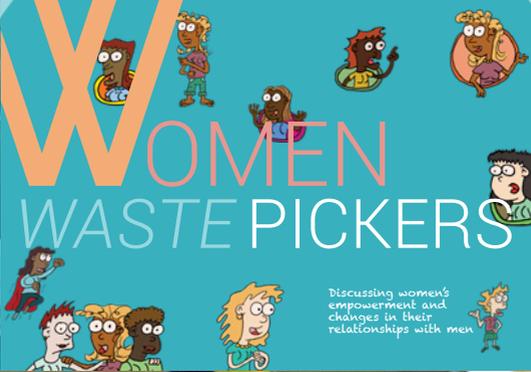


# From Theory to Action: Gender and Waste Recycling

A Toolkit for Teachers, Researchers and Practitioners  
Book 3: Resources

**WOMEN  
WASTE PICKERS**

Discussing women's empowerment and changes in their relationships with men

Belo Horizonte  
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**Coordinators of Rethinking  
Gender and Waste Recycling:**  
A Research-Action Project in  
Minas Gerais

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**From Theory to Action Toolkit**

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

INSEA – Nenuca Institute for Sustainable Development (*Instituto Nenuca de Desenvolvimento Sustentável*)

MNCR – The National Movement of Waste Pickers (*Movimento Nacional de Catadores de Materiais Recicláveis*)

NEPEM-UFMG – The Women’s Studies Research Center (*Núcleo de Estudos e Pesquisa sobre a Mulher*) at the Federal University of Minas Gerais

WIEGO – Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing

### Note On Word Choice

The millions of people worldwide who make a living collecting, sorting, recycling, and selling materials that someone else has thrown away are referred to by many different terms in different regions. These include scavengers, recyclers, reclaimers, ragpickers, bidders, and waste pickers. In some places they collect only recyclables and in cities with no formal collection of household waste they provide the only system of waste collection that there is.

At the First World Conference of Waste Pickers, held in Colombia in 2008, a provisional consensus was reached to use the generic term “waste picker” in English (but, in specific contexts, to use the term preferred by the local waste picking community) and avoid the term “scavenger” due to its derogatory meaning. While an international consensus is still to be reached amongst activists, waste specialists, membership-based organizations (MBOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the term waste pickers has been adopted and put into use by WIEGO as a useful generic term that suits the purposes of current global networking.

In this toolkit we use the term “waste picker” for the purpose of clarity and uniformity, regardless of context specificities.

## Acknowledgements

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Thanks are due to Lucia Fernandez and Melanie Samson who served as critical reviewers of the first versions of the research-action project.

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*Sonia Dias*  
WIEGO, Waste Specialist

## Foreword

In February 2012, the Gender & Waste Project – a partnership between WIEGO, NEPEM-UFMG, MNCR, INSEA — was born. It started as a pilot project in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil, with the objective of raising awareness of the need for increasing the economic and political empowerment of women waste pickers throughout Latin America. The main focus of the project was to address gender inequality in waste picking activities, which could then be extended to the inequality faced in three areas of day-to-day life: at home, at work, and as leaders within their representative organizations. The project served not only to critically address these issues, but also to format workshops that specifically dealt with the initial stages of gender training. In other words, the project was designed to raise the women waste pickers' awareness of the complexities of gender relations and inequalities and the various spheres in which such dynamics play out. The project was broken down into a three-phase system with the following objectives in mind:

1. To provide women with the tools to work towards equality in the workplace and in their personal lives in order to strengthen their capacities and voices;
2. To increase women's leadership roles in waste picker representative organizations; and
3. To contribute to the economic empowerment of women waste pickers.

The idea for the Gender & Waste Project came from the Brazilian and Latin American women waste picker leaders' discussions with WIEGO. The project began taking shape after a participatory phase in 2011, involving women in small meetings and public debates (such as the Rio + 20's People's Summit, the Waste and Citizenship Festival), which were essential for the design of the pilot project. During these preparatory discussions, women raised the following issues:

- Marginalization during national waste picker movements' meetings;
- Current practice of more men participating in negotiations with federal government;
- Difficulties women face given the lesser recognition they receive for the way they express themselves compared to their male counterparts;
- Challenges caused by a combination of strenuous work and domestic responsibilities;
- Desire of women to have greater knowledge and education; and
- Struggles in tackling and discussing issues such as domestic violence, among others.

This participatory phase, guided by the principles of popular education, was meant to influence the design of the entire project based on the needs expressed by women waste pickers. These needs served to inform the second phase of the project, which resulted in several regional workshops with women waste pickers. Relying upon participatory methodology tools and a gender and feminist perspective, the participants reflected on women’s autonomy, stereotypical gender roles and the main constraints for attaining greater equality and recognition in the diverse areas of social interaction during the workshops. They also identified their practical and strategic needs for overcoming such obstacles.

Understanding the gender inequalities associated with waste picking will ultimately increase the efficiency of waste management, while encouraging mutual respect between men and women.

Based on the results of the workshops, phase three of the project included the development of a “popular toolkit” for waste pickers on gender issues, as well as this practitioners’ toolkit. For a look at the “popular toolkit” in English, see here: <http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/resources/files/Gender-Toolkit-EN-LR.pdf>. For the version in Spanish, see here: <http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/resources/files/mujeres-recicladores-baja.pdf>. For the version in Portuguese, see here: [http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/resources/files/Waste\\_Gender\\_Toolkit\\_portuguese.pdf](http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/resources/files/Waste_Gender_Toolkit_portuguese.pdf).

It is hoped that both toolkits will provide guidance for the fourth phase of the project, which is aimed at mainstreaming gender in the Latin American Network of Waste Pickers (RedLacre) and waste pickers networks and organizations elsewhere.



For WIEGO, empowerment refers to the process of change that gives working poor women – as individual workers and as members of worker organizations – the ability to access the resources they need while also gaining the ability to influence the wider policy, regulatory, and institutional environment.

Striving for women’s empowerment on all levels – economic, symbolic, and political – is crucial for ensuring mutual respect and for improving the lives of female and male waste pickers.

*Sonia Dias*  
WIEGO, Waste Specialist

## Preface

*“Autonomy is knowing what you want. It’s about making decisions at home, of not being indecisive, deciding on what you really want”.*  
(Woman waste picker)

*“Autonomy is a right we are fighting for every day”.*  
(Woman waste picker)

*“It’s fighting for your objectives to be heard”.*  
(Woman waste picker)

It is with great pleasure that I present the results of the careful work carried out in the project “Rethinking Gender and Waste Recycling: A Research-Action Project in Minas Gerais” (WIEGO/NEPEM-UFGM/INSEA/MNCR).

This Gender and Waste Recycling Academic Toolkit can be seen as a valuable instrument for disseminating useful practices in the process of mainstreaming gender in social projects and, especially, in projects with workers from the waste recycling sector.

This Project was designed with the purpose of intervening in workers’ lives in a creative and original manner. Based on complex democratic and sociopolitical processes, it seeks to collectively work on public issues and agendas of intervention that impact the world of labour. In other words: the central axis of this pilot project of intervention, carried out in partnership with WIEGO, NEPEM-UFGM, INSEA, and MNCR, along with the other projects carried out by NEPEM, is based on the main objective of *mainstreaming<sup>1</sup> gender*. In yet another project, NEPEM/UFGM, known as a reference centre and institution for its contributions on gender and feminist perspective in Brazil, was interested in creating new frameworks for interpreting reality through a critical and feminist analysis that rethinks both the power relations among individuals and the possibilities for establishing alliances and shared strategies of action, though this time in the field of waste picking.

