
Mapping of Waste Pickers and Organizations Supporting Waste Pickers in Kenya

Research and report by
David Kuria and Rina Muasya



About WIEGO: Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing is a global research-policy-action network that seeks to improve the status of the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy. WIEGO builds alliances with, and draws its membership from, three constituencies: membership-based organizations of informal workers, researchers and statisticians working on the informal economy, and professionals from development agencies interested in the informal economy. WIEGO pursues its objectives by helping to build and strengthen networks of informal worker organizations; undertaking policy analysis, statistical research and data analysis on the informal economy; providing policy advice and convening policy dialogues on the informal economy; and documenting and disseminating good practice in support of the informal workforce. For more information see www.wiego.org.

About Inclusive Cities: Launched in 2008, the Inclusive Cities project aims to strengthen membership-based organizations (MBOs) of the working poor in the areas of organizing, policy analysis and advocacy, in order to ensure that urban informal workers have the tools necessary to make themselves heard within urban planning processes. Inclusive Cities is a collaboration between MBOs of the working poor, international alliances of MBOs and those supporting the work of MBOs. The following partners are involved in the Inclusive Cities project: Asiye eTafuleni (South Africa), AVINA (Latin America), HomeNet South Asia, HomeNet South-East Asia, Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (KKPKP, India), the Latin America Network of Waste Pickers, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA, India), StreetNet International, and WIEGO. For more information, visit: www.InclusiveCities.org.

About Ecotact Limited: Ecotact is a Social Enterprise incorporated in Kenya in 2006 with the objective of developing and investing in social innovations in environmental sanitation and management in Africa and beyond. Ecotact is driven by local needs. Sustainability is central to its works in improving the urban environment which focuses on the five pillars of place, technology, social marketing, partnerships and economic sustainability. <http://www.ecotact.org>

Mapping of Waste Pickers and Organizations Supporting Waste Pickers in Kenya

Research and report by David Kuria and Rina Muasya

Publication date: September 2010

Commissioned by Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO)

Address:

Harvard University
79 John F. Kennedy Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
USA

521 Royal Exchange
Manchester M2 7EN
United Kingdom

Phone: 1-617-496-7037

Fax: 1-617-496-2828

Phone: 44-161-819-1200

Fax: 44-161-819-1222

Email: wiego@hks.harvard.edu.

Website: www.wiego.org

Design: Julian Luckham

Cover photographs: Ecotact

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 The Importance of Organizing.....	1
1.2 Objectives	1
1.3 Organizations and Organizing	1
1.4 Structure of the Report.....	2
2. Methodology	3
2.1 Overview of Methodology.....	3
2.2 Definitions.....	3
2.3 Overview of the Organizations Interviewed	4
3. Literature Review	5
4. Overview of Policies Related to Waste Picking in Kenya	8
5. Summary of the Findings per Municipality	10
5.1 Kisumu	10
5.2 Mombasa.....	10
5.3 Nairobi.....	11
5.4 Nakuru.....	11
6. Overview of Findings	13
6.1 Types of Organizations	13
6.1.1 Self- Help Group and Community- Based Organizations.....	13
6.1.2 Networks and Associations.....	14
6.1.3 Cooperatives	15
6.1.4 Individual Waste Pickers and Waste Picker Businesses	16
6.2 Organizations	17
6.3 Supporting Organizations	17
6.3.1 Kisumu	17
6.3.2 Nakuru.....	18
6.3.3 Nairobi	18
6.3.4 Mombasa	18
6.3.5 Objectives	18
6.3.6 Challenges Faced While Working With Waste Pickers and Mitigation Measures	18
6.3.7 Benefits of Supporting Organization Programmes to the Waste pickers	19
6.3.8 Partnership.....	19
6.3.9 Opportunities to Develop Waste Picker Organizations.....	19

6.4 Current State of Organizing by Waste Pickers and the State of Their Organizations	19
6.4.2 Cooperatives	20
6.5 Gender in Organizing.....	20
6.6 Way Forward.....	20
7. Recommendations.....	22
8. References.....	23
9. Appendices.....	24
Appendix A: Templates describing Solid Waste Picker Organizations and Supporting Organizations in Kisumu	24
Appendix B: Templates describing Solid Waste Picker Organizations and Supporting Organizations in Nakuru	24
Appendix C: Templates describing Solid Waste Picker Organizations and Supporting Organizations in Nairobi	24
Appendix D: Templates describing Solid Waste Picker Organizations and Supporting Organizations in Mombasa.....	24

Acronyms

CBO	Community-Based Organization
DDO	District Development Officer
EMCA	Environmental Management and Coordination Act
GoK	Government of Kenya
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KIE	Kenya Industrial Estates
KISWAM	Kisumu Solid Waste Management
KPA	Kenya Ports Authority
MCN	Municipal Council of Nakuru
MIEMO	Mombasa Integrated Environmental Management Organization
MISWMP	Mombasa Integrated Solid Waste Management Project
NAHECO	Nakuru Affordable Housing and Environmental Cooperative
NCC	Nairobi City Council
NEMA	National Environmental Management Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PIC	Project Implementation Committee
SHG	Self-Help Group
SWM	Solid Waste Management
UWAGA	Umoja Ward Garbage Collectors Association

1. Introduction

This summary study report provides an overview of solid waste picker activities in Kenya. Many waste pickers belong to vulnerable groups: recent migrants, the unemployed, the disabled, women, children, and the elderly. They survive in a hostile social environment, often rejected by the society, and subjected to a range of practical challenges and indignities. They work on the streets and in open dumps, where daily contact with all kinds of waste – including hazardous and medical waste – poses risks to their health and personal safety.

1.1 The Importance of Organizing

By becoming organized, waste pickers can strengthen their bargaining position with industries and government, become actors in the development process, and begin to overcome poverty through grassroots development. Working together, they can begin to achieve improved stability, higher incomes, and legalization of their activities. They can obtain higher prices by avoiding middlemen and adding value to materials sold. Organized into cooperatives, they can enter into contracts with industry, or grant agreements with donors (Martin Medina, 2008).

“Testimonials by waste pickers and the findings of researchers show that, in a range of contexts, waste pickers are treated as expendable nuisances whom authorities and many residents accuse of marring the image of the city. They are frequently ignored within public policy processes and harassed and persecuted by authorities. However, waste pickers from around the world are beginning to organize. They are demanding recognition for their contributions that they make to the environment and the economy, and they are fighting to ensure that their role within the municipal waste management systems is valued and made more secure” (Melanie Samson, 2009, 1).

1.2 Objectives

Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) is a global action-research-policy network that seeks to improve the status of the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy. As part of a five-year “Inclusive Cities Project”, WIEGO is running an Africa Waste Picker Programme. The objectives of this programme are:

- To increase the organization and voice of waste pickers (reclaimers) and make visible their contribution to solid waste management and recycling, nationally, regionally and internationally
- To create fora/ opportunities for exchange of ideas and experiences between organizations of waste pickers (reclaimers), other stakeholders and policymakers, and provide support for policy advocacy.

