

#03 DECEMBER  
2019  
WOMEN IN WASTE

WOMEN IN WASTE  
GRASS ROOT INNOVATIONS  
WASTE WISE CITIES CHALLENGE  
EVENTS & ROSRA TOOL KIT  
UPDATES

## INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN AND WASTE NEXUS



Regardless of the income, culture and place of living, our life is undoubtedly linked to waste. As urbanization accelerates, more waste is generated in the world cities and mishandling of the waste affects climate change. "Climate impacts hit women and girls hardest giving existing vulnerability." – Kathrine Wilkinson, who is working to heal the planet, said. Following to Kathrine, [Cradle to Cradle NGO](#) says that "the same is particularly true for women and one of the most significant climate issues: waste." To be more precise, hazardous waste is threatening women.

It is true that most of workers who are engaging in as cashiers in supermarket, who are employed as cleaners, who are caring children and households are women. Given this situation, the people who are consequently

threatened to allergies of nickel in the coins, harmful cleaning products, toxic materials and primitive designs from houses, are women.

Considering above, to be more precise, women in Waste is one of the most marginalized groups in the world. While Gender mainstreaming has been encouraging equal opportunities for both men and women across all aspects, women are still battling with cultural, historical and religious barriers. In the waste sector, attitudes associated with stereotypes of women contribute more women to engage in the informal part, which is unpaid, minimally compensate or voluntary participation.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) analyzed the experiences in gender and waste in three Asian countries; Bhutan, Mongolia, and Nepal.

The cases tell us that first-line response is to bring a gender perspective in waste management and implement well-balanced participation of men and women in the sector. Embedding gender consideration in waste management can improve gender equality in employment. However, in parallel, the hierarchy in the waste management sector supposed to activate women's participation, particularly in administration and operational context. In doing so, it encourages the government to achieve gender mainstreaming in the legislation, policy and all activities in the country.

Find more on UNEP's work on Women and Waste Nexus [When waste works for women](#)

## STORIES OF WOMEN WHO BROKE STEREOTYPES

### SUMAN MORE

Suman is a great mother. She brought up her son who is now doing a master's degree, by waste picking. Her career was started when she was 13 years old, then she married her husband who was also engaging in waste picking. In 1992-93, she decided to be a member of KKP KP – Global Alliance of Waste Pickers, while her neighbors discouraged her to join in.

She can now earn more money with fewer working hours. Additionally, she succeeded to build a relationship with people, even though she was thinking it would be difficult as she came from a

lower caste. Her improved situation has also provided her with proper medical care service and a relaxing time at home. Suman's case shows us that empowering women in waste results in not only their economic and health situation but also an education for the next generation. Read more [Suman More](#)



Photo credit: Deccan Herald



## NOHRA PADILLA



Photo credit: Goldman Prize

Nohra's family was a recycler for three generations. Nohra had also worked as a recycler since she was seven years old. Although her livelihood was threatened, she had no choice but to keep working as a recycler because she has not had higher education. Nonetheless, she was holding passionate and had the chance to take an action.

Nohra established a cooperative with her fellow recyclers and her organization now becomes Asociación de Recicladores de Bogotá (ARB) with more than 18,000 members through 24 cooperatives. As its executive director, Nohra plays an important role. She fought for their right to continue

recycling when the municipality decided to close dumpsite. Unfortunately, the dumpsite was closed but the cooperatives got financial support to keep their collection work in the street. As well as protecting the right, ARB has succeeded to pay salary, social security, medical aid and so on for fellows. In addition, Nohra finally could get a scholarship to attend university and completed a degree to improve her skills and recyclers' organization. Read more [Nohra Padilla](#)

## INNOVATIONS AT GRASSROOTS

### REUSABLE SANITARY PADS



PadMad project by Madhvi Dalal is about reusable sanitary pads improving sanitation as well as the life of marginalized women and girls in Kenya. A 100% biodegradable sanitary pad, which is made by natural materials available locally, brought excellent impacts on;

- o The economic status of marginalized women through pad business (production and sales)
- o Education for girls through solving their absenteeism caused by menstruation
- o Environment by reducing disposal issues of the sanitary pad which takes 500-800 years to breakdown

This skin- and eco-friendly material can be biodegraded within 6 months. Introducing a reusable & biodegradable pad can contribute to a reduction of disposal waste, especially in a shantytown where mishandled waste pushes unhygienic conditions every day.

