Evaluation of the Recycling with Reclaimers Pilot Project in Brixton and Auckland Park, Johannesburg

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Executive Summary

This report presents an evaluation of the Recycling with Reclaimers pilot project conducted in the Johannesburg suburbs of Brixton and Auckland Park in 2020. The pilot was led by the African Reclaimers Organisation (ARO), in partnership with Unilever and the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). It had a soft start in October 2019 and became fully operational in January 2020. The evaluation covers the period up to the end of October 2020.

A key motivation underpinning the pilot was to develop a model that would demonstrate that paying reclaimers to provide S@S collection services is a viable and preferable alternative to the contracting of private companies. The aim of the pilot was to improve the livelihoods of reclaimers and collection rates of recyclable material from households through recognition and compensation for reclaimers’ collection work and community behaviour change on waste.

The pilot sought to: 1) improve relationships between residents and reclaimers; 2) increase the number of households separating recyclables; 3) provide a regular collection service; 4) increase the recycling rate; 5) improve reclaimers’ working conditions; and 6) increase reclaimers’ incomes.

As detailed below, the pilot succeeded in providing a regular separation at source (S@S) collection service that increased the average kilograms collected by reclaimers and increased extraction of recyclables from the waste stream. The pilot made a significant difference in improving reclaimers’ relationships with residents, integration into the community, access to materials, and working conditions. The pilot did not increase incomes, as the funds to pay the service fee were redirected to COVID-19 relief for reclaimers across the city. The non-payment of the fee illustrated that unless reclaimers are paid a service fee to collect all recyclables (as is the case with private companies), some materials will be left behind and S@S will be undermined. The good relationships between the project partners, which improved significantly over time, were central to the pilot’s success and generated lessons for other collaborations.

Overview of the pilot

In Recycling with Reclaimers, 50 reclaimers received uniforms and identification cards associating them with the pilot. Each week reclaimers: gave residents plastic bags for their recyclables; collected full bags of recyclables; had their bags weighed; and were subsequently paid R0.50 per kilogram collected as a service fee. ARO planned and managed all pilot implementation activities, working closely with the Brixton Community Forum and Auckland Park Residents Association. Due to widespread hunger amongst reclaimers when the Level 5 COVID-19 lockdown prevented them from working for 5 weeks in March and April of 2020, the funds for the service fee were re-directed to purchase staple foods, sanitisers, and masks for reclaimers across the city. As a result, the service fee was paid for only a portion of the pilot.

Methodology

The evaluation is based on resident and reclaimer surveys, semi-structured interviews with key informants (including residents, reclaimers, the local councillor, ARO, and Unilever), a group interview with key officials at the Waterval Pikitup Depot, semi-structured interviews with participating reclaimers, and geo-tagging of recyclables put out for collection. The reclaimer survey is representative of reclaimers in the pilot. The inability to conduct face-to-face resident
survey interviews due to COVID-19 resulted in a poor response rate and unrepresentative sample, meaning that the findings of the resident survey cannot be generalised.

**Key findings**

**Relationships between residents and reclaimers**

Resident key informants were unanimous that the biggest success of the pilot was the improved relationship between residents and reclaimers. 88% of residents surveyed had a positive general perception of reclaimers, with 38% reporting that their perceptions had been improved by the pilot. In addition, 29% of residents said that the pilot addressed key problems they previously had with reclaimers. This was supported by the local councillor, who said that while she had negative experiences and problems with reclaimers in other parts of her ward, the pilot was “phenomenal”. Residents identified four key factors that improved their perceptions of reclaimers: 1) familiarity from seeing the same people every week (79%), nametags (61%), awareness and education about reclaimers’ work and lives (58%), and the wearing of uniforms (49%).

Residents also valued reclaimers’ work. 99% reported that reclaimers’ work is important. There was strong recognition of reclaimers’ contributions, with the top four identified being environmental (97%), reduction of waste going to landfill (93%), economic (69%), and saving money for the municipality (49%). Some residents expressed their appreciation and solidarity by setting up tables with tea and snacks for reclaimers, as well as leaving out tinned food and soapy water for them to sanitise themselves during COVID-19.

Residents, the councillor, and reclaimers all identified resident education and reclaimer participation in community events and clean ups as crucial to the transformation of relationships. Several resident key informants highlighted ARO’s engagement with children, with one noting that at the Brixton Christmas market, “all the reclaimers helped the kids make superhero outfits, we figured out that if you put the kids on the trolleys the capes fly. It was a very awesome moment”. ARO also ran workshops at the local crèche and schools. Another key informant noted that the reclaimers’ relationship with local children meant that the whole family could be involved in the pilot.

These new relations changed reclaimers’ status in the pilot area. While in the Baseline 22% of reclaimers felt valued or extremely valued, this increased to 60% in the Evaluation. 75% of reclaimers said that as a result of the pilot it was easier to approach residents. 98% of reclaimers felt welcome in Brixton and Auckland Park, 95% felt they were part of the community, and 85% said that this improved since the start of the pilot. The residents shared similar sentiments, as just over ¾ said that reclaimers were part of the community. The local councillor likened the reclaimers to a satellite of her ward, who were stakeholders as much as any resident, and advocated for them in areas where they lived. Summing up the effects of these transformed relationships, one reclaimer poignantly stated that as a result of the pilot, “I actually, I felt like I was one of the many counted here in South Africa.”
Resident participation in Separation at Source

Resident champions, participating reclaimers, and ARO put significant effort into encouraging households to separate recyclables and participate in the pilot. In addition to the educational workshops and participation in community activities, ARO representatives and reclaimers distributed information sheets, went door-to-door approaching residents, produced weekly digital posters for residents that provided updates and information on kilograms of recyclables collected, spoke at public meetings, made concerted efforts to address problems raised by residents, and gave participating residents stickers donated by PETCO to put on their garbage bins announcing that they recycled with reclaimers. Reclaimers emphasised that developing personal relationships increased resident participation.

The Champions sent regular messages to resident WhatsApp groups, spoke to residents to encourage them to participate, shared information on the pilot in community newsletters, forwarded the weekly reports from ARO, responded to questions from residents, engaged ARO to ensure that resident concerns and problems were resolved, and provided regular feedback to ARO on how the service and pilot could be improved. Due to COVID-19, in-person outreach activities were discontinued, reducing the level of community activation.

98% of residents in the survey separated recyclables in their homes, indicating that people who value recycling were more likely to participate in the online survey. Due to that bias in the sample, it is not possible to rely on their survey data to identify broader changes in the number of households separating materials. However, the pilot clearly made a difference to the residents’ own separation practices. Two thirds said that receiving the bags from ARO encouraged them to separate their materials and 95% said that giving residents bags improves participation. Two thirds of the reclaimers, the people who actually collected the bags of recyclables, reported some increase in the number of residents separating materials since the pilot started.

Collection service

The pilot succeeded in providing an effective collection service. Almost ¾ of residents surveyed identified regular collection of recyclables as the key benefit of the pilot. The local councillor stated that the pilot was 100% more effective and efficient than the Pikitup and cooperative recycling initiatives that preceded it. The Pikitup Waterval Depot reported that due to the pilot, their waste collection trucks did fewer rounds and finished earlier in Brixton and Auckland Park, demonstrating the benefits of the pilot for Pikitup. Depot representatives and the councillor advocated the extension of the pilot to other parts of the city, as did 92% of residents surveyed.

Like any new initiative, the pilot experienced teething problems. Residents identified not receiving bags (69%) and non-collection of bags (34%) as key problems with the service. Others included lack of a regular collection route, other reclaimers collecting the bags, other reclaimers being pushed out, slow response times, and reclaimers not taking all materials. Resident key informants were aware that inadequate funding and the related inadequate human resources and managerial capacity underpinned the problems. The ARO Organising Team members who led the project implementation ensured its success by sacrificing significant amounts of time and income to keep the project running. As noted above, ARO and the Champions worked together to address problems, and several highlighted that the creation of a common WhatsApp group made it much easier to do so. As the pilot progressed, ARO recruited more reclaimers into the pilot, although not all were reached and some did not want to join.
While 20% of residents complained that reclaimers left a mess on the street, their own behaviour contributed to this. 95% of reclaimers found trash in the ARO recycling bags and 98% still salvaged from bins because residents threw recyclables away with their rubbish. As a result, reclaimers had to dig through bags to remove trash and through bins to extract recyclables. Correct resident participation would make a significant contribution to addressing residents’ problem with reclaimers making a mess. COVID-19 was also a factor, as markets crashed for a number of recyclables, and because reclaimers were not paid the service fee, it was not viable for them to collect recyclables that had too little or no value. Better communication with residents about what could be sold and therefore put in the bags could have reduced the amount of materials left behind.

Recyclables collected

Between March 3, 2020 and October 27, 2020, the reclaimers collected 187,279 kilograms of recyclable materials in the pilot area. It is important to note that this period includes the five weeks when reclaimers were not permitted to work due to the COVID-19 Stage 5 lockdown. The average daily weight of recyclables collected by each reclaimer rose from 117.34kg in the first four weeks of March 2020 to an average of 144.5kg throughout the period from March 3 – October 27, 2020. If all of the approximately 8000 reclaimers in the city were to collect the average kgs collected by reclaimers at the very start of the pilot, it would take them just 27.7 days to collect the 25,991 tonnes of recyclables collected by Pikitup and all of its contracted private companies and cooperatives in 2018/2019. Using the average amount collected with the pilot’s intervention, it would take only 22.5 days.

Reclaimers have more incentive to collect the maximum amount of recyclables than private companies, as reclaimers are paid for what they collect, while private companies in Johannesburg are paid a flat fee per household whether or not they collect recyclables from a household. Another key reason reclaimers collect significantly more recyclables is that while private companies and cooperatives only collect the separated bags, virtually all reclaimers in the pilot continued to salvage from bins. 29% said that this was because they were looking for things other than recyclables, but 96% said that this was because residents continued to throw away recyclables. On October 27, 2020, thirteen reclaimers were supported to keep recyclables salvaged from rubbish bins separated from the recyclables in the separated bags. 71% of the recyclables came from the bins and 29% from the bags. Provision of separation at source collection services by reclaimers while residents move towards full compliance means that the maximum amount of recyclables are diverted from landfills.

The materials most collected by reclaimers were, in descending order: plastic, plastic bottles (PET), cardboard, and paper. The materials that brought them the most value were: plastic, plastic bottles (PET), paper, and steel. Reclaimers also collected reusable materials such as old appliances, food, old clothes, and old shoes left out for them by residents or salvaged from bins.

Working conditions

Reclaimers’ working conditions improved in several ways. One explained that “the plastics [for separated recyclables] are very helpful. In the dustbins you may find dog faeces, maize porridge, and non-recyclables”. However, this improvement was not as great as expected, as almost all reclaimers continued to salvage from bins due to poor and incorrect participation by residents.
The main improvements in reclaimers’ working conditions derived from better relationships with both other reclaimers and residents. Reclaimers identified receiving a uniform as the top benefit of participating in the pilot (65%), focusing on how the uniform decreased harassment and increased their access to materials. One said: “I have received an overall, and even places where we could not enter, we can now enter”. Another added: “the residents would say ‘the person who works there is in greens and he’s got a badge of ARO, we all know him’”. This indicates that improving reclaimers’ secure and legitimate access to materials is a crucial step to improving their working conditions, something that is relatively easy and quick to achieve.

Incomes

Due to both the redirection of funds from the service fee to COVID-19 relief and participant turnover, not all of the reclaimers surveyed for the evaluation had been paid the service fee. Those who received the payment benefited. When asked to identify the primary way the payment helped them, 75% said that they used it for necessities and 4% to pay for school fees, demonstrating the inadequacy of their regular incomes to cover their most basic needs. The reclaimers only received the service fee for materials collected one day per week. Extending the fee to all recyclables collected would make an important difference to reclaimers’ incomes and their families’ quality of life.

Recommendations

The Evaluation report includes an extensive list of recommendations for pilot, collaborations between reclaimers and non-reclaimer partners, and other pilots and programmes on integration and S@S, as well as some general recommendations.

**Key recommendations for the pilot** include: 1) continue and expand the pilot for a period long enough to assess effects on resident behaviour; 2) raise funds to reactivate the service fee; 3) budget for and fund all aspects of the pilot, including monitoring and evaluation; 4) deepen relationships with BCF and APRA and work with them to establish relationships with resident associations in new pilot areas; 5) raise core funding for ARO; 6) seek more extensive partnering with Pikitup and the City; and 7) urgent registration of ARO as a legal entity.

**Some key recommendations for reclamer-resident collaborations** include: 1) develop strong relationships with the resident association, councillor, and waste management service provider; 2) create a team of resident Champions; 3) champions should spend a day working with reclaimers in their area; 4) reclaimers should educate and engage residents through public meetings and participation in community events; 5) reclaimers should engage and educate children, and make include families in the programme; 6) establish a communication infrastructure and hold regular meetings; 7) agree on collection routes and schedules; 8) appoint street captains; 9) residents associations should connect and exchange ideas with their counterparts in other areas; 10) reclaimers and residents should have realistic expectations and time frames based on resources and time available.

**Recommendations for collaborations with corporates, industry, and municipalities** include: 1) representatives should have decision-making power; 2) all non-reclaimers should spend a day working with reclaimers and attend a reclamer meeting to understand more about how a democratic organisation works; 3) clear written agreements on principles and all aspects of the
collaboration should be jointly developed; 4) there should be full transparency and joint decision-making; 5) resources should be provided to enable full participation of the reclamer organisation; 6) reclaimers’ priorities should be prioritised; and 7) non-reclaimers should recognise their privilege, and unequal power relations should be proactively identified and addressed.

Some of the key **recommendations for other pilots and programmes** are: 1) follow the recommendations for collaborations; 2) recognise the centrality of social relationships to S@S and include strengthening relationships as a key goal; 3) provide pre-proposal funding; 4) do not rely on free labour by reclamer representatives; and 5) actively support reclamer organising as part of the programme, particularly when no organisations exist.

Four key **general recommendations** are that: 1) reclaimers should provide S@S collection services to ensure maximum extraction of recyclables; 2) other corporates, industries, and municipalities should pilot the organising and coordination approach to integrating individual reclaimers; 3) there is an urgent need for core funding for reclamer organisations from EPR levies and other sources; and 4) payment of a service fee appropriate to ensure collection should be paid on all materials included in S@S is necessary for successful S@S.
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Acronyms

ARO African Reclaimers Organisation
APRA Auckland Park Residents Association
BCF Brixton Community Forum
CSIR Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
EISD Environment and Infrastructure Services Department
IJRC Interim Johannesburg Reclaimers Committee
S@S Separation at Source
UNIDO United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
Wits University of the Witwatersrand
1. Introduction

This report presents an evaluation of the Recycling with Reclaimers pilot project conducted by the African Reclaimers Organisation (ARO), in partnership with Unilever and the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). The pilot was conducted in the Johannesburg suburbs of Brixton and Auckland Park. Work to design the pilot began in April 2019. The pilot implementation had a soft start in October 2019 and became fully operational in January 2020.

The evaluation was conducted between August and October 2020, with additional interviews conducted subsequently to address gaps in the draft report and delve more into the governance of the pilot. The evaluation report draws on and engages the pilot baseline study conducted by Social Surveys in September and October 2019 (Social Surveys 2019).

National and local context

The pilot project took place in the context of wider developments in national policy on waste management and reclaimers. ARO was a key participant in the participatory process to develop national government’s Waste Picker Integration Guideline for South Africa (DEFF, 2020a), which was completed in 2019 and published in 2020.1

Building on the Guideline, the 2020 National Waste Management Strategy (DEFF, 2020b) requires all metropolitan municipalities to implement waste picker integration in 2021. In addition, starting in 2022, industry must pay reclaimers a service fee as part of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). The experience of running the pilot and the findings of the evaluation provide valuable insights that can help to inform each of these processes.

