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SLRs 1.00 = \$ 0.09

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CMC	Colombo Municipal Council
CDC	Community Development Council
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DFID	Department For International Development
HCDC	Housing and Community Development Council
GIS	Geographical Information System
GDI	Gender Development Index
GEM	Gender Empowerment Index
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
PRIMUSS	Participatory Improvement of Under Served Settlements
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
SCP	Sustainable Cities Program
UMP	Urban Management Program
UNDP	United Nations Development Fund
UNCHS	United Nations Center for Human Settlements
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Colombo is the main city and commercial capital of Sri Lanka. Within the city, the urban poor live in 1,614 under-served settlements, some of which are degraded, low cost housing formerly owned by commercial companies and others, temporary shanties built on marginalized lands. The urban poor are mostly employed in the informal sector. They face social exclusion and major problems in accessing basic services. Lack of land tenure security, low incomes and indigence, poor access to clean water and sanitation, health threats due to vector-borne disease and congested surroundings, and high numbers of female headed households are some of the problems that they face. Their community organizations are weak or non-existent, making dependency on political decision makers and other powerbrokers, the norm.

In the past twenty years, there has been enhanced emphasis on optimizing service delivery to the urban poor, beginning with the interest shown by significant political personalities. With this came several externally funded projects, which sought to cater to the needs of the marginalized groups, especially in improving their habitat and livelihoods. With 51% of its population living in underserved settlements, the Colombo Municipal Council (CMC) has been increasingly urged to develop strategies and systems of focusing on pro-poor service delivery to urban poor. The CMC is thus an organization in transition in relation to its service orientation.

Since the extent of poverty and the nature of poverty stricken groups were not well documented, the CMC found it difficult to prioritize service delivery. The provision of services to the under-served settlement often took on political undertones in the past. CMC sought solutions by linking up with civil society organizations, which had close connections with and ample experience in mobilizing the urban poor. With the development of a comprehensive Poverty Profile of Colombo's 1,614 under-served settlements and through expansion of its uses, CMC has developed a management tool by which the most poverty-stricken settlements and their specific needs could be prioritized. This Profile has proved its uses for ongoing CMC programs as well as a base for future planning. CMC has also placed before its Councilors a draft Poverty Reduction Strategy for ratification, which will further bolster its pro-poor stance. The joint experience of carrying out the activity with a civil society organization has also built in complementary skills in the CMC and put in place an effective partnership.

As with most urban centers, garbage disposal has been a critical issue of concern to citizens of Colombo. The poor were particularly more vulnerable, as about 70% of the previous 1,250 wayside dumping sites were near under-served settlements. The extent of this problem was underlined by CMC when it established a Solid Waste Management Department as early as 1987. Various modes of controlling haphazard dumping of garbage have been tried since 1984, but most of these attempts did not have a positive impact on the under-served settlements due to the acute lack of space in which garbage could be stored prior to pickup.

When household collection of garbage was instituted in 1998, the overall garbage dumping situation improved in Colombo, except in the under-served settlements. By benchmarking and continuously improving on previous efforts, the CMC developed familiarity with community consultations in the under-served settlements. A consultative process between the CMC and the urban poor led to the solution to introduce plastic bins in under-

served settlements, where garbage can be stored until the designated collection time. This succeeded in reducing haphazard garbage dumping and in creating a cleaner environment in the settlements. The system is client-driven, with the all-important timing of the collection being based on the client requests. CMC also brought about internal changes that support this process. A full time Solid Waste Management Education unit was created to link with the under-served settlements. The Solid Waste Management project is seen as a successful solution, improving garbage collection of urban under-served settlements through effective consultation and consensus building.

Bi-annual monsoons result in heavy rains and floods that spread diseases in Colombo. Health problems due to vector borne diseases such as dengue have affected the urban poor the most, in the form of income lost due to illness and medical costs. The CMC likewise used to incur heavy expenditures in controlling dengue outbreaks through traditional means.

The poor level of awareness of citizens regarding mosquito-breeding sites was cited as one of the major reasons for the prevalence of dengue. The Integrated Health and Environment Management program, also known as the Green Star Home Project, is an innovative means of forging a multi-stakeholder network of CMC officers, civil society organizations, schools and commercial companies to carry out a citywide awareness campaign to control mosquito breeding. The Public Health Department of the CMC initiated a stakeholder network for launching a clean-up campaign and inspection of 45,000 households. This inspection process was supported by a large-scale media and public awareness campaign. Environmental friendly efforts of 10,000 civic-minded citizens were recognized through the Green Star Home certification. As a result of this campaign, the incidence of dengue was substantially reduced, and a greater awareness of environmental management has been formed within the communities.

CMC continues to enhance its capacity to improve service delivery to the poor. A Decentralized Budget with a steadily increasing Members' Allocation gives greater flexibility of response to client needs; it is being strengthened by the CMC Poverty Reduction Strategy, which is in the process of being ratified. Various consultative mechanisms such as Housing and Community Development Councils (HCDC), Public Days and Mobile Public Hearings provide the platform for citizens to voice out their needs. E-mailed complaints to the Mayor are responded to promptly and a system of E-governance is being put in place.

The CMC Approach to Poverty Reduction, the Solid Waste Management program and the Integrated Health and Environmental Management program for under served settlements are all part of the CMC attempts to build a client-responsive approach through the partnership mode, focusing on giving expression to the needs of the poor. Collectively, all three activities have a positive impact in enhancing the living environment and well being of the urban poor and provide a learning experience in mobilizing effective partnerships for pro-poor service delivery.

I. Profile of Colombo City

Colombo is the main city and commercial capital of Sri Lanka and was, till 1980, the administrative capital as well. Beginning as a trading post for Arab traders on the West coast of Sri Lanka, its natural harbor attracted a succession of colonial powers. It grew in stature with the gradual development of an export economy.

The Colombo Municipal Council (CMC) has been established as far back as in 1865. As the premier local government institution in Sri Lanka, CMC has a history of over 135 years as the local authority of Colombo City. The Colombo Municipal Council consists of 53 Councillors, headed by a Mayor, elected on a proportional representation system to a four-year term. For administrative purposes, the CMC is headed by a Municipal Commissioner. It is divided into 6 administrative districts, employing 12,000 staff who work under 15 Departments to provide 14 basic services. (Appendices 1 & 2) The CMC has Statutory Standing Committees, which are responsible for developing policies on service delivery.

Currently the city of Colombo covers an area of 3,731 hectares and is home to a resident population of 642,020. With a population density of 278 persons/hectare, it also hosts a floating population of 400,000. This large floating population poses a major strain on the resources and services of the CMC. The city, unlike many of its Asian counterparts has a remarkably low level of population growth: the city population increased from 4,516 during the first census in 1881 to 642,020 at present. This is due to the low level of rural urban migration. Urbanization in Sri Lanka is below 25%, and the relatively small size of the country allows the rural population to easily shift from country to city.

Colombo City itself accounts for nearly 30% of Sri Lanka's gross domestic product (GDP), predominantly from the service sector (27.6%), manufacturing (24.3%) trade and tourism (20.2%). Within the city, one-third of its inhabitants, mostly those from under-served settlements (USS) find their livelihood in informal sector activities.

In colonial times, large commercial houses established their own low cost housing for workers. These deteriorated with time and became slums especially after they were divested from their former owners through a ceiling on property ownership. During the Second World War when Colombo suffered a significant airborne attack, parts of the city were razed to create firebreaks. In subsequent years, shanties catering to an increased population of the urban poor filled in these gaps.¹ The inhabitants of the under-served settlements were long seen as anti-social elements and troublemakers by the city administrators and suffered from a social stigma, negatively impacting on their ability to access services.

Apart from social exclusion,² which constrains their access to education, services and employment, the urban poor in Colombo suffer from serious physical disadvantages due to the nature of their settlements. Sixty-three percent (63%) lack tenurial security over their land, while 10% are squatter families maintaining a precarious existence on canal banks and railway reservations. Inadequate access to basic amenities such as sanitation and water supply pose health threats to 56%. Most of the urban poor settlements (91%) do not have access to a community center. Only about 12% of urban poor families have a permanent source of income

¹ Silva, K.T and Athukorala, K, *The Wattle Dwellers: A Sociological Study of Selected Urban Low Income Communities in Sri Lanka*, University Press of America, 1991

² De Silva, Amarasiri, *Study on Poverty Profile on Colombo Core Area*, Municipal Councils of Colombo, Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte and Dehiwela-Mt. Lavinia 2000

from either formal or informal sector employment. Estimations of female-headed households range from 10% to 35%. About 89% of the urban poor settlements have 10% -25% families who need to receive assistance under the Municipal Poor Relief program to survive.³

Urban poor communities also suffer from a range of social problems such as high crime rates and drug addiction. Dependency on political patronage for employment and services are further constraining factors. Some settlements are viewed as strongly influenced by political and sometimes even criminal elements that act as a conduit or barrier for any benefits accruing to these families. Strong Community Development Councils (CDCs) could champion the cause of the community against such pressure groups, but as highlighted in the CMC Poverty Profile, these organizations, which were quite effective in the past,⁴ are now defunct in 67% of the urban settlements. Of those CDCs yet in existence, about 24% are not meeting or functioning regularly.

³ DFID/UNDP/UN-HABITAT/UMP Urban Poverty Reduction Project , Poverty Profile of Colombo – Urban Poverty Reduction through Community Empowerment, Colombo ,Sri Lanka 2002

⁴ Devas, Nick, Connections Between Urban Governance and Poverty: Analyzing the Stage 1 City Case Studies, University of Birmingham ,2000

II. Service Delivery Context

Around 1,506 urban poor settlements were located within the CMC area as in 1998-1999; they have now increased to 1,614, housing about 51% of the total residential population of the city. They are, however, relatively small in size—74% of them have less than 50 housing units while the large settlements with more than 500 units account for only about 0.7% of the urban poor settlements in Colombo.

The large number of underserved urban communities represents a problem which has long engaged the attention of the CMC as well as other national agencies and external donors. Especially after 1972, CMC expanded its activities from purely regulatory functions to a more development-oriented focus. A series of special projects designed to uplift the status of the urban poor came into being. The Urban Basic Services Program largely funded by UNICEF was particularly significant in emphasizing the need for participatory action for successful urban renewal. It carried out a pioneer, innovative program in the urban slums in the 1980's.

