



Urban Agenda Platform

The global platform for sharing progress, action and knowledge on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve sustainable urban development.

ReciVeci: Inclusive Recycling improvement through the connection between waste pickers and citizens

Region	Latin America and the Caribbean
Award Scheme	Dubai International Award
Themes	Local Economic Development Waste Management Youth & Livelihoods Environmental Resilience Financial Strategies
Start Year	2017
Sustainable Development Goals	Goal 1 - End poverty in all its forms everywhere Goal 8 - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable Goal 15 - Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Summary

ReciVeci is a citizen and volunteer initiative that started in 2015 in Quito, Ecuador. Its purpose is to generate a human bond between waste pickers and citizens and to increase the recovery of recyclable waste that is generated in the city through the implementation of numerous strategies.

Background and Objective

Before ReciVeci started, neighbours did not know how to segregate their recyclable material and what to do with it because Quito does not have a differentiated collection system. The population size is 12.000 inhabitants where waste pickers are all women who increased 3 times the amount of recyclable material recovered.

Actions and Implementation

ReciVeci has faced problems related to waste pickers organisation since they are a vulnerable group that has always been exposed in streets to violence and discrimination. At the beginning it was hard for them to trust ReciVeci volunteers; however, it was a matter of time and perseverance for them to believe in the project and get involved in the activities. Many actors have played an important role in ReciVeci. There has been participation from different sectors such academia with partnership between universities and ReciVeci to contribute with students as internships in ReciVeci's activities. Additionally, Quito's municipality has started to work with the group of waste pickers ReciVeci began the project in the first neighbourhood. They have provided waste pickers with appropriate safety equipment and given differentiated containers in some buildings in the pilot area where ReciVeci started its activities. ReciVeci has few tools such as their mobile app, web site and social network to communicate and educate people about inclusive recycling. Also, ReciVeci monitors the amount of recyclable material recovered by waste pickers of the pilot areas where the project has been implemented every fortnight.

Outcomes and Impacts

ReciVeci is a sustainable initiative since it includes social, cultural, environmental, institucional and financial components. Financial: ReciVeci's new business and management model will allow it to become a financially sustainable initiative that can obtain economic income from activities paid by local governments that need assessment in how to implement inclusive recycling projects. Also, ReciVeci can provide paid trainings to large groups in enterprises or institutions that need it. However, ReciVeci will remain its volunteering activities because we believe it is the heart of the project. Social and economic: ReciVeci promotes gender equity and social inclusion of waste pickers that are mostly women in Ecuador. Cultural: ReciVeci seeks to



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change people's behaviour towards waste generation and management to increase the amount of material that is recycled. Environmental: ReciVeci diverts the amount of material that would otherwise go to a landfill, preventing pollution in cities. Institutional: Quito already has few policy documents that start to mention waste pickers and inclusive recycling, however, it is still being a new topic that needs more people to get involved with. ReciVeci represents civil society participation in this type of processes in public policy that can make pressure to enforce inclusive recycling in Quito.

Gender and Social Inclusivity

The Best Practice transfer includes many actors that have transferred knowledge and skills to different groups. First, knowledge transfer between ReciVeci volunteers, citizens and waste pickers. Most of ReciVeci's staff and co-founder volunteers have expertise in waste management since they are professionals working in that area. Hence, their know-how has been transferred to other volunteers that have been part of the process. Also, their knowledge in organisation and association has been transferred to waste pickers who have worked informally and unorganised for years. Another transfer interaction is between waste pickers and neighbours since waste pickers teach, based on their experience, what type of material are recyclable and under what type of conditions. They know better than anyone else this experience. The resources involved in the transfers are mainly staff time. Volunteers have invested time in developing the project and transferring information and know-how. Hence, a group of volunteers developed the mobile app, web site and social networks that are ReciVeci's key tools. The impacts of these transfers are a community that is more sustainable and waste pickers more empowered of their job. An important lesson learnt is that it takes time to see real results with waste pickers and neighbours.

Innovative Initiative

There are few lessons that can be learned from in this process. First, waste pickers do not have the same behaviour in every area of a same city. Waste pickers dynamics is complex since they are not a legalised or formal sector of the productive chain in a recycling process. They are always exposed to violence and discrimination which makes it hard to make commitments with them in the long term. However, this can be reverted with patience and perseverance. Waste pickers start to trust with time and real tangible results in their life style or incomes. Second, it is important to include all the actors involved in recycling in order to make real changes. Civil Society, Academy, Municipality, formal and informal waste pickers, National government play an important role so it is important to maintain continuous dialogues with all these groups in order to succeed. Third, volunteering work requires a lot of commitment, many people come and go, not everyone has the same level of participation and commitment or time. This is why ReciVeci needs to become financially sustainable in order to have a paid staff group of people that will still develop the chore actions of the organisation. Volunteering will still be part of ReciVeci but the sustainability of the organisation can not rely on volunteering work only. Every lesson has been very important in improving the project, every volunteer has gained experience and expertise to make ReciVeci a sustainable project in the future.

Conclusion

ReciVeci is an independent and volunteering initiative; however, ReciVeci has maintained dialogues with the local municipality about waste pickers situation. The first group of waste pickers that worked in ReciVeci are now developing a project together with the municipality which shows the importance of multisectorial integration to develop a sustainable city. One of ReciVeci's projects for the future is to review plans, programs and laws that are related to waste pickers and inclusive recycling in order to compare, analyse and assess their real impact in the city. So far, ReciVeci has already found some inconsistencies in these tools that are managed by the local government so ReciVeci would like to contribute with the improvement of these tools in the future.