

Plastic Pickers Operational Working Group

Member Profiles for Global Giving Campaign

The Plastic Pickers Operational Working Group (POW) is a network of organizations supporting the work of waste pickers in a number of countries. POW is raising funds to extend a lifeline to these communities and ward off further extreme hunger and disease by providing rations, soap, water, protective equipment, masks, and basic health treatments. Meridian Institute, a nonprofit that facilitates the POW, will assist these groups via rapid distribution of funds to our trusted partners. We are also assisting them in addressing longer-term needs of their organizations and constituents.

This document provides additional information on each of the organizations that are being supported by this campaign.

Chintan Environmental Research and Action Group

Location: India

URL: <https://www.chintan-india.org/>

Description: Chintan is a registered non-profit organization which works on waste and environmental justice issues that impact the Global South. Their thematic areas are circular economy, waste, air pollution and urban ecology. In everything they do, the poor, particularly women and children, take center stage. Chintan's model for change has several aspects.



- Their Voice for Waste program understands the challenges using participatory research as well as data from the ground to shape implementation of their projects.
- They have diverse partnerships to advocate for and enhance policy change.
- They implement projects that directly fight poverty and influence public opinion, which has enabled Chintan to build a constituency to support their vision.
- They build capacity in order to embed ideas of environmental justice and foster leadership and action. Across India, from workers' unions to government officials, they train people and curate exchanges of ideas that will deepen the understanding of these issues.

COVID-19 Response: The United Nations says even with the advent of COVID, handling waste is an essential service, without which we can all get more ill. Waste pickers do this for us in India. Delhi's

50,000 waste pickers need our support as they protect us. Donations can provide dry rations for a month and help families with basic rations and safety.

Mr. Green Africa

Location: Kenya

URL: <https://www.mrgreenafrica.com/>

Description: Mr. Green Africa is a Nairobi-based collecting, sorting and recycling company that produces high quality recycled plastics in and for East Africa, while achieving tangible social and environmental impacts. Its materials are fairly traded with a traceable social and environmental impact. Mr. Green Africa provides monetary incentives to marginalized waste pickers by offering premium prices for the plastics they collect. Mr. Green Africa believes in the importance of localized value chains with clear and long-term benefits from the sustainability angle. Therefore, they supply to a local and regional customer base, enabling them to achieve their circular economy goals.



COVID-19 Response: Mr. Green Africa is working to provide support for 500 loyal small suppliers during the government shutdown to help them maintain their quality of life. Mr. Green Africa will provide weekly payments to invest in the social, physical and mental well-being of waste pickers during COVID-19. They will utilize their loyalty program infrastructure to gather and track data on impacts.

Plastics for Change

Location: India

URL: <http://www.plasticsforchange.org/>

Description: PFC is a for profit, Fairtrade organization that brings a standardized recycling system to India's 1.5 million informal scrap pickers who sort more than 6,000 tons of plastic per day. PFC has developed a marketplace platform that streamlines the process for global brands and manufacturers to source consistent and certified high-quality recycled plastic from responsible supply chains. PFC material is currently the world's first fairly traded plastic (World Fair Trade Organization). The ISO certified scientific segregation process ensures the highest quality source stock in the industry and PFC is currently the only supplier from India that has EU certified food grade rPET. PFC has developed a franchise model to fortify recycling businesses that pay waste-pickers decent incomes, train them in techniques that boost



their incomes, and prevent the root cause of ocean plastic. Access to working capital is one of the biggest challenges of the informal waste economy, PFC's is working to develop a unique program of First Loss Default Guarantee to provide stakeholders access to credit through partnership with financial institutions.

COVID-19 Response: Covid-19 is having a devastating effect on vulnerable communities. The PFC team is working towards sustainable livelihoods and holistic social services for some of the world's poorest people working in the informal waste economy. They believe that a pandemic of this scale will have long term effects on people and their livelihoods. PFC has divided their work into 3 phases: Phase 1: Baseline & Emergency Relief; Phase 2: Securing livelihoods & Workplace Safety; Phase 3: Rehabilitation of the Communities. As of the end of April 2020 PFC's program has so far supported over 402 families in the coastal regions of Karnataka. They are also able to attract partners for long term interventions in the communities. They are aiming to reach 2500 families through this campaign.

