

Essay on Development Policy

Addressing informality in local Waste Management

- ***Experiences with informal waste pickers from Kosovo***

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List of Abbreviations

DLDP	Decentralisation and Local Development Programme of HELVETAS in Albania
ECMI	European Center for Minority Issues
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ISWM	Integrated Sustainable Waste Management
KEPA	Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency
KLMC	Kosovo Landfill Management Company
LWM	Local Waste Management
MESP	Ministry for the Environment and Spatial Planning of Kosovo
PoE	Public owned Enterprise
RAE	Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian minorities
RWC	Regional Waste Company
SMS / GIZ	Sustainable Municipal Service Program of GIZ
SWMP	Solid Waste Management Plan
UN HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
WIEGO	Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing

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Abstract

Informal waste picking is a common activity in Kosovo municipalities, often involving disadvantaged communities of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians (RAE) who are thereby making their living (ECMI 2015; Mendonça 2015). Individual pickers are currently collecting waste at containers and transfer stations managed by Local Waste Management (LWM). This practice challenges municipalities and is often perceived negatively (messing up containers, transfer stations), but can also be viewed as an opportunity: Waste picking is at the bottom of a recycling value chain and a possible starting-point for a more generalised waste separation and recycling system, yet not existing in Kosovo.

This policy essay shall explore options that municipalities and waste operators have in dealing with waste pickers. It takes cases from Kosovo and Albania as examples to draw lessons for an Integrated Sustainable Waste Management (ISWM) framework that informal practices such as waste picking.

Keywords: Informal waste pickers; Local Waste Management (LWM); Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians (RAE), recycling.

1. Introduction

This policy essay links waste management in Kosovo with informal practices. Waste management is per se a key challenge for Kosovo's municipalities in the ongoing decentralisation process: In this context, informal practices such as waste picking offer both challenges and opportunities to municipalities. The focus of the paper is on informal waste picking and on the associated challenges and opportunities for municipalities and waste operators.

Informality versus formality?

Informality has two faces: informal living conditions and settlements as well as informal economies:

- “Urban Informality. Toward an Epistemology of Planning” by Roy (2005) describes informal 'modes of urbanisation' as self-organised processes, against the traditional planning approach.
- Informal economies as a concept in development studies was first established by Hart in his article “Informal Income Opportunities and Urban Employment in Ghana” (Hart 1973). Until lately the informal economy has been understood in antagonism to the formal economy .

Informal settlements and informal economies are interlinked, as many examples of informal workers from informal settlements show. And informality can be understood as being complementary to formality, as Roy argues: “*Against the standard dichotomy of two sectors, formal and informal, we suggest that informality is not a separate sector but rather a series of transactions that connect different economies and spaces to one another*” (Roy 2005, p. 148). Applying this complementary approach to waste management in a system with both informal and formal activities and stakeholders can best be done with the Integrated Sustainable Waste Management (ISWM) framework (UN HABITAT 2010).

Informal waste pickers in Kosovo's waste management:

The first link in the recycling chain cannot be overlooked in the streets of Pristina: Scavengers, who search the containers for all kind of re-usable materials (Municipality of Pristina, p. 14).

This citation from the Municipal Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) of Pristina (2012) shows the relevance of waste pickers for municipalities – the same is true in municipalities of Albania (DLDP 2012). Informality in waste management challenges municipalities in the process of decentralisation: They are struggling with fulfilling their new competences in waste management (especially waste collection). In this context the presence of other (informal and formal) stakeholders is often seen as a challenge: of private waste operators and micro-businesses, professional waste pickers and individual waste pickers: Municipalities and waste operators interact especially with individual waste

pickers and often perceive them as competitors for recyclables. On the other hand, informal waste picking is a livelihoods strategy, namely for the most disadvantaged communities in Kosovo, the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) minorities: It often constitutes the income of whole families which do not have access to the formal job market (OSCE 2010).

Waste picking: the start of recycling?