The objective of this activity is to identify waste picker organizations and individuals, and organizations working with waste pickers across the country in order to develop a basic understanding of the current state of organizing and to make links with waste pickers, and organizations working with waste pickers, that can be of use to WIEGO and other organizations.

1.3 Organizations and Organizing

As explained by Chris Bonner of WIEGO, “Democratic worker organizations, in this case waste picker organizations, bring workers with a similar occupation, common interests and issues together, in a structured and democratic form, with the common purpose of using their collective power to challenge and change their position in the society. The organization may focus on using collective power to further their economic/business interests, such as a cooperative, or

on defending and advancing their rights and status as workers, such as a trade union. Often it combines these two purposes, within a cooperative or a union, or other democratic organizational form (e.g. self-help groups, associations).

Organizing is the process of building such organizations. It involves bringing workers into the organization (recruiting), constantly developing and maintaining democratic organizational structures, collectively implementing activities and programmes, providing a voice through representing members in engagements with public authorities, industry and other relevant actors, building leadership and empowering members”.

1.4 Structure of the Report

The introduction to this report provides an overview of waste pickers, their organizations and the importance of organizing, reviews waste management problems in Kenya, explains the motive and objectives of this project and defines waste picker organizations and organizing. An overview of the methodology is provided which describes the research methods and a number of definitions used in the report; an overview of policies related to waste picking in Kenya that explain the legislative framework of waste and the Nairobi, Kisumu and Mombasa Municipal Council by-laws; a summary of findings within each municipality, namely Kisumu, Mombasa, Nairobi and Nakuru; an overview of the findings that provides information about the waste picker organizations and current status of organizing activity; and a summary of recommendations. Further detail is provided in the list of references and the appendices.

2. Methodology

2.1 Overview of Methodology

The methodology for the research involved the following actions:

1. Development of a literature review, since there is limited literature available at present about waste pickers in Kenya.
2. Development of a checklist which targeted waste picker organizations and organizations that support waste pickers in Kisumu, Nakuru, Nairobi and Mombasa. The checklist contained the name of the waste pickers/ the name of the waste picking group, contact person, physical address and telephone number, year the group was formed, location/ division, waste stream reclaimed, and the status (i.e. street dwellers/ homeless families, middlemen/brokers, youth groups, CBOs, NGOs, Cooperatives and Networks) and the registration of the organization, if any.
3. Development of questionnaires for waste picker organizations and organizations supporting waste pickers.
4. Development of interview schedules to ascertain when and why waste pickers began organizing their groups; their objectives; geographical information; organizational information; networking partnership linkages; livelihoods information; challenges encountered by the members as well as the organization; opportunities and future plans; and the development of interview schedules for organizations supporting waste pickers.
5. Site visits were conducted in order to validate information obtained from the interviews, and also to conduct interviews which took place in Kisumu in November 2009, in Nakuru in December 2009, and in Nairobi and Mombasa in January 2010. The interviews were supported by photographs of the sites.
6. On-site group discussion for the waste picker organizations, networks and cooperatives, which took place in Nairobi and Mombasa.
7. The development of a template design where data was documented.

2.2 Definitions

1. **Waste pickers** collect and dispose of waste by collecting, using and selling reusable or recyclable materials, and disposing of what they cannot sell in a variety of ways. Waste is collected from houses, restaurants, hotels, markets and streets. Waste pickers are paid directly by their clients and also make money from sales of recyclables and other items. Waste pickers can be street dwellers (homeless), youths or families. They may work as individuals, or be organized as self-help groups (SHGs), community-based organizations (CBOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), networks, associations or cooperatives.
2. **A network** is an organization consisting of various waste picker individuals and organizations. An example of a network is UWAGA (Umoja Ward Garbage Collectors Association), which is a network in Nairobi comprising more than 22 waste picker groups and more than 200 members that belong to groups registered by UWAGA.
3. **A cooperative** is an organization comprising various waste picking networks which come together with a common purpose. Savings and credit cooperative societies are the only existing cooperatives for waste pickers in Kenya. An example of a cooperative is the Plastic Recyclers Savings and Credit Cooperative Society Limited in Nairobi.

-
4. **Clients** are people from whom waste pickers collect waste. They may be residents, hotels, restaurants, businesses, schools or church groups, amongst others.
 5. **Urban Agriculture** is the planting of crops in large plastic sacks filled with a mixture of loam soil and compost manure. Waste pickers recycle biodegradable waste into compost manure and use it in Urban Agriculture, as practised by poor urban residents in the backyards of their homes and/or sites of operation of waste pickers. This provides fresh food for them, as well as some income from the sale of surplus crops.
 6. **A criminal gang** is a group of people that engages in activities such as extortion. For example, waste pickers are forced to pay a fee in order to dump waste in a public dumping site, particularly at the Dandora dumping site.

2.3 Overview of the Organizations Interviewed

- In Kisumu, 56 organizations were found; 35 organizations were interviewed, 28 of which were waste picker organizations, while 7 were organizations supporting waste picker organizations.
- In Nakuru, 56 organizations were found; 29 organizations were interviewed, 23 of which were waste picker organizations, while 6 were organizations supporting the waste picker organizations. .
- In Nairobi, 176 organizations were found; 30 organizations were interviewed, 25 of which were waste picker organizations, while 5 were organizations supporting the waste picker organizations.
- In Mombasa, 62 organizations were found; 23 organizations were interviewed, 21 of which were waste picker organizations, while 2 were organizations supporting the waste picker organizations.

3. Literature Review

Approximately 35 per cent of the total population of Kenya lives in urban areas consisting of 277 Urban Centres and Local Authorities, where basic service delivery is highly constrained. The situation is compounded by the high growth rate of the informal settlements, where the urban poor, who happen to be the majority, live within the urban centres as a result of the chronic lack of job opportunities. These urban poor engage in all kinds of jobs, both formal and informal, trying to make ends meet. Since these settlements are unplanned, no systems have been put in place to support the growing population (Environmental Sanitation: Field Update, September 2005).

The likelihood of both surface and groundwater pollution is high because local authorities rarely consider the environmental impact of municipal solid waste disposal sites. Illegal dumping of municipal solid waste on the river banks or on the roadside poses environmental and economic threats to adjoining properties. There is poor servicing of municipal solid waste collection vehicles, while the inadequate infrastructure and insufficient funding means that the municipal solid waste disposal service cannot function effectively. Formulation of policy and planning for solid waste management (SWM) is almost completely lacking at both the national and local levels, and the responsibility for SWM policy, planning or the preparation of national standards guidelines has not, at this point, been allocated to a specific central government ministry.

At the local level, local authorities are responsible for their own policy formulation through an environmental committee. However, there is a lack of comprehensive plans and guidelines for SWM, and the policy tends to be centred on *ad hoc* decisions being made rather than on developing a set of comprehensive policies, including, for example, on disposal, recycling, or waste prevention.