Between the 1980s and 1990s, the need for services by the urban poor gained greater attention due to the impact of a few key political personages from Colombo City who have gained national prominence. A series of activities such as the Million Houses Program and agencies such as the National Housing Development Authority sought to improve living standards in under-served settlements. Community Development Councils (CDCs) and the Housing and Community Development Committee (HCDC) were instituted to act as a platform to facilitate a dialogue for the urban poor with the city administrators.

A study of the current CMC portfolio reveals a wide range of activities focusing on pro-poor service delivery. They include conventional approaches such as Poor Relief (based on an activity initiated in colonial times), a decentralized budget targeting the poor on a needs basis (approached through a special Members Allocation), and participatory modes of consultation for citizens, both ratepayers and non-ratepayers, to access the Mayor and CMC top administration. Examples of the latter are Public Days held every Wednesday, mobile public hearings, prompt response and action by appropriate Departments to e-mailed complaints to the Mayor, and a system of e-governance currently being put in place, with computer access planned at CMC community centers to cater for the digitally deprived urban poor.

As far back as 1972, CMC has recognized the need to facilitate effective participation of communities in the under-served settlements and to initiate new programs. CMC adopted a "learning-by-doing approach" in experimenting with pro-poor activities, gradually refining its approach to pro-poor service delivery within its organizational and financial constraints. Within the CMC administration too, the paradigm shift has brought about changes, with new cadre positions and units being set up to support the new challenges.

For example, a new Department was set up to handle solid waste management in the city in response to the increasing public outcry about garbage disposal, especially from the underserved settlements which were the most affected. A new cadre position was created for health instructors to serve as the link between the CMC and the marginalized communities. These changes were periodically reviewed in attempts to create strong interdivisional linkages within the CMC for effective service delivery. While not always successful, they nevertheless constituted useful learning experiences.

The CMC attempts at a focused minimum level of service delivery for the urban poor were also reflected in its fiscal policies. The annual budget of the CMC for the year 2004 is US \$ 40 million. The traditional centralized budget has been adjusted since 1998 to provide greater flexibility to citizens' needs by including a provision for a Member Allocation, to be used based on the specific needs of the constituency. This program aimed to enhance responsiveness to the needs of the urban poor. It has grown from an initial allocation of US \$800 in 1998 to US\$26,000 in 2004.

The CMC has also been strategically linking up with local and overseas partners, both civil society organizations and donor agencies to strengthen its programs. One of the most significant outputs of such partnership was the CMC Poverty Profile.⁵ The development of the Poverty Profile has been institutionalized and extended within the CMC and its philosophy has been integrated into the 2001 Colombo declaration of Sri Lankan Mayors' Forum now being disseminated to other municipalities (Appendix 3). A draft Poverty Reduction Strategy (Annex 4) developed as a direct outcome of the Poverty Profile is currently under review by the Municipal Councilors prior to formal adoption.

These efforts, notwithstanding, the politicization of service delivery and its subsequent impacts on the urban poor are major constraints to poverty reduction programs. The impacts of political decision makers, both positive and negative, on activities of the CMC have been elaborated elsewhere by independent authors,⁶ but they are rarely cited in the documentation of the numerous projects of the CMC. The Intermediate Report on the Benchmarking Project has this one laconic statement: *Independence of programs from political processes is difficult to manage (sic)*. Within this statement lies a system of political patronage which the CMC seeks to circumvent through its use of the Poverty Profile as the definitive tool for measuring and prioritizing pro-poor service delivery.

⁵ This was a key output of the DFID/UN-Habitat assisted Poverty Reduction Project which was in operation during 2001-2003

⁶ Footnote 4

III. Urban Good Practices in Service Delivery

The CMC portfolio includes a wide range of pro-poor service delivery initiatives. The activities selected as Urban Good Practices by an In-Country Technical Team for this paper relate to provision of services for the urban underprivileged communities—towards improving their cleanliness, maintaining satisfactory levels of health and most significantly, developing a system of prioritizing their needs and placing the partnership approach to poverty reduction at center stage within the CMC planning efforts.

These initiatives—the Poverty Profile, the Solid Waste Management activity, and the Health and Environmental management activity, have evolved out of the CMC experiences in targeting the needs of the urban under-served settlements in partnership with other actors. All three activities represent the CMC's efforts to build effective partnerships with other stakeholders in resolving issues and seeking solutions in pro-poor service delivery.

A. CMC's Approach to Poverty Reduction

Colombo is primarily a harbor-based city, which developed into Sri Lanka's harbor and commercial capital with its related commercial activities. Several large business houses owned tenement gardens with common services to house their labor. With the 1973 Ceiling on Housing and Property Law, a large number of low cost housing had their ownership transferred to State to harmonize the economic disparities in the society. Nevertheless, the transfer had a detrimental impact on housing stock and quality, which experienced rapid deterioration. State mechanisms failed to raise the quality of life and surroundings of the urban poor. Although not phenomenal, the increased population contributed to increase congestion of these settlements. While tenement gardens deteriorated in terms of quality of services and environment, new shanty settlements came up in marginalized lands (railway and canal reservations, low-lying marshes) in response to the need for shelter by the urban poor. New settlements were set up due to forcible eviction of squatters; during the Non-Aligned Nations Summit of 1976, large numbers were forcibly evicted and settled in Colombo North, in a major shanty settlement which later became known as Summit Pura. Though the government later relaxed taxes on house builders in an effort to promote investment in low income housing, the investors were not attracted and the delivery of affordable housing with appropriate level of services continued to be a problem.

The demand for and the inability of urban poverty groups' to access basic services created a continuously tense situation, leading to greater dependency on political decision makers. This caused problems for the CMC staff who were forced to follow a politically motivated prioritization due to poor contact with the urban poor. But even among the political leadership, the inability to provide services to their constituents and the resultant pressures were also a source of frustration. In one extreme instance, a woman municipal councilor, frustrated in her longstanding attempt to obtain services for an under-served settlement affected by poor drainage, doused herself with kerosene and attempted self-immolation within the Municipal Council premises. Until the 1970s, the CMC still functioned under colonial Statutes which specifically prohibited provision of services for non-ratepayers. No budgetary provision was thus available, thereby locking out access to services for most of the urban poor. This situation is best expressed by the case of a Mayor who provided a water point to an under-

served settlement using CMC funds, and who was stripped of his civic rights for seven years as a penalty.

However, this situation started to change in the last decades of the past century. With the catalytic impact of powerful political personages in the city who have risen to national prominence, attention grew on the needs of the urban poor throughout the 1980s. More sustained attempts were made to deal with this issue in the 1990s. In retrospect, the Slums and Shanties Program (1978-1984) and the National Million Houses Program (1978-1989) were particularly significant in focusing attention on the needs of the urban poor.

But there was the need for an up to date mapping of the urban under-served settlements on a citywide scale. The provision of high rise housing for the urban poor through the Sahasrapura Program (1994) was preceded by such a mapping of the settlement. The CMC as a partner gained much experience in this activity, which became useful in planning its own Poverty Reduction program and Poverty Assessment.

The Poverty Profile is the salient feature of the CMC's efforts to achieve poverty reduction through a targeted, pro-poor service delivery. At present, the CMC faces the key challenge of improving the living conditions of the city's urban poor within a politicized context, which may not always prioritize the urban poor's needs. As a first step, a comprehensive database needs to be compiled, which can be used as a management tool to identify and prioritize the service delivery needs. But the CMC itself did not have in-house capacity to develop an appropriate methodology to collect, monitor and analyze relevant data; it also did not have the outreach mechanisms to mobilize and liaise with the urban poor for such an activity.

During the year 1998/1999, the CMC carried out a development program in partnership with the Urban Management Program (UMP) of UNDP/UN-HABITAT. This watershed activity also brought in civil society partners such as Sevanatha Urban Resource Centre. Their combined efforts culminated in a City Consultation in May 1999,⁷ which aimed at improving the capacity and participation of stakeholders, particularly the urban poor, for better municipal services. In the consultations with participating stakeholder groups, the following major concerns relating to improvement of urban poor settlements were identified: deficiencies in the municipal service delivery system, centralized municipal functions with inadequate capacity to respond to community needs, and inadequate community representation in the municipal decision making process. The CMC and Sevanatha, with the assistance of UMP project personnel, developed a proposal seeking financial and technical assistance from DFID to launch a project that would address the key concerns raised at the City Consultation.⁸

Joint planning for the Poverty Profile was carried out by CMC and Sevanatha starting in 1999. Actual field work took three months and involved persons from both organizations. The activity also benefited from the strong support of the then Mayor. Through consulting with other partners including community leaders from underserved settlements, the methodology was developed and fine-tuned by the civil society partner, Sevanatha. Sevanatha further trained its partners in carrying out participatory consultations, thus effecting a transfer of skills to the CMC.

⁷ Colombo Municipal Council and Sevanatha –Urban Resource Center, Report on the Proceedings of the Colombo City consultation 1999 – the Poverty Profile itself was developed through Urban Poverty Reduction Project, which was in operation in Colombo during the period 2001-2003

⁸ A Poverty Audit was undertaken by DFID to substantiate the CMC request and justify funding of the Urban Poverty Reduction Project for UNCHS/UMP.

The preparation of a Poverty Profile for the City of Colombo is significant. It is the first ever known city level effort to forge partnership between government and civil society in identifying key issues, perspectives, strategies and actions for urban poverty reduction.⁹ The involvement of a civil society organization, Sevanatha, brought in complementary skills and experience in social mobilization which became useful in involving the community and in developing a methodology that reflects the multi-dimensional nature of poverty. With its involvement in the process, CMC acquired skills and became more comfortable working in a participatory mode.

The Poverty Profile was prepared through a process of dialogue with the key stakeholders. The process was bottom-up and consultative at every crucial stage. In particular, members of under-served settlements, including CDC leaders, were involved in developing criteria to assess poverty, carrying out the community survey, sharing primary information in the communities and developing and implementing demonstration projects. Under-served communities were classified into four groups and ranked using a set of twenty quantitative indicators for prioritizing services. Two wards in each Municipal District were selected as pilot areas to develop tools for local operational planning with respect to housing in urban low-income communities. District Offices of the CMC were also strengthened to improve service provision. The under-served settlement data are being recorded in order to update the profile continuously. Based on the Poverty Profile, a detailed work plan for carrying out activities related to the Poverty Project has been prepared for the period up to February 2004 in the two selected pilot municipal districts, and the work is currently in progress.