Kosovo's municipalities currently do not have the – financial and technical – capacities to build up recycling systems. Not having a recycling system puts them under – financial – pressure because for the time being the waste operators need to send most waste to landfills: In 2008, an estimated 90% of the collected waste was directly sent to a landfill (MESP 2013). At the landfill they pay gate fees to the Kosovo Landfill Management Company (KLMC). So why not using the services of waste pickers? Since waste pickers have proven to be recycling experts, by collecting, separating and processing recyclables for their clients.

This policy essay wants to find out which possibilities exist to combine the municipalities' political objectives (e.g. saving costs, building recycling rates) with the interests of waste pickers (e.g. improving their efficiency; escaping poverty and marginalisation). This leads to the following research questions:

1. Which is the role of waste pickers in Local Waste Management (LWM)?
2. How is informal waste picking perceived by the interviewed waste management experts?
3. Which synergies with waste picking could municipalities make use of?

Expert interviews and the analysis of project documents are the main sources to answer the questions. Several experts have been interviewed via skype with a guideline for expert interviews, in order to document cases in Pristina and Gjakova (both in Kosovo) as well as in Shkodra and Lezha (both in Albania). The interviews have been transcribed (according to Flick 2010) and analysed with qualitative content analysis based on Kruse (2016). Annexes 2 – 8 provide more information about the process of evaluating the interviews.

Structure of the policy essay:

The essay first introduces the LWM system in Kosovo (chapter 2.1). Then, the role of informal waste pickers in this system is explained (chapter 2.2). Subsequently, the paper analyses examples from Kosovo and from Albania (chapter 3.1). Finally, the lessons learnt from the different examples shall be summarised and synthesised (chapter 3.2). In the conclusions, the lessons learnt shall be synthesised, specifically for the Kosovo / Balkans context.

2. Informal waste picking within local waste management

Chapter 2.1 shall give a short overview of municipal waste management in Kosovo and of the municipal competences. This is necessary to better understand the position of waste pickers and where they intervene: subject of chapter 2.1. Thereby research question 1 shall be answered:

1. Which is the role of waste pickers in local waste management?

2.1. Municipal waste management in Kosovo

Waste management policies are just in the starting block since the countries' declared independence. After the end of armed conflicts, the international community mainly gave its attention to cleaning up the left-overs of war (DANIDA 2004) and municipal waste management has come into the focus of local decision-makers and donors in the recent process of decentralisation.

Responsibilities of municipalities in local waste management:

Municipalities, with the new waste Law No.04/L-060 (replacing the law Law No. 02/L-30, applicable together with the UNMIK Regulation no. 2006/31 of 05.05.2006) are exclusively responsible for local waste management (cf. art. 17 lit. f of the Law No. 03/L-040 on local self-government) except for hazardous waste. The main tasks of the municipalities are defined in art. 15 of the waste law:

- establishing waste management on their territory, from planning in a Municipal Waste Management Plan in accordance to the National Waste Management Plan (MESP) to implementation and enforcement
- organising the services related to collection, storage and transportation of waste, including the selection of operators that are licensed by the Ministry
- determining fees for the services and the way of collecting fees including enforcement
- informing the ministry and the public about the state of waste management.

Challenges for municipalities:

Municipalities therefore have a core function in waste management. Their main challenges regarding Local Waste Management are summarised in table 1 (focusing on household waste).

Problems of waste management	Challenges for municipalities
Low coverage with waste collection: only 49% of the population receiving waste collection services (rural urban and rural areas,	Ensure a full coverage with waste collection both in rural urban and rural areas, covered financially by fees

areas with a low coverage), partly due to the reluctance of citizens to pay the fees (KEPA 2013)	
Wide-spread illegal dumping: 400 illegal landfills (KEPA 2014: p. 37)	Halt dumping both in public spaces and in rural areas, e.g. by increasing coverage, by improving public awareness and by fines
Lacking funds for investing into waste management: The collection of waste fees is a key challenge (OAG 2013), leading to insufficient funds for implementing the waste management plans (RIINVEST 2016)	Increase fee-collection, to invest into waste management infrastructure (e.g. containers) and to implement waste management plans
Indebtedness towards Kosovo Landfill Management Company (KLMC): debts of Regional Waste Management companies that are financed by municipalities to Kosovo Landfill Management Company of 3.5 million Euros (DEMOS 2015)	Increase fee-collection to avoid landfill company closing its gates to the indebted operators

Table 1: Main challenges for municipalities in Local Waste Management (own representation).