The extent and nature of solid waste management problems in Nairobi alone is noted in the JICA 1998 Survey (the most recent city-wide survey on solid waste) as being, first, the collection ration, which is where the proportion of the solid waste generated that was collected was estimated to be as low as 25 per cent (Overview of solid waste management in Kenya, JICA, 1998). This is still evident as mountains of rubbish heap up in residential estates. Second, marked inequality in the geographical service distribution characterizes the service provider. The 1998 JICA study found that 26 per cent of households in high income areas, 16 per cent of those in the middle income areas, and 75 per cent of those in the low income areas did not receive any service at that time. At the present time, the western part of Nairobi city, representing high and middle income sectors, is well serviced by the private firms and the Nairobi City Council (NCC) while the Eastern part which comprises the greater part of Nairobi's low income and slum settlements is hardly serviced.

The existing body of legislation concerning SWM is incomplete at the national level. For example, while the existing laws provide a workable but very limited basis for SWM, a comprehensive law regarding SWM, including control of hospitals, industrial or hazardous wastes has yet to be enacted.

The Public Health Act places a duty on all Local Authorities to provide services. The Local Government Act gives power to Local Authorities to establish and maintain SWM services. Some Local Authorities have also enacted several by-laws under the provisions of the Act concerning SWM which address the illegal dumping of waste, the general duties of the generators of waste with regard to the storage and collection of waste, and the right of Local Authorities to impose charges on citizens who contravene the by-laws.

The Local Authority has a primary duty of care for the Provision and Regulation of Solid Waste Management Services to the Urban Centres within its jurisdiction. The Local Authorities, however, are unable to sustain proper collection, street cleansing and disposal services to their Urban Centres as a result of chronic under-funding, too few vehicles, poor equipment and inadequate maintenance. In addition, they have significant difficulties in managing their human resources whose quality at the lower levels is poor, resulting in a low level of collection services.

To try and alleviate these problems, the private sector, NGOs and informal workers have begun to provide waste management services. There is a high level of private sector involvement in the collection services provided to households and businesses in urban centres. Private collection services are delivered under open and completely unregulated competition, that is, private companies are free to provide services to whom and where they like and collect tariffs directly from their customers.

A number of Local Authorities have contracted out solid waste collection and street cleansing services. Some commentators have argued that private companies have performed very well and there has been a substantial and noticeable improvement in collection and cleansing services. However, the local authorities do not have the necessary funds to finance these contracts and pay the contractors, and the future viability of the contracts is thus uncertain.

Community-based organizations and groups have not been left behind. There are many groups involved in waste management activities, mainly concentrated in low income areas. Despite the poor working conditions of the groups and individuals in the waste picking, re-using and recycling sector, recycling of waste has the potential to generate income. Waste pickers and itinerant buyers are seen as unprotected and unrecognized, and as the poorest and the most marginalized among poor urban workers. Waste pickers have been overlooked in all kinds of organizing and development endeavours. For example, trade unions continue to be preoccupied with workers in the organized sector; social workers from NGOs rarely meet waste pickers who are usually out at work during the day.

Among the many challenges that waste pickers have to contend with in their work are the following:

- encountering dogs, cats, cows and vermin when picking their “valuables” from the garbage;
- the stench of the putrefying garbage that remains with them;
- metal and glass can cut their hands if they are not careful;
- the more valuable scrap items have already been removed by domestic workers and security guards who take the high value material;
- they are often a target for the police and local government officials who round them up if there has been a theft in the neighbourhood;
- local residents complain about the mess they make whilst sitting on the roadside to sort the scrap;
- they are often seen by society generally as “dirty, thieving scum of the earth”;
- scrap traders arbitrarily fix the purchase rates of re-usable/ recyclable waste materials/ scrap, or they reduce the weight of the scrap, claiming that it is dirty or wet;
- female waste pickers have particular concerns that their husbands may suspect their fidelity and subject them to physical and psychological abuse or that their children are ashamed to acknowledge their mothers’ occupations.

These critical issues should inform the process of organizing, and organizations should then seek to establish an alternate identity for waste pickers as “workers” on the basis that scrap picking is socially relevant, economically productive and environmentally beneficial “work”, and that the working conditions could, and should, be changed and improved.

Given the challenges faced by waste pickers, it seems likely that collective action could play an important role in addressing many of these issues. The mapping of waste pickers and the challenges facing them is a logical step in the process of organizing them. Waste pickers who collect reusable and recyclable materials from the waste stream work on landfills and in the streets

in Kenyan cities. There is limited literature or information about their working conditions, and to date there has not been a study that identifies and maps waste pickers, waste picker organizations, and organizations working with waste pickers. Such information will provide an important basis for future initiatives to both organize and network waste pickers working in Kenyan cities.

4. Overview of Policies Related to Waste Picking in Kenya

The legislative framework of waste in Kenya includes the Local Government Act (CAP 265), Public Health Act (CAP 242) and the Environmental Management and Coordination Act (No. 8. of 1999). The Local Government Act is the framework law governing local authorities in Kenya. The Local Government Act places the responsibility of waste management in the respective Local Authority. The Public Health Act concurs with the Local Government Act that it is the responsibility of the respective Local Authority to ensure proper sanitation and housing within its area of jurisdiction. The Environmental Management and Coordination Act (EMCA) is the framework law on environmental management in the country and makes provision for waste management (refer to WIEGO's *Policy and Legislative Review: Context for Reclaiming Waste in Kenya*).

Waste picking involves the transportation of waste, but the legislation entrusts the responsibility of transporting waste to either waste generators or licensed operators thus excluding waste pickers who operate without licences (EMCA Act, 1999).

Waste management regulation covers waste generators, transporters and disposal. Integration of waste pickers in waste management calls for a review of the existing regulations. This is important as it is unlikely that waste can be comprehensively handled by waste generators. Some of the waste generators continue to dispose of waste in unauthorized locations, necessitating the intervention of either the local authority or other players such as waste pickers (EMCA, Waste Management Regulations, 2006).

The EMCA Waste Management Regulation (2006) 7(1) states that no person shall be granted a licence under the Act to transport waste unless such a person operates a transportation vehicle approved by the Authority. Such vehicles will not cause scattering, escaping and/or flowing out of the waste or emitting of noxious smells from the waste. Transportation and other means of conveyance of waste shall follow the scheduled routes approved by the Authority from a designated point of collection/storage to the designated storage/disposal site or plant. Regulation 7(1) places serious constraints on waste pickers for two reasons. Firstly, the regulation expects waste transporters to possess a valid licence issued by the Environmental Management and Coordination Act (NEMA). Waste pickers are not licensed and even if they are to be licensed, it is likely to be out of reach for most waste pickers because of costs. Secondly, the regulation requires those engaged in waste transport to acquire vehicles approved by NEMA. Most waste pickers do not use vehicles as they often transport waste either on their back or in a wheel cart. The vehicles recommended by NEMA are not only expensive but unsuitable for waste picking, since the transportation needs of the waste pickers are very different from those prescribed by NEMA. There will thus be a need to develop appropriate transport equipment for waste pickers.

Nairobi City Council Solid Waste Management by-laws (2007) prohibit waste picking firstly because it is their responsibility to manage waste in the city (Local Government Act CAP 265), and secondly because waste pickers are perceived to be interfering with the smooth operation of waste management by the Municipal Council. The Council also cites concerns about the health and safety of waste pickers, since there is also hazardous waste to be disposed of.

