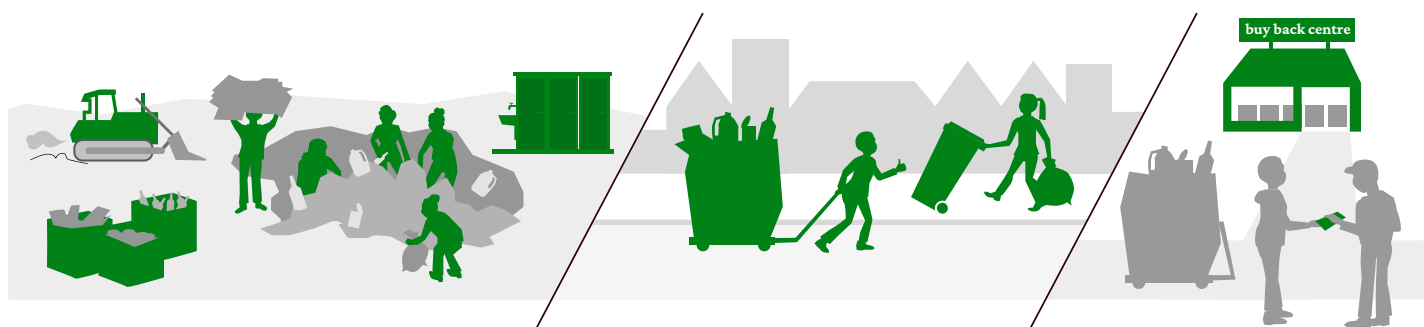


Waste picker integration

Principles



Every city and town is unique. Each has its own specific historical and current:

- waste management and recycling systems
- recycling programmes and projects
- local economy
- distance from markets for recyclables
- unemployment level
- relationship between the municipality and waste pickers
- programmes and projects for waste pickers
- local government politics
- forms of waste picker organizing (if any)
- forms and levels of mobilization by waste pickers, workers, other civil society organisations, and political movements
- relationships between waste pickers and other popular movements, nongovernmental organisations, and political organisations
- businesses and industries that interact with local waste pickers and the municipality
- etc.

As a result, **integration cannot take the same form everywhere**. It must be designed for the specific context where it will be conducted.

However, the stakeholders who developed the Waste Picker Integration Guideline for South Africa agreed that there are **10 principles** that should underpin any and every integration activity.



Waste Picker integration 10 Principles

www.wastepickerintegration.org

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Building Capacity for
Waste Picker Integration

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.

Putting the principles into practice

While it can be easy to understand the principles, it can be more challenging to figure out how to put them into practice.



QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT AND DISCUSS

Go through one or more of the case studies on the **Reclaim, Revalue, Reframe** website

[LINK TO: THE CASE STUDIES](#)



and answer the following questions:

1. Which principles were put into practice in the case study?
2. How were they put into practice?
3. Which principles were overlooked? What were the implications?

Now think about an integration or recycling project that you have been involved in.

1. Did it give life to any of the principles?
2. Which ones? How?
3. Were there any principles that it undermined? How? What were the implications?
4. How can you make sure that a new recycling or integration programme you are involved in developing will comply with the principles?
5. What other principles need to be put in place for each project you are working on?
6. How will all stakeholders work together to develop these principles and how will waste pickers' perspectives be prioritized?



Building Capacity for Waste Picker Integration

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