Organisation of municipal waste management:

In addition to the challenges mentioned in table 1, municipalities have to ensure the legal conformity of their waste management system: Licensed – public or private – operators need to be selected through a tender-process; if the municipality organises waste-collection with its current staff members, it needs a license as a public owned enterprise (PoE). From these operator-models with different degrees of influence by the municipality and with varying incentives for investments by private partners, municipalities are called to find out which is the most advantageous model for them.

Most municipalities organise services through one of the public Regional Waste Companies (RWCs), that continue to exist from the previous, centralised system. The companies collect the waste for two or more municipalities and are controlled by them in their board. The influence of individual municipalities on these public enterprises depends on the size of municipalities. Some municipalities combine the services of the RWCs with the service of smaller, private operators (e.g. for certain areas / zones); some other – small – municipalities organise waste collection with their own staff, sometimes without having a license. In Serbian-majority municipalities, services are often provided by parallel institutions (RIINVEST 2016).

Recently, both a trend towards more control by the municipalities – by creating an own PoE – as well as a tendency to cooperate with private operators can be observed. While creating an PoE has the

advantage for big municipalities to avoid subsidising the services of regional companies in little municipalities (with a low level of fee-collection), the cooperation with private operators offers municipalities the possibility to get fresh capital for urgently needed investments. Both trends also embody risks: getting a license for an own PoE enterprise is complicated; and going into a Public-Private Partnership is complicated and bears the risk of losing political control if not well-designed.

Recycling: a “nice to have”?

With all the mentioned challenges, recycling remains an untapped potential. Municipalities though have the legal obligation to show in their waste management plans how they organise the classification (based on separation) respectively the separate collection as well as the recycling of waste (art. 10 par. 6 law on waste). Beyond legal obligations, there are other factors explaining the interest of municipalities to start with waste separation and recycling, namely:

- the trend of the last years with a moderate increase of waste amounts, presumably resulting in increasing costs for local waste management, without gains in efficiency (KEPA 2014)
- the fact that municipalities are indebted to the landfills via the RWCs, with consequences such as the closure of landfill gates: Therefore, if municipalities can reduce the waste amounts without heavy investments, they can use the savings made (reduced landfill fees) for reducing costs (paying debts to KLMC)
- the pressure of the European Union to comply with its standards on the way to a deepening of Kosovo's relations to the EU.

Since waste pickers are currently at the basis of the small recycling sector (ECMI 2015, Mendonça 2015), it is interesting to have a closer look at their role in the waste management system in chapter 2.2.

2.2. Informal waste pickers in the local waste management system

“Individual informal waste collectors are the fundamental link between the formal and informal waste sector companies” (ECMI 2015, p. 17).

This chapter will give a picture of the position that informal waste pickers and their activities have within LWM. This presumes a definition of informality, an understanding of the activities waste pickers are performing as well as of their interactions and intersections with “formal” waste management.

Informal economy in Kosovo:

Informal economy in Kosovo accounts for a high share of the economy: It is difficult to make quantitative estimates and different sources come up with different figures based on different sources (Krasniqi and Topxhiu 2012; Glovackas 2005). In its Labour Force Survey for 2014, the Kosovo Agency for Statistics (ASK 2015) uses the concept of vulnerable employment (meaning self-employed persons and family members) that in Kosovo accounts for 24.9% of total occupation (the highest value in the region). Informal waste picking as a typical form of vulnerable employment is thus part of a general informal pattern of economy. As mentioned in the introduction, the informal economy is full of interactions with the formal economy, which makes it difficult to separate them. There are yet several factors that distinguish informal from formal practices in waste collection:

- property relationships: waste pickers producing without own means of production, but largely using the infrastructure provided by municipalities (containers, transfer stations) respectively avoiding to take property of the waste by selling it to companies (lack of storage capacities)
- labour contracts: informality in the waste sector is precisely defined by a lack of contractual relationships, be it between waste pickers and companies or between informal companies and municipal waste operators (Interview with Gola 2016)
- financial credit: The informal collection respectively separation of waste involves manpower and does not require credits; only more sophisticated activities of the informal waste sector such as pressing waste to prepare it for exportation (informal companies) requires investment capital
- social security systems: Waste pickers in Kosovo partly receive social assistance which is not enough for surviving; by being employed the waste pickers would lose their eligibility for social assistance.

