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USAID Recycling Matters Activity

Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan

Fushë Kosovë / Kosovo Polje

2023

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Recycling Matters Activity - Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje Activity

Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan

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AOR: Flora Arifi

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RECYCLING MATTERS ACTIVITY – FUSHE KOSOVE/ KOSOVO POLJE

Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan

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AOR Name: Flora ARIFI

Submitted by: Adrian Zeqiri, Executive Director
European Centre for Minority Issues Kosovo
Str. Rexhep Luci Nr 36, Appt 7, 10000 Prishtinë, Kosovë
Email: zeqiri@ecmikosova.org

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List of Abbreviations

AGE	Agency on Gender Equality
AOR	Agreement Officer Representative
CLSF	Consultative Local Stakeholder Forum
COP	Chief of Party
D&D	D&D Business Support Center
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
ECMI	European Centre for Minority Issues in Kosovo
EU	European Union
IP	Implementing Partner
IR	Intermediate Result
KAS	Kosovo Agency of Statistics
MELP	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan
MESP	Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning
MWMR	Municipal Waste Management and Recycling
RAE	Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities
RMA	Recycling Matters Activity – Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje
SWM	Solid Waste Management
SWMP	Solid Waste Management Plan
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
WE3	Women's Economic Empowerment and Equality
WMR	Waste Management and Recycling

Introduction

Under its grant agreement with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), European Centre for Minority Issues Kosovo (ECMI) submits the following Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan for the Recycling Matters Activity – Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje in Kosovo (RMA). Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan aims to highlight gender-related issues[1] in national and municipal waste management and recycling and support the Municipality of Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje efforts to ensure that appropriate interventions to address them are carried out. Once adopted, it will be worth exploring how the Municipality of Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje will effectively improve gender-sensitive methodologies within the Waste Management and Recycling Cycle.

Approaches will be developed to integrate and mainstream gender considerations in RMA programming and establish appropriate measurement tools. The report also compiled findings and recommendations to provide gender-sensitive perspectives on the SWM and recycling sector. The overall purpose is to identify strategies and approaches that RMA can refer to and make use of to better integrate gender considerations into the activity.

Recycling Matters Activity – Fushë Kosove/Kosovo Polje, seeks to increase socio-economic cohesion among targeted communities-Kosovo Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian through the facilitation of sustainable recycling models led by the private sector and in cooperation with communities and local governments.

The activity encourages public participation in recycling initiatives while ensuring that informal waste collectors are part of the waste collection sector as it continues to expand. Through the activity interventions, a viable, implementable, and self-sustainable model based on local actors' needs and interests will be established. RMA will develop an efficient waste collection system with the inclusion of the Municipality of Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje and transform the informal waste collection into a synchronized and sustainable recycling model.

The activity aims to achieve three objectives : **(1)** Local stakeholders coordinate, support, and mobilize to increase socio-economic cohesion among targeted communities, **(2)** Create sustainable recyclable models in Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje by the private sector and supported by local government, citizens, and local business communities, and **3)** Scale up the recycling models in other communities/regions In addition, activity implementation will directly support the municipality by linking technical experts and municipality officials to develop the waste and recycling plan that includes also the data analysis. All this will be achieved through the three phases of the activity which include: 1) Phase one includes the startup phase which will include a wide range of consultation for the inclusion part but also to ensure the increase of knowledge on waste management. 2) Phase two foresees the development part, where direct investment in hardware, equipment, and machinery for recyclable waste is planned. 3) Final phase, the third includes formalization and sustainability, as the most important part where not just the training part is foreseen but also business ties are created and financial sustainability is ensured.

For all three phases, gender considerations will be a top priority and that will be focused on gender mainstreaming, i.e. increased participation of women in all the actions including in the prior consultation phase. Gender equality is a fundamental right and an important factor for economic growth, development, and stability. Dedication towards ensuring gender equality in all its interventions emphasizes the necessity

[1] Main gender issues that will be considered are: under representation of women in general and how is this reflected also in the waste collection sector. Gender mainstreaming focused on increased participation of women in all the actions will be applicable through all activities.

to develop and implement policies through strategies and programs, legal framework, and the provision of goods and services aimed at achieving the set goal of gender equality.