At a local level, the pilot was developed at a time when the City of Johannesburg and its Pikitup waste management utility were expanding the contracting of for-profit companies to provide separation at source (S@S) collection services. These contracts had extremely negative effects for reclaimers, as the contracted companies collected the same materials that reclaimers salvaged to meet their family’s basic needs (Samson et al., 2020). Although there was increasing recognition of these problems in government, municipal and industry circles, there was a pervasive sense that it would not be possible for reclaimers to provide a S@S collection service.

Motivation

Arising out of this context, a key motivation underpinning the pilot was to develop a model that would demonstrate that paying reclaimers to provide S@S collection services is a viable and preferable alternative to the contracting of private companies.

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1 The Guideline can be found at: https://wasteroadmap.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Waste-Picker-Integration-Guidelines.pdf
Aim

The aim of the pilot project was to improve livelihoods of reclaimers and collection rates of recyclable material from households through recognition and compensation for reclaimers’ collection work and community behaviour change on waste.

Key components of the pilot

In South Africa and around the world, reclaimers are stigmatised, ostracised, criminalised, harassed, and seen as “scavengers” who pose threats to the wealthier neighbourhoods where they salvage their materials. Transforming and strengthening relationships between reclaimers and residents was therefore a core component of the project, and the Brixton Community Forum (BCF) and Auckland Park Residents Association (APRA) were crucial partners. Other key components included paying reclaimers for the collection service that they provided (which no other project in South Africa has done to date) and developing an approach to integrate individual reclaimers (in a co-ordinated way), rather than forcing them to form cooperatives to be integrated.2

Indicators

The key indicators of project success established at the beginning of the pilot were:

1. Increased number of households separating recyclables in the pilot area
2. Regular collection of bags of separated recyclables by reclaimers
3. Increased recycling rate
4. Increased income for reclaimers
5. Improved working conditions for reclaimers
6. Improved relationships between reclaimers and residents

Overall assessment

As detailed below, the pilot succeeded in providing a regular S@S collection service that increased the average kilograms collected by reclaimers, increased extraction of recyclables from the waste stream, and was more effective than Pikitup and cooperative collection services that preceded it. The pilot made a significant difference in improving reclaimers’ relationships with residents, integration into the community, access to materials, and working conditions. The pilot did not increase incomes, as the funds to pay the service fee were redirected to COVID-19 relief for reclaimers across the city. The non-payment of the fee illustrated that

2 According to the Godfrey et al. (2015), 92% of cooperatives in the waste sector fail. In addition, reclaimers value their independence and the control that they have over their own work. While some reclaimers choose to form democratic reclamer-controlled cooperatives, there is a need to develop ways to integrate reclaimers who choose to remain independent.
unless reclaimers are paid a service fee to collect all recyclables (as is the case with private companies), some materials will be left behind and S@S will be undermined. When services fees were received, they were primarily used to buy basic necessities, indicating the importance of paying reclaimers for the collection service they provide. The good relationships between the project partners, which improved significantly over time, were central to the pilot’s success and generated lessons for other collaborations.

**Overview of the report**

This evaluation is divided into fourteen sections – introduction; background; structure and components of the pilot; methodology; effect of COVID-19; basic information on participating reclaimers; relationships between residents and reclaimers; resident participation; collection service; benefits, working conditions and income; survey and key informant evaluation of the pilot and recommendations; lessons regarding collaborations and piloting; and conclusions and recommendations.

2. Background

2.1 ARO

ARO is a mass-based democratic movement of reclaimers, currently primarily based in Johannesburg. ARO organises reclaimers on landfills and in the street. It includes South Africans and reclaimers from other parts of the region (primarily Lesotho and Zimbabwe), and reports that it has 5000 members in Johannesburg.

ARO began its life as the Interim Johannesburg Reclaimers Committee (IJRC) in 2016, when reclaimers came together to oppose Pikitup’s intention to contract private companies to provide S@S projects, as reclaimers had already experienced the negative of such contracts outlined above. In 2017, the IJRC transformed into ARO.

*ARO meeting with pilot reclaimers*
2.2 Pilot partners and geographical focus

ARO, Unilever, and Wits began working on the pilot in April 2019, after Leadership Vanguard\(^3\) introduced ARO to Unilever as a potential donor and pilot partner. The pilot built on ARO’s existing reclamer-resident recycling initiatives in several suburbs, in which residents separate recyclables for reclaimers.

The Brixton Community Forum (BCF) was the first residents’ organisation to engage ARO about implementing a resident-reclaimer S@S programme. As relationships were well established, ARO decided that the pilot should be conducted in Brixton and the neighbouring suburb of Auckland Park. With this expansion, the Auckland Park Residents Association (ARPA) joined the project.

Even prior to the soft start of the official pilot in October 2019, ARO met regularly with the BCF and residents, and distributed recycling bags donated by PETCO, in which some residents placed their recyclables for collection. The pilot did not, therefore, start on a blank slate. This is important to bear in mind, as pilots that are starting from scratch may require additional preparation time in order to build relationships.

2.3 Pilot Theory of Change

The Baseline Report set out the pilot’s theory of change which is replicated here. The Theory of Change, presented Figure 1, was structured around a four-pronged logic:

1. recognition of reclaimers’ work by paying them a service fee for collected materials
2. improving collection rates by providing clear bags and a separate collection day for recyclables
3. improving recycling awareness by reclaimers educating residents in various ways
4. improving relationships between reclaimers and residents through the increased contact and respect established through awareness raising discussions and formal engagement regarding the separation bags.

In combination, these four strands were expected to lead to increased income levels for reclaimers, increased volumes of recyclables separated and collected, and improved working conditions and dignity for reclaimers. As noted in the Baseline Report (Social Surveys 2019), higher level systemic impacts of greater inputs to industry and savings for municipalities were understood to flow from the immediate impacts, but were outside the scope of the pilot, and hence of the Baseline and Evaluation studies. They are shown in the theory of change as ultimate impacts.

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\(^3\) See [https://xynteo.com/our-work/leadership-vanguard](https://xynteo.com/our-work/leadership-vanguard) for additional information on Leadership Vanguard.
3. Structure and components of the pilot

The key pilot project activities can be divided into three categories: planning and preparation, the collection service, and ARO implementation activities. These are briefly outlined below.

3.1 Planning and Preparation

1. Mandate – Before embarking on the pilot, the ARO coordinating committee (comprised of representatives from each area where ARO has members) discussed the idea of the pilot, engaged members to receive their input, and took collective decisions to: a)
develop and implement the pilot in partnership with Unilever and Wits; and b) conduct the pilot in Brixton and Auckland Park.

2. **Project Team** - ARO, Unilever, and Wits formed a project team and worked together for a number of months to agree on all aspects of the pilot.

3. **MOU and agreement on principles** – After initial tensions, the project team agreed on a set of principles to underpin the project and the ways the organisations would work together and provide information to the media and other external parties. The updated version of ARO’s principles of engagement are included as Annexure 1.

4. **Responsibilities** - The three partners worked together on all aspects of the pilot (with less involvement from Wits). In addition, each party had specific responsibilities. ARO was responsible for engaging and educating reclaimers about the pilot, securing reclamer support for and participation in the pilot, developing relationships with resident associations, engaging residents, and all aspects of planning and implementing the project on the ground. Unilever provided funding and personal protective equipment (PPE), held a media launch, created a short video, and built media interest in the project; Wits ensured that the project was informed by local and international research on waste picker integration and national policy developments, and assisted ARO and Unilever to develop common language and understandings (including understanding each other). As no funds were available for an evaluation, the Wits representative volunteered to lead a team (who either volunteered their time or received minimal payments) to conduct the evaluation.

5. **Additional support** – PETCO donated plastic bags and bins for residents’ recyclables, a scale, and stickers for residents declaring they recycle with reclaimers; the Goethe Institute donated reusable hessian bags for recyclables that were co-designed with ARO; Polyco donated a scale and Pack-a-Ching unit; Packaging South Africa, PETCO, Polyco, Fibre Circle, and The Glass Recycling Company sponsored the baseline study.

6. **Participants** - Fifty reclaimers who were already working in the area were recruited to participate in the project and received education from the ARO representatives regarding all aspects of the pilot. Each reclamer was provided with a uniform and an identity card that affiliated them to the project. The cards included their name, a photo, and a unique participant number. As discussed below, there was turnover in participants during the course of the pilot.

7. **Baseline** - Prior to the commencement of the pilot, a baseline study was conducted by Social Surveys (2019).
8. **Reclaimer - Resident engagement** - A number of meetings were held between ARO, the BCF, and APK to secure wider resident understanding and support, and to discuss how the project would be implemented on the ground.

9. **Resident education by reclaimers** – Prior to and during the pilot, ARO distributed information pamphlets to residents about the pilot, which materials to separate, and how to participate. ARO also participated in community events where they shared information and developed relationships with residents. The BCF held public seminars in which ARO and Wits provided information on who reclaimers are, the work that they do, the contributions they make, why it is crucial for reclaimers to provide S@S services rather than private companies, how they pilot works, and how residents could participate.

10. **Resident education by resident “pilot champions”** - The BCF and APRA provided information on the pilot to residents via resident WhatsApp groups, encouraging residents to participate.

11. **Implementation strategy** - ARO developed an implementation strategy and informally built internal capacity to conduct the pilot.

3.2 **The collection service**

1. **The service** – In the pilot, ARO provided a weekly service to collect recyclables separated by residents in specific areas in Brixton and Auckland Park.

2. **Distribution of bags** - Each week, participating reclaimers gave residents clear plastic bags (sponsored by PETCO) for recyclables and collected the full bags. Initially the bags were collected on Mondays, but this was subsequently changed to Tuesdays (see Section 9 below for discussion of the reason for this change). During the course of the pilot, some residents began to use 240l recycling bins provided by PETCO. Most preferred to use bags due to high levels of theft of bins.

3. **Collection of recyclables** - Participating reclaimers collected the bags put out by residents. As many residents continued to place recyclables in their rubbish bins, the reclaimers also continued salvaging materials from the bins. This had not been anticipated in the design of the project, but bore important results discussed in Section 9 of this report.

4. **Weighing recyclables** - Once the participating reclaimers finished collecting recyclables in Brixton and Auckland Park, they pulled their trolleys to Kingston Frost Park in Brixton to be weighed on a scale donated by PETCO.
5. **Payment of service fee** - Reclaimers were paid a service fee of R0.50/kg for collecting the recyclables. As discussed in Section 5, the payment ceased during the COVID-19 level 5 lockdown so that the funds could be used for emergency food relief.

6. **Regular preparation and sale of materials** - After weighing the recyclables, reclaimers transported the materials to their regular sorting spaces, where they sorted and cleaned the materials and prepared them for sale. The participating reclaimers sold the materials to the buyback centres of their choice, mixed together with materials of the same types of materials collected on other days, in other areas.

7. **Sweeping up truck** - Once the pilot had commenced, ARO began to use a truck to do a “sweep up” at the end of the day to collect any materials that had not been taken by the reclaimers. The truck was necessary as: residents placed rubbish in the recycling bags and, particularly once the service fee was not paid, reclaimers did not collect materials with little or no value. ARO initially rented a truck using project funds. When UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organisation) donated a four tonne truck to ARO in October 2020, this truck was used in the pilot.

8. **Weekly information poster for residents** - ARO produced a weekly WhatsApp poster for residents with information on how many recyclables had been collected. BCF and ARPA distributed the poster to residents via WhatsApp.

9. **Champions engaging residents** - Resident “champions” played an active, ongoing role in providing information on the pilot to residents, encouraging residents to participate, conveying problems encountered by residents to ARO, and assisting in resolving problems. During the course of the pilot, a “Champions” WhatsApp group including representatives from BCF, APRA, ARO and Wits, as well as the local councillor, was created as a space where information and updates could be shared, and where residents’ and reclaimers’ challenges and concerns were discussed and addressed.

### 3.3 ARO implementation activities

The weekly implementation of the pilot required significant work by the members of the ARO Organising Team leading implementation on the ground. Much of this work was not anticipated at the outset of the pilot, and was not well-understood by Unilever, the resident associations, or even other reclaimers in the pilot and ARO more generally. The work was conducted throughout the week, including evenings and weekends. It included:

1. transporting the scale to the park and setting it up
2. finding a place to store the scale
3. collecting new recycling bins and bags donated by PETCO from their storage space to distribute to residents
4. ensuring that each reclamer had recycling bags to distribute to the residents (including both the PETCO plastic bags and re-usable hessian bags when these were donated by the Goethe Institute)

5. educating reclaimers on what a pilot means, how it works, and why it was important to participate

6. educating reclaimers on why materials needed to be weighed and how it worked, and encouraging them to take the time and effort to weigh their materials

7. weighing the materials

8. recording and calculating the weights

9. producing the weekly feedback posters to residents with total weight collected and other information

10. engaging residents and responding to their complaints (received directly or from the resident champions)

11. collecting uncollected material

12. responding to individual requests for information and education from residents

13. engaging the Pikitup depot to ensure a harmonious relationship (including providing weight data, raising and addressing concerns and requesting support)

14. keeping in close contact with the resident champions via the Champions WhatsApp group

15. identifying and responding to problems and challenges encountered by reclaimers, as well as residents

16. actively engaging participating reclaimers and keeping them updated on project developments.

17. organising and coordinating the work of participating reclaimers, ensuring that participating reclaimers maintained discipline, and facilitating good relations between them

18. engaging non-participating reclaimers working in the area and recruiting them to join the project

19. driving the truck and doing sweep-up collections

20. negotiating agreement with Pikitup depot to provide skips at sorting spaces and collect waste that was disposed with recyclables

21. reporting back to ARO structures and receiving mandates

22. other ad hoc activities.
4. **Methodology**

The evaluation methodology and methods were based on those employed in the Baseline study. It was, however, necessary to make some changes due to COVID-19 restrictions, which has some implications for the comparability of some of the data (see below). Both studies included:

- key informant interviews with resident, reclaimer, and Pikitup representatives
- surveys of residents and reclaimers
- mapping and counting of recycling bags put out for collection
- weighing and analysis of kilograms of recyclables collected
- analysis of Pikitup data.

While the Baseline Study included focus groups with reclaimers, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Evaluation replaced these with individual semi-structured interviews with reclaimers.

4.1 **Key informant interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with two representatives of the BCF, two representatives of APRA, three members of the ARO organising team, the ARO organiser, two representatives of Unilever, and the local ward councillor. A group interview was held with the Pikitup Waterval Depot Manager, Operations Manager, and S@S Supervisor. These interviews sought to gain insight into the successes and challenges of the pilot project from the relevant parties’ perspectives. The interviews with the members of the ARO organising team were held outdoors and in compliance with COVID-19 protocols, and the interview with the Pikitup depot was held in a large, well-ventilated board room with COVID-19 protocols observed. All other key informant interviews were conducted over WhatsApp, Zoom or MS Teams.

4.2 **Semi-structured interviews with Reclaimers**

The Baseline study conducted two focus groups with participating reclaimers to learn more about their relationships with residents, working and living conditions, incomes, perspectives on resident recycling, and expectations of the pilot. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight participating reclaimers. The interviews focused on the same issues as in the Baseline, as well as on how reclaimers experienced the pilot and their reflections on its successes and challenges.