It is well known that gender relations are deeply unequal and vary in degree throughout the world, whether it is in day-to-day life or at work. The differentiated value placed on the work done by men in detriment of that carried out by women, for example, is still a harsh reality in many countries. We also know that these asymmetrical relations are based on traditional and stereotypical dimensions of the sexual division of labour and continue to organize

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<sup>1</sup> The idea of mainstreaming gender has gained ground not only as a theoretical concept, but also as a policy strategy (Daly, 2005). Nonetheless, it is a contested concept in feminist theory and in development studies. For useful discussions and critiques of the concept see the special issues of Social Politics (2005) and The International Feminist Journal of Politics (2005). More specifically, see: Moser (2005); Daly (2005); Walby (2005).

our relationships. Even though it may be true that men and women have been participating in productive activities (sometimes even identical) in the labour market, it is important to recognize the segregations in determined occupations and the unacceptable inequalities in terms of salaries, for example. Despite women's massive entrance into the labour market, the gendered segregation of productive and reproductive activities is one of the key reasons for a series of inequalities, including though not limited to the pay gap. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) (1995), even with the attempts made at addressing gender inequalities, "it would take 475 years for parity to be achieved between men and women in top level managerial and administrative positions." Furthermore, attributing reproductive activities as a historically and socially acceptable "feminine" role has extended well beyond the private sphere. As a result, women deal with double and triple work shifts that are not only burdensome, but cut into their own leisure time and prevent them from participating in what would be opportunities for political participation.

On a larger scale, these embedded practices are present throughout the world. As Moraes and Gassen note (2004), recent UN data reveals that:

- Women are responsible for 2/3 of the work carried out in the world and receive 1/3 of the salaries;
- Women receive 1/10 of the world income;
- Women represent 2/3 of the world's illiterate population;
- Women own less than 1/100 of the world's property;
- Of the 1.3 billion living in poverty, 70 per cent are women.

With such firmly entrenched inequalities, feminist struggles have called attention to the need for mainstreaming gender in policies and social projects. This agenda calls for both transversal and intersectional actions and policies.

The mainstreaming of gender has constituted itself as a power and critical instrument for reforms, monitoring and evaluation of processes involved in public policymaking and in social projects (Walby, 2005). It has been able to stimulate and reorganize actions and practices throughout the world. In the academic field and in public policymaking, the mainstreaming of gender is based on the consciousness that our actions are influenced by traditional and stereotypical values regarding gender that need to be revisited, deconstructed, and reformulated, particularly when they are placed in check by other intersectional forms of oppression such as race, class, age, sexuality, etc. Our project of intervention, which gave rise to this toolkit, considered the centrality of these dimensions.

With many years of communitarian and participatory interventions, NEPEM/UFMG joined this partnership with the aforementioned organizations based on the encounter between academic militancy and the movements of women waste pickers. The dialogue that has taken place has reassured us that this is certainly a productive path towards the construction of more equal and just gender relations.



We hope this toolkit can provide insights for other experiences of this nature throughout the world.

*Marlise Matos*

Director of The Women's Studies  
Research Center (NEPEM)

Professor at the Federal University of  
Minas Gerais (UFMG)

# 1

## Introduction



Recent studies have shown a large number of informal workers in developing countries make a living collecting, sorting, recycling, and selling valuable materials. In addition, many of these workers are women and children (Dias and Fernandez, 2013; Madsen, 2006; Hunt, 1996; Furedy, 1990).<sup>2</sup> Waste pickers face numerous challenges related to the very activity of handling waste, which is not always recognized for the environmental and economic benefits it may bring to a city. Women waste pickers also face the added burden of having to deal with the reproduction of hierarchical gender relations at home, in the workplace, and in their respective communities.

Despite the increased attention given to studies on waste picking and solid waste management, there is still a lack of understanding on the gender dynamics and sexual division of labour involved in waste picking activities. Adopting a gender and feminist approach to waste picking, therefore, recognizes the need to:

- address the multiple dimensions of subordination women are subject to on various fronts;
- discuss the ways men and women naturalize their social relations;
- focus on the threats and opportunities that men and women experience in their jobs;
- question how one of the ways the social division of labour manifests itself is through the sexual division of labour or the differentiation of job positions / roles according to gender;
- explore how the marginalization of waste pickers, and women waste pickers in particular, impedes access to greater economic independence;

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<sup>2</sup> In India, for example, about 80 per cent of the waste pickers are women; while in Brazil, a small-scale study found that 56 per cent of the members of waste picker organizations are women (Dias and Fernandez, 2013). Another study conducted in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, shows that there has been an increase in the number of women who are employed in one of the associations - ASMARE. The data reveals that the percentage of women working in the association jumped from 18 per cent in 1993 to 55 per cent in 1998 (Dias, 2002). In Thailand, about 93 per cent of street sweepers in the Bangsue district of Bangkok, and 60 per cent of waste pickers at dumpsites, are women (Madsen, 2006).

- recognize how gender stereotypes are often employed as a means of discouraging women's participation, especially at more formal levels.

A deeper understanding of the gender dynamics involved in waste picking, often masked or under-theorized, ultimately seeks to provide women waste pickers with the tools necessary to enhance their role as economic and political actors.

The Rethinking Gender and Waste Recycling research-action pilot project was created in light of the need for further exploration of the gendered dimensions of waste picking, but also as a result of the expressed concerns and interests of women waste pickers in Brazil and in Latin America in dealing with gender relations.

This toolkit, which has been divided into three parts, was designed as one of the products of the research-action project. The toolkit aims to integrate a variety of different focuses and resources so that it can be used by multiple audiences.

In Book 1: Theoretical Considerations on Gender, Empowerment and Waste, the toolkit begins by exploring the very notions and theoretical concepts of women's empowerment that guided the discussions and activities of the exploratory workshops conducted in Minas Gerais, Brazil. Bridging the gaps in the literature between gender and waste recycling, it also focuses on specific gender dynamics in waste recycling given the social, cultural, economic, and political context of Latin America and, more specifically, Brazil. In this section, the toolkit provides links to other projects and guides that offer further insights into gender and recycling.

Once gender issues pertinent to waste recycling have been contextualized, Book 2: Project Design, Tools and Recommendations goes on to highlight our own experiences with the exploratory workshops with women waste pickers, thus expanding the scope of the target audience by hoping to include those interested in mainstreaming gender in waste recycling. This content will also include links to other resources and toolkits that have been published on fieldwork in gender and recycling.

Lastly, in Book 3: Resource Book, the toolkit integrates a variety of information and resources that are available on the subject matter. While these resources are far from being exhaustive, they seek to provide an extensive starting point for those interested in gender equality in recycling.

The toolkit is designed to be user-friendly and hopes to engage academics, researchers, and practitioners. Each section provides links to other sources that may be of interest. The toolkit can also be read and used according to the needs and interests of the public. We encourage you to make use of the materials and adapt them to the needs of your own context. Finally, we would like to hear back from those who have used this toolkit, sharing critical comments and the specific ways in which this toolkit proved useful.

