

THE PHILIPPINES, QUEZON CITY



POPULATION
2.9 million

2020 Census

Trash to Cashback Program

Quezon City, as the largest city in Metro Manila, deals with the challenge of managing over 2,000 tons of waste generated daily. Recognizing the pressing need for effective waste management strategies, the City Government acknowledges the significance of addressing both the volume of waste and the community's attitudes toward waste. Understanding that sustainable solutions require collaborative efforts, the city emphasizes the importance of partnerships with stakeholders across various sectors. In pursuit of inclusive and tailored solutions, Quezon City remains committed to innovation. Despite the existence of an informal recycling sector that supports thousands of low-income residents, challenges persist, particularly in fostering behavior change at the household level regarding waste segregation.

The Quezon City Government, in collaboration with Basic Environmental Systems and Technologies, Inc., has launched the Trash to Cashback Program, aimed at actively engaging citizens in recycling efforts. This initiative incentivizes individuals to segregate recyclables and single-use plastics at the source, such as households or offices. Participants can exchange their recyclables at designated trading booths for Environmental Points (EPs). These EPs can then be redeemed for various benefits, including payment for utility bills such as electricity, water, and internet services via the Bayad App, purchasing grocery items at the Trash to Cashback Mart, and ordering food deliveries from partner merchants.

The program's objectives include reducing the environmental and ecological impact of urban waste in Quezon City, fostering a sustainable lifestyle among residents through incentivized recycling practices, offering additional financial assistance, particularly to those impacted by the pandemic, and mobilizing various stakeholders to promote a circular economy. This initiative prioritizes the recovery of organic, paper, and plastic waste, aiming to engage citizens, community groups, and the private sector in collective efforts toward waste management and environmental sustainability.





IMPACTS TO ACHIEVE SDG 11.6.1

- The program encourages individuals to properly segregate their waste, calling them eco-warriors. Recyclables such as paper, plastic, and metal can be exchanged for Environmental Points (EP) while glass can be exchanged for coin bank incentives.
- The program has built 23 designated drop-off points – My Basurero Eco-Community (MBE-C) Centres in the city.
- During the first 5 months of the project in 2021 around 7,000 kilograms of recyclables and single-use plastic were traded, averaging almost 1,800 kilograms collected each month.
- In 2022, recyclables volume has increased to an average of 4,000 to 5,000 kilograms per month.
- After 1 year, the city has established 10 regular trading booths. More than 9,000 transactions have been handled by these booths, with over 73,955 kilograms of recyclables and single-use plastics traded. This volume is equivalent to 245,899.42 EPs or Php 245,899 (USD 4,381).
- Pop-up trading events are simultaneously organized in neighborhoods and schools to widen the reach and increase the benefits and impacts to more members of the community. Until July 2022, 11 pop-up trading events have been carried out, generating more than 4,500 kilograms of recyclables and single-use plastic traded, which translates to over 6,300 EPs or Php 6,300 (USD 112).

Showcasing the upcycled products of Used Beverage Cartons



First Pilot of MRF & Turnover of PPEs and MRF to Barangay Lapan waste Workers



Source: trashtocashback.com

INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY



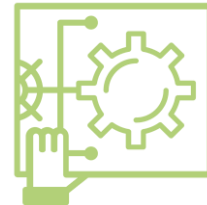
This initiative relies on forging partnerships through Memorandum of Agreements to ensure its continuity and sustainability. Launched in March 2021 in collaboration with Basic Environmental Systems and Technologies (BEST), the program established accessible trading booths for recyclables across districts and business centers. In December 2021, the City Government expanded the program's benefits by partnering with BeepXtra and Bayad Center, allowing residents to use Environmental Points for utility bill payments. Notable partners include BEST, BeepXtra Philippines, Corporate Information Solutions (CIS) Bayad Center Inc, Alaska, San Miguel Yamamura Packaging Corporation, and Meralco, each playing a crucial role in implementing the program.

PLANNING & MONITORING



Residents are equipped with an app facilitating account monitoring and point redemption for grocery items through the online store, as well as utility bill payments from their homes. The program also conducts monthly monitoring of recyclables recovered citywide, tracking trends and progress. Inspired by the success in Quezon City, the initiative was expanded to other cities, municipalities, government agencies, schools, and corporate groups through the City's partners.

PROGRAM TECHNOLOGY AND SERVICES



- Waste collection, transport, and disposal, including retrieval of packaging materials.
- MBE-C Booth/Tent Setup and Logistics.
- Waste diversion: reusing, recycling, and composting.
- Environmental Points (EP) / Cashback Rewards System through an app.
- Data Management: recording of wastes collected and diverted, real-time transaction report.
- IEC Campaign (Social Media) Support.
- Redemption of grocery items at the mobile redemption store and online.



Source: trashtocashback.com

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY



Despite operating on a highly constrained budget of only Php 1,038,200 (approximately USD 18,400) from March 2021 to date, the City Government, under the oversight of the Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Department, effectively utilized its partnerships with the private sector and engagement with community stakeholders. This strategic leveraging enabled the establishment and operation of ten regular trading booths, along with the organization of 11 pop-up trading events and numerous community orientations. Additionally, the program's promotion has been efficiently managed through social media channels, eliminating the need for additional expenditure. To further enhance participation, free registration initiatives have been regularly conducted for both Quezon City employees and citizens by the Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Department.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT / INCLUSION OF INFORMAL WASTE SECTOR



The success of the Trash to Cashback program hinges on robust stakeholder involvement, emphasizing inclusivity as a core principle. This initiative thrives on collaboration with both public and private sector partners, who have played pivotal roles in promoting the program within the local community and encouraging widespread participation. Various partners contribute to the program by engaging in activities such as recycling, waste collection and transportation, establishment of trading centers, and provision of incentives. Notably, while the program initially targeted household-level waste segregation, the informal waste sector has also been actively engaged. Encouraged to collect recyclables and exchange them for EPs, members of the informal sector have found an avenue for additional financial support through their participation in the program.



SOURCES

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- Urban SDG Knowledge Platform – http://www.urbansdgplatform.org/profile/profile_caseView_detail.msc?no_case=599
- Phil Atlas – <https://www.philatlas.com/luzon/ncr/quezon-city.html>
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