

From Theory to Action: Gender and Waste Recycling

A Toolkit for Teachers, Researchers and Practitioners
Book 2: Project Design, Tools and Recommendations



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**Coordinators of Rethinking
Gender and Waste Recycling:**
A Research-Action Project in
Minas Gerais

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From Theory to Action Toolkit

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

INSEA – Nenuca Institute for Sustainable Development (*Instituto Nenuca de Desenvolvimento Sustentável*)

MNCR – The National Movement of Waste Pickers (*Movimento Nacional de Catadores de Materiais Recicláveis*)

NEPEM-UFMG – The Women’s Studies Research Center (*Núcleo de Estudos e Pesquisa sobre a Mulher*) at the Federal University of Minas Gerais

WIEGO – Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing

Note On Word Choice

The millions of people worldwide who make a living collecting, sorting, recycling, and selling materials that someone else has thrown away are referred to by many different terms in different regions. These include scavengers, recyclers, reclaimers, ragpickers, bidders, and waste pickers. In some places they collect only recyclables and in cities with no formal collection of household waste they provide the only system of waste collection that there is.

At the First World Conference of Waste Pickers, held in Colombia in 2008, a provisional consensus was reached to use the generic term “waste picker” in English (but, in specific contexts, to use the term preferred by the local waste picking community) and avoid the term “scavenger” due to its derogatory meaning. While an international consensus is still to be reached amongst activists, waste specialists, membership-based organizations (MBOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the term waste pickers has been adopted and put into use by WIEGO as a useful generic term that suits the purposes of current global networking.

In this toolkit we use the term “waste picker” for the purpose of clarity and uniformity, regardless of context specificities.

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Thanks are due to Lucia Fernandez and Melanie Samson who served as critical reviewers of the first versions of the research-action project.

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Above all, a very special thank you is due to the women waste pickers from Minas Gerais who participated in the workshops and opened their lives and experiences to the team. We are deeply grateful for and inspired by their participation, interest and most importantly, their knowledge from the onset of the project.

Sonia Dias
WIEGO, Waste Specialist

Foreword

In February 2012, the Gender & Waste Project – a partnership between WIEGO, NEPEM-UFMG, MNCR, INSEA — was born. It started as a pilot project in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil, with the objective of raising awareness of the need for increasing the economic and political empowerment of women waste pickers throughout Latin America. The main focus of the project was to address gender inequality in waste picking activities, which could then be extended to the inequality faced in three areas of day-to-day life: at home, at work, and as leaders within their representative organizations. The project served not only to critically address these issues, but also to format workshops that specifically dealt with the initial stages of gender training. In other words, the project was designed to raise the women waste pickers' awareness of the complexities of gender relations and inequalities and the various spheres in which such dynamics play out. The project was broken down into a three-phase system with the following objectives in mind:

1. To provide women with the tools to work towards equality in the workplace and in their personal lives in order to strengthen their capacities and voices;
2. To increase women's leadership roles in waste picker representative organizations; and
3. To contribute to the economic empowerment of women waste pickers.

The idea for the Gender & Waste Project came from the Brazilian and Latin American women waste picker leaders' discussions with WIEGO. The project began taking shape after a participatory phase in 2011, involving women in small meetings and public debates (such as the Rio + 20's People's Summit, the Waste and Citizenship Festival), which were essential for the design of the pilot project. During these preparatory discussions, women raised the following issues:

- Marginalization during national waste picker movements' meetings;
- Current practice of more men participating in negotiations with federal government;
- Difficulties women face given the lesser recognition they receive for the way they express themselves compared to their male counterparts;
- Challenges caused by a combination of strenuous work and domestic responsibilities;
- Desire of women to have greater knowledge and education; and
- Struggles in tackling and discussing issues such as domestic violence, among others.

This participatory phase, guided by the principles of popular education, was meant to influence the design of the entire project based on the needs expressed by women waste pickers. These needs served to inform the second phase of the project, which resulted in several regional workshops with women waste pickers. Relying upon participatory methodology tools and a gender and feminist perspective, the participants reflected on women’s autonomy, stereotypical gender roles and the main constraints for attaining greater equality and recognition in the diverse areas of social interaction during the workshops. They also identified their practical and strategic needs for overcoming such obstacles.

Understanding the gender inequalities associated with waste picking will ultimately increase the efficiency of waste management, while encouraging mutual respect between men and women.

Based on the results of the workshops, phase three of the project included the development of a “popular toolkit” for waste pickers on gender issues, as well as this practitioners’ toolkit. For a look at the “popular Toolkit in English, see here: <http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/resources/files/Gender-Toolkit-EN-LR.pdf>. For the version in Spanish, see here: <http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/resources/files/mujeres-recicladores-baja.pdf>. For the version in Portuguese, see here: http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/resources/files/Waste_Gender_Toolkit_portuguese.pdf.

It is hoped that both toolkits will provide guidance for the fourth phase of the project, which is aimed at mainstreaming gender in the Latin American Network of Waste Pickers (RedLacre) and waste pickers networks and organizations elsewhere.



For WIEGO, empowerment refers to the process of change that gives working poor women – as individual workers and as members of worker organizations – the ability to access the resources they need while also gaining the ability to influence the wider policy, regulatory, and institutional environment.

Striving for women’s empowerment on all levels – economic, symbolic, and political – is crucial for ensuring mutual respect and for improving the lives of female and male waste pickers.

Sonia Dias
WIEGO, Waste Specialist

Preface

“Autonomy is knowing what you want. It’s about making decisions at home, of not being indecisive, deciding on what you really want”.
(Woman waste picker)

“Autonomy is a right we are fighting for every day”.
(Woman waste picker)

“It’s fighting for your objectives to be heard”.
(Woman waste picker)

It is with great pleasure that I present the results of the careful work carried out in the project “Rethinking Gender and Waste Recycling: A Research-Action Project in Minas Gerais” (WIEGO/NEPEM-UFGM/INSEA/MNCR).

This Gender and Waste Recycling Academic Toolkit can be seen as a valuable instrument for disseminating useful practices in the process of mainstreaming gender in social projects and, especially, in projects with workers from the waste recycling sector.

This Project was designed with the purpose of intervening in workers’ lives in a creative and original manner. Based on complex democratic and sociopolitical processes, it seeks to collectively work on public issues and agendas of intervention that impact the world of labour. In other words: the central axis of this pilot project of intervention, carried out in partnership with WIEGO, NEPEM-UFGM, INSEA, and MNCR, along with the other projects carried out by NEPEM, is based on the main objective of *mainstreaming¹ gender*. In yet another project, NEPEM/UFGM, known as a reference centre and institution for its contributions on gender and feminist perspective in Brazil, was interested in creating new frameworks for interpreting reality through a critical and feminist analysis that rethinks both the power relations among individuals and the possibilities for establishing alliances and shared strategies of action, though this time in the field of waste picking.

