

## D.4.2 Manual for School Recycling

### 1. Introduction

Schools are vital forums for educating young people about environmental problems including the problem of solid waste management. One practical and effective way to introduce students to the rather new concept and benefits of recycling is to implement a recycling program at schools.

A school recycling program can impart valuable hands-on experience that encourages students to make recycling a part of their lifestyle – not only at school, but also at home and in the future. In addition, recycling programs can often generate funds for schools. A well-run school recycling program can benefit the community as well. Local recyclers will receive an increased flow of recyclable materials.

### 2. Types of School Recycling Programs in General

The type of recycling program a teacher decides to run is very dependent on the school's situation. Available funds, time, size of school and location are all variables that should enter into their decision. The following program options could be popular methods in Sri Lanka.

#### 2.1 An occasional or one-time recycling initiative

One option is to run a one-time or occasional initiative during the school year. In their homes, students collect recyclables such as glass bottles and papers and bring them to school on one or more designated days. Teachers should arrange for the recyclables to be collected by local recyclers from schools. Collecting textbooks and notebooks at the end of the school year could be a successful one-time recycling initiative in Sri Lanka.

#### 2.2 Long-term in-school recycling program

Another type involves setting up a permanent, in-school collection center for recyclables generated at school such as paper from schoolwork. In addition, students can bring recyclables generated in their homes to school regularly, say once a month, and keep them in the in-school collection center. This type of program requires that a storage space for the collected recyclables be available at school. It is also necessary to arrange for the recyclables to be collected from school fairly frequently. Even though a long-term, in-school recycling program requires thoughtful planning and continuous effort, it also offers great opportunity to encourage the habit of recycling since students will make it part of their routine.

### 3. Setting up community collection points at school

This option is to set up a collection center at school that parents who come to pick their children up can also use. A storage facility where parents can drop off their recyclables as donations needs to be established in an easily accessible place.

#### Ten Steps to Starting a Recycling Program at School

- 1) Select the type of recycling program you are going to run.
- 2) Organize a team to be in-charge.
- 3) Decide which recyclables to collect based on the local market for recyclables.
- 4) Work out a budget.
- 5) Make municipal contacts.
- 6) Establish a system for collecting and storing recyclables.
- 7) Educate the school and the parents about the program.
- 8) Set overall and individual goals.
- 9) Reward the doers.
- 10) Prepare a monitoring and supervision system

#### 1) Select the type of recycling program you are going to run

You can model your program after one of the four options presented earlier, or "custom-design" a program to fit your school's needs. Since the success of the program will depend upon the interest and enthusiasm level of the school community, let them help you make this decision.

Distribute a survey in school for students and parents, asking specific questions about their willingness to participate. Would they be willing to keep recyclable materials at home? Would they be able to bring the recyclables to school? After the survey has been completed, use the results to gauge which type of program would be most suitable for your school.

#### 2) Organize a team to be in-charge

Putting a team in-charge of the program will help it run smoothly. In addition to being responsible for program planning, publicity and operation, the team should make recycling fun for students. The team should include students, parents, teachers, and so on.

#### 3) Decide which recyclables to collect based on the local market for recyclables

Deciding which types of materials you are going to recycle is a big step, for there are many issues to consider. Materials which can be recycled in Sri Lanka include paper, bottles and metals. In some areas, certain types of plastic are also recycled. ***No materials should be collected for which there isn't an existing local market.*** Safety issues should also be considered.

#### **4) Work out a budget**

It does cost some money to set up any recycling program; however, these costs can often be recovered from the operation of the program. If no school designated start-up funds are available, investigate other possible sources of funding, such as local business entities and NGOs.

#### **5) Make municipal contacts**

There are environmental officers who are usually knowledgeable about environmental issues at many local authorities. Contact them and get their support.

#### **6) Establish a system for collecting and storing recyclables**

To keep the program running efficiently, your collection system needs to be as simple and organized as possible. If sorting recyclables at school, you will need to provide ample storage space, preferably with vehicle access. The materials you collect should be taken into consideration when setting up a system.

#### **7) Educate the school and the parents about the program**

Notify the entire staff (including all teachers, clerical staff, and custodians) and the surrounding community about the program. It is good idea to hold an explanatory session or an awareness program at the school to describe how the program will run and when collection will occur. To make sure that the program does not interfere with class schedules or create conflicts, schedule a regular time for it or stress that students must work on the program outside class hours.

#### **8) Set overall and individual goals**

Goals are always useful for encouraging students to excel. Aim for an overall amount of recyclables to be collected, and perhaps keep a running total displayed in a prominent place to show progress.

#### **9) Reward the doers**

It is important to stress that recycling helps the environment, and that is a reward that everyone enjoys. A prize system, however, can make the recycling program even more successful.

#### **10) Monitor and supervise progress**

In order to make the program sustainable, regular monitoring and supervision by the team in-charge is essential. The result should be compared with the goals set.



