4.3 **Mapping**

The mapping of bags placed out for collection employed the same methodology as in the Baseline. Two teams of evaluators drove through the piloted suburbs on October 6, 2021 and geotagged the location of recyclable bags. The data from the Baseline and the Evaluation are somewhat unreliable for four reasons: 1) reclaimers collect some bags very early, and unknown numbers of bags were collected before the geotagging was done; 2) some residents put their
bags out later in the morning or give them directly to specific reclaimers, in which case they were not captured; 3) it was unclear in the Baseline whether bags of garden waste were included; and 4) on the Evaluation geotagging day it was raining, which possibly affected the number of residents who put out bags.

4.4 Surveys

4.4.1 Reclaimer Survey

The Reclaimer Baseline and Evaluation Surveys targeted reclaimers participating in the pilot. All fifty reclaimers at the start of the pilot participated in the Baseline Survey. Some reclaimers left after the Baseline, and additional reclaimers who had been working in the area joined. The overall number of regular participants remained relatively stable. Forty-six participants responded to the Evaluation Survey. The proportion of female respondents decreased from 11.1% to 6.5%.

Due to issues related to reclaimers’ levels of literacy, languages spoken, and lack of access to the internet, the Reclaimer Baseline and Evaluation surveys were both conducted in-person. The interviews were conducted while reclaimers waited to weigh their materials and in the areas where they sort. All COVID-19 protocols were observed when Evaluation surveys were conducted.

4.4.2 Resident Survey

The Resident Survey for the Baseline Report was conducted online and through in-person interviews in public spaces (a local shopping mall, a local park, and the streets). Due to COVID-19, it was not possible to do in-person interviews for the Resident Evaluation Survey, which was conducted only online through Google forms. Both online surveys were distributed via WhatsApp groups, email and Facebook pages. The BCF and APRA played key roles in encouraging resident participation in the surveys.

The inability to conduct in-person surveys had negative implications for the number of responses received and the demographics of the respondents to the Evaluation Survey. Seventy-three residents in Brixton and Auckland Park completed the Evaluation Survey between September and November 2020, significantly less than the 251 surveys completed for the 2019 Baseline Report.

While in the Baseline Survey there was an almost equal split between female respondents (52%) and residents who identified as male, non-binary, or preferred-not to disclose their gender identity (48%), the percent of women increased by 12% in the evaluation. The respondents to the Evaluation Survey were generally older, with an increase in the proportion of respondents in the 61+ age group from 11% in the Baseline to 28% in the Evaluation. The percent of students who participated in the surveys decreased from 24% to 10%. There was also a substantial difference in represented population groups between the two surveys. 45%
of respondents in the baseline survey were African, compared to only 3% in the evaluation, while the percentage of white respondents increased from 33% to 77%. 85% of residents in the evaluation are homeowners and 10% were residents. 59% have post-graduate degrees.

Given these differences and the challenges they create for comparing data from the two surveys, this Evaluation Report places greater emphasis on survey data related to respondents’ statements regarding changes in their own perceptions and actions. The report also highlights additional information on residents that was obtained through the mapping, reclamer surveys, key informant interviews, reclamer focus groups, and semi-structured interviews, which were not affected by the changed composition of resident survey responses.

5. Effect of COVID-19

The onset of COVID-19 in early 2020 impacted virtually all areas of work and life in South Africa and across the globe. It had negative implications for both the pilot and the evaluation of the pilot. Surprisingly, it also had a benefit for the pilot, which is discussed further below.

On March 26, 2020, the South African government imposed a highly restrictive phase 5 lockdown, which lasted until April 30, 2020. Reclaimers were not considered essential service providers and so were unable to work. As a result, the pilot came to a complete standstill for more than a month.

5.1 Negative effects of COVID-19 and lockdown

Reclaimers were not permitted to work for the first five weeks of the lockdown. As recycling companies also had not been able to operate, they had large stockpiles of recyclables to process, resulting in a dramatic drop in prices. Together with other informal and precarious workers, reclaimers in Johannesburg and across the country could not purchase food and other necessities. In the first months of the crisis, government did not provide specific support for reclaimers, and industry donations were insufficient, as were government measures when they were put in place.

5.2 Redirecting resources from the service fee to emergency support

Within this context, ARO decided that it would be inappropriate for a small number of members to receive additional income for payments for services while all of its members and reclaimers more generally were experiencing widespread hunger. With agreement from Unilever (the funder), ARO redirected the remaining funds intended to pay stipends were redirected to purchase and distribute food packages.

Participating reclaimers received extra food parcels and a second uniform as some compensation for the additional work they were required to perform (engaging residents, distributing bags, weighing materials etc.) to ensure that other aspects of the pilot continued and could be assessed. Some understood that it was important to complete the pilot so that the results could be used to inform future programmes and support ARO’s demands. One
reclaimer explained that he continued to be active as although the benefits were more limited than expected, he had experienced many improvements through the organisation and had confidence that the pilot would lead to positive changes.

However, an ARO Organising Team member noted that although the participants had agreed to the redirection of the payments, the lack of funds to pay the service fee created distrust, and despite their agreement, some still demanded money. Others could not understand why “they still see the truck driving up and down and yet we tell them that there is no money to pay for the kilos [kilograms of recyclables they collected]”. The Organising Team member explained that this meant that ARO project leaders needed to take on new work in educating and engaging participants:

My role actually - I work to motivate ‘abasebenzi’ [the workers/reclaimers]. Even though sometimes money is not enough for us to pay them, I am able to calm them down so that we work on negotiations in a relaxed manner. You see, when the [reclaimers] arrive with complaints, I tell them that they know that we are within the COVID-19 Pandemic, so when he comes back again next week, I use a different approach, and think of what else to tell him.

The discontinuation of the service fee also had implications for the pilot. While it ensured that more reclaimers received desperately needed support, participating reclaimers were asked to undertake additional work and activities during the pandemic crisis for only minimal reward. As discussed further below, because they were not paid the service fee, they stopped collecting materials that did not have sufficient market value to warrant their collection. Finally, as the service fee was only paid for a portion of the project, it is not possible to evaluate the longer term effect of payment for services. Nevertheless, as discussed in Section 11.2, it is possible to draw some key conclusions regarding the effects of payment for services provided that establish the need for and importance of payment for services. This evaluation report also distills lessons to inform future pilots and programmes to pay reclaimers for service provision.

5.3 ARO campaign

While simultaneously engaging government and industry to demand strong support for reclaimers, ARO set up its own food relief programme, raising just over R265 000 rands through a GoFundMe campaign (https://www.backabuddy.co.za/champion/project/aro-solidarity). The ARO Organiser noted that by the third day of the lockdown, ARO was already providing food, masks, sanitisers, and COVID-19 education to reclaimers. ARO subsequently assisted government and industry to distribute their donations to reclaimers.

ARO also launched a campaign demanding that reclaimers be declared essential workers so that they could be permitted to work. Through social media and resident networks, it shared information with residents on how to prepare recyclables so that they would to best protect reclaimers when they collected them, and requested that residents leave food and soapy water
for reclaimers when they came to collected recyclables. As the ward councillor noted, many residents in the pilot area responded to this call.

**ARO poster announcing restart of service**

![ARO poster announcing restart of service](image)

5.4 Unexpected positive effects for the pilot project

The pandemic had some unexpected positive effects for the relationships between residents and reclaimers. A group of residents from Auckland Park, Brixton, and Bordeaux (where ARO also works with residents and provides a collection service) formed an ARO Solidarity group to support ARO’s COVID-19 response. Subsequently, residents from other areas joined the Solidarity Group, which has expanded the work that it does with ARO.4 In addition, ARO’s campaign garnered significant media coverage, which increased public understanding of who reclaimers are, the work that they do, and the contributions they make.

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4 Work of the Solidarity Group spans a range of activities, including working with ARO on its campaign against the municipality’s recent attempt to charge a recycling levy and marginalise reclaimers, research, transcription, map-making, arts projects with reclaimers, gardening projects, building a website, other forms of communication, and holding meetings with residents from other areas and designing materials to educate these new residents and support them to work with reclaimers and ARO.
Residents surveyed attested to these improvements, with 42% of residents surveyed saying that the pandemic improved their perception of reclaimers and none saying that it worsened their perception. 50% said that the pandemic showed how important reclaimers’ work is. While 19% of resident respondents felt that the pandemic had worsened the pilot (primarily due to a decrease in efficiency), 53% felt that there was no change, and 28% felt that it had improved the pilot. Elaborating what had improved, 30% of those who answered the question (n=23) said that people are more aware of reclaimers' work, 26% said that there is more “community spirit”, and 26% also said that the project has become more efficient.5

6. Some basic information on participating reclaimers

There were a few significant shifts in the demographics and basic characteristics of the reclaimers between the Baseline and the Evaluation.

6.1 Demographics

The two major demographic changes related to gender and level of education. The percentage of female reclaimers decreased from five to three. The percentage of reclaimers without any formal education rose from 4% to 28%, and the percentage with at least some high school education dropped from 73% to 50%.

There were minimal changes related to nationality. The reclaimers in the Evaluation Survey came from across South Africa, with the highest proportion coming from Gauteng. Reclaimers also came from Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. 44% were South Africans and 48% were from Lesotho, compared to 49% and 47% in the Baseline. There was a significant change in levels of education. In the Baseline study, 26% of reclaimers had primary or no education. In the Evaluation, this rose to 50%, while the percent of reclaimers with matric, a matric equivalent of post-secondary certificate dropped from 15% to 4%.

![Figure 2 - Place of Birth](image)

5 Reasons for the increased efficiency were not explored, but may relate to ARO's receipt of a truck from UNIDO.
6.2 Communication and banking

Access to communication and banking decreased from the Baseline to the Evaluation. While 20% of reclaimers in the Baseline had a bank account, this applied to only 8% in the evaluation. Cell phone ownership decreased from 71% to 59%, and there was a dramatic change in whether the reclaimer’s cell phone could connect to the internet, dropping from 47% to 2%. It is possible that the question was understood differently in the Evaluation.

Table 1 - Cell phones and bank accounts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has a bank account</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership of cell phone</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone connects to the internet</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3 Work experience and practice

64% of reclaimers had done other work before reclaiming, and 93% worked full-time as a reclaimer. These figures were relatively unchanged from the Baseline. However, there was a shift in working practices, as 91% of the reclaimers worked alone, compared to 72% in the Baseline. The reclaimers in the Evaluation were also more likely to have worked in the sector for a longer period of time than those in the Baseline, with approximately 2/3 having worked as reclaimers for nine or more years, compared to 51% at the start of the pilot.

Figure 3 - Years Worked as a Reclaimer
7. Relationships between Residents and Reclaimers

Both residents and reclaimers indicated that the pilot was highly successful in transforming their relationships with each other.

7.1 Residents’ perspectives

All resident key informants said that the biggest success of the pilot project was the improved relationships between residents and reclaimers. A leader of APRA said that it was a success that people who had vaguely similar interests (recycling) came together on a collaborative project that would also dismantle biases and judgements in the process. Another Champion from Auckland Park elaborated:

The immediate success is that there is now a line of communication between men and women working on the streets and people living in those areas and that’s unprecedented. In the past, it was unnamed men and women coming past your street and picking up your rubbish. Maybe some people chat to them and others don’t, but this project has...bridged a gap between people who are working in a particular way and residents who are making use of that service. Following from that is making residents aware of the circumstances under which the recyclers work and secondly, the need for recycling.

The resident survey bolstered this analysis. 88% of resident respondents had a positive general perception of reclaimers, compared to 64% in Auckland Park and 51% in Brixton in the Baseline. While these differences may have been affected by the different demographic compositions of the two surveys, it is notable that 38% of residents in the evaluation survey reported that the pilot improved their own perceptions of reclaimers.

99% of residents surveyed believed that reclaimers’ work is important or very important, and residents identified a number of contributions made by reclaimers:
While it is often stated that reclaimers are a security threat, only 9.5% of residents in the evaluation survey concurred with this (n=42), while 27% said they increased security (n=71). 29% of residents reported that the pilot addressed key problems they had previously had with reclaimers (n=55).

91.5% of residents in the Evaluation Survey reported greeting reclaimers, although only 37% knew reclaimers by their names, indicating scope for deepening of the relationships. More than ¾ (77.5%) of residents reported seeing reclaimers as part of their community.

A number of factors contributed to improving residents’ perceptions of reclaimers. Residents identified these as:

1. familiarity (seeing the same faces every week) – 79%
2. wearing a nametag – 61%.
3. awareness and education about reclaimers’ work and lives – 58%
4. wearing uniforms – 49%

A Brixton resident, who played a central role in building the relationship with ARO and championing the pilot, explained how it deepened her sense of connection with reclaimers:

The trolley creates a sense of community, if I see someone with a trolley, now my reaction is more positive than it would have been before. It's a bit like seeing a fellow musician carrying an instrument.

The resident key informants explained that working with reclaimers extended beyond recycling and environmental concerns to include transforming their neighbourhoods and society more generally. One explained that the pilot was also about:
...building a society that we all want does take work but doing something for your community is super important. Working with ARO gives you the opportunity to do something useful and good and we need to translate that with the other residents.

Residents demonstrated their appreciation of, and solidarity with reclaimers in several ways. Particularly on cold days, some residents set up a table with tea and snacks for reclaimers along their routes. Others provided reclaimers with water. Particularly during the first phases of the lockdown, residents also provided reclaimers with buckets for washing their hands, sanitisers, and masks, in line with the suggestions made by ARO. A number of residents developed personal relationships with the reclamer who regularly collected from their house and would keep their bags inside their property until they could give them to that specific reclamer.

Reclaimer and ARO participation in community events played a central role in the forging of these relationships. A BCF representative noted that the pilot opened up the community to reclaimers, explaining how at the Brixton Christmas market, “all the reclaimers helped the kids make superhero outfits, we figured out that if you put the kids on the trolleys the capes fly. It was a very awesome moment”. The local ward councillor also highlighted the importance of the interactions between reclaimers, adult residents, and children at the community events, remembering how at an event at the tennis club the reclaimers walked around with the park with them showing them what could and couldn’t be recycled.

Reclaimers and Residents at the Brixton Festival of Lights

The forging of relationship between reclaimers and children in the pilot areas made an important difference. One BCF representative said:
I have enjoyed involving my family in the project. We have been able to bring children to meetings and be part of recycling programs. The reclaimers have gone to their school and assisted in education programs. They too have had trolley rides!

Finally, resident key informants spoke of how the pilot transformed their personal understandings, analysis and commitments:

One immediate prejudice [that was] challenged [as a result of the pilot] is that educated people know best. This project has highlighted that ‘educated’ people can ‘reason’ and use their ‘logic’ but are often unable to comprehend systems that they don’t belong to or work in. Educated people are often one dimensional and ignore realities. Educated people, and I speak for myself, tend to patronise and impose our own ideas or principles of right and wrong. For me the project has highlighted the sophisticated and extensive informal networks. It has also further highlighted Brixton Community Forum's inability to fully navigate or integrate between races, class etc. The BCF is majority white and middle class. It has meant we (middle class white people) need to stop and listen and be happy to be told how best to do it. ARO has been able to successfully show how to integrate without a top down approach that many RA's [resident associations] tend to try.

The resident Champion added that pilot deepened his understanding of xenophobia:

A further awakening is a more personal experience of xenophobia. Many of the reclaimers we have met have had terrible experiences with the police and officials. The continued hating of poor people and blaming them (by officials and some residents) for problems is extremely disheartening, but ARO have been extraordinary in their support of the causes against this.

The councillor likened the relationships that reclaimers had forged with residents to the highly personal relationship that residents had with milkmen in an earlier era noting that:

they are organized, everyone has their road, they get to know their residents, much like the old days, where you your milkman or your postman and you knew them by name and gave them a Christmas gift. It is a service that is being offered and there should be a relationship with that person.