The issue of waste management falls under USAID's top priorities "Climate change and environment issues". This follows and looks also the impact on women and other vulnerable communities. Gender inequalities within the SWM and recycling sectors have historically been and continue to be addressed not just in Kosovo but worldwide. A lack of understanding of gender differences and the challenges they create; limited regulatory and physical protections that protect the wide range of stakeholders in the sector, including women at different levels of the value chain; and insufficient capacity to develop and implement solutions that meet the needs of men and women continue to perpetuate an unequal playing field that has serious economic, social, health, and environmental impacts. In accordance with USAID policy and in recognition of the importance of addressing gender aspects in any development strategy, RMA has developed the following Gender Action Plan to weave gender interventions throughout its activity structure, work plans, and associated operations, including its communications and Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning efforts.

METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

This Recycle Matters Activity gender analyses methodology is based on desk research and filed interviews through door-to-door interviews with informal waste collectors. It aims to apply gender-sensitive and gender-transformative approaches across all interventions. The activity will focus its work in the field of women, men, and youth as advocates on the waste recycling chain.

This gender analysis and gender action plan has reviewed the existing national legal frameworks, policies, mechanisms, and institutional and non-governmental initiatives relevant to the environment and waste chain in general. The desk review also focused on gathering statistical data and evidence at a national and local level on the current state of gender inequalities. The research methodology was focused on the identification of progress and gaps, as well as the barriers, but also potential entry points, toward enhancing gender equity in this field.

The gender analysis which was based on desk research showed a wide range of limitations. The Kosovo Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning (MESP) rarely has conducted proper gender analyses to inform policies, programs, and activities. In addition, MESP and the responsible municipal authorities rarely organized public consultations in this field, in cases when they were organized women have been underrepresented among participants. Furthermore, the limited data and research on gender and recycling/waste issues in Kosovo, made it impossible to disaggregate any data on 1) age and 2) engagement of women in recycling waste. This has barred the analysis from drawing concrete conclusions regarding the involvement of women and young girls in this sector.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AND INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

Program objectives and intermediate results

The Recycle Matters Activity aims to contribute to the overall progression of the waste management and recycling process chain. This is to be done through the activity model, which aims to formalize the recyclable waste collection from the current informal and unorganized activity to a formal, structured,

and profitable activity by intervening at different stages of the waste management and recycling process chain. In doing so, retaining the critical position of informal waste collectors in the sector alleviates their status to that of a formal actor. Through the Municipality's involvement, the Project seeks to address the gaps in the local policies on the waste collection sector in Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje. The Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje municipality has its strategic plans and processes in place for addressing recycling, however, there's also a vibrant informal sector comprised of private companies that deal with processing recyclable waste. The activity will utilize these stakeholders and local processes and support to jointly develop them through proposed activities. These activities also include the capacity-building part that will ensure the sustainability of our interventions.

To achieve all this, the activity aims to conduct a thorough and comprehensive consultation, research, and assessment in the initial phase and periodically through all stages, and work with the Municipality of Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje and informal waste collectors to determine the exact nature of their relationship. However, the principal objectives are the formalization and streamlining of recyclable waste in Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje, with the full inclusion of Informal waste collectors at all levels. The specific steps of the model proposed in the Project are as follows and they will seek to engage at least 30% of women and young girls as participants, beneficiaries, and also officials at the municipality level:

- Establish a consultation structure for Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian stakeholders involved in informal waste collection and recycling, the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian Communities' Stakeholder Local Consultative Forum in Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje, the CLSF.

- Establish working relations with the Municipality of Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje, including support for developing a municipal waste management plan to embed the project objectives within the Municipal Strategy. MoUs with the Municipality as critical stakeholders, including issuing legal permits and licenses for streamlining separation at source and recyclable waste management.

- Support to increase the supply of recyclable waste by expanding existing infrastructure for recyclable waste through joint investments with the Municipality on the infrastructure for recyclable waste.

- Effective management of recyclable waste through support to the company for managing recyclable waste, which involves informal waste collectors at all levels. The company's exact nature is determined by the first phase of consultations, studies, and assessments.

- Technical support, hardware and equipment, institutional development, and business-oriented support ensure that the company turns a profit and is self-sustainable financially.

- Involve the Informal Waste Collectors in the company at all levels.

