



Curated Session: Women of Waste Task Force

– A session spotlighting investment models and compelling research on Women's Economic Empowerment in Waste Management and Recycling

ISWA Working Group on Women of Waste Task Force

October 2021

Title: Going Green: Women's role in a post-COVID green economic recovery!

– A session spotlighting investment models and compelling research on Women's Economic Empowerment in Waste Management and Recycling

Conference Themes

The role of governance in the shift towards a circular economy

Abstract

At ISWA we know that women make a strong contribution to the solid waste management (SWM) sector, but from a global perspective, women still face very real challenges. A broad range of barriers include: persistent bias in legislation, rigid cultural norms and gendered roles that dissuade entry and professional advancement, plus a lack of access to and control over assets, opportunities, and financial resources to start and grow businesses.

In recent years, there has been more attention paid to the role of women's economic empowerment in the waste and recycling sector globally. This is evident in the rise of gender-focused research, donor-funded projects and events in the sector than ever before. These efforts have highlighted the indispensable and transformational role that women play in solid waste management—from skilled collecting and sorting, to reducing corruption, advancing research and innovation, and increasing profitability in large corporations. The business case for investing in women is compelling. As the world struggles with the dual threats of the climate crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbated by the global economic downturn, women entrepreneurs and leaders offer promising potential in catalyzing economic growth and a circular economy.

The Women of Waste (WOW!) session therefore focusses on WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING. The session showcases inspiring and pioneering investment models, development projects and related research focusing on women's economic empowerment in SWM, including access to finance, entrepreneurship, the informal sector, circular economy, and innovation.

Our expert guest panels share current examples, obstacles, and opportunities for advancing the role of women in a green economic recovery with sustainable solid waste management.

Speakers

Session 1 – Making the Case for Policy Makers

Speaker 1

Name: **Dr Melanie Samson** – Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Johannesburg



Bio: Melanie Samson is an Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Johannesburg. Her current research focuses on the labour and struggles of reclaimers/waste pickers. She facilitated the multi-stakeholder process to develop the South African government's Guideline on Waste Picker Integration for South Africa and is currently running a project funded by the Government of Japan and UNIDO that is conducting training and capacity building to support the implementation of the Guideline.

Links: Waste Picker Integration Guideline for South Africa
<http://sawic.environment.gov.za/documents/13012.pdf>

Gender and waste workers articles

https://www.municipalservicesproject.org/sites/municipalservicesproject.org/files/publications/Samson-2003-Dumping_on_Women_Gender_privatisation_waste_management.pdf

https://www.wiego.org/sites/default/files/publications/files/Samson_antipode_producing_privatization_final.pdf

Speaker 2

Name: **Dr Sonia Dias** – WIEGO Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing, Brazil



Bio: Sonia Maria Dias, PhD, is a waste specialist for WIEGO. Her experience encompasses: city officer in Belo Horizonte municipal sanitation agency, Brazil, consultancy for GIZ, ILO, WB. She is a member of the observatory for Inclusive Recycling and the Waste and Citizenship Forum and had served as Latin American representative to the Collaborative Working Group on Solid Waste Management. She is a pro-bono associate researcher with the Women's Centre for Research and Studies -NEPEM from the Federal University of Minas Gerais. Sonia Dias has expertise in gender dynamics in waste work, solid waste management, informal recycling, recycling cooperatives, dump closures and waste. She works to empower the working poor, especially women in the informal economy to secure their livelihoods.

Links: www.wiego.org

1m teaser video on the upcoming WIEGO gender and waste project

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1N7cIXYRu6dFFuolwpTR6dJTCWykPEAoG/view?usp=drivesdk>

Speaker 3

Name: **Valerie Geen** – National Coordinator, South Africa (presenting the UNIDO project on the Economic Empowerment of Women in Green Industry (EEWiGI))



Bio: Valerie is the National Coordinator in South Africa for the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation's (UNIDO's) Global Programme on the Economic Empowerment of Women in Green Industry. This role has included policy research, capacity building and a programme of action prioritizing gender equality in the sectors of Renewable Energy, Waste Management and Road Transport. Valerie's rich experience in leading collaborative and innovative initiatives particularly between government and the private sector, has included strategic and practical responses to Climate Change, Industrial Energy Efficiency and the Green Economy. She has also played an advisory role for UNIDO's programmes. She is currently completing a Masters in Management of Energy Leadership at Wits Business School.

Links: Synthesis of the EEWiGI four country reports.

<https://www.unido.org/resources-publications-safeguarding-environment/green-industry-publications-and-documents>

[WOMEN IN GREEN INDUSTRY: How gender-transformative policies can boost women's economic empowerment](#) – Infographic pdf

Session 2 – Innovative Programming

Speaker 4

Name: **Silvia Petrova** - Urban and Ocean Plastics Specialist, USAID, USA



Bio: Silvia Petrova is an Environment Officer with U.S Agency for International Development and part of the Green Cities division in the Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation. She co-leads the Agency's work on preventing ocean plastic pollution by focusing on sustainable solid waste management and recycling approaches in developing countries. Ms. Petrova also leads gender inclusion and women's economic empowerment work across the ocean plastic portfolio. Her USAID experience also includes integrating geospatial technology to support land governance cross-sectoral programming.

