

Gender responsive programs From inclusion to transformation

Guidance on how to mainstream gender in e-waste and plastic waste

Introduction

E-waste and plastic waste are large and growing waste streams with a great potential for resource extraction. In 2019 it was estimated that some 353 million metric tons (mt) of plastic¹ and about 53.6 mt of e-waste² were produced globally. Both waste streams have seen the growth of thriving informal market systems which try to maximize value from waste. In the absence of stringent local and national regulations to guide such activities, informal systems dominate the waste management sector, particularly in developing countries. For plastic waste, an estimated 50-100 per cent of the management sector is informal³ and the e-waste sector is no different.

The informal sector, with little investment or technological development, often applies rudimentary techniques to extract valuable resources. This might include open burning/melting, chemical extraction, grinding etc. – most of which is done without regard to health and safety⁴. Various studies from across the world demonstrate increased incidents of health impacts in people who work in and/or live near areas with high informal waste management activities. Moreover, workers in the informal sector are paid low wages for long hours of laborious work, often going without access to basic requirements such as toilets, food, water etc. Even in this highly strenuous and difficult work environment, the impacts on lives and livelihoods are not equitable.

¹ [OECD, 2022](#)

² [Global E-waste Monitor, 2020](#)

³ [Gender CC](#)

⁴ [University of Reading, 2018](#)

About this manual

The aim of this manual is to help guide programmatic interventions in e-waste and plastic waste management on effectively incorporating gender. It provides simple step-by-step guidance on designing, implementing and monitoring programs with a conscious gender lens along with examples from the sector.



Women participating in the plastic and e-waste management sector often face disproportionate bias and discrimination, with little-to-no representation, entrepreneurial, leadership and influential roles⁵. Evidence from across the world shows women mostly work at the lowest tiers of the waste management sector hierarchy. They also work under undue and often unjustified stereotypes that limit their participation, as well as facing greater health impacts through their role as mothers and caregivers. In this context, it is increasingly important to pay heed to the gendered experiences of the waste management sector and develop systems and policies that alleviate such impacts.

Both plastic and e-waste management sectors have seen greater involvement of programmatic efforts from multilateral agencies, particularly in developing countries. Such programs designed around waste management often provide the opportunity to mobilize resources for transformative impact in specific locations. Specifically, there is potential to leverage programs in having gender-centric positive outcomes – such as improved participation and experiences for women in the sector, greater opportunity for growth and development, and higher intangible impacts such as sense of safety, comfort, work-life balance, etc.

Mainstreaming of gender into programs is not new; however, it is often posed as a 'good-to-know' concept rather than an active element of program design, planning, implementation and monitoring. In this context, this guideline defines how gender can be more

effectively mainstreamed into programmatic efforts with the aim to improve the quality of life and experience of women working in the waste management sector. The following sections summarize specific points and forms of interventions throughout the program lifetime.

Gender responsive programs

Gender responsive programs put gender at the heart of the project design, planning, implementation and outcome. This is done by paying attention to distinctive gender needs, appreciating their perspectives, taking cognizance of the lived realities and understanding development differences amongst other things. In doing so, such programs not only deal with issues like gender inequality but create meaningful impressions and ensure long-term commitment in addressing the problem. Developing such programs provides the opportunity to bring about a transformative impact and achieve gender-centric positive outcomes such as:

- Improved participation of marginalized groups like women
- Greater agency among marginalized groups
- Improved work experience
- Protection against dangerous elements
- Increased financial security
- Greater opportunity for growth and development
- Higher intangible impact
- Higher sense of safety
- Greater comfort
- Work-life balance

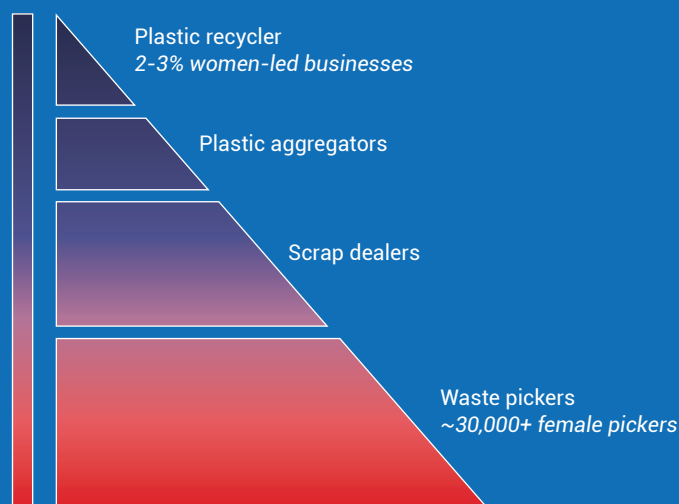
⁵ Based on stakeholder consultation with sector players and informal sector liaisons undertaken for the project with representatives of EU, Africa, South Asia and Global context.

