Recycling Networks & Waste Governance

Two international action research initiatives to map waste governance and grassroots innovations in waste management

Multiple case studies on waste picker initiatives in Buenos Aires (Argentina), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), Kisumu (Kenya), Managua (Nicaragua), Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia), São Paulo (Brazil), Vancouver & Montreal (Canada)

Millions of informal waste pickers collect household waste daily in cities around the globe to earn a living. In doing so they make a significant contribution to reducing the carbon footprint of cities, recovering re-sources, improving environmental conditions and health particularly in low-income residential areas, creating jobs and income among the poor. Strengthening of such initiatives, networks and practices promotes grassroots resilience, contributes to reduce both the adverse impacts of cities on climate and environmental change (UN sustainable development target 11.6) as well as urban poverty (UN sustainable development goal 8).

"Recycling Networks" is a research project that aims at examining the challenges that innovative grassroots initiatives and networks encounter in generating livelihoods to improve household waste collection and recycling in informal settlements of global South cities. The research on **"Waste Governance"** seeks to map successful waste management initiatives, arrangements and policies in some cities in the global South and global North.

Researchers in the two projects collaborate in offering a critical inter- and transdisciplinary perspective on waste governance, organizing resilience against climate and environmental change involving cooperatives, associations, community-based organizations, public-private partnerships, networks and organizations working with waste related issues.

Waste cooperative Managua

Waste cooperative, Ribeirão Pires

Informal waste workers, Kisumu

"Recycling Networks" addresses the following questions:

1. Processes: How do these grassroots initiatives and networks operate to bring about socio-environmental and economic change?
2. Challenges: What are the organizational, institutional, social, and material challenges encountered in the creation, development and stabilization of these initiatives and networks?
3. Opportunities: How can such difficulties be overcome?

"Waste Governance" addresses the following questions:

1. Processes: What are the assets and barriers of everyday waste governance in each specific geographic context?
2. Challenges: How can waste governance become more sustainable and thus inclusive?
3. Opportunities: What can we learn from these specific political, organizational and institutional experiences (governance arrangements, finance, business models, etc.)?

Both research projects combine multi-case studies of waste picker groups and local government initiatives, apply qualitative research tools and participatory action research (e.g. photo voice, participant observation, workshops).
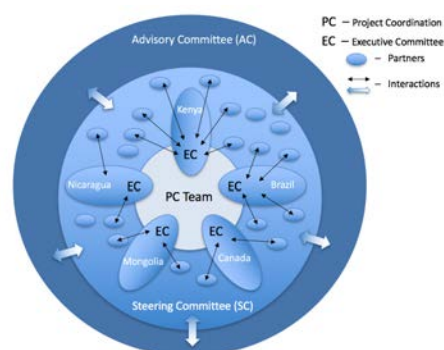
"Recycling Networks"

Year 1: Multi-case studies of waste picker organizations in Buenos Aires, Dar es Salaam, Kisumu, Managua and São Paulo: a) Mapping grassroots innovations by waste picker organizations with a survey, followed by b) in-depth studies of innovations through interviews, observations and interactive workshops in each city/country. **Year 2:** a) Reports from each city/country are discussed in a workshop/seminar in Kisumu by scholars and waste picker organizations. b) A common report is published and scientific publications written. c) A study of global and regional waste picker networks is conducted through interviews and document analysis. d) Workshops in each city/country to diffuse results and prompt interventions in waste governance through waste picker organizations/ networks. **Year 3**: a) In-depth case study in Kisumu b) International research and waste pickers conference c) production and diffusion of final report and scientific publications.

Grassroots technologies for recycling, Buenos Aires

"Waste Governance"

Year 1: Preparation and implementation of case studies with waste picker organizations and government in Ulaanbaatar, Managua, Kisumu, ABC region São Paulo, Vancouver and Montreal focusing on governance arrangements, legislation and technology. Preparation of case study reports for each city. Establishment of the project governance structure and the Research Advisory Committee (see Figure). **Year 2**: Knowledge mobilization of research findings between the Stirring Committee, the Advisory Committee and partners from the *Recycling Networks* project. Implementation of photo voice projects with waste picker youth in each city. Production of video policy briefs for the region. **Year 3**: Knowledge mobilization and preparation of academic and non-academic publications and a video documentary. Preparation of an international conference to present and discuss the research.

Projects' participants and collaborating initiatives

Research team

Adalberto M. M. de Azevedo, Federal University of the ABC region, Brazil, adalberto.azevedo@ufabc.edu.br
Sebastián Carenzo, CONICET/Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, Argentina, sebastian.carenzo@unq.edu.ar
Charles Goodluck, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, goodluck@udbs.udsm.ac.tz
Jutta Gutberlet, University of Victoria, Canada, and Federal University of the ABC Region in São Paulo, Brazil, gutber@uvic.ca
Jaan-Henrik Kain, Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden, kain@chalmers.se
Michael O. Oloko, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology Kisumu, Kenya, moloko@jooust.ac.ke
Ambarish Pandey, Royal International University, Mongolia, ambarish@royalacademy.edu.mn
Jessica Pérez Reynosa, University of Central America, Nicaragua, jessicap@uca.edu.ni
Patrik Zapata, University of Gothenburg, Sweden, patrik.zapata@spa.gu.se
María José Zapata, University of Gothenburg, Sweden, mj.zapata@handels.gu.se

Recycling Networks:
http://gri.gu.se/english/research/managing-big-cities---recycling-networks
https://www.facebook.com/Recycling-networks-Grassroots-resilience-297035903792716/

Waste Governance:
http://pswm.uvic.ca