



REDUCING MISMANAGED PLASTIC WASTE THROUGH HEALTHIER WASTE ENTREPRENEURS

Independent waste collectors are entrepreneurs who play a key role in addressing limitations of the government-run solid waste management system in Ho Chi Minh City (population: about 13 million); they collect recyclables from narrowly built, otherwise inaccessible neighborhoods and minimize the volume of recyclable waste going to landfills. These activities are critical to reducing the overall cost of waste collection for municipal governments, yet independent waste collectors have minimal access to services such as health care and protective gear.

BUILDING STRONGER INDEPENDENT WASTE COLLECTOR COOPERATIVES

The project strengthens solid waste management (SWM) by supporting independent waste collector cooperatives with skills training and the development of inter-cooperative networks for more effective government advocacy. Cooperatives are recognized by local government authorities as legitimate counterparts, and most independent waste collectors already belong to such organizations, making the cooperatives a key platform to facilitate efforts to gain more secure livelihoods.

ADVOCATING FOR HEALTHIER LIVELIHOODS

The project advocates on behalf of 1,561 independent waste collectors—about 39% of the city's waste collector population—for higher salaries and protective gear, access to health insurance, and city acceptance of the motorized tricycles independent waste collectors use for transportation. The project also reduces stress on the city's waste management system by increasing waste segregation at the household level. By formalizing the linkages in the plastic value chain between independent waste collectors, local and national level buyers, and local government, roughly 4.4 million pounds of plastic waste will be redirected from disposal in the ocean by the end of the project.

HIGHLIGHTS TO DATE

- The percentage of **women in cooperative leadership roles increased from 0% to 22%** among nine project cooperatives.
- 815 independent waste collectors acquired better access to **health care**.
- 1,200 independent waste collectors acquired **occupational health gear and safety training**.
- 8,700 community members participated in awareness raising activities about **waste separation and the health effects of ocean plastics**.
- Sustained advocacy and negotiations with the local government contributed to **two milestone solid waste management ordinances in Ho Chi Minh City**:
 - **Waste segregation at household level is mandatory**. Independent Waste Collectors can report households who do not segregate their waste, resulting in fines of up to \$800 (Decision 44/2018).
 - **Independent Waste Collector fees paid by households doubled** from \$1 per month to \$2 per month, **increasing monthly income by about 65%** as compared to 2017 (Decision 38/2019).

PROJECT: Towards Higher Effectiveness for Informal Sector Waste Pickers in Plastic Waste Recycling

DURATION: October 1, 2017 – October 31, 2019 | **IMPLEMENTER:** Environnement et Développement du Tiers-Monde (ENDA)

LOCATION: Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Vietnam | **BUDGET:** \$243,527