Example of plastic waste management from Pune, India

- Recyclable plastic is collected by ragpickers/waste pickers who are predominately women working alone or with small children
- They are paid based on the market price for the recyclables collected only
- Only opportunity to scale is by procuring a cart or a vehicle – which most women feel they are not 'capable' of doing independently – and might thus involve their spouse

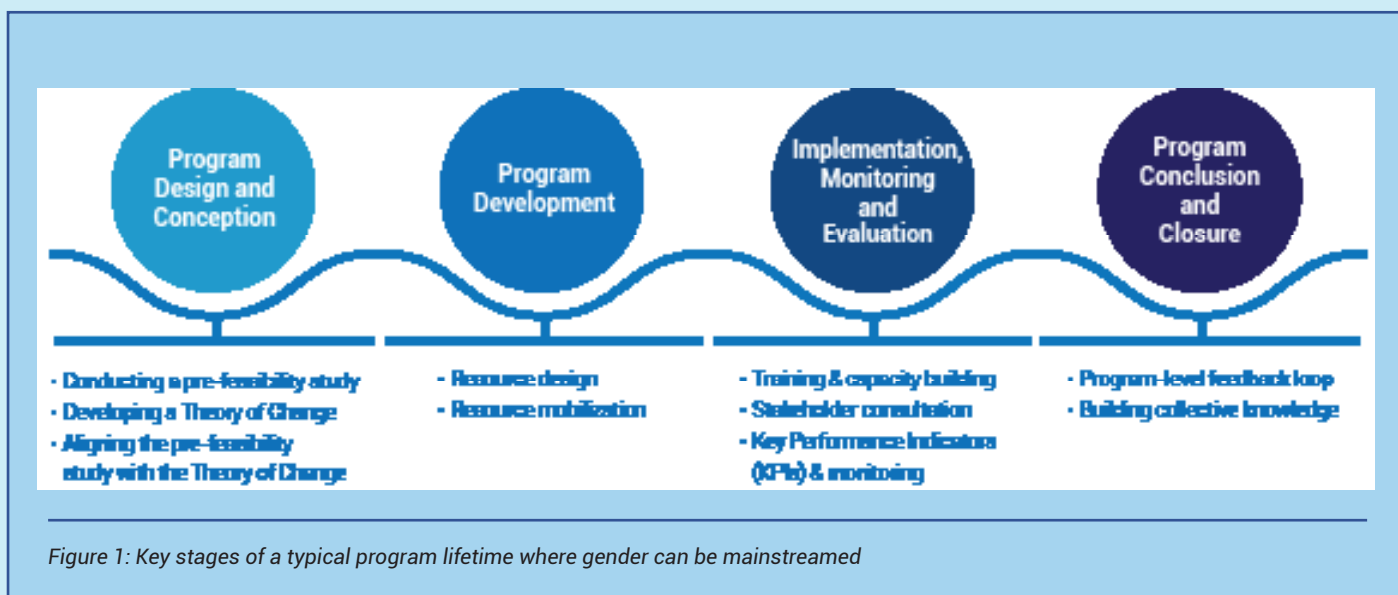
Based on on-ground assessment by SWaCH

Predominately male



Predominately female

Through the lifetime of a program, gender can and should be incorporated at various stages, starting from program conception and design all the way to closure. The illustration below summarizes the key steps in a program lifetime and the activities conducted under each.



A. Program design and conception stage

Incorporation of gender in waste management programs is not new. Various multilateral agencies require gender training and/or monitoring of gender-based indicators. However, for a truly transformative and inclusive program, the mainstreaming of gender must start much earlier – ideally at the design and conception stage itself. The following steps outline how this mainstreaming can be conducted.

1. Understanding socio-economic context – pre-feasibility study

Before a project can be designed and developed, it is important to understand the context within which it will be implemented. This helps in acknowledging the socio-cultural and economic context in which the program will be delivered and thus helps in identifying the biases, perspectives and norms.

A pre-feasibility study to discover required information about the existing situation is highly encouraged.

The pre-feasibility study should try and answer the following questions:

- In the area/region of implementation, what are the most vulnerable communities/axes of vulnerability?
- What are the perspectives/opinions on gender in implementation (in general), and the waste management sector in particular?
- What roles are usually occupied by women in the sector?
- What work has already been done around implementation (geographic area, waste management sector)?
- Has any gender-specific effort(s) been taken?
- Who are the key stakeholders in the area from a gender/vulnerable groups perspective? (This would include dedicated ministries/government agencies, not-for-profit organizations and institutions working with such groups, academic institutions that have worked closely in the context, international agencies/funders with current or recent programs, local champions/advocacy groups, unions etc.)

Various data collection techniques can be used at the pre-feasibility stage itself. Please see sections C.2 and C.3 for more information.