It is well known that gender relations are deeply unequal and vary in degree throughout the world, whether it is in day-to-day life or at work. The differentiated value placed on the work done by men in detriment of that carried out by women, for example, is still a harsh reality in many countries. We also know that these asymmetrical relations are based on traditional and stereotypical dimensions of the sexual division of labour and continue to organize

¹ The idea of mainstreaming gender has gained ground not only as a theoretical concept, but also as a policy strategy (Daly, 2005). Nonetheless, it is a contested concept in feminist theory and in development studies. For useful discussions and critiques of the concept see the special issues of Social Politics (2005) and The International Feminist Journal of Politics (2005). More specifically, see: Moser (2005); Daly (2005); Walby (2005).

our relationships. Even though it may be true that men and women have been participating in productive activities (sometimes even identical) in the labour market, it is important to recognize the segregations in determined occupations and the unacceptable inequalities in terms of salaries, for example. Despite women's massive entrance into the labour market, the gendered segregation of productive and reproductive activities is one of the key reasons for a series of inequalities, including though not limited to the pay gap. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) (1995), even with the attempts made at addressing gender inequalities, "it would take 475 years for parity to be achieved between men and women in top level managerial and administrative positions." Furthermore, attributing reproductive activities as a historically and socially acceptable "feminine" role has extended well beyond the private sphere. As a result, women deal with double and triple work shifts that are not only burdensome, but cut into their own leisure time and prevent them from participating in what would be opportunities for political participation.

On a larger scale, these embedded practices are present throughout the world. As Moraes and Gassen note (2004), recent UN data reveals that:

- Women are responsible for 2/3 of the work carried out in the world and receive 1/3 of the salaries;
- Women receive 1/10 of the world income;
- Women represent 2/3 of the world's illiterate population;
- Women own less than 1/100 of the world's property;
- Of the 1.3 billion living in poverty, 70 per cent are women.

With such firmly entrenched inequalities, feminist struggles have called attention to the need for mainstreaming gender in policies and social projects. This agenda calls for both transversal and intersectional actions and policies.

The mainstreaming of gender has constituted itself as a power and critical instrument for reforms, monitoring and evaluation of processes involved in public policymaking and in social projects (Walby, 2005). It has been able to stimulate and reorganize actions and practices throughout the world. In the academic field and in public policymaking, the mainstreaming of gender is based on the consciousness that our actions are influenced by traditional and stereotypical values regarding gender that need to be revisited, deconstructed, and reformulated, particularly when they are placed in check by other intersectional forms of oppression such as race, class, age, sexuality, etc. Our project of intervention, which gave rise to this toolkit, considered the centrality of these dimensions.

With many years of communitarian and participatory interventions, NEPEM/UFMG joined this partnership with the aforementioned organizations based on the encounter between academic militancy and the movements of women waste pickers. The dialogue that has taken place has reassured us that this is certainly a productive path towards the construction of more equal and just gender relations.



We hope this toolkit can provide insights for other experiences of this nature throughout the world.

Marlise Matos

Director of The Women's Studies
Research Center (NEPEM)

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Minas Gerais (UFMG)

1

Introduction



Recent studies have shown a large number of informal workers in developing countries make a living collecting, sorting, recycling, and selling valuable materials. In addition, many of these workers are women and children (Dias and Fernandez, 2013; Madsen, 2006; Hunt, 1996; Furedy, 1990).² Waste pickers face numerous challenges related to the very activity of handling waste, which is not always recognized for the environmental and economic benefits it may bring to a city. Women waste pickers also face the added burden of having to deal with the reproduction of hierarchical gender relations at home, in the workplace, and in their respective communities.

Despite the increased attention given to studies on waste picking and solid waste management, there is still a lack of understanding on the gender dynamics and sexual division of labour involved in waste picking activities. Adopting a gender and feminist approach to waste picking, therefore, recognizes the need to:

- address the multiple dimensions of subordination women are subject to on various fronts;
- discuss the ways men and women naturalize their social relations;
- focus on the threats and opportunities that men and women experience in their jobs;
- question how one of the ways the social division of labour manifests itself is through the sexual division of labour or the differentiation of job positions / roles according to gender;
- explore how the marginalization of waste pickers, and women waste pickers in particular, impedes access to greater economic independence;

² In India, for example, about 80 per cent of the waste pickers are women; while in Brazil, a small-scale study found that 56 per cent of the members of waste picker organizations are women (Dias and Fernandez, 2013). Another study conducted in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, shows that there has been an increase in the number of women who are employed in one of the associations - ASMARE. The data reveals that the percentage of women working in the association jumped from 18 per cent in 1993 to 55 per cent in 1998 (Dias, 2002). In Thailand, about 93 per cent of street sweepers in the Bangsue district of Bangkok, and 60 per cent of waste pickers at dumpsites, are women (Madsen, 2006).

- recognize how gender stereotypes are often employed as a means of discouraging women's participation, especially at more formal levels.

A deeper understanding of the gender dynamics involved in waste picking, often masked or under-theorized, ultimately seeks to provide women waste pickers with the tools necessary to enhance their role as economic and political actors.

The Rethinking Gender and Waste Recycling research-action pilot project was created in light of the need for further exploration of the gendered dimensions of waste picking, but also as a result of the expressed concerns and interests of women waste pickers in Brazil and in Latin America in dealing with gender relations.

This toolkit, which has been divided into three parts, was designed as one of the products of the research-action project. The toolkit aims to integrate a variety of different focuses and resources so that it can be used by multiple audiences.

In Book 1: Theoretical Considerations on Gender, Empowerment and Waste, the toolkit begins by exploring the very notions and theoretical concepts of women's empowerment that guided the discussions and activities of the exploratory workshops conducted in Minas Gerais, Brazil. Bridging the gaps in the literature between gender and waste recycling, it also focuses on specific gender dynamics in waste recycling given the social, cultural, economic, and political context of Latin America and, more specifically, Brazil. In this section, the toolkit provides links to other projects and guides that offer further insights into gender and recycling.

Once gender issues pertinent to waste recycling have been contextualized, Book 2: Project Design, Tools and Recommendations goes on to highlight our own experiences with the exploratory workshops with women waste pickers, thus expanding the scope of the target audience by hoping to include those interested in mainstreaming gender in waste recycling. This content will also include links to other resources and toolkits that have been published on fieldwork in gender and recycling.