Most important of all, the CMC was able to identify that 10% of the under-served settlements needed urgent, immediate attention and 40% needed considerable improvements.

The CMC Poverty Profile is the first significant attempt to consider service delivery on a needs basis rather than on a political basis, as was the norm in the past. It is now supported by the development of a Poverty Reduction Strategy.¹⁰ This important strategic document has now been developed and is now very close to ratification by the Council. CMC has given highest priority to the institutional adoption of the draft Poverty Reduction Strategy, given the absence of an official policy paper on poverty alleviation in the past.

B. Case Study in Effective Solid Waste Management in Under Served Settlements

The CMC initiative on solid waste management in under-served settlements is a successful attempt to control haphazard garbage dumping. The negative impacts of poor garbage collection were mostly felt by the urban poor as garbage were dumped prior to collection in 1,250 wayside collection points, 70% of which were situated next to under-served settlements. Often the garbage remained uncollected in the under-served settlements due to shortages of CMC staff. While the wealthy communities could afford to "tip" the garbage collectors

⁹ Three previous city-wide surveys had been carried out by different agencies – the Survey of Slums and Shanties in the City of Colombo by the Urban Development Authority in 1978, Survey of Urban Low Income Settlements in Colombo by the CMC in 1987 and the Survey of Low Income Settlements by the Clean Settlements Program Unit, under the Ministry of Urban Development housing and Construction in 1997/98 (Known as the REEL Database)

¹⁰ DFID.UNDP/UN-HABITAT Urban Management Program Executed Urban Poverty Reduction through Community Empowerment Project: Draft Poverty Reduction Strategy for Colombo. 2003

to clean up their neighborhoods, the urban poor often lacked cash to do so. Workshops and commercial establishments also add to the problem by trucking in garbage from their establishments and dumping it in the wayside collection points, some distance away from their own neighborhoods. Narrow access roads added to the problem.

A number of attempts were made by CMC to deal with the problem of haphazard dumping of garbage. In 1984, it started to distribute two black plastic garbage bags per week to each household in the city, but the results were mixed. In middle and upper class households, the black bag could be stored for some time with garbage pending collection. But in the crowded tenements and shanties, there was not enough space for the family to sleep, let alone to store garbage. Thus the black bags were sometimes used to store other items or were sold back to the contractor. Organizationally, CMC also set up a Solid Waste Management Department in 1987, indicating the level of importance accorded to the garbage disposal problem.

CMC next started to use wheelie bins—large metal containers of one cubic meter capacity—at the usual collection points. The bin facilitated mechanical loading and to a certain extent kept the street and under-served settlements clean. But this too had problems. CMC has always had problems dealing with the transient population of 500,000 who make use of city services but do not pay rates. Since the bin was placed in the usual dumping site near the entrance to an under-served settlement, non-residents started to dump garbage in the bins close to the settlements, a practice resented by the urban poor and one which has led to confrontations.

Other problems were encountered: drug addicts cut the wheels off the bins to sell the metal; the bins caught fire due to the dumping of charcoal used in ironing clothes by small scale laundries; the bins suffered corrosion and natural deterioration, thus more and more were taken out of commission. Also, the bins became a traffic problem because they obstructed city traffic. Numerous accidents were caused by vehicles running into the bins at night. To prevent such, luminous stickers were used; they were then ripped off for reuse in other purposes. CMC had to slit the stickers so that they could not be peeled off. High cost of maintenance (each wheelie bin costs approximately US\$150) due to corrosion made replacement an expensive option, if not unaffordable.

During a period of internal instability in 1989, two persons were killed when a bomb placed in a bin exploded. These bins were then seen as a major security risk and they were gradually removed from the roadside, especially in areas where VIP travel was common. Due to the above problems the wheelie bins were seen as unsustainable and were soon discarded. At that point the CMC gradually went back to the old system of wayside collection sites. Unsanitary, unhygienic garbage dumps once more became the norm. In 1997 Central Government assistance enabled the acquisition of 90 compactor trucks through a Japanese grant. This gave momentum to the CMC efforts in garbage collection. House to house collection was initiated at predetermined times and was quite successful in high and middle-income areas. However, storing garbage within the narrow confines of houses in under-served settlements continued to pose a problem. Due to the narrowness of the access roads within the settlements, internal collecting had yet to be done in larger settlements using handcarts. In smaller settlements the garbage had to be taken to a collection point which soon grew into a dump.

CMC took a radical step in October 1988 by privatizing garbage collection in half of the city. Half of the underserved settlements too were covered in this program. Householders were informed about approximate times of collection. Collection was done three times a week

in the middle and high-income areas, and daily in underserved settlements. It is generally accepted that the privatized collection is efficient and acceptable to most people. However, due to the storage problem, only high and middle-income households were able to participate successfully in this program. As with all CMC efforts thus far, this process was seen to work best in high and middle-income areas where environmental awareness and education level is high, and where the households have more space to store garbage. Garbage continued to be thrown out twice or thrice a day at the wayside dumps, and by the average household in underserved settlements which lacked garbage storage space.

Nevertheless this program was partially successful. It enabled the CMC to minimize the number of wayside dumps from 1250 to 750. The reduction brought relief to the marginalized communities where the abolished dumps were located.

With the experiences gained from earlier initiatives, the CMC Solid Waste Management Department saw the need to devise a system where garbage could be kept from touching the ground until collection time. Again, a watershed point for CMC decisionmakers was their involvement in the ADB-funded Enhancing Municipal Services Delivery Capability Project (RETA 5764 -1998-2000). Solid Waste Management was one of the services selected for this project for benchmarking and continuous improvement (Appendix 5). Within the CMC, 36 professional staff was trained for this purpose and the positive impacts of this activity are most clearly visible within Solid Waste Management Division. The collective deliberations on this issue, along with the project consultants' inputs, underlined for the CMC staff, the critical need to consult urban poor stakeholders in identifying solutions to haphazard garbage dumping. Therefore several community consultations were carried out in partnership with the urban poor. Jointly, the CMC and the stakeholders came up with a solution where a plastic bin would be issued to each household to store garbage prior to a community-determined collection time. The 50-liter plastic bins were pierced so that they could not be used for storage and were given free of charge to each household in the under-served settlements.

Concurrently a Solid Waste Education unit was set up in-house in the Solid Waste Management Division to carry out the awareness programs, which were also seen as critical in promoting the new initiative. The Unit was given its own vehicles and facilities; its staffing has expanded since inception. The distribution of the plastic bins in each site was preceded by a Solid Waste Education activity, which clearly communicated the importance of the new program in maintaining a healthy environment. The activity was launched formally with a ceremony in the community, attended by CDC officials, CMC staff and householders; it marked a clear break from the old behavior pattern of dumping garbage and the new behavior pattern of storing.

The joint CMC/community activity proved to be successful in managing solid waste management in the under-served settlements. Both groups collaborated in carrying out their share of responsibilities. Community pressure ensured that there were few violations of the rules forbidding indiscriminate dumping. CMC ensured that the garbage was picked up regularly during the community defined times. Due to the success of the pilot project, CMC decided to distribute plastic bins to other areas as well. The program was started at the end of 1999 and full coverage of all 800 underserved settlements being serviced by the CMC was reached in March 2000.

C. Integrated Approach to Improve Health and Environment Management

Dengue and other mosquito-borne diseases have become a major urban health problem in urban areas in Sri Lanka, due to the prevalence of breeding grounds, and due to improper collection and disposal of garbage. During the bi-annual monsoon periods in April-June and September-November where heavy rains and the resultant floods spread disease, CMC spends a large amount of resources on medication and corrective actions. Mosquito-borne diseases (filariasis, dengue and other virus diseases) infect approximately 5,000 to 6,000 persons in Colombo each year. Barely 10% of these cases are reported to the city health authorities. High economic costs are incurred by families of daily wage earners suffering from dengue in the form of hospitalization, lost time, and lost wages. The last reported epidemic of Dengue Fever and Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever was experienced by the city in 1999. Up till then, the number of suspected dengue fever cases had continued to increase during annual outbreaks despite routine control measures.

The CMC Public Health Department was used to controlling the outbreaks of mosquito-borne diseases through emergency mopping up operations, that is, clearing and spraying roadside drains and collecting containers in which the mosquitoes could breed. This has been the standard response to the outbreaks of mosquito-borne diseases especially in the under-served settlements. Though the CMC spent around US \$ 53,000 in material and another US \$ 157,000 for wages as recurrent expenditure annually in mosquito control, it was not possible to prevent or contain the bi-annual outbreak of mosquito-borne diseases in the city during the monsoon seasons, mainly due to the sectoral approach to the problem within the CMC itself.

The lack of access to the services which will help maintain a healthy environment, namely garbage disposal, water and sanitation increases the vulnerability of the urban poor to the impact of vector-borne diseases. The mosquito menace is a major concern to all citizens of the city, especially to the poor, distressing their rest at night and affecting levels of efficiency at work. The resultant loss of productivity not only affects the patient but also the entire community. Thus, CMC efforts to create a clean and conducive environment in the city supports poverty reduction and enhanced productivity by reducing morbidity rates in under-served settlements.

The conditions that prevailed in under-served settlements called for an integrated approach to health and environmental management to curb mosquito-borne diseases. A study conducted by the Epidemiological Unit of the Public Health Department on reported and suspected cases of mosquito-borne diseases found out that a majority of these areas had dumps of uncollected garbage that facilitate mosquito breeding. Furthermore, the study noted that most instances of dengue mosquito breeding in and around the houses were due to lack of awareness among city dwellers.

Dengue is to an extent an avoidable disease provided that the mosquito breeding grounds are systematically destroyed. However, the awareness of citizens on the need to destroy mosquito breeding grounds had to be improved so as to enlist their support in a novel anti-dengue campaign. To raise awareness on controlling this disease, the Public Health Department planned in 2001 an innovative program enlisting the partnership of a broad network of organizations. This activity was supported by the Sustainable Cities Program (SCP) of UNDP and a consortium of leading private sector companies and NGOs in Colombo.¹¹

¹¹ The CMC has been a partner of this program for four years and the Green Star Home project has been selected as one of SCP's Best Practices.

