

Composting at the community level:

A brief overview of centralized and decentralized approaches

Why compost at the community level?

- ❖ Prevent waste of nutrients and organic matter
- ❖ Reduce landfill and pollutants
- ❖ Our soils need compost!
- ❖ Promotes circular economy
- ❖ Improves food security and soil health



What is centralized composting?

- ❖ One big facility that serves neighboring cities & communities
- ❖ Material can be trucked from 100's of km's away
- ❖ High capital cost: \$ millions
- ❖ Reliant on lots of fuel and heavy equipment



Advantages of a central facility

- ❖ Can process high volumes of material
- ❖ Faster composting times
- ❖ Can be regulated and inspected
- ❖ Requires few trained staff
- ❖ Less physical work!



Disadvantages of centralized composting

- ❖ Very high capital costs
- ❖ High operating costs
- ❖ Lots of equipment
- ❖ Lots of trucking
- ❖ Low community buy-in needed – high contamination potential

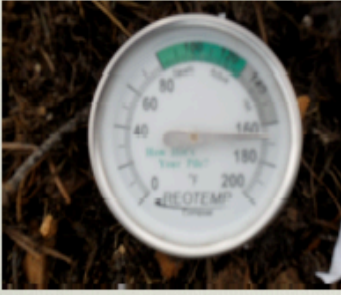


What is decentralized composting?

- ❖ Communities taking responsibility for composting at the household, street, neighborhood and village level
- ❖ People powered rather than machines
- ❖ Low capital and operating costs, inexpensive to start
- ❖ Strengthens community resilience, self reliance and food security

Advantages of decentralized composting

- ❖ Direct community control
- ❖ Builds local self reliance, skills and economy
- ❖ Low cost
- ❖ Low tech – simple to operate, easy to build/ fix with local materials and resources



Disadvantages of decentralized composting

- ❖ Requires champion(s) in the community to make it work
- ❖ Requires trained composters/personnel
- ❖ Community buy-in needed for long term success
- ❖ Contamination can be a problem
- ❖ Can attract wildlife if not done properly