For the councillor, the reclaimers had become such a part of the community that she said that, “it is like they are a little suburb outside my ward”, and that “they are stakeholders, as much as any resident”. In keeping with this, she advocated for reclaimers to be included in development planning in Newtown, where many of the pilot reclaimers lived and ARO had asked the city for a building and sorting spaces.
South Africa and South African cities are characterised by profoundly entrenched colonial and apartheid divisions of race, class, gender and nationality. The pilot demonstrated that reclaimers and residents doing concrete, collaborative work can contribute to transforming these divisions and power relations. This demonstrates that resident-reclaimer integrated S@S contributes to achieving fundamental national social goals and commitments in ways that would not be possible if S@S is done by private companies. It also provides insight into how these goals can be achieved through similar programmes in other sectors.

7.2 Reclaimers’ perspectives

Importantly, reclaimers also emphasised improvements in their relationships with residents, with a reclaimer key informant sharing that:

residents currently treat reclaimers fairly and most of them are kind to reclaimers. Thanks to the community champions there are better relationships now between reclaimers and residents.

Another reclaimer simply stated that “In Brixton, the support is too much”.

The benefits and meaning of these transformed relationships for reclaimers extended far beyond simply facilitating their work, with one reclaimer reporting that as a result of the pilot, “I actually, I felt like I was one of the many counted here in South Africa.”

The reclaimer survey results are striking:

- In the Baseline, 22% of reclaimers felt extremely valued. In the Evaluation, this rose to 60% across the two areas.
- 75% of reclaimers said that as a result of the pilot, it is easier to approach residents.
- 98% of reclaimers feel welcome in Brixton and Auckland Park, 95% feel part of the community, and 85% feel that this has improved since the project started.
- 27% of reclaimers stated that the pilot enabled them to secure more agreements with households/businesses. As a result, 55% have agreements with households to collect their recyclables and 29% have agreements with businesses to collect their recyclables.

Reclaimers identified that wearing uniforms and name cards associating them to the project played an important role in strengthening their relationships with residents, reporting that the uniforms made the ARO reclaimers identifiable and facilitated easier access to materials. One reclaimer explained the importance of the card:

That card made a difference in that, when another person does not know your name, he or she would look at the name tag and then will be able to tell who you are. Again, mine has been used many times in the areas where I work.

ARO key informants noted that actively participating in community events and running workshops on what they do for adult residents and in the schools were crucial to forging these relationships. One explained that the workshops “helped to demonstrate that most of the
problems that residents attributed to reclaimers were not caused by reclaimers and this helped a lot in improving the relationship between residents and reclaimers”.

8. Resident participation in the pilot

8.1 Encouraging residents to participate

Both resident champions and reclaimers put significant effort into encouraging households to separate recyclables and participate in the pilot. ARO representatives and reclaimers in the pilot distributed information sheets, went door-to-door approaching residents, produced weekly posters for residents providing them with updates and information,\(^6\) engaged residents at community events, ran educational workshops at crèches and schools, spoke at public meetings, and made concerted efforts to address problems raised by residents.

Example of weekly digital poster for residents

ARO also gave participating residents stickers donated by PETCO to publicly announce that they recycle with reclaimers.

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\(^6\) At several points in the project ARO was unable to produce the posters or produced them late due to capacity constraints. Project champions noted that this had negative implications, as it was important for residents to receive regular updates and see how their efforts were contributing to a larger change.
Reclaimers emphasised the role that developing personal relationships played in increasing resident participation:

When you have just arrived, let us say it is your first time in my yard. I will start by being surprised but if I see you this week and next week and next week, and there is no mess up, I will start trusting you and you can see I will start taking out the material they need because I now know their time.

For their part, the resident champions sent regular messages to resident WhatsApp groups, spoke to residents to encourage them to participate, shared information on the pilot in community newsletters, forwarded the weekly reports from ARO, responded to questions from residents, engaged ARO to ensure that resident concerns and problems were resolved, and provided regular feedback to ARO on how the service and pilot could be improved. One resident Champion explained her strategy in reaching out to different kinds of residents:

when trying to get middle class people to be interested in the pilot you tell them it's good for the environment, but when you are trying to bring the working or just below middle class residents on board 'you tell them ARO helps people feed their families.

All key informants said the residents were more knowledgeable about recycling than they were before the pilot.

The challenges in getting residents to participate in S@S programmes, both in South Africa and globally, are well-documented. Both reclaimers and residents noted that it was particularly difficult to engage the many university students living in communes in the area and to get them
to participate. They also felt that there are generally just some people who are not willing to listen or consider recycling. The onset of COVID-19 also meant that community activities and public meetings where reclaimers and project champions could engage residents in person came to a stop, eliminating key ways to deepen knowledge and relationships.

8.2 Households separating recyclables

While 49% of residents in the Baseline survey separated their recyclables, 98% of residents in the evaluation separated their recyclables. However, due to the differences in the sample sizes and compositions, this is not a meaningful comparison, and the overall separation rate in the pilot areas was less than 98%. It appears that residents who were separating materials had a greater interest in responding to the survey.

When asked to identify all of the people in their household who separate recyclables, the top three groups were: themselves (84%), spouse/partner (40%), and domestic worker (19%). Domestic workers were not surveyed or interviewed in either the Baseline or this Evaluation. As they were separating materials in almost 1/5 of the survey households, it will be important to include them in future studies to benefit from their insights and knowledge. In addition, several reclaimers stated that domestic workers had begun to realize the value of the separated materials and were keeping them to sell and generate income for themselves. This is something that should also be explored.

The number of bags of recyclables put out for collection mapped in the evaluation showed a strong increase in Auckland Park (from 26 to 56 bags) and a small decrease in the number of bags counted in Brixton, down from 76 in the Baseline to 69 in the Evaluation. This may have been related to the different ways that the bags were counted – in Brixton there were more residents involved in the counting and geotagging. A Brixton resident Champion who played an important role in the mapping shared that:

the results were slightly different for the researchers who were able to walk with the reclaimers or in my case where I could stay out for the entire period instead of just every 15 minutes or so to check if anyone had put out the PETCO plastic bags. What we picked up was that some residents, from communes, gave directly to the reclaimers in a small plastic bag or box and didn’t leave their recycling on the street in the clear bag. They knew the reclamer and waited for them. This may mean that we have missed out other residents who are in fact separating at source but we did not identify as they didn’t use the clear plastic bag.

Counting bags was also complicated by the fact that residents put out their bags at many different times during the day, so some were likely collected before the counting, while others were only put out later.

The Councillor felt that there had been an increase in the number of residents separating recyclables. She attributed this to the education reclaimers had provided to residents on how to
recycle, the relationships between residents and reclaimers, and the fact that they provided a much more regular service than Pikitup or the cooperative that had sometimes collected in the area prior to the pilot.

Resident key informants felt that the number of people recycling had not increased significantly (perhaps having held higher expectations than the councillor), yet they also shared surprise at how many residents came on board, as well as stories of residents beginning to recycle and their pride in this transformation:

The fact that my neighbour across the road hasn’t recycled for the past 12 years that I have lived here and now he is, and I’ve seen the same neighbour engaging with reclaimers, is a success.

I feel a great sense of pride when I look at my street and everyone has put out their bins. Everyone on my street does it... because of me... but there is a huge difference street to street.

Just over 2/3 of the reclaimers, the people who actually collected the recyclables, believed that the number of residents separating materials increased since the pilot started. 22% thought that the number had increased a lot, while 44% believed it increased a little. It is clear, however, that as in all S@S initiatives, more needs to transform residents’ wasting and recycling attitudes and practices.

![Figure 5 - Reclaimers assessment of change in households separating recyclables](image)

8.3 Participation in the pilot

A Brixton resident Champion noted that there had been an increase in people who separated materials giving those materials to reclaimers instead of to private companies and other organisations collecting recyclables.

However, not everyone who separated materials participated in the pilot. Just over three quarters (78%) of residents surveyed for the evaluation participated in the pilot, 8.2% were
unsure, and 13.7% said they did not. Of those who did not participate, 50% said it was because they did not receive bags, 29% because they did not know about the pilot, and 21% because they said their street is not included in the pilot.

The provision of recycling bags was also important for residents who did participate in the pilot. ARO primarily gave residents plastic bags with their logos, donated by PETCO. In early 2021, they also distributed hessian bags that they designed with artists, which the Goethe Institute had supported them to create and subsequently produced. While the latter were a more environmentally friendly option, many were stolen, and ARO members found them being sold informally in the central business district. Similarly, most residents in the pilot area had not wanted recycling bins donated by PETCO, as they feared they would be stolen.

The reusable hessian bags

Almost 2/3 of residents surveyed (63%) said that receiving the bags and bins from ARO encouraged them to separate their materials. Reclaimers concurred, with over 95% believing that giving residents bags improves their participation in some way.

However, it is interesting to note that over 90% of the residents said they would continue to separate even if they no longer received the bins or bags. This demonstrates that while it might be important to provide bags/bins during the initial phase of pilots and programmes, as resident participation solidifies, it may be possible for this to be tapered off.
9. Collection Service

9.1 Collection day

At the start of the pilot, reclaimers collected separated bags of recyclables on Mondays, the day before Pikitup collected rubbish in the area. Some also salvaged from bins on collection day. Residents in the pilot area found it onerous to put out the separated bags of recyclables on Mondays and many were not home at the correct times. At the request of the residents, in March 2020 the pilot changed so that residents put out both their separated bags of recyclables and their rubbish bins on Tuesdays. Data on weights of recyclables collected presented in the remainder of this section runs from March 2020 to October 2020, so that the days being compared are analogous.

9.2 Incorrect separation by residents

Both residents and reclaimers noted that a high number of residents put recyclables in the trash and non-recyclables in the recycling bags. A reclaimer key informant reported that there had been some improvement over time, as they were finding less food and liquids in the separated bags. Nevertheless, 95% of reclaimers reported finding garbage or garden waste in ARO recycling bags. As reclaimers needed to extract the rubbish from the recycling bags, this generated waste which reclaimers hauled across the city in their trolleys and then needed to find a way to dispose of. When reclaimers extracted the rubbish and left it on the streets, the ARO truck was required to collect and then find a way of disposing as well.

Finding waste in recycling bags

![Graph showing how often reclaimers find garbage or garden waste in recycling bags]

*Figure 6 - How often reclaimers find garbage or garden waste in recycling bags*

9.3 Effect of stopping the service fee

The pilot had been designed so that reclaimers would collect all of the same materials as the private companies and cooperatives contracted by Pikitup. This hinged on the payment of a
service fee to reclaimers, which meant that even when the price for a material was too low to warrant collection, reclaimers would collect it to earn the service fee.⁷

Once the service fee was diverted for COVID-19 relief, it was not economically viable for reclaimers to collect materials that had little resale value, such as newspapers after prices plummeted. Some reclaimers therefore started sorting through materials in the bags and only taking those with higher value. It is therefore not surprising that 20% of residents in the survey identified reclaimers leaving a mess as a problem in the pilot. The ARO truck collected materials left behind, but some could not be sold at all, leaving ARO responsible for their disposal.

These changes indicate the crucial role played by the service fee in ensuring that all potentially recyclable materials are collected. They also indicate the importance of educating residents on how the recycling market works, the at times extreme price fluctuations, and why this affects what materials reclaimers collect in the absence of sufficient service fees. Under conditions in which service fees are not adequate, it is advisable that ARO include information on price changes and possible implications for collection of specific materials in weekly communication with residents.

It should, however, be noted that the implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) should resolve this issue, as EPR makes industry responsible for paying reclaimers and ensuring that all materials are extracted from the environment. In order for this to succeed, service fees will need to be set at rates that make it viable for reclaimers to collect all materials. The service fees must also include fair compensation for reclaimers’ labour and skills required for the provision of the service.

9.4 Efficacy of the collection service

The key informants were in general agreement that the pilot ran relatively efficiently and there was a regular collection of bags. As discussed further in Section 12.1, almost ¾ of residents identified the regular collection of recyclables as the key benefit of the pilot. The local councillor stated that the pilot was 100% more effective and efficient than the Pikitup and cooperative recycling initiatives that preceded it.⁸

This is not, however, to say that the collection service was without problems. 69% of residents identified not receiving recycling bags as the top problem encountered during the pilot, and 34% highlighted bags not being collected as another key problem. Other issues raised by residents surveyed and resident key informants included: reclaimers not taking all materials and leaving a mess (see above for reasons why this was the case), other reclaimers taking the

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⁷ The pilot partners were aware that the service fee of R0.50/kg for recyclables might not be sufficient, and had wanted to generate evidence regarding an appropriate level for the fee based on the experience of the pilot.

⁸ See Section 12 for further discussion of the Councillor’s assessment of the pilot.
materials before pilot participants collected them, other reclaimers potentially being pushed out by the pilot, slow response times when residents raised problems, and the lack of a standard collection route (even though two collection maps were developed at different stages).

The ARO organising team members leading implementation of the pilot and the resident champions worked together to address residents’ problems, revising the pilot as they did so. Although the pilot plan had not included the rental of a truck, ARO re-budgeted to hire a truck in order to provide a sweep-up service to collect materials that remained uncollected at the end of the day. An ARO organising team member with a Code 14 driving license drove the truck, significantly reducing costs. Although the truck was very rundown, the new expense created even more pressure on the pilot budget. In October 2020, UNIDO donated a four tonne Isuzu truck to ARO, which replaced the rented truck and released the funds for other uses.

As the project progressed, the ARO team placed more emphasis on recruiting reclaimers working in the area who had not joined the pilot. Some resident key informants were also proactive in encouraging reclaimers who worked on their streets to participate. Some of these reclaimers joined the pilot, but without the payment of the service fee there were fewer incentives to do so. In addition, research has found that reclaimers who typically work alone are frequently reticent to join collective initiatives. However, several resident key informants felt that more should have been done to include these reclaimers.

The champions did a significant amount of work in conveying residents’ problems to the ARO team and in explaining the challenges faced by the team to the residents. A key innovation was the creation of the Champions WhatsApp group that grew over time and eventually included the ARO organising team members leading the pilot, the ARO organiser, the Champions, the local councillor, and the representative from Wits University. The group provided a platform where the Champions could share problems raised with them by residents so that ARO could respond. ARO shared the weekly posters with weights collected and messages to residents via the WhatsApp group. In addition, ARO pilot leaders also used the platform to share problems that they encountered, including problems with residents not putting bags out on time and separating materials incorrectly, as well as problems encountered by the ARO team, such as when the truck broke down and could not do the sweep up.

All resident key informants feared that the ARO team was stretched too thinly and worried that this would impact the project negatively if it were to be scaled up or implemented in other areas. One suggested that there should be a team dedicated to dealing with residents in the pilot project. Another stated that “[the ARO Implementation Manager] is always responsive, but he has too much responsibility”.

ARO key informants concurred, and were concerned about the physical, psychological, and financial toll that the pilot was taking on the organising team members who worked long hours.
to implement the pilot and resolve problems. The ARO implementation manager noted that residents contacted him directly at all hours to address problems and even ask questions about basic information, such as the names of different types of recyclables. The ARO team identified that the key challenge was that insufficient resources were allocated to the implementation of the pilot, and few reclaimers were willing or able to sacrifice earning an income and working even longer days than usual to ensure the pilot's success.

A final issue highlighted by resident key informants was that they felt most residents had expected a formal working system from the outset, and only subsequently realised that it needed to be developed collaboratively. This indicates the need for ARO to spend more time working with residents at the beginning to explain what is entailed in the recycling with reclaimers approach. After the experience of this first pilot, ARO and partners should, however, be better able to develop more detailed implementation plans, which will hopefully mitigate some of the problems experienced. They should also be able to have more in-depth discussions with residents regarding the meaning and nature of the partnership before the start of new projects.

