

Community supported waste segregation and recycling

Thelle Mogoerane Regional Hospital

GGHH Agenda goal:

Waste

Hospital Goal:

- We are committed to the waste goal because we would like to reduce the amount of waste going for landfilling while reducing the amount of money spent on its treatment. We would like to benefit not only financially but also be able to fulfil our social responsibility as an institution by creating jobs for the members of the community.
- Create awareness on the impact poor segregation has, not only on human health but also on the environment.

Progress achieved:

- 4 members of the community of Vosloorus have been employed to do the sorting of all recyclable generated within the institution. The institution has been able to generate revenue of approximately R800 per month from recyclables.
- General waste collected for landfilling by the local municipality has decreased from 3 large skip bins to 1 or 2 generated on a weekly basis.

The issue:

During the year 2014/2015 the hospital experienced significant poor waste segregation to the point where the local municipality returned all general waste they had collected as it contained medical waste. To correct the problem of poor waste segregation within the institution segregation flow charts were pasted on walls and notice boards to create awareness not only for employees but the patients and community. Sorting of waste was then introduced as a form of monitoring waste segregation and decreasing the quantity of waste going for landfilling in 2015. However, the initiative wasn't successful as the service provider started missing payments to the institutions and later on stopped collecting the recyclables.

In 2016 in house audits on waste segregation were introduced to keep the departments on their toes/ On spot trainings also took place to educate the staff on waste segregation. An independent waste auditor employed by the service provider made regular visits to conduct audits as a form of

measuring progress on waste segregation in the facility. A member of the community assisted with the sorting and collection of recyclables with no remuneration for the institution. In the year 2017 the Environmental Health Practitioners introduced the recycling initiative that would help in the socioeconomic aspect by creating jobs for members of the community and also play a role in the BBBEE empowerment.

A cooperative company of a member of the community was appointed by the institution to do the sorting and collection of all recyclables on site with the condition that the institution would get some form of revenue from it and 3 members of the community be employed. Plastic bottle caps were also collected for the “Donate a Wheelchair” initiative. The Environmental Health Office in the institution would donate a wheelchair to a less fortunate member of the community once a total of 450kg lids have been collected.



Sustainability strategy implemented

- We have implemented a strategy of creating employment because the initial strategy of getting a service provider for the collection of recyclables was not successful as some service

providers would not make payment for recyclables collected and would end up not paying the hospital. Employing community members made the project sustainable thus far.

Implementation process

- A gap was identified by the EHPs and management was notified of the intentions or plans the Environmental Health department had in taking the hospital Green.
- Staff was trained on what recyclable were and the importance of recycling waste.
- Notices / Memos were put up in the institution requesting everyone to assist with the recycling.
- A Service Level Agreement was drafted and signed a community member who will be heading the entire project of collecting recyclables.
- Recycling was implemented in the institution, though some people had difficulty accepting that they will not be permitted to take recyclable waste home with them as recycling was officially being conducted on site.

Tracking progress:

- A checklist was developed to track Health care risk waste generation rates on a weekly basis.
- Quantity of both general and healthcare risk waste to be evaluated on a quarterly then annual basis to track any improvement.

Challenges and lessons learnt

We have learned that there is no right time to start implementing change as there will always be resistance in changing behaviors. The longer one waits to implement change the harder it will be. And things become easier when you involve the community as they feel they are important and considered.

Next steps:

An official GGHH launch will take place in the institution to make everyone aware of the importance of greening the institution and the benefits thereof. This launch will assist in having green champions in each department who will assist in attaining our goals as an institution.

Demographic information:

Thelle Mogoerane Regional Hospital is a 821 bed hospital located at Vosloorus Extension 14 in Boksburg with more than 1500 staff members.

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