The activity called for the formation of a Working Group including personnel from different divisions of the CMC, private sector entities as well NGOs to tackle the problem. As there were only 2 types of dengue mosquito out of 14 species that are found in Colombo, the Working Group decided that the CMC should actively carry out a campaign to destroy all mosquito breeding places. Accordingly, special promotional material to create awareness in communities and individual households were designed. To encourage the community to take part in the campaign, a Green Star Sticker certification was issued to households which upon examination were found to have maintained clean and mosquito-free premises.

To select such households, a set of criteria to eliminate mosquito-breeding places was devised. The criteria were as follows: no mosquito breeding places should be found on premises; no overgrown rank vegetation or overgrown trees, bushes and hedges should be found; road frontage, drains and gutters should be clean and well-maintained. Paper advertisements in all three languages were placed informing the citizens about the project and soliciting their cooperation. This created an enthusiasm in citizens to join in the clean-up program in the hope of qualifying for a Green Star Sticker certification.

The project was implemented in two stages. The First Stage was designed to cover large land parcels followed by the marginalized land areas in the city. In the Second Stage, improvements to environment in underserved settlements situated along the canal banks were carried out (garbage disposed of in the canal had created islets of vegetation in which dengue mosquitoes breed). In both stages, the major impact of the program was seen in the reduction of dengue-incidence on the urban poor who were more exposed to the disease. The Green Star Home project also took into account the leading role that women play in keeping the environs clean and eliminating the mosquito breeding places around their houses and settlements. It was decided by the Working Group to carry out the house to house inspections strategically in the initial stages. In the first round, only the CMC wards which had dengue cases in that year were chosen. In the second round, the CMC wards that had dengue patients in the previous years were chosen while in the third round those areas which had no history were included.

The three rounds of inspection saw the volunteer stakeholders led by the Working Group inspect 45,410 premises. Only 10,000 households were issued with the Green Star Home certification. More than a thousand notices under the Mosquito-borne Diseases Regulations were issued to unhygienic households. Strong deterrents were put in place and 401 persons were taken to courts for disregarding the notices. The result was a decrease in the total number of dengue cases for the year.

This program was remarkable for the high public participation not only in the inspections but also in parallel activities such as school cleanup programs, media programs and awareness building marches. Public opinion was monitored through reactions during Public Health staff visits and through the CMC Standing Committee on Health and Sanitation.

IV. Achievements

The CMC was and still to some degree is a very hierarchic organization. CMC officers were reluctant and to some extent still are slow to engage CSO services. The recognition of civil society organizations was a slow, yet, ongoing process.¹² However, through the processes described here, the CMC has recognized the need to work in partnership with the urban poor and by extension, with civil society organizations. Community consultation and partnership with CSOs is being institutionalized in the CMC management systems with the Poverty Reduction Strategy. The CMC, which was earlier resistant to CSO involvement in its projects gradually modified its stance; in particular the Institutional Development Center, which led the Poverty Reduction activity, recognizes the active CSO contribution to the Poverty Profile. Both groups, CSOs and CMC, have gained familiarity with working in the partnership mode.

The usefulness of the Poverty Profile as an instrument supporting decision making is illustrated by the following instances:

- The Poverty Profile highlighted that 15% of the settlements had no access to municipal waste collection services. This information was quickly picked up by the Solid Waste Management Department, which verified the situation using its own staff and then put in place appropriate corrective measures.
- Since CDCs had functioned successfully in the past, the CMC officers worked under the assumption that they were the most appropriate mechanisms for linking with the communities. The CDC representatives who came to meetings were seen as the best means of conveying information to the under-served settlements. The Poverty Profile however was instrumental in highlighting the fact that in reality, only 9% of the CDCs were functioning well.
- It was also assumed that Savings and Credit programs were functioning well among the urban poor in Colombo. The Poverty Profile established the fact that only 17% of the families currently have access to community savings and credit facilities.

The Poverty Reduction efforts of the CMC have successfully internalized the use of the Poverty Profile. Using the Geographical Information System (GIS) now in place¹³ in the CMC, a periodic update of the Poverty Profile analysis ensures that an effective management tool is available to support pro-poor decision making. Since the recording of information is available in three layers, from settlement to family level in some instances, a rich source of data exists on the multidimensional nature of poverty. This activity is not project-bound but is now institutionalized within the CMC. External funding is available for this activity up to 2004, but from that point on, the CMC's own sources will be used. Already the CMC has trained officers who can use and update this system, as well as field operatives, technical officers and health instructors who will collect the information.

¹² Asian Development Bank, Final Report for Enhancing Municipal Service Delivery Capability (Phase II) TA 5959 REG 2003

¹³ An output of the Local Area Sustainable Development Observatory (LASDO) of the Asia Urbs Project 2003

The Poverty Profile is also used in other development programs of the CMC. The GTZ-funded Participatory Improvement of Under-Served Settlements (PRIMUSS) project is another ongoing activity that has made extensive use of the Poverty Profile for its site selection. Thus, the Poverty Profile continues to be a living document accessed for different purposes by the various actors and decision makers who work with the urban poor. What is not clear presently is how the urban poor themselves can be strengthened to independently access the Poverty Profile in order to demand services.

The CMC Solid Waste Management Department realized the importance of a change in management styles to improve pro-poor service delivery. During the Benchmarking and Continuous Improvement Project in 1999, solid waste management was recognized as a priority.¹⁴ The need for a multidisciplinary effort was understood and consequently some progress was made in linking up the two key Departments, Public Health and Solid Waste Management for the duration of the project. Thereupon the Solid Waste Management Department decided to start up its own Solid Waste Management Education unit, a multidisciplinary team consisting of engineering and public health staff. This unit, which has been expanded further very recently, carries out the role of linking up with the CMC's partners in underserved settlements. It constituted a permanent conduit for two-way information; each field visit and solid waste education program enabled the community to express their needs to the CMC and the CMC in turn, to adjust its services accordingly.

As a result of the cumulative impact of the various waste related CMC initiatives, the daily tonnage of garbage in Colombo has been reduced from 780 to 680 within a year. This is an indication of the positive impacts of building partnerships with the community. Wayside dumps in Colombo city have been further reduced to 300 with the introduction of the individual plastic bin for household waste. There is remarkable change in the perceptions of the urban poor, especially women, about maintenance of clean environments (Appendix 6). Waste minimization and recycling projects introduced by the CMC have been successful in building partnerships with the community. Information outreaches of the Solid Waste Management Division have been particularly effective—the CMC contact telephone numbers are now known by stakeholders in case of emergency.

The new Solid Waste Management collection system has resulted in financial gains to the CMC management. Garbage handlers find loading easy, speedy and with less spillage; their health and safety has improved since there is less direct handling. Route planning of the garbage trucks is streamlined because of the community consensus.

Within the CMC's own management structure, the activity has succeeded in instilling client responsiveness as a core value. It is a culmination of a long process of experimentation with different modalities and represents, on the part of the CMC management, the willingness to embark on a learning process. Constant discussions with clients over problem situations sharpened the CMC officers' awareness of the problems and instilled a sense of partnership rather than antagonism or patronage. There was a sense that the urban poor, instead of being constantly perceived as a nuisance and the source of problems, could become effective partners in the search for solutions.

The Education outreach program carried out by the Solid Waste Management Department led to improved awareness and knowledge of waste management in the under-

¹⁴ Mallawaarachchi, K.T.D. and Wickramaratne, K.A.D.N. Intermediate Report on Benchmarking Project, 1999

served communities. The communities themselves became key decision makers, particularly as regards disposal times. Under this system, the communities were given the flexibility to define the route maps and pickup times. For example, the urban poor community at Rev. S. Mahinda Mawatha expressed a desire to have the pickup only at night; else the pickup truck would block access in their narrow street. The communities were given a sense of importance and a feeling that they too have some stake in decision making, leading to a unique sense of ownership of the project.

Frequent feedback from the community is seen as a key factor in the success of this program. The CMC is ready to review and fine-tune its initiative according to client needs. Women in underserved settlements had recently complained that the filled garbage barrel was too big and heavy for them to carry. As a result, the CMC agreed to replace the 50 liter barrels by the lighter 40 liter barrels.

Client feedback on the solid waste activity was accessed in different ways. CDC leaders were reporting on successes and failures of this system at the monthly Mayor's meeting and at the HCDC. CMC supervisors provided follow-up and verification on field visits to underserved settlements. Further, a monthly Standing Committee on Solid Waste Management is now held where city councilors may discuss and report on the status of solid waste management in their respective areas according to feedback received from their voters. Another forum provided for client feedback is the Public Day held each Wednesday and the Mobile Public hearings held periodically. Media coverage in the form of investigative journalism is another means by which citizens can make their demands via various national languages TV shows focusing on good governance which target citizens' grievances.

There are a limited number of independent studies of urban services in Colombo. A study carried out by an NGO¹⁵ briefly dealt with user perceptions of public utilities in Colombo. This opinion survey covered 611 respondents (not all of them from under-served settlements) in Colombo and confirms that 84.3% of the respondents felt that household garbage was cleared away regularly while 63% said that roadsides were cleared regularly as well.¹⁶ The general client feedback on the CMC attempts to maintain a clean environment has thus been positive.

The work on continuous improvement and benchmarking has had a longstanding impact on the CMC' achievements in solid waste management. As a result of the studies undertaken on solid waste management and enforcement, major recommendations were made to set up an exclusive education unit for solid waste management, use media for awareness building, and use of non-formal means such as street drama and competitions. In the process of calling for fresh tenders for privatized garbage collection contracts, a seminar was held to scrutinize the pros and cons of a Two Envelope system. Upon the specific request of the mayor, the CMC teams that were trained in Continuous Improvement and Benchmarking extended their services for a brainstorming session. As a result, it was decided that specifications in the contracts should include a separate section on the waste minimization programs and community education programs by the private firms.

¹⁵ Social Indicator- Centre for Policy Alternatives, Public Service Delivery, A Report Card on Four Essential Services in the City of Colombo, 2003

¹⁶ However only 18.5% felt that the spraying of mosquito repellent was adequate.