## 2 Links to Additional Tools and Guides



This final section of the toolkit seeks to provide readers with additional resources on waste picking and gender issues. The literature review includes both scholarly work and projects implemented by development agencies/NGOs/government agencies that focused in on key elements for a gender approach to waste picking issues.

Certain questions were at the forefront of our attempt to provide a more comprehensive list of resources. The sources may reflect on any given number of the issues we considered relevant to gender and waste picking. Some of these include:

- ✓ What is the gender division of labour in waste pickers' organizations?
- ✓ Do men in waste pickers' organization monopolize the collection of more lucrative materials?
- ✓ What are the initiatives/activities/projects used to enhance/support women in the recycling value chain?
- ✓ What are the key theoretical discussions about gender empowerment in the waste sector that are relevant for a future capacity building programme that focuses on the economic/political empowerment of women waste pickers?
- ✓ What are the key issues and practical suggestions when tackling the issue of building women's confidence and capacity as leaders within their organizations, at bargaining bodies, in decision-making bodies within and outside their organizations?
- ✓ How does the literature approach the inclusion of men in the activities of a gender awareness project?
- ✓ Are there common themes the literature discusses when it comes to analyzing gender subordination among waste pickers beyond the organizations, such as the home (i.e domestic violence, substance abuse, body issues)?

- ✓ In addition to considering ways of economically and politically empowering women, what are other practices/initiatives/projects that focus on the demands for recognition, or remedying misrecognition and gender subordination, both in the public and private spheres (i.e. organizations and domestic sphere)?
- ✓ Have any initiatives for increasing women's participation in decision-making bodies been implemented or documented by a network (i.e. allocating desirable positions to women)?

Overall, the literature review reflects our interest in sources that highlight the economic and political empowerment of women waste pickers, especially as legitimate leaders of their enterprises, here understood as cooperatives/unions and/or networks and social movements. While our project worked more specifically with economic and political empowerment issues, we understand that a necessary front of action also involves creating greater recognition of women's productive and reproductive work in society. Recognition is important for not only raising women's awareness of what obstacles impede their autonomy, but also for tackling cultural belief systems that are necessary for effectively transforming how men and women reproduce gender inequalities in multiple arenas of social interaction.

The literature review is divided into specific sections, including a brief summary of the work, how and if it related to gender and waste picking, and links to access the source.

# 3

## Literature Review<sup>3</sup>



### 3.1 Academic Publications

Beall, Jo. 1997. "Thoughts on Poverty from a South Asian Rubbish Dump: Gender, Inequality and Household Waste." *Institute of Development Studies*. (IDS) Bulletin, 28:3, 73–90. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1759-5436.1997.mp28003006.x/abstract>

**Summary:** This paper explores the interlocking circuits of accumulation and consumption that characterize the management of household solid waste in two South Asian cities. Interactions are explored among household members, and between them and paid waste pickers, such as domestic workers, sweepers, and pickers. The article challenges the gender stereotype of women having a special affinity with the environment, at least in the context of the urban environment and solid waste management. It also rejects any essentialist linking of particular social groups to waste and dirty work, arguing that in the case of both gender and caste relations, association with waste is socially constructed.

Bisht, Medha. 2005. "Sanitation and Waste Management: A Perspective of Gender and Diplomacy." Institute of Social Studies Trust, online document, New Delhi. <http://www.gdrc.info/docs/waste/001.pdf>

**Summary:** This concept-based article argues for a "bottom up" approach to local-level diplomacy in managing sanitation policy in developing contexts. After a lengthy description of the concept of diplomacy, the author historically analyzes urban planning in New Delhi to explore the developments in policy and the uses of diplomacy that led to its current sanitation legislation. She determines the stakeholders in this project, and analyzes the forms of negotiation that resulted. She concludes that poor women's rights must be considered when making policies, and that community-based women's groups can more easily mobilize and have their voices heard.

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<sup>3</sup> Entries in **green** denote "women's empowerment stories," which may be used to educate women by providing real world examples about their own potential. The literature review was conducted in 2013, only includes sources available on the internet, and thus may not include more recently published texts on the subject matter.

Davies, Anna. 2008. *The Geographies of Garbage Governance: Interventions, Interactions, and Outcomes*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing. [http://books.google.com.br/books/about/The\\_geographies\\_of\\_garbage\\_governance.html?id=-4-8AAAAIAAJ&redir\\_esc=y](http://books.google.com.br/books/about/The_geographies_of_garbage_governance.html?id=-4-8AAAAIAAJ&redir_esc=y)

**Summary:** This book examines the neglected geographies of waste management – in particular, the increasingly complex patterns of multi-level governance and the integral processes of trans-localization and politicization that are emerging in waste networks. Illustrated by in-depth case studies from New Zealand and Ireland, it critically analyses the interaction between political scales of governing waste, from the local to the supra-national level. It provides recommendations for better management of the waste sector in the future. Though there is no focus on waste work, gender, or community-based action networks, it does argue for the interrelatedness of local and global actions and policies toward waste management.

De Koning, Anouk. 2010. “Gendered Fears of Pollution: Traversing Public Space in Neoliberal Cairo.” in *Urban Pollution: Cultural Meanings, Social Practices*. Edited by Eveline Dürr and Rivke Jaffe. New York: Berghahn Books. [http://books.google.com.br/books?id=KOOvjRwU6dIC&printsec=frontcover&hl=pt-BR&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com.br/books?id=KOOvjRwU6dIC&printsec=frontcover&hl=pt-BR&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)

**Summary:** This collection of essays focuses on cultural meanings and values that are attached to conceptions of “clean” and “dirty”, purity and impurity, healthy and unhealthy environments, and addresses the implications of pollution with regard to discrimination, class, urban poverty, social hierarchies, and ethnic segregation in cities. This volume offers a range of accounts on the cultural construction of pollution.

Understanding how notions of pollution are socially constructed, and the effects these constructs have on women and other minority groups, can help women navigate public perceptions of their work, and the rights to which society believes waste pickers are worthy.

Dias, Sonia and Ana Carolina Ogando. 2015. “Rethinking gender and waste: exploratory findings from participatory action research in Brazil.” *Work Organisation, Labour & Globalisation*. 9:2, 51-63

**Summary:** The paper delves into the exploratory research-action project carried out in Minas Gerais, Brazil, with women waste pickers. The paper presents findings on the gender inequalities that structure women waste pickers’ lives and how they confront them. The paper also contributes to methodological and theoretical discussions on the limits and possibilities for building gender awareness with women waste pickers. The overall

objective is to show how such projects need to focus on strengthening women's individual and collective levels of empowerment.

Dias, Sonia and Lucia Fernandez. 2013. "Waste Pickers – A Gendered Perspective." In: Cela, B, I. Dankelman, J. Stern. (eds) *Powerful Synergies: Gender Equality, Economic Development and Environmental Sustainability*. UNDP: 153-157. <http://wiego.org/publications/wastepickers-gendered-perspective>

**Project:** This article argues that a gendered perspective is necessary when examining the issues waste pickers face. A gendered approach to waste picking needs to address the multiple dimensions of subordination women are subject to at home, in the workplace, and within their organizations. Such an approach needs to provide women waste pickers with the tools to enhance their role as economic and political actors, strengthening their capacities and voice.

Ethelston, Sally. 1994. "Gender, Population, Environment." *Middle East Report*. 190 (Sep-Oct), 2-5.