The Kisumu Municipal Council revised its by-laws on solid waste management in 2008 to improve waste management in the municipality. While the Council does not specifically make reference to waste pickers, at the operational level it has made efforts to integrate waste pickers in waste management. By November 2009, 42 waste picker organizations had been registered. Registered waste pickers are issued with a letter of recognition. They do not require a permit to operate, but the Council has stated its intention to revise this requirement in the future. Those engaged in waste management have formed an umbrella association called the Kisumu Waste Management Association (KIWAMA).

The Mombasa Municipal Council (Environmental Management) by-laws were revised in 2009. The drafted by-laws are yet to be signed by the Mombasa town clerk and Deputy Prime Minister/

Minister for Local Government. They allow any person who intends to collect, transport, sort, separate, salvage, reuse, and recycle waste or any other waste handling and treatment activity to apply to the council for an appropriate permit. Collection of garbage must be authorized within a specified zone and the council may review the boundaries of garbage collection zones from time to time as deemed appropriate. The permits are also provided to firms and groups seeking involvement in solid waste management.

5. Summary of the Findings per Municipality

5.1 Kisumu

The Municipal Council of Kisumu acknowledges that it is able to manage only 20 per cent of the total waste in Kisumu, and therefore recognizes the role of the waste pickers by giving them recognition letters and work permits. They also offer transportation of waste from the transfer point to the dumpsite, tools and equipment such as brooms, rakes, spades and protective clothing. The relationship between the Municipality and the waste pickers is a cordial one when compared to the other towns.

There are more than 49 solid waste organizations that have applied to the Municipal Council of Kisumu for recognition letters that will allow for work on a part-time basis. These organizations include waste picker organizations which were interviewed during the study, and private collectors of waste. The waste pickers reclaim waste, sort and sometimes recycle, while the private collectors collect waste and dump. They pay a small fee to acquire the permits, which allow them to manage waste within the Municipal boundaries.

The main objective of the Kisumu Municipal Council is to ensure the full implementation of the Environmental Management Coordination Act (EMCA), drawing on Public-Private Partnerships. This includes Public-Private Partnerships under the auspices of UN-Habitat; it has provided support for Kisumu Solid Waste Management (KISWAM), which is also involved in Urban Agriculture projects. The development approach of the Kisumu Municipal Council has been to enact by-laws to recognize some solid waste management initiatives such as urban agriculture; to oversee the implementation of government policies related to environmental management; and to provide letters of recognition to solid waste organizations, in which they have recognized more than 58 waste picking groups, all of them being worker groups.

5.2 Mombasa

Mombasa Integrated Solid Waste Management Project (MISWMP) is a project with a management structure that comprises a Project Implementation Committee (PIC), the Mombasa Integrated Environmental Management Organization (MIEMO) and the Mombasa Integrated Environmental Management Organization Savings and Credit Cooperative Society (MIEMO SACCO). The PIC is the implementation committee which functions on behalf of CBOs under the umbrella body MIEMO. The PIC members include eight CBO representatives and five stakeholders (NEMA, KPA, Municipal Council, District Development Officer and Tourism Board). The Municipal Council of Mombasa, as a member of the PIC, has indicated its willingness to support emerging solid waste groups and it has accepted their objectives.

Waste pickers derive their income from waste picking and are keen to share their experiences. The waste pickers have requested the Municipal Council to help them with the transportation of waste and to recognize them as role-players in the waste industry. MIEMO is working closely with PIC members in formulating further by-laws in order to recognize the waste pickers/garbage collectors' organizations. A draft of environmental management by-laws has been developed for approval by the Mombasa Town Clerk and Deputy Prime Minister/Minister of Local Government.

The Mombasa integrated project's primary beneficiaries are the Mombasa Municipal Council and the solid waste organizations. The public gains from the removal of garbage, improved hygiene, reduced incidence of disease and improved food availability. The benefit to local government is seen in improved services which reflects positively on the Council employees. The Mombasa Municipal Council intends to use the waste picker organizations to assist in monthly clean-ups and to plant a million trees within a year as part of their rapid response initiative, although the by-law has not yet been signed.

A total of 23 organizations were visited and interviewed, namely 21 waste picking groups within four divisions, and two supporting organizations. One of the supporting organizations is a trust fund which provides financial support to the solid waste pickers.

The Mombasa Integrated Solid Waste Management Project is a community-based organization project consisting of 43 solid waste picker organizations within four divisions in Mombasa, most of which belong to the Mombasa integrated solid waste management project. They are represented by the eight CBO representatives in the PIC, and incorporated in the PIC to represent the interests of CBOs involved with the project.

5.3 Nairobi

There are more than 200 solid waste groups within Nairobi, well distributed in each division, namely Kamukunji, Dagoretti, Makadara, Lang'ata, Embakasi, Dandora and Industrial Area. Most of these groups are formally registered as waste picker groups and private collectors. A checklist was first developed and different solid waste organizations listed. From the checklist, only waste picker organizations were selected and interviewed, namely thirteen self-help groups, ten CBOs, four networks, one association and one cooperative.

The role of the environmental department in Nairobi City Council is to ensure that Nairobi's residents enjoy a clean, healthy environment through the provision of services such as cleansing and beautification of the city, enforcement and implementation of deterrent laws and by-laws, maintenance of existing parks, improvement of NCC open space, control of leisure parks development, and selling of selected plants and flowers. The department encourages waste re-use, recycling initiatives, income generation technology from waste management, public awareness, and education. The garbage collection, transportation and disposal vehicle fleet is estimated at 180, although it appears that the number of operational vehicles is low. Approximately 1,600 tons of refuse is generated each day, and only 40 per cent of the garbage is collected, leaving a 60 per cent collection deficit. The support offered by private refuse collection enterprises has alleviated the problem somewhat, although the increase in private firms has created problems of control and haphazard dumping. The department has therefore formulated and implemented a policy on private sector involvement in solid waste management. It is hoped that with the comprehensive Environment and Management Coordination Act of 1999 coming into effect, and the constitution of the Board for its administration, the NCC will form a new section to address environmental matters. The Department of Environment has completed the first stage of review and formulation of solid waste management by-laws and will work closely with other partners to complement the provisions of the Public Health Act, the Local Government Act, the Water Act, the Factories Act and the Penal Code. It is unfortunate that waste pickers have not been included in such consultation processes, and continue to be marginalized.

Nairobi solid waste picker groups operate in the City and slums. Their main challenges include lack of support by the Municipal Council in the transportation of waste, and the fact that CBOs are not being recognized by the municipal council and other organizations.

5.4 Nakuru

All waste picking and business activities operate within central areas in Nakuru municipality, namely Free Area, Burma, Kiti, Lanet, Kenya Industrial Estates (KIE) zone, GTZ – Bondeni Jua Kali sheds, Shabaab, GoK Road opposite Hotel Waterbuck, Mwariki, Hilton and Barut areas.