9.5  Relationship with Pikitup

The relationship between the pilot and Pikitup, and the Pikitup Watervaal Depot in particular, had important implications for the collection service.

Although the City’s Environment and Infrastructure Services Department (EISD) and Pikitup did not want to be official partners in the pilot, they were supportive, and agreed to inform the Depot and a non-reclaimer cooperative that at times received materials from the pilot area that they should not collect recyclables in Brixton and Auckland Park during the pilot. An EISD representative spoke at the June 5, 2019 official announcement of the pilot, welcoming the initiative and noting the importance of developing innovative approaches to reclamer integration.

Unfortunately, due to a lapse in communication, Pikitup head office did not inform the depot and the cooperative about the pilot. As a result, for the first two scheduled months of the pilot (November and December 2019), the depot and the cooperative collected the ARO recycling bags that residents had put out for reclaimers. This limited the reclaimers’ access to materials and significantly compromised the pilot, as many of the recyclables separated by residents were not weighed and recorded, and reclaimers were not paid for that collection. It also created tensions between the reclaimers and the depot, as the reclaimers thought that the depot knew about the pilot and was undermining them, and the depot did not know that they were disturbing the pilot. Once the pilot team realised this, the ARO Implementation Manager engaged the cooperative leader and the depot Supervisor for S@S, both of whom agreed to stop the collections so that the pilot could proceed. The pilot then officially re-started in January 2020.
Depot officials reported that at the beginning, they were skeptical about the viability of the pilot. Reasons included: it was a new way of recycling that they were not familiar with; collecting recyclables is expensive due to the need to provide residents with bags, and they did not trust that ARO had sufficient funding to do so; they were concerned that reclaimers would not collect all of the materials and then the Depot would be blamed; and as reclaimers did not have formal sorting facilities, they did not know where the pilot participants would store and then sell their materials.

Indeed, when ARO was still setting up systems at the start of the project, the Depot received complaints from residents that their recyclables hadn’t been collected and that they hadn’t received new recycling bags. This created difficulties for the Depot, as even though they were not responsible for the collection, they felt that their reputation was at stake. However, when the depot team was interviewed in October 2020, they said that the complaints had virtually disappeared and that they were extremely happy with the pilot.

Both ARO and the Depot emphasised that regular communication and meetings between the Pikitup S@S Supervisor and the ARO Implementation Manager were central to the strengthening of their relationship and the success of the pilot. The level of partnership developed to a point where the Depot sent its trucks to assist ARO when the vehicle they rented broke down.

Another key factor facilitating the deepening relationship between the two parties was ARO’s sharing of its collection data with the Depot. The Depot included the data in its waste minimisation reports sent to Head Office, which significantly increased its achievement of this key Pikitup goal.

The ARO data was supported by the Depot’s own observations regarding the pilot’s successful diversion of waste from landfill. As the Pikitup trucks that collected rubbish in the pilot also collected from neighbouring suburbs, the depot did not have data on the the tonnes of waste collected in Brixton and Auckland Park before and during the pilot. However, the Operations Manager noted that the number of loads had been reduced and that “the main benefit for us has been time – so if the truck would have finished at 3, now it finishes at 2”. Because the trucks finished earlier and were not as full, they could collect waste from more areas before needing to go to the landfill.

When interviewed for the evaluation, the Depot manager and relevant staff expressed strong support for the pilot and the approach. They were excited by the results that had been achieved and were keen to share the successes of the pilot approach to S@S with head office. One explained that:

Currently, the model we run is very expensive because the main [private company] contractor is paid per household and not [based on] what they collect. It is also not inclusive. It doesn’t include the reclaimers, it is about the people who have already made it.
Waste management should start on the ground. I absolutely love this model, they have been doing the work long before any of us knew about recycling.

The Operations Manager added that Pikitup should be willing to move beyond a focus on cooperatives and utilise this approach as the landfills only had 4.5 years remaining before they reached capacity.

The strength of the relationship and the Depot’s support for the recycling with reclaimers approach was demonstrated when its senior team attended the UNIDO truck handover ceremony. The Depot Manager explained that:

For me, it was quite significant, because we know that the reclaimers are basically pushing trolleys. For them to be getting a truck, it says that a lot of people are really interested and realising their value in the waste management value chain. It was really significant for me.

The rest of the team added that they were very happy with the donation of the truck as it was a progression that would make the reclaimers’ work easier and enable them to collect greater volumes and earn more income.

Based on their experience, the Depot representatives had useful advice for other depots wanting to work with reclaimers:

1. Start by communicating with the councilor, who is the main connection between the residents and the provider (in this case the reclaimers), so that they can communicate to residents and explain the pilot.
2. There should be regular (weekly at the beginning), structured meetings from the very start of the programme.
3. One on one education of residents by reclaimers on what to recycle is powerful and should be a part of the initiative.
4. There should be project managers on both sides (Pikitup and the reclamer organisation) who can work together.

ARO representatives raised similar points. They also noted that it is crucial for the head office to learn from this positive experience, to partner in future phases of the pilot, and to support the extension of this approach. They highlighted that a key contribution required from the City and Pikitup is the provision of land where participating reclaimers can sort and store their materials, and access ablution and other facilities, and from where the pilot can be coordinated.
10. Recyclables collected

10.1 Weights of recyclables collected

Between March 3, 2020 and October 27, 2020, the reclaimers collected 187,279.10 kgs or 18.728 tonnes of recyclable materials from Brixton and Auckland Park. Figure 7 displays the total kilograms collected each Tuesday in the pilot area, as well as the number of reclaimers who collected materials on that day. It provides a vivid depiction of the effect of the Stage 5 COVID-19 lockdown on reclaimers, as no reclaimers could work between March 31, 2020 and April 28, 2020. As a result, no recyclables were collected in this period.

The average daily weight of recyclables collected by each reclamer rose from 117.34kg in the first four weeks of March 2020 to an average of 144.5kg throughout the period from March 3 – October 27, 2020. If all of the approximately 8000 reclaimers in the city were to collect the average kgs collected by reclaimers at the very start of the pilot, it would take them just 27.7 days to collect the 25 991 tonnes of recyclables collected by Pikitup and all of its contracted private companies and cooperatives in 2018/2019. Using the average amount collected with the pilot’s intervention, it would take only 22.5 days.
Figure 7 - Kgs collected and number of reclaimers each week – March – October 2020

Figure 8 - Average kilograms collected by each reclamer in the pilot area
10.2 Types of materials collected and valued

Figure 9 illustrates which materials reclaimers collected the most of, as well as those that gave them the most value. Some were closely aligned, such as paper, metal and caps, but others, such as plastic and cardboard diverged significantly.

![Figure 9 - Materials collected most and materials collected with the greatest value](image)

The Baseline study found that approximately 50% of residents surveyed separated reusable materials for reclaimers. Although it was not an official part of the pilot, this practice continued. The top four reusable items residents gave to or left out for reclaimers were: old appliances, food, old clothes and old shoes.

| Table 2 - Reusable materials residents separated for reclaimers |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Clothes         | 36%            |
| Shoes           | 33%            |
| Old Appliances  | 51%            |
| Tools           | 11%            |
| Old cell phones and electronics | 13%    |
| Food            | 34.5%          |
| Old Furniture   | 13%            |
| Kitchenware     | 20%            |
| Household Items | 27%            |
10.3 Collections from rubbish bins vs recycling bags

As so many residents (including those who were separating materials) threw recyclables away with their waste, 98% of reclaimers continued to salvage from rubbish bins. 96% explained that this was because residents continued to put recyclables in their bins. 29% said that they were looking for materials other than recyclables.

On regular collection days for the pilot, reclaimers would typically mix the recyclables from the separated bags with those from the bins, as this was easier to manage on their trolleys and took less time. In order to ascertain how much of the material was still coming from bins compared to the recycling bags, on October 27, 2020, 13 reclaimers committed to keep the materials separate, with some being supported to do so. 71% of their recyclables were salvaged from bins and 29% were collected from the separated bags. While the figures from the two weeks vary, it is clear that the majority of recyclables were still extracted from rubbish bins.

Private companies and cooperatives contracted to provide S@S collection services only collect the bags of separated recyclables. Had they provided the S@S collection service in Brixton and Auckland Park, all of the materials in the bins would have remained in the waste stream. This highlights that S@S collection by reclaimers reduces waste to landfill more than private companies and cooperatives, as while residents transition to separating their recyclables, reclaimers continue to do it for them.

11. Working conditions and incomes

11.1 Working Conditions

11.1.1 Adjusting to changes in the method of work

Participating in the pilot required reclaimers to adapt to a new way of working. Changes included: timing their work to ensure that they collected bags when they were put out, changing their route out of the area to go to the park and weigh their materials, waiting for their turn to weigh the materials, educating residents and engaging with them, and attending community events (although not all reclaimers did so). 53% said that it was not difficult at all to change how they worked. 36% said it was a little difficult, and only 11% said that it was extremely difficult. These were, of course, reclaimers who stayed in the project. Some of those who left may have found the transition difficult. However, conducting S@S collection in the pilot was much more similar to the way reclaimers normally collect and sell materials than a shift to working and selling collectively as a member of a cooperative.

11.1.2 Relationships between reclaimers

Reclaimers’ working conditions improved in several ways as a result of the pilot. Reclaimer key informants and participants reported that harassment by residents had decreased as a result of the improved relationships. Some reclaimers reported that the area had become safer due to the pilot and ARO’s presence. In addition to improving relationships between reclaimers
and residents, it also improved relationships between reclaimers who participated in the pilot. As one respondent noted “I think now I have a lot of friends, because even the ones I was in conflict with when I was in the street, today we are together”.

At the same time, the pilot created tensions with reclaimers collecting in the area who did not participate. One resident key informant shared that residents had noted raised concerns that ARO was bullying reclaimers who were not part of the organisation and that they were not as inclusive as they should be, especially to coloured reclaimers. Another noted that residents had observed some tension between the two types of reclaimers, but chose not to get too involved. However, a third explained that he had encouraged the reclamer in his street to join the pilot. Particularly as the pilot advanced, ARO made a concerted effort to recruit these reclaimers and a number joined. However, others preferred to remain outside the project. If the service fee was still being paid, this would have provided a material incentive to participate, and perhaps more would have participated.

11.1.3 Uniforms

65% of participating reclaimers said that receiving a uniform was the top benefit of participation in the pilot. The uniforms provided greater protection against the unhygienic nature of working with waste and the possibility of contracting diseases, which gained importance with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the uniforms helped to differentiate the participating reclaimers from criminals, which increased their dignity and made it easier for them to relate to each other, as the uniforms enabled them to know each other and differentiate each other, between ‘umgeresi’ and a tsotsi (criminal).”

As noted in Section 7, the uniforms also facilitated better relationships with residents, by making it easier for residents to know them and relate to them. This reduced the stigmatization and harassment reclaimers face on a daily basis. One reclamer summed this up saying “I have received an overall, and even places where we could not enter we can now enter.” Another added that as they had uniforms and identification cards, “the residents would say ‘the person who works there is in greens and he’s got a badge of ARO, we all know him.’”
When the service fee payment was stopped, ARO gave participating reclaimers a second uniform. However, some reported that they only had one, which created problems related to cleanliness:

Yes, there are reclaimers who chose not to wear their uniform when they get to certain places, these are reclaimers who cannot stand being dirty. Yes, maybe, they were wearing it on duty, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. By Thursday he also wishes to be clean because it is the only one uniform and he does wear anything else. Just like now, we have run out of vests to wear.

11.1.4 Access to cleaner, separated materials

Resident separation of recyclables resulted in greater access to cleaner, separated recyclables. Due to more secure access to materials, some reclaimers reported that they could leave home later in the morning, rather than at 3 am. The increased number of contracts with residents and businesses further improved their access to materials.

Access to separated materials decreased the time needed for salvaging from bins, reduced reclaimers’ contact with waste, and meant that they could spend less time cleaning materials. As one reclamer noted, “the plastics [for separated recyclables] are very helpful. In the dustbins you may find dog faeces, maize porridge and non-recyclables”. When asked if separation of recyclables by residents benefitted reclaimers, one reclamer key informant was quick to note the role of reclaimers in securing that access:
Yes, I would say that they have made it easy for us, but we also made emphasis to teach those who do not know. As you can see here [pointing at the pile of recyclables inside the branded PETCO plastic recycling bags on their premises].

However, this improvement was not as great as expected, as almost all reclaimers continued to salvage from bins due to poor and incorrect participation by residents.

11.2 Income

There was high turnover in the reclaimers participating in the project. Some original participants left due to delays in receiving the first service fee payment. Others left Johannesburg at the start of the pandemic. As a result, not all of the participating reclaimers surveyed had received the service fee prior to the onset of the pandemic and the cancellation of the payment of the fee to individual reclaimers.

Those who received the payment benefited from it. Asked whether the payment made a difference to him, a reclamer reported: “Yes, I think it makes a difference because they just add some percentage. There is money that they add, that is a bit more than what we get in the scrap yard”. When asked to identify the primary way the payment helped them, 75% said that they used it for necessities and 4% to pay for school fees, demonstrating the inadequacy of their regular incomes to cover their most basic needs.

![Figure 10 - Primary benefit of the service fee](image)

On average, the reclaimers in the pilot supported 4.4 people (just slightly less than the average of 4.7 dependents in the Baseline). One reclamer noted that the service fee helped and was important, while also emphasizing that the amount was too small, noting that as a
result of the service fee, “Nothing changes, the kid will change maybe when we are talking about huge amount of money. You cannot change a child with R500.”

59% of reclaimers said that the pilot had not increased their income. This is not surprising, given the decision to stop payment of the service fee to provide COVID-19 food relief to the wider reclamer community. But several other factors were also at play. When they were paid, reclaimers were only paid the service fee for materials collected one day a week in Brixton and Auckland Park rather than all of the materials they collected, reducing the impact on their overall income. In addition, 24% of participants reported a decrease in materials collected, most likely related to decreased consumption of residents who faced job loss and depressed incomes during the lockdowns. Reclaimers also attributed lower incomes to lower prices for materials due to decreased demand from industry. As a result, reclaimers stopped collecting entire categories of materials. “I don’t collect newspapers, its kilos are low and they are bought very far, there in Alexandra, and it gets too heavy.”

All reclaimers who answered the question (46 out of the 47 surveyed) said that it was very important that reclaimers be paid for the service they provide. One elaborated: “It is very important that the reclaimers get paid, because this thing that we are doing is not easy and it is not everyone who can do it. So the government needs to assist us.” Residents concurred, with 90% agreeing that reclaimers should be paid.

12. Survey and key informant evaluations and recommendations
12.1 Residents
12.1.1 Resident Assessments of the Pilot

There was strong support amongst resident survey respondents for both reclaimers and the pilot. 99% of the residents believed that reclaimers should be allowed to collect recyclables and, as noted above, 90% believed that reclaimers should be paid for their work. 90% of residents who participated in the survey said the pilot should be continued and 92% said that it should be expanded to other others.

The top five benefits of the pilot according to the residents were:

1. the regular collection of recyclables (74%)
2. contribution to saving the environment (72%)
3. contribution to social change through supporting reclaimers (71%)
4. increased recycling (58.5%)
5. improved relationships with reclaimers (48%).

These findings suggest that residents equally valued the social and environmental aspects of the pilot.
Residents also shared problems encountered during the pilot, as well as proposals regarding how to address them and strengthen the pilot. As discussed in Section 9 above, the three key problems identified by residents were:

1. not receiving bags (69%)
2. reclaimers who were not part of the pilot taking the bags (51%)
3. bags not being collected (34%).