**Summary:** This article recounts the daily existence of a female waste picker and her family in Cairo. It tells of failed social policies aimed at women's reproductive health, and environmental concerns associated with slums. The majority of the article, however, focuses on the relationship between population increase and environmental quality (and the ways women are blamed).

Fredericks, Rosalind. 2008. "Gender and the Politics of Trash in Dakar: Participation, Labor and the 'Undisciplined' Woman." A paper presented at Thinking Gender Conference, UCLA, 1 February. <http://www.gdrc.info/docs/waste/011.pdf>

**Summary:** This paper explores how the politics of garbage in Senegal's capital city are constituted in and through gendered spaces and divisions of labour. In Senegal, like in many Muslim and Third World countries, household trash is seen as the responsibility of women. As such, the household represents the starting place in the trajectory of conflict and debate surrounding garbage in Senegal. The neoliberal era in Senegal has seen an explosion of a) participatory development projects which place the work of neighbourhood trash collection into the hands of neighbourhood women; and b) the widespread entrance of women into the official (paid) trash collection sector as street sweepers and their mobilization in the trash workers union. This paper shows the present conjuncture – a time of "crisis" in the official trash system – to be a productive moment in which gendered spaces and roles are being renegotiated in and through discourses of cleanliness, responsibility, and work.

Huysman, Marijk. 1994. "Waste Picking as a survival strategy for women in Indian cities". *Environment and Urbanization*. 16:2, 155-174.

**Summary:** This paper draws from interviews with women waste pickers in Bangalore, India, who describe their work, the returns they receive, and the difficulties they face. This includes the extent to which other family members (including husbands, for those who are married) contribute to household income. It also includes a detailed account of a day in the life of a woman waste picker. Despite the low returns and the health risks, waste picking offers one of the few ways in which women from lower castes can earn an income and also meet their household and child-rearing responsibilities. The paper also includes a description of the Garbage Recycling and Segregation Programme (GRASP) in Pune and some conclusions and recommendations for governments and NGOs.

Madsen, Catherine A. 2006. "Feminizing Waste: Waste-Picking as an Empowerment Opportunity for Women and Children in Impoverished Communities." *Colorado Journal of International Environmental Law and Policy*. 17:1. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265276531\\_Feminizing\\_Waste\\_Waste-Picking\\_as\\_an\\_Empowerment\\_Opportunity\\_for\\_Women\\_and\\_Children\\_in\\_Impoverished\\_Communities](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265276531_Feminizing_Waste_Waste-Picking_as_an_Empowerment_Opportunity_for_Women_and_Children_in_Impoverished_Communities)

**Summary:** This article argues that an exploration of strategies to improve the livelihoods of waste-pickers that takes advantage of their expertise and experience in recycling and environmental sustainability is lacking. Rather than building on the waste management models used in industrialized nations, this note proposes that developing countries encourage the existing systems of waste management practiced by waste-pickers by improving the employment conditions and opportunities in this informal sector. This paper argues that economic and entrepreneurial programmes, specifically programmes in microfinance and the creation of "Recycling Schools," be employed to capitalize on waste-pickers' overlooked skills in waste management. Because the majority of waste-pickers are women and children, an examination of gender roles and the vulnerability of children are also presented.

Millar, Kathleen. 2010. "Cooperation in the Informal Economy: The Case of Recyclers at a Brazilian Garbage Dump." In *Cooperation in Economy and Society*. Robert Marshall, ed. Lanham, MD: Altamira Publishing. [http://books.google.com.br/books?id=8gJl0xs\\_f6gC&pg=PA180&lpg=PA180&dq=catadores+women&source=bl&ots=U7pL2B5FgH&sig=Z-1NLoRScfGz\\_zDjBr1vrtzmZRE&hl=en&sa=X&ei=Q4DgT-DWF8LL6QHJq4x\\_&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com.br/books?id=8gJl0xs_f6gC&pg=PA180&lpg=PA180&dq=catadores+women&source=bl&ots=U7pL2B5FgH&sig=Z-1NLoRScfGz_zDjBr1vrtzmZRE&hl=en&sa=X&ei=Q4DgT-DWF8LL6QHJq4x_&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false)

**Summary:** This article analyzes the working conditions of different types of waste pickers in Rio, and examines how their conditions varyingly shape social relations and political practices. The author argues that the flexibility and autonomy of some work situations outside of formal wage labour enable cooperative practices, while threats to the livelihoods of informal labourers ultimately motivate collective organizing and political action.

The author concludes that three factors influence the capacity of waste pickers to organize collectively: (1) structural conditions of the work environment, (2) scope of social activities at the work site, and (3) social solidarity and group formation.

Miraftab, Faranak. 2004. "Neoliberalism and casualization of public sector services: the case of waste collection services in Cape Town, South Africa." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. 28:4, 874–892. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.0309-1317.2004.00557.x/abstract>

**Summary:** This article focuses on the waste collection strategies of the municipal government in Cape Town, South Africa, using the case as a point of entry into a wider critique of global neoliberalism and the privatization of municipal services. To minimize costs, local governments, like private sector firms, rely on and have enhanced the casualization of labour. This strategy further blurs the conceptual distinction between the public and private sectors. Stressing the continuities of apartheid under the neoliberal policies, the article identifies specific ways in which the neoliberal government in its post-apartheid moment uses gender ideologies and the rhetoric of voluntarism and empowerment to justify its use of residents' underpaid and precarious labour for municipal services in poor black townships.

The article explains the gender-discriminatory logic that the Cape Town government used to justify exploiting women as municipal waste pickers in poor neighbourhoods. It is important to bear in mind naturalizations of links between women and waste, waste work, and cleanliness, which lead to exploitation and under-valuation.

Moser, Caroline. 1993. *Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice and Training*. New York: Routledge. [http://books.google.com.br/books?id=BN4OAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=pt-BR&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com.br/books?id=BN4OAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=pt-BR&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)

**Summary:** This book argues that gender planning is not an end in itself but a means by which women, through a process of empowerment, can emancipate themselves. Ultimately, its success depends on the capacity of women's organizations to confront subordination and create successful alliances which will provide constructive support in negotiating women's needs at the level of household, civil society, the state, and the global system. The book takes a critical perspective on "training" as the panacea for all gender problems and analyses the strengths and drawbacks of gender training, as well as providing techniques for successful empowerment.

The author poses five guiding questions when considering training: why train, when to train, who provides the training, who undergoes training, and how to train.

Noel, Claudel. 2010. "Solid Waste Workers and Livelihood Strategies in Greater Port-au-Prince, Haiti." *Waste Management*. 30:6, 1138-1148. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/41465495\\_Solid\\_waste\\_workers\\_and\\_livelihood\\_strategies\\_in\\_Greater\\_Port-au-Prince\\_Haiti](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/41465495_Solid_waste_workers_and_livelihood_strategies_in_Greater_Port-au-Prince_Haiti)

**Summary:** This paper examines the involvement of workers in the solid waste management industry in Greater Port-au-Prince and the implications for livelihood strategies. The findings revealed that the Greater Port-au-Prince solid waste management system is very inclusive with respect to age, while highly segregated with regard to gender. This paper calls for better salary scales and work compensation for the solid waste pickers.

The article concludes that women receive lower salaries, have more injuries on the job site, and have a greater desire to leave than men in similar positions. It does not address cooperatives, and does not provide tools for action.