The new contracts are now functional and the private companies are now engaged in waste management and awareness building programs. The private sector also introduced other improved practices such as mechanical street sweeping. With the move to popularize waste separation, numerous small enterprises have started up in under-served settlements to collect and separate waste. This has developed a series of partnerships with private sector and urban settlements. Private sector operators now make great efforts to use diverse means for awareness building such as street drama, dedicated publicity vehicles and staff for educational purposes, use of print media to convey messages (the leading English national daily publishes a paid advertisement in the front page with sponsorship of the private sector), frequent distribution of leaflets, and visual media advertising. The CMC letterhead itself bears a solid waste related message as a footer.

The focus of the CMC Public Health Department used to be on cure and not on prevention of disease. The mosquito menace is felt directly by all the citizens, and not only by those who only actually fall ill. Thus, it was relatively easy to mobilize the citizens for dengue control than for any other program and this is seen as part of the success of the Green Star Home Program. The other supportive factor is the effective mobilization of a large group of stakeholders into a network, each contributing according to its resources and specialized skills, to the common program.

The poor in the city exclusively use government-run hospitals to avail of free medical care when stricken with dengue. It is evident that the urban poor have benefited from the Green Star project, as the numbers seeking ward treatment for dengue in such hospitals had been halved, while the numbers in the private hospitals have remained the same or has increased slightly.

Dengue fever has existed in the city for over 35 years, with major out breaks occurring periodically every 5 to 10 years. But there have been no detailed records available to analyze the trends and other associated factors until the Epidemiological Unit of Public Health Department was equipped with information sharing facilities with other relevant stakeholders through the SCP project. All cases over a period of three years have been mapped out and the dengue endemic areas have been identified for future action. This has now led to better knowledge management about dengue epidemics. The data set thus generated indicates that the case-rate for the Colombo City is much lower than that of the surrounding Colombo District and it is seen clearly that the Green Star Home project had a major impact among the monitoring and controlling measures taken by the authorities (Appendix 7).

V. Lessons Learned

The impacts of the CMC initiatives highlighted in this paper are ongoing and dynamic, reflective of the ongoing learning process within the organization. The pro-poor stance still has its few detractors. Whenever the problem of services to the poor was debated in the past, there always has been a division of opinion among the political decision makers and the CMC management. There was earlier a marked reluctance on the part of many CMC decision makers to invest in services for the urban poor. One group maintained that the ratepayers were entitled to a higher level of service than the non-ratepayers, the urban poor; the other argued that the ratepayers' monies invested in welfare measures for the urban poor did in itself benefit ratepayers by ensuring social stability and a clean environment. With a supportive paradigm shift under consecutive mayors, increased attention to the urban poor marked the 1990s and has remained a core value in CMC/citizen interaction.

The Poverty Reduction project has established the need for an improved institutional memory and levels of evidence-based documentation. Objective external assessments and detailed internal record keeping are now seen as necessary to disseminate the need for targeted pro-poor focus in the CMC service delivery. With the introduction of the Poverty Profile, the need for monitoring and external documentation of ongoing processes has been recognized, but they are not yet operationalized due to a variety of reasons. These activities may require a different set of skills, which CMC may have to induct in or outsource from outside. The necessity to track the perceptions of stakeholders other than those in the under-served settlements through such a process too is now a felt need.

The CMC wishes to plan and prioritize its activities in the under-served settlements on a needs basis rather than on the basis of political affiliations. However, political dominance is as yet paramount in the allocation of resources and can, in some instances, override the needs based assessment. With the final ratification of the Poverty Reduction Strategy by the CMC, it is expected that political domination over resource allocation will be diminished, at least marginally. Until then, it is clear the Member Allocation will continue to be politicized. In the GTZ funded PRIMUSS project, which uses the Poverty Profile with modifications, there has been some degree of confrontation as the Councilors begin to question their loss of supremacy of decision making, an indication that politically driven service allocations would not be easy to challenge.

The magnitude of the problem of solid waste generated in the city of Colombo can be measured by the tonnage of garbage collected each day within the CMC limits (600 tons) as well as the demands articulated by the city population, especially those living in under-served settlements, in person and through representation to the elected city councilors. Due to the lack of strong community organizations in the under-served settlements, such representation was usually on a personal basis and often tinged with political overtones. Consequently, it was not unusual to find a community being "penalized" by political decision makers for lack of support in a municipal election, through the withholding of services, especially garbage collection. Garbage collection can also become a tool to ensure political compliance. In another instance, hoodlums terrorized the garbage collection supervisor of a private sector firm so much that he went to courts and paid the fine for dumping garbage himself. The overall pressure on the CMC management and the politicians which impelled the initial search for solutions is still ongoing. The CMC solid waste management project is an attempt to grapple with this critical issue despite continuing political pressures and financial constraints.

The Solid Waste Management project is seen as being more successful where there are functional community organizations and a strong leadership. However this settlement based leadership can at times be political or based on a criminal activity; hence the CDCs are generally weak. Therefore this program was not free from political interference. Some Municipal Councilors knew that the bins were to be given free of charge. Once they saw that there was a remarkable change in the appearance of communities, they demanded coverage for their areas, even if these were not under-served, to satisfy their voter bases. One councilor actually raided the CMC stores and took away 500 bins, which he then distributed indiscriminately. In such a situation the CMC officers face difficulties in justifying their choice of settlement for distribution of plastic bins. This further underlines the importance of such tools as the Poverty Profile to help justify beneficiary prioritization. It is also seen that investment in citizens' empowerment would support CMC activities in the long run.

In 2000, 22% of dengue cases were recorded by the Epidemiological Department of the CMC, as having been in areas where garbage was not cleared properly. At that time, the Solid Waste Management Department had poor awareness of this linkage. There are now plans to rehabilitate canals for recreation and transport, and thus reduce the mosquito breeding grounds. Any attempt to reduce and finally eradicate the incidence of dengue and other vector controlled diseases in the city will not be comprehensive, unless joint action within the CMC for public health, solid waste and drainage management, especially in relation to large drains and canals, go hand in hand with a social mobilization and education initiative. Improved inter-departmental flow of information is seen as critical for CMC departments to fulfil their obligations to the stakeholders. In the future, synergies need to be actively sought and a stronger interface in both planning and implementation built up speedily between especially these two CMC departments, Public Health and Solid Waste Management.

VI. Challenges and Future Directions

The three good practices selected from the CMC are ongoing activities, which are evolving through effective partnerships in response to demands from stakeholders. It is interesting to note the plans for future action.

Most importantly, the CMC has recognized the need to work in partnership with the urban poor and civil society organizations in its Poverty Reduction initiative. Community consultation is being institutionalized in the CMC management system through the ratification of the Poverty Reduction Strategy. The CMC also hopes to disseminate to other Sri Lankan municipal corporation its experiences in poverty reduction using the Poverty Profile, through its links with Satellite Cities and its involvement in the Sri Lanka Mayors Forum.¹⁷ Continuation and dissemination of the management changes, put in place by the Continuous Improvement and Benchmarking project as well as linkages with satellite cities need appropriate allocations of time and finances from CMCs.

The CMC experiences in developing a pro-poor stance on service delivery, and the response of the stakeholders from underserved settlements to the various pro-poor initiatives of the CMC have yet to be documented and evaluated by external agencies or researchers. There is a constant demand for services from the urban poor as reflected in the various issues periodically taken up in the various committees and CMC meetings. Without an institutionalized system of recording issues from initiation to follow up action, it will be difficult to track the exact nature of response. The CMC recognizes that the attention given to accessing public opinion has been limited thus far. A gap in information documentation that could be filled by client satisfaction surveys is recognized, which may require further internal capacity building or outsourcing. This situation is however much the same as in many other Sri Lankan and overseas local authorities.

A good example of the ongoing use of the Poverty Profile is the GTZ-funded PRIMUSS project which builds on the gains made by the Poverty Profile. The project operates totally in the participatory mode introduced by the Poverty Profile. The urban poor in the underserved settlements as well as their political representatives must both contribute financially to the upgrading of settlements. However, since funds from the Membership allocation are being solicited for PRIMUSS, it is possible for the operations to be politicized. This could be addressed if the CMC Poverty Reduction Strategy is ratified and made operational as soon as possible.

In order to strengthen its pro-poor approach, the CMC along with related agencies in the Provincial and Central government need to review and revise outdated regulations and Statutes which no longer match urban realities. This calls for political will as well as bureaucratic support.

The CMC stance on garbage dumping is that having already provided the means of hygienic disposal, there is need for deterrent action to control violators. Since November 2003, the Solid Waste Management Department has acted against those who dump garbage in areas where proper means of disposal is available. In each of the CMC districts, at least 25 cases a month of those flouting the law are to be filed in courts. A transparent process is followed; the first offender is issued a warning and a letter of notification is issued, which the householder

¹⁷ Nuwara Eliya, Kotte and Kandy Municipalities had been selected to work with the CMC as Satellite cities for the ADB Enhancing Municipal Service Delivery Capability Project Phase II.

must be asked to countersign. A repeat offence will be reported to the Solid Waste Management Department. The legal procedure is then delegated to the Public Health Department and a maximum fine of US \$ 10 is payable if the offence is proved in courts.

This program has been integrated into the budgetary process of the CMC. Since the CMC continues to directly handle 50% of the city garbage collection even after partial privatization, it decided recently to purchase 12,000 plastic bins to replace those damaged and broken. This expenditure was supported by the political decision makers who have realized the value of the program for their voters in the under-served settlements. The Council members are now in total support of the activity and this has facilitated the provision of enhanced budgetary allocations.

The contractual agreement of the private companies which now handle 50% of garbage collection in Colombo specifies that dumping of garbage on roadsides near underserved settlements are forbidden. The private garbage contractors have taken this as a guideline in dealing with the under-served settlements in their areas of operation. They use different methods to ensure that garbage does not touch the ground. Some communities have been issued common bins placed at strategic points. In others the handcart collects from the houses at a given time. The private companies have a higher level of vigilance since they could be penalized by the CMC for any violations. They are very much more alert in trying to trace the persons and warn them of legal action. These processes will ensure that a clean environment for the urban poor will be maintained even after garbage collection is fully privatized.

Major recommendations were made for the establishment of an exclusive public education unit for solid waste management, using media and non formal means to raise awareness. The private sector now undertakes to support waste minimization and community education. This has led to the strengthening of a new partnership between the CMC, communities and the private sector.

