

# ROLE OF GENDER IN WASTE MANAGEMENT

Gender perspectives on waste in India,  
Indonesia, The Philippines & Vietnam

IN SUPPORT OF SDGS:



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# Critical Questions

## for the Role of Gender in Waste Management around ASEAN



### Incomes

Are there income differences based on gender for similar occupations?



### Perceptions

Might women and men have different perceptions of waste management?



### Favoured Occupations

What occupations are favoured by men and women within the waste sector?



### Occupational Challenges

What are the gender-specific occupational challenges while working with waste?



### Roles

What role does gender play with regard to household waste management?



### Participation Challenges

What are some perceived challenges to participation by women in these occupations?



### Interventions

Are there any gender-specific interventions that may improve the waste landscape?

# Key Findings of Gender Study

01

While gender differences are significant, the conventional challenges of gender inequality don't apply.

02

Women participate both individually and alongside men (as a family unit) in the waste sector.

03

Key interventions suggested are intended to **empower, support and enable women** and the general waste sector rather than formalise the nature of employment.



# Gender Participation in Waste Value Chain



## Sorting is typically a woman's task

Women are employed in repetitive and time-consuming tasks while men tend to participate in "heavy" duties.



## Equipment and/or vehicles varies by gender in all countries except Vietnam

Women tend to use protective gear because they handle wet waste more than the men do.

## Women staffed junk shops

Women often co-owned businesses with their spouses or run them as a family operation.

They perform the administrative tasks.



## Formal waste work is dominated by men, except in parts of India

Salaries do not vary between genders, but it is easier for men to seek formal employment in waste collection.



# Challenges Faced by Women in the Waste Industry

“Unable to handle large amounts or bulky items”  
(reported by men and women)

“Lack of safety”  
(reported by women)

Waste dumping tends to occur in early hours when it is still dark

“Lack of access to equipment”  
(reported by women)

**Physical Challenges**

**Safety**

Exposed to crime when having to work in alleyways and poorly maintained areas of city

Men and women are at risk of contracting respiratory illnesses from exposure to toxic and unhygienic materials.

**Health Risks**

**Social Stigma**

“They (women) must tend to the house/children”  
(reported by men and women in the Philippines, and men in Indonesia)

Many do not have health insurance coverage, and have limited access to adequate health care

“It is inappropriate for women to work as waste sector workers”  
(reported by men and women)

“Low social status” and Lack of respect in society

# Key Insights



## Ownership

Few women own and operate businesses at the end of the waste value chain.



## Family Businesses

Working in waste is often a family enterprise.



## Migration

Most of the informal sector are individuals that have moved to cities from other parts of the country.



## Communications

Women resort primarily to informal channels of communications and networks.

# Opportunities of Intervention to Support Women



## Societal

Recognising women, Improving social status and removing stigma

## Operational/ Technical Assistance

Capacity building, Providing vehicles, Training and awareness, Financing, Health and safety

## Other Interventions

Semi-formalising the informal sector, Converting migrant status, Providing social benefits, Building awareness of their rights





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