Samson, Melanie. 2008. "Mopping up the Labour Shortage: The Privatisation of Waste Management and Gendered Work Reorganization." *Work Organisation, Labour & Globalization*. 2:2, 85-100. [http://yorku.academia.edu/MSamson/Papers/1396598/Mopping\\_up\\_the\\_labour\\_shortage\\_the\\_privatisation\\_of\\_waste\\_management\\_and\\_gendered\\_work\\_reorganisation](http://yorku.academia.edu/MSamson/Papers/1396598/Mopping_up_the_labour_shortage_the_privatisation_of_waste_management_and_gendered_work_reorganisation)

**Summary:** This article explores the gendered nature of work reorganization in Johannesburg's privatized Pikitup waste management utility. It establishes that a feminist analysis requires an exploration of

the historical production of gendered and racialized divisions of labour, the continuities and disjunctures that arise with privatization, the consequences for men and women workers in the workplace and the home and the effects of men's gendered privileges.

The article focuses on the gendered division of labour, and the discrimination female workers faced as waste collection became privatized, providing an analytical framework for thinking about comparisons between gendered work roles, remuneration, and social dynamics.

### 3.2 NGO Publications/Reports

*Declaration of the First Conference of Central American Waste Pickers.* 2012. Global Alliance of Waste Pickers blog post. <http://globalrec.org/2012/02/28/declaration-of-the-1st-conference-of-central-american-waste-pickers-juana-rafaela-juarez-tellez/>

**Summary:** The Declaration was made to (1) unify waste pickers (especially in Central America); (2) increase financial options for waste pickers; (3) advance the visibility of waste picking as a profession; and (4) ensure the right to continue and improve this line of work. The points in the Declaration focus on self- and group-expression, mutual support, strategizing against plans to hinder or eliminate waste pickers' work, improvement of the work environment, self-governance/control, and broad recognition of waste pickers. A special point was made about women:

“Women – who make up the majority of waste pickers, and who are working mothers, often breadwinners, daughters and wives – should have equal access in the distribution of power in the workplace, to organizing and rights, and should be respected in landfills and dumps. Women waste pickers should have access to specific trainings about their legal rights. It's very important to build a path towards gender equality.”

“Waste & Gender: Rethinking Relations for Empowerment.” WIEGO website publication. <http://wiego.org/informal-economy/waste-gender-rethinking-relations-empowerment>

**Summary:** There are still few studies that deal with unequal gender relations and practices in the waste sector. A collaborative project involving waste pickers in Latin America seeks to shed light on the needs of women waste pickers and on the multiple levels of discrimination that they face. In 2012, the Latin American Waste Pickers' Network (Red Lacre), the National Movement of Waste Pickers in Brazil (MNCR),

and WIEGO agreed on the importance of opening up a dialogue about gender in the context of waste picking or informal recycling. An existing relationship with the Center for Study and Research on Women (NEPEM) of the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) allowed these groups to start a pilot project in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil. Later on, INSEA, an NGO, joined the project.

“Struggling for unity: women waste pickers in South Africa”. Globalrec site. <http://globalrec.org/2015/04/15/struggling-for-unity-women-waste-pickers-in-south-africa/>

**Summary:** This blog post discusses the increase of women waste pickers and the connections to neoliberalism. Drawing from interviews, it also highlights what it is like to be a woman waste picker and the recent efforts made to organize women waste pickers.

Kuria, David and Rina Muasya. 2010. *Mapping of Waste Pickers and Organizations Supporting Waste Pickers in Kenya*. WIEGO. <http://wiego.org/publications/mapping-waste-pickers-and-organizations-supporting-waste-pickers-kenya>

**Summary:** This report states that most waste pickers in Kenyan cities are men (though elsewhere the report claims that there are many women workers). 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. 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.

Muller, Maria. “Gender, social inequality and waste management.” World Bank, Draft Planning Guide for MSWM (Solid Waste Management), online document. [http://www.worldbank.org/urban/solid\\_wm/erm/Annexes/US%20Sizes/Annex%201.2.pdf](http://www.worldbank.org/urban/solid_wm/erm/Annexes/US%20Sizes/Annex%201.2.pdf)

**Summary:** This paper first focuses on the relative roles of women and men in urban waste management. The observation is then made that gender differences and other social inequalities are maintained through the operation of similar social mechanisms. Finally, the paper gives recommendations for strategies to support the inclusion of both women and men in waste management activities and to reduce social inequalities. The author points out that one can expect that men and women re-value waste materials for different purposes, such as domestic utility, saving

on expenditure, earning money, or other purposes. In short, there is a gendered definition of “waste” and of “resources”, which should be reflected in the discussion of priorities regarding waste management in the community consultation process.

Muller, Maria S. and Anne Scheinberg. 1998. “Gender and Waste: Electronic discussion group, 9-31 May 1998: A summary.” Urban Waste Expertise Programme (UWEP) and the Netherlands Development Assistance (NEDA), occasional paper. <http://www.gdrc.info/docs/waste/004.pdf>

**Summary:** This report of an email conference on the relationships between waste and gender is primarily concerned with society in general, not cooperatives or organization of waste pickers.

Muller, Maria and Anne Schienberg. “Gender and Urban Waste Management.” Global Development Research Center (GDRC), online document. <http://www.gdrc.org/uem/waste/swm-gender.html>

**Summary:** The Urban Waste Expertise Programme (UWEP) of WASTE in Gouda, the Netherlands, has found that gender has a great impact on: the definition of waste, access to resources, and attitudes and approaches towards public health and community cleanliness. They have found that attention to gender can increase project effectiveness, avoid costly mistakes, and ensure equitable access to livelihoods, resources or benefits which the project makes available. For them, the ultimate objective of incorporating a gender perspective in development programmes is to promote the equality of women and men in society, and to empower women to become protagonists in their own development. Much of the information provided was stated in Muller’s “Gender, social inequality and waste management” (see synopsis above).

Muller, Maria and Anne Schienberg. 2002. “Gender-linked livelihoods from modernizing the waste management and recycling sector”. <http://sites.utoronto.ca/waste-econ/GenderBook.pdf#page=7>

**Summary:** The article explores the economic and gender dimensions of the urban waste sector. It specifically considers how power dynamics and relations within the sector affect women and men’s livelihoods. The article does not discuss how activities within the sector affect the daily lives of men and women, nor does it consider ways of improving women’s status. It lists a series of gender inequalities within the sector according to research carried out in the late 1990s.

Narayan, Laxmi and Purnima Chikarmane. **“Power at the Bottom of the Heap.”** Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (KKPKP), report.

**Summary:** This article tells the story of KKPKP, a collective of women waste workers in Pune. The collective began when women took over the task of waste picking from their children and united in their efforts. The organization has won important resources and recognition for waste pickers from the municipal government, and made significant contributions to the gradual re-positioning of waste pickers as participants in a critical urban service with environmental sustainability credentials. Within KKPKP, empowerment is understood to be a process in which the poor critically reflect upon their life situation, analyse it, and experience a sense of confidence and self-worth through the building of a collective identity. With this confidence, it is then possible to exercise the power to make, influence, or control decisions that affect their lives. Much of the article concerns the visibility and legitimacy of waste workers in general, including the use of protests and street theatre.

