



## “Social Aspects of Solid Waste Management: The experience in Argentina

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### 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



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## From scavenging to organized economic activity

### 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)





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## 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



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## 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



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## 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





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### 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



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### 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





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## 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