- Through a Green Fund facility, to finance small-scale projects to add value to the project objectives through the involvement of local actors, the private sector, the grass-root NGOs, and the participation of the target communities.

- Enable the consultation structure, the CLSF, to further coordinate the formalized recycling initiative established through the Activity and coordinate with donors and other national stakeholders in the longer term.

With the facilitation of sustainable recycling models led by the private sector and in cooperation with communities and local governments we aim at reaching two intermediate results in these two results we seek to have 30% of the total number of beneficiaries women.

OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

This overview will focus on the below points as described in ADS 205[2], specific attention will be given to the parts that apply to the activity. Also, ECMI's comprehensive gender approach fully and meaningfully integrates women in all proposed activities and is following USAID's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy. The RMA team does not simply look at women alone, but rather evaluates the perspective of relationships between men and women in RAE communities, as well as other vulnerable and marginalized populations.

It should be noted that the existing research data on gender issues in WMR in Kosovo is very limited, therefore representing an untapped area of research activity for the government, donors, and academic and research institutions. In general, however, inequalities are present in the WMR sector as they are in other sectors and are primarily the result of deeply entrenched patriarchal values and gender roles.

This activity presents opportunities for new and strengthened levels of engagement for donors, such as USAID, to contribute to increasing gender equality and women's empowerment in the WMR sector both at the formal and informal levels. Engaging women in non-traditional jobs in the WMR sector and increasing their participation in decision-making and leadership positions expands the talent pool to tackle the challenges facing the WMR sector.

By driving the international donor community agenda and setting Women's Economic Empowerment as a priority within WMR, USAID can help other municipalities in Kosovo to further enhance their path to self-reliance, while preserving the environment and creating long-term pathways for women's economic empowerment.

Cultural Norms and Beliefs:

In Kosovo, women are primarily considered as households and the ones that do implement decisions but do not influence or take them this is also reflected in the field of the work of this activity. In this context also the activity field of work is information about SWM and the benefits of recycling for this particular group lacks. According to OSCE in Kosovo, members of minority communities are often discriminated against, especially members of the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities, "and women in particular, face barriers that lead to their exclusion from participation in all areas of life."[3]

Throughout the analysis, we learned the complexity and sensitivity surrounding minority issues in Kosovo; and recognized the importance of accessibility and affordability for other vulnerable groups, such as minority populations, people with disabilities, and youth. In Kosovo, the term 'minority' is deemed extremely controversial. Minority groups in Kosovo have a long and fractured past and are oftentimes discriminated against based on reasons of ethnicity, language, and religious affiliation. Minority communities in Kosovo, people with disabilities, women, and youth all struggle with similar issues of discrimination and limited access to employment, basic services, and information. It has been reported that the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian (RAE) communities living in some of the most difficult conditions in Kosovo, exacerbated by

[2] ADS Chapter 205 - Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle
[3] Pasqyrë e Komunitetit Rom, Ashkali dhe Egjiptian të Kosovës.2020. https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/c/c/443590_2.pdf

what a recent report from the Council of Europe calls a "negative trend towards nationalism".[4] As part of this analysis and in line with the recommendations, the RMA team will ensure that targeted measures must be taken by the Municipality of Fushe Kosova/Kosovo Polje and key stakeholders to tackle discrimination and ensure that all groups have equitable access to public services and employment.

Access to and Control over Assets and Resources

When it comes to women in Kosovo, they face a wide range of common, structural, and gendered barriers that impede their full economic participation in the traditionally male-dominated WMR sector. These impediments exist for women throughout the WMR value chain – which encompasses informal and formal sector actors, such as recyclers and waste pickers, intermediaries, and small and medium-sized recycling centers, as well as large private sector recycling and plastics companies and pre-processors. Women working in the recycling sector, both at the municipal and national government levels, encounter significant obstacles to career advancement, as evidenced by the low representation of women in this field. A survey conducted among women involved in recycling further highlights the gendered barriers that they face in this sector.[5] To a large extent, gender integration in the WMR sector nationally has been negligible, though awareness is slowly growing of the need to increase the participation of women in WMR. Very often, experts, governments, donors, and other stakeholders working in WMR are not cognizant of the gender dimensions of waste and recycling and do not have specialized expertise in this area.

