

Project Summary

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSION OF WOMAN RECYCLED WASTE COLLECTORS



Cochabamba, Bolivia

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I. INTRODUCTION

Considering the situation of marginalization of women in the Cochabamba society, it is necessary and urgent to take measures to promote integration, that includes integrated education and training in areas that allow them to generate income for their families (in most cases dysfunctional families), which contribute to both local and regional economy, as family unit.

The activity of collecting recyclable materials is significant and thriving as a non-traditional economic activity performed mostly by women. This project will create and support a program for women engaged in this activity to achieve their socio-economic inclusion, improve the conditions in which they do their work and improve their quality of life.



II. PROJECT SUMMARY

a. Technical

- Consolidation and equipment of a legally constituted Waste Pickers Association of recyclable waste, with future self-sustainability.
- Organization , equipment and training of 25 women and their families (150 people total) to form 25 productive units that integrate a Collectors Association and also engage the in the processing and sale of crafts made from recycled material.
- Development of educational materials (Power Point presentations and educational booklets) considering the following topics: organization, management and self-management, recycling, sanitation, health, processing and sale of crafts from recycled material.
- Conducting training workshops for 180 women in: organization, management and self-management, recycling, sanitation, health, processing and sale of crafts from recycled material.
- Participation in nine popular exhibits where they could sell products made by them.

b. Economic

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|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Required Funding | \$u\$ 18800 |
| Beneficiaries contribution | \$u\$ 3800 |
| Project Total | \$u\$ 22600 |

III. BACKGROUND

Bolivia is one of the poorest countries in Latin America, it has one of the largest indigenous population in South America and women experience an extreme form of social and economic exclusion. The changing labor demands have caused women to adapt and be more flexible, to work independently and receive minimum wages for hard labor and work. These women should fight against marginalization that comes with lack of basic rights.



Garbage collection is an informal activity without any educational or qualification requirement, allowing the poorest to find livelihood in this area. This activity is practically invisible to the state and the rest of the population. Both government and population do not know the value of this activity in the local economy as source of cheap raw materials, and environmental protection.

In Bolivia, there are approximately 30,000 garbage collectors. According to the SGAB (2008), over 80 % are women and most of them are seniors. Exposed to problems of cultural, linguistic and social exclusion adaptation most collectors are mainly migrants from the provinces of Cochabamba and highland areas.

The work of waste collection in which women are involved, is a disadvantageous activity, which does not give them security, recognition or protection. Despite being a job that allows them to generate the minimal income to survive, working conditions are high risk and low social status.

The demographic and family structure, such as the age of female family supporters, spouse not present, the condition of rural migration, low educational levels and employment in low occupational hierarchy, are factors that place the population of women collectors of recyclable waste in vulnerable situations and social disadvantage.

The very low educational levels of the population are an element that contributes to the intergenerational transmission of poverty. Children born in households where parents have access to low-income jobs, develop under unfavorable conditions of nutrition, health care and education. In adulthood repeated conditions replicating their parent's poverty situation.

IV. THE PROBLEM

One of the main problems in the city of Cochabamba and the country is gender inequality and poverty. This is due to the high rates of domestic violence, lack of access to productive resources, lack of access to education and inequality at work. For marginalized sectors, as in this case the waste collection sector these problems remain as the roots to chronic poverty.

The access to education, studies reveal that the educational level of women collectors is lower than men; uneducated women in the city reached 34%, the percentage of women who reached the middle and upper level of education is 7%, while the male is 22%. This data confirms the unequal access of women to education that in many cases is due to the cultural factors.

According to a UNPD report (2009), women from Cochabamba and throughout the country, especially the poorest, women carry the heavier loads of work, because of the additional responsibility of fulfilling domestic tasks at home, complicated by poor socioeconomic conditions.

Their entry into the labor market presents many problems faced by segregation. Therefore forced to concentrate in informal sector jobs, such as the collection and segregation of waste with lower wages than those paid to the men.



The employment of women in the activity, is governed by the conditions of poverty in their households, in addition to lack of education and training, therefore, these women have found in this work the means through which they can generate the necessary resources to meet their basic needs without meeting any requirement or qualifications(SGAB, 2008).