First Mile dba WORK

Location: Haiti

URL: First Mile - <https://www.firstmilemade.com/> ; WORK - <https://www.dowork.org/latestnews/covid-19-response>

Separate, direct campaign on Global Giving-
<https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/firstmilecovid19response/>

Description: The First Mile, an initiative of Thread and WORK, supports waste collectors in Haiti, Honduras, and Taiwan to recycle plastic and earn a dignified income while diverting waste destined for oceans and landfills. These recycled materials are then sourced to First Mile Member brands to be processed into consumer products that deliver a social, environmental, and financial impact. The First Mile is housed within Thread, a certified Benefit Corporation with an expertise in developing and executing



product supply chains that are both human-centered and more profitable. Thread partners with its sister organization, WORK, a nonprofit with a mission to accompany the families they serve out of poverty through good, dignified jobs. Together, they work with multinational consumer products brand partners to map recycle material waste sheds all over the world, facilitate the economic and social connections necessary in each node of the supply chain to meet demands of collectors and brand partners; recommend programming that both increases the amount and quality of waste that can be diverted, improves livelihoods, and implements programing that ensures the social responsibility of the supply chains.

COVID-19 Response: First mile is working to provide access to recovery space that meets medical standards for collectors to use when symptoms arise. They are also educating the community on when isolation is necessary and supporting wages lost during isolation period. They are supporting access to tests, setting up transportation, providing access to quality care and follow through, and supporting some lost wages during the treatment period.

WIEGO

Location: Global network

URL: <https://www.wiego.org/>

Description: Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing & Organizing (WIEGO) is a network of 211 individual and institutional



members in over 40 countries dedicated to securing livelihoods for the working poor, especially women working in the informal economy. WIEGO keeps issues associated with the informal workers in front of policy and decision makers, builds capacity among informal worker organizations, expands the knowledge base thru a website and [publication series](#), and works to Influence policies at the local, national and international levels. The [WIEGO Team](#) consists of over 50 specialists based around the world. Only a small segment work full-time for WIEGO. Many also play important roles as teachers, researchers and consultants for other institutions. Members of WIEGO's Program Teams live and work in more than 12 countries, in the both the global South and North. This allows WIEGO to create and maintain strong partnerships and alliances in many regions

COVID-19 Response: WIEGO is calling on governments at all levels to partner with them on relief, recovery, and resilience efforts that are emerging from the grassroots during this time of unprecedented crisis. Accordingly, WIEGO will allocate their portion of the Global Giving funds to support other organizations in need in Latin America and Africa.

1. The National Waste Pickers Movement ([MNCR](#)) / Brazil: The MNCR was founded in June 2001 as a result of different waste pickers' struggles across the country. It currently represents one million waste pickers in Brazil. The movement's main principle is the self-management and organization of waste pickers through organic base organizations. It has regional committees representing waste pickers who belong to second-level networks of cooperatives, such as Cataunidos and Redesol (state of Minas Gerais), and Catasampa (Sao Paulo state) to name a few. The MNCR has been a powerful ally of waste pickers in Latin America and the region. It has also been an example for waste picker movements in the world given the success it has historically had in making demands for inclusive solid waste management policies and laws both locally and nationally. In the recent years, the MNCR has also seen the closing of channels of dialogue with the national government, placing at risk the hard-won achievements related to the social and economic inclusion of waste pickers.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected many waste pickers who are no longer working due to the risks of handling waste. Funds raised via Global Giving would be used to send either food baskets or cash grants to MNCR associated coops across Brazil's 23 states.

2. African Reclaimers Organization ([ARO](#)) / South Africa: ARO is a Johannesburg based organization of informal reclaimers who collect recyclables from Johannesburg's streets and landfills. There are approximately 6,000 reclaimers in Johannesburg. They have struggled over the past two years in stop-start engagements between organized reclaimers and the City of Johannesburg over the recognition of their work.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, ARO has requested government support to designate them as essential workers but their request was denied. Through a solidarity campaign they have managed to distribute bags of basic food staples and soap to those living in informal settlements and particularly single mothers, the elderly, pregnant women and children but funds are running low.