In 2021, the Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS) reported that the employment rate among the working-age population in Kosovo was 30%. The employment rate was no higher for men than for women: 44% of men of working age were employed compared to 16% of women also of working age. As per KAS, there is a big gender gap in the labor market, one in five (20.6%) women of working age are active in the labor market, compared to about three-fifths (54.9%) of men of working age. Women tend to work in part-time jobs as they often bear more responsibility for caring duties within the family, thereby limiting their availability to work full-time.[6] The report of the Kosovo Women Network has drawn the conclusion that individuals from minority communities, particularly women, encounter discrimination in their workplace.[7] Regrettably, official data pertaining to gender-specific employment rates across community categories are unavailable. Moreover, a report carried out by the Riinvest Institute has disclosed that over 10% of women have experienced discrimination in their workplace. When compared to other regions, WMR in Kosovo especially in the Municipality of Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje is notably incipient and there is a general lack of public awareness around the importance of recycling and proper waste segregation and disposal. However, growing awareness of the economic value of waste and the benefit of a circular economy is incentivizing municipalities and the private sector to increase their involvement in WMR. Furthermore, the legislative groundwork and precedence for gender equality in the WMR sector are already present,

[4] Council of Europe, 'Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities", September 2013, http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/3_FCNMdocs/PDF_3rd_OP_Kosovo_en.pdf

[5] Survey conducted by ECMI in February 2023

[6] Anketa e Fuqisë Punëtore. ASK. TM2 2021. https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/7164/anketa-e-fuqis%C3%AB-pun%C3%ABtore-afp-tm2-2021.pdf

[7] Diskriminimi me bazë gjinore dhe punësimi në Kosovë. Rrjeti i Grave të Kosovës. 2019. https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/RrGK_Diskriminimi-me-baze-gjinore-dhe-punesimi-ne-Kosove_REV_FIN.pdf

indicating that at the national level, the need for gender integration is understood even if budgetary allocations are low and implementation and enforcement may be lacking.

Patterns of Power and Decision-making:

Community rights, equality, and multiculturality are key elements of the functioning of Kosovo society. Among these, the rights of marginalized communities, namely Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities have been determined as important dimensions of advancing those societal elements. The process of integrating Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities has been addressed through a comprehensive set of laws and two strategies. The Strategy for the Inclusion of the Roma and Ashkali Communities in the Kosovar Society 2017-2021[8] was approved in 2017 by the Government of Kosovo and aims to promote and ensure the effective realization of the rights of these communities, in particular their access to education, employment, health services, and housing. To increase employment, this Strategy is designed to promote success stories in the labor market of members of these communities, with a particular focus on women.

The increasing importance of women in family decision-making has been observed, with a shift away from traditional narratives. The employment and economic independence of women are being recognized as significant factors in strengthening decision-making within the family, as they are gradually displacing conventional gender roles.[9] However, significant effort is required to address the issues prevailing in public institutions and other organizations. Based on a report by WNK, women in communities are significantly underrepresented in decision-making positions within civil society. [10] In municipalities, women hold only 30% of decision-making positions, with a ratio of 1 to 3 compared to men. [11] Specifically, women in communities encounter multiple barriers and often lack agency in decision-making, with many being financially dependent on their husbands. [12]

The transition from informal to formalization and streamlining of recyclable waste, which will be supported through this activity, can create benefits and opportunities for both women and men, such as employment generation, marketing and outreach opportunities, and improved health conditions. There is a tremendous opportunity to address barriers that women face in benefiting and participating in the effective management of recyclable waste initiatives. To do this, significant efforts must be made to ensure equal representation in decision-making and promote the education and training of women on business-oriented support and technical support, toward securing future jobs in the recycling sector.

