

“Eco Savers program” –sustainable solution for waste management

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I. Overview

Nowadays, when socio-economic improves, consuming need rises up and this causes a rise of waste. Waste treatment, environmental protection is issued paid attention by many nations. There are a number of ideas, activities,



program, and projects implemented like: source separation (3R), waste recycle day, waste banking, waste treatment project, etc. and one of meaningful and practical projects which appreciated by European Commission is “Eco Savers program”.

Eco Savers is initiative under Marikina city, Philippines, implemented from 2004 to now. Content of program is that student collect, separate recycled waste at home and then bring to school. At school, waste will be bought, money collected will be recorded at Eco Savers Book of each student, a day when student bring waste to school called “Eco Day”. With mark recorded, student can use to exchange learning tools like: dictionary, book, education toy or other good like: sugars, chocolate, drink and rice on eco-buses. Through program, student and community increase awareness, and have activities to contribute waste management and environmental protection.

Eco Savers program is good practice in urban environmental management, hence there are more than 1000 cities from different countries in the world to visit, study experience and Vinh city is one of those cities. This program was piloted at primary schools and secondary school in Hung Dung ward in 2011-2012 and replicated in over the city from 2012-2013 on.

II. Some results of the program in Vinh city

From September 2011, Eco Savers implemented pilot in three wards, Vinh city. After that, this program replicated in 51 secondary schools and primary schools in the city from 2012-2013.

Three types of waste separated: paper, beer container and plastic. In comparison with Marikina, amount of recycled waste in Vinh city is less. In

Marikina city, recycled waste separation implemented detail and divided into 9 types.

There are some results achieved after two years of implementation as follows:

Firstly, the program has attracted participation of many stakeholders, including students, teachers, father and elder brother, and community. Total student participated in program were 2,100 people and after replication were 33,000. In average, each school implemented one eco day in 1 month.

Besides, the program attracted attention from many cities in the country. In March 2012, Ha Tinh city had field-visit, study and applied this model in 10 schools and continue replication.

Secondly, more than 80 million Dong saved by students from recycled waste in 2011-2012 (*pilot period*) and more than 450 million Dong in 2012-2013 (*replication period*). This amount saved carefully, assuring publicity and transparency with student.

Average of money saved from waste collection, recycling by secondary school student minimum is 830 dong/ person and maximum is 30,911 dong/person and primary school student minimum is 3.730 dong/person and maximum is 28,652/dong. That amount is not so big but meaning of the project is noticeable.

Thirdly, the program changed positively on awareness of student in environmental protection. Students hardly throw waste on the ground. They start to form “saving” awareness, know to separate, collect recycled waste to participate the program.

Through the program, students are educated on living skill, are aware of waste management, use good reasonably and protect resource. From each student, their relatives like parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters, and community increase awareness on waste separation and environmental protection, understand advantage of waste, waste considered as resource not worthless.

Participating program, community in Vinh city gets familiar and gets used to separating waste at source. This is objective of state management, mobilizing community in waste management.



Fourthly, the program implemented to reduce amount of treated waste and once replicated, this will decrease pressure for dump-site of the city, reduce polluted environment from dump-site when buried method applied widely.

At the same time, investment cost for waste collection and treatment went down. In order to treat 1 ton (excluding collection, transport expense) by sanitary buried method, it costs from Dong 115 to 142 thousand/ton/day (excluding investment capital recovery) and from Dong 219-286 thousand/ton/day, in which above 70% of waste is recycled. Besides, waste recycling reduces people's dependence on development, usage of decreasing natural resources; recycling helps us recover materials like: plastic, paper, metal, glass, etc. avoiding wasteful resource.

The program will be more meaningful on environment when "nylon" collected, recycled. If nylon buried, it will take hundreds of years for bacterial.

In fact, "Eco Savers program" has content similar to "Small plan program" which implemented at school years ago. However, the Eco Savers has larger area and is more meaningful, amount of waste collected, recycled which is not just on "document" and the program does not give "fixed amount of waste" which students have to send, but participation bases on voluntary and each student's awareness.

From above outputs, we can affirm effectiveness of the program on socio-economic and environment.

III. Conclusion and recommendation

The program is meaningful activity on theory and practice as well; it is sustainable solution for waste management and environmental protection. At first steps, there are positive impacts to community of the city, which contribute to change people's thinking, awareness, toward civilized, clean city. Therefore, the program need replicating, popularizing to other cities in the countries.

The program has been disseminated all over Vinh city in 2012-2013 and continued in coming years. In order to make the program success, authorities need to pay attention and steer the program, at the same time organization

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