



UNEP Africa/ Africa Wildlife Foundation Charles R Wall Fellowship
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Adopting Waste Picking as a formal sector in Tanzania: A Policy Review.

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2022

Executive Summary

This advocacy brief addresses a social challenge gearing towards change in policy and implementation on the needs of waste pickers in Tanzania. The brief wishes to influence policy changes and adoption of the waste picking as a formal regulated economic activity. largely, placement of formal legal and socio-economic frameworks that enable waste pickers functions in the community as micro entrepreneurs solving the waste management crisis in Dar es Salaam. Dar es Salaam, is the focus area of the brief as it is a rapidly growing urban city in Tanzania.

Scope of the Problem

Waste recycling in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, is not spearheaded by any government, private or civil society institution but rather by the efforts of an informal army of self-employed, micro-entrepreneurial waste pickers. The United Republic of Tanzania legal framework does not house waste picking as a formal field nor provide policy guidance on its contribution and ways of implementation.

The informal network of waste pickers and unrecognized recycling transfer stations in Dar es Salaam provides a commendable environmental and waste management service to the city. With the growing adverse impacts of climate change, this informal sector can be a crucial pillar to smooth waste recycling, environmental sustainability and possibly zero waste in communities.

The present few independent studies in this informal sector indicate that Dar es Salaam, the largest city, is grooming rapid economic growth. Not to leave out its fastest-growing population (8th in the

world ranking) and Africa's third fastest-developing urban area.

However, this rapid growth has created in its wake a severe waste management crisis. The city generates some 4,260 tonnes of waste daily, of which only 30% is managed and dumped legally at the Pugu Kinyamwezi Dumpsite in its outskirts. The remaining 70% is either disposed of or illegally dumped into social infrastructural systems like waterways and fields. In addition, some per cent of the waste is also subjected to a typical behavior of burning that results in health and related social consequences. Recycling in Dar es Salaam by waste pickers is a microeconomic activity that should be promoted and explored as an opportunity whilst Tanzania seeks to clean up its cities and manage waste.

Overview Research

There is still very limited research that is geared towards the waste sector in Tanzania and even narrows down when it comes to waste workers in the subject. A 2015 study by the University of Dar es Salaam showed that an average of 65 waste pickers entered and exited identified informal recycling transfer stations daily to trade their waste materials while some 200-300 waste pickers entered and exited the Pugu Kinyamwezi city dumpsite daily to collect and trade waste materials. It is estimated that a combined total of 1,237 waste pickers are operational at both the fifteen identified informal recycling transfer stations and the one city dumpsite at Pugu Kinyamwezi. 1,267 waste pickers, each were able to collect, move and trade approximately twenty kilograms of recyclable waste per day and are estimated to exist in Dar es Salaam.

Case studies

Waste pickers organizing in other countries:

South Africa

<https://wastepickers.org.za/>

South Africa has more than 90 000 Waste Pickers. The South African Waste Pickers Association



(SAWPA), is an Organisation of more than 1000 registered waste pickers from all nine provinces of South Africa.

The organized movement started in 2007, and it was constituted in 2009 during the first national meeting of waste pickers in Africa. GroundWork has been a partnering organization of SAWPA since its inception. SAWPA members are based on waste dump sites and on the streets of cities and towns across the country.

They play a key role in environmental justice and mitigating climate change by collecting and selling waste as a livelihood strategy. They divert materials such as plastic, cardboard, paper and metals away from waste dumps and recycle them – thereby reducing GHG emissions from waste dumpsites and reducing reliability on virgin material.

Nigeria

<https://globalrec.org/organization/national-union-of-scrap-and-waste-workers-of-nigeria-nuswon/>

National Association of Scrap and Waste Workers of Nigeria (NASWON); an affiliate of The Federation of Informal Workers' Organizations of Nigeria (FIWON) is a platform that represent those at the base of the recycling industry whose source of livelihood depends on the collection, sorting and recycling of waste. These three activities are always interrelated reflecting the environmental implications of their work. NASWON engages governments at all levels, the private sector, local and international development agencies to promote knowledge driven initiatives to advance the socio-economic rights of scrap and waste workers.

Gaps in the waste sector:

- **Lack of data and research.**

The area is still under-researched and existing research is typically qualitative and case based. This therefore, leads to the absence of informing data that influences policy and decision making by leaders.

- **Funding mechanism.**

Lack of capital is a major hurdle to improve and expand operations or to become formalized by both the government and waste pickers themselves.

Legal evidence

- Formalisation, lack of official documents (certifications, permits). No recognition in the law and policy frameworks
- Terms related to waste pickers are not translated into Tanzania's legal frameworks or even communicated formally
- There is no definite government body mandated to the issues of waste pickers

Social evidence

- Informal schedules by waste pickers, i.e. waste day collection is haphazard and subject to fluctuation
- Rapid urbanization of Dar es Salaam. This then translates to an increase in the production of waste and the government is still struggling with current waste management issues due to low capacities

Policy Recommendations

- Recognizing the informal sector of waste pickers as a formal sector with guidance, policy and laws to govern it
- Developing working conditions and tools for waste pickers.
- integration of the private sector and waste picking for social entrepreneurial activities and maximization of business opportunities.
- Inclusion of waste pickers in the plastic transition governance discussions i.e. INC Global Plastic treaty meetings



Policy Brief Objectives

- Streamlining Green Jobs in Tanzania, this will encourage more young people under unemployment to venture into the waste sector as pickers or waste entrepreneurs or innovators in the sector
- Adding value to materials through technology and capitalization. This will lead to quicker attainment of the zero waste global goal, enabling our communities to be healthier, safer and sustainable.
- Growing linkages between social entrepreneurs and external investors, taking into account that investing on sustainable projects is number one currently on the global agenda.
- Preservation of the environment and ecosystems enabling it to supply the natural resources that our communities need.