The CMC did a pilot project on home composting by distributing 600 composting barrels for high, low and middle income areas in 2001. Sevanatha linked up with the CMC and took on the contract for mobilizing the communities for this purpose. The results were encouraging, with 4,500 establishments (including homes and commercial establishments) of different income levels in one contiguous area selected for waste separation and recycling, including home composting. Once again Sevanatha has come in as CMC partner to take on the contract on behalf of CMC for the Poverty Reduction study. Some early attempts by Sevanatha in starting up garbage recycling for women's groups through the Poverty Reduction Project should be pursued on a citywide scale. CMC's own efforts in recycling through district offices should be linked to this activity at the settlement level. This activity has good potential to improving incomes and should be pursued jointly by the CMC and its CSO partners, drawing on each other's strengths.

The second phase proper of the Green Star Home program is expected to resume in 2004. The initial awareness campaigns targeting women and children have been completed. This project will be implemented with the help of NGOs, private sector organizations and other state agencies such as Sri Lanka Railways, Land Reclamation and Development Corporation, and Ports Authority in twelve underserved areas of the city. Green Star is now in its third year and annually the Green Star Home House to House campaign has been carried out with the help of service organizations such as the Rotarians, Leo clubs and Scouts associations which basically provided the project with the much needed volunteers.

In 2003, no CMC funds were used for the Green Star activities, except fuel for CMC vehicles. All other support was accessed from the private and NGOs sectors, thereby highlighting the strong support of all stakeholders for this project. By April 2004, Sri Lankans will celebrate their traditional New Year, which is marked by cleansing the households and business premises. A Green Star program is planned at this time to involve medical colleges, in the inspection of the high-risk dengue areas.

Currently the CMC activities function on a gender-neutral basis. Even though Sri Lanka scores high on the Gender Development Index (GDI - 69%), which is well above the developing country and world average, the achievement on the Gender Empowerment Index (GEM) is poor. GEM is only 31%, which is below the developing country average of 37%. The field visits highlighted the fact that female participation in most community activities is very high and there is much potential that CMC and its partners can tap. But access of women to decision making is perceived as poor.¹⁸ It may be useful to reorganize and strengthen the CDCs,¹⁹ paying particular attention to creating an enabling environment for the participation of women. The CMC overall, and the three initiatives studied in particular, would benefit from a more gender cognizant approach.

¹⁸ UNDP, Sri Lanka: National Human Development Report, 1998

¹⁹ Colombo Municipal Council, City Development Strategy Colombo 2000

VII. Replication

The situations and problems encountered in the Colombo City are common to many cities in developing countries and therefore the solutions sought in Colombo too may be applicable to some cases. It will be useful to examine how the CMC itself suggests its experience to be viewed.

In the case of the plastic bin project, the long road traversed in seeking solutions to solid waste problems in other cities could be cut short by sharing the CMC experience. The importance of creating an interface with the community at a very early stage needs to be emphasized. Here, the building up of a city poverty profile could be useful in the preliminary identification stage. For instance, land parcels with under-served settlements may have to be adequately identified in many Sri Lankan cities. Other municipal corporations could adopt the GIS system now being used and further expanded by the CMC. It would help replication if an interactive CD on the use of the poverty profile and the GIS system could be made available for this purpose to other local authorities.

Many local government institutions recognize the need for technological innovation. Record keeping needs to be modernized by computer technology in local authorities and municipalities. For this purpose, there has to be awareness building and consensus among political and administrative decision makers since it involves a major investment of financial and human resources. The GIS system in CMC has therefore interesting lessons for other organizations. The investment in human resources has been made available by giving overseas training to younger CMC professionals who are now actively running these programs. This in itself is remarkable since in many developing countries, such training is often accorded based on seniority.

The Integrated Health and Environment program too is a useful lesson for developing countries as it works on three significant principles: co-opting a wide range of stakeholders necessary for implementation as well as financing, giving recognition for compliance, and making optimum use of media. The CMC Public Health Department has already started giving guidance to the local authorities in the Greater Colombo area that surround the city, which are experiencing problems in controlling vector borne diseases. The Solid Waste Management Department too has been sharing its expertise on controlling garbage dumping and privatization of garbage handling. A Western Province Solid Waste Authority has been formed in 2002. The Director of the Solid Waste Management Department is at present its Acting Director. This is the only solid waste authority set up at provincial level in Sri Lanka and it provides technical support on solid waste management to other local authorities.

The CMC has a supporting program on improving tenurial security for the urban poor which too has implication for the listed activities. The Poverty Profile indicates that only half of the urban poor have security of tenure. With secure tenure, the urban poor will likely take a greater interest in maintaining their surroundings. The pro-poor paradigm shift, which has been the common core value underlying these three programs needs to be made manifest in related programs as well.

Most critical is the need to establish the participatory approach as a norm in the urban context, as a process going beyond mere consultation. Very often the participatory approach is seen as difficult to understand and more difficult to operationalize. It can be viewed as a threat to the authority of decision makers, both officers and politicians. Thus, it is

sometimes carried out as a mere cosmetic exercise, with pliant CSOs, in compliance with donor requirements; this does not result in citizens' empowerment. It is important to go beyond the cosmetics, in first building awareness of the stakeholders about objectives and outcomes of an activity prior to carrying out a participatory exercise in order to gain optimum results for both agency and community. For this the municipality may need to develop linkages, not only with CSOs who partner with it on projects but also with advocacy organizations.

The selection and induction of the stakeholders for a participatory exercise too often can be skewed, reflecting only the wealthy and the influential. It can leave out the truly marginalized, and very often such processes have been noted in particular to leave out poor women. This is especially important for the urban poor in Colombo who have a high incidence of female-headed households. Even when women are co-opted to discuss some issues, the discussion forum may have to be arranged in a way conducive to maximizing their participation. It may be useful to conduct focus group interviews with women separately in order to get insightful information.

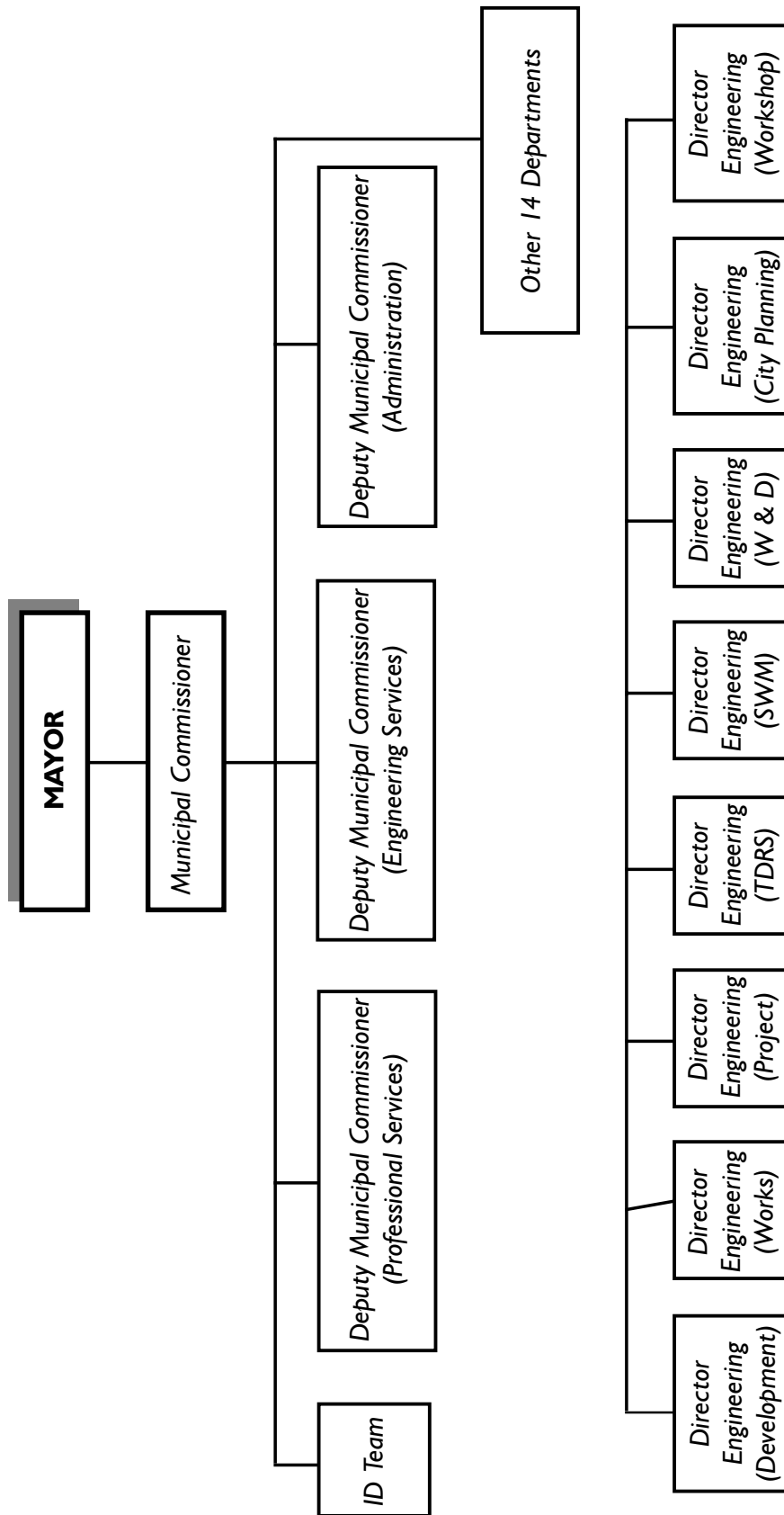
Participatory exercises and processes all have their costs in terms of finances and human resources. The CMC faces the challenge of ensuring these resources are integrated into its financial cycle, and accepted by political decisionmakers, as in-house costs or as an outsourced service, so as to ensure continuity of representation of urban poor viewpoints.

The study of the three Good Practices indicates that the CMC as an organization is engaged in a learning process and is continuously improving on its performance for effective pro-poor service delivery. Within it, inter-departmental linkages essential to improving the level of service delivery need to be further enhanced in order to optimize pro-poor service delivery. Future attempts to provide a stronger interface with the urban poor can build on the current strengths and gains achieved by the Colombo Municipal Council.