Relevance of informal waste picking in Kosovo:

Waste picking is relevant for different stakeholders involved in LWM:

- Relevance for the waste pickers themselves: They are mostly from the marginalised RAE minorities, one of the most vulnerable groups in Kosovo, with a high incidence of poverty and relatively low levels of education (OSCE 2010). In its Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) acknowledges this fact and gives directions to improve these communities' situation (OPM 2008). Different sources show the relevance of waste picking for a big number of families, especially in certain municipalities and neighbourhoods: E.g. a report on the Housing and Integration Project for RAE communities of Caritas Switzerland located in the RAE neighbourhood "Ali Ibra" in the

municipality of Gjakova shows that, out of 333 unemployed persons from totally 455 labour-aged individuals in the neighbourhood, 81 persons make a living from solid waste collection and recycling: This makes the waste sector the first one in the informal economy of “Ali Ibra” (Caritas Switzerland 2015);

- Relevance for municipalities: Waste pickers are ensuring at least a low level of recycling in Kosovo (ECMI 2015, Mendonça 2015); and they are citizens of the municipalities with rights and duties. As long as municipalities cannot provide neither recycling services nor formal income opportunities to waste pickers, they have an interest in ensuring that the communities living from waste picking can continue doing so, but in respect with public order (e.g. no littering) and respecting basic human rights (such as the right of the waste pickers' children to education);
- Relevance for waste operators: Waste operators are active at the same places as waste pickers (at containers) and are directly confronted with both the negatively and positively perceived impacts of waste picking: They have an interest to minimise negative side-effects (such as cleaning up the left-overs around containers after picking) and in using the potentials of waste picking (reducing the amount of waste they need to handle and thus their costs);
- Relevance for recycling companies: Waste pickers are their main suppliers. And when they buy recyclables from informal waste pickers, they become subject to informal/illegal practices: first, because no VAT is paid on these transactions and no accounting can be done; second, because they tolerate abusive practices of waste pickers such as child labour when buying from from them. Therefore recycling companies have an interest in ensuring the continuation of waste picking, but in more human conditions (reputation risk, possibly legal consequences).

In order to understand the position of waste pickers in local waste management, their role in the by and large private recycling system as well as their interferences with municipal waste management system shall be described in the following paragraphs:

Role of waste pickers in the recycling system

In her master's thesis, Mendonça (2015) goes into the mechanisms of the recycling system, with waste pickers being at the bottom of the value-chain, collecting and separating mainly metals, PET and cardboard and selling the recyclables to formal or informal companies. The recycling companies further process the materials, mainly by pressing it; in some cases of plastic-recycling, by producing granulates (personal comment by Hofmann 2016; Interview with Tetrica 2015). In the next step, the

material is either directly exported by the companies or sold to export companies. The collected respectively sorted out recyclables are mostly being exported as long as recycling is limited to a few companies recycling paper and plastics (KEPA 2014).

Within the system of collecting and separating recyclables, two categories of waste pickers can be found: itinerant and more professional waste pickers. The interview partners agree that itinerant street pickers are very poor, socio-economically speaking, and are mostly from RAE minorities; in addition, they are often poorly equipped (e.g. in terms of transportation, cf. ECMI 2015) and very flexible, thereby escaping local authorities by working at night (Interview with Koplaku 2016). The more professional waste pickers are specialised in certain types of recyclables (Interview with Gola 2016) with a better knowledge of prices (Interview with Mendonça 2016); they are better organised by visiting waste generators such as supermarkets on a regular basis (ibid).

