

# Solid Waste Management... turning Waste into Gold!





## Experience

The SRC aims to ensure a healthy and safe living for vulnerable groups and communities. Since the 1970ies SRC addresses water, sanitation and hygiene as important determinants of health.

Annually around 150'000 people benefit from improved access to water and sanitation, learn how to change hygiene practises and how to contribute to a clean, safe and healthy environment.

The SRC follows a holistic approach to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), integrating solid waste management (SWM) as a component into comprehensive health projects. The SRC is experienced in rural and in peri-urban/urban areas, where inadequate provision of water, sewerage and unsafe waste management creates serious public health hazards. To date, the SRC has implemented specific solid waste management projects in Nepal and India.

## Response to need

The involvement of the SRC in SWM is based on the demand for improved waste management expressed by beneficiary communities.

Typically, the programmes start with meeting most pressing water, waste water, sanitation and waste management needs. This includes hardware components such as the promotion and construction of household and public sanitary toilets, the construction of drains, as well as improvements in public services (e.g. dumping site management).

Additionally, existing waste management systems are improved, starting with segregated waste collection at household level, transportation and secondary segregation up to the sale of waste products such as compost or recyclables. These interventions are always coupled with an intensive sensitization of the local population, which induces gradual behaviour change.

## Strategy

From the very onset of programming, a partnership with the local government/municipality is sought for. This helps to establish optimised subsidiary systems and solid public private partnerships, in which roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. Such partnerships create the ground for sustainable solutions.

The SRC support to improved SWM is always based on a thorough analysis of the national and local policies, the legislation and the existing guidelines on the topic. SRC programmes contribute to national health strategies and development plans. The programmes work through the local Red Cross /Red Crescent Society or local Non-Government or Community Based Organisations.

Involvement of all stakeholders and beneficiaries right from the in-depths needs assessment to planning, implementation and monitoring ensures ownership and enhances sustainability beyond the SRC engagement.

## Approach

The approach to SWM is based on three pillars: awareness raising and empowerment of communities, strengthening of networks and alliances and subsidies to hardware with the aim to establish a complete and fully functioning waste management system.

Empowerment of communities lays at the basis of SWM interventions. Beneficiary communities are introduced to the health and personal benefit of a well-working SWM system and define their own contribution to improvements. The programmes emphasise the value of waste and establish a value chain from the creation of waste up to its use in form of compost or in form of monetary rewards received through the sale of recyclables. Individuals are targeted as much as household units and community groups in order to trigger a social movement around the waste issue.

Children have proven to be valuable promoters of behaviour change and positive social control.

## Alliances

Empowered local communities enter in dialogue with public service providers and become respected and valuable partners in SWM.

The SRC helps to establish strategic alliances between the local communities and the respective local/municipal government of the intervention area. The actual role and contribution of the government may differ according to country context and relevant legislation. Public private partnerships are based on high levels of transparency and mutual accountability.

Additional partners from the private sector are sought to complement the efforts through special grants, provision of trainings and establishing markets for recyclables and compost.

Schools and educational institutions as well as youth groups are successful partners in inducing behaviour change not only at school, but also at household level.

## Capacity Building

Capacity building of partners in implementation is a fundamental principle of the SRC action.

When beneficiary community organisations manage the system themselves, capacity building focuses as much on organizational development as it does on technical and managerial aspects. Peer-to-peer exchange of experiences, learning events and exchange visits among community organisations contribute to capacity building.

Capacity building at the level of government agencies entails regular sensitization events to make them aware of the complexity of SWM systems in view of institutional sustainability and the need for a waste management information system. The readiness of governments to contribute to SWM services on a longer term is based on their understanding of the procedures, technicalities and financial aspects of a waste management system.

## Best practises

SWM has to be built around a sense of community and communal responsibility in order to have a lasting impact on urban sanitation and hygiene.

The impact is quickly visible and perceived positively by the inhabitants. This perpetuates their engagement. Snowball effects are comparatively easy to achieve based on the demand created by showing a convincing example.

The link to the local authorities creates mutual trust, accountability and confidence to be able to jointly address the problems.

Making waste management information accessible and understandable for all stakeholders is important for future planning. Since waste management is rarely on the Government agenda, intensive lobbying requires considerable resources.

## Challenges

Perseverance and flexibility in programme implementation are a must when working in a multi-stakeholder alliance. Especially working with the government is a challenge in terms of timing and reliability of technical and financial support.

Establishing a well-functioning waste-management system requires a durable and reliable interplay of all elements in this system. If only one element is not functioning, immediate repercussions at all levels are perceived.

Local government often lacks the capacity and funds to establish sustainable and safe solid waste dumping sites. Non-recyclable and non-degradable waste is therefore usually deposited on an abandoned piece of land, creating a huge public health hazard.

The development and implementation of appropriate and cost-effective incineration technologies are important aspects in SWM to be further explored.



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