

WASTE MANAGEMENT PROJECT IN DEWATHANG

REPORT BY KEZANG DORJI

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Acknowledgement

The proponent and the Youth of Dewathang would like to thank **Bhutan Center for Media and Democracy (BCMD)** for support the Waste Management Project in Dewathang. It would have been very difficult for us to do a project like this if BCMD did not have the Democracy Day Challenge Program.

In addition, we would like to thank the **Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative (SJI)** for providing additional fund while in the middle of the project implementation. Above all, SJI had been the facilitating agency for the project in Dewathang as the project coordinator could not be physically present in Dewathang.

The proponent would also like to thank the **Chokyi Jatsho Institute** for all the support and providing the required resource persons. The proponent is thankful to the Dewathang Town Committee and the shopkeepers of Dewathang town for their moral and monetary support.

The implementation would not have been possible without the young volunteers from Dewathang who worked with the project Implementer from the beginning to the end. So, thank you very much to all the young volunteers. The proponent also would like to thank Aum Karma for providing refreshments and lunch for the volunteers.

Above all, the proponent is obliged to Mr Sherab Dorji who implemented the project in Dewathang. Without his the project would have never happened.

There are so many other to who deserved to be thanked. Therefore, the proponent would like to heartfully thank everyone who played a part in this project.

Background of the Project

Dewathang is a small town under Samdrup Jongkhar Thromde with a population of a few thousand people. It was observed that a huge amount of waste was produced in the area and was dumped on a source of a stream which happens to be tributary of a river called Dewree. Dewre is home to a variety of aquatic life and is also a spot where a lot people go for picnics.

If nothing was done the river would be continuously polluted. The youth group from Dewathang approached the concerned authorities to address this problem. The authorities informed that they have plans to resolve the waste problem. However, as their plan was to be implemented at a later time while the need for intervention was very urgent the youth group came up with the idea of doing something in Dewathang which would reduce the amount of waste produced.



Picture showing waste dumped at an open fill

Kezang Dorji, a youth from Dewathang who is based in Thimphu came to know about the Democracy Day Challenge of the Bhutan Center for Media and Democracy. The waste issue was brought to his notice through Sherab Dorji at Dewathang. The two decided to install waste specific dustbins in Dewathang town and also create awareness on Waste Management.



Project Coordinator: KEZANG DORJI



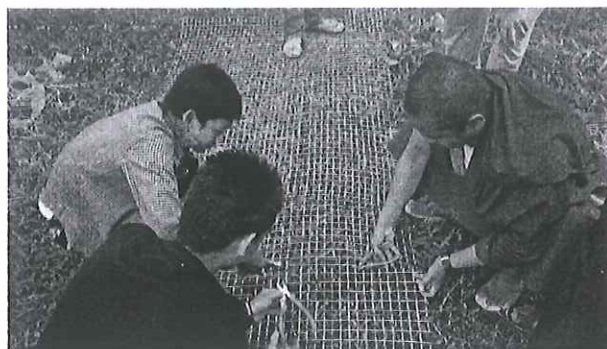
Project Implementer: Sherab Dorji

The proposal on Waste Management in Dewathang was put up by Kezang Dorji. With the proposal getting approved by BCMD, the vision of the youths to address the waste issue in Dewathang started realizing.

Summary of the Action

In order to create awareness and constantly remind the people of Dewathang about the importance of waste segregation waste specific dustbins were installed.

On 30th October, Sherab, the project implementer at Dewathang went to the bordering Indian market of Daranga Mela and purchased two bundles of iron net. He had requested Lopen Tshewang Rinzin, a monk at the Chokyi Jatsho Institute to teach how to make the dustbins with the net. On November 7th, 14 youth volunteers from Dewathang joined Sherab and made the dustbins. They could make 23 dustbins in total. The refreshments and lunch for the volunteers on that day was provided by Aum Karma, a resident of Dewathang.



Volunteers making the dustbins

After the frames made from 134 kg of iron rods the dustbins were almost ready for installation by November 10. However, the Thromde's approval for installing the dustbins was required. Therefore, on 15th November Sherab Dorji, Tshewang Rigzin (JNP trainee) and Jamyang Rabten (Dungsam academy student), went to Thromde office to get the permission on behalf of Dewathang youth. They met with the Thrompn himself and received his permission to install the dustbins.

The dustbins were given to Tshoki Gyatsho Institute for painting and welding. It was collected from there on 26th November. The 23 dustbins were installed in Dewathang town and in some areas where there was need on 4th December.



Dustbins installed in Dewathang Town

Impact of the Project

Waste Management is a top agenda in Bhutan. When this project was shared with the Thromde in the initial stage itself it was received with appreciation as they already had it in their future plans. The amount of unmonitored waste that is produced in a small town like Dewathang is very alarming. Waste is inevitable but Waste Management is possible and not very difficult. But our people need awareness on waste issues and they need to be educated on the importance of waste management.

This project was a small program that created awareness among the shopkeepers and the residents of Dewathang town. It was observed that in a few days after the installation of the dustbins there was a decrease in the amount of waste produced. Since the Thromde plans to dedicate more time and resources into waste management in future this project will help them in terms of resources and even in educating the people as they have now already got some ideas about waste management.

A Unifying Agent

The project implementation period were moments brought institutions and individuals together for the same cause. It is something unprecedented and exemplary in Dewathang. The project brought together the young boys and girls of Dewathang, the ones staying there and the ones who stay in other Dzongkhags as well. Further, the youths interfaced with the elders as well. It sends a strong message that our youths are aware of what is happening and that they are concerned as well.

What is meant by institutions brought together? Democracy Day Challenge fund was a little not enough. And so we had to approach Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative. As requested we received Nu 7000.00 (seven thousand only) from SJI and then later we found that we were still in short. Therefore, we had to approach the Dewathang town Committee. The committee also kindly supported the project with Nu 2500.00 (two thousand five hundred only). Only with all these institutions supporting the project was implemented very successfully.



Our dustbins installed beside a dustbin already installed by Thromde

Evaluation and Feedback

The project implementer in Dewathang, Sherab was gone out of Dewathang for eleven days after the installation of dustbins. On his return he had observed that the shopkeepers and the residents had become more careful with their waste. The amount of waste was reduced. However, the problem was that wastes were not dumped in their specific bins.

Therefore, it looks like the project has to be continued with constant awareness programs in the area.