Certain aspects regarding waste pickers cannot be answered conclusively based on the interviews: Especially the question to which degree the itinerant pickers are working independently respectively are being engaged by companies, such as stated in two interviews (Gola 2016; Koplaku 2016), is difficult to answer as long as the terms “independent” and “dependent” are not defined. This question is important to the CEO of the public waste management company Cabrati, because for her, if waste pickers are working for companies (even if not registered as employees), these companies should be held accountable for problems occurring as a result of waste picking (whereas if waste pickers are working independently, it is possible to make them accountable for their activities respectively to directly cooperate with them). A further question that would need research is whether there are waste workers working both as itinerant pickers and as employees of a waste collection company such as Cabrati in Gjakova: The CEO of Cabrati (Interview with Gola 2016) has doubts about employees of the public waste collection company Cabrati separating waste illegally during their work as municipal waste workers (comment by the author: he has observed street cleaners of the public waste management company in Pristina, Pastrimi, with plastic bags for plastic bottles and aluminium cans on their mobile containers).

Interferences of local waste pickers with LWM

Waste pickers interfere with LWM in public spaces, with two main hotspots: containers and transfer stations. This is where employees of municipal waste management companies acknowledge the presence of waste pickers (Interviews with Koplaku, Gola and Mendonça, all in 2016):

- Waste picking from public containers: in Kosovo, 42% of the waste is collected from containers closed to collective housings, whereas 58% is collected by door-to-door collection (KEPA 2014). In the first case, waste pickers need “only” to tour these collection points and

can already retrieve relevant amounts of waste. In areas with direct door-to-door collection waste operators get less in touch with waste pickers (also because for waste pickers it is often not worth going from house to house, except for valuable materials such as metals).

- Waste separation at transfer stations: Waste pickers can also be found in transfer stations (where available), as far as the studied case of Gjakova is concerned (Interview with Gola 2016): The waste is deposited in transfer stations after primary collection from containers respectively after door-to-door collection, before being loaded on other – bigger – trucks, to bring it to the landfill. This place offers waste pickers big quantities of waste – and of potential recyclables – but is also a dangerous place with harmful health conditions (smells, leakages)
- Waste picking from final disposal sites: Besides picking from one of the illegal dump sites, there are also reported cases of waste pickers in Kosovo on the regional landfills of Mitrovica, Gjilan and Peja despite the dangers awaiting them, such as being covered by waste dumped by the waste operators' trucks (personal comment by Hofmann 2016).

The observed interactions between local waste management are decisive for the way waste management stakeholders perceive waste pickers; based on the analysed case-studies, the author has observed that these perceptions are determining the attitude of stakeholders from municipal waste management whether to adopt restrictive or cooperative policies (cf. figure 1). Understanding the contacts between LWM and waste pickers is therefore a prerequisite for better understanding the perceptions and, in a next step, for analysing the degree of cooperativeness between the stakeholders in chapter 3.1.

Figure 1: From contacts to cooperation between Local Waste Management (LWM) and waste pickers (own representation based on working experiences; Lines: the more dotted, the less clear the causality).

3. Lessons learnt from experiences with informal waste picking

In the following sub-chapters, experiences of local waste management in Kosovo and in Albania with waste picking shall be described and analysed (with references to other regions), in order to give answers to the following research questions:

2. How is informal waste picking perceived by the interviewed waste management experts?
3. Which synergies with waste picking could municipalities make use of?

3.1. Approaches to deal with waste picking in Kosovo and in Albania

The following sections go about the policies of two municipalities in Kosovo (Pristina and Gjakova) and two cities in Albania (Shkodra and Lezha), analysed in expert interviews (cf. introduction). As shown in figure 1, understanding the attitudes and perceptions of the involved stakeholders helps analysing the approach of LWM towards waste pickers and its degree of cooperativeness. In a last step, the lessons learnt shall be derived (chapter 3.2).

Experts' perceptions of waste pickers' impacts on LWM

The perspective of LWM on informal practices (mainly waste picking) represents the – subjective – pictures of waste pickers in the discourse of the interview partners.

Waste pickers are “*mostly seen as a competition and waste picking as stealing*” (Mendonça 2015, p. 55) by municipal waste management. In addition, waste pickers are reported to leave behind a mess when opening waste bags and leaving the non-recyclable products behind, next to the container (Interview with Koplaku, 2016). This argument is even used if the waste bags have been disposed of outside the containers by uncautious citizens (Mendonça 2015).