Lastly, in Book 3: Resource Book, the toolkit integrates a variety of information and resources that are available on the subject matter. While these resources are far from being exhaustive, they seek to provide an extensive starting point for those interested in gender equality in recycling.

The toolkit is designed to be user-friendly and hopes to engage academics, researchers, and practitioners. Each section provides links to other sources that may be of interest. The toolkit can also be read and used according to the needs and interests of the public. We encourage you to make use of the materials and adapt them to the needs of your own context. Finally, we would like to hear back from those who have used this toolkit, sharing critical comments and the specific ways in which this toolkit proved useful.

2 From Theory to Action: Promoting Gender Awareness with Women Waste Pickers in Minas Gerais



2.1 General Overview of the Project

In this section, we will look at how our project sought to work with gender training tools as a means of challenging various gender differences already detected by the women. The activities conducted with women waste pickers from Minas Gerais were based on important tenets of Participatory Action Research (PAR). The project began by articulating the very demands and interests of the women waste pickers as early as 2012. Some group meetings were held in various public arenas throughout Brazil, such as Rio+20, a People’s Summit Radio Program (Women’s Broadcasting Network), the III National Meeting of Women Waste Pickers, and the Waste and Citizenship Festival. Other smaller meetings were carried out with key women waste picker leaders and with women waste pickers from Minas Gerais and Brazil.

Participatory Action Research and Feminist Research

Planning for participatory action research, as Moser (1993) notes, involves recognizing how the process is both political and technical, how it involves conflict, how it should be centred on horizontal forms of debate and how it must allow room for transformation. The Gender & Waste project is committed to principles of participatory action research with a feminist perspective.

Project’s theoretical guidelines

- Obtain knowledge through direct involvement of the community, in this case waste pickers. This notion is linked to a popular education approach advocated by Paulo Freire.³
- Recognize that knowledge is capable of raising consciousness regarding different forms of oppression. In this sense, the teacher or educator is not

Project’s practical guidelines

- Establish more reciprocal relations between researchers, experts, and waste pickers in all phases and activities.
- Avoid that local elites (professionals, academics, and powerful community members) control the design and implementation of the project (Mitlin, 2012; Kesby, 2005).

³ Popular education pedagogy is modeled on Paulo Freire’s vision of empowering the oppressed by shifting epistemological claims. Freire was concerned with the education of the poor and politically disempowered in Brazil and believed popular education was a collective effort where all participants learn from each other given their particular life experiences. In this sense, popular education dispels the idea of a hierarchy of knowledge between teacher and learner.

the only bearer of authority, truth, or knowledge. The construction of knowledge is in itself a political act.

- Prioritize women's situated experience as the starting point for building gender awareness. In this sense, it allows women to identify, from their own experiences and voices, the forces that invisibly or directly reinforce marginalized positions and identities.
- Understand that gender awareness can not only be tied to individual experiences, but also can be linked to broader forms of collective actions.
- Understand that gender awareness does not mean women will now be automatically capable of challenging all forms, levels, and structures of gender hierarchies and oppression. Rather, this process is an initial stage for reflecting on the ways gender inequalities shape these women waste pickers' lives. Furthermore, building gender awareness should be understood as part of long-term processes according to an individual's re-conceptualization of his/her position in a variety of roles and spaces.

- Consider the number of participants in each workshop to ensure participation of all and avoid reproducing hierarchies throughout activities.
- Establish women's only reflection and activity groups in the initial phases prior to the process of involving men in order to provide women with a safe space to voice their concerns.
- Consider how age, class, sexuality, religious beliefs, and race differences may lead to conflicts of opinions. Such conflicts are nonetheless important for women to identify how intersectional identities overlap and impact the ways they experience inequality.

For more on Participatory Action Research, Feminist Participatory Action Research and Freirean popular education, see these articles:

1. Brydon-Miller, M., D. Greenwood, & P. Maguire. 2003. "Why action research?" *Action Research* 1, No. 1, pp. 9–28.
2. Fals Borda, O. 2011. "Participatory (action) research in social theory: origins and challenges." In P. Reason & H. Bradbury (eds) *Handbook of action research: participative inquiry and practice*, pp. 27-37. England: London Sage.
3. Freire, P. 2005. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc.
4. Frisby, W., P. Maguire & C. Reid (2009) "The 'f' word has everything to do with it: How feminist theories inform action research." *Action research* 7, No. 1, pp. 13-29.

5. Gatenby, B.; Humphries, M. 2000. "Feminist participatory action research: Methodological and ethical issues." *Women's Studies International Forum* 23, No. 1, pp. 89-105.
6. Kesby, M. 2005. "Rethorizing Empowerment through Participation as a Performance in Space: Beyond Tyranny to Transformation." *Signs*, 30, No. 4, pp. 2037-2065.
7. Maguire, P. 2001. "Uneven Ground: Feminisms and Action Research." In P. Reason & H. Bradbury (eds) *Handbook of action research: participative inquiry and practice*, pp. 59-69. England: London Sage.
8. Mitlin, D. 2012. "From aid to empowerment." *Reflect and Act*. Accessed 6 June 2015 from <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G03415.pdf>.
9. Moser, C. 1993. *Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice and Training*. New York: Routledge.
10. Weiler, K. 1991. "Freire and Feminist Pedagogy of Difference." *Harvard Educational Review* 61, No. 4, pp. 449-475.

These meetings were essential for understanding the most pressing issues from the women waste pickers' perspective, as well as for gathering support from both men and women waste pickers. Overall, it was deemed to be more beneficial and representative of participatory guidelines to slowly and gradually encourage women waste pickers to speak about sensitive gender issues in smaller groups.

It is worth noting that this approach was made possible due to the fact that funding for this project came from WIEGO's core funding. Consequently, and importantly, this allowed the team to respect the women's pace and concentrate efforts on effectively working from the bottom up. Hence, it avoided a process driven by tight project deadlines.

The involvement of women waste pickers was an important step in promoting a more critical reflection on gender dynamics among the waste pickers. In 2013, NEPEM's staff and the project team conducted four exploratory workshops



Meeting with Women Waste Pickers in Belo Horizonte, May 2012. Photo: S. Dias



Rio+20, June 2012. Photo: S. Dias



*Rio+20 Radio Program, June 2012.
Photo: S. Dias*



III National Meeting of Women Waste Pickers. Photo: S. Dias



Waste and Citizenship Festival, October 2012. Photo: A. C. Ogando

"We need to learn more about women in waste picking".

