Participatory Learning Workshop: Application for designing a municipal solid waste management model project in Mandalay City, Myanmar
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Introduction:

After decades of repressive rule and self-imposed isolation, since 2011, Myanmar has moved to institutionalise a more democratic system of governance and open up the economy. In this process of reform, the country has emphasised the importance of improved performance in public service delivery, good governance and citizen participation. To achieve these goals, more responsibilities and resources towards service delivery are gradually being transferred from the Union level government to the state/regional and township administrations. However, due to lack of administrative and institutional capacity, a governing system at local or township level continuous to lack genuine accountability and transparency in basic service provisions. In this background, the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) in partnership with Kitakyushu City, Mandalay City Development Committee (MCDC) and the ASEAN ESC Model Cities Programme organised a two-day participatory learning workshop to design a municipal solid waste management model project in Mandalay City. This brief case study summarises the findings of the workshop.
Municipal Solid Waste Management in Mandalay City:

Mandalay is the second largest city and the last royal capital of Myanmar. Despite Naypyidaw’s recent rise, Mandalay remains the main commercial, educational and health centre in the country. According to the MCDC, the city had a population of 1.2 million in 2014 and divided into six townships and 96 wards for administrative purposes. The MCDC has 14 departments to keep the city clean, green and enable the residents to enjoy a pleasant life. Among them, the Cleansing Department is responsible for handling solid waste collection, transport and disposal. The Cleansing Department collects municipal waste from high-income and commercial areas using 1.5 tonnes capacity trucks three times a day and called it as a Bell ringing System. In the middle and low-income areas with narrow streets, three-wheel cars named Toku Toku pickup waste daily-basis and transport them to the secondary collection points which are fixed container tanks or open collection points. The collected waste is then transported to final disposal sites using 1.8 tonnes capacity trucks.

The MCDC operates two landfill sites which are located 5-10 km away from the city centre and has the capacity of 30 acres. According to the Cleansing Department, the total waste collection per day has been increased from 259 tonnes in 2005 to 779 tonnes in 2014. Due to this rapid growth of waste to be landfilled, the handling capacity of the landfill sites remains only for two years. The waste separation and collection of recyclable materials is managed by the informal sector, and about 40 private recyclers are operating at Aung Myae Tha San Township area to handle primary operations before them export to China. However, organic waste that comprises 55% of the total waste generation is still end up at landfill site without proper management. As a result, MCDC is in negotiation with Thai Capital Company to establish an integrated waste treatment facility at landfill including bio-gas, incineration and recycling activities.
**Organisation of Participatory Learning Workshop:**

Aiming to enable diverse groups and individuals in the city to learn, work and act together in identifying key challenges and possible actions to move away from throw-away society (waste collection and disposal) to recycle-based society (introduction of waste reduce, reuse and recycling before disposal) in a collaborative manner, a two day workshop was organised on 11 and 12 Nov 2014 at the conference room of MCDC.

**Mobilise a MCDC team to facilitate the workshop:** The Cleansing Department nominated six of its staff (U-Min Aung Phyoe, U-Soe Wai Yan Moe, U-Soe Naing Oo, U-Soe Moe Aung, U-Tun Tun Naing, Daw-Yi Yi Tun, Daw-Win Min Thant) to assist the facilitation of the workshop. While the concept of the recycle-based society and the facilitation of participatory workshop is a new idea for all of them, an introductory meeting was held before the workshop to familiar with the new concepts.

**Organisation of planning workshop on 11 Nov 2014 (13:00 – 17:00):** Over 100 participants representing, citizen groups, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), private recyclers and MCDC staff were joined the planning workshop. The workshop was started with traditional opening ceremony and a welcome speech by the Hon. Mayor Mr. Aung Maung of MCDC. After his speech, representatives from Kitakyushu City gave opening remarks and keynote lectures. These lectures presented the experience of Kitakyushu City in establishing a recycling society and included the topics related to waste separation at source, collection, environmental education and recycling promotion. The lectures used more visuals and documentary films to explain the
initiatives of Kitakyushu City. These presentations helped to brainstorm the participants about the subject.

