

## How MCC became an example for other City Corporations:

The NGO Forum for Public Health has been implementing a Project for the last five years focusing on urban disaster risk reduction, waste management, and livelihood in the Mymensingh City Corporation area. In its continuation, the NGO Forum for Public Health, in partnership with Oxfam in Bangladesh, is conducting the project **“Resilient, Inclusive and Innovative Cities in Bangladesh (RIICB)”**. Two notable aspects of the program are:

- Fecal sludge treatment and co-compost plant.
- Formation of a separate FSM unit in Mymensingh City Corporation.

Fecal Sludge Management is neither the starting step of the journey neither the last, continuous development projects in the area has made way for a mature project such as FSM. Educating community and strengthening Local Government Institutes on climate change and its effects and how to build a sustainable city has worked out majorly.

The Mymensingh City Corporation has from the inception played a very important role of a co-contributor. Once a plan was chalked out and it was understood how much area would be required to construct a Fecal Sludge Treatment and Co-compost Plant, the MCC immediately allocated 44 decimal land in Akua. They also played a significant role in bringing about a change in the system and amongst the people of the area.

The second part of the above activities has played a very important role in achieving the common goal. Earlier in MCC, the condition of FSM i.e. Vacutug service was quite unmanaged and only a limited number of services were provided. Moreover, other waste management activities including these activities were conducted under the Department of Health. Repeated physical visits to the MCC were required for someone to avail FSM services; this resulted in more sufferings of the common people.

In the light of the Joint Action Plan and through advocacy meetings with MCC policy makers at various intervals throughout the project, MCC established a new department called Waste Management which is separate from the Health Department and more recently a Fecal Sludge Management Wing has been formed under the Waste Management Department.

Introducing a new concept is tough as it requires endorsement from prominent people of the community. Awareness messages and animations were broadcast on the television and it was noticed later that the MCC then took over and carried on the advertising to raise awareness.

Apart from all these activities, some innovative steps were taken by the project to make FSM popular. The first step was setting up a Hotline number for the Vacutug service. This meant that the customers could just call and get the service which saved their time. Understanding the demand of the area, MCC then increased the number of vehicles and the project also made contributions to smoothen the process. Currently to avail the Vacutag service one has to either call the Hotline number or directly go to the Waste Management Department and first apply for this service in the approved form. Later, a representative from the MCC will visit the site and check whether the Vacutug would be able to access the road, the distance from the road to the house and so forth.

When the Joint Action Plan (JAP) was drafted and agreed upon by the MCC, one requirement was the separate unit called FSM. In theory having a separate unit would expedite FSM activities of Mymensingh City Corporation and now in practical that theory has been proven right.

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