

Poverty–Environment– Gender Nexus in urban areas through the green and inclusive economy

by Pilar Roman, Poverty-Environment Initiative
Latin America and the Caribbean Programme

Population growth, rapid urbanization and current patterns of production and consumption have accelerated the rate of urban solid waste generation, this has become one of the biggest issues of Peru's main planning and management problems.

Currently, 7,000,000 tons of solid waste are generated in the country, half of which ends up in unplanned areas, impacting public and environmental health. It is estimated that 75% of these residues are re-usable.

In contrast, in Peru approximately 100,000 people rely on recycling as their income source, either formally (5%) or informal (95%). Recyclers are an economically and socially marginalized group, in part due to the lack of awareness of the value of their work to society. The profile of the group of recyclers is 66% of women, of whom 70% are between 30 and 59 years old, 46% are street recyclers, 49% spend between 21 and 40 hours a week, 20% are illiterate and 19% live below the poverty line. Most women recognize that their link to recycling is due to economic needs, since this is their main source of income.

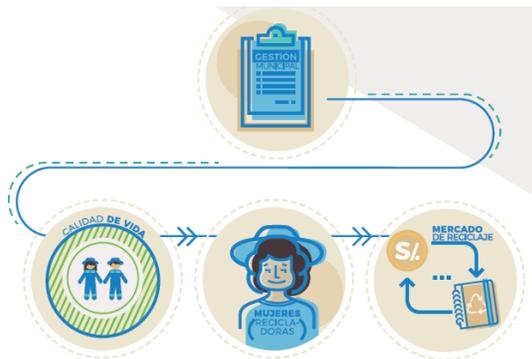


The work of these women is key in the reduction of waste in dumps, streets, canals and streams of water thus allowing recyclable waste to enter the production chain again and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and avoid spending on natural resources, such as energy, water and raw materials. Similarly, this activity reduces municipal waste transportation costs and extends the life of landfills. But, above all,

these women contribute to the generation of a culture of environmental care in the population.

Despite the economic, social and environmental benefits to which these women contribute, their daily work faces challenges that affect the quality of their work, their income and their recognition as valuable agents in support of municipal management. For example, poor sanitary conditions, insufficient personal protective equipment, instability in the volume of recycling and prices, inefficient collection routes and limited support in mobility and storage, among others. All of which leads them to extend their working hours to compensate for losses.

The Poverty Environment Initiative project in Peru incorporates a strong gender equality component, encompassing more than only specific actions for social and economic inclusion, through the promotion of a circular economy model that generates opportunities for the population in conditions of greater vulnerability, Through the formalization of green jobs with active articulation of the public and private sectors, and citizen involvement.



Changes have been reflected as a result of the incidence of Poverty Environment Initiative in the city of Arequipa, starting with the high participation of women recyclers in leadership activities. For example, 81% of Arequipa associations are led by women. Recycling is going from being seen as a survival strategy to having a business vision, generating added value to the products, involving private and public sector actors in the selective collection routes, and greater participation of the general public due to the increasing appreciation of its work. Progress has also been made in the formalization of employment conditions through associations and recycling cooperatives, which are also developing their business plans with the support of the project and the constant support of the municipality.

At the national level, the updating of the National Plan for the Comprehensive Management of Solid Waste and at the municipal level, alienating the municipal solid waste Plans to the Comprehensive Management of Solid Waste, have included approaches and indicators to guide the action and allocation of resources For solid waste management in a socially inclusive and sustainable way. Working synergistically with other sectors, such as the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Women and the Ministry of Labor, this plan contemplates a gradual formalization of recyclers, strengthening their capacities for their insertion in the competitive

recycling market And generating quality jobs, empowering women, at the level of self-esteem and economic, and generating conditions to ensure greater participation in decision-making about their livelihoods.



This threefold approach to poverty reduction, environmental quality and gender equality in the urban environment is proving to be a key factor in including vulnerable women and marginalization as key players in promoting changes in patterns of consumption and production In the transition to a green and inclusive economy.

Sustainable Development Goals

This type of integrated approach, with actions towards improving the environment, institutional strengthening, and improving the quality of life and social inclusion of vulnerable groups; Contributes to the implementation and achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals.

Sustainable Development Goal 1: Increase of recyclers' revenues due to the formalization of associations and the development of business plans

Sustainable Development Goal 5: Greater empowerment and resilience of the collective of recyclers thanks to the collaboration with the ministry of women and the support received regarding gender violence

Sustainable Development Goal 8: Increase of decent jobs through the formalization of associations in the public registry

Sustainable Development Goal 11: Reduction of pollution of the environment by entering the recycling chain metals, plastics, cartons, etc. and find a second useful life

Sustainable Goals 12: Substantially reduce the generation of waste through the implementation of the solid waste plans and the solid waste law

Sustainable Development Goal 16:

16.10 Improvement of the public information system on the management of solid waste due to the updating of the system and the disaggregation of data

Sustainable Development Goal 17:

17.14 Strengthening normative coherence by integrating social and environmental approaches into the solid waste law and solid waste plans at both national and subnational levels