2. Defining a Theory of Change

Theory of Change (TOC) is an approach used to plan all the considerations that a project requires and how will they be incorporated in its implementation. It is used during the design stage to think critically about the project's intended outcomes, what could be the positive and negative contextual externalities and how could they enable or inhibit the achievement of the intended outcomes. This model helps in sharpening the implementation of the project while questioning and planning the activities that need to be undertaken throughout the lifecycle of the project. (See Figure 2 below). Theory of Change can be operationalized through different stages by charting out the steps taken at every stage –

- **Identification of goals/outcomes** (short, intermediate and long-term) through backward mapping from long-term goals to see what needs to be done at the early and intermediate stage to achieve the outcomes.
 - *At this stage, it would be pertinent to set gender-based or gender-disaggregated outcomes, wherever possible. It is highly encouraged to plan at least one dedicated social impact and needs assessment.*
- **Articulation of assumptions** of all kinds such as contextual conditions, environmental conditions, justified interlinkages between the short, intermediate, and long-term goals, commitment to the initiative and availability of resources etc.
 - *The information and knowledge obtained from the impact and needs assessment, or the pre-feasibility study must be applied to integrate the gender/social knowledge into the Theory of Change.*
- **Measurement of activities** through causal linkages to see how a change that needs to be brought in requires a change in the others⁶.
 - *Based on this, specific activities should be tailored for the TOC framework that impact the most vulnerable and marginalized groups including women.*
- **Development of indicators** to translate the outcomes into observable measures for evaluation of the project goals.
 - *While developing the indicators, gender-based or gender-disaggregated indicators must be included, wherever possible.*

Several studies that have adopted a gender approach to study how gender impacts the work, livelihood and health of women waste pickers in Latin America, Mexico, Brazil and India reveal the inequalities perpetrated by gender-blind policies.

⁶ A good Theory of Change should be plausible, doable, and testable (Connell, 1996). Some suggest that it should also have a fourth element which is 'meaningful' to all the stakeholders.

Theory of Change

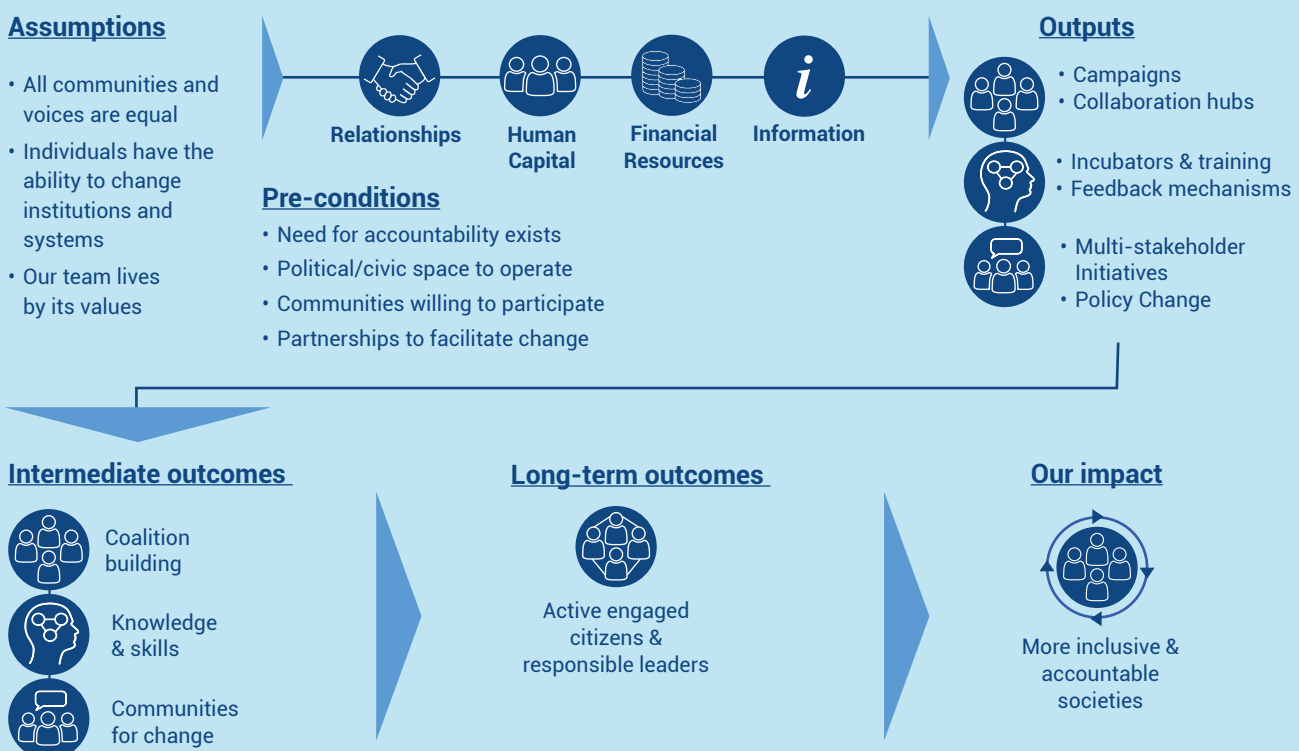


Figure 2: A TOC framework developed by the Accountability Lab

Theory of Change in action

IDinsight and The Incubation Network⁷ joined forces to work towards improved and inclusive waste management and recycling systems across South and Southeast Asia.