"This was beneficial, sometimes we are embarrassed of expressing ourselves. Here we felt comfortable".



Group picture from workshop in Conselheiro Lafaiete, August 2013. Photo: A.C. Ogando

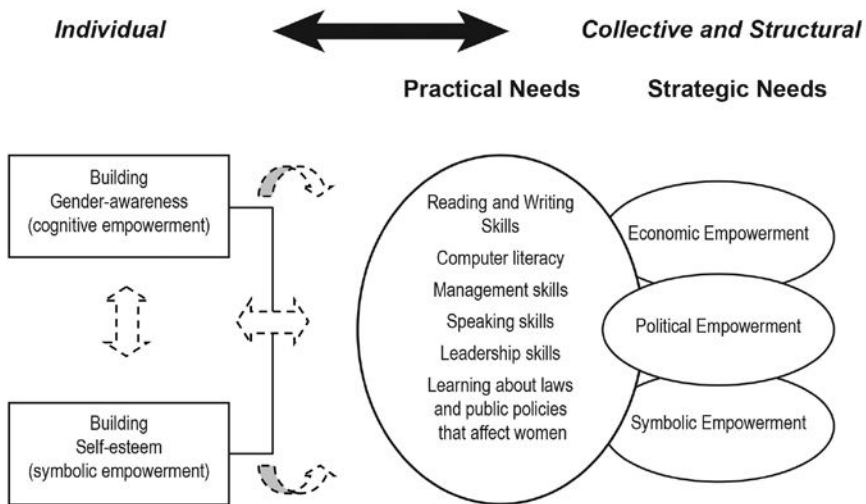
"There were so many new things ... I could see how important women are and how much we need to continue fighting".

representing four regions in Minas Gerais: the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte, João Monlevade, Conselheiro Lafaiete, and Itaúna. The workshops lasted for an entire day with groups ranging from 12 to 22 participants. In order to ensure the participation of all the women, we sought to work with smaller groups (Moser, 1993) and also to break the larger group into smaller reflection groups of 4-5 women during several activities.

Various cooperatives and associations were represented in each of the four workshops. The workshop invited two women waste pickers (one woman waste picker leader and one other woman associate) from approximately eight cooperatives in each of the four regions. In general, the participants were mostly middle-aged, but in some workshops there were younger and older women participating. The age difference did not seem to present obstacles when conducting the discussions as many could relate to similar issues either at the workplace or at their homes.

Gender & Waste Project's Understanding of Empowerment

Empowerment can take on various directions and have several dimensions. The Gender & Waste Project sought to bridge individual levels of empowerment to broader and more structural levels of empowerment that encompass economic, political, and symbolic empowerment. The figure below illustrates the connections between different forms of empowerment that were relevant in all stages of the project. It is important to also highlight how the process is not unidirectional, but rather an integrated and interconnected one, where different levels of empowerment can continuously impact different forms of empowerment. More particularly, the process reveals that building women's sense of self-worth must be tied to a clearer understanding of women's practical needs. Once practical needs are identified, women can collectively think of ways to begin challenging and confronting obstacles towards economic, political, and symbolic empowerment. For more, refer to Book 1 of this toolkit for definitions on economic, political and symbolic empowerment.



Source: Authors' own elaboration.⁴

⁴ For more on the project's discussion of empowerment, see Dias & Ogando (2015).

For a perspective of empowerment that ties into the project's perspective, see the following:

1. Kabeer, Naila. 1999. "Resources, agency, achievements: Reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment." *Development and change* 30.3, pp. 435-464.
2. Kabeer, Naila. 2003. *Gender Mainstreaming in Poverty Eradication and the Millennium Development Goals: A handbook for policy-makers and other stakeholders*. Commonwealth Secretariat.

The exploratory workshops left us with many important lessons. The participants expressed enthusiasm for, and satisfaction with, the opportunity to critically reflect on their role as women and waste pickers in society.

They were also able to positively reflect on many of their strengths in light of the struggles they continuously face as women. Broadly, these reflections can be summarized as follows:

- First, it was essential to end the workshops on a positive note and reinforce how many of these women overcame hardships as a result of their courage. By doing so, the workshop highlighted stories of women's agency that served as inspiration for other participants.
- Second, it was interesting to note how the women waste pickers called attention to the need to be more aware of their own roles in settings that reproduce gender inequalities in their day-to-day lives.
- Third, the women waste pickers seriously reflected on the need for greater solidarity among them. In the various workshops, women waste pickers commented that it would be important to have more women participating in events such as the exploratory workshops.

2.2 Activities for Workshops

Some recommendations

The following activities were chosen to represent the discussions that we had throughout the one-day workshop. Ideally, a two-day workshop would have given the team and women waste pickers more space to explore and reflect on a number of issues in a more detailed manner. However, given certain limitations regarding time and resources, the exploratory workshops worked within a one-day framework. In addition, each activity was designed to build upon the work done in the previous one. This strategy relied upon the strengthening of ties, comfort level, and trust among the participants and facilitators.

Pictures from the Itauna workshop held in Belo Horizonte, October, 2013. Photo: A. C. Ogando



"We have this fear not only of our husbands, but our brother or even our own son, [a fear of] men in general. If we as women do not look them in the eye, there is no way around it. We need to set our minds to this and end our fear".



"We need to open our minds, I'm going to be more decisive, be more courageous".

"I'm going to remember a lot of things said here and apply it to my personal life".



Pictures from the workshops in Conselheiro Lafaiete, August 2013 and the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte, May 2013. All photos on this page by A. C. Ogando



"We learned many new things; we need to pass this on to the other women who didn't participate".



In most of the tools used during the workshop, there were two facilitators guiding the discussion. However, other trained facilitators also intervened at key moments to stimulate discussion and/or diminish any rising tensions. In addition, there was always a team member in charge of reporting. When the larger group was broken into smaller groups, there was always a facilitator in each of the discussions. Thus it is advisable to work with a team of at least 4-5 facilitators.

We also recommend that these facilitators be familiar with social intervention work based on a feminist perspective, in addition to familiarity with the activities/tools, and with possible difficulties, distractions, and tensions that may arise. The facilitators should have an interest in working with gender and be comfortable with the issues being addressed. The facilitators have the responsibility of encouraging dialogue and respect. A team of two facilitators was considered to be the most appropriate in order to maintain the level of energy and interest throughout the long day of discussions, but also as a means of keeping the topics from straying off into other issues that were not necessarily in the scope of the activity. After each tool, the participants were asked to comment on that activity and what they felt they had learned. One team member was responsible for registering the discussions and dynamics of each activity. After the workshop, a report of the activities was drafted for analysis. Photographs were taken with the permission of all participants.

