Welcome to the webinar: EPR in Practice: Lessons from Waste Picker Organisations Around the World

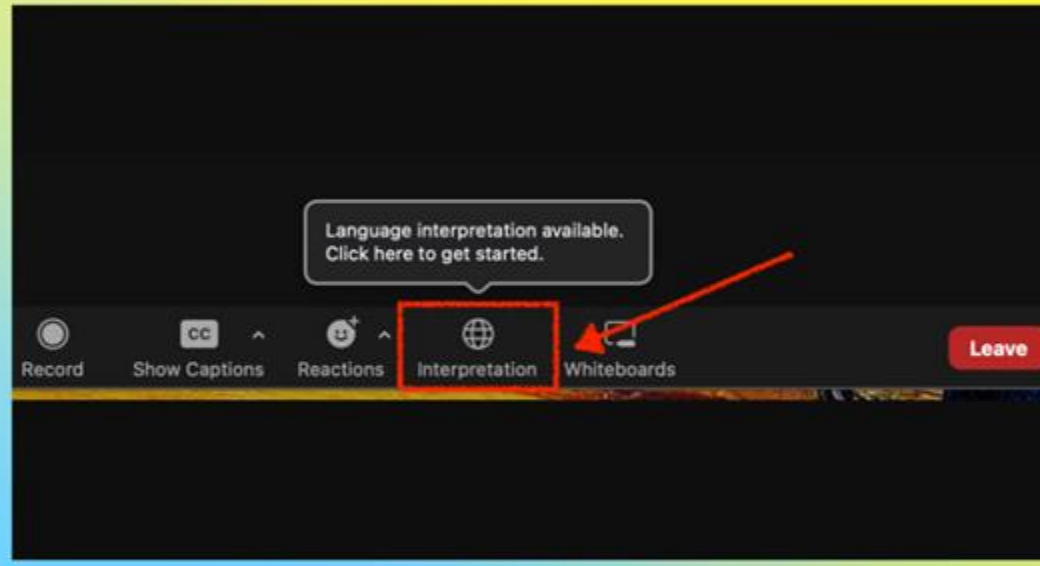
EPR
Global Action Partnership

We will start in a few minutes!

Interpretation - between English and Spanish

You can find the “**Interpretation**” icon

- either in the bar at the bottom of the screen
- or under the three dots at the far right of the bar



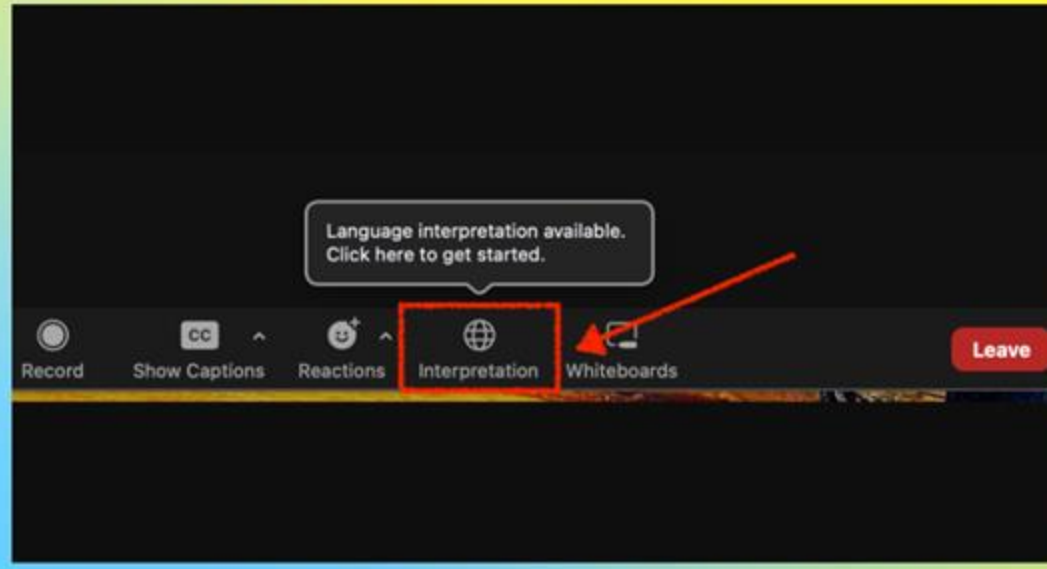
Here you can choose between

- Original audio (interpretation off) - (if you speak both languages)
- English - (to follow in English)
- Spanish - (to follow in Spanish)

