AN ARISE RESPONSIVE FUND CASE STUDY

SLUM TV
NAIROBI, KENYA

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ARISE
Accountability in Urban Health

INTRODUCTION

Supported by the ARISE responsive challenge fund, the African Population and Health Research Center worked with Slum TV to use film to help address solid waste management (SWM) in the community. SWM is the collecting, treating and disposing of solid material once it has been discarded. SWM is a challenge in informal settlements because: absentee landlords flout development control orders; inadequate storage containers; indiscriminate disposal by households; unreliable collection by county government; low household incomes; and limited public education. In the Mathare informal settlements, poor socio-economic conditions, spatial challenges and a lack of awareness about regulation lead to undesirable waste management practices like open dumping and burning. Desirable practices, such as waste sorting or recycling, are rarely adopted. Waste management practices, whether positive or negative, are influenced by community interactions, where both formal and informal rules play a role. This brief presents activities, key outcomes, lessons and recommendations.

KEY ACTIVITIES

1. Consultation meetings and stock taking:

These brought together key stakeholders, including SWM workers, community leaders and ward managers. The objective of these meetings was to map out the activities of various stakeholders involved in waste management. During these consultations we fostered collaboration and alignment among different groups. Participants discussed their roles, shared insights, and identified challenges, laying the groundwork for coordinated efforts to improve waste management practices in the community. These meetings provided a comprehensive understanding of the current state of waste management and set the stage for informed, collective action and commitment to next stage of the project phase.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Sustainable engagement is key in SWM:** There is a need to maintain regular communication with stakeholders to address intersecting challenges related to solid waste management along the value chain. In addition, it is important to encourage the reduction of waste at the source through community education on sustainable consumption and waste reduction practices.

- **Economic incentives:** Actors in SWM should introduce economic incentives for waste segregation, recycling and proper disposal. This could include financial rewards, subsidies or microfinance opportunities for waste-related enterprises.

- **Localised SWM guidelines for improved governance and accountability:** There is a need to adapt national and county government guidelines to the local needs, and co-create clear rules that explain everyone's roles and responsibilities in waste management. This will ensure transparency and accountability through regular monitoring and reporting.

- **Inclusive participation:** Actors in the sector should ensure that marginalized groups, including refugees, individual waste pickers, and persons with disabilities (PWDs), are included in all aspects of waste management.

- **Community programs:** There is a need to actively involve community members in waste management through education and awareness campaigns. This can be through local leaders, youth groups, and community health promoters to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility.

- **SWM infrastructure and facilities:** Actors in the SWM sector should develop and maintain essential waste management infrastructure such as transfer stations, recycling centres, and accessible waste collection points. These facilities should be well-distributed and maintained.

- **Exposure visits:** There is a need for more resources beyond screening, including follow-up activities, such as workshops and exposure visits for SWM workers.

2. Community dialogues

Community dialogues about garbage collection, recycling and waste innovation were conducted with representatives from youth groups, community leaders, community health promoters, the refugee chairperson, individual waste pickers and persons with disabilities (PWDs). The objective of the dialogue was to understand the issues they were facing with a particular focus on discussing accountability and responsiveness in the informal settlements regarding SWM. Participants engaged in an open discussion on challenges and opportunities for improving SWM (see table below), which were also documented via video.

As part of the documentation process community members, including local leaders, youth groups and waste pickers, were interviewed to share their experiences and perspectives, highlighting challenges and successes. Workshops and dialogues were held to discuss waste management issues, providing a platform for community input. Additionally, the video captured community-led initiatives such as clean-up drives and recycling projects, showcasing their efforts to maintain a cleaner environment.

Collaborative art projects and role-playing performances dramatised waste management problems and solutions, making the content engaging and educational. Feedback sessions after video screenings ensured that the community's voice was heard and incorporated into future waste management strategies.