Read more about Madhvi & her project here: [StartSomeGood](#) and [PadMad](#)



### GRASSROOTS TECHNOLOGICAL AND FINANCIAL INNOVATIONS FOR INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE WASTE MANAGEMENT

In Kisumu, Kenya waste pickers have seen many times the failure of waste infrastructure projects. Yet, something different is currently happening. Within the framework of the Recycling networks research [project](#), in April 2018 waste pickers from Tanzania, Kenya, Argentina, Brazil and Chile organized a peer-to-peer workshop in Kisumu to share ideas and technologies between continents, during the workshop several grassroots, low-cost and low-tech innovations were developed: a light pushcart adapted to waste collection in informal settlements, easy to maneuver, easy and cheap to produce, strong, and capable to take heavy loads; a mechanic press; and a small scale biogas production. This peer-to-peer technology development opens for an exciting venue to develop and scale up grassroots innovations in a sustainable manner.

These technological innovations converge with the imminent launch in 2020 of a [community currency](#), a financial innovation that aims to link waste related services and products provided by these grassroots organizations, such as waste collection, gas provision or organic fertilizers, which as a token can then only be used to purchase other products and services in community provided by local suppliers and organizations, such as food, transportation, repair and maintenance, school fees or the church Sunday alms, to mention a few. This financial innovation provides an incentive to motivate the waste actors to sustain their operations to ensure a clean and healthy environment as the benefit. [Innovations in Kisumu](#)



## DEBRIS IN PARADISE- PLANET HEROES A NEW WAY TO FIGHT AGAINST IT

In Indonesia, every Friday Laura participates in Debris-free Friday organized by Gili Eco Trust and encourages others to join it. Diving is a perfect way to clean up: she simply takes a mesh bag with her and pick any litter she can from underwater. Every time she leaves the water, her bag is full. Lack of education, motivation, and funds makes local people insensitive to environmental issues. They don't care about where their debris ends, causing harm to nature and others. That's why it is so important to find a way to motivate local people and it seems there is a new way to do it. She recently discovered the Planet Heroes initiative that works on a crowdfunding basis: someone on the other side of the planet cleans up the beach. Then, thanks to this platform, he can show

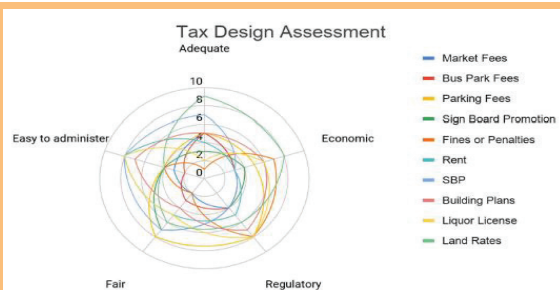


the same: cleaner Earth. The donation people send to that stranger might be 1€ or 100€ - for poor fishermen or kids from the village, that amount means a lot and works like a big motivation. [Planet Heros](#)

## UPDATES

### WASTE WISE CITIES CHALLENGE

We have recently launched the challenge under Waste Wise Cities Campaign! This challenge aims at cleaning up cities and establishing a sustainable waste management in 20 cities by 2022. You can apply for this challenge and be **CHANGEMAKER CITY** or **SUPPORTER CITY**. The CHANGEMAKER CITY will act to develop and improve their SWM and the SUPPORTER CITY is expected to assist your partnered changemaker city regarding administration, technical skills and financing. The deadline of the application is 31 January 2020. We are waiting for your active participation in the challenge! For more details you can read here. [WWCC - Call for Applications](#)



### THE RAPID OWN SOURCE REVENUE ANALYSIS (ROSRA TOOLKIT) - DOMESTIC RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Achieving the SDGs requires finance; however, cities are collecting far below potential. UN-Habitat's Urban Economy and Finance Branch has designed the **ROSRA Toolkit** to provide local/subnational governments with strategic guidance on how to optimize their own source revenue (OSR). ROSRA clearly defines the type of data that is needed as well as the kind of analysis which needs to be carried out to better understand what the key bottlenecks are to optimize OSR. The toolkit was piloted in Kisumu County, Kenya, and found out that Kisumu's OSR is only at 17% of its full potential (i.e. the County is missing out on a lot of money that could be used for example to finance a sustainable waste management system).