- The two organizations developed the TOC together to map out the vision for change such as increasing informal workers' access to dignified work in waste management facilities particularly for vulnerable groups (See Figure 3).
- The TOC included network membership, project sourcing and design, support facility, project facility and knowledge management.

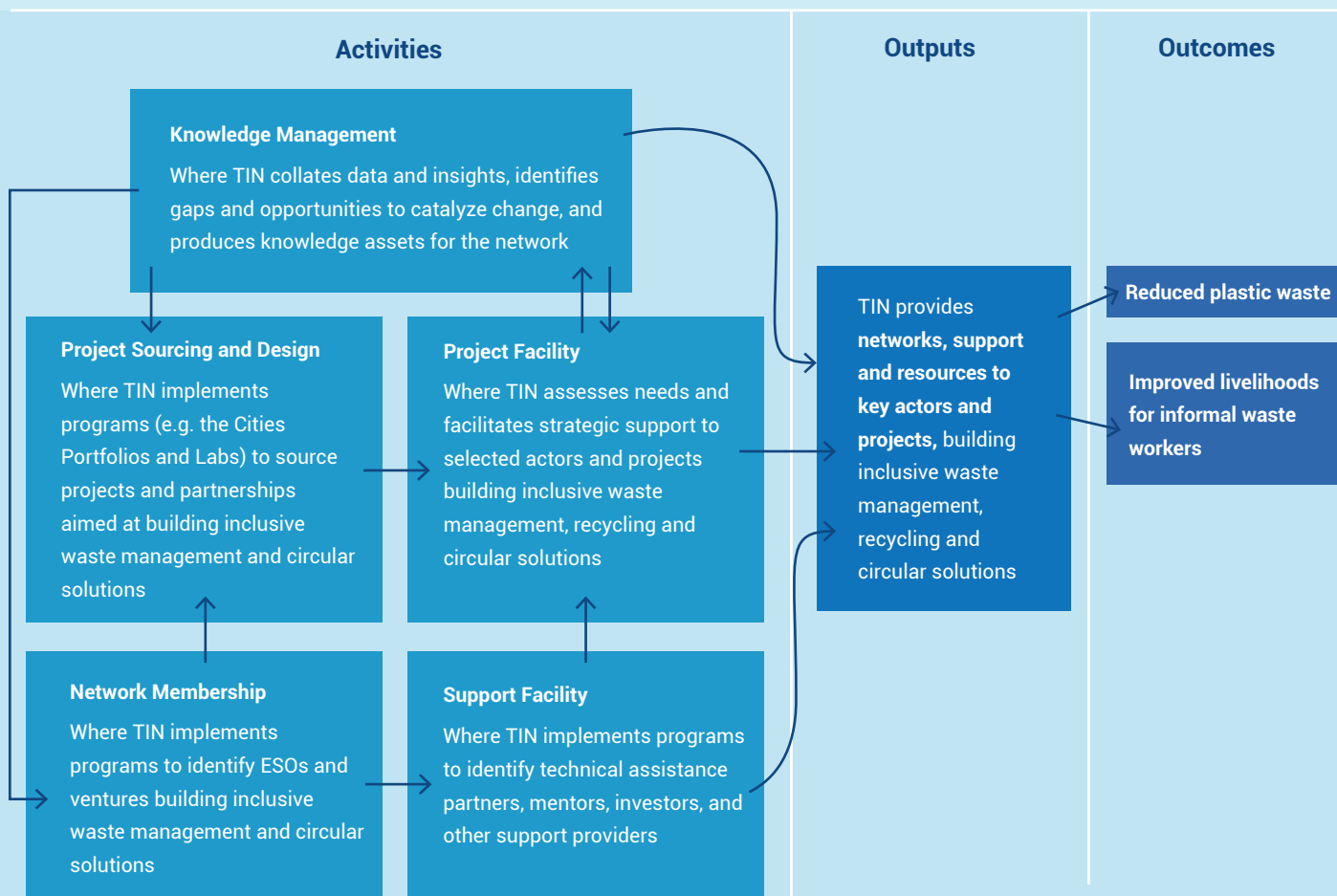


Figure 3: TOC developed by IDinsight and The Incubation Network

3. Validate incorporation of gender into the Theory of Change

A TOC can be a key resource in helping conceptualize the design and implementation of a program. It can be used as the basis for developing the program methodology and implementation.

Before the program design is finalized and sent for approval, the following questions could be asked to ensure that gender is well-incorporated into the design:

- How does the aim and vision of the program impact women and other socio-economically vulnerable groups?
- Is gender adequately represented in the program outcomes or Theory of Change?
- Has gender been considered a part of the program design? This includes having an active gender-based section as a part of the entire program plan.
- What is the specific gender-based outputs and outcomes expected from this program?

B. Program development

Within the ambit of any program, effective planning, allocation and mobilization of resources is crucial to its success. In this context, it is important to consider how consciously the gender aspect is being considered at this stage, outside of an academic or informative interest. The following steps can be kept in mind to ensure adequate gender-representation at this stage.