[8] ANGSTRATEGJIA_PER_PERFSHIRJEN_E_KOMUNITETEVE_ROM_DHE_ASHKALI_NE_SHOQERINE_KOSOVARE_2017-2021.pdf (rks-gov.net)

[9] Gratë në tregun e punës. 2017. Instituti Riinvest. https://www.riinvestinstitute.org/uploads/files/2017/November/10/Grate_ne_tregun_e_punes1510308263.pdf

[10] Diskriminimi me bazë gjinore dhe punësimi në Kosovë. Rrjeti i Grave të Kosovës. 2019. https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/RrGK_Diskriminimi-me-baze-gjinore-dhe-punesimi-ne-Kosove_REV_FIN.pdf

[11] Gratë në Politikë III. BPRG.2021. https://balkansgroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/edit-ALB-Grat%C3%AB-n%C3%AB-Politik%C3%AB-III-P%C3%ABrfaq%C3%ABsimi-Gjinor-n%C3%AB-Nivelin-Lokal-Web-19.03.2021-1-1.pdf

[12] Draft Feasibility Study and Recycling: Fushe Kosova Municipality. D&D and ECMI Kosova. ECMI survey with women in recycle waste, February 2023.

The legal framework

Kosovo's legal framework is quite advanced in supporting gender equality and promoting anti-discrimination in all its fields. The law on gender equality provides a basis for official gender mainstreaming at the national and local levels and foresees the role of monitoring by the Agency on Gender Equality (AGE). The legislative framework also foresees a quota when it comes to gender representation. But all these legislative pieces and policies remain largely not implemented.

Based on the legal framework, Kosovo has also adopted the Program for Gender Equality[13], which aims to ensure that gender equality is placed at the center of the transformation processes, within all structures, institutions, policies, procedures, practices, and programs of the government, agencies, civil society, the private sector, and the donors' community. This governmental program is largely ignored and unfortunately fails to create equal opportunities to contribute to and benefit from economic development, increased inclusion, and improvement of social welfare.

Kosovo also has a Plan for Waste Management[14], which is gender-blind. The respective field in all its policies completely lacks gender-disaggregated data indicators and contains no gender impact analysis. To add to that, with the limited statists that are available, especially on employment at the public level in this field we do see that women are underrepresented[15] in the waste management sector and there are no efforts to improve it.

GENDER AND RECYCLING

Nationally and locally, there is a very limited number of available information about women's involvement in the informal waste collection sector. This is a very unregulated sector and as the name tells, is done informally.

The process of recycling in Fushë-Kosova is largely informal and primarily undertaken by minority communities. Individuals are responsible for waste separation at the point of disposal, which is then sold to a limited number of traders and recyclers located nearby. The number of individuals engaged in informal waste collection fluctuates between 150 and 250.[16]

A survey conducted by ECMI Kosovo on 58 informal waste collectors revealed that the vast majority of respondents were men or young boys. This finding is consistent with the prevalent gender norms and roles in the community, where men tend to take the lead in informal waste collection, while children and wives assist. To further explore this issue, ECMI conducted a door-to-door interview with informal waste collectors and women who are culturally associated with traditional roles, as informal waste collectors tend to underreport their involvement in the process. However, additional research revealed that women do participate in informal waste collection, primarily through sorting recyclable waste. [17] Out of the 58 respondents, only 5 were women, 2 of whom focused on the recycling process and worked solely on separating waste from recycling sources, while the other 3 women directly assisted their husbands or

[13] https://abgj.rks-gov.net/assets/cms/uploads/files/AGE Kosovo Program for Gender Equality 2020-2024.pdf
[14] FINAL_2020_mars kiwms_final_EN_SDGs (1).pdf (rks-gov.net)
[15] Microsoft Word - EU Gender Analysis_2018-09-12_FINAL.docx (womensnetwork.org)
[16] Draft Feasibility Study and Recycling: Fushe Kosova Municipality. D&D and ECMI Kosova. 2023.
[17] Ibid.

family members in collecting waste. All women reported that informal waste collection is an unpleasant job due to poor working conditions. [18]

The proposed model to be supported by this project seeks to enhance the involvement of women in all recycling processes. To achieve this objective, the project will implement an educational and informational campaign that involves specialized local women activists and grassroots organizations. The rationale behind this decision is that the majority of women in the community are housewives[19] who are not formally employed and thus can be more easily engaged in the project activities. Moreover, women play a crucial role in the informal waste collection process, particularly in the sorting of recyclable waste. After the waste is collected from various sites, it is taken to individuals' homes for sorting and packing before being sold. Women are typically responsible for these tasks which are carried out in their backyards. Therefore, their active involvement in the project can significantly contribute to the success of the recycling initiative.[20]

In addition to the survey, an extensive desk review of waste management and recycling (WMR) documents was conducted to provide a comprehensive overview of the gender dynamics within the sector. The review revealed that at the national level, women are significantly underrepresented in the WMR sector, which is traditionally dominated by men. This gender gap is most visible in waste collection and sorting activities. To address this issue and increase women's full participation in the sector, it is crucial to identify and eliminate structural barriers that impede their involvement, as is necessary for any male-dominated field.

