A Needs Assessment for a Municipal Compost Pilot Project in the Dominican Republic

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Research Questions

- What does the compost pilot project need to change in order to be successful?
- What community empowerment tools can be implemented in order to engage more community members?

Project Location

- Laguna Salada, Dominican Republic is a municipality located in the Northwest region
- It has a population of roughly 24,000 people

Project Justification

- In Laguna Salada, there are no municipal inorganic recycling programs
- All of the solid waste from Laguna Salada is currently disposed of in one central dumpsite which is unmonitored for related surrounding environmental degradation and is unlined
- Without a protective lining method, there is no protective measures made in terms of toxic leachate going into the ground water underneath the landfill area
- The community suffers from large amounts of littering

Methodology

Interviews: 31 business owners were selected to be interviewed of which 11 were males and 20 were females. These 31 businesses made up the majority of businesses that were found in the pilot neighborhoods.

Informal House Visits: More than 200 informal house visits were completed, where I received input on residents’ knowledge and understanding of the previous compost project.

Environmental Education Survey: 14 of the 30 environmental coordinators were given an environmental education survey of which seven were males and seven were females. The surveys were given to better understand their education and interest level dealing with environmental issues.

Community Maps: Community maps were used to map-out where the different house groups were located and which of the environmental coordinators were supporting each group.

Impact: Project can be scaled-up to meet requirements of different sites in order to send less organic materials to dumpsites or landfills, creating less production of methane

Project Objectives:
- Complete a needs assessment of the compost pilot project
- Lay groundwork and create collaborative partnerships for future implementation

Project Background

- The municipality decided to invest in a pilot neighborhood compost project, collecting waste from 200 households, in order to divert the residential organic waste from going to the dumpsite
- The idea was that the organic waste could earn a profit by being turned into compost and selling it to local banana plantations in order to have a sustainable source of funding to manage the ongoing compost project

Broader Impact and Project Objectives

- Complete a needs assessment of the compost pilot project
- Lay groundwork and create collaborative partnerships for future implementation

Key Results

- From the interview sample, almost half of the residents were not separating their organic from inorganic waste
- From the interviews, about a third of the residents did not receive information about the project
- From the informal house visits, it was learned that many residents observed improper handling of organic waste at the collection level by municipal employees

Top Three Recommendations

1. Increased residential outreach
   Implement the environmental coordinator house cluster system where specific coordinators are responsible for outreach to specific houses

2. Increased residential monitoring
   Implement a monitoring system where environmental coordinators will be responsible for monitoring individual house involvement and waste separation rates

3. Inclusion of municipal collection employees
   Include waste collection employees during planning and educational activities in order to assist in achieving continued separation rates at the collection level

Project Organizations

- APRADELASA
- UNDP
- ADELYVA

Project Organizations

- A Needs Assessment for a Municipal Compost Pilot Project in the Dominican Republic
- Laguna Salada's Dumpsite
- Neighborhood Cleanup
- Participant Interviews
- “Zero Trash” Campaign
- Meeting with the Mayor
- Community Workshop

Laguna Salada’s Dumpsite
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