Prior to joining USAID, her work was focused on applied geospatial analysis for climate change mitigation and adaptation solutions in the agriculture and forestry sectors. Ms. Petrova holds a master's degree in Geospatial Information Science for Development and Environment from Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, USA and both a bachelor's and a master's degree in Computer Science from Technical University, Sofia, Bulgaria.

Links: [OCEAN PLASTICS](#)

Speaker 5

Name: **Dr Laurie Krieger** - Social and Behavior Change and Gender Director, USAID Clean Cities Blue Ocean Program, USA



Bio: Laurie Krieger is the Social and Behavior Change and Gender Director for the USAID Clean Cities, Blue Ocean program. She has a Ph.D. in anthropology and more than 30 years of experience in gender and in social and behavior change for international development. She served as a Fellow in the USAID Women in Development Office, has been a staff member of an international NGO, and worked as an independent consultant. For the past 22 years, Dr. Krieger has been the Senior Advisor, Health and Social Science for The Manoff Group, a woman-owned small business focusing on social and behavior change, where she has led gender.

Links: [Clean Cities Blue Oceans](#)

Speaker 6

Name: **Anna De Chavez** - USAID Clean Cities Blue Oceans Program, Philippines



Bio: Anna De Chavez is the Women in Waste Economic Empowerment Activity Manager of the USAID Clean Cities, Blue Ocean program. She has 23 years of professional experience in development finance, creating products and solutions for local businesses through unique financing approaches coupled with capacity-building interventions. Before joining CCBO, she was the Retail Lending Department Head for Credit Access Philippines.

Links: www.urban-links.org/ccbo

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o1OS7ix1BkA>

Session 3 – Private Investing and Ethical Relationships

Speaker 7

Name: **Dr. Jenna R Jambeck** - Georgia Athletic Association Distinguished Professor in Environmental Engineering, & New Materials Institute, Center for Circular Materials Management, University of Georgia, USA



Bio: Jenna Jambeck, is a professor in the College of Engineering, National Geographic Fellow and is internationally recognized for her research on plastic waste in the ocean and for the Marine Debris Tracker app she co-created with fellow faculty member Kyle Johnsen. She notes that being active in research helps bring current environmental engineering issues into the classroom for students.

Links: [JENNA JAMBECK - Ocean Plastic](#)

<http://jambeck.engr.uga.edu/>

Co-moderator 8

Name: **Maria Tsakona**, WOW! Task Force Leader, Founder Qgreen Environmental Consultancy, Greece



Bio: Maria Tsakona is an International Waste Management Consultant, Senior waste and marine litter expert of GRID-Arendal, Norway (A UNEP partner), Founder of Qgreen (qgreen.gr) consultancy firm, Chair of the ISWA Women of Waste Task Force and Researcher of the ISWA Marine Litter Task Force. She has more than 15 years of experience in directing and managing environmental engineering projects in the field of solid waste management: formulation of waste management plans and strategies, reuse and recycling programs, environmental impact assessment studies and feasibility studies. She has participated in several EU funded projects with expertise on plastic pollution and

marine litter.

Co-moderator / Speaker 9

Name: **Delila Khaled** – Impact Partner, Global Bio Fund, Egypt/USA



Bio: Delila is committed to accelerating positive impact in the world. For the past 25 years she has advanced inclusive economic growth and women's economic empowerment across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. She has designed and managed multi-million-dollar programs for USAID, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, UNICEF, and the World Bank in more than 20 countries. Working with the public, private, and informal sectors, Delila ensures that women's considerations are integrated into policies, international donor programs, and institutional reforms. She has been at the forefront of mainstreaming microfinance and advancing the role of women in the global recycling sector to better combat ocean plastics pollution. Delila designed USAID's first municipal waste and recycling

program in Southeast Asia and led the agency's pioneering global study of women's economic empowerment in the waste and recycling sector.

An entrepreneur at heart, Delila has led non-profit and for-profit startups – including the Development Innovations Group and the Center for Global Policy – and advises women entrepreneurs in the US and globally on business strategy. As Impact Partner with Global Bio Fund – a fund investing in women-owned and -led business in the life sciences – she supports entrepreneurs in emerging markets with business strategy and ensures that that fund investments align with gender equity and environmental impact goals.

Co-moderator 10

Name: **Georgina Nitzsche**, WOW! Task Force Coordinator, Independent Development & Communication Consultant, UK/Austria



Bio: Georgina Nitzsche recently came to waste management from the Development sector, working on issues of human security, capacity building and community engagement in Europe, Western Asia and the Middle East with a focus on female empowerment and security. She holds a MSc in Sustainable Development and Climate Change and specializes in management and communication for international development projects for civil society, government and international organizations such as the OSCE, UNDP, and Women without Borders.