Before 2007, the management of solid waste was the sole responsibility of the Municipal Council of Nakuru (MCN). The community and private operators were only involved in public free environmental cleanup campaigns. However, following the formulation of the 2007 environmental by-laws of the MCN, the Council decentralized SWM service provision in the spirit of public-

private partnership initiatives. The by-laws provided a legal framework for decentralization of service delivery of SWM, bringing community and public actors into the solid waste management sector.

The MCN thus managed to realize the decentralization goal of SWM by licensing SWM businesses so that they can operate legally; they can be regulated so as to ensure that the urban environment is not compromised by their activities; and waste picking in demarcated zones can be allocated to specific licensed waste enterprises in the municipality. In liaison with NAHECO (Nakuru Affordable Housing and Environmental Cooperative), the MCN introduced access to seed capital business loans to boost solid waste collection service community businesses.

Licensing and regulation of waste enterprises by the Council provides revenue to the municipality and transforms waste businesses from informal to formal. Spatial zoning in Nakuru has enabled waste pickers to avoid unnecessary conflicts and competition between various solid waste enterprises. The MCN encourages a partnership with almost all development stakeholders in Nakuru and works closely with all licensed waste pickers. Waste pickers who are not licensed operate informally and are not usually organized. Most of them work individually. Middle men who buy waste from waste pickers and operate at various rented rooms or open consolidation spaces are licensed and regulated by the MCN.

6. Overview of Findings

6.1 Types of Organizations

6.1.1 Self-Help Groups

The organizing aspect depends on whether the waste business is run as a private informal/formal and/or a community group. A self-help group is a registered or non-registered group of people with the same social and economic background who come together with each member making a contribution in accordance with the agreed rules of the group. Most of the waste self-help groups use these contributions to fund their activities. For organized community organizations, they are non-profit organizations that offer services to the community and are located in the community. They follow the typical organizational structure of self-help groups. Self-help groups and community organizations are registered with the Ministry of Culture and Social Services. Each group normally has a clearly defined leadership structure comprising the chairperson, secretary, treasurer and a committee of registered members. These together run the group waste recycling business activities with the chairperson leading the team.

From the mapping carried out, it appears that waste pickers are organized as community self-help groups. Their objectives include cleaning the environment with the aim of reducing the quantity of waste, creating job opportunities for youth and earning a living, reducing poverty within the informal settlements through effective utilization of waste resources, and improving water and sanitation provision within the informal settlements.

6.1.1.1 Activities

Waste picking groups are known by the community to collect waste and either dump it or sell it, but there is little awareness of the long hours of hard work, transportation hardships, harassment and humiliation that waste pickers experience. Most of them are poor and have no choice but to engage in collecting and recycling waste. Most of them also work with their children and their spouses to contribute to the household budget.

The types of waste streams being recycled include plastics, polythenes, organic waste, scrap metal, paper and brown carton waste, bones, shoe soles and glass. Recycling includes shredding of plastics; production of charcoal briquettes from a mixture of waste paper, bark, charcoal chippings, or sawdust and cartons; composting manure from organic waste; urban agriculture and tree planting; and baling of waste brown carton. The rest of the waste that cannot be directly recycled is sold to middlemen or industries for them to recycle. That which cannot be sold is transported for dumping. Mixed waste is collected from landfills, houses, restaurants, hotels, markets, and streets, sorted into reusable waste and sold to middlemen or industries that recycle. The remaining waste is transported to a dumpsite. Other activities include providing civic education to the community and promoting HIV/AIDS awareness.

6.1.1.2 Challenges

Challenges faced in organizing waste pickers include bringing different people together, and training them on waste collection and income generation. Inadequate income generation means that some group members earn more than others and this can lead to friction within the group and a consequent collapse of the organization. Furthermore, a criminal gang that controls a dump site discourages the members during transportation of waste to the dump site. These challenges can only be overcome if all the solid waste stakeholders (the Council, NEMA, NGOs that are willing to support waste pickers) are brought together in order to share ideas and experiences on solid waste management.

Challenges faced by the waste pickers during the handling and managing of waste include harassment by council/police on suspicion that some materials stored in their consolidation points

may have been stolen; harsh reprisals from council staff when they are late in paying for annual business licences; sometimes being forced to bribe council staff; fluctuation of market prices; high transport costs incurred to ferry products for sale to other towns; high costs for hiring handcarts to transport mixed waste to their site of operation; the expense of hiring municipal trucks or personal pickup vehicles to transport waste to the dumpsite; inadequate working capital for the business; harassment of waste pickers by authorities on suspicion of their being thieves; reduced recycled material volumes delivered at consolidation points and the need for affordable credit facilities; and inadequate infrastructure, tools and equipment. Risks encountered include handling hazardous waste from hospitals and dispensaries, direct contact with dust, and the foul smell from long stocked waste.

6.1.1.3 Goals

The ultimate goal of involvement in solid waste initiatives is to generate an income in order to raise the living standards and restore dignity to disadvantaged communities and to contribute towards making the environment a suitable place to live in through recycling and reuse of waste. Every person has the right to live in a clean and safe environment; to drink clean water; to go to the toilet in private; and to be clean. Access to these basic necessities restores confidence and dignity and opens doors to a more positive future.

6.1.2 Networks and Associations

Network organizations are CBOs that bring waste picker groups together and connect them to supporting organizations. The organization structure of a network is that of a community-based organization, namely, with a chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, vice-secretary, treasurer, organizing secretary and two other members, who together comprise the management committee.

6.1.2.1 Organizational Structure

In Mombasa, CBOs in waste management have formed an umbrella body called the Mombasa Integrated Environmental Solid Waste Management Organization (MIEMO) which includes a Project Implementation Committee (PIC). The PIC members include eight CBO representatives and five stakeholders (NEMA, Kenya Ports Authority (KPA), Municipal Council, District Development Officer (DDO), and Tourism Board). MIEMO has an ongoing project of purchasing recycling machines. PIC is responsible for implementing this project and participates in the revising of drafted by-laws so that waste pickers can be incorporated in it. MIEMO, as an umbrella body, has formed a MIEMO saving and credit cooperative which is in its early stages.

Leaders of a network are elected by the group members. The registration fee for a group ranges from \$5 to \$6. There is an annual renewal fee for every registered group. Records maintained include inventory books, accounts books, quotation procurement records, bank statements and bank reconciliation books. Information contained in a computer database includes details of project groups, cash analysis, funding provided, by-laws, enterprise, education and awareness, social impact, equipment, strategic partners, and the communities.

6.1.2.2 Challenges

Challenges include corruption within the network, lack of health schemes for the members, and limited ability to organize waste picker groups. The UWAGA network in Nairobi faces the challenge of organizing transportation of waste to the dumpsite for a number of waste picking organizations, using trucks from the Municipal Council of Nairobi. The by-law requirements for waste transportation make this a complex task. Waste picker organizations pay \$57 per trip of waste to the dumpsite from Monday to Saturday. The UWAGA network is responsible for the allocation of the trucks to the different waste picker groups.

Control of the trucks at the dumpsite by a criminal gang also presents a major challenge. Waste pickers are forced to pay a fee of \$2 per handcart of waste to be dumped and \$3 per truck of waste to be dumped at the Dandora dump site.

