



## ***CLEANING FROM THE BOTTOM UP: INTEGRATING THE INFORMAL WASTE COLLECTOR INTO THE WASTE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM***

### Key messages

- 80% of residents in the Ga-East Municipality believe the activities of Informal Waste Collectors ought to be legalized.
- The main reasons for legalization include: for identification and tax purposes, in order for the government to monitor their activities
- The Environmental Sanitation policy (2010) need to be amended to capture the needs of Informal Waste Collectors

### Introduction

- Municipal solid waste (MSW) management is currently a global concern, from generation to disposal (Abarca et al., 2013). Local government capacity to manage MSW in developing countries is deteriorating while waste generation is alarming. It is estimated that more than 30% of the local authority's budget is used in waste collection and disposal. Yet, even in the most efficient service delivery, only 50% to 70% of waste generated is collected (Abdel-shafy & Mansour, 2018).
- By this forecast, environmental sanitation and its complications such as indiscriminate dumping, waste collection, and disposal would significantly increase in low-income countries where Metropolitans/Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDA) find it challenging to manage MSW( Maung, 2019). Ghana's district authorities struggle with solid waste collection, transportation, treatment, and disposal. Among the number of factors contributing to this sad situation is the absence of final disposal sites.
- The Ga East Municipal Assembly generates 361 tons of solid waste yearly; out of this, only 261 tons is collected by the assembly through its contracted Private Waste Management Companies (Personal communication). The rest of the waste is left at the behest of the informal waste collectors. The informal waste workers play an essential role in the solid waste management system. However, their environmental and economic contributions to local governments, local communities, and value chains are either not fully recognized or appreciated by many governments particularly in developing countries .
- In Ghana, however, over a decade of advocacy for recognition of informal waste workers has began to catch the attention of the government. However the issue of how to integrate the informal sector into the formal solid waste management sector is not very clear.



## About the program

It is a 5-year program that seeks to increase the production of high-quality, integrated (inter- and transdisciplinary), solutions-oriented research on global sustainability by early career scientists in Africa. The knowledge will be used to address complex sustainability challenges in the region.

## Research Methodology

- Approach (Mixed Methods)
- Interviews/ Focus Group Discussions / workshops ( informal waste collectors, Ga-East Municipal Assembly to strategize how MMDAs can engage informal waste workers)
- Survey at the community level ( general public)
- Workshop for Civil Society Organizations
- Media engagement

## Partners



## Objectives

- Deepen the existing engagement with government and informal waste workers
- Broaden the scope of engagement to include a wider range of private sector and civil society actors.
- Broker communication and knowledge exchange across all actor groups and levels, to emerge with innovative models for waste management in the city

## Policy frameworks for solid waste management in Ghana

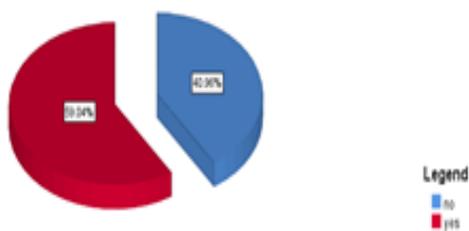
- National Environmental Sanitation Policy 2010
- Solid Waste Management Strategy - 2020
- The Local Government Act 936 has given Assemblies the authority to govern solid waste management by enacting bye-laws.

## Perspectives of Ga East Municipal Assembly

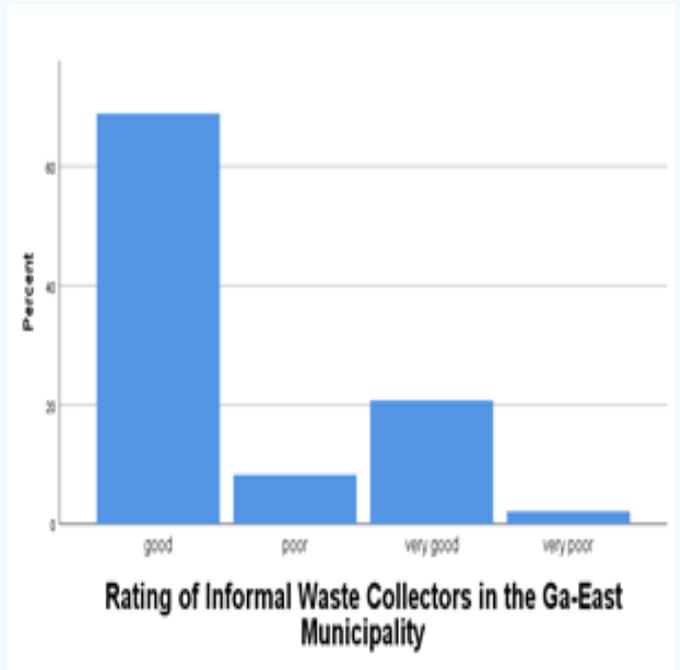
- No relationship existed between Municipal Assembly and informal waste workers
- Readiness to engage /organize the informal waste workers
- No data on informal waste workers in the municipality
- Major concerns
- The absence of regulatory system for the informal sector
- No Waste Disposal sites in the municipality
- Nuisances caused by the informal sector in the conduct of their work

### Households perception of the informal waste collection (IWC) sector

Percentage of residents that use Informal Waste Collectors



59% of residents patronize IWC services



Over 60% of users rate services as good



GEMA handing over certificate of registration documents



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## The challenges informal waste collectors face

- Security issues
- Absence of proper disposal sites is a major problem
- Absence of transfer stations
- Waste collected is often mixed with human excreta.
- Need to educate public on segregation
- MMDAs should support them with protective gears
- MMDAs should award them concessions in areas with bad roads

### Justification for recommendation

These recommendations will transform waste management by increasing Assembly efficiency in scrutinising private service operators services.

**Environment:** By ensuring that the unseemly sight and odour that come from choked drains, unsanitary refuse dumps, open defecation and filthy markets are a thing of the past. Proper solid waste management will ensure that the President's vision of making Accra the cleanest city in Africa is achieved. Additionally, it will help Ghana progress towards circular economies. Increased recycling saves energy, thereby reducing Ghana's dependency on fossil fuels, thus decreasing the emissions of harmful greenhouse gases and the resultant effect on climate change

**Health:** Poor solid waste management has significant health implications. It creates conditions conducive to spreading disease-causing organisms responsible for substantial health threats such as cholera and typhoid fever.

**Economic:** According to the world Bank WSP (2012), poor waste management costs Ghana GHC 420 million (1.6% of GDP) annually .

## What can policy and decision-makers do to integrate the informal waste collectors in the waste management system?

### 1. Recognition of activities of informal waste collectors

- MMDAs should recognize the activities of the informal waste collectors and appreciate their contribution to waste management.
- Integration of basic Occupational Health and Safety standards for the waste management and recycling sector through ongoing support to waste collectors cooperatives.
- Provision of essential personal protective equipment, training, and marketing resources to support integration and Inclusion of waste collectors in the waste management and recycling value chains.
- A conscious effort should be made to create a database of all players in the Informal sector.

### 2. Translate policy into action

- Segregation of waste at source should be introduced as this will help in separating the various waste and make collection easy
- Construction of waste transfer stations at vantage points within the district to enhance waste collection and transportation time

### References

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