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Colombo Municipal Council-Organisation Structure – 1

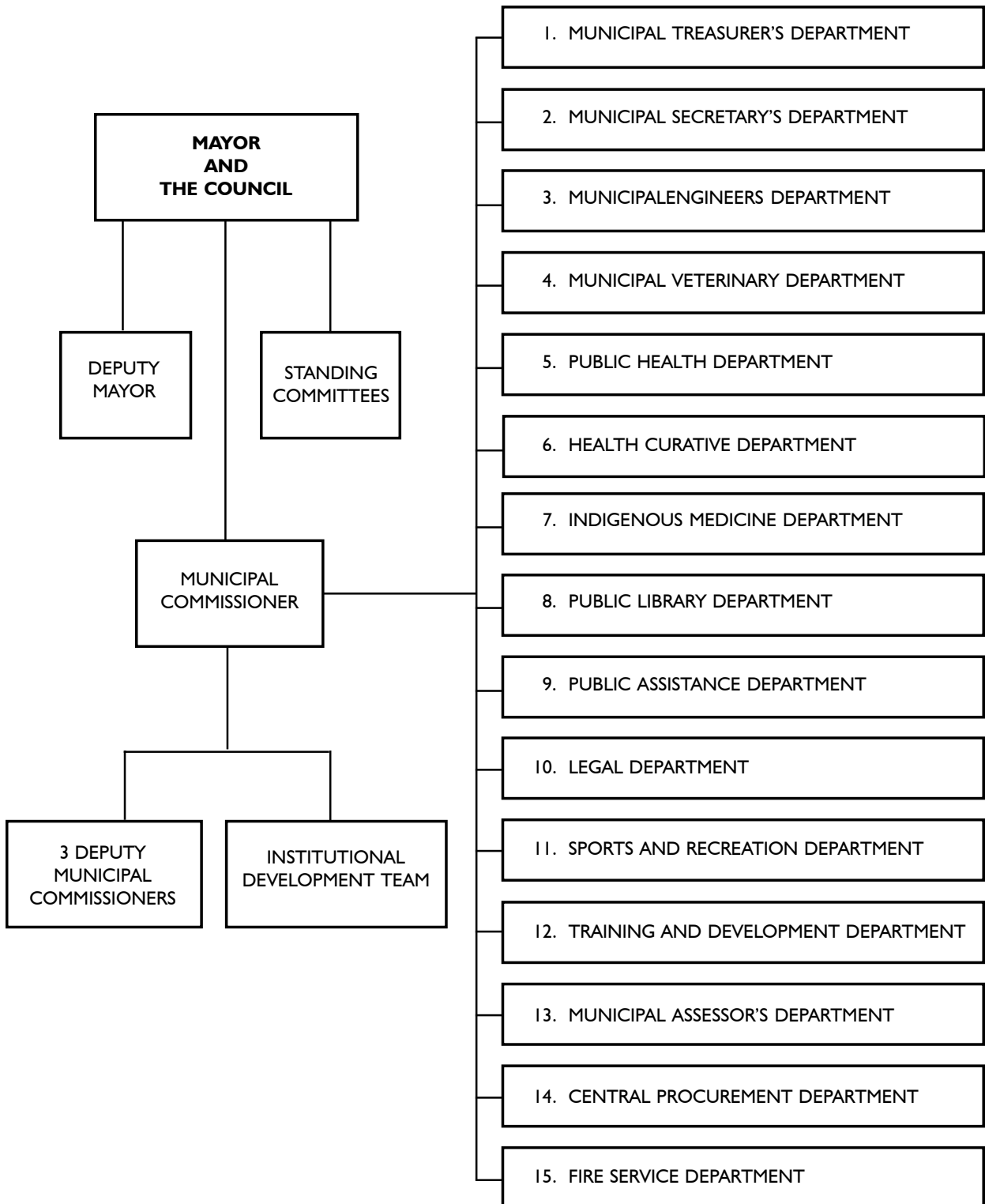


Appendix 1

Abbreviation: TDRS Traffic, Design & Road Safety
 SWM Solid Waste Management
 W & D Water Supply, Drainage

Refer Org. Str. No. I for other 14 Departments

Colombo Municipal Council – Organisation Structure



COLOMBO DECLARATION OF SRI LANKAN MAYORS ON URBAN POVERTY

We, the members of the National Chapter of Mayors of Sri Lanka, having met in Colombo on the Twenty-fourth Day of February in the year Two Thousand and One AD.

Considering that the path of globalization of financial markets, economic restructuring and structural adjustments chosen by Sri Lanka for its development have shown some positive impacts with broadening opportunities for communications, mobility of labor and sharing of technologies and expertise and the emergence of a new economic thrust and order.

Noting that, except through visionary and orderly management, these impacts could also lead to negative consequences on the present social order leading to further inequity in the distribution of wealth; accelerated erosion of social values, morals and norms; increased crime, violence and family disintegration, all of which could further exacerbate the conditions of the poor, particularly the urban poor who depend solely on their cash income for survival and development.

Recognizing urban poverty as a major challenge that our cities would continue to face in the new Millennium.

Agreeing that greater political and administrative space need be created to help reduce poverty in our cities.

Hereby pledge our unstinted commitment to:

- Develop a Strategic Vision to reduce poverty in our cities by addressing both the immediate and underlying causes of poverty.
- Gear the energies, powers and resources that are at our disposal to strengthen and mobilize the required capacities of our municipal institutions and that of our stakeholders, primarily of the poor themselves, to address urban poverty in a comprehensive and visionary manner.
- Formulate and implement a comprehensive, long term Plan of Action to reduce poverty in our cities and to build an all party consensus to ensure the continuity of its implementation, and
- Set up an independent self-assessment mechanism through the National Chapter of Mayors to measure progress of implementation of such plans.

POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

A. Introduction

This Poverty Reduction Strategy for Colombo City has been prepared as a significant piece of output directed towards ground level action. The Poverty Profile prepared in February 2002 has identified a number of key issues to be addressed pertaining to the urban poor communities in Colombo. This Strategy addresses only those poverty related issues identified by the Poverty Profile and those that are identified by the Charity Commissioner's Department of the Colombo Municipality.

B. The Priority Issues of Poverty

- Land tenure
- Lack of basic amenities
- Insecure income
- Family instability
- Poor community organizations
- Lack of access to credit
- Lack of recognition of the poor by formal sector institutions
- Hidden social problems
 - a. drug addicts
 - b. Domestic violence, marital instability, child abuse
 - c. Erosion of moral values
 - d. Increasing number of street children and destitute families
 - e. school drop outs

C. Demand for Housing for The Increasing Population – The Need for A Poverty Reduction Strategy to Address The Identified Issues

The Colombo Municipality being the main institution responsible for improving the over-all livelihoods of the city population, needs to take vigorous actions to tackle the problems faced by a majority of the city's urban poor. The responsibility is not only a constitutionally vested one but also ethnically and morally the Municipality would need to make sure that its citizens are well looked after. This requires not only taking some reaction-based measures to address the current issues but a more comprehensive strategy to address the urban poverty issues systematically.

D. The Governing Principles of the Poverty Reduction Strategy

The governing principles of the proposed poverty reduction strategy have been conceptualized in order to change the current paradigm to a more responsive target oriented new paradigm of Municipal Service delivery.

E. Time Perspective of the Strategy

When looking at the specific poverty issues highlighted in the foregoing section, they could be considered relating to time perspectives for addressing these problems effectively. A categorization of issues in terms of time perspectives is indicated below.

- a. Short and Medium Term Programs
 - i. Improvement of Basic amenities
 - ii. Improvement of income earning opportunities
 - iii. Empowerment of communities
 - iv. Promote partnerships with NGOs, CBOs & Private Sector
 - v. Land Tenure issue
 - vi. Social redress
 - vii. Improved access to resources, particularly to credit (Community level credit programs)
 - viii. Long Term Programs
 - ix. Decentralization of municipal functions and creating institutional systems
 - x. Planning for responding to the future demand for land and housing
 - xi. Integration of the poor into the formal city structures

A more coordinated regional level programs should be developed for deconcentration of the future demand for land and housing of the city population towards the Colombo urban area and or towards Colombo Metropolitan Region. For this purpose, a coordinated effort with key national agencies such as the National Physical Planning Department (NPPD), the Urban Development Authority, the Provincial Council and the National Housing Development Authority etc. would be essential. The Colombo's urban poor should not be made to look for spaces within the city enclaves . They should be guided and opportunities should be opened up for them to move beyond the city limits.

Programs should be developed to include all the upgraded low income settlements for levying municipal rates. The common amenities in upgraded settlements should be managed by the Municipality in partnership with Community Development Councils. Thus, they become integral part of the formal city systems.

- a. A comprehensive awareness programs on neighborhood level planning and environmental aspects should be carried out considering the need for regulating the development activities in the upgraded urban poor settlements where relaxed building regulations were allowed. If not, deterioration of the living environment in these settlements would be inevitable.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND BENCHMARKING PROJECT

Introduction

In 1998, ADB carried out a Regional Technical Assistance Program (RETA 5764) to support ten municipalities in the Asian region to enhance their capacity to deliver services, by applying modern management techniques such as Continuous Improvement and Benchmarking to the delivery of services which support good governance, poverty reduction and enhanced quality of life for the urban poor. It also sought to create an active support network between municipalities. Colombo was one of the cities thus selected and solid waste education and enforcement, one of the critical services benchmarked. This was followed by an activity, which selected three of the most successful cities as Core cities for a Technical Assistance (TA) program. Colombo was selected as one of the Core Cities of this program and expected to among other targets, to extend its service as trainer to three in-country satellite cities.

Under Phase 1, six services were selected for upgrading in consultation with participating cities and the ADB. The following criteria were used in the selection – a) importance to the City's strategy b) significance in cost of the service or the potential revenue c) need for improvement d) Number of 'customers'/impact provided the service e) performance data available and f) ease of making changes.

The Project objectives of Phase I were as follows. – a) Improvements in six of services to residents / constituents b) an understanding by the respective management team on design and implementation of programs on service improvement c) Two senior staff to be trained to coordinate and lead improvement programs d) staff trained to work in teams and use the latest improvement techniques e) Development of insights into other municipalities' service achievements and f) Participation in a network with like minded municipalities for improvement of services.