Most of the workshops were conducted in spaces that had enough room for at least 20-24 participants working together or in smaller groups. The participants were advised in advance of the location and time of the workshop. Various ice-breaking activities were also used throughout the workshop to maintain the concentration level of the participants. It is also important to prepare all the materials prior to the activities.

Before the workshop began, facilitators and participants agreed upon some ground rules in order to ensure the continuity of the activities (i.e. turning off cell phones, avoiding parallel conversations while someone is talking, leaving the room and activity, respecting opinions).

Key Aspects to Keep in Mind

- ✓ Consider that consensus-building should not suppress the very differences in women's experiences which enable new ways of thinking about gender.
- ✓ Consider tensions that may arise out of traditional viewpoints on gender relations.
- ✓ Implementing workshops should not be considered as a one-time, collective event. The workshops should serve as a starting point for all participants to formulate action plans to continue working on gender post-workshop.
- ✓ Engage key male leaders as supporters of gender discussions in key activities. Working on gender issues will ultimately create tensions and upset power balances in organizations and in the movement, so engaging male leaders in specific activities and stages of the project will help to mitigate this.
- ✓ Consider that some men and women may boycott the idea of gender training, which is why a strategic outline and plan of the project should be well established before the activities take place.

Tool #1

Ice Breaker

Objective:

Introduce each other and discuss expectations regarding the workshop

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: Note card or nametag and marker

During this activity, the group was broken into pairs so that each participant could present herself. The objective of the activity was for the participants to get to know each other, share their expectations of the workshop, and, importantly, call attention to the way they identify themselves. How they identify is essential as it shows whether or not the ways of presenting themselves are marked by gender (which would then lead into the next step in the intervention process). Once this short dialogue was finished, each participant had to introduce her partner to the entire group.

Observations: Oftentimes when presenting the partner to the group, one of the women would forget what the other participant had said. This was important as it highlighted the need for the participants to focus their listening and memory skills.



Ice breaker with waste pickers from Conselheiro Lafaeiete (L), August 2013, and the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte (R), May 2013. Photos: A. C. Ogando



Tool #2

Awareness of gender relations – Ping-pong Activity

Objective:

Discuss the meaning of autonomy and what it represents in their own lives

Time: 30 minutes**Materials:** Any kind of string

During this activity, the women were asked to form a circle and answer the following question: “What is autonomy?” Once a participant responded, she would throw the ball of thread to another participant, who would then answer the same question. After everyone participated, a second round of questioning was initiated where the group had to answer the following question: “What is autonomy for you?”

These questions brought up a variety of different answers that would later set up the discussions in the next activity. In this activity, the facilitators filled a crucial role by encouraging the participants to speak and by establishing links between some of the women’s remarks and general ideas about gender relations and women’s autonomy. The facilitators should also pay attention to those who still have not participated and to avoid repetitive answers. At the end of the activity, the facilitators should briefly summarize the general ideas and examples that were given throughout the activity.



Workshop in the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte, May 2013. Photos: A.Oliveira

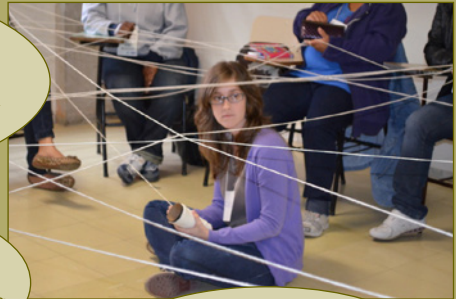
Many of the participants focused in on how autonomy should be exercised both at home and at work. Again, this reflected the initial idea of our method's design, which links back to the lived experiences of gender as discussed by the women. The answers varied from having economic autonomy to being free to make one's own decisions in life. Some of the answers showed how many of these women have, on some level, realized the negative effects of their gendered roles in different social settings.



Pictures from the workshops in Conselheiro Lafaiete, August 2013, and Itaúna, October 2013. Photos: A. C. Ogando

"I was able to survive without having to depend on a man ... [autonomy] is going without having to account for anything I do".

"It's positioning myself, knowing how to position myself at home with my kids, it's dealing with problems at home and at work".



"It's the right to work, to come and go as you please, it's being able to achieve things without depending on a man, defining my sexuality without".

"It's occupying more space in society, being represented in other areas".



"What we all need is to be in collective groups discussing autonomy, when we form a group, we can further advance our autonomy. We can get ideas on how to get more autonomy".

"It's speaking, it's [about] being heard and respected".

Tool #3

Autonomy Tree

Objective:

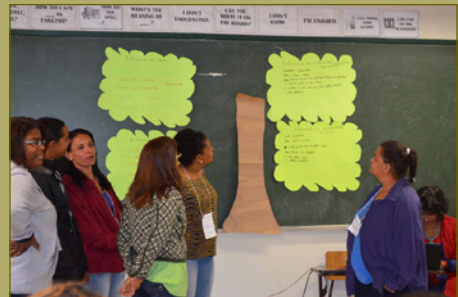
Discuss what autonomy means more comprehensively

Time: 1 hour

Materials: Cardboard, cut out tree trunk, cut out tree leaves and markers

During this activity, the group was broken into smaller groups of 4-5 participants and each group had to discuss one of the following topics: autonomy at home, autonomy over one's body/sexuality, autonomy in the movement and/or association, and economic autonomy. One of the team members also joined in on each of the groups. After the discussion, they listed some examples of autonomy on their cut out leaves. The activity ended with a presentation of these ideas to the entire group.

This activity was important for building upon the ideas that circulated in the previous activity. First, this activity was useful for making sure that everyone's voice was heard and opinion expressed. Second, taking time out to discuss autonomy in a more in-depth manner allowed room for challenging more socially ingrained views on gender relations. In some workshops, there was tension due to different perspectives on autonomy over one's body and sexuality, but even these moments had value as they allowed for a more broadened discussion on autonomy and women's roles in overcoming traditional viewpoints and beliefs that even women reproduce. Overall, interaction among the groups during the presentations was significant, and fulfilled the objective of creating an environment based on respect and solidarity.



Workshops in the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte (L), May 2013, and Itaúna (R), October 2013. Photos: A. C. Ogando and S. Dias

Tool #4

Discussing gender roles

Objective:

Reflection on roles attributed to men and women in society

Time: 1 hour

Materials: Cardboard, scissors, magazines, and markers

This activity opened the afternoon session. The group was broken into two groups. The women were asked to draw the body of a man and a woman and to find images or words from magazines that represented the roles attributed to each. This activity highlighted the traditional and stereotypical ways in which gender is represented and is internalized in daily life. This activity allowed us to evaluate the participating women's level of awareness regarding gender roles. Furthermore, it allowed us to note whether or not the women participants had started to incorporate a more critical perspective on traditional gender roles, given the discussions in the previous activities.