Samson, Melanie. 2003. *Dumping on Women: Gender and Privatisation of Waste Management*. Municipal Services Project (MSP) and the South African Municipal Workers’ Union (Samwu). [http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/publications/files/Samson\\_Dumping\\_on\\_Women.pdf](http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/publications/files/Samson_Dumping_on_Women.pdf)

**Summary:** This book – based on research in three South African municipalities – attempts to find out how the privatization of waste management services affected men and women differently, and if privatization made it harder for municipalities to promote equity between women and men. It offers a gender perspective on the implications of and difficulties with waste management privatization. It provides case studies as well as analysis. Analysis is based on whether new systems ensure gender equity: providing equal opportunities to women and men in ways that take different needs into account.

Samson, Melanie. 2011. **“Nohra Padilla, Third Generation Recycler and Advocate for Organizing the Working Poor.”** *Inclusive Cities*. [http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/resources/files/IUP\\_Story\\_Nohra\\_Padilla.pdf](http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/resources/files/IUP_Story_Nohra_Padilla.pdf)

**Summary:** Norah, a life-long waste picker, played an important role in creating a recycler cooperative (*Asociación de Recicladores de Bogotá* (ARB)) in 1990. She is currently the Executive Director of the ARB. Three years ago, Norah also received a scholarship to finally attend university. She is completing a degree in administration which will help to strengthen the skills she has developed while working to organize recyclers.

Scheinberg, Anne, Maria Muller and Evgenia L. Tasheva. 1999. "Gender and Waste: Integrating gender into community waste management: project management insights and tips from an e-mail conference, 9-13 May 1998." Urban Waste Expertise Programme (UWEP) and the Netherlands Development Assistance (NEDA), working document 12. <http://www.bvsde.paho.org/bvsacd/cd69/AScheinberg.pdf>

**Summary:** This document is designed to translate the rich and productive discussion generated over an email conference into specific insights and approaches that make a practical contribution to waste management projects in the developing and transitional world. They hope to show how the "gender lens" can be useful in improving outcomes as well as in avoiding problems. The text includes an interesting table that links common problems in waste management with the gender issue that may be causing them.

Much of the information contained is available in Muller and Scheinberg, "Gender and Waste: Electronic Discussion Group" (see synopsis above).

**"SEWA Academy."** Self Employed Women's Association webpage. <http://www.sewaacademy.org/aboutus.html>

**Summary:** SEWA Academy was founded in 1993 by SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association) and functions as the members' university. It provides members with their first introduction to a formal learning environment. It is the organizational wing that is responsible for basic membership education and for capacity building, leadership training, communication, and research. Learning is encouraged through training and capacity building, action-oriented research of its members, and by building strong communication channels within the organization as well as with the outside world.

Srinivas, Hari. "Incorporating gender criteria in waste management planning." Global Development Research Center (GDRC), online document. <http://www.gdrc.org/uem/waste/gender/gender-waste.html>

**Summary:** This website has useful links to articles and documents related to gender and waste. Many of these articles and documents are reviewed in this literature review.

**"Trained women waste pickers maintain biogas plant."** Mary Robinson Foundation—Climate Justice (MRFCJ) Flickr account. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mrfcj/6436467461/in/photostream/>

**Project:** The Alliance of Indian Wastepickers (AIW) is a grouping of over 30 organizations working with waste pickers in many different

areas of India. AIW organizes events at the national, state, and city levels to bring together a large number of waste pickers to one platform. AIW organizes women waste-pickers into Self Help Groups and gives them access to micro credit. It also assists them in accessing government schemes for urban poor. It provides training in alternative skills such as composting, bio-methanation, fine sorting (sorting materials by type: for example separating paper from plastic, and so on), etc.

**“Women Behind the Wheel: The Story of Satvashila Potekar.”** 2012. *Inclusive Cities*. <http://wiego.org/resources/women-behind-wheel-story-satvashila-potekar>

**Summary:** After failing the driving test twice, waste picker Satvashila Potekar learned how to drive a garbage truck for her cooperative, SWaCH, in Pimpri Chinchwad, India. SWaCH initiated a survey and series of test runs to see what would work best to optimize waste collection along their routes. They found that teams with drivers who understood the waste picking business adapted very well to the demands of a mechanized collection model. The ideal “dream team” would be run by three women – all waste pickers from the same neighbourhood and including one with a truck-driver’s license. However, most waste pickers do not have the minimum educational qualifications required to apply for a truck driver’s licence. As a result, most drivers on the SWaCH teams are men with no links to the waste picking profession.

Woroniuk, B and J. Schalkwyk. 1998. “How is equality between women and men relevant to waste disposal systems?” Global Development Research Center (GDRC), online document. <http://www.gdrc.info/docs/waste/007.pdf>

**Summary:** This article argues that the effectiveness of waste disposal initiatives can be improved through the incorporation of an understanding of gender differences and inequalities. Waste disposal projects can also provide support to women (especially if they are responsible for waste disposal) and ease their overall work burden through improved family health. Waste disposal initiatives can also contribute to gender equality by offering opportunities for women’s increased employment. Much of their information is from Muller and Scheinberg, “Gender and Urban Waste Management” (see synopsis above).

### 3.3 Governmental Reports

“Community Participation, Roles of Stakeholders, Gender Dimension and Contracting for Solid Waste Management.” 2007. *Start Your Waste Recycling Business: Technical Handouts*. Harare, Zimbabwe: International Labor Office, p 25-38. <http://www.gdrc.info/docs/waste/008.pdf>

**Summary:** This selection focuses on understanding the various ways that workers and community members can participate in the process of building waste management cooperatives and programmes. These include participation in decision-making, planning and design, recycling and composting, and raising awareness more broadly, contributing money, and contributing labour. It claims that articulating the roles and motivations of each stakeholder in a SWM programme (i.e. the municipality, donors, workers, residents, etc.) will contribute to stronger results, especially if all stakeholders are aware of the desires and roles of the others. Harare, Zimbabwe’s SMW programme is used as an example.

A separate section on gender focuses on raising awareness of gender issues to “people at the grassroots level”. It defines “gender myths and stereotypes” as “society’s biases that ascribe certain roles to men and others to women”.

Maclaren, Virginia and Nguyen Thi Anh Thu, eds. 2003. *Gender and the waste economy: Vietnamese and International Experiences*. Hanoi: National Political Publisher, “Introduction” and Maria Muller and Anne Scheinberg, “Gender-Linked Livelihoods From Modernizing the Waste Management and Recycling Sector.”

**Summary:** This collection of papers argues that the gendered nature of waste work means that men and women tend to have different exposures to health risks, different incomes, and different social status in their work. Women and men tend to have different social networks and different decision-making authority within the home, which can affect the ability of both women and men to influence decision-making in household or community waste management.

The workshop papers focused on the role and contributions that women can play in the waste economy; constraints and obstacles and even pressures that women and children are often confronted with in this field; relevant policy solutions proposed to raise public awareness of the role of women and children in the waste economy; and supporting policies to enable women to improve their knowledge of environmental sanitation. The purpose of making a gender analysis is to ask how gender relations affect the efficient operation of these waste management activities; and to assess what equal or unequal chances women and men

have to improve their livelihoods through the modernization of the waste management sector.

Patel, Almitra H. "Waste Management Practices And Policy In India From A Gender Perspective." Presentation to Supreme Court Committee for Solid Waste Management in Class 1 Cities in India.