Sweden is an exemplary case of a country that leads the way in both waste management and recycling[21], as well as gender equality in its economy, including the WMR sector. [22] For instance, the board of directors of Swedish Waste Management, a trade association for Swedish municipalities and associate members from the private sector, consists of 30 percent women, highlighting the successful efforts towards gender parity and inclusivity. [23]

GENDER ANALYSIS KEY FINDINGS

The following findings are based extensively on desk reviews conducted by local and international organizations that work on gender issues and reflect the most salient Women's Economic Empowerment Issues affecting the WMR sector nationally and the ECMI survey focused on Fushe Kosova/ Kosovo Polje.

The evidence suggests that women face double discrimination in minority communities, particularly within the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities. Despite Kosovo's efforts to promote gender equality, women in these communities continue to face significant barriers to basic protection mechanisms that are afforded to other women in the country. This unfortunate reality has significant implications for their ability to engage in economic activities, including the WMR sector, and underscores the need for targeted interventions to support their empowerment and advancement.

Gender integration in the recycling sector nationally has been negligible. Experts, governments, donors, and other stakeholders working in WMR are not cognizant of the gender dimensions of waste

[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Sweden is able to recycle nearly 100 percent of household waste, either using traditional recycling methods or through energy recovery https://sweden.se/nature/the-swedish-recycling-revolution/
[22] Sweden was ranked in 3rd place in gender equality (2018 Global Gender Gap Index),
[23] For more information see Avfall Sverige: https://www.avfallsverige.se/om-oss/vad-vi-gor/styrelse/.

and recycling and do not have specialized expertise in this area. This results in programs that do not adequately address the needs and conditions of women working in the sector, lack of encouragement for women to get involved, and further exacerbates.

A traditional gendered division of labor exists throughout the WMR sector nationally. Women are disproportionately represented in the lower echelons of the recycling chain, typically employed as informal waste pickers or recyclable sorters with limited opportunities for career advancement. The manual labor associated with heavy lifting and hauling, which is often considered "men's work," tends to yield higher wages. Due to limited access to equipment, vehicles, and waste, women have less capacity to collect and transport larger volumes of higher-value recyclables. Moreover, informal women waste collectors frequently work in physically hazardous conditions and are subject to a range of gendered risks, including violence, harassment, and exploitation. These challenges contribute to significant gender-based barriers and impediments for women in comparison to their male counterparts operating in the informal sector.

Gendered power relations within the informal sector restrict women's access to recyclables. Nationally, a gendered waste hierarchy exists wherein men control access to landfills and dumpsites, limiting women's access to higher-value recyclable materials. Consequently, this exacerbates income disparities and in turn increases the economic and social vulnerability of women's waste-pickers.

Sexual harassment and abuse are significant issues affecting women and inhibiting their advancement throughout the recycling value chain. Enterprises and organizations working in the formal sector often do not incorporate any recourse for on-the-job sexual harassment and abuse of power affecting female workers, which inhibit women's ability to engage in other functions in the value chain.

The absence of data, in general, and sex-disaggregated data, are widely acknowledged problems throughout the WMR sector nationally. The lack of municipal, sex-disaggregated WMR data significantly inhibits the visibility of women in WMR, the development of the sector in general, and the incorporation of women's priorities and effective Women's Economic Empowerment approaches.

GENDER STRATEGY AND ACTIVITIES

RMA leadership will ensure that each activity component applies gender-sensitive approaches as much as possible in national, and local working site efforts. The following section outlines proposed, foreseen interventions across each of the activity's main objectives, which will be validated through the RMA's planning, implementation, and stakeholder engagement process.