Several resident key informants highlighted that, particularly in the beginning, there was poor communication from ARO. One noted that this improved with the appointment of a project manager for part of the pilot. Another highlighted the important role that good communication played in the project, stating that:

In my experience every time there’s someone who doesn’t have bags, there’s been a very rapid response to that so I would say that the communication has been a real strength and success of the pilot.

A third resident key informant believed that more still needed to be done to improve the frequency and consistency of communication. However, he also recognised that this was related to underfunding of implementation which led to a lack of sufficient capacity.

A strong majority (71%) of survey respondents said that some or all of their problems were addressed. However, there was an almost even split between those who said that all of their problems had been addressed (28%) and those who said that none of their problems were addressed (27%). Based on the data gathered, it is not possible to discern whether there were any patterns related to these differences, such as spatial location.

While some resident key informants said that the ARO team made efforts to resolve problems, but struggled from limited capacity, others felt that there was a need for stronger urgency on ARO’s part in addressing problems. Almost half (48%) of the resident survey respondents said that the pilot improved over time, 44% said that they were not sure, and only 8% said that it did not improve over time.

12.1.2 Resident recommendations to improve the pilot

Residents surveyed and key informants made a number of suggestions regarding how to improve the pilot. Key recommendations were:

1. Provision of clearer information on what reclaimers will collect, with updates as the market changes
2. Learn from the ARO project in Bordeaux and have “Street Captains” who encourage S@S and participation in the pilot, and help to address issues that arise on the streets where they live.
3. Improve ARO communication and administration through an administrative team or capacity building.
4. Formalise the relationship between ARO and the resident associations/forums through a committee that meets regularly.

5. Develop a relationship between residents and Unilever.

6. Improve ARO branding to make ARO and the project more visible.

Some resident key informants made contrasting proposals regarding the role that should be played by residents. One suggested that ARO should make better use of the skills of resident volunteers (particularly related to communication and social media), while another felt that too many expectations were placed on the community, noting that “there are [times] where the burden is placed on the community to do things that I just don’t think is very realistic for most people to do. Only the most motivated...are the ones who will bend over backwards to do what’s necessary”. These responses indicate that even amongst the Champions, there were different understandings of the nature of the collaboration with ARO.

12.2 Local ward councillor

12.2.1 Councillor evaluation

The pilot transformed the local ward councillor’s experience of reclaimers and provided her with new ideas regarding how she and residents could work with them. The councillor reported that she had previously had negative experiences with reclaimers in other parts of her ward, but that the result of the pilot was “phenomenal”. Reflecting on why this was the case, she stated that:

The difference is that this pilot was properly managed, there were proper partnerships involved, there was stakeholder engagement, decisions were made that included the residents and recyclers. It wasn’t something being forced in an area, it was a transparent process and inclusive process.

The councillor highlighted that a key initial challenge faced by the pilot was that, due to the highly irregular service that had been provided by Pikitup and the cooperative, many residents had lost interest in recycling. In addition:

they [residents] had been around this block so many times with Pikitup, that they didn’t believe there could be organised recycling, you know, in days when there wasn’t even organised bin collections.

She went on to note that despite this:

people bought into it, because it’s more efficient than any other previous schemes that we’ve seen come, it was efficient and reliable, and there was lots of knowledge sharing you know, people who hadn’t been involved with recycling previously started to get involved.

The councillor concluded that “actually ARO was probably more efficient than Pikitup by leagues, so some days the recycling was collected, but the bins weren’t”.
The councillor added that while there were challenges (which she referred to as “oopsies”) in the early part of the pilot (such as not having bags to distribute and reclaimers sometimes not arriving to collect), these were quickly resolved, and that there were never any major problems with the pilot. Although she received complaints from residents in the beginning, these were only occasional. The councillor credited the WhatsApp group for making it much easier to inform residents of challenges and changes, which reduced the number of complaints. On the other hand, many residents contacted the councillor to share positive feedback:

very complimentary comments were received in terms of, it was very nice once the thing was up and running, schedules were sorted and what have you. There were lots of compliments about the efficiency and [that] it was nice to have a regular collection. Lots of comments from residents who had engaged with the person on their road who had gotten to know them, chatted with them, made them a sandwich or something, and it was good to know who was working on the road. ...There was never a negative experience that I encountered from any of the residents with any engagement whatsoever with the ARO guys.

This contrasted sharply with her experiences in other parts of her ward where reclaimers were not organised. She believed that a key reason for this was that:

when ARO is organised, there is like a code of conduct... they understand what the residents don’t like to see and the residents also understand that they have a responsibility, like not to put pizza boxes in [the recycling bag], because the pizza boxes need to come out. There was no conflict in the pilot area, whereas we see lots of conflict in other areas where we see other recycling things going on.

The councillor highlighted the importance of having active resident associations, noting the role that the BCF played in building the support for the project in Brixton and bringing APRA in, as well as the roles that both associations and she played in addressing community concerns and encouraging resident participation.

12.2.2 Councillor Recommendations

Like the staff at the Pikitup Waterval Depot and the residents, the councillor advocated for the expansion of the pilot approach. She argued that the pilot:

is something that needs Pikitup to interrogate a lot more, because I think it is the only way forward, and I think somehow we need to work out a partnership programme to get reclaimers formally into the recycling projects of the city.

Elaborating why she thinks recycling with reclaimers is the only way forward, the councillor explained:

It is not re-inventing the wheel. The recyclers, the reclaimers they have been around for years now, they are an economy, they are doing the job already. So why not embrace it and work with it? Why not make it work, make it work for future generations, make it
work for the landfill crisis, make it work for the environment? Why not? Fear is usually based on the unknown, so take away the unknown. You know say this is, you know, John Smith, he's your Reclaimer and you know he's coming to Parkhurst and he's doing twelve 13th and 14th St. And he prefers to come and collect at 5:00 o'clock in the morning or 7:00 o'clock. Or sorry, John, John’s not feeling well today, he will try to pop through tomorrow, you know it's not rocket science... If you build a relationship - you know none of us rush and run out in public and hug a stranger. But when you stop and you chat to a person, you get to know them. After five minutes you might hug and say goodbye. You've just, you've gotta get to know the who, the why, and then there's no unknown. There's nothing to fear. And when you have a relationship with the person you know, these are extra eyes and ears in the street every now and then, you know. There are so many benefits to formalising this. Never mind solving what I think is a humanitarian crisis in terms of their living conditions and what they're having to deal with.

The councillor emphasised that Pikitup must contribute financially to recycling with reclaimers initiatives as “you can’t expect people to do your job as the municipality, and not support them in any way. It can’t be”.

12.3 Reclaimers
12.3.1 Reclaimer evaluation

Participating reclaimers strongly endorsed the project. All but one stated they would like to continue to participate in the pilot and that the pilot should be expanded to new areas.

The top five benefits of the pilot identified by reclaimers were: receiving uniforms (65%), receiving food parcels (52%), better relationships with residents (50%), better working conditions (39%), and having more pride in their work (33%).

*Figure 11 - Benefits of participating in the pilot*
In terms of problems encountered – the top problem was that the Pikitup truck took the recyclables (50%). As noted above, this had improved significantly since the beginning of the pilot, however it remained a key issue for participants. It is possible that they were referring to the Pikitup rubbish collection truck arriving before they did. The second most common problem was other reclaimers taking their materials (42%). Residents not separating correctly, and not being paid were tied for third place (36%). Reclaimer key informants also highlighted the problems related to residents taking out their bins late, which reduced reclaimers’ access to materials and meant increased work for the sweep-up team.

![Figure 12 - Problems encountered by reclaimers in the pilot](image)

12.3.2 Reclaimer Recommendations

Reclaimer survey respondents and key informants made useful recommendations regarding how the pilot could be improved. By far and away, the key recommendation, which was raised by 81% of respondents, was that residents need to be better informed. Overall, they made six key recommendations:

1. residents need to be better informed (81%)
2. provision of sorting spaces (44%)
3. more support from the ARO team (39.5%)
4. provision of more bags to reclaimers (37%)
5. provision of more uniforms to each reclaimer (35%)
6. more campaigning by ARO (30%).

Reclaimers interviewed added that skips and bins should be provided and serviced where they sort, so that the waste materials residents mixed with recyclables can be removed so that they can work and live in a more hygienic environment.
In terms of ensuring that residents are better informed, a key reclaimer informant identified four things that residents need to know more about:

1. how to separate different kinds of materials
2. what times to put their bags out
3. which reclaimers work on their street
4. which uniform is the official ARO uniform.

Another reclaimer key informant identified three key lessons to inform the establishment of recycling with reclaimer initiatives in other areas:

1. “equipment and the training of the people who will be working on the ground is crucial”
2. “working with community champions is good, because they can explain things much easier to their neighbours than we can”
3. “consistency at how we work on the ground will be key to changing attitudes”

13. Lessons regarding collaborations

Over the course of the pilot, the project partners developed strong, respectful relationships, which were important to the functioning and success of the pilot. As one of the Unilever representatives said when reflecting on the pilot, “the relationship is the key factor”. The remainder of this section discusses the nature of the collaboration, the challenges that needed to be overcome, and how the collaboration was transformed to address them.

The collaboration was facilitated by Mark Irvine of DNV GL, as part of a Leadership Vanguard project that sought to decrease plastic waste in South Africa. Because of the way the collaboration was initiated, ARO engaged directly with senior managers in Unilever who could make decisions and had the ability to secure resources and move the project forward. Importantly, all of the key partner representatives had a strong commitment to the pilot and its aims from the outset.

13.1 Pilot planning

The pilot planning period took much longer than the partners expected for several reasons. First, it was the first time that the partners were working together, and they needed to build trust and develop ways to relate to each other. Second, they were developing an entirely new approach to S@S and integration in South Africa. Describing the pilot, the ARO Implementation Manager said, “I think probably 70% of the whole project was just engagement, engagement, engagement and preparation for it”. Reflecting on the pilot, the partners agreed that it is necessary to schedule more time for pilot development for new projects.

13.2 Different decision-making processes, time-frames, and resources

Due to the newness of their collaboration, Unilever and ARO had limited understandings of who the other was, how the other functioned, and what was required for the other to receive authorisation to make commitments and take actions in the project.
This was particularly challenging for the Unilever representatives, who had no prior experience of being involved in, or working with, mass-based democratic organisations. For an extended period, they struggled to understand the differences between a democratic organisation and an NGO. It took time for them to understand the ways that ARO needed to report back to structures; explain the context, pilot, and proposals to members (which included translation into simpler concepts and other languages, as well as education on the sector, their role in it, integration, and government policy, to name a few topics); and receive mandates.

As a result, in the early phase of the collaboration, the Unilever representatives became frustrated that it took ARO a long time to take decisions. This also caused frustration for the ARO representatives, who felt that their counterparts wanted the benefits of partnering with a reclainer organisation that enabled them to collaborate with reclaimers, but did not appreciate the labour and time that this required.

Once the Unilever team grasped this process and its importance in ensuring that pilot would be able to function, their frustration subsided and they worked with ARO to find ways to support ARO to engage members. However, they then needed to explain why the pilot was proceeding at a slower than expected rate to their colleagues and superiors in Unilever.

One Unilever representative highlighted the need to set realistic time-frames for pilot projects and to explain internally that time for thorough mandating is fundamental for the success of collaborations. She added that a key recommendation for future collaborations is that “when they say they need a meeting with members [it is important] to ensure that happens”.

13.3 Formal corporation, informal organisation

Other challenges arose due to the very different natures of the two organisations. Unilever’s internal systems were not designed to work with organisations of informal workers. In addition, ARO was not registered as a legal entity and did not have a bank account. ARO had a relationship with an established NGO to manage ARO’s finances, as a way of ensuring financial accountability while the organisation was still consolidating. However, this created additional administrative hurdles for the Unilever representatives. While they understood ARO’s constraints and reasons for delays in ARO’s submission of documents, they still needed to comply with internal Unilever protocols. During the pilot it became clear that ARO required project management support (which it had requested previously) and that it was essential for ARO to register and gain formal status.

13.4 Project management and coordination

Three different parts of Unilever were involved in the pilot - the Unilever Foundation, the Sunlight Brand, and the Unilever Sustainable Plastics Lead Africa. The Foundation provided financial support, while the brand purchased the uniforms, printed the identification cards, hosted a media launch, organised media interviews, made a promotional video, and sought to
conduct other public relations activities. This required internal coordination, which a Unilever representative noted was absent at the start of the project.

When a project manager from within Unilever was appointed, there was confusion in the pilot, as ARO understood that the person appointed was the pilot project manager. However, many of the Unilever representatives understood that he was only coordinating Unilever inputs. Ultimately, ARO developed and managed the entire implementation process, which placed significant strain on ARO, particularly as it was dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. The experience highlighted the importance of all partners having internal coordination and management processes, in addition to an overall pilot manager accountable to all partners.

13.5 Resource inequalities

Unilever representatives’ frustrations related to delays also arose from an initial lack of understanding of the extent of ARO’s and the reclamer representatives’ resource constraints. Due to this, at first Unilever did not see how ARO’s requests for funding for airtime, data, transport, and stipends for Organising Team members to attend meetings and do organising work related to the pilot. This was exacerbated by ARO’s use of the word “organising” in a way that is understood within an activist context as being central to all work of a democratic organisation, but that was not self-evident to corporate representatives.

This resulted in distress, financial hardship, and an affront to the dignity of the reclamer representatives. Speaking to what he identified as the most difficult part of the collaboration, the ARO organiser said:

I think the biggest thing is that reclaimers underwrite a lot of these processes of consultation, whether with government or with corporates. People make assumptions that someone is there in a meeting, whether that person actually had to walk 15 kilometres to get to that meeting, whether they have eaten anything, whether they are sacrificing their family so that they can sit in that meeting.

The ARO Implementation Manager elaborated that for him, the most difficult thing was:

giving up my time... You know. I'm giving up my time, giving up my earnings to be able to work on something that was not putting anything at the table at that time. Well, I think that it really disturbed my flow of living. You know, I had to subsidise a lot of traveling, right, I had to subsidise not going to work for certain days, and you know that well, I've lost so much materials for these days, you know? Collecting in the northern suburbs, everyone has a particular space where we collect materials and 80% of the people that I collected materials from, they know me personally. And if they start not seeing me for two weeks in a row, they start getting someone else to come into our area, losing work. You know, it was difficult at that time.

While it took time, through working with ARO and reclaimers, the Unilever representatives developed a deeper understanding of ARO’s resource constraints and the financial burdens the pilot was placing on ARO representatives. They then worked with ARO to revise the budget so
that the ARO implementation team could be paid a stipend for more of the time worked on the pilot and did not need to pay for transport and communication costs for pilot related work.

One Unilever representative explained that it would never have occurred to her that it is a privilege to have cell phone data, or to be in a place with good enough cell phone reception to be able to participate in meetings. She added that:

> What working with ARO over these past two years has really opened my eyes to, is the extent of really, how much harder it is for them. I've worked with some really, really underfunded NGOs before, and the setbacks that they have are still nothing compared to the likes of ARO. So, it goes back... to this conversation when we were discussing the paying of stipends...It seems obvious now, but at the beginning it wasn't that obvious, so that's one massive eye opener.

She emphasised that she would make the payment of stipends a requirement for future collaborations and that it should be paid for time in meetings and planning the project, as well as work on the ground.

### 13.6 Public relations

Challenges emerged due to the different time frames and priorities of brands as opposed to pilot projects. As the brand was keen to promote the partnership, the media launch was held and the start date was announced before sufficient progress had been made to determine the appropriate start date. This created expectations amongst the residents, reclaimers, Unilever, and the media, so the pilot commenced in October 2019, before all components had been put in place (such as the electronic payment system). In addition, as the recycling industry starts shutting down for the year at the end of November, prices drop, and many reclaimers do not sell materials and leave the city to go home. As a result, this was not the ideal time of year to commence the pilot.