By having the women focus on several conflicting attributes assigned to gender roles, the facilitators can encourage a more critical reflection on how women have overcome various obstacles and stereotypes in contemporary society. This activity also revealed that, while women waste pickers do not seem to



*Workshops in Conselheiro Lafaiete, August 2013, and Itaúna, October 2013.
Photos: A. C. Ogando*



have problems doing activities that are typically designated as “male” in their cooperatives, men have not occupied the spaces typically designated as “feminine”. This was important for further discussions on the role men must take in order to guarantee greater gender equality. In other words, effective transformation would involve the cooperation and engagement of men. The activity was also interesting because, in some groups, women reflected on how their race also affected the ways in which they experience gender inequality.

After the small group discussions, all the participants came together to share their reflections. Once again, this generated a lot of discussion among the women. This activity proved to be successful given that the participants often made links to comments from previous activities. Furthermore, the group began reflecting more seriously on their own experiences on how to challenge and confront gender roles.



Workshops in Conselheiro Lafaiete, August 2013, and Itaúna, October 2013. Photos: A. C. Ogando

Closing Session

Evaluating the Workshop

Objective:

Reflection on the workshop and further discussion on women's practical needs

Time:

approximately 30 minutes

This was a wrap-up session where, in addition to evaluating the day's workshop, women were also encouraged to discuss the following points: difficulties/obstacles faced; abilities/knowledge required to confront these obstacles; changes within society as a whole and the movement of waste pickers in particular. The ensuing phases of the exploratory project were then presented to give all the women a comprehensive view of the project's development and of their role in bringing about changes towards gender equity.



Workshops in Conselheiro Lafaiete, August 2013, and Itaúna, October 2013. Photos: A. C. Ogando

2.3 General Findings

Each workshop had its own unique dynamic, which was reflected in the topics that seemed to be most recurrent for that group. The ideas presented in this section reflect some of the broader lessons learned from conducting the workshops, particularly in terms of the obstacles women faced at home, at work, and in the movement. The objective of this section is to present the perspectives of the women waste pickers on several issues that frequently came up in all of the workshops.

2.3.1 Gender Relations at Work

In all of the workshops, the women waste pickers proudly claimed that they do all types of activities in their cooperatives. Many concluded that, because they are capable of doing all kinds of activities, even those that demand more physical strength, this meant they had achieved greater equality. Despite this fact, they also acknowledged that women are frequently the ones who sort the materials, given that men think it a more feminine activity. In addition, there are fewer women who pick up materials in the streets or at establishments that generate a lot of waste. Nevertheless, there were some participants who mentioned they go along with the drivers of the cooperative or even drive themselves to pick up some materials. Thus, they recognized that there is a sexual division of labour when it comes to what men do in the cooperatives. In other words, women may be doing all kinds of activities, but the same is not true of the men.

This division is also found in decision-making and in the hierarchy of the movement as well. Interestingly enough, the participants claimed that there seem to be more women working in their cooperatives; however, in some workplaces, the members of the cooperatives' boards are usually men. There were some cases where women directed the cooperatives and thus played a central role on the decision-making boards. These women were very articulate and enjoyed their leadership positions. They took great pride in discussing stories of negotiations with local politicians and serving as examples for other women in the cooperatives. Nevertheless, the participants discussed that when women do participate, there are instances of men cutting them off or of not giving them enough space and respect when voicing their opinions.

Some women also expressed concern for the bullying and sexual harassment they experience at work. These examples encouraged women to think about strengthening their own relations among women in the cooperatives.

On a positive note, the women waste pickers claimed that the work space is often a safe environment for them. They feel the job they do offers them more flexibility than other informal and formal jobs. This enables them to dedicate themselves to either other informal jobs or their domestic responsibilities. On the other hand, all of this work is itself an obstacle for women to participate in other activities since they have no free time.

Important Observation:

During the discussions on stereotypical gender roles, it is fundamental to critically reflect on the activities and roles women take on in their lives. Many of the women waste pickers claimed their lives had greatly improved because they were now able to do many things once designated as only a man's job or activity. It is worth considering the problems of this view and how this adds to women's double or triple work shifts and illustrates how men are not changing their attitudes and beliefs regarding gender roles.

2.3.2 Gender Relations at Home

While many of the personal accounts illustrated an unequal division of labour at home, some participants claimed their partners do a fair share of domestic work. Often their partners started helping out once the women took drastic measures at home and stopped doing some of the domestic chores, such as cooking. The women who are able to divide the domestic work with their partners claim this is what enables them to participate more actively in the waste pickers movement.

However, the majority of the women deal with the opposite. Most of the women said while there is a more equal division among the partners in the family budget, most of the husbands do little or no work at all in the home. This is a reflection of a sexist society and culture that believes domestic responsibilities are a woman's natural ability. Some of the participants even claimed that their husbands do not like to wash dishes, cook, or clean because it makes them feel less manly. Women are also responsible for looking after the children and/or any relatives, as well as for taking care of their children's homework, or for discussing issues like sex. This highlights an important methodological principle: the presupposition that deconstructing gender roles is necessary in order for women to take on more leading roles in activism and public arenas, including social movements.

The overwhelming result of having to be responsible for most, if not all, of the domestic duties is the lack of any free time whatsoever for leisure activities. The women recognized the need for an equal division of domestic work, and also the need to create more room for engaging in dialogue with their spouses and children on the subject. Yet cultural barriers and their naturalizing effects on gender roles seem to limit the possibilities for more progressive change in the domestic sphere for many of these women.

2.3.3 Gender Violence

Gender violence against women was one of the most recurrent themes in all of the workshops. It is important to note that the workshops anticipated the

theme, yet did not want to focus particularly on it given its gravity and the need for further training of the staff. Nevertheless, the stories and experiences of gender violence were significant and, in many ways, one of the central elements for establishing solidarity among the women participants. Many of the women in the group who had experienced gender violence were careful to emphasize the fact that it often goes beyond just physical violence. In this sense, the participants emphasized the negative effects of both psychological and sexual violence in their households not only by their husbands, but also their fathers, brothers, or other male figures. Expanding the definition of violence allowed women to publicly voice their experiences, as well as their own particular ways of overcoming such violence.