6.1.3 Cooperatives

Savings and credit cooperatives are registered with the Ministry of Cooperative Development and Marketing. They operate in close proximity to markets and target groups and provide access to financial services and markets, which is an essential prerequisite for sustainable poverty reduction. Cooperatives have an executive committee (consisting of a chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary and treasurer), shareholders and donors. There are also subcommittees, such as a credit committee. Each subcommittee has a chairperson, a secretary and a treasurer. Annual general meetings are convened. In the process of mapping waste pickers, it is evident that all the four towns have formed savings and credit cooperatives for waste pickers. Nakuru also has investment cooperatives. However, the research did not identify any worker cooperatives in Kenya. .

Objectives include offering financing services to low income registered members in a particular town where the cooperative is located; mobilization of new members; and promoting a culture of daily savings and credit access to meet their own financial needs. Training is also provided for members in various aspects, such as training of registered groups to build technologies in partnership with organizations that support reclaimers and to improve the urban environment through developing sustainable community-managed water, sanitation and waste management services.

Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOs) are found in all four towns. Waste picker groups within each town register as members in their respective SACCO, and members of these groups become members of the SACCO in general. Each group selects an individual who represents the group in SACCO meetings which are held to discuss issues concerning cash contributions, processing of loans, and the organization of the SACCO and the waste picker groups.

6.1.3.1 Activities

Kisumu Solid Waste Management SACCO

This was formed as a result of the need for financial assistance. The members benefit through access to loan facilities, trainings and exposure. The organization's activities are funded through the sale of shares to members, support from donors, proposals, loan interest, and recycling.

Nakuru Affordable Housing and Environmental Cooperative (NAHECO)

NAHECO offers financing services to low income registered members in Nakuru and beyond. It encourages members to save and promotes credit access to meet their own financial needs (members may borrow three times their own savings), and provides training for members. For example, local artisans have been trained in various building technologies in partnership with the NGO Practical Action. Programme services include provision of loan financing services to members with various loan products such as land acquisition loans, housing loans, and business loans including SWM businesses.

Nakuru Waste Collectors and Recyclers Management Investment Cooperative Society (NAWACOM)

NAWACOM was set up in 2002 as an umbrella organization of community groups dealing with waste management and waste recycling, aimed at enhancing modern technologies on organic solid waste management. Since 2005 it has been an investment cooperative. It runs a number of activities including organic solid waste composting through affiliate satellite composting groups and individuals; processing of mazingira organic fertilizer; training members on composting skills; and creating awareness amongst farmers on the usefulness of Mazingira organic fertilizer as an eco-friendly agricultural input. Marketing of the fertilizer goes beyond the Nakuru region.

Plastics Recyclers Savings and Credit Cooperative Society

This organization is limited to Nairobi. It encourages new members to assume a culture of daily savings and promotes credit access for members to better meet their financial needs. They also recycle waste plastics which are sold to them by waste groups registered with the SACCO.

Mombasa Integrated Environmental Management Organization Savings and Credit Cooperative Society

The MIEMO SACCO in Mombasa is still in the early phase, having been formed in 2009. It encourages new members to join in order to access savings and credit provision so as to meet their financial needs.

6.1.3.2 Challenges in Organizing Members

The process of encouraging new members to commit to daily savings and credit in order to access financial services by cooperatives has proved challenging, since many individuals do not manage their cash wisely. Another major challenge is providing financing services for SWM businesses: monthly loan repayments are not adhered to (mitigation: follow-up to clients, discussing the matter, readjusting the schedules); inadequate environmental loan fund to meet the increasing demand (mitigation: increasing the fund through own savings, partnership with other stakeholders); the high costs of follow-up of clients especially those struggling to repay (mitigation: might increase the interest rate).

Challenges faced while working with waste pickers include: lack of waste separation from the source (mitigation: waste separation from source is the best solution but this is a long-term measure since it is not practiced in Kenya); lack of own transport makes it difficult to collect waste products from recyclers and it has to be taken to the cooperatives at own cost (mitigation: teaming up to share transport costs among recyclers); cooperatives having limited resources to finance an effective marketing campaign (mitigation: sourcing funds from financiers to promote the product as well as collaboration and networking with appropriate stakeholders).

6.1.4 Individual Waste Pickers and Waste Picker Businesses

For private waste businesses, the organizing aspects are different. Waste pickers normally operate individually. They are not organized into formal groups and it has proved difficult to draw them together through support organizations. Each waste picker moves around with a gunny bag searching for items of some value to collect and take to a preferred consolidation point for sale. Waste pickers have specific buyers to whom they deliver their wares for sale and with whom they may have developed a relationship over time. They are paid in cash on the spot after delivering the collected recyclable materials at the buyers' consolidation points.

At the higher level, there are waste recycling businesses where the waste pickers may sell their wares, which are usually informal sole proprietorship family businesses. The proprietor manages the business activities with a few regular staff (3 to 6) as well as numerous casual labourers hired as needed, depending on the volumes of reclaimed waste materials being handled at any given time. For instance, one business in Nakuru hires five women casual labourers to sort and package waste paper into various grades as well as two strong young men, one for baling brown paper and the other for transporting purchased waste paper to the consolidation point for either sorting or baling. One woman runs a sole proprietorship waste business at GTZ – Bondeni, and has employed five workers who go into the field to prospect for the collected recyclable waste materials she specializes in, buys and brings these to the consolidation point. Jane's waste recycling business also has a network of 30 loyal waste pickers who collect recyclable waste materials from all over Nakuru and deliver to her consolidation point for sale.

6.1.4.1 Activities

Various activities are undertaken in waste recycling businesses, including going into the field (dumpsite, businesses, offices, streets, residential estates) to prospect for valuable waste materials;

transporting them physically (waste pickers), by handcart or more rarely using a vehicle, to the buying centres of various waste paper business operators; sorting into various grades, weighing to confirm weight for recording and payment, baling (brown paper only), shredding (plastics only) and composting (organic solid waste). Sales are also made locally from the waste consolidation points as well as transportation to other towns for sale of other materials (shredded plastics, baled and sorted paper, old shoe soles, to mention a few).

6.1.4.2 Challenges

Organizing or bringing individual waste pickers together is a challenge, especially for the supporting organizations, because they are competing among themselves. Risks encountered include the health risks of handling solid waste materials without protective clothing or footwear.

The limitations faced include fluctuating low prices of collected recyclable materials and low profits, and waste pickers regularly facing harassment and/or arrests by the authorities or being mistaken as thieves.

6.2 Organizations

In total, 117 interviews were conducted with 97 waste picker organizations and 20 supporting organizations in the four towns.

In Kisumu:

17 self-help groups, 7 CBOs, 2 associations, 1 cooperative and a group of waste pickers which was not registered. Supporting organizations included 1 church-based organization, 5 NGOs and the municipal council of Kisumu.

In Nakuru:

9 individual waste pickers, 4 individual waste pickers who are in waste picking businesses, and 3 self-help groups. Supporting organizations included a family bank, 2 NGOs, 2 cooperatives and the municipal council of Nakuru.