Interpretación - entre inglés y español

Puedes encontrar el icono de "Interpretación“

- Opción 1: en la barra inferior de la pantalla
- Opción 2: bajo los tres puntos en el extremo derecho de la barra



Aquí puedes elegir entre

- Audio original (interpretación desactivada) - (si hablas ambos idiomas)
- Inglés - (a continuación, en inglés)
- Español - (a continuación, en español)

Webinar Series | Cooperation with the Informal Sector: Key Pillar to Successful EPR Implementation

1. Yunus Environment Hub
2. MAREA, Malaysia
3. PAKPRO Kenya & Kenya's Centre for Environment Justice and Development
4. Fair Circularity Initiative Secretariat Indonesia
5. ANCAT and WIEGO Brazil
6. Reverse Logistics Group Peru
7. Today: final session with International Alliance of Waste Pickers

Presentations & Recordings: Webinar Series | Cooperation with the Informal Sector: Key Pillar to Successful EPR Implementation - Global Action Partnership for EPR

Today‘s speakers

EPR
Global Action Partnership

Pietro Luppi

National Network of Secondhand Operators Association (Rete ONU)

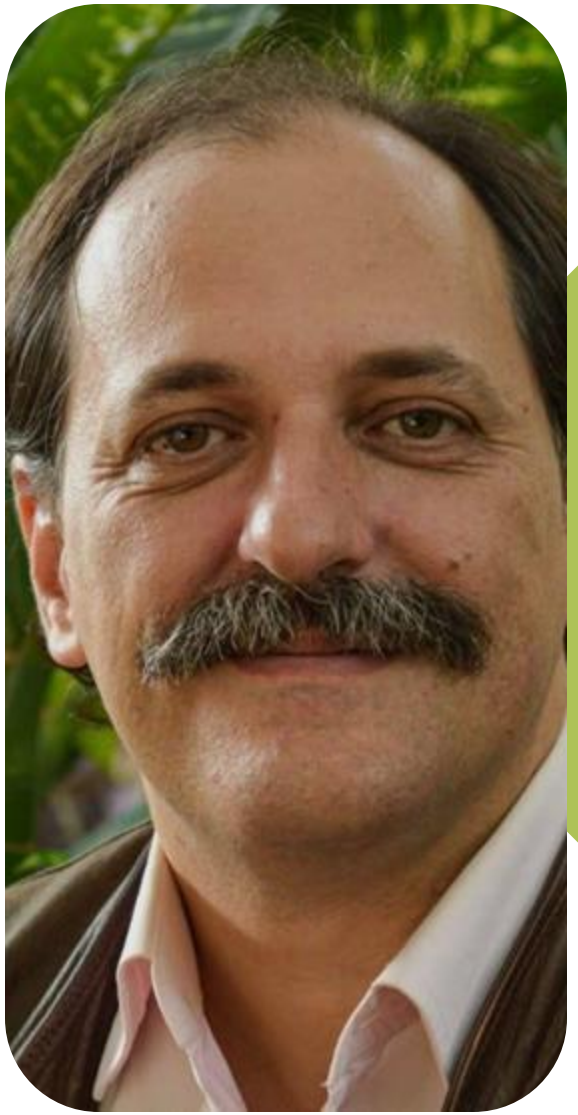
Soledad Mella

Asociación Nacional de Recicladores de Chile (ANARCH)

Luyanda Hlatshwayo

The African Reclaimers Organization (ARO)

Waste picker's Perspective on EPR and a look at the Global North



Pietro Luppi

Italian Network of Secondhand Operators (Rete ONU) - Chair of IAWP Advocacy Subcommittee

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WASTE PICKERS

The Main Issues of EPR in Global North

1. No Recognition

Waste Pickers were never taken into account in the architecture of the Global North EPR system.

