The U.S. Agency for International Development’s (USAID) Sustainable Coastal Livelihoods Project created a grassroots program for rural communities to recycle materials and compost organic waste. Why? To improve sanitation, reduce resource use and minimize environmental pollution.

In the project’s two test villages, Ban Phukhao Thong and Ban Tub Nua, there was progress in the very first year. With their community-based waste management program, the villages decreased the amount of garbage tossed into their local dump and took pride in how much neater and cleaner their villages looked. The program encouraged people to collect recyclables and organic materials and then sort, process, and later sell them. Profits were shared amongst families that contributed materials for recycling, community members who collected materials and managed the program, children’s programs, and the mosque fund. The success in these two villages may spur the start of waste management programs in other communities.

A long-term community outreach effort was a key element of this waste management program. It included a needs assessment, feasibility study, stakeholder buy-in, awareness-building campaign, and skills development program. Periodic reviews of lessons learned improved the program even more.

**THE STEPS TO RECYCLING**

**ANALYZE THE WASTE**

Understanding the waste stream is an important first step in recognizing the types of products the community uses and which products would be the most beneficial to recycle.
Analyzing the waste stream is an important first step in deciding what the community has to recycle and which of it is the most beneficial to recycle. This is also an excellent outreach tool. It lets villagers get the full picture of the waste they produce each day. Analyzing the waste stream gets people thinking about how—if they wisely manage this waste—they can create a more beautiful and healthy community and at the same time make money. Preliminary results of the analysis will show which municipal and household wastes have high potential for reuse or recycling—by composting garbage or selling the recyclables.

**The Individual Household**

Ask individual households to separate their waste by type for one week. Typical categories include plastic, glass, metal, paper, organic, and other materials. At the end of the week, count and weigh the separated household wastes. Record this information. This helps in understanding the recycling process and helps build a team. It also gives each family a view into what they use, the type of food they eat, and helps them begin to think about how this could be reduced and/or recycled.

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**Engage the children.**

- Give each child their own waste bank book. Have them contribute recycling items through their schools or through their households.
- As an incentive, have children collect recyclables in exchange for pencils, toys, and maybe even candy or ice cream.

**Pay out money or goods to the clients.**

- Payment for recyclables can be made in cash or in household items, such as eggs and cooking oil.
- Have the committee determine the frequency of payments. Options could include immediately, monthly, or when a household accumulates a certain amount in their waste bank book.

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**Empowering the Community and Its People**

By managing your waste and recyclables, you build community and personal pride.

**Community Outreach**

Think of holding a celebration of recycling with a “Waste Fair,” featuring games and prizes for children. You can engage village health workers, school teachers, and religious leaders in the effort, and keep them actively involved.
CREATE A WASTE BANK

Waste banks are a great way for your community to develop its own recycling project with local members of management. You can use five basic steps:

First, set up a community committee to lead the planning, management and implementation

- The committee can be semi-formal or formally established as a microfinance group.
- Identify roles of committee members. Typical roles could include a chair, secretary, and treasurer.
- Have the committee determine the process for collection, selling, and payback.
- Committee members could begin as volunteers, but as the operation matures consider paying them for their time.

Second, collect and store materials so that they can be sold in bulk

- The waste bank will collect materials from membership households.
- When selling to the market, remember that sorted and cleaned materials will demand a higher price an will unclean and unsorted items.
- It is better to sort your materials and either sell directly to the market immediately or collect a larger volume and sell them in bulk.

Third, keep accurate records of both collections and sales.

- In a waste bank book, record by individual the deposits made of recyclables.
- Assign each member an account number and keep records for each member.
- Record information about the type of garbage, weight, pieces, unit price, and payments received for the sales.

The Village Dump

Analyze community waste at the dump site. The dump can be a municipally-designated site or an informal area of the village set aside for dumping. Separate and weigh the waste, then record the results for analysis. Collect random samples from the dump and fresh municipal waste from a collection truck. Separate the waste samples manually into piles and categorize the wastes into main types including: organic or kitchen waste, plastic, paper, gardening, glass, metal, etc. Lastly, weigh each group separately.

IDENTIFY WHICH PRODUCTS TO RECYCLE

There are many types of materials that can be recycled. Typically, community-based efforts focus on bottles, cans, paper, and plastic. Why? Because we seem to generate a large number of them and they are easy to sell! Each product has a different resale value. Villagers learn early that “Plastic is not trash, it is gold.” Beverage bottles, for example can be cleaned and sold for money. Many types of bottles can be reused such as glass beverage bottles and plastic motor oil bottles.

REASONS TO RECYCLE

- “Plastic is not garbage, it is gold!”
- It is a community member’s civic duty to reduce environmental pollution
- Recycling is consistent with the King’s “sufficient economy” program
- Generates revenue that can be socially reinvested for village improvement
- Reduces the volume of solid waste that ends up in the community dump and can cause contamination of ground water
- Creates leadership opportunities and income for a local recycling group
- Promotes a useful savings mechanism when linked to a Waste Bank program
- Encourages generational behavior changes by increasing awareness among children
A GUIDE TO THE SELLING PRICE OF RECYCLABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>BAHT/KG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aluminum can</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic bottle</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color plastic</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparent plastic</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVC</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zinc</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric wire</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing net</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aluminum</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass bottle</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Collection from each home
A buyer could go house-to-house to buy separated waste and then load it into a cart, car, or truck to be taken away and sold. Collections can be managed by a committee, a hired individual, or the municipal waste collector.

Reminders
Always make sure materials are clean so they do not attract flies or animals. And remember, cleaned and sorted items bring a higher selling price. You need to clarify if each household should clean the materials or if they will be cleaned at the collection site by the committee or vendor.

Creating a Cooperative System

Create a Pilot Activity
Practitioners can begin their recycling program by creating a small pilot activity with a limited number of villagers. This small group practices and improves the system before engaging with the entire community.

1. First identify a small number of households willing to participate in the pilot recycling effort.
2. Select a few items to recycle at first. Choose items that are used frequently and are easy to sell—for example plastic bottles, aluminum beverage cans, or white glass bottles.