In Nairobi:

13 self-help groups, 10 CBOs, 4 networks, 1 association and 1 cooperative. Supporting organizations included 3 NGOs, 1 society and 1 trust fund.

In Mombasa:

19 self-help groups. Supporting organizations included 1 trust fund and the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

All waste picker organizations in Mombasa (100 per cent), are organized in the form of a self-help group; 60 per cent of waste picker organizations in Kisumu are organized as self-help groups; 80 per cent of waste pickers in Nakuru manage waste as a business; 52 per cent of waste picker organizations in Nairobi are self-help groups as compared to 40 per cent being CBOs. It is evident that self-help groups as a form of organizing is widely used, most likely since these are easy to register and do not require many resources in order to be set up.

6.3 Supporting Organizations

6.3.1 Kisumu

Organizations supporting waste pickers within Kisumu include the Kisumu Urban Apostolate Programme (KUAP), SANA International, Millennium Cities Initiatives (MCI), and Kisumu Municipal Council, Men for Women and Community Mobilization for Eco-development and Advanced and Practical Action. Existing opportunities include planning the regulatory role of the

groups while handling the waste to maximize their income from it, and also harmonizing all the activities of different government departments in relation to waste handling.

The Kisumu Municipal Council intends to promote the privatization of waste handling, zoning and establishing of waste transfer points in the future and waste picker groups can then be based at these locations.

6.3.2 Nakuru

Organizations supporting individual waste pickers and waste picker organizations and businesses include Family Bank, Practical Action, Municipal Council of Nakuru, Sustainable Community Environment Programme, NAHECO Cooperative (Nakuru Affordable Housing and Environmental Cooperative), and NAWACOM Cooperative (Nakuru Waste Collectors and Recyclers Management).

6.3.3 Nairobi

Organizations supporting waste picker organizations within Nairobi include Maji Na Ufanisi, KESHO (Kenya Environmental Sanitation Health Organization), Umande Trust, Practical Action, and the Community Development Trust Fund.

6.3.4 Mombasa

Organizations supporting waste picker organizations within Mombasa include the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Community Development Trust Fund. Their main source of funding is the Community Development Trust Fund in Partnership with Destiny Africa and Ecotact.

6.3.5 Objectives

The general objectives of these supporting organizations are to empower waste pickers in solid waste, to mobilize resources in managing waste, and to offer training in solid waste management. Funding organizations such as CDTF aim to contribute towards poverty reduction in Kenya by offering technical support, as well as financial support in the form of grants to community-based projects which address social, economic and environmental priorities.

6.3.6 Challenges Faced While Working With Waste Pickers and Mitigation Measures

A key challenge concerns high expectations from the waste picker groups regarding their expected income. Other concerns relate to corruption, weak leadership and limited capacity within the waste picking groups to understand the broader challenges of managing solid waste. To address these problems, supporting organizations engage the members from various waste picking groups in discussions while performing waste training, leadership training, capacity building and exchange visits with other waste picking groups.

In addition there is a lack of user-friendly technology to deal with sanitation issues as well as limited resources, and the supporting organizations have attempted to fundraise for new technology and resources. There is also a high degree of competition among waste picker groups. In order to address these challenges support groups partner with other civil society organizations and work together to unite the waste pickers.

Waste businesses often take a long time to pay waste pickers, and the waste pickers then begin to lose trust in these organizations. Start-up businesses usually take some time before a profit is seen as the market is limited. This challenge may be mitigated by holding meetings with waste pickers regularly, especially at the initial stages of a business which can provide training for the waste pickers on how to market their services.

Transportation of waste remains a challenge, which is passed on to the supporting organizations because they are seen as reliable. Some supporting organizations have been successful in persuading City Councils to allocate transfer points for various groups.

Many proposals for funding are written to supporting organizations but funding overall remains limited. Funding organizations often assist community-based organizations to write good proposals. CDTF, for example, supports more than 30 projects in Kenya but has few technical officers to deploy, and monitoring of projects in different parts of the country becomes a challenge.

6.3.7 Benefits of Supporting Organization Programmes to the Waste Pickers

Waste pickers become aware of health issues that surround them and their environment, the newly-initiated programmes provide income for them and the groups adapt to good group management and leadership.

6.3.8 Partnership

Most of the supporting organizations partner with other organizations to assist waste pickers. These include partnerships with civil society organizations and trust funds to fund waste pickers, engaging with other NGOs to plan for exchange visits, and solid waste trainings.

Maji Na Ufanisi has partnered with five NGOs (KESHO, Pamoja Trust, Riruta environmental group, Umande Trust and Carolina for Kibera) to advocate for awareness in solid waste leadership and coordination of environmental clean-ups within their wards. Each NGO supports a particular division within Nairobi. The five NGOs are able to join forces and look for funds that will assist them to support waste picking groups.

6.3.9 Opportunities to Develop Waste Picker Organizations

Existing opportunities include research into more friendly and new technology in sanitation, leadership in environmental management, learning about other wastes, knowledge on how to contact donors directly, and wider networking and collaboration. Other opportunities include supporting organizations introducing self-sustaining activities to the groups.

Supporting organizations are committed to supporting initiatives and integrated systems in solid waste management. They are also looking forward to linking many young people to solid waste management initiatives and are ready to engage in policy making in order to provide an efficient environment within which the waste pickers can operate.

Future plans in relation to waste pickers include having a clean environment, informing communities about the importance of waste and providing financial assistance where they can in order to improve their living and working standards.

6.4 Current State of Organizing by Waste Pickers and the State of Their Organizations

6.4.1 Self-Help Groups, Community-Based Organizations and Networks

Self-help groups, community-based organizations and networks increase in number every year but are not always sustainable. When initially started, members are enthusiastic about handling waste but as time goes by they discover how hard the work is. Most of the members leave their groups thus affecting the organizational flow and management of the groups. The waste picker organizations that were identified tend to have fewer women than men. In general, solid waste management activities and programmes have been initiated, funded and implemented by waste supporting organizations but the waste picker organizations are yet to fully embrace these activities and programmes. Organizing has gone as far as transitioning of status from CBOs to NGOs and companies: for example, Riruta Environmental Group, a CBO in Nairobi, is in the process of changing and registering as an NGO. Magongo Santana, a CBO in Mombasa, is in the process of changing and registering its status to a company. This is because the organizations want to enter into contracts with other organizations or industries that would associate and partner with them, or they want to obtain grant agreement with donors.

6.4.2 Cooperatives

In the quest to offer financial services, KIWAMA SACCO in Kisumu is slowly achieving its objectives despite having few registered members, as it is still a challenge convincing the waste pickers to register with the SACCO.