A second challenge related to the approach of the brand and its public relations (PR) companies to publicity, which they were accustomed to focusing on the brand. The PR companies were not part of the meetings with reclaimers and did not fully understand the nature of the collaboration or the focus of the project on transforming how reclaimers are seen and valued. The ARO logo did not appear on the video or draft pamphlets for residents. Promotional material developed fell into stereotypical tropes about people who work with waste, portraying reclaimers as passive and in need of charity. The ARO Organiser explained:

> I think that the main problems that are really at the heart of it [issues related to PR] have to do with issues of power and whose voice... The publicity material took a very strong charity approach...appealing to residents to have sympathy and empathy, and which is not the kind of thing that we really want. You know, we want reclaimers to be seen as men and women who are providing an essential service and are worthy of consideration, not because they are poor, but because they are performing an important job...which all of society needs to recognize.
Extensive negotiations around the portrayal of reclaimers and ARO were so protracted that ARO ultimately produced its own pamphlet. Failure to include ARO in decisions about other PR and media activities to be conducted, as well as logistical planning for them, resulted in similar problems, and meant that the activities could not proceed. This highlighted the need for brands and PR companies to work directly with reclamer representatives and to ensure that PR appropriately portrays reclaimers and the pilot.

13.7 Principles

ARO reported that while these engagements were extremely challenging and difficult, they led the organisation (with support from Wits) to develop a set of principles to underpin all collaborations, which ARO has continued to develop over time (see Annexure 1). Based on the experience of the pilot, ARO representatives emphasised that all collaborative projects must start with agreement on principles, as well as clear rules of engagement.

Because verbal agreements can result in misunderstandings, the ARO Organiser suggested that it would be useful to exchange and work on written documents. He also highlighted that collaborations are learning processes, and that all parties must be committed to seeing and understanding new things, changing their initial perspectives and positions, and deepening their understand of each other.

13.8 Immersion day

Unilever and ARO representatives identified that a key turning point in the collaboration and the pilot was when a senior member of the Unilever Team spent a full day with reclaimers. Explaining the motivation behind the immersion day, the ARO Implementation Manager said:

we really wanted them to move out of their comfort zone and understand the importance of our work, the hardship of our work, and for them to understand why it is important to include reclaimers in each and every single step during the process of the pilot.

As a result, when the Unilever representative was in Johannesburg, instead of meeting at a restaurant, the ARO representatives requested that she purchase KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken) for a larger number of reclaimers and meet them at their sorting space. She saw where they lived, walked with them while they collected, asked many questions, and through this developed a much deeper understanding of reclaimers, ARO, and the way the pilot would work on the ground.

Explaining the significance of this to ARO and why it is important for all collaborations, the Organiser said:

They [corporate and government representatives] think they know, through driving in town and seeing a reclamer or maybe talking to one person, they think they know what it is that we’re talking about, when they actually don’t. You know, they won’t know until they actually experience it and ask and talk to people and get into people’s lives.
Elaborating the importance of immersion days to the pilot, Implementation Manager said:

I think that was the very most important step that Unilever took…they allowed us to be able to teach them from the ground the work that we are doing, which made it much more easier when we were sitting down on the table and writing policies of how we go to work.

The Unilever participant in the immersion concurred, sharing:

I was very naïve when I first started about how connected the ARO team members are digitally, so I think that the first thing is that you’ve got to check your privilege, nearly hourly, when working with organisations like ARO and it’s hard. It really is. You’ve got to be very deliberate about it. And I do think when they say we need a full day immersion with team members, I think that’s absolutely important and almost nothing should happen until that is done…that’s step one. Everyone needs to understand who everyone is and where they come from.

13.9 Privilege and power

As elaborated above, issues of privilege and power were always starkly evident to the ARO representatives. ARO had strategic reasons for engaging in the collaboration, and at a few points made clear that they would walk away from the project if their principles or dignity were compromised.

Both Unilever representatives emphasised how their work with reclaimers and ARO made them more deeply aware of their privilege. This was intensified through their awareness of how differently they experienced COVID-19 and lockdowns from reclaimers. One shared:

The fact that you are being paid to do this as a project, that is one of the first privileges and ARO is not necessarily being paid to do it unless you give them funding. You have a computer, phone, electricity, car. You have that freedom. You also have the freedom that if something else comes up you can go and do that. I used to get frustrated when something else comes up [and ARO representatives could not attend meetings or meet deadlines], but then there is a flood that ARO has to go deal with it.

As discussed above, this led to some changes within the projects’ constraints. It also led to a conviction that more needs to be done in the future. Reflecting on her key learnings from the pilot, one Unilever representative proposed that:

We need some kind of privilege statement, something that just reminds you that we are all here as equals around a table, and we will treat each other with respect and dignity, and that this is not about charity or handout. The immersion day is so important, but it is a once off. People can get blasé about it...especially when you get frustrated with lack of progress, because as corporations we want things done quickly.

This highlights the importance of explicit consideration of how to address power inequalities between partners at the start of any collaboration and project involving reclaimers.
14. Conclusions and Recommendations

14.1 Conclusions

14.1.1 Aim and indicators

The pilot was conducted in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, which put significant strain on the reclaimers and the pilot. Despite this, the pilot established that reclaimers can provide a regular collection service that is comparable to, and more effective than that provided by private companies and cooperatives. Due to the cessation of the service fee, the pilot did not fully achieve the aim, which prioritised improvement in reclaimers’ income. However, the pilot demonstrated that it is possible to pay individual reclaimers a service fee, that this makes important contributions to meeting their essential needs, and that the payment of a service fee on all recyclables is important for the success of S@S. The pilot was successful (to varying degrees) in achieving improvements in the other five indicator areas. Key conclusions related to the indicator areas include:

1. **Improve relationships between residents and reclaimers**

   The pilot was highly successful in improving relationships between reclaimers and between reclaimers and residents. It transformed the suburbs by making reclaimers part of the community, improved residents’ understandings of how the area where they live is intimately related to the rest of the city, deepened residents’ understanding of inequity and injustice in the city, and enabled them to work directly with reclaimers to transform this. Reclaimer participation in community clean-ups and events, public seminars, educational programmes for children and youth, engagement with residents on collection days, work with the Champions, and successful management of the project contributed to these transformations. The pilot shows that S@S collection services provided by reclaimers can facilitate the social integration of reclaimers (which is part of the definition of waste picker integration), and achieve national and municipal goals related to social and urban transformation, while simultaneously promoting recycling. This should be factored into decisions regarding the modality of S@S collection systems.

2. **Increase the number of households separating recyclables**

   The pilot slightly increased the number of households separating their recyclables. While the increase was small, resident behavioural change takes time. It will be important for the extension of the pilot and creation of new ones to have longer timeframes and more adequate resources dedicated to promotion of changes in residents’ wasting and recycling practices. The forging of personal relationships with reclaimers and learning how S@S directly improves their daily working life add a new and human angle to standard S@S education programmes.
3. **Provide a regular collection service**

The pilot succeeded in providing a regular collection service that the local councillor reported was more effective and regular than previous Pikitup and cooperative initiatives in the area. The efficacy of the service is evidenced in the support from the councillor, the Pikitup depot, and residents for the extension of the pilot. Greater financial support to have a larger reclamer implementation team, managerial support, and communication infrastructure is required to address the problems residents and reclaimers identified with the service provision.

4. **Increase the recycling rate**

The Evaluation Team did not have access to the data required to calculate the recycling rate. Although there were regular fluctuations in amounts of materials collected, the pilot resulted in a steady overall increase in the weight of recyclables collected, as well as the average daily weight collected by participating reclaimers. The Evaluation data showed that reclaimers are more effective at extracting recyclables from the waste stream than Pikitup and the private companies and cooperatives that it contracts. This is because the companies and cooperatives only collect bags of separated recyclables, but reclaimers collect the bags and also continue to salvage recyclables from rubbish bins.

5. **Improve reclaimers’ working conditions**

The pilot significantly improved reclaimers’ working conditions, but not in the ways that were anticipated. Due to poor and incorrect separation by residents, almost all reclaimers continued to salvage materials from bins. However, the uniforms provided the reclaimers with improved personal protection. The most significant improvement in reclaimers’ working conditions related to the changes in their work environment – this was because the strengthening of their relationships with residents and resident understanding that reclaimers were legitimately collecting recyclables in the area meant that reclaimers faced less harassment when they were working and had improved access to recyclables. The uniforms and ID cards contributed to the increased acceptance of reclaimers by the community. S@S programmes that focus on strengthening relationships with residents can result in improved working conditions that cannot accrue from S@S initiatives that exclude reclaimers or only focus on their direct work activities.

6. **Service fee, income, and collection**

While the cessation of the service fee precluded the ability of the pilot to increase reclaimers’ incomes, it also provided useful insight into the effects of non-payment of service fees. When reclaimers were paid a service fee for all recyclable materials, they generally collected the full bags of recyclables. When the payment ceased, it was not viable for them to collect materials that would generate little income from their sale. This demonstrates that a service fee must be paid on all recyclables if all are to be
collected. As noted above, the pilot developed a mechanism to pay a service fee to individual reclaimers and proved that it is possible to do so.

14.1.2 Additional conclusions

1. **Integrating individual reclaimers through organising and coordination**

   It is commonly assumed in South Africa that the only alternatives to reclaimers working as autonomous individuals are to require them to form a cooperative, establish an SMME, or be employed or paid by someone else. The pilot developed a highly effective alternative option – which is to organise individual reclaimers to work collectively. This approach preserves much of the autonomy that many reclaimers value in their work, while ensuring that their work is coordinated and an efficient service is provided. The participating reclaimers do not need to join an organisation, but the democratic organising approach builds reclaimers’ trust and confidence in the pilot, ensures that participants have ways to raise their concerns and ideas, creates effective mechanisms for communication, discipline and coordination, and increases reclaimers’ knowledge of the pilot and the sector. This approach also presents a way in which reclaimers who do not want to join reclaimer/waste picker organisations or form cooperatives can be integrated, as being organised does not require joining an organisation.

2. **Support for organising is essential**

   Despite the centrality of organising to ensure effective reclaimer, participation and service provision, this work remained invisible and unfunded for much of the pilot. This meant that the success of the plot hinged on reclaimers sacrificing their own income and meagre resources. The subsequent recognition, valuing, and funding of the organising work facilitated more effective collaboration and service delivery, and created compliance with the Waste Picker Integration Principles (DEFF 2020a) that integration initiatives cannot make reclaimers worse off, and that reclaimers must be valued and paid for the work that they do.

3. **Relationships are the foundation of S@S programmes**

   The relationships between the project partners and between the reclaimers and residents were central to the success of the pilot. Specific attention to how to forge and maintain strong, equitable relationships should be part of planning pilots and programmes.

4. **Reclaimer expertise and ingenuity**

   The design and implementation of the collection system was rooted in reclaimers’ expert knowledge of how the existing collection system worked, what was required to bring reclaimers into the new way of working in the pilot, and their understanding of and relationships with the participants. The pilot was also reliant on reclaimers’
ingenuity in finding creative solutions to problems (such as what to do with the recyclables left behind and the garbage mixed in with them), that were available to them because of their access to reclaimers’ existing ways of working. The pilot showed that reclaimers bring knowledge and skills not held by other parties in the sector.

5. **Grounded understanding**

The time that the Unilever representatives spent visiting and working with reclaimers significantly transformed their understanding of reclaimers, the recycling system, the sacrifices made by reclamer representatives, the challenges they faced to make the pilot work, and the depth and nature of inequality and injustice in the sector and city. The pilot highlighted the importance of non-reclaimers engaging in similar immersions so that pilot proposals are grounded in current realities and can contribute to transforming them.

6. **Reclaimer subsidisation of collaborations and pilots**

Reclaimers subsidised the planning and initial implementation of the pilot, as they were forced to sacrifice their own income to attend meetings and conduct other preparatory and implementation work. The revision of the pilot to appropriately compensate reclaimers and facilitate their participation alleviated the personal hardships encountered by reclamer representatives, ensured better communication, enabled greater progress on the pilot, and deepened trust and respect between the partners.

7. **Time frames**

Planning for the pilot took much longer than expected. This was related to the facts that the pilot was developing a completely new approach to integration and S@S in South Africa, and that the partners had not previously conducted a pilot or worked together. Another key issue was that it took ARO more time than other partners to make decisions due to its democratic processes. However, this was exacerbated by ARO’s lack of resources to hold meetings, and at many times to communicate via WhatsApp and cell phones and participate in online meetings due to lack of data. There is a need for corporates and other parties to understand why it takes longer for democratic organisations to make decisions. At the same time, pilots and programmes should provide resources to facilitate the decision making processes.

8. **Addressing privilege and power relations**

The Unilever representatives’ increasing awareness of their privilege and power, and their conscious efforts to address these within the project’s constraints were important in creating a more meaningful and effective collaboration. The pilot highlighted that it is crucial to explicitly identify and budget for the resources necessary for reclamer representatives to be equal partners in collaborations, that there must be a commitment to minimising unequal power relations to the greatest extent possible, and
that it is necessary to engage in constant reflection on whether this is being achieved and what else needs to be done.

9. **Relationship with Pikitup and the City**

The Evaluation demonstrated the importance of the good collaboration between the pilot and the Pikitup depot, and the ways in which this was mutually beneficial. More benefits could accrue and greater success secured through strong active participation of Pikitup Head Office and the City. The City has a unique ability to secure land for the pilot and reclaimer integration more generally. Such land is necessary to provide spaces for reclaimers to sort and store the materials, ablutions facilities, other amenities for reclaimers, a secure place for equipment donated by other parties, and office space necessary to run pilots and programmes. Such a partnership could support Pikitup and the City to meet the new requirements for municipalities to integrate reclaimers.

10. **Relationship with residents associations and resident Champions**

The Brixton Resident Association (BRA) and the Auckland Park Residents Association (APRA) provided the link between ARO, participating reclaimers, and residents. The Champions performed crucial work in receiving residents’ question and complaints, resolving them to the best of their abilities, and engaging ARO to ensure that they were addressed. Simultaneously, they explained ARO’s constraints to residents, advocated for the pilot, and included ARO in community events. Active involvement of resident associations and residents is an important part of S@S.

11. **Challenges in working with informal organisations**

Unilever’s internal systems were not designed to work with organisations of informal workers. This was exacerbated by the fact that ARO was not registered as a legal entity. Planning for a pilot should include analysis of what is required to fund the reclaimer organisation, whether and how that can be streamlined, and what support (if any) is required to assist the reclaimer organisation to comply (including formal registration).

12. **Organisational support**

Unilever’s collaboration with reclaimers was dependent on partnering with ARO. Unilever and other non-reclaimer parties cannot successfully partner with reclaimers without the existence of reclaimer organisations. However, informal worker organisations have little access to resources and struggle to maintain their existence. Even if funding is allocated for organising work, this cannot happen without the organisation. Pilots and programmes must include or be accompanied by core support for reclaimer organisations.
14.2 Recommendations

14.2.1 Recommendations for the Recycling with Reclaimers pilot

1. **Continue and extend the pilot**
   The pilot should be extended and expanded to new areas of Johannesburg, as well as to new municipalities.

2. **Timeframes**
   The extension of the pilot should be for a period of time sufficient to analyse effects on resident behavioural change, and to entrench the S@S service (approximately two to three years).

