street lights also went out outside which was encouraging!"

According to Tanzeed Alam, the climate change and sustainability manager at EWS-WWF, an estimated 20 per cent of electricity consumption in the UAE households is currently being wasted. Alam says that by following online tips from the heroesoftheuae.ae website, immediate energy and financial savings are possible.

"It is a message that is steadily spreading. To date, if all individuals who have pledged [to save power] follow through on their intentions, we would save enough energy to power some 700 apartments in the UAE. We want this number to keep increasing," he said.

Natasha Adnani, 22, born in India and raised in Dubai, said she had pledged to use less energy to see the effect it can have across the world. "Mass contribution put together will really show what we can do," she said. At home Adnani and her family have also started switching off the wall sockets feeding TV plugs, and the time spent in the shower has been.

"Once my laptop is charged I use it on its battery pack instead of leaving it plugged in all the time. It's tiny little things but it works," she said.

Similarly Kaz Fairs, 28, a consultant from the United Kingdom made her pledge to save power as a way to "keep myself in check". Lunch in her office has taken a drastic change with colleagues drinking from personal cups and using their own cutlery.

Ecological Footprint

The UAE has the highest per capita Ecological Footprint in the world, meaning that if everyone in the world consumed natural resources at the same rate as an average UAE resident, we would need the equivalent of 4.5 planets to sustain that level of consumption.

To make a pledge, please visit www.heroesoftheuae.ae.

(Gulf News)