1. Resource allocation

Resource allocation is a key aspect of ensuring a program is intentional in its design. It is particularly important to ensure the support, interest, and alignment of the beneficiaries with the program – and thus critical to its success.

- There should be **monetary allocations** towards outputs or deliverables that directly impact existing gendered notions. These should be specified and planned in **at the beginning of the program** to ensure that indirect outcomes are not mapped onto the funds.
- **Program staffing should provide for adequate representation** of its beneficiaries. This would include aligning with the right grassroots organizations, leaders, institutions, collectives etc. as an intentional element of its design.
- **Expert positions** should explicitly invite applications from specific gender and vulnerable groups, having gender-specific roles and gender-responsive activities in the terms of reference etc.
- **Sensitization** of the organization and local staff on gender issues in the context of waste management through orientation sessions, workshops and preliminary assessments are also necessary.
- It is also important to check for the **gender sensitive policies**, assigned gender-roles, gender-balance at the governance level and **awareness of gender inequalities** within the partner organizations and their staff as well.

Having a gender expert

- Can help design programs that are intentional in incorporating gender aspects
- Can help develop gender specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and monitoring protocol
- Can act as a program conduit to help reach women working in plastic and e-waste – who are often highly marginalized and thus might be wary of the program
 - In terms of data collection, consultation and feedback
- Can help ensure adequate training programs are designed and implemented (may also be able to implement the program)
- Can actively track nuanced experiences of women and other marginalized groups and develop a gender-oriented program narrative

The local connection is particularly important to ensure support, interest and alignment of the beneficiaries with the program. Expertise/background in gender and gender-waste management intersection should be encouraged as a part of the project team staffing.

2. Resource mobilization

Gender-responsive budgeting⁸ is an important tool to incorporate into any program. It helps not only to plan gender into the program outputs and deliverables, but also ensures that gender remains an important aspect of consideration every financial year. Gender-based budgeting can also help connect the outcomes of a program to the efforts undertaken, thus providing evidence of impact that can be studied and assessed for further implementation.

⁸ [OXFAM, 2018](#)

Gender-responsive budgeting can:

- help connect the outcomes of a program to the efforts undertaken
- provide evidence of impact that can be studied and assessed for further implementation
- support conscious movement towards gender equality by the budgeting, disbursement and reporting of finances in line with gender-based goals

There are various different tools/methodologies that have been developed by organizations and agencies globally, which can be adopted for program-level gender responsive budgeting such as:

- [United Nations Development Programme](#)
- [OXFAM](#)
- [United Nations Population Fund](#)
- [The European Institute for Gender Equality](#)
- [United Nations The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific](#)
- [The International Agency for Prevention of Blindness](#)



A gender-responsive budget is a budget that works for everyone (women and men, girls and boys) by ensuring gender-equitable distribution of resources and by contributing to equal opportunities for all.

Gender-responsive budgeting is essential both for gender justice and for fiscal justice.

OXFAM

C. Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

At the program implementation stage, it is important to not lose sight of the deeply ingrained nature of gendered experiences on the ground. The following points explain some of the key activities at the implementation stage and how gender can be effectively incorporated.

1. Training and capacity building

In sectors such as plastic and e-waste management, access to relevant training can go a long way in ensuring not only improved performance, but also increased participation and reduced inequalities. Gender-responsive programs require effective training sessions that not only incorporate gender aspects, but also focus on developing skills, agency and confidence among participants. For example, in the waste management sector a common theme highlighted by sector participants is the lack of women in leadership positions/as entrepreneurs⁹. Therefore, building capacity in how to set up and finance businesses would be of great value.

[Gender-sensitization](#) should be a part of any mandatory training that is implemented during the program. Such a training should not only focus on explaining gendered notions, bias and the need for gender-sensitive thinking, but should also highlight the perspectives, aspirations and stance of the implementing/funding agency on gender. As well as the key regulatory checkpoints to be kept in mind (for example, if there are any local or national guidelines/policies on sexual harassment at workplace – this is important information both from the point of view of beneficiaries to the program and those working on the program). The following table lists trainings/workshops that could be conducted under the ambit of a program. However, it should be noted that there are no standardized or perfect training curricula and should be adapted to the context of implementation.

“Despite my experience and position as a business owner, I have to prove my expertise to the men I meet, like potential clients, parts suppliers, e-waste collectors. I have faced sexual harassment in meeting new clients. I have been told to come back with a man because I would ‘not understand’ technical details. Men balk on seeing me lead a team, even drive a truck if needed.”
- A female recycling business owner in Ghana (paraphrased)