The six services studied by the CMC for Phase I was as follows

- a. Solid Waste Management – education and enforcement
- b. Complaints and Public Grievance Resolution (including public information system)
- c. Property Tax Assessment and Collection
- d. Parking Regulation
- e. Street Vendors (hawkers) – licensing, allocating space, regulation
- e. Integrated computer systems

For Phase II however, CMC opted to focus on Food Safety and Recreation Facilities. The objectives of Phase II were to

- a. to build on the skills of selected city personnel to lead analyze, coordinate, benchmark and implement service change
- b. to establish an institutional organization, policy and process framework which will provide direction leadership ,community consultation and management of change
- c. Incorporating community participation and feedback in both the institutional and service improvements of a city's change strategy
- d. Rely on Core cities to support the satellite cities
- e. Use domestic consultants from the NGO sector to provide onsite monitoring and assist in the interface with the wider community.

The Sri Lankan Municipalities Kotte, Nuwara Eliya and Kandy were selected for this purpose as satellite cities. In Phase II, Colombo's role as the recognized Lead City to extend Continuous Improvement and Benchmarking for selected Sri Lankan Municipalities was defined as follows

- a. Provide trained coordinators from its staff to visit the partner cities and develop their capacities to analyze and benchmark services, develop proposals for improvement and implement those proposals successfully.
- b. In conjunction with the partner cities, choose at least two common services that will be studied and improved over the project period.
- c. Coordinate and chair a scheduled Cluster Steering Committee at which the partner cities elected Mayor and or President together with the most senior administrative official will provide oversight and direction to the service improvement programs of the four cities.
- d. Provide a reference source for the exchange of information between the cities on services that they perform to ensure the cities are able to identify opportunities to improve their services.

The CMC range of activity with the partner Satellite Cities also covered the below listed activities.

- a. Establishment of a steering committee to oversight and direct continuous improvement and benchmarking within their city.
- b. Appointment of an accountable officer who will be the liaison person between CMC and the city as well as be the focal point for managing the change program within the city.
- c. Ensure that, four or more suitable personnel who will attend any training sessions presented by CMC.

This mechanism was to enable the CMC to transfer management skills and build effective partnerships with other local authorities. Using the trained coordinators TOT was conducted on using new management techniques. Eight senior management personnel selected from CMC have continued to play a key role in the transfer of knowledge.

Expectations and Achievements

This TA differed from the ordinary insofar as it places the onus of the Core city itself to design, drive and implement the changes, using the international consultant s' inputs. The success of the activity would be measured by tangible evidence of service delivery improvement, capacity for change and effective operation of institutional arrangement.

The Phase II activity operated on a series of assumptions and risks. These include strong political support from the mayor and senior management in supporting change, the ability and willingness of municipal staff to adopt new techniques while being retained within the organization, ability of municipal staff to link up with other stakeholders, allocation of resources by municipalities to carry out these programs, availability of trained city staff, release of staff to complete improvement tasks and assist satellite cities, NGO involvement and the willingness of cities to establish organizational arrangements to institutionalize change.

While acknowledging the considerable efforts expended in the face of obstacles by the Core cities including Colombo, the Final Report is sharply critical of the outcomes – the report states that local government fell short of expectations, the overall program was thereby negatively affected and resulted in a time lag of at least nine months.

Specifically in relation to CMC, the Report highlights the early rate of success that enabled CMC to be selected for Phase II was not sustained; there was disinclination to involve community representatives in the project and the proposed interaction with the satellite cities was inadequate. The assumption that the city would be able to live up to its earlier promise in Phase 1 was unfounded; the change of mayors and the lack of senior political continuity is perceived as having had a negative impact.

The main actor within the CMC for this project, the Institutional Development Unit was seen as being too preoccupied by donor priorities in other projects to invest sufficient time in following up on the Continuous Improvement and Benchmarking project. Since their task had not been recognized by the CMC as part of their official work with an appropriate time and financial resource allocation, the Coordinators were not able to extend the expected support to the satellite cities.

The engagement of an NGO, Sevanatha, as domestic consultant to monitor the project and provide an interface with civil society was not seen as successful either. The international consultants felt that the NGO, which had other contracts ongoing with the CMC was thereby constrained from playing an independent role. City officers claimed that the Mayor did not approve of NGO participation in the project steering committee (which was the Institutional Development Unit Committee). But the Mayor had subsequently set up a Partnership Promotion Program involving NGOs, thereby providing a direct access channel.

Lessons Learnt

The following summary are the key lessons learnt from Phase II of this project related to the institutionalization of continuous improvement.

Change programs needs to be integrated with city priorities, the current autocratic management styles of key managers who are risk averse need to be further engaged and changed through the training program, the donor should support the approved change proposals with funding and a permanent change coordination unit within the city is recommended. Satellite cities should provide staff on longterm secondment for the project and the Core city personnel themselves should allocate a substantial full-time commitment.

The "Accountable officers" need support in order to facilitate change management and culture change within their organizations

Financing needs of change proposals should be allocated by the technical assistance or by the Client City.

A prequalification project phase may help in defining projects and service priorities. A system of reward for successful implementation of service would be an added incentive.

Both NGOs and CMC personnel need to revisit their interaction for future work in institutionalizing continuous improvement of service delivery. Development NGOs experience constraints in a monitoring role in dealing with their client organizations and these leads to a conflict of interest. This solution may be to enlist the services of independent advocacy NGOs that do not hold service contracts with the Municipalities.

FIELD VISIT

To evaluate the impacts of the CMC's solid waste program, the consultant undertook field visits to 4 randomly selected Under Served settlements .

Watte 25, Vinayalankara Mawatha , District 2B

Watte 129 District 2B

Kassapa Road District 4

Tharawatte¹ District 3

Visited at mid morning to early afternoon, the positive impacts of the Plastic Bins project was very clear. The settlements (Wattes) were consistently free from indiscriminately dumped garbage. The inhabitants interviewed were in agreement that the plastic bins were very useful and they ensured that the area was kept clean. Garbage was placed in its usually enclosed in a plastic bag or other covering. In one it was noted that a bin liner was used. The perceived problem was that rats had damaged the bins and that some times drug addicts steal them. In two places the delays in garbage collection at the appointed times were pointed out as problems. However in one of these sites the distance to the collection point was a mere ten yards but yet the community insisted that the collectors should enter the watte.

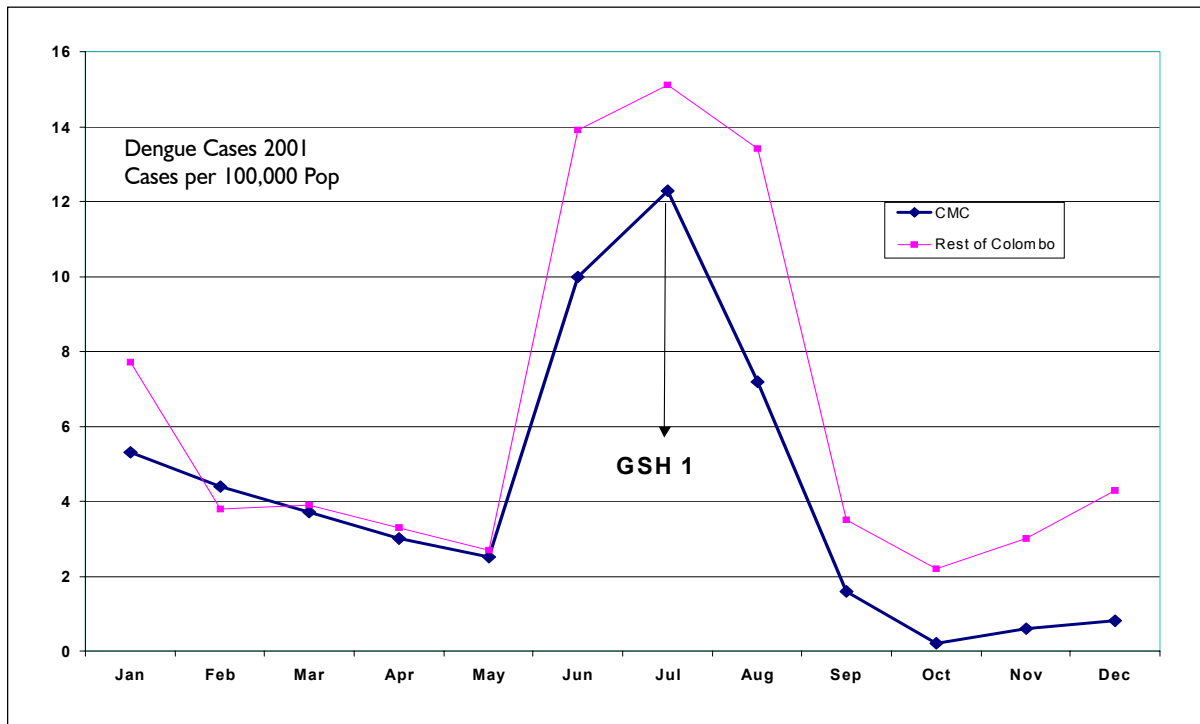
In Tharawatte, a shanty community, some bins were found to contain beer bottles, sand and toys. However the owners of the bins pointed out that the premises were kept clean, anyhow and that they do not indiscriminately dump garbage; but that being women they were not strong enough to haul out the filled bins.; therefore they parcelled garbage up in small plastic bags for easy disposal and gave it at collection time. There are instances of dumping being continued. In some cases drug addicts would dispose of garbage on behalf of householders usually unhygienically, in return for some money. In some case CMC cleaners are recorded as having demanded some payment in order to clean dumps.

The field visits also threw up an interesting example of CMC interaction with the private sector. A major Sri Lankan bank had constructed a multi-storey national headquarters in close proximity to a settlement whose inhabitants claimed that they had been disposing garbage in that site for over 100 years. The CMC interacted with the bank which donated barrels for the community; the Solid Waste Education Unit carried out awareness on health consequences of garbage dumping and the bank used its CCTV to identify persons who continued to dump. With time the practice of dumping has been totally abandoned.

The field visits also highlighted the positive response of the beneficiaries, especially women stakeholders in USS towards this initiative. A change of attitudes of stake holders and community support was seen as forthcoming in most instances. In most instances of non-compliance, communities themselves were acting as a check on offenders. This situation has been arrived at by the investing in the people as stakeholders and building in them an understanding the constraints and potential risks while providing the mechanism of garbage disposal.

¹ Most USS in Colombo are known by the appellation "Watte" meaning Garden

Dengue Cases 2001 – CMC and Other



CMC data 2003