

Research, Network and Support Facility (RNSF)

“Support to enhance livelihoods per people dependent on informal economy
and improve social inclusion of marginalised and vulnerable persons”

Good Practices and Lessons Learned

RESEARCH QUESTION	1- ENABLING ENVIRONMENT
SUB-TOPICS (Research matrix)	Advocacy with government to improve legal and policy frameworks to support informal economy enterprises (1.2)
COUNTRY OF IMPLEMENTATION	Colombia, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Vietnam
GOOD PRACTICES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A multi-level advocacy strategy to grant recognition to precarious informal waste pickers and recycler; 2) Creating an Observatory of Public Policy on Waste Management aimed at establishing a joint discussion space for community representatives, public authorities, private businesses, universities, recyclers and the project
PROJECT NAME	<i>Towards social protection and inclusion of informal waste pickers and recyclers (IWPRs) in the South</i>
YEAR	2010
FUNDING AGENCY	European Commission
IMPLEMENTING AGENCY	ENDA - Environnement et Développement du Tiers-Monde Environmental Development Action in the Third World
KEY TARGET GROUPS	Waste pickers and recyclers
SUMMARY OF THE ACTION	
<p>Waste management has been a particularly important and successful domain of intervention for activist NGOs supporting the organisation of poor and vulnerable populations of waste pickers and recyclers across the world. One of the reasons is that there is potential to attain higher levels of income in a well functioning value chain. It is, however, common that dominant actors try to control and invest in many of the levels within a value chain and then eliminate traditional actors who have to struggle to keep their survival jobs.</p> <p>A <i>strong multi-level advocacy strategy</i> was identified as the best means to grant recognition to precarious informal waste pickers and recyclers in the countries where this project was implemented.¹ One of the most striking results of the analysis is that waste pre-collectors can benefit greatly from public awareness raising and the participation of inhabitants in the projects. Waste pre-collectors provide a proximity service but usually suffer from a bad reputation as they often belong to the lowest categories of the society and are identified with dirt. Spreading knowledge about their conditions of lives and organizing events that create links with the</p>	

¹ Colombia, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Vietnam

inhabitants can have a direct effect to improve their work conditions. Harassment may be decreased while the quality waste sorting is improved thus also limiting the presence of hazardous waste.

In each project country, the main revenue upgrades—particularly payments for the pre-collection services—and contract stability came as a result of better relationships with the inhabitants. Advocacy with public authorities is also necessary to reach the first step towards the official recognition of waste workers, helping them pass from a harmful to a useful image of themselves.

In Colombia, the creation of an Observatory of Public Policy on Waste Management was aimed at establishing a joint discussion space for community representatives, public authorities, private businesses, universities, recyclers and the project. The Observatory contributed to spreading knowledge on the life conditions of workers. It also organised events that created links with the inhabitants that could have a direct effect on the quality of work. Issues discussed included limiting harassment and improving the sorting of waste, limiting the presence of hazardous waste.

The Observatory provided the place where the project and the association leaders of the recyclers elaborated a proposal for the implementation of Environmental Management Plans on Solid Waste. They managed to ensure that, in 2012, the Constitutional Court recognised the waste pickers and recyclers workers as entrepreneurs who make a contribution to the value chain. This decision paved the way towards their integration in the municipal waste management scheme and progressive registration thus qualifying the associations to access procurement contracts. Such a successful process and struggle of waste pickers for recognition can, however jeopardize if individuals elected in municipal elections do not support the process. As a result, the challenges are still topical today.

Official recognition and registration may reveal more challenges in other countries. In Vietnam for example, the project's advocacy work with several levels of relevant authorities and government achieved tolerance for the use of three-wheel vehicles at certain times of the day. This significantly reduced the risk of abuse. Likewise, tolerance of the junk shops run by cooperatives to buy and sell od recyclable waste inside the city centres also reduces abuse. Until the end of the project, however, these decisions were not formalized into municipal by-laws because of the complexity of bureaucratic decisions and advocacy is still continuing.

In their background paper for the HDR 2015, Martha Chen, Chris Bonner and Françoise Carré (2015) bear witness of this continuing and never-ending process of advocacy for the most vulnerable informal workers in order they keep and somewhat improve the modest place that is tolerated for them on the labour market.

LESSONS LEARNED	It is common that dominant actors try to control and invest in many of the levels within a value chain and then eliminate traditional actors who have to struggle to keep their survival jobs.
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Organise the most vulnerable workers such as waste pickers and recyclers using multi-level advocacy to support formalising them. Formalising will enable them to obtain recognition, safety and cleanliness to the benefit of workers and communities. 2) Creation of structures such as observatories that provide a discussion space for community representatives, public authorities, private businesses, universities, beneficiaries and the project.

SOURCE(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RNSF Research Volume 4.1: https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/iesf/document/rnsf-research-volume-41-gp-and-ll-33-projects-funded-european-union • RNSF Blog Post: https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/iesf/blog/good-practice-multi-level-advocacy-strategy-informal-waste-pickers-colombia-ethiopia-madagascar
REFERENCE(s)	<p>ENDA “Towards social protection and inclusion of informal waste pickers and recyclers (IWPRs) in the South” Colombia, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Vietnam (Project Final Report).</p> <p>ENDA website contains 26 fiches for 19 countries on best practices for Informal Waste Pickers and Recyclers (IWPAR) in 3 languages (French, English and Spanish):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Egypt-The Zabbaleen Environmental Development Program (ZEDP) - The Vida Limpa Program (Brazil) - National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) in Ghana - The community-based project SEWA (Self Employed Women’s Association) - India - Cooperatives of recyclers in Colombia: the examples of Recuperar (workers’ cooperatives in Medellin) and Prosperar (Manizales) - Waste Collection in Buenos Aires: Multi-faceted cooperatives - Mozambique, Senegal and Burkina Faso: LVIA Plastic Recycling Centres - Philippines - Metro Manila Linis Ganda Program - India - Pune, KKPKP and SWaCH - South Africa - Durban, the municipality of eThekweni - Brasil - Rio de Janeiro, the cooperative Coopcarmo - Thailand - The Project Baan Mankong and the “Community Organizations Development Institute” (CODI) - Mauritania - Zazou project - Bangladesh - Waste Concern - Rwanda - Mutual Health Insurance - Cambodia – The SKY Program - Senegal - Mutual Healthcare Organizations GRAIM/ENDA GRAF - Tanzania - Mutual Healthcare Organization UMASIDA - Philippines - The Kasapi program - India - Hasiru Dala - Costa Rica - Universal Social Security - Morocco - The RAMED Project