

Cleaning Up Your Community



Background: The government's and municipality's mandate to ensure that its citizens stay in a clean and safe environment, it is of concern that waste management remains a big challenge in urban areas especially in developing countries. Increased economic development, rapid population growth and improvement of living standards are among the factors attributed to increased quantity and complexity of solid waste being generated. On the other hand, while people generate wastes, they continue to be looked at as passive recipients of municipality services. Ultimately, citizens fail to recognize their role in waste management and become unwilling to either pay for service delivery or participate in clean-up campaigns. Waste dumps are prime breeding sites for communicable disease vectors such as rodents, mosquitoes and houseflies, which can exacerbate the prevalence of water, food and waterborne diseases such as cholera and typhoid. Participatory Human Rights Advancement Society with his volunteers and neighbors successfully conducting community-led clean-up campaign.

Globally, there are ongoing campaigns to promote sustainable use of the environment while considering the negative effects of waste in general as well as climate change, which have become evident in a number of regions. In particular, the primary aim of sustainable solid waste management is to address concerns related to environmental pollution, public health, land use, resource management and socio-economic impacts associated with improper disposal of waste. However, as urbanization continues, the management of solid waste in particular, remains a major public health and environmental concern.



Lessons Learnt:

1. Community participation is indispensable to the success of solid waste management at the local level.
2. Clean-up campaigns offer the residents an opportunity to demonstrate their willingness to do community development work and show that they are good citizens.
3. Community participation is key to the successful implementation of any initiative towards solid waste management in urban areas.

4. A clean-up campaign is an effective platform to show communities that waste management is important.
5. By educating, a community has the power to police each other on littering and waste dumping
6. Residents will willingly look after their environment, if we can educate them.

Impact: Vacant lots and public lands can become dumping grounds, too. Cleaning these areas up has many benefits. We can protect animals, fish, birds, and plant life from the risks that the trash brings, and we are also sending a message to other people that someone cares about this piece of water or land — that it's not a place to dump their unwanted items.

Overall, it was concluded that not only did the activity serve the practical purpose of cleaning up, but it also created a greater sense of unity and friendship among community members. A clean-up provides community members an opportunity to bond with one another. It also assists to cross or dissolve racial, cultural, ethnic and other established neighborhood divides. Further, the power of beautification in a clean-up campaign would naturally motivate residents to believe that their problems could be solved.

Conclusion: Lack of awareness and low participation of communities tend to exacerbate solid waste management challenges that are being experienced by the urban population especially the poor communities. By participating in clean-ups, citizens can contribute in creating immediate and long-term solutions for their neighborhoods. Clean-ups can serve as catalysts for permanent changes in behavior and attitude as well as encouraging communities to adopt good practices such as reuse and recycling, which have a profound effect on waste management in a community. Overall, it was concluded that not only did the activity serve

the practical purpose of cleaning up, but it also created a greater sense of unity and friendship among community members. A clean-up provides community members an opportunity to bond with one another. It also assists to cross or dissolve racial, cultural, ethnic and other established neighborhood divides. Further, the power of beautification in a clean-up campaign would naturally motivate residents to believe that their problems could be solved. This activity assisted the community to measure (hypothetical) how much control they had over their lives if they worked together for a common goal. Therefore, communities need to consider clean-up campaigns as ongoing activities that they could turn into neighborhood tradition.