The cost for applying the ROSRA toolkit depends on the size of the local government (population), the availability of data as well as the distance from UN-Habitat Headquarters in Nairobi (travel expenses), and will probably lie somewhere between \$25,000 - \$75,000. However, if ROSRA is used properly the return on investment could be 10x-100x of this original investment. If we managed to catch your interest, do not hesitate to reach out to our colleague Lennart Fleck ([lennart.fleck@un.org](mailto:lennart.fleck@un.org)).

### WORLD URBAN FORUM 2020

UN-Habitat with 3R will be hosting the event at [WUF](#) on "Waste Wise cities together" with key focus on New Urban Agenda and SDG goals.

### SOUTH-SOUTH GALAXY PARTNERSHIP

Waste Wise Cities is a partner with South-South Galaxy. With the cooperation, we will share the good practice and connect for potential collaboration, learning opportunities and exchanges

<http://my.southsouth-galaxy.org/en/solutions/detail/waste-wise-cities-campaign>

### WORLD URBAN FORUM 2020

Our Solid Waste Management chief Dr. Graham Alabaster talking on Waste Management and Sanitation <https://youtu.be/MJG6RgvaEhM>



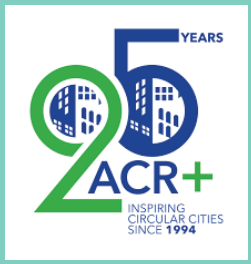
# ADVISORY GROUP

We welcome our new Advisory group members!

[ICLEI](#) is a network of local governments for sustainability and consist of more than 1,750 local and regional governments supported by global experts for sustainable urban development in the world. ICLEI sparks actions to transform urban environment at local and global levels, also build connections among governments, stakeholders, and across city, region, local, national and global connections. Their five pathways towards low emission, nature-based, circular development, resilient development, equitable and people-centred development provide a framework to design integrated solutions that consider the balance of human life and natural environment.



## ACR+



[ACR+](#) aims at promoting a sustainable resource management and accelerating the transition towards a circular economy. The working themes of this international network of cities and regions are; awareness rising and communication; operations instruments and monitoring; legal and economic instruments; strategy and planning; and cooperation and capacity building. The activities of them are determined by its members based on their needs and priorities. Apart from that, ACR+ also has key activities to facilitate experience exchanges between members and to share technical and policy information.



## WHY SHOULD WE TALK ABOUT WOMEN IN WASTE?

We should talk about women in waste because;

- Waste related associations established by women can break stereotypes of women and bring gender mainstreaming into waste sector;
- Recycling programs have higher success rates when the sector focus on women-centric given gender roles in Household activities; and
- Waste innovations with small action launched by women can expand and have positive impact on environment as women encourage women.

What the stories in this newsletter shows is highlighting women and waste enhances women's role as economic and political actors, as well as it ensures productive activity in waste management.

## ACTION STEPS FOR GENDER INCLUSIVITY

- Promote women's participation in formal sector.
- Commit towards equal employment opportunities.
- Properly implement a legislative gender mainstreaming in waste management.
- Professionalize street sweeping, waste picking and recycling.
- Collecting gender-disaggregated data and implement gender-sensitive policies or reforms in waste sector.
- Provide protection for vulnerable and marginalised informal waste labours.
- Make well balanced gender deployment in all levels of administration related to waste management.



**Andre Dzikus,**  
Coordinator Urban Basic Services Branch

**Graham Alabaster,**  
Head Waste Management Unit

[wastewisecities@un.org](mailto:wastewisecities@un.org)  
[#WasteWiseCities](https://twitter.com/WasteWiseCities)

**UN HABITAT**  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