CHALLENGES	NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN SWM
• Limited infrastructures such as roads and pathways within narrow congested lanes making it difficult for the garbage collectors to work effectively. • Lack of support from local governments in waste collection impacts the living conditions of children who are the most vulnerable. • Garbage from neighbouring settlements were dumped in Mathare river. • Cartels have monopolised the single dumping site leading to poor SWM. • Limited SWM empowerment leading to improper waste disposal causing health hazards. • Inadequate waste sorting and recycling systems. Out of 22 solid waste management groups in Mathare, there were only two groups that sort and recycle waste, meaning waste ended up dumped in rivers. • Mathare has many unregulated waste collectors due to increased unemployment, posing insecurity and unfair wages to registered waste collectors/pickers.	• Increased potential in partnerships and collaborations especially with the private sector, local government, and NGOs to learn from waste recycling companies to increase job creation. • Empower existing community led waste management to create awareness to the Mathare informal dwellers on taking ownership of their SWM needs. • Implementing digital/innovative waste management solutions where Mathare dwellers can report SWM issues in real time. • Creation of more recycling sites. This will strengthen the local economy for young people who collect the garbage. • Decentralising waste collection regulated sites, in partnership with local government, so all residents can go and dispose of their waste.

3. Film screening and discussions

Separate film screenings were held for urban refugees and artists (photographers, videographers, musicians) from Mathare. Two films dealing with accountability, sanitation and waste management, were shown to spark discussions and awareness – 'Shonde Mtaani' and 'Beyond Bins'.

The film screenings and subsequent discussions provided an engaging opportunity for community education and dialogue. The videos showcased various aspects of the waste management process, including collection, segregation, recycling and disposal, featuring real-life experiences and initiatives from the community. After the screenings, facilitated discussions allowed participants to reflect on the content, share their insights and discuss local waste management challenges and solutions. These discussions fostered a deeper understanding of the waste management value chain, promoted community involvement and inspired collective action towards sustainable practices.

"Screenings generated a significant buzz on social media platforms, indicating a broader reach and interest in solid waste management" Executive Director, Slum-TV.

KEY OUTCOMES

- Urban marginalised people are able to come together, identify their priorities on health and well-being and develop action to achieve these.

- Stronger relationships between community organisations, urban marginalised people and government/other organisations/community.

- **Behaviour change in waste management.** Positive interactions were observed during community dialogue, as local leaders expressed a desire to work with the youth and invited them to different forums for further discussion and consultations on SWM.

- **Sustainable waste management practices.** The combination of screenings, facilitated discussions and community feedback sessions fostered a deeper understanding of the waste management value chain. These activities promoted community involvement, encouraged the adoption of sustainable practices, and inspired collective action towards improved waste management in informal settlements. For example, youth groups successfully united to stop waste dumping around the river.

KEY LESSONS

- **Engagement:** Diverse engagement strategies can effectively reach various target groups. For example, positive interactions between artists and urban refugees resulted in willingness to collaborate on an art project focused on raising awareness about waste management.

- **Stakeholder collaboration is important in SWM:** Consultation meetings with SWM workers, community leaders, and ward managers highlighted the importance of involving all key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of waste management projects. These meetings facilitated the introduction of project activities and aligned efforts across different groups.

- **Community dialogues can amplify community voices:** Engaging a diverse range of community representatives in dialogues about garbage collection, recycling, and waste innovation revealed the critical issues faced by different groups. Open discussions on accountability and responsiveness in informal settlements provided valuable insights into local challenges and opportunities for improvement in SWM. Documenting these dialogues via video ensured that community voices were heard and recorded for future reference.

- **Active community involvement:** The process of documenting the video on solid waste management along the value chain showcased the community's active participation. Interviews, workshops and collaborative art projects highlighted their experiences, challenges and successes, while role-playing performances and clean-up drives demonstrated their commitment to improving waste management practices.

- **Educational film screenings enhanced awareness on SWM:** Film screenings and discussions involving urban refugees and local artists proved to be an effective method for raising awareness and sparking dialogue on waste management. Films like 'Shonde Mtaani' and 'Beyond Bins' highlighted issues of accountability and sanitation, prompting participants to reflect on their own practices and engage in discussions about local waste management challenges and solutions. Screenings facilitated emotional connections, promoted discussions and the development of local and sustainable solutions.

SUGGESTED CITATION:

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