**Summary:** In India, women are responsible for the generation and disposal of most household waste, and they form the majority of waste pickers. To make cities cleaner, women must be encouraged to change practices. The author suggests: waste separation at source into "dry" and "wet" (for composting); segregation of biomedical waste; composting leaf litter, garden waste, and food leftovers from vendors and homes (preferably on site and not centralized); educating the public as to best practices; and encouraging informal sector recycling by waste pickers.

"Public Awareness and Communication Modules and Materials: Gender mainstreaming in SWM." Mediterranean Environmental Technical Assistance Programme and Regional Solid Waste Management Project in Mashreq & Maghreb Countries, online document. <http://www.gdrc.info/docs/waste/012.pdf>

**Summary:** This presentation provides a definition of gender as culturally specific and malleable. The author argues that because women and men have different roles and priorities, which can be in contradiction to or in competition with each other, recognizing gender roles and relationships is crucial to waste management project success. It is also noted that equipment and services are mostly designed by men and institutions who have different priorities and concerns from women; they are not used to (and often not aware of) women's perceptions, specific needs, and concerns with the handling and disposal of solid waste.

### 3.4 Dissertations

Millar, Kathleen. 2011. "**Reclaiming the Discarded: The Politics of Labor and Everyday Life on Rio's Garbage Dump.**" PhD diss., Brown University.

**Summary:** This text does not focus on or theorize gender, but the stories of many women workers and leaders are presented, making extrapolation on their situations as women possible. An ethnography of work in the informal economy, it explores the experiences and meaning of waste work in the context of Rio's Jardim Gramacho municipal landfill. It uses participant observations and life history interviews to discuss human suffering, resilience, and political projects forged in the brutal conditions of urban poverty.

Millar depicts the complexities of family life and work life for waste pickers, who must manage both despite the social, economic, and physical difficulties. She shows their suffering as both noble and tragic, as the waste pickers themselves see their own working lives. Millar also shows how waste work can be a liberating escape from the difficulties of family life as co-workers joke, play, laugh, and make the labour of collecting and sorting waste a fun activity. The study also reveals the complex dynamics of female leadership in cooperatives.

Brechbuhl, Sandra. 2011. "Female Waste Pickers in Côte D'Ivoire: A Study on Women's Livelihoods in the Informal Waste Management Sector of Abidjan." Faculty of Natural Sciences, University of Berne, Switzerland. <http://documents.plateforme-re-sources.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/A60-BRECHBUHL-Female-waste-pickers-in-C%C3%B4te-d'Ivoire.pdf>

**Summary:** This master thesis focuses on female waste pickers who work in the waste dump of Akouédo in Abidjan. The conceptual framework used is the sustainable livelihoods framework (SLF) in order to highlight the roles, challenges and needs of informal waste pickers. The study seeks to provide a clearer understanding of how women waste pickers sustain their livelihoods, along with the use of qualitative research methods. The thesis contributes by casting light on how women's access to livelihood assets is impacted by their backgrounds, strategies, activities, and their place in the recycling hierarchy.

Kadfak, Alin. "An analysis of the social relations in waste management: Two case studies on Somanya and Agormanya in Ghana". Masters dissertation in Sustainable Development, Faculty of Science and Technology, Uppsala University, Sweden. <http://uu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:453271/FULLTEXT01>

**Summary:** This thesis looks at how social relationships influence solid waste management in developing countries. The focus is on case studies carried out in Somanya and Agormanya, two towns located in the eastern region of Ghana. Qualitative research methods were applied to collect information. The analysis of social relations uses a gender lens to understand dynamics in the private sphere.

Mathew, Tinu K. 2010. "Role of Social Movements in Organising the Unorganised Sector Workers: a Case Study of Learn, Dharavi." *Masters of Arts in Globalisation and Labour*, Tata Institute of Social Sciences Mumbai. [http://www.global-labour-university.org/fileadmin/master\\_theses/India/Dissertation\\_Tinu.pdf](http://www.global-labour-university.org/fileadmin/master_theses/India/Dissertation_Tinu.pdf)

**Summary:** This study focuses on the challenges informal workers face and explores the impacts of organizing workers through trade unions, non-governmental organizations and other social movements. The Labour Education And Research Network (LEARN), a non-governmental organization, is considered a successful case study in this work. The discussion on LEARN's practices casts light on how workshops on microcredit, training and qualification, and violence against women can be particularly useful for women workers and NGOs working with the informal sector.

Mitchell, Carrie. 2008. "Recycling the city: The impact of urban change on the informal waste-recovery trade in Hanoi, Vietnam." PhD thesis, Graduate Department of Geography University of Toronto. <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/handle/1807/16767>

**Summary:** The dissertation is divided into three papers. The second paper has a more specific focus on the gendering of the waste sector in Hanoi. The research draws from a survey of 575 informal waste collectors and 264 waste intermediaries as well as 73 in-depth interviews. In addition to a discussion on methodology, it highlights the difficulties of conducting research with informal groups. The author's objective is to show waste-recovery literature is often compromised by the lack of academic rigour. Overall, the papers explore the growth of the informal waste collection sector in Hanoi and how the rapid urbanization process affects the livelihoods of workers.

### 3.5 Blogs

Fernandez, Lucia. 2012. "A Conference for Central American Waste Pickers." MIT CoLab Radio website. <http://colabradio.mit.edu/a-conference-for-central-american-waste-pickers/>

**Summary:** Nicaragua signed a Memorandum Of Understanding with their city government that allows them to work in better conditions when their dumpsite is closed. In February 2012, they held the First Central American Waste Pickers' Conference and employed a democratic voting process to draft the Declaration of the First Central American Waste Pickers' Conference. One of the highlights of the conference was the focus on gender. Women waste pickers took control of a session during the assembly to focus completely on their own issues. They hoped to be able to co-manage the dumpsite and waste facilities with the municipality so that they could have some control over workers' livelihoods, pensions, etc.

McAnaney, Patrick. 2011. "Gender Dynamics in the Cooperatives." *Patrick Talks Trash*. Blog post. 19 Sept. <http://patricktalkstrash.blogspot.com.br/2011/09/gender-dynamics-in-cooperatives.html>

**Summary:** McAnaney notes that the division of labour within the cooperatives he studied in Belo Horizonte occurs along gender lines. Men tend to collect and transport (often independently), while women tend to sort (usually in the cooperatives). In the cooperatives, gender can be a source of conflict. Due to the gender separation through division of labour, men and women often view their own tasks as more valuable and accuse the other of not carrying their weight within the group. Furthermore, women have tried to incorporate work schedules that allow them to leave early to prepare for their "second shift" of domestic duties, such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for children. This progressive approach to ameliorating unfair societal household practices is often a source of tension among the men of the group, who insist that work and home are separate activities and that women should not be given special privileges within the group. Nevertheless, because women usually make up such a strong majority of members, they often get their way. McAnaney sees women waste pickers as the vanguard of the feminist movement within contemporary capitalism because they have the power to change the capitalist structure through their increased presence in the work force and their new sets of social, political, and economic demands.

O'Hanrahan, Liam. 2012. "Recycling Oral Histories with Audioboo." *The Audioboo* blog post.

