Argentinean Context

- Waste-picking notorious after economic crisis
- Scavenging also linked to poor SWM practices
- Economic crisis in 2000 resulted in 100,000 waste picking families

- “Cartoneros” or “cardboard pickers” found in large cities:
  - 80,000 throughout Buenos Aires city, collecting up to 66 tpd
  - Average earning = US$4 per day
- Waste pickers found mainly in medium and small urban areas
  - Collecting at dumpsites
  - Mainly for own use
Scavenging (before crisis)

• Initially merely for survival
• Rejected by public opinion
• Faced considerable difficulties:
  – parasitic and other infectious diseases
  – Dangerous road safety conditions
  – Organized crime
  – Police and institutional repression
  – Social indifference
• Family size groups
• Lacked sorting equipment and facilities
• Low revenues due to use of intermediaries
• Inadequate market conditions for recycling (cheaper to import raw materials)
From scavenging to economic activity (2)

Recycling Cooperatives

• After crisis, exchange rate favored recycling
• Organized activities to increase revenues and credibility
  • The result = Cooperatives
  • Cooperatives seen as a legitimate way of living and have higher social acceptance
• Contribute to promotion of source separation
• Promotion of soup kitchens and vaccination programs
Successful experiences

**El Ceibo**
- Has 102 members (mostly women)
- Have a collection and sorting facility
- Have sales agreement using one intermediary only
- Average monthly member's earning US$ 200 – 275 *
- Export to China

* Police monthly salary US$ 250 - 300

• Coverage: 10,000 houses
• Operates in the "Palermo" area of Buenos Aires City

Successful experiences (2)

**Nuevo Rumbo**
- Established due to intermediaries’ commercial abuse (30%)
- Has 162 members, all using uniforms and safety clothes
- Have 1 sorting facility and 3 collection sites
- Recover around 700 tons per month
- Classifying 52 waste types
- Operates in the “Lomas de Zamora” area of Buenos Aires Province
- Coverage: 7,000 houses
- Average monthly member’s earning US$ 200
- Export to China
Successful experiences (3)

CEOS SOL (NGO, Salta)

• Operates in Salta city (NW of the country)
• Originally conceived to assist handicapped children
• Has 300 members (some are volunteers)
• Have 12 collection facilities and 1 sorting site
• Recover approximately 140 tons per month of waste (Paper/cardboard, glass, plastics) = 2% of city’s SW generation
• Prices: Paper US$0.05/kilo (transportation cost US$0.02/kilo), Cardboard US$0.07/kilo, waste plastic US$0.03/kilo (US$0.50/kilo if processed into pellets)
• Revenues used to provide basic health care services to children benefiting 31,000 families

WB’s Argentina SWM project

• To Improve overall SWM management in Argentina
• To Develop new environmentally safe and socially acceptable landfill practices
• To Promote and Develop Social Assistance Programs for waste pickers, building on successful experiences through:
  • training and education
  • legal and institutional support
  • provision of adequate equipment
• Social Assessment currently underway
**Conclusions**

- Social component important complement of a National SWM Strategy
- Support for new and existing cooperatives will increase waste pickers overall quality of life
- Argentina's current economic situation is favorable for recycling activities
- Not only collecting and sorting waste but also processing it will increase cooperative's revenues.
- Need to develop local markets to reduce transportation costs
- Composting could also be an economic feasible alternative in specific areas (Patagonia and Northern Argentina), more research is needed