

Briefing Note

UPM Integrated Participatory Approach towards Innovative Solutions

Example of Technical Assistance in Lebanon: Pre-Feasibility Study & Capacity Building Assistance for Waste-to-Value – Integrated Sustainable Sanitation in Tyre – Rashidieh

Success in identifying appropriate innovative integrated environmental and social sound eco-sanitation & waste management solutions and systems change depends on buy-in the community and all relevant stakeholders, and their willingness to adopt technical innovations based on informed choices. Effectiveness of these solutions and the sustainability of the related community services depend on the awareness and willingness of the local community to adopt these innovative solutions and initiate behavioral change. This requires long-term engagement with the community and all relevant stakeholders through an inclusive, participatory integrated awareness raising and education strategy geared towards increasing environmental knowledge, changing negative attitudes and perceptions and promoting environmentally sound practices on individual, community and organizational levels.

In its work, UPM Umwelt-Projekt-Management GmbH (UPM) – on behalf of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation – employs an integrated inclusive approach linking technical and social aspects of innovation through working with all relevant stakeholders to ensure informed choices and to guarantee local ownership and long-term sustainability of the offered innovations. This requires pro-active and meaningful participation of the community and all other actors and the promotion of knowledge transfer throughout the project cycle. It also requires coordination and exchange of information among all relevant stakeholders to raise efficiency and effectiveness of the proposed interventions and build on existing knowledge and experience.

Therefore, the UPM integrated participatory approach seeks to:

- Improve general environmental awareness and highlight and prioritize environmental health, eco-sanitation and waste management among the community members.
- Promote waste-to-value concepts as tools to enhance environmental awareness and encourage behavior change in a way that brings financial benefit to the community with focus on opportunities for youth and women. (both organic waste and solid waste (e.g. upcycling, bio-energy creation, etc.).
- Address the issue of sustainability of the proposed interventions and environmental and health awareness by facilitating knowledge sharing and a participatory decision-making process that yields informed choice and enhances community sense of ownership of the proposed innovative solutions.
- Identify and support capacity building needs, both in terms of technical and soft skills necessary for sustainability.

- Promote behavior change and environmental health awareness by identifying possible concrete appropriate interventions or further developing existing ones based on the current practices and experiences and the needs of the community.
- Identify lessons learned and best practices for replicability of “integrated approach” in other similar contexts.

The key components of the UPM integrated and inclusive approach are:

Stocktaking

UPM considers stocktaking an important starting point for all its interventions. The purpose being to create a baseline through defining the situation and the context at the starting point of the interventions. This includes:



Mapping relevant actors, their roles and partnership.



Creating an overview of existing data and information.



Mapping relevant technologies/methods.
Determining capacity levels and needs.



Mapping relevant past and existing initiatives, projects, studies, etc.



Reflecting on common and individual enabling and limiting factors.

This can be done through review of documentation, existing information, interviews and meetings with individual actors, knowledge sharing workshops and observations.

Engagement with all actors

Ensuring that all relevant actors are on board is a pre-requisite for positive outcome and successful interventions. Engaging with all these actors leads to comprehensive understanding of the context, and a better assessment of the nature of the problem, and appropriate solutions. It also allows space for the various actors to put their concerns, interests and needs on the agenda, negotiate positions, and feel that their voices are heard. Meaningful and transparent engagement with all parties concerned builds trust, enhances cooperation and minimizes possible resistance to new innovations leading to better results.



Therefore, UPM considers engagement with all concerned parties on the local and national level is an important first step in the process. In addition to community representatives, UPM seeks to engage with national, local and international service providers and NGO partners, municipalities and hosting communities, relevant line ministries and other relevant legislative and (political) decision makers as well as relevant academic institutions and public sector actors. UPM team engages actors throughout the process through individual meetings, presentations and knowledge exchange and training workshops.

For example, in its work to conduct a feasibility study for an integrated eco-sanitation and waste management program for UNRWA in Rashidieh Palestinian Refugee Camp in Tyre – Lebanon, UPM engaged with Tyre Municipality, UNRWA and its staff working in the camp, the camp community and its representatives, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Water and Energy, the Army, International Agencies and their local NGO partners working in waste management, Academic and training institutions, relevant local businesses and the neighboring RAMSAR site. UPM also liaised and informed relevant funding agencies working on environment and waste management in Lebanon.



Rashidieh, Lebanon.

Working closely with the local community

Engagement and meaningful participation of the local community builds trust and enhances the sense of ownership and acceptance of innovative technologies based on informed choices. Lack of community-buy in is generally tied to poor knowledge and limited access to information by the community. UPM's inclusive approach seeks to get and maintain buy-in through involving the beneficiaries at each stage starting with the preliminary assessment and design and throughout implementation.

UPM team solicits input and feedback of community members and engages and informs them at every stage of its intervention to ensure compatibility with local realities and needs as perceived by the community itself. This community-based approach also serves to identify potential livelihood opportunities related to interventions for members in the community and to raise community awareness and promote pro-environment practices. During the process, UPM team also identifies and supports capacity building needs of the community members (and other stakeholders), both in terms of technical and soft skills necessary for sustainability.

UPM community-based approach is gender responsive. It involves working with men, women, boys and girls and dealing with their specific needs. It also provides them space not only to voice their specific needs and concerns, but also to benefit from the opportunities related to the interventions. In this respect, UPM explores potential livelihood particularly for youth and women; particularly opportunities for business development in relation to waste-to-value in the case of Rashidieh in Lebanon.



