



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

Solid Waste Management

As cities grow economically, business activity and consumption patterns drive up the amount of solid waste or garbage that is created.

At the same time, increased traffic congestion adversely affects the productivity of the vehicles that haul this solid waste. Productivity loss is increased by longer trips required of the trash trucks, as suitable land for disposal is pushed further away from urban centers.

The management of various types of waste has over the years been a very difficult and challenging issue. This difficulty has manifested itself in the perennial outbreak of diseases such as cholera and dysentery and the pollution of water resources, air and soil.

Improvements are needed in waste management – such as finding ways to create less waste – and making sure that as much waste as possible is recycled. Efforts also need to be made to find more efficient ways to dispose of waste products that can't be recycled.

The challenge is to expand waste management services to a rapidly growing urban population in the midst of other equally competing demands of government and local authorities.

The Weekly Information Resource Bulletin

The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- Bring listeners in the project area the latest information on natural resources, the environment and agriculture
- Focus on solutions, what works and what people can do
- Encourage listeners to share both their questions and solutions (African solutions for African problems)
- Raise awareness of issues that need to be discussed to affect public policy.
- Bring the latest solutions and practices that have relevance to this region from around the world
- Identify and link other NGOs working in the region share the project interests and goals
- Give the participating journalists guidance and tips on their reporting on these issues

The Problem: Waste Management in Urban Areas

Zambia is one of the most urbanized countries in Africa. Zambia's overall goal of solid waste management is to collect and dispose of waste generated by the population in an environmentally and socially sustainable manner. (ZEMA information desk)

However, waste management is a problem in Zambia because there is insufficient capacity for the recovery and recycling of various types of waste products including plastics.

There is also insufficient capacity and equipment for municipalities to deal with the collection, transportation and disposal of waste.

Much of the equipment used by municipal councils has broken down and no longer works.

The lack of proper maintenance of waste collection trucks has resulted in huge piles of trash in urban areas.

This is a huge health concern for communities -- as diseases such as cholera and other diarrhoea diseases have become rampant.

Huge piles of garbage also destroy the natural beauty of communities. These trash piles then become the breeding grounds for mosquitoes which cause malaria.

These garbage piles also become breeding grounds for cockroaches and rats – which are problems for many households.

There is little or no awareness on how to manage waste and its impact on human health and the environment. This has led to the dumping of garbage on roadsides and where-ever else is considered convenient.

These problems are a result of a lack of enforcement of regulations enshrined in the Constitution of Zambia. If these regulations were enforced, Zambia would be a much cleaner place to live.

Activities for Journalists

According to the Lusaka City Council it has partnered with the private sector and community-based organizations in handling waste management. A franchise system has been implemented in Lusaka and towns in the Copperbelt province that encourages the participation of the private sector in waste collection. This has resulted in an increase in waste collection and disposal and is leading to cleaner cities.

The Zambian government is making strides in waste management such as the building of an engineered landfill in Lusaka. This has resulted in reduced air and ground water pollution arising from waste.

To further reduce the amount of waste being produced, commercial and public facilities, industries and mines should be encouraged to develop a policy to minimise the generation of waste.

Generators should further put in place mechanisms to treat all hazardous waste in a safe manner.

Considering the fact that there is currently a lot of packaging waste (e.g. plastic bottles) as a result of the proliferation of the drink and beverage industry, legislation would be very important in encouraging producers of these products to find alternatives to this type of packaging or, at the very least, encourage consumers to recycle by purchasing these plastic containers.

Since waste may not necessarily have to be disposed of as soon as it is generated, its storage becomes essential. The storage of waste provides the opportunity to sort it and recover any useful materials for recycling. A classic example is the recovery of copper and other metals from slag dumps and mine tailing dams.

Recycling of waste is a very important component in the sound management of waste. Recycling involving the utilisation of discarded material to produce another product of the same grade or

lower.

Zambia is implementing the Keep Zambia Clean and Healthy Campaign as a way of strengthening information dissemination and awareness among the public. This is very important as it reminds people to dispose of waste in designated places.

Are there NGOs or other organizations in your community that are focused on waste management issues? You might invite them to come by the station for an interview to discuss waste management.

Talk to your local council to find out what it is doing in collecting waste? Are there measures in place to recycle any of the waste being collected?

What, if anything, are local entrepreneurs and shop owners doing to contribute to reducing plastic waste? What are the suppliers of plastic packaged goods (water drinks) doing to recycle plastic waste in your community?

What plans have been devised by the municipal council in your area to collect waste?

How is the council sensitizing communities on waste management? What punishment is given for someone throwing waste at undesignated places?

Do you feel that your community could be cleaner? Consider a talk show on the topic and even organize a clean-up activity in your community.

Useful Links

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National Solid Waste Management Strategy for Zambia, 2004. www.zema.org.zm/index.php/publication

The Lusaka State of Environment Outlook report, 2012. www.zema.org.zm/index.php/