2. No Integration

When EPR is integrated with municipal waste collection, and when it introduces DRS, the new operation schemes and their economic scale tend to push out micro-scale and informal operators

3. Unclear Future

Following packaging EPR, textile and furniture EPR is coming. If the approach remains unchanged, hundreds of thousand of Waste Pickers involved in reuse activities will be also pushed out of the system.

Key Learning Points

1. Participating in the policy-making processes where the circularity laws and policies are defined, it is fundamental to not be excluded from the new scenario
2. The microscale condition of our work brings important and irreplaceable elements of efficiency, and a big potential of improvement. Not only for our sake but for the collectivity sake. However, our fragmentation and lack of economic accumulation make more difficult to carry on effective advocacy paths
3. The EPR system in Europe is not perfect. It has serious problems of efficiency, and structural problems that hinder the reaching of the environmental goals.
4. One of the EPR problems is its incapacity to be more competitive upon environmental crime.

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WASTE PICKERS

Conclusions

1. Global North Waste Pickers often live beneath policy-making processes orientated by decision- makers that are very far from the territory. EU has 450 million inhabitants located in 27 member States. USA has 340 million inhabitants located in 48 States. Wide network of Waste Pickers are necessary to reach the decisioner
2. Waste Pickers should be seen not as “an issue to solve” but as the possible solution to the weakness of the system.
3. Participation of Waste Pickers, among other things, could shed light on the grey zones of the system, leading our “parallel” collections to the more transparent channels, and contributing to overcome the environmental crime.

The challenges of EPR based on the experience of waste pickers in South Africa

Luyanda Hlatshwayo

African Reclaimers Organization (ARO)

The Main Issues

1. Limited Recognition and Inclusion

Waste pickers are often not fully recognized as key actors in the recycling value chain.
Decision-making processes are frequently dominated by industry and government, with limited meaningful participation by waste picker organizations.
Consultation may occur, but waste pickers are not always involved in planning, governance, and implementation

2. Unequal Access EPR Benefits

EPR funds are intended to support collection and recycling systems, but many waste pickers struggle to access these resources.
Benefits often reach larger waste management companies and intermediaries before reaching waste pickers.
Lack of transparency regarding how EPR funds are allocated can create mistrust.

3. Weak or no Integration with Municipal Systems

Coordination between municipalities, Producer Responsibility Organisations (PROs), and waste picker organizations is often inconsistent.
Waste pickers may be displaced when municipalities introduce new collection systems.
Roles and responsibilities are not always clearly defined.

Key Learning Points

1. Government should Recognize waste pickers in policy and legislation for integration programmes. Ensure participation in decision-making.
2. Producers and PROs must Invest in waste picker-led collection systems. Develop responsible sourcing programmes and provide infrastructure and business support.
3. Municipalities must Partner with waste picker organizations include us in separation-at-source programmes to facilitate access to recyclable materials.

Conclusions

1. From an informal sector perspective, EPR should not only be about meeting recycling targets. It should also be about creating a fair, inclusive, and sustainable recycling system that recognizes the contribution of waste pickers and improves their livelihoods.
2. A successful EPR system is one that delivers both environmental outcomes and social justice. Waste pickers are not a problem to be solved—they are essential partners in building a circular economy.

Retos Oportunidades desde la experiencia de la Ley de EPR en Chile y una perspectiva del Sur Global.

“Sin recicladores no hay economía circular justa”.

Soledad Mella

Asociación Nacional de Recicladores de Chile (ANARCH)

De la informalidad a la formalidad

- Certificación de competencias laborales.
- Reconocimiento certificado.
- Profecionales del reciclaje.

Dignificación del oficio

- Inversión
- Condiciones Dignas
- Infraestructura.
- Maquinaria.

