



Story of a new leader to bring change in her community

USAID-supported Dhaka CALLING Project developed capacity of community people to work on their environmental rights



Maya Begom of Balurmath Slum

Tapping the improper waste management system in the urban slums of Dhaka City, DSK Consortium has been working at Boubazar and Balurmath area for strengthening the community level networks so that their initiative in the community-level campaign helps to bring changes in KAP of community people towards waste management. 50 years old self-dependant woman Maya has been living with her family in the Balurmath area since 2010. After learning about the Dhaka CALLING project, she joined the Balurmath Community Based Organization (CBO) which is an initiative of the project.

After working as a CBO leader, she has learned, why proper waste management is essential for her community and community peoples' health. Then, she has realized, she must do something for the community people, as the community people in her area had a paucity of knowledge on proper waste management and cleanness. She has been working as a manager of around 40 rented households on behalf of her house owner. She collects rent from them and checks out whether there are any problems in those houses or not. Besides that, she had a tea stall. As a part of her activity she had the scope to community many households' members, and she used the opportunity. Afterward, she keeps talking to community people- why waste management is necessary, what is organic and inorganic waste, where and how to dump and so forth while doing her regular job. Moreover, she observes in her community whether anyone throwing waste here and there or not. She said, "Dhaka CALLING has enhanced my understanding and wider my eyes of waste management. If I find plastic and polythene waste on the road, I always try to pick up and keep those in a specific place, so that it could not float with the rainwater and block the drain." She mentioned that her community is remained clean more than before.

People who come to her stall for tea, she always tells them to keep the food waste in the bins as well as she often discuss the waste management-related learnings with the customers. She shared, "Initially, people were become disturbed while talking about waste management and our duties to keep the slum clean and for what they need to advocate, but now they don't bother. Now, people discuss and talk how they can advocate for their rights and demands." As she always keeps her stall neat and clean, so many people come for tea in her stall. Maya stated, "We didn't have knowledge where to go and talk about waste management related problems. Now we know. If needed we will communicate with our city authority. We need to work together to keep our community clean, otherwise our children and we will get sick. What is in our hand we will do to live in a healthy environment."