Leaving violent relationships is never easy, even though recent public policies, such as the Maria da Penha Law, have been enacted.⁵

For information on Lei Maria da Penha, see these articles:

1. Spieler, Paula. 2011. "The Maria da Penha Case and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights: Contributions to the Debate on Domestic Violence Against Women in Brazil." *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 18, No. 1, pp. 121-143.
2. Roure, Jodie G. 2009. "Domestic Violence in Brazil: Examining Obstacles and Approaches to Promote Legislative Reform." *Columbia Human Rights Law Review*, 41, p. 67- 97.
3. Kiss, Ligia, D'Oliveira, Ana Flavia; Zimmerman, Cathy; Heise, Lori; Schraiber, Lilia Blima; and Watts, Charlotte. 2012. "Brazilian policy responses to violence against women: government strategy and the help-seeking behaviors of women who experience violence." *Health and Human Rights: An International Journal* 13, No. 1.

Some of the women pointed out the importance of knowing what laws can protect them. Yet they highlighted the difficulties they face when using the

⁵ The Maria da Penha Law is a federal law enacted in 2006 by President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva which sought to reduce the high rates of domestic violence in Brazil. The law changes the punishment for perpetrators. It states that aggressors should no longer be punished with alternative sentences, increases the sentences, and offers a variety of measures for removing the abuser from the home.

It is named after Maria da Penha Maia, who suffered abuse at the hands of her ex-husband, including two attempted homicides causing her to become paraplegic. Given the long wait to have her ex-husband condemned, Penha Maia, along with the Center for Justice and International Law and the Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights, took her case to the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights, which found Brazil responsible for negligence and omission in the case of domestic violence against women. Today, Maria da Penha is a well-known advocate of women's rights in Brazil.

For more information on Penha's story, see: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2011/8/maria-da-penha-law-a-name-that-changed-society>.

law. Many claimed that police officers and authority figures are limited in how much protection they can offer or, in some circumstances, may even suggest that women stay in these relationships to protect the family. Some women told stories about how they lived in abusive relationships for many years as a result of the death threats they receive, which would put not only their own lives at risk, but also the lives of their children and even relatives. The stories of the women who have overcome these situations served to highlight women's agency despite experiences of abuse.

One of the most positive outcomes of such stories was the fact that many women have been influenced by such discussions and the courage of their colleagues. Some women even claimed to have left abusive relationships after participating in the preparatory meetings held in May 2012 prior to the workshops. Many of the participants requested that women waste pickers have access to such examples and stories by suggesting the project should publish short stories on women's empowerment particularly when facing violence and other issues.

2.3.4 Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Discussions on sexuality brought up two interesting topics. First, the women waste pickers said they have had to confront their own stereotypes regarding LGBTQIA (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex, and asexual) workers in their cooperatives. Many have changed their attitudes after some discussions were held in the cooperatives as to how LGBTQIA workers were being treated. A lesbian waste picker claimed she was unable to use the female bathroom when she started working at the cooperative, but after a group discussion, she was no longer discriminated against. Some of the women in the group stressed that they would not discriminate against others, particularly given their own experiences of being marginalized, but when dealing with LGBTQIA workers, they realized they were reproducing discriminatory behaviour. According to the participants, the workers in many cooperatives have learned to respect such differences.

Second, the women seemed to enjoy discussing their own sexuality and desires. Such discussions also brought up perceptions on how women should behave and dress in society that reflected more patriarchal and conservative stances. In these cases, it was important to question why certain moralist viewpoints have such a stronghold in Brazilian society today. The tension these questions brought up was essential as it helped begin the process of breaking down the stereotypes of how women function and what their place in society is, as well as reflected on women's autonomy and control over their bodies. As a result, women reinforced the fact that women should be respected and protected from violence independent of the clothes she wears, for example. In this sense, the participants agreed that women should not be objectified in society, despite being able to provide extensive examples of objectification in Brazilian society.

2.3.5 Race

Discussions on race appeared tangentially in the workshops. On a few occasions, class and race were pointed out as identity markers that intensify the discrimination and marginalization of waste pickers in general. In one workshop, during the discussion on gender roles, a participant gave an extensive testimony on how slavery and racial discrimination can be found in many areas of contemporary life and waste picking. In another workshop, a black woman who is currently dating a younger white man said interracial dating still shocks a society that claims to live in a racial democracy.

2.3.6 Gender Relations in the Movement

There are at least three general findings with regard to gender relations within the movement. First, the women emphasized how they would like more women from the movement to participate in workshops and activities such as the one being conducted on gender. Second, they emphasized the need for all workers to participate more in meetings held at the local, state, and federal levels of government. In this sense, there was a demand for broader participation from the movement, and not just from the same few workers who tend to be the ones representing the movement. Third, and associated with the second finding, is the demand for more transparency and access to information. Many of the workers claimed they are not aware of all the decisions and would like to learn more about what is happening. On the other hand, some participants also stated that waste pickers have to make the time and express their interest in learning more about what is going on in the movement. In general, the women agreed that there should be more joint efforts for women to collectively participate in, both in their cooperatives and in the national movement. Finally, in some of the workshops, women expressed their desire to have a women's forum within the national movement of waste pickers (MNCR).

In order to do so, they need to strengthen their solidarity, as well as their self-esteem. Some women also stated they would not so easily accept all the decisions made by the male waste pickers. The key to participating is through more information, including on the laws related to waste picking, more collective efforts among women, and more skills so that women can be respected in such arenas.

2.3.7 Economic Autonomy

Aside from recognizing the importance of being economically independent from their families and/or husbands, the women waste pickers also highlighted how women waste pickers should be respected for the knowledge they have regarding waste picking, the market, and even their family budget.

While economic autonomy is essential for giving women the freedom to make various decisions in their lives, the participants also recognized this can sometimes create certain tensions in the relationship if a woman earns more

than her partner. In addition, the women waste pickers noted that economic autonomy is not the only area in which women can be empowered; they are dealing with various structures and belief systems that create daily obstacles for gender equality that could also be challenged.

What we learned

- ✓ Beginning the workshops with a discussion on autonomy proved to be quite useful and successful as we noticed how the women took ownership of the concept and reflected more critically throughout the entire workshop on their own lives.
- ✓ Discussions on gender violence never succumbed to an emphasis on victimization. Rather, the group collectively reflected on these experiences and was capable of recognizing women's agency even in highly unfavourable circumstances.
- ✓ Stereotypical gender roles are hard to break, particularly those that are shared and reproduced not only by men, but also by women. The workshops strove to begin deconstructing attitudes and beliefs that reinforced traditional, conservative, and patriarchal gender roles, particularly those pertaining to sexuality.