3. **Funds for the service fee**
   Funds must be secured to pay the service fee and payments should commence as soon as possible. Ways should be sought to compensate reclaimers who weighed their materials out of dedication to the pilot, but did not receive the service fee.

4. **Adequate funding to cover all pilot activities**
   An analysis should be conducted of all activities and expenses required for the pilot to function (including ARO’s organising work) and these must be budgeted for.

5. **Partnerships with resident associations**
   Continue and deepen the relationships with BCF and APRA, include them in more discussions regarding the overall pilot. Prioritise developing relationships with resident associations in new areas. Involve BCF and APRA in reaching out to these resident associations.

6. **Specific contributions by brands**
   If brands are to contribute to the pilot, they should make specific contributions once the pilot is well-established, and they should work within the project principles.

7. **Core organisational funding**
   Core organisational funding should be included in the pilot or provided alongside it. If it is not possible for Unilever to provide such funding, then Unilever should support ARO to secure such funding.

8. **Increased role for Pikitup and the City**
   The project partners and the Pikitup Waterval Depot representatives should meet with senior Pikitup and City officials to report on the pilot’s achievements, and seek to secure commitment from them to partner in the project. Priority should be placed on the provision of appropriately located properties for sorting and storing materials and other pilot activities.
9. **ARO legal status**

ARO must register as a legal entity as a matter of urgency.

14.2.2 **Recommendations for reclaimer-resident collaborations**

1. **Partner with resident associations**
   It is important for reclaimer organisations to reach out to resident associations in areas where they would like to work, discuss their ideas and proposals, and partner with them as early as possible.

2. **Champions**
   Create a team of resident Champions who can galvanize other residents to participate, provide residents with information, and help to address their concerns.

3. **Immersion days**
   It could be very productive for resident Champions to spend time working with reclaimers to gain a better understanding of the work that they do. Ideally, this should be done in the area where the residents live.

4. **Public meetings**
   The resident associations and reclaimer organisation should host public events to educate residents about who reclaimers are, the contributions that they make, and how they can work together to positively affect the environment and transform the neighbourhood.

5. **Community education**
   Reclaimers should be directly involved in educating residents on how to separate their recyclables and participate in the programme. It is important to provide residents with very clear information on what materials should be separated for reclaimers. The reclaimer organisation should also conduct educational workshops with crèches, schools, and other community organisations (including religious institutions).

6. **Focus on children and families**
   Conduct special activities with children and involve the whole family in recycling with reclaimers.

7. **Regular meetings**
   Regular meetings should be held between the reclaimer organisation representatives, the Champions, and interested residents to discuss the programme, and to provide the residents with more insight into the broader work of the project and the organisation. At times, common meetings could be held with residents from several different areas.

8. **Communication Infrastructure**
   It is important to create a communication infrastructure, such as a dedicated WhatsApp group, to ensure regular communication between residents and the reclaimer organisation.
9. **Community events**
   Reclaimers should participate in community events in order to forge stronger bonds with residents.

10. **Collection schedules and routes**
    Reclaimer representatives and the Champions should collectively develop a collection route and schedule, and it should be ensured that there is a reclaimer assigned to every street.

11. **Street captains**
    It can be very helpful to have “street captains” who play an active role in encouraging their neighbours to participate and in identifying and addressing problems.

12. **Develop a relationship with the municipal waste management depot**
    The residents and reclaimers should jointly meet with the waste management service provider in the area to explain the partnership and request the service provider’s support.

13. **Seek to include the local councillor**
    Engage the local councillor to explain the role of reclaimers and the importance of the programme and seek to secure their support and include them.

14. **Connect with other resident associations**
    There is much that Champions in new areas can learn from their counterparts in other areas. Resident-to-resident engagements should be pursued.

15. **Realistic time-frames and expectations**
    It is important for residents and reclaimer organisations to have realistic expectations based on resources (financial and human) available, as well as realistic timeframes. Reclaimer organisations are usually highly under-resourced and residents should understand that reclaimers need to work each day to make their living.

14.2.3 **Recommendations for collaborations on integration, S@S, and EPR**

1. **Representatives with decision-making power**
   Representatives from all organisations must have seniority and decision making power. In the case of reclaimer organisations, this means that the representatives must be accountable to structures and receive mandates.

2. **Immersion days**
   At the outset of any collaboration, all non-reclaimers should spend a day with reclaimers, relating to them as fellow humans, working with them, and learning from them. If pilots or programmes are already running, then time should also be spent understanding how they function.
3. **Attending organisational meetings**

Reclaimer organisations should invite collaborators to one or more regular organisational meetings so that they can understand how reports are received, issues are discussed, and mandates are developed in democratic worker organisations.

4. **Principles**

Principles for how the parties will engage each other, and principles that will guide the design and implementation of the programme should be thoroughly discussed and agreed up front. Collaborations should also be grounded in the Principles for Waste Picker Integration included in the Waste Picker Integration Guideline. Discussion should be held on what it means to put the principles into practice. The ARO Principles for collaborations included in Annexure 1 can provide a good starting point.

5. **Written agreements**

Written agreements should be developed and signed at the start of the project so that everyone has a common understanding of what is being piloted, why, how they will work together, how the funding will raised, and the responsibilities and commitments of each party. The agreement should include the Principles referred to in #3 above.

6. **Full transparency and joint decisions**

Collaborations must be grounded in firm commitments to joint decision making and full transparency. Transparency can require support for reclaimers to understand issues being discussed and analyse data.

7. **Resources to level the playing field and enable collaboration**

Collaborations require full participation of reclamer representatives. Budgets must therefore include funds to cover reclamer representatives’ costs of participation, and pay them for lost earnings and the work they do on the development and implementation of the pilot. Budgets must also cover costs incurred by the reclamer organisation, which plays an essential role in ensuring that industry can collaborate with reclaimers.

8. **Reclaimers’ priorities should be prioritised**

Reclaimers’ priorities and bottom lines for the collaboration should be foregrounded.

9. **Identifying and addressing unequal power relations**

Partners should proactively identify power relations and take measures to address them at the start of the collaboration and throughout. All types of power relations should be explored, including (but not limited to) those rooted in occupation, class, location in the recycling industry, race, gender, and resources. Attention must be paid to resources, times and locations of meetings and engagements, dynamics between partners in meetings and the overall programme, language (including technical) etc. It can be
helpful to have a skilled external facilitator attuned to power inequities to support this process and facilitate meetings. This is essential for the success of collaborations and also for achieving the goal of waste picker integration to ensure reclaimer involvement and leadership in all issues and programmes related to them.

14.2.4 Some recommendations for other pilots and programmes

1. **Collaborative approach**
   Waste picker integration requires a meaningful and leading role for reclaimers in all phases of programmes and pilots that affect them. All pilots and programmes should incorporate the recommendations for collaborations outlined below in 14.2.4.

2. **Simple, clear goal**
   A pilot should have a clear and simple goal that must be agreed and commonly understood by the partners. This should not be altered during the course of the pilot, unless there is explicit agreement by all partners.

3. **Support organising**
   Include funding and resources to support democratic reclaimer organising, particularly when no organisations exist.

4. **First step – provide legitimacy and remove harassment**
   The pilot established that improving resident acceptance of reclaimers and decreasing harassment of reclaimers significantly improved their working environment and access to materials. A simple first step to integrating reclaimers is to support them to work without harassment. Municipalities should announce that reclaimers are permitted to work, amend their bylaws and landfill site permits to enable this, and actively encourage residents to respect and separate materials for reclaimers.

5. **Social relations**
   Recognise that the development of strong, positive relationships between programme partners and between reclaimers and residents is fundamental to the success of integrated S@S programmes. Plan and budget accordingly.

6. **Written agreements**
   Pilots and programmes to integrate reclaimers cannot be conducted informally. All pilots and programmes should be based on written agreements that include (at a minimum), core principles, goals, partner responsibilities, project management, governance and decisions making, budget, and dispute resolution.

7. **Partnerships with municipalities**
   To the greatest extent possible, municipalities should be included and actively participate in industry-reclaimers collaborations.
8. **Partnerships with resident associations**

S@S hinges on resident participation and behavioural change. Collaborations should include representatives of the residents in the areas where the pilot/programme will be implemented.

9. **Pre-proposal funding**

Funds should be made available to support reclaimer organisations to develop project proposals and plans. While this could be the first stage of project funding (as is the case with some donor agencies), it can also be provided through EPR funds.

10. **Allocation of sufficient time**

Programme time frames should be based on a realistic assessment of the work required and how long it will take. The decision-making processes of democratic reclaimer organisations should be taken into account. At the same time, resources should be provided to facilitate swift decision making by reclaimer structures.

11. **Programme management**

A programme manager must be appointed to lead the programme. This person can come from one of the partners or be externally appointed, and should be agreed by all partners.

12. **Project management support for reclaimer organisation**

As reclaimer organisations are still emerging and strengthening their management skills and capacities, it is important for programmes to provide them with project management support to facilitate their active engagement in the programme and enhance the success of the programme. This is also makes a longer-term contribution to waste picker integration.

13. **Programme budgets**

All funds for the pilot or programme should be secured prior to the start of the project. Budgets should include:

- Pre-proposal funding (if possible)
- all costs for participation of reclaimer representatives in project planning and implementation (including transport and communication).
- all costs incurred by the reclaimer organisation in project planning and implementation, including organising work to receive mandates from reclaimers and ensure continued and effective reclaimer participation in the programme
- payment for the time reclaimer representatives work on the project
- resident education by reclaimers
- all implementation costs
- the service fee
- project management
- programme management support for the reclaimer organisation (which is not the same as overall project management)
- monitoring and evaluation

14.2.5 Some general recommendations

1. **Further piloting of the Recycling with Reclaimers approach**

   The pilot developed an innovative way to integrate individual reclaimers into S@S and pay them for their labour. Given the generalised failure of cooperatives in the waste sector and the ways reclaimers are pushed out of the sector by S@S contracts with private companies, there should be further piloting of the Recycling with Reclaimers approach to improve it and adapt it to different local conditions.

2. **Core funding**

   There is a pressing need for industry and government to provide core funding to reclaimer organisations so that they can organise, represent, and build the capacity of reclaimers; develop proposals and programmes for integration; partner with other parties; and successfully implement autonomous and collaborative programmes. Without this, top-down charity approaches will prevail, integration programmes will not succeed, and social and political integration will not be realised.

3. **Service fee for all recyclables to ensure S@S**

   In order for S@S to succeed and all materials to be collected, the service fee must be paid for all materials put out for collection. It must be high enough to ensure that materials are collected even when prices decrease or when there is limited market demand for specific types of recyclables.
References


Annexure 1- Principles for Collaborations

At the beginning of the pilot, the parties agreed to basic principles for their collaboration. After challenges related to the handling of media and publicity, ARO developed principles specifically related to working with the media. ARO subsequently expanded the principles as it built collaborations with Unilever and other parties. The full set of principles is included below as a resource for other collaborative projects.

**Principles for ARO Collaborations**

It is important that ARO develop principles that must be adhered to by other parties in its collaborations.

It is necessary to differentiate between: 1) principles of engagement between reclaimers and the collaborating organisations; and 2) principles to be abided by in the substance of the collaboration (i.e. the project). Some of these principles may be the same.

In addition to the specific principles outlined below, all ARO collaborations must be underpinned by commitment to the Waste Picker Integration Principles included in the Waste Picker Integration Guideline for South Africa:

1. Recognition, respect, and redress – Waste pickers’ role in the recycling system is recognised and taken into account. Waste pickers are engaged respectfully. Unequal power relations between waste pickers and municipal and industry officials, as well as those rooted in gender, race, class, nationality and so on are recognised and addressed.
2. Value waste pickers’ expertise – Officials cannot presume to know what waste pickers want, how they are affected by changes in the recycling and waste management system, what the best form of integration would be, or how waste pickers work. Successful integration programmes are based on waste pickers’ needs and interests – as communicated by waste pickers.
3. Meaningful engagement – Legitimate platforms are created to meaningfully include waste pickers as equal partners in decision-making related to recycling programmes and waste picker integration. Waste pickers are supported to organise themselves so that they can better represent themselves.
4. Build on what exists – Waste pickers’ informal system for collecting, preparing and selling recyclables is recognised and valued, and provides the basis for the development of new formal recycling programmes and contracts.
5. Increased diversion and cost effectiveness – New waste picker integration and recycling initiatives increase diversion of recyclables from landfills through cost-effective means.
6. Evidence-based - Waste picker integration and recycling policies and programmes are evidence-based. Piloting can assist in generating necessary evidence. Information
generated through monitoring and evaluation contributes to revisions and future developments.

7. Enabling environment – Enabling environments for waste picker integration are created at national, provincial and local levels.

8. Improved conditions and income – Waste picker integration and recycling policies and programmes improve waste pickers’ working conditions, incomes and social security. Waste pickers are provided with alternatives and compensated for any displacement, deterioration of conditions, or decrease in income resulting from official waste picker integration and recycling programmes and contracts.

9. Compensation for services and savings – Waste pickers are remunerated for the collection services they provide, for costs avoided by municipalities and industry because of waste pickers’ services, and for the environmental benefits they generate.

10. Holistic integration – Successful waste picker integration requires changing how waste pickers are seen and engaged by residents, industry and government. Waste pickers are recognised as active and equal participants in political, economic, social, cultural and environmental processes

2. Principles of engagement between ARO and collaborating organisations

1. ARO is a full and leading partner in collaborations.
2. ARO is fully involved in and signs off on all decisions related to the collaboration, including the addition of new parties to collaborations.
3. All parties’ reporting requirements to be transparent and respected.
4. ARO to be included in all meetings – ARO should not be discussed in its absence.
5. All discussions and engagements will be transparent – all plans and documents will be shared with all parties as they are developed and completed.
6. Reclaimers to be recognised and engaged experts on collecting and revalorizing recyclables,
7. Reclaimers must play the leading role in determining how they would like to be integrated into S@S, municipal waste management systems and EPR
8. There must be agreement on clear dispute resolution mechanisms.

3. Principles underpinning projects

1. All decisions regarding project aims, governance, messaging, media strategies, partners, service providers, implementation plan, monitoring and evaluation are agreed by ARO.
2. The project’s focus is on recognising and valuing the existing work and contributions of reclaimers and improving their access to materials, incomes and conditions.
3. Work on the project will be transparent – all plans and documents will be shared with all parties as they are developed and completed.
4. The project must result in increased skills and knowledge for ARO representatives

4. **Budgets**
   1. The project will provide ARO with funding to ensure effective project management, participation and engagement. This includes, but is not limited to: airtime, data, transport, stipends, administrative work, organisational work, office materials, project management.
   2. The budget will include funds required for participatory monitoring and evaluation.
   3. All capacity-development required for ARO to participate in and implement the project to be identified and included in the budget.

5. **Media and publicity**
   1. ARO must be involved in developing, reviewing and approving all media and PR strategies, media and PR briefs, and external communication.
   2. ARO must brief all journalists and PR people before they begin work and ARO must agree to the approach and storyline.
   3. All journalists, PR people, and visitors must be briefed on and abide by these principles.
   4. All journalists, PR people and others coming to interview, meet with, visit etc. Reclaimers must work with ARO to develop the logistics plan, which must be signed off by ARO. No changes may be made (including arriving early or late) without prior agreement with ARO.
   5. ARO and its representatives will be part all media statements or press conferences held on the project.
   6. ARO must be given sufficient notice of media engagements and meetings.
   7. Media and PR must present reclaimers as creators of the collection system, experts on municipal recycling, active, complex people, leading partners in the project. Reclaimers must not be presented as passive or in need of charity or pity.
   8. ARO’s logo must be included prominently in all communication.
   9. Corporate branding on equipment for ARO and ARO members must be discussed and agreed.