Additionally, UPM works with the community on different levels engaging individuals, households, (political and religious) organizations and educational institutions to ensure broad outreach and involvement of the community and to achieve broader impact and ensure sustainability.

In the course of the Rashidieh feasibility study, UPM worked closely with the Field Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Programme (FICIP) Working Group (WG) which was identified as the key counterpart to UNRWA's water and sanitation infrastructure work and environmental education and awareness programming in the camp. The WG represents the main political and social actors and organizations in the camp and has a mandate from the community to oversee design and implementation of UNRWA's projects. As such, the WG was involved at every stage of the work of the UPM team. Members of the WG participated in the two knowledge-sharing and training workshops which were conducted at the start-up and conclusion of the study and they provided input and feedback on the presentations of the experts and participated actively in the discussions. UPM team members also conducted in-depth meetings and focus group discussions with the WG at various stages of the work to gain insight in their positions, inform them about the process and provide them knowledge about the technical, social and economic aspects of the various proposed solutions and answer their questions and concerns. Building trust with the WG was important and having them on board was an asset and a bridge to the community throughout the process. Their commitment and pro-active participation contributed to and facilitated the work of UPM team in the camp. Therefore, capacity building of the members of the WG was identified as being essential to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to conduct their role effectively.

In addition to the WG, UPM experts team also engaged with the community on different levels and in many ways to get a broader insight in the current situation and concerns and to conduct a more in-depth assessment of the needs and possible practical and appropriate solutions. This included tours and observations, household visits, focus group meetings with women, school visits, and discussions with different groups and individuals. Furthermore, UPM expert

team paid special attention to schools and other educational institutes and initiatives given the central role of the formal educational setting in environment education and (environmental) behavior change and the need to enhance the link between school and community as the key to success and sustainability, special focus was given. Hence the team conducted school visits and met with the school directors of all 4 schools in the camp and talked to teachers and educationalists in the camp and at UNRWA headquarters.

Enhancing the link between school and community with in regard is key to success and sustainability.

Facilitating Informed Choices

Resistance to new technologies and innovative solutions to enduring problems is usually a result of lack of information; previous experiences of unsustainable interventions or inappropriate technologies; or regulatory, political or institutional constraints.

UPM encourages informed choices for innovative and appropriate eco-sanitation and solid waste management to ensure sustainability of these proposed technical solutions through acceptance, ownership and community mobilization. In the case of Rashidieh, UPM technical team used the knowledge and training workshops conducted in the course of the feasibility study as well as several briefing meetings to present, review and explain all aspects of the proposed integrated approach and the key new technologies to all stakeholders and community representatives to facilitate informed choices.



Facilitating knowledge and awareness towards behavior change

Behavior change and promoting pro-environment practices is a key element of UPM approach to innovation. Knowledge and awareness form the basis for behavior change in the community. UPM plays a key role both in contributing and facilitating knowledge towards community-based awareness raising that leads to sustained behavior change in relation to environment and environmental health practices. In this respect, UPM team provides advice and facilitates knowledge exchange and training workshops which also deal with awareness raising and behavior change as important parts of the integrated approach, as was done in the Rashidieh trajectory.



Promoting and facilitating knowledge sharing, information management & learning

Facilitating Knowledge sharing and information management and learning among stakeholders is another key component of the UPM integrated participatory approach to innovation in the field of environment, echo-sanitation and waste management. UPM experts experience regularly that stakeholders are unaware of information resources, and the lack of accessible accountable mechanism to share information. Generally, stakeholders lack power, time, or structures that enable them to convene to share information, coordinate activities, problem solve, and engage with and support one another. Ineffective information sharing leads to redundancy in project design and technical studies. The UPM Rashidieh expert team for example, experienced significant information disconnects across scale (e.g. local, municipal, national, INGOs and international,) and stakeholder type (e.g. conservation, education, health, planning, engineering, community work etc.) In fact, a wealth of information has been produced over the 70 years of Rashidieh existence but has had limited impact on community services and development. UPM managed to bring all the relevant actors together for the first time in two knowledge-sharing and training workshops. The target of the workshops was to convene stakeholders from Rashidieh Camp, Tyre Municipality, UNRWA, relevant line ministries, and local NGO partners working in solid waste, sanitation, and natural heritage in order to exchange knowledge and experiences, introduce possible technical solutions, and discuss a pro-environment vision for sustainable sanitation in the target area and to present and discuss the outcomes of the feasibility study at the concluding workshop.



Timeline of interventions

	2017	2018	2019
Stocktaking			
Mapping actors and technologies.			
Identifying existing initiatives, projects and studies.			
Identifying common challenges, limitations and training needs.			
Engagement with all actors			
Engaging local actors (Municipality, Local Communities).			
Engaging national actors (Line ministries, among others).			
Engaging international actors (UNRWA).			
Working closely with the local community			
Involvement of FICIP Working Group.			
Meetings with households and women.			
Involving schools and other organizations in the Camp.			
Facilitating Informed Choices			
Organizing knowledge exchange workshops.			
Meetings with stakeholders.			
Meetings with Committee's representatives.			
Facilitating knowledge & awareness towards behavior change			
Working with local communities			
Working with schools			
Linking schools with RAMSAR			
Promoting and facilitating knowledge sharing, information management & learning			
Knowledge & information sharing workshops.			
Convening stakeholders.			

This material is based on research funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The findings and conclusions contained within are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect positions or policies of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.