In 2007, NAHECO (Nakuru) provided loans to members in paper recycling business activities in Nairobi, beyond the Nakuru region. From the start, NAHECO's purpose has been to provide loans to members who were involved in eco-friendly businesses as their contribution towards improving the Nakuru municipality urban environment. Their meagre savings were boosted by Practical Action in 2005 with about \$8,571 provided as an affordable loan to SWM businesses at 10 per cent interest rate per annum (to cater for NAHECO administration overheads) and repayable within one year. This was through Improved Urban Environments (IUE) which has links to the British charity organization Comic Relief. The MCN boosted this amount by adding extra funds to NAHECO. Environmental loans from NAHECO are disbursed to qualifying clients at an affordable interest rate of 10 per cent, repayable within one year, depending on the amount borrowed. For loans below \$142 the repayment period is 6 months, between \$142 and \$285 nine months and above \$285 the repayment period is 1 to 2 years depending on the amount borrowed. In collaboration with Practical Action and the MCN, NAHECO has since been able to disburse over \$8,571 in small loans to boost SWM businesses in Nakuru.

The waste picker business enterprise beneficiaries from NAHECO included the following:

- Nairobi Waste Paper Recyclers cooperative members formerly located along Kijabe Street – a loan of \$1,429
- St Joseph's Environmental Group based at Kaptembwo Estate – a loan of \$1,000
- Salvage Services Limited based at Section 58 area – \$4,286 secured as business working capital
- Gilani Environmental Group – \$929 received as business capital
- Pangani Cleaners Group – \$686 received as business capital.

Plastic Recyclers Savings and Credit Cooperative Society in Nairobi are almost defunct because members are neither contributing nor saving into the SACCO. The executive committee has been advised to change from being a cooperative to a multipurpose organization because it has failed to offer financial services to its members. The Mombasa Integrated Environmental Management Organization SACCO in Mombasa is in its early stages and is mobilizing new members to join.

6.5 Gender in Organizing

The majority of waste pickers in Kisumu, Mombasa, Nairobi and Nakuru are men. According to some informants this is because managing waste is a tough job and many women find it difficult to carry heavy loads or pull a laden handcart. The few women present in these organizations mainly sort waste or do administrative work. They may leave their groups if they marry or obtain an easier job elsewhere. The hard tasks are thus usually done by the men. In most of the cooperatives, networks and associations, even though there are very few women as compared to men, an attempt is made in the management of the organizations to incorporate women into the leadership committees.

6.6 Way Forward

A number of business operators and waste picker organizations are engaging support organizations as they are keen to access Waste Venture Fund loans to boost their working capital at affordable interest rates. Several waste business operators are in ongoing negotiations with buyers

from other towns to collect the reclaimed materials from them so as to save on high transport costs. Others are thinking of value addition, especially in plastics, so as to fetch slightly higher market prices but this is limited by the high cost of shredding machines. During the interview, the need to bring all waste pickers together to discuss issues affecting them and share experiences was expressed. This provides a good opportunity for support organizations to collaborate and take this process forward in a coherent manner with other stakeholders.

7. Recommendations

Drawing on the secondary data, field visits, consultations and enquiries among the key actors and the waste pickers, the following recommendations may be made. These recommendations form a sound foundation for strengthening waste picker groups, amongst themselves, their relations with the policy environment, and in engaging with the business of waste generally.

Review by-laws: There is a need to review by-laws by the relevant municipal authorities in order to accommodate the waste picking sector within the bigger framework of waste management. Recommended strategies for the strengthening of existing waste pickers' organizations and promoting organizing include advocacy for clearer by-laws on waste pickers at the municipal level. Waste pickers should first be recognized in Kenyan regulations. They are presently not covered by the waste management regulations (EMCA, Waste Management Regulations, 2006). Waste management regulation covers only waste generators, transporters and disposal. The formal integration of waste pickers into waste management calls for review of the existing regulations. This is important as it is unlikely that waste will be fully handled by waste generators. Some of the waste generators will continue to dispose of waste in unauthorized locations, necessitating the intervention of either the local authority or other role-players such as waste pickers.

Transportation: Most waste pickers do not use vehicles as they transport waste either physically or in a wheel cart. The vehicles recommended by NEMA are not only expensive but unsuitable for waste picking. The transportation needs of the waste pickers are different from those prescribed by NEMA. There is a need to develop appropriate transport equipment for waste pickers which will require engagement on technical support to redesign an affordable and appropriate mode of transportation that is within the reach of the waste picker groups.

Municipal transfer stations: In order to support waste picker groups effectively, there is a need to lobby for the establishment of transfer stations in every municipality. This will effectively be the site of operation by the waste pickers, including waste sorting, classification and packaging for markets. These common sites created within certain divisions would gather together both waste pickers and waste buyers. A standardized market price can also be set at the common sites as an incentive. The presence of waste pickers within one place and selling their waste at a standardized price would most likely encourage waste pickers to work collectively. This will make it easier to organize them and will facilitate the building of new organizations.

Information sharing: In order to generate a common approach among key actors, waste pickers, supporting organizations and the municipal authorities, there is a need to organize information workshops, either per municipality or a joint national workshop. Strengthening of waste picker organizations is also possible if individual waste pickers, waste picker organizations, networks and associations are brought together in a conference to share their experiences, opinions and views about becoming organized.

Building group capacity: Once organized, there is a need to build the capacity of the waste picker groups. This could include issues on personal and public health, business development including value chain assessment, group dynamics, and management and group advocacy strategies.

Registration: There is a need to promote and support the legal registration of the waste picker groups to ensure they are given the necessary recognition. This can be done by social service registration or the cooperative societies. This will also enhance transparency of the groups and increase their potential for obtaining financial support.

8. References

1. JICA (1998) 'An overview of Solid Waste Management in Kenya', Republic. of Kenya, *The study on solid waste management in Nairobi City in the Republic of Kenya, Kenya: Final Report Vol. 2.* August 1998.
2. www.naibocity.org/departments/default2.asp?search=environment
3. Martin Medina (2008) Note No. 44. *The informal recycling sector in developing countries – Organization of waste pickers to enhance their impact.* At [Http://www.3rkh.net/3rkh/files/44informal_recycling_sectors.pdf](http://www.3rkh.net/3rkh/files/44informal_recycling_sectors.pdf) (accessed 22 February 2010).
4. Draft Report (2009) The Municipal Council of Mombasa (Environmental Management): Solid Waste Management By-laws.
5. Melanie Samson (2009) *Refusing to be Cast Aside: Waste Pickers Organizing Around the World*: Cambridge, MA, USA. Published by Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO).

9. Appendices

Appendix A: Templates describing Solid Waste Picker Organizations and Supporting Organizations in Kisumu

Appendix B: Templates describing Solid Waste Picker Organizations and Supporting Organizations in Nakuru

Appendix C: Templates describing Solid Waste Picker Organizations and Supporting Organizations in Nairobi

Appendix D: Templates describing Solid Waste Picker Organizations and Supporting Organizations in Mombasa

Mapping of Waste Pickers and Organizations Supporting Waste Pickers in Kenya

About this book: This publication uses the findings of research and interviews to map the current status of waste pickers and supporting organizations in Kenya. The report includes an overview of policies related to waste picking in Kenya that explain the legislative framework of waste and the Nairobi, Kisumu and Mombasa Municipal Council by-laws. The report also provides a summary of findings from each municipality, namely Kisumu, Mombasa, Nairobi and Nakuru and an overview of the current status of organizing activity.