¿Qué sostienen los recicladores de base?

Cumplen una función ambiental, económica y social que conecta hogares, barrios y sistemas de gestión.

1

Recolectan

puerta a puerta
y desde puntos limpios

2

Clasifican

y separan materiales
para su valorización

3

Sostienen

Rutas, relaciones
y educación
ambiental

4

Recuperan valor

para la economía
circular y el territorio

Del trabajo invisible al reconocimiento como prestadores de servicio y actores de la transición justa.

Cómo se han organizado

La organización ha crecido desde lo territorial hacia la articulación nacional y la incidencia pública.

1

Base territorial

sindicatos, asociaciones y grupos por comuna

2

Articulación

ANARCH y redes regionales de coordinación

3

Escala productiva

cooperativas, centros de acopio y servicios asociados

4

Incidencia

Ley REP, convenios, negociación y derechos

Organizarse no solo mejora la voz colectiva: también permite trazabilidad, contratos, mejores condiciones y participación real.

Lo que ha permitido la organización

Más capacidad de negociación, mejor inserción en la REP y defensa del trabajo de base.

Voz colectiva

representación, negociación y defensa de derechos

Mejores condiciones

formalización con ingresos, seguridad y equipamiento

Inserción en la REP

trazabilidad, contratos y reconocimiento del servicio

Pero persisten

pagos bajos, contratos frágiles, falta de datos e infraestructura.

La clave no es solo “incluir”: es reconocer, contratar y co-diseñar el sistema con quienes ya lo hacen funcionar.

AGENDA PRIORITARIA

- Pago por servicio
- Contratos justos
- Infraestructura territorial
- Datos y trazabilidad
- Participación vinculante
- Federación
- Confederación

1 Pagar el servicio

2 Contratos estables

3 Infraestructura y logística

4 Trazabilidad y datos

5 Participación real

Experiencias en India

1. En India, a pesar de las normas de gestión de residuos sólidos que exigen la integración de los recolectores informales, la (REP) omitió por completo este requisito y las organizaciones de recolectores no se han beneficiado.
2. Los Sistemas de Depósito y retornabilidad en Goa,India, no solo perjudican a los recolectores informales al atraer más competencia al mercado, sino que tampoco ofrecen oportunidades claras para el trabajo formal dentro del sistema, que se propone automatizar y digitalizar en gran medida (lo que representa otra barrera).

Conclusiones para en el Sur Global

1. **La REP debe ser una herramienta de formalización, no de exclusión.** La Leyes REP como toda normativa debe cumplir con un enfoque de derechos e inclusión obligatoria. Si las empresas privadas se quedan con el "derecho" a recolectar los materiales reciclables, se desplaza y condena a la miseria a millones de personas que viven del reciclaje.
2. **Reconocimiento mediante Pago por Servicio Ambiental** (No solo por material). Las leyes REP nos deben reconocer explícitamente como prestadores formales de servicios para la gestión de residuos. Bajo la REP, los Sistemas de Gestión (financiados por las empresas que ponen envases en el mercado) deben reconocer una tarifa justa por el trabajo ambiental que realizamos.
3. "Nosotros no pedimos limosnas, **pedimos oportunidades.** Queremos ser dueños de nuestro trabajo, levantar nuestros propios centros de acopio y vivir con dignidad de lo que hacemos."

General conclusions

1. Mandatory inclusion of Waste Pickers in the negotiations with Government and Producers will enable their participation in the new EPR scenario, for the sake of collectivity.
2. The Waste Pickers contribution to the system should be economically recognized in law to align their standards and capacity to the expectations and objectives of circularity, and to improve their condition of life
3. Waste Pickers, if properly involved in traceability and transparency policies, through tools designed with their operational reality in mind, can become the sentinels of the system. The observation of waste supply chains as they really are, without drawing artificial boundaries in mapping and researches as is frequently done, shows an obvious truth: no real traceability and transparency is possible, without including Waste Pickers.

Questions & answers

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Thank you for your attention!

Connect with us on:

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