What women need

- ✓ Women waste pickers need to support each other more, especially in decision-making processes.
- ✓ Women waste pickers need to work on creating women's groups within their cooperatives in order to discuss gender relations with other workers.
- ✓ Women want more access to information. They also want more training and courses that will help them strengthen their voices within the cooperatives and movements.
- ✓ Women need more daycare centres.

In terms of more capacity-building, training, and qualification, the women identified the following as interests:

1. They would like to establish women's reflection groups within the cooperatives and movement and/or have more spaces to reflect on the impact of gender differences on their lives within or outside of the movement. This extends to the idea that they would like to have a women's forum within the national movement.
2. They would like to participate in adult learning courses to finish their secondary education.

3. They would like literacy courses.
4. They would like to be more computer literate. This would include learning how to use certain programmes such as Excel and Power Point, and even learning how to navigate the Internet.
5. They would like to learn how to speak more effectively in public. Many are embarrassed or afraid of public speaking.
6. They would like to learn more about public policies and laws that directly affect them as women and waste pickers.
7. They would like to learn new languages since the movement is growing.

"This is our space; we are having this privilege of seeking our autonomy".



"We aren't making any money with this workshop but we're gaining knowledge. That's why participating is important".



Photos from the General Meeting with waste pickers from Brazil and Latin America for discussion on the Gender & Waste Project, April 2015. Photos: L. Mintz



Photos from the workshops in the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte, May 2013 and Itaiúna, October, 2013. Photos: A.C. Ogando and S.Dias

Follow-up Activities to Disseminate Updates and Information on the Gender Workshops

In keeping with the participatory nature of this process, there were several follow-up activities and products produced and disseminated among not only the women and men waste pickers, but also among partners around the world.

Photo News Report

In order to give the women waste pickers feedback on the process and phases of the project, as well as to keep them and others informed, a short photo report was produced and distributed.

Popular Toolkit

The popular toolkit was developed with the help and suggestions of women waste picker leaders. It was primarily based on the information from the workshop reports.

For more, see here:

<http://wiego.org/resources/women-waste-pickers-toolkit-low-resolution>

Additional Website Links

Information about the workshops and project were also posted on the GlobalRec website. For these posts, see here:

<http://globalrec.org/2013/05/28/mulheres-catadoras-de-minas-gerais-discutem-genero/>

<http://globalrec.org/2014/03/08/waste-and-gender-rethinking-relations-for-empowerment/>

For further updates and information on gender and waste picking, please see the following links to WIEGO's website:

- <http://wiego.org/wee/gender-waste-project>
- <http://wiego.org/informal-economy/waste-gender-rethinking-relations-empowerment>

2.3.8 General Outcomes and Impacts

- **Empowering women:** The workshops were useful in that they highlighted questions specifically related to waste picking. They also gave the women a first opportunity to understand the dimensions of gender inequality, in both public and private settings, in a more in-depth and critical manner. The women's understanding of the scope of gender inequality is intricately tied to the importance of reinforcing and developing their sense of autonomy.
- **Social and Cultural Impacts:** The workshops provided women with the space to share their stories of overcoming hardships throughout their lives, an exercise which increased their self-confidence and reinforced their self-esteem. It also increased their interest in having further discussions on gender relations with other co-workers and with their communities. Some women claimed to have left abusive relationships following the discussions in all phases of the project.

- **Impacts on the Movement:**

- o For the first time, a male dominated movement of waste pickers acknowledged the issue of gender, and also for the first time, the national movement of waste pickers in Brazil (MNCR) had a gender panel at their main event, Expatadores (with 2,000-3,000 participants), in 2013.
- o The women participants demonstrated their desire to form a permanent women’s forum within the Minas Gerais state chapter of the MNCR. In order to continue raising gender awareness, further work must be done in collaboration with movement leaders, NGOs and waste pickers across Latin America. During the feedback workshop in April 2015, men and women waste pickers from Brazil and Latin America, along with other partners, signaled an interest in gaining an understanding of the gender inequalities in different contexts across Latin America.

- **Indirect Contributions of Gender Discussions on the Movement:**

- o The state chapters of Brasília and São Paulo have held meetings of women waste pickers to discuss gender issues.

“This project gave us hope to take it to the base of our organizations. We need to make changes. If women continue to produce this sexist thought, we won’t change. We know it is a slow process. Women have to change. The government needs to help so we can fight for our own rights”.

(female waste picker and leader from Brasília, Brazil)



General Meeting with waste pickers from Brazil and Latin America to discuss the Gender & Waste Project, April 2015. Photos: L. Mintz

"We need to think of sexist thought amongst us. We need to stop victimization. I have been through terrible things, but I have overcome them. This is the moment to rethink this. We are not victims, we are recyclers, business women".

(female waste picker and leader from Venezuela)



"We [men] need to discipline ourselves and understand women's suffering".

(male waste picker leader, MNCR)



"This meeting has been very good in this sense of liberating me from my sexism".

(male waste picker from Minas Gerais, Brazil)



General Meeting with waste pickers from Brazil and Latin America to discuss the Gender & Waste Project, April 2015.

Photos: L. Mintz

- o Recently, a group of women waste picker leaders from different states challenged male leaders within the MNCR, demanding fair representation at the coordination level of the MNCR. They also wrote a letter to the President of Brazil – Dilma Rousseff – asking for a seat for women at the Interministerial Committee of Social Inclusion of Waste Pickers (CIISC: an inter-ministerial committee created by former President Lula to coordinate the integration of waste pickers within solid waste systems). The MNCR has a male waste picker as a representative on this committee, but the women waste pickers demanded gender representation. President Rousseff accepted the request and the women will now be equally represented on the committee.

During this meeting feedback event, both men and women waste pickers recognized the relevance of gender discussions for the sector and movement in their struggles for social justice.

As we have noted throughout this book, raising gender awareness is a slow process that involves respecting the waste pickers' pace and building alliances within the movement and with partners. It is also important for both men and women waste pickers to recognize how gender equality is closely linked with the sector and movement's struggles for social justice.

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About WIEGO: Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing is a global research-policy-action network that seeks to improve the status of the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy. WIEGO builds alliances with, and draws its membership from, three constituencies: membership-based organizations of informal workers, researchers and statisticians working on the informal economy, and professionals from development agencies interested in the informal economy. WIEGO pursues its objectives by helping to build and strengthen networks of informal worker organizations; undertaking policy analysis, statistical research and data analysis on the informal economy; providing policy advice and convening policy dialogues on the informal economy; and documenting and disseminating good practice in support of the informal workforce. For more information visit: www.wiego.org.

