

# ACADEMY ON SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY (12<sup>th</sup> EDITION)

BUILDING BACK BETTER: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY IN A HUMAN-CENTRED AND PLANET-SENSITIVE RECOVERY

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*Elective 3: SSE, just transition to climate-neutral and circular economy: innovative ways of production and consumption* 











# WASTE PICKERS'COOPS

## Outline:

- About WIEGO
- Who are waste pickers
- Overview: Coops in LA.
- Case study Coops in Belo Horizonte city
- Coops dynamics and key issues

# Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing

- WIEGO is a global action-researchpolicy network that seeks to improve the status of the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy through:
  - increased organization and representation
  - improved statistics and research
  - more inclusive policy processes
  - more equitable trade, labor, urban planning, and social protection policies



# **Belo Horizonte**



## **Capital of Minas Gerais State**

A planned city located in the southeast of the country **Population:** 2,881,945 people (IBGE 2004)

First coop founded in 1990 and integrated as city partner in 1993 Today: 8 coops integrated



## Informal Workers in Source Segregation Scheme Mixed System

□ **Curbside** collection of recyclables in part of the Central and Southern Regions of the city.

•Recyclables collected by municipal trucks are taken to coops warehouses for sorting and further processes.





# Recycling containers in public areas.

- **156** Voluntary Delivery Sites (**435** recycling containers)
- Collection by municipal trucks; recyclables taken to coops warehouses

## **Informal Workers in Source Segregation Scheme**

## **Mixed System**

Coops collect recyclables from larger generators (industries etc) with their own motorised vehicles





 Two of the existing 8 coops collect reyclables in offices downtown using manual pushcarts

# Moving up the value chain collectively:

- REDESOL a network of 3 waste pickers cooperatives for bulk selling of recyclables.
- CATAUNIDOS a network for bulk selling of recyclables and plastic recycling of PET (production of pellets) formed by ASMARE from Belo Horizonte and 8 waste pickers' organizations from cities within the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonteinvolving around 500 waste pickers in total.

# Gender and Waste Project-Brazil

### Aims:

- ℵ To provide women with the tools to work towards equality in the workplace and their personal lives in order to strengthen their capacities and voices;
- ℵ To increase women's leadership roles in waste picker representative organizations; and within the National Waste Pickers Movement.
- ℵ To contribute to the economic, political and symbolic empowerment of women waste pickers.

### How

Learning gender workshops, popular and academic gender toolkits, coaching program on leadership, mapping of health risks, ergonomic workshops, gender strategic work plans





## **Coops &its Dynamics – Key Issues**

- Low business turnover one of the main obstacles for sustainability, with direct consequences on income of coop members (1,5 minumum salaries –MS- on average) when compared to non-organized WPs (3-4 MS).
- However, coop members enjoy indirect benefits which make up for this 'economic disadvantage', such as: better working conditions, support to schooling to children, housing programs, etc.

# **Coops &its Dynamics – Key Issues**

- Nature of activity as it is today: labour intensive work not capital intensive – so productivity depends on direct activities done by the worker (the more efficient his work be more value will be added to the product).
- Average 50% are women: work done at coops are generally more favourable to women as many coops provides child care and are keen on equity issues.
- Social function: by including women and other vulnerable groups coops have a social function in terms of poverty reduction. And this socially relevant work needs to be valued as a by-product.

## **Coops & its Dynamics – Key Issues**

Coops as environmental agents: many coops promote and/or take part in joint environmental campaigns.





ASMARE's Recycling fashion show

# Challenges

- Demands for efficiency in service provision represents, in some cases, a strain on some individual members.
- Some members have difficulty in complying with demands for discipline and work schedule
- As work becomes more complex (administrative skills required) this may be a strain to people with low educational level, which comprises the majority of the coops.

How to balance efficiency and its social functions is key to sustainability

# **Cooperative Movement – Main Achievements**

- Social solidarity economy principles: workers' identity; links of solidarity organized & non-organized workers; visibility and recognition
- Inclusion of pickers of recyclables: Brazil's national classification of occupation
- Approval of 2010 National Solid Waste Policy with recognition of workers
- Inclusive Extended Producers' Responsibility
- Gender & waste action plan

# Conclusions

- By giving incentives to organizations of waste pickers such as associations, cooperatives and unions their social and economical condition can be enhanced.
- These organizations can voice demands of WPs, represent their interests, fight for visibility and validity
- Data from Brazil shows that organized WPs enjoy better work and living conditions (Dias PhD thesis, 2010)

# **Thank You!**

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## Integrating Informal Workers into Selective Waste Collection: The Case of Belo Horizonte, Brazil

This Briefing Note expands on the genesis and key elements of the public policy focused on the integration of one category of informal waste workers, the categories (collectors of recyclubles) of Beih Mintonne, Brazi, sketched in the previous Briefing Note – No. 5.

#### Introduction

Informal workers in the solid waste sector represent a large and growing stakeholder group in most developing countries. In some cities their work is responsible for between 50 and 100 per cent of all waste activities. This means they make an important economic contribution to reducing the burden of waste management for which a city is responsible. Experience shows that informal workers often achieve higher recycling rates than formal recycling systems in many cities of the developing world (UN-Habitat 2010; Visser and Theron 2009). Higher recycling rates are associate with reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. However, most of these workers experience poor working conditions, their contribution is no acknowledged, and they are often harassed by members of the public and by the authorities.

A WEARS



#### ASMARE leader Dona Geralda and her husband were the pion in getting waste pickers organized in the city. Source: Lette Tr

In Some countries are now recognizing Brazil many cities have developed tile the contribution that these workers make to solid waste systems. In integrate waste pickers. This

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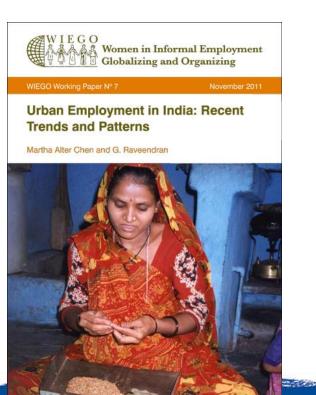


vendors to earn livelihoods, while at the same time reducing congestion and maritaining sandary conditions in public spaces and streets. This Breifing Mixed describes the process by which Inda's National Policy on Lifzon Street Vendors was developed the context of the policy, and the congoing story of its implementation.

In India, a national policy is essentially a statement of intent by the government and does not have the legal "teeth" that a law has.1 Rather, it is often an important first step toward the establishment of laws. Though its implementation since 2004 has been weak and uneven, India's Supreme Court has upheld the fundamental rights of street vendors in court cases over time, and in October 2010 called on the government to enact a law on street vending no later than June 2011. This Supreme Court judgment reinforced the need for state and local governments to implement binding laws based on the National Policy.



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