The conditions under which women develop the work of collecting in the streets or landfills are completely precarious; they are at risk of diseases of different kinds. Currently public policies that will improve their situation are non-existent.

Their poverty does not even allow them to purchase safety equipment. In some cases, they are affected by pneumonia and other respiratory illness, as most

work in the coldest hours of the day when looking for material on the street. There are also cases in which diseases that affect them are not determined, because they die before being diagnosed. The work of these people is not regulated and does not have a specific norm stating how to make this work in a safely manner.

The information collected on household income shows that scavengers of the city have an average monthly income of Bs. 717 (\$USD 103.91); this means that each member of the household has less than a dollar per day (Bs 5.6) which is insufficient to meet minimum food needs. The low level of income received by household members ratifies the condition that poverty affects this group, a situation that seems to have been a constant in their life.



From the perspective of gender differences between men and women, regardless of social group they belong to, women are discriminated against, being disadvantaged compared to their male peers they become visible.

A study by SGAB (2008) found that only 7% of women and 18% of men, both heads of households are scavengers in the city center that gives them a higher income of about 1000 Bs / month. On the other hand, the remaining collector's 35% woman and 23% men earn less than Bs 500 per month segregating the city center.

The feminization of poverty is thus confirmed, since most of the groups of scavengers are women, many of them also heads of household that in this high-risk activity endanger their health, and receive low labor and social hierarchy.

V. JUSTIFICATION

This project addresses the urgency of action to achieve a society based on equity, to contribute to the socio-economic integration of women collectors and to find alternatives that will improve quality of life.

This project supports, protects and defends their rights. In this manner, it will use appropriate methods and strategies for the Bolivian reality; will be executed by women, who, with good training and sustained support of FUNDARE, will have the ability to organize and achieve the consolidation of the Association of Women Collectors and Artisans (legally established). The Association will initially consisting of 25 productive units (collector women and their families, on average 5-6 people) equipped and trained.



Thanks to the support provided through the project, the Association will comprehensively become organized, have the technical and financial capacity to achieve self-management, and serve as a tool for women to fight for their rights. Currently, no women collectors associations that meet those characteristics in Cochabamba exist.

The material and cognitive support to be provided through the project, will allow women to make more effective and efficient work that will result in a significant increase in profits and an improvement in their quality of life.

Through the project, the women of the Association will no longer get recyclables directly from the K'ara K'ara dump or dumps in the city, risking their health. Instead the material obtained will come from previously classified schools, neighborhoods and condominiums that FUNDARE has already trained in proper waste management (training is currently developed thanks to the Ant educational program, conducted by the foundation).

Also worth mentioning that all efforts to promote the recycling of urban waste, as in the case of this initiative, will create jobs and improve the living conditions of women, but can also contribute greatly to the decrease environmental pollution from waste and also generate millions of economic resources to the country. It is estimated that the value of recyclables each person produces in Bolivia, is on average \$USD 6 per year. This means that 10 million Bolivians discard 60 million dollars each year; with proper separation, collection and sale, these resources can be recovered and reused.



VI. EXPECTED RESULTS

With the implementation of the project, it is expected to achieve the following results:

- A Collectors Association consolidated, equipped, legally constituted and capable of future self.
- 25 productive units of collectors and artisans that make up the Association, consisting of technical and integrally trained woman, organized and equipped to allow safe and efficient work.
- Educational material prepared considering the following topics: organization, management and self-management, recycling, handling, processing and sale of crafts from recycled materials, hygiene and health.
- 180 workshops and complete technical training conducted.
- Participation in nine popular exhibit fairs to sell products made by them.



As long-term project for replication at local and national level, we expect:

- To contribute to the integration of women collectors in the economic and social structure of the country.
- Contribute to the training of women collectors who are motivated to work and succeed, which have the technical and financial capacity to improve their quality of life and live in optimal conditions being sustainable over time.
- Contribute to a cleaner and garbage free city; mitigate negative impacts on the environment and health through coordination between actors in the recycling chain and the promotion of proper waste management.