**Summary:** O'Hanrahan visited various cooperatives in India in 2011 and recorded the oral histories of various waste pickers (six women, three men). They discussed the various issues they face in their daily lives and work and how they have formed unions and organizations to struggle for social justice. O'Hanrahan posted 49 oral accounts (32 from women, 17 from men) on a blog, with each entry noting the name of the interviewee and the social issue they primarily discuss in the blog. The interviews are in English and include O'Hanrahan's questions.

### 3.6 Radio Shows and Films

*Radio Pink*. 2012. The Voice of Women at the People's Summit. Directed by Myriam Marques. People's Summit Radio Station. Rio de Janeiro. <http://globalrec.org/2012/09/25/debate-on-the-peoples-summit-radio-with-waste-pickers-street-vendors-allies-we-have-to-unite-waste-pickers-and-street-vendors/>

**Summary:** During the People's Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012, Myriam Marques conducted interviews with informal workers, mainly waste pickers and street vendors, and their allies. Representatives from India, Brazil, and Chile participated in the programme and offered their perspectives and concerns regarding sustainable development.

*Estamira*. 2006. Directed by Marcos Prado. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSZv8jO9SAU>

**Summary:** The documentary is about Estamira, a 63-year-old woman who has been working in a landfill in Rio de Janeiro for over 20 years. It captures the philosophical outlook of the waste picker and gives voice to a woman's perspective on the hardships of her life.

*Full Circle*. 2010. Directed by Amit Kumar Raj. Pune: Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (KKPKP) Productions. <http://www.cultureunplugged.com/play/3942/Full-Circle>

**Summary:** This film tells the stories of women waste pickers in Pune, who were harassed by police before the KKPKP union was formed. The union allowed women to bring complaints of violence, unfair treatment, and harassment to a body that would defend their rights and promote the importance and dignity of their work. As a result, the SWaCH (Solid Waste Collection and Handling or, officially, SWaCH Seva Sahakari Sanstha Maryadit, Pune) cooperative was created, which was important in order to help workers get a fair deal from unethical scrap dealers. Eventually they started their own scrap shop. Currently, KKPKP has over 6,000 members.

*Reciclaje – tres casos*. <http://vimeo.com/114289617>

**Summary:** The film looks at the situation of waste pickers in dumpsites in Nicaragua and the impacts of privatization processes. The film also shows the women's cooperative *Luz Del Futuro*.

*Recyclers in Peru*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dy8rhZOREtg&feature=youtu.be>

**Summary:** The short film interviews Maria Elena Diaz who is the president of a recycling cooperative in Peru – *Asociación Vida Verde de Los Olivos*.

# 4

## List of Relevant Websites

- MNCR — Movimento Nacional dos Catadores de Materiais Recicláveis (National Movement of Waste Pickers of Brazil). <http://mncr.org.br/>
- Waste Picker and Climate Change Blog. <http://frontlineagainstclimatechange.inclusivocities.org/>
- GROUNDWORK: A NGO which has engaged in organizing waste pickers in South Africa. <http://www.groundwork.org.za>
- MNRCH – Movimiento Nacional de Recicladores de Chile (Chilean National Movement of Waste Pickers). <http://movimientorecicladoreschile.blogspot.com/>
- KKP KP: <http://www.kkpkp-pune.org>
- Basurama: A forum for discussion and reflection on trash, waste, and reuse in all its formats and possible meanings born in the Madrid School of Architecture (ETSAM) in the year 2001. [www.basurama.org](http://www.basurama.org)
- SWaCH Coop – Solid Waste Collection and Handling, or officially the SWaCH Seva Sahakari Sanstha Maryadit, Pune: The SWaCH Coop is India's first wholly owned cooperative of self-employed rag pickers/waste pickers. [www.swachcoop.com](http://www.swachcoop.com)
- CSARO – Community Sanitation and Recycling Organization: works on waste picking issues in Cambodia. <http://www.csaro.org/>
- SEWA: a trade union established in 1972, currently with a membership of 1.2 million. SEWA's activities include SEWA bank, savings, credit, insurance, pensions, and financial counseling. It represents waste pickers and other informal workers. <http://www.sewa.org/>
- Stree Mukti Sanghatana: works with waste pickers within its waste management programme. [www.streemukthisanghatana.org](http://www.streemukthisanghatana.org)
- Chintan Environmental Research and Action Group: an Indian NGO focusing on sustainable consumption and on environmental and social equity. [www.chintan-india.org](http://www.chintan-india.org)
- Red Latinoamericana de Recicladores: a Latin American international network dedicated to informal activities in solid waste management and its stakeholders. [www.redrecicladores.net/](http://www.redrecicladores.net/)
- Asociación Nacional de Recicladores de Colombia (National Recyclers Association of Colombia): Information about the national association of recyclers in Colombia. <http://asociacionrecicladoresbogota.org/>

# 5

## List of Relevant Organizations and Foundations That Fund Gender Projects



- The African Women’s Development Fund (AWDF) <http://www.awdf.org/>
- The African Development Bank (AfDB)
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation <http://www.gatesfoundation.org>
- Department for International Development (DFID) <https://www.gov.uk/international-development-funding>
- Coraid <https://www.coraid.org/en/>
- The Channel Foundation <http://www.channelfoundation.org/index.html>
- The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=6&nr=60&menu=1549&template=375>
- European Union <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/>
- The Foundation for Women <http://www.foundationforwomen.org/index.php>
- Ford Foundation <http://www.fordfoundation.org/>
- FRIDA, The Young Feminist Fund <http://youngfeministfund.org/about-frida/>
- The Global Fund for Women <http://www.globalfundforwomen.org/index.php>
- Grameen Foundation <http://www.grameenfoundation.org/>
- Grantmakers Without Borders <http://www.internationaldonors.org/>
- Hivos <http://www.hivos.nl/Landing>
- The International Development Centre (IDRC) <http://publicwebsite.idrc.ca/EN/Pages/default.aspx>
- Levi Strauss Foundation <http://www.levistrauss.com/who-we-are/>
- M.A.C. AIDS Fund <http://www.macaidsfund.org/#/fund/mission>
- Mama Cash <http://www.mamacash.org/>
- The McCormick Foundation [http://www.newmediawomen.org/site/about\\_this\\_initiative/](http://www.newmediawomen.org/site/about_this_initiative/)
- The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) <http://www.ned.org/grantseekers>
- Oak Foundation <http://www.oakfnd.org/>

- The Rockefeller Foundation <http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/our-work/current-work>
- UN Foundation <http://www.unfoundation.org/who-we-are/>
- Urgent Action Fund-Africa (UAF) [http://urgentactionfund-africa.or.ke/?option=com\\_content&view=article&id](http://urgentactionfund-africa.or.ke/?option=com_content&view=article&id)
- Trust Africa <http://www.trustafrica.org/en/>
- The Women's Funding Network (WFN) <http://www.womensfundingnetwork.org/>
- The Institute of Fundraising London (IFL) <http://www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk/about-us/>
- The Everyone Foundation <http://www.everyonefoundation.org/about-us/who-we-work-with/>
- The UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF) <http://www.un.org/democracyfund/apply-funding>
- Africa Grant-makers Affinity Group <http://africagrantomakers.org/>
- Kiva Microfunds <http://www.kiva.org/>
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) <http://www.ifad.org/english/indigenous/grants/index.htm>



**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 visit: [www.wiego.org](http://www.wiego.org)