After the brainstorming session, about 52 participants including 30 male and 22 female were retained to the final discussion session. To facilitate the active participation of all members to the discussion, a colour card game was introduced by the facilitators. The facilitators distributed a colour card to each participant and asked them to identify the most challenging factor in establishing a recycle-based society in Mandalay City. Then, advised the participants to write their answer on the colour card. After all participants had finished in writing their answers, facilitator asked one of them to present the answer and checked with others who have the same answer. The similar answers collected and posted on the white board by the facilitators. Then checked the different answers and continued the discussion until all answers were grouped. Asking answers, the facilitators enable the discussion among participants based on the limited time availability.

According to the answers that given by the participants, most challenging factors in building recycling-society in Mandalay are lack of public awareness and civic engagement (38%), lack of cooperation among different sectors (public, citizen and private) (28%), lack of technology (13%), lack of investment (9%), lack of common vision, policies and laws (7%) and lack of encouragement and enforcement (5%).

After identifying the most challenging factors in building recycling-society, the participants were given different colour card and asked to write one important solution to overcome the challenges. The answers were later collected and grouped using the same methodology as previous. The results identified the following actions for establishing a recycling society in Mandalay City:
• Public awareness: Start from schools/community, Apply participatory planning (workshops), Use media, Change the mind-set (separation at source/ waste put into dustbins), Social campaign.

• Building partnership and cooperation: Establish committee for facilitate GO, CBO, NGO and Private sector partnership in the projects, Sharing responsibilities, Sharing information and communication among each other, Respect the roles of each other and Transparency.

• Technical development: Partnership with international agencies (JICA, ADB, World Bank), Partnership with experienced cities through the city-to-city partnership (Kitakyushu City and others like Korea, China).

• Investment: Loans and grants from international agencies (JICA, ADB, World Bank), Invite private sector (both local and foreign) investment,

• Policies and regulations: Establish long-term visions and short-term actions, Establish supportive policies/regulations consultation with relevant stakeholders

• Enforcement: Good supervision, Reward and punishment (win-win), Complaint department

**Organisation of policy workshop on 12 Nov 2014 (13:00 – 17:00):** A policy workshop was organised with approximately 30 participants including the members of the MCDC, Head of Departments, Senior Staff and academic groups to share the findings of the planning workshop and identify follow-up actions. The policy workshop also started with a brainstorming session that gave a detailed explanation about the experience of Kitakyushu City in establishing recycling society through building partnership between citizen, academic, private and local government. After the brainstorming session, the results of the planning workshop were shared with the participants. Finally, ASEAN ESC Model City Programme shared the experiences of selected Asian countries.

![Figure 8: Senior staff of MCDC who joined the policy workshop](image)
**Conclusion and follow-up actions:**

The participants who joined the policy workshop acknowledged the key challenges identified by the participants at the planning workshop and also agreed to consider the actions proposed by the participants. *Mr. Nay Win Myint, Head of the Cleansing Department explained that MCDC has taken some efforts to build a partnership with citizens and recycling groups to improve the waste collection at township level. However, due to lack of capacity, institutional, financial and technical limitations, the implementation of these new activities are still very limited and ad-hoc.*

As a follow-up, the participants identified the essential in developing a model project in selected township based on the findings of the planning workshop. The project should apply the waste separation at source, environmental education programme, improvement of waste collection and recycling. The project planning, implementation and monitoring should be applied the participatory methodology and enable cooperation among key partners such as citizen, academic, private and the MCDC.

The participants also recognised the potential of participatory learning workshop in enabling stakeholders to achieve their goals for practise and policies. *According to Mr. Min Aung Phyoe, Senior Staff of the Cleansing Department and one of the team member of the workshop facilitation said that for the first time as a city official he was joined a dialogue with citizens and other stakeholders in planning service improvement activities in the MCDC. He identified that workshop method is a good system to learn from each other’s knowledge and perspectives and finding solutions together. However, it was identified that to integrate such participatory planning methods and tools for service provision, MCDC had to take steps to change from its hierarchical forms of government structure to more flexible forms of partnership with other stakeholders.*

Finally, the participants also identified that the concept of the recycling society and the application of participatory learning workshop are all new ideas for the Cleansing Department of the MCDC and the further technical assistance from the IGES, Kitakyushu City and ASEAN ESC Model City Programme is essential. Thus, both MCDC and Kitakyushu City representatives were agreed to find potential in developing a joint proposal for JICA or other funding.