⁹ Based on stakeholder consultations

Training	Description	Target Audience
Gender sensitization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primarily aimed at addressing biases and encouraging equity and equality in work Such workshops should be mandatory trainings for all working on and alongside a program, including stakeholders on the ground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program practitioners Key stakeholders
Technical training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focused on the best practices, occupational health and safety, tools and techniques, etc. of e-waste and plastic waste management Can incorporate an element of gender sensitization as well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiaries
Financial training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focused on financing individuals and businesses, with attention to building financial literacy (like opening a bank account and digital payments) and existing incentives (like loans, subsidies etc.) Should also focus on women/marginal community-focused incentives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiaries
Entrepreneurial training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A step beyond the basic financial training, such modules focus on helping individuals understand how they can start their own businesses. Such a training focuses on financing, building networks, procuring infrastructure and volumes etc Should include experiential sessions with entrepreneurs, particularly women from the field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiaries
Labour and agency awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Such trainings focus on educating workers on their rights, including their rights to mobilization, decent work and pay etc. This training can help empower workers to collectivize and demand action/support from governing bodies This training should focus on rights of individuals, groups and specific provisions in law that may exist for socio-cultural/ economic groups – such as poverty alleviation programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiaries

Case study from Philippines

Camaren and Bagomg Silang, the two major informal e-waste collecting and dismantling communities in Manila are being assisted by UNIDO and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Environmental Bureau and funded by the Global Environment Facility to support safe informal recycling¹⁰.

- The project applies a **gendered perspective** that goes beyond just identification of the gender-specific roles and risks attached with it.
- It makes sure that women **receive training and information** on environmentally sound practices and technologies for e-waste management.
- It ensures tracking the project outcomes through **sex-disaggregated indicators** and continues working towards advancing women's leadership and participation in e-waste management.

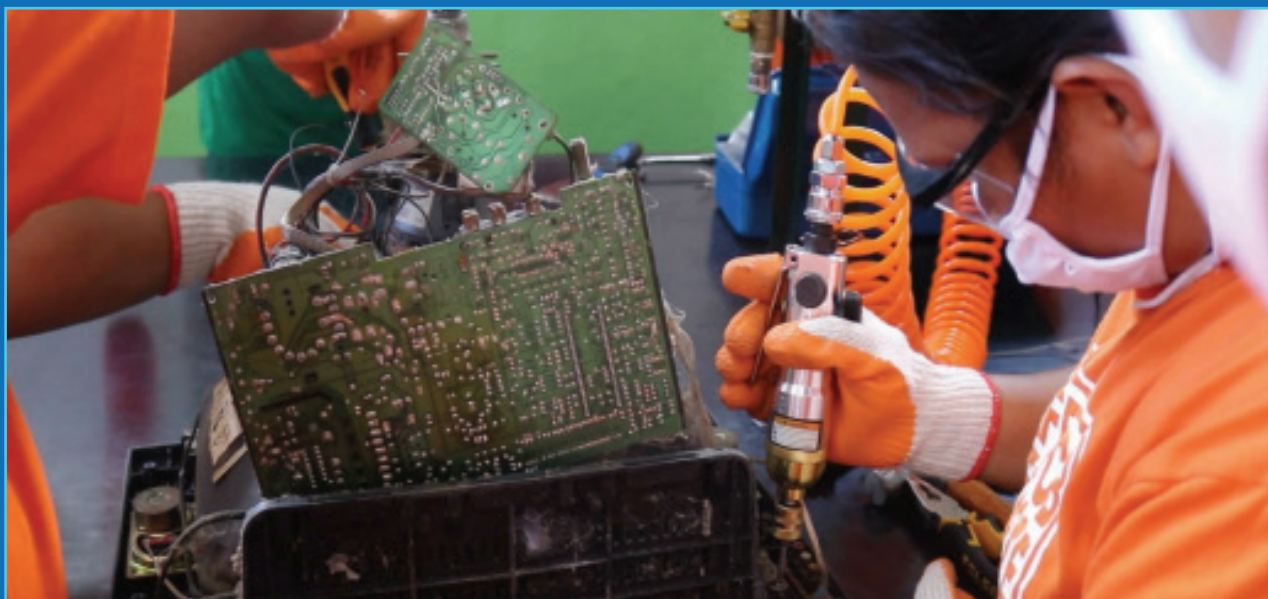


Figure 4: Women dismantling e-waste in Manila (photo from UNIDO)

¹⁰ UNIDO, 2020

2. Stakeholder consultation (data collection)

Many programs include an element of stakeholder consultation at various stages of the program execution. When planning for stakeholder inputs, always ensure that the most marginalized voices are adequately represented. In plastic and e-waste management this includes waste pickers, collectors, landfill scavengers and other individuals from the informal sector. The method of consultation is very important. There are many different techniques that can be applied:

Type of consultation	Description	When should it be used?
Personal interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sessions organized with individuals, often with a pre-prepared list of guiding points/questions Aim of the discussion is to record perspectives of one individual in detail 	<p>Highly influential or knowledgeable individuals such as policymakers, experts etc</p> <p>Workers (both men and women)</p>
Consultative workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A multi-group workshop organized with the intention to discuss one or more topics, often with the aim to reach consensus or a collectivized decision May be done for multiple participants of a single stakeholder group, or multiple stakeholder groups A typical agenda would normally include introduction to a topic and discussions in both small groups and as a whole 	<p>Groups that have an impact on the program as a collective – for e-waste/plastic it can be manufacturers, recyclers, dismantlers, policy makers etc</p>
Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A guided group discussion that is facilitated by an experience individual A typical agenda would be to pose un-biased and neutral questions, and then encourage participants to share their opinions and perspectives Often useful for groups that are not comfortable or used to sharing their opinions FGDs are usually tailored to specific groups – which should be based on the social dynamics. For example, in many cultures, women may not feel comfortable in sharing their opinions in front of men – here having separate gender groups might help 	<p>Groups that have collective impacts but are unlikely/ unable to actively participate, such as waste pickers and other informal sector workers</p>
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted questions, both qualitative and quantitative in nature that are administered in person or through digital and non-digital channels 	<p>Groups that have collective impacts but are unlikely/ unable to actively participate, such as waste pickers, especially when time and/or budget is limited or there is a large and widely dispersed sample</p>

It should be noted that stakeholder consultations are, in essence, data collection efforts and thus care must be taken to ensure that the data is captured in an unbiased manner, without any influence from the perceptions of those collecting data. It is always a good practice to maintain some form of a recording (audio or audio-visual), with prior consent from the participants.

3. Monitoring and reporting

Gender should be a critical axis of assessment for relevant KPIs and outcomes. For example, if the program is expected to collect primary data, this data should ideally be disaggregated by gender and other key socio-economic factors. Similarly, stakeholder engagements – particularly at community level through methods such as Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) should ideally consider both gender-disaggregated and mixed groups, to observe the difference in opinions shared. Reporting gender-disaggregated program outputs and outcomes is vital to learning from the program experience and ensuring that there are no unfortunate consequences of the work done. Moreover, programmatic efforts can often help catalyze change by mobilizing resources locally; the learnings from such efforts can not only help the implementing/funding agencies, but also can become an important resource for any policy or regulations that may be in development in the country.



How to develop an effective gender-based monitoring system?¹¹

An effective monitoring system requires the following:

- A pre-determined list of impacts and/or beneficiaries that are to be monitored (i.e. the scope of the monitoring system)
- A pragmatic and comprehensive list of data points to track
- A reasonable frequency for the collection of data
- A set of KPIs that provide meaningful insights to the impacts of a program
- Adequate resources to periodically collect this information
- A robust verification and validation process to review the KPIs calculated
- A trustworthy, safe and protected database to collect and retain this information over time to allow for measuring impact and changes over time.

¹¹ This section is based on the experience of the authors and stakeholder consultations undertaken for this project.

Step	Key points to consider	E-waste specific recommendations	Plastic waste specific recommendations
A pre-determined list of impacts and/or beneficiaries that are to be monitored	<p>Some beneficiaries that can be included in the scope are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal sector workers and businesses • Formal sector businesses and workers • Local residents • NGOs and CSOs that work with/ within the sector <p>Some impacts that can be tracked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater participation • Improvement in wages/payments • Increased skills • Increased awareness • Greater investment • Greater entrepreneurship • Improved health and safety practices • Improved quality of work life 	<p>E-waste and its social impacts are not as extensively studied as plastic waste. Programs should help provide greater insights into this sector by helping discover and record the current situation, along with the benefits/ impacts that take place through the project implementation</p>	<p>Plastic-waste sector (formal and informal) is usually better understood, and often change is mobilized through the formation and bargaining from groups/cohorts/ cooperatives. It is good practice to track impact on cooperatives and/or cooperatives formed as an impact of the project</p>
A pragmatic and comprehensive list of data points to track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data points that are selected for the program should ideally allow for gender disaggregation • If possible, also consider other axes of exclusion (like age, socio-economic background, race etc.) 	<p>If possible, the flow of e-waste in the study area should be included in the list of data points, to understand the actual movement of material, and thus the pressure points in the system. In most developing contexts, e-waste management is still predominately informal, therefore there is high likelihood of interface with the informal economy at some point of the e-waste value chain</p>	<p>The plastic waste value chain – formal or informal – tends to hierarchical in its setup, with a large workforce of collectors at the lowest tier and a handful of recyclers at the top. In this context, programs need to identify the material flow in the context of operation, and to understand points of aggregation and formalization of the waste flow. It is also important to understand the consumer/collector interface and observe how collectors access waste (like door-to-door collection and/or landfill scavenging). The impacts on the workers would be greatly determined by this context of working</p>
A reasonable frequency for the collection of data	<p>Typically, an annual monitoring period would be applied for multi-year programs. This may be reviewed and adjusted based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program duration • Indicators to be tracked • Typology of method used to collect the data – for example – large surveys would require significant time and resources, thus might be done less frequently 	<p>Social impacts are typically slow to develop, and therefore should be tracked at a pace in line with the level of transformation expected. Impacts such as greater agency and representation at sectoral level would take years to catalyze and develop</p>	
A set of KPIs that provide meaningful insights to the impacts of a program	<p>If a TOC approach is followed, then different KPIs may be set for different levels (such as outputs, outcomes and impacts) with different periodicity</p> <p>An illustrative list of KPIs for plastic and e-waste management is given in the next table</p>	<p>For e-waste, KPIs should reflect the practices on the ground, particularly those that pose a health hazard. Measurement of such indicators should include both workers and residents in the vicinity</p>	<p>In case of plastic waste, it would be good practice to not only disaggregate by gender and other social group but also plastic type</p>
Adequate resources to periodically collect this information	<p>Adequate budgetary allocations are necessary, especially for deeper and more nuanced data collection (please see section B2)</p> <p>In mobilizing individuals to collect the data, it is highly important to address any existing prejudices or biases that might adversely impact the data collected. Wherever possible, interactions with individuals for monitoring should be recorded (as audio or video). As this would not be possible in many cases – like for surveys, sensitivity training should be conducted for the data collectors</p>	<p>Door-to-door surveys and focus group discussions are a good method to discover the impacts of the programs, particularly for sectors with low visibility like e-waste</p>	<p>Random surveys, interviews and consultative workshops are good methods to collect data, especially when sector workers are empowered and collectivized. In the absence of such collectivization, steps as suggested for e-waste can be followed</p>
A robust verification and validation process to review the KPIs calculated	<p>Data verification and validation process should be in line with the expectations of stakeholders and the multilateral agency. It is good practice to consult a social expert in developing the validation process (and the monitoring protocol in general)</p>		
A trustworthy, safe, and protected database to collect and retain this information over time, to allow for measuring impact and changes over time	<p>It is recommended the data collected is routinely analyzed and the results are shared with key program stakeholders as well as international network, to increase collective knowledge on the interlinkages between gender and plastic/e-waste management. The data, however, should be protected from tampering, and housed with the agency and/or their trusted partner(s)</p>		