RMA activities aim to achieve economic empowerment, and in doing so, will work to create new marketplaces, jobs, and opportunities for vulnerable populations and businesses. In nodes of the value chain and in operations where fewer or no women are involved, if there is a desire from women to be involved and if resources are the constraint, RMA will provide ways to make resources accessible so women can be involved more. In addition, through RMA activities, the staff will continuously lobby to increase their involvement in the sector. For example, material inputs and supplies, technical know-how, training, information, market access including certification of products, and subsidies for women's enterprises. When new jobs are created in this sector, RMA will encourage and lobby for the placement of women in new and/or high-level positions in the private and public sectors.

RMA will also work with its private sector partners to ensure that in the development of new products, technologies, and marketplaces, women and their perspectives are considered as employees, business and

household decision-makers, users, consumers, and leaders. Where possible, RMA will build capacity amongst its private sector partners in developing gender-informed business models, which may include provisions to engage and/or support funding for women-owned businesses.

Outreach planned under each objective will be developed to be locally appropriate and gender-responsive. RMA will provide technical assistance to develop strategies that acknowledge and leverage women's power as decision-makers, community influencers, and stewards of sustainable communities and the environment. RMA will identify, map, and engage youth and women's organizations not only in support of social behavior change activities but to be integrated across all programmatic activities. In addition, RMA will ensure that the Municipal Waste Plan includes gender-sensitive indicators that promote the rights of women to an inclusive, equitable, and healthy environment.

GENDER ACTION PLAN

RMA will continue to grow awareness of and implement solutions that address the critical nature of women's empowerment and gender equality within the SWM sector, which will strive for livelihoods and economic opportunities, and will have an impact on the overall effectiveness of RMA initiatives. The following Gender Action Plan establishes how RMA will undertake gender-focused, responsive, and equitable work in its first programmatic year and beyond.

The action plan begins by presenting the activity's overall approach, which will be overseen by COP and informed by local analyses. The strategy then goes on to detail objective-specific gender strategies, which will be validated and adjusted, as needed, following the completion of assessments in each of the program's work sites, conducted with a gender lens. RMA will be using a gender lens through all levels of consultations and the next steps will be adjusted as per the most immediate needs that will be identified.

RMA will seek to engage women throughout the stages of the project. Within activities, we have already launched a Consultative Local Stakeholder Forum where all local stakeholders from Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian Communities are part of this. We will be seeking to represent women in this format, specifically the wives of informal waste collectors and civil society activists. The main idea is on supporting women in this process, which is now at the final stages of formulation. We will be supporting women in running as administrators of the company that will be managing the collection and sorting of recyclable waste.

Women will be involved in the information and educational campaign foreseen as part of the introduction of separation at source. Women from communities are mostly heads of households, so in this process, they are the key to separation at the source of the waste. We will seek to target women, specifically in the education and information campaign through the engagement of specialized local women activists and grass root organization. Via the Green Fund Facility, in which we seek to involve a major part of grass root organization in various support activities. As they will be also used to manufacture or further process art effects, tools, equipment, and raw material. Green Fund will be supporting this kind of initiative, particularly in targeting the role of women.

RMA's gender action plan will support each of these initiatives, including work to support women's prosperity in the workforce, and their success as entrepreneurs, and enable their participation in national

and local economies. RMA's Gender Action Plan focuses on equity, economic empowerment, and strengthened, fair markets also align with broader USAID and USG priorities.

Approach

In the recycling sector, gender-differentiated roles and responsibilities can be quite pronounced and require specialized knowledge, expertise, and solid understanding before their related challenges can be addressed. This requires internal, robust staffing expertise, coupled with foundational gender research that will inform the activity's overarching strategy. Through RMA's human-focused and gender-responsive work, the activity will work toward achieving gender equity, improved livelihoods through equal access, economic empowerment (including support for entrepreneurship), and enhanced health and safety.

RMA will aim to support women and young girls in this domain by keeping in mind to seek the 30% quota which is applicable in different sectors also in this one. This will allow RMA to contribute to decreasing gender inequality that exists in this sector. The reports that will be drafted, will include specific outcomes and results of the activity related to gender and female empowerment.

ANNEX B: DOCUMENTS CONSULTED FOR LITERATURE REVIEW

WMR desk review: mainstream documents.

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- WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND EQUALITY, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (WE3), APRIL 2019 https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00TQSH.pdf