A list of KPIs that could be adopted for e-waste and plastic waste management are given below:

An illustrative list of KPIs for plastic and e-waste management			
Improved working conditions	Increased participation	Economic empowerment	Greater agency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occupational health and safety (training, emergency protocol, gear) Access to support infrastructure (toilets, canteens, working spaces and childcare) Employee-support policies (healthcare and accident remuneration) Paid maternity leave Structured hours of work and flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of opportunity in the sector Improved visibility of women in the sector Reduced gender-based violence and/or discrimination Sensitization of sector and related groups on non-discrimination Access to training and capacity building on technical topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to minimum living wage or higher at all tiers Access to existing governmental and non-governmental financial incentives Increased participation of women at higher tiers of the sector (scrap dealers, aggregators and recyclers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation of sector workers (particularly from lower tiers) in sector level development and conversations (such as policy/guideline development) Representation of women in high level sectoral decision-making Formation and/or strengthening of collectives Access to legal support systems
<p>Green text – gender disaggregated indicator Blue text – gender-based indicator</p>			

D. Program conclusion and closure

During its lifetime, a program will generate vast amounts of knowledge relating to the context, perceptions, biases, socio-cultural factors etc. Moreover, the experience of implementing the project will lead to the understanding of what works and what does not, the successes, the failures etc. All this information can be crucial to the understanding of the waste sector, as well as for a more nuanced realization of lived realities. In this context, making sure that the program is adequately recorded and disseminated becomes very important.

1. Program-level feedback loop

Ensuring institutionalization of information internally (at agency and program management unit level) can be crucial, not only to gauge the long-term impacts but to also ensure that learnings are channeled to all future program conception efforts. Some ways in which this can be done include:

- Development of insight reports to reflect on the social side of program implementation, starting with the problems that were intended to be addressed and the changes that were observed during and after implementation.

- Development of training modules based on the experience of the program – this will be especially important for all subsequent efforts in the waste management-gender nexus.
- Appropriate curation of information internally with the use of relevant key words and phrases.
- Internal presentations to peers who may derive knowledge and contribute to the topic by bringing in fresh perspectives–this is particularly relevant for similar sectors. For example, the learnings from e-waste and plastic waste may be applied to hazardous waste and textile waste programs.

2. Building collective knowledge

Globally, many humanitarian and multilateral agencies are working in plastic and e-waste management. They are joined by a common goal of improving the livelihood and experiences of communities, particularly vulnerable ones. In this context, it is good practice to disseminate learnings with the larger global sector, wherein experiences in program conception, development, implementation and closure can be shared. This could be through workshops, training/awareness sessions, media kits, training modules etc. Such efforts can also lead to the development of collaborative efforts between different agencies.

Conclusion

Mainstreaming gender at program level, while contextual to sectors, also has a universal goal of 'Leaving No One Behind'. Conscious and thoughtful efforts towards including gender at every stage of a program can help build **gender responsive programs** that go beyond representation and inclusion towards transformation. Moreover, in areas like plastic and e-waste management, where large-scale efforts are being implemented in various countries, gender responsive programs can not only help ensure equitable positive impacts but also avoid any unintended negative consequences that might otherwise arise due to existing gender-based norms, perceptions and stereotypes. We hope that this manual can inspire a more inclusive approach to building programs, the impacts of which would transition to a safe and comfortable world for all.



Women workers proud to work at an e-waste recycler in India