On the other hand, the positive impacts of waste picking on municipal waste management are not acknowledged in official documents (Mendonça 2015). The most important impact of waste pickers on LWM is to drive the recycling value-chain: Currently, municipal waste management consists in collecting the waste and bringing it to one of the landfills; this is why the waste pickers are so far the only providers of recycling-materials (Mendonça 2015; ECMI 2015). In addition, waste picking contributes to reducing the amount of waste to be collected and landfilled: Different cities have proven that waste pickers can considerably increase recycling rates (Scheinberg 2012; Wilson et al. 2009), thereby reducing the amount of waste, saving costs to municipalities (transportation and landfill gate fees) and saving space and landfill capacities (Ezeah et al. 2013) and reducing environmental impacts (e.g. less waste in riverbeds).

Table 2 summarises how the interview partners perceive and assess waste picking, highlighting both positive and negative impacts on LWM in the view of the experts. The experts' perceptions are either based on personal observations by the interviewed experts and their partners, they are rooted in assumptions or they result from a combination of both empirics and observations.

Mentioned perception of waste picking and its impacts on LWM	Impact mentioned by several interview partners (IPs)	Assessment: “+” for positive and “-“ for negative impacts
Waste pickers making their living from collecting and separating recyclables, often without alternatives	Mentioned by all IPs, as a positive and negative argument, mainly for LWM and donors	+ -
Littering of waste around containers (causing additional work for cleaning to waste operators)	Mentioned by all IPs mainly as an argument of waste operators and local authorities (partly shared by donors)	-
Waste pickers reducing the amount of recyclables, thereby saving landfill gate fees, also seen as competitors for recyclables	Mentioned by all IPs, mainly for LWM and donors (in Pristina and Shkodra it is seen as a negative impact)	+ -
Waste pickers exposing themselves to health risks	Mentioned by two IPs as an argument of LWM (Gjakova) respectively of donors (cases in Albania)	-
Creating a negative image for tourism	Mentioned by one IP, as an argument of local authorities in Shkodra	-
Creating a feeling of unsafety for citizens	Mentioned by one IP, as an argument of local authorities (cases in Albania)	-
Waste pickers in need of support and recognition (and thus cooperation)	Mentioned by two IP, as a donor's argument (cases in Pristina and Albania)	+ -
Waste picking as a working activity (vs begging, not seen as work)	Mentioned by one IP, as an argument of local businesses (cases in Albania)	+
Waste pickers are considered to be dependent (engaged by companies), leading to a lack of cooperation	Mentioned by one IP, as an argument of the local waste operator in Gjakova	-
Waste pickers escaping control (working conditions / child labour, working times)	Mentioned by two IPs, as an argument of local businesses (case of Pristina) and of municipalities (cases in Albania)	-
Waste pickers as experts for the recycling business	Mentioned by one IP, as an argument of donors (case of Pristina)	+

Table 2: Perceptions of the interview partners regarding waste picking (based on expert interviews with Mendonça; Gola; and Kopliku; all in 2016).

The perceptions that waste pickers themselves have of the waste management system are missing in table 2; they are important pre-conditions for analysing the cooperation potentials between LWM

and waste picking, too. The conducted expert interviews do not allow for a comprehensive analysis of the waste pickers' perspectives. Literature from Kosovo shows that waste pickers have a predominantly negative perception of local authorities and waste operators, based on their negative experiences: Waste pickers are being harrassed (Interview with Mendonça 2016) or taken away the material by the waste operator as described for Pristina (Mendonça 2015). In addition, they fear formalisation by registering themselves, because of the administrative burden and because they are afraid to lose social assistance which is only paid to unemployed persons (Interview with Kopliku 2016; ECMI 2015).

Cooperation between Local Waste Management and waste pickers

The perceptions of waste picking by the interviewed experts and by local authorities as well as waste operators are reflected in the described cooperation patterns, for the three analysed cases: in Gjakova, Pristina as well as in Albania (the two cities of Shkodra and Lezha). The examples in boxes 1 – 3 summarise the cooperation patterns.

In Pristina, the analysed “waste banks” reflect a change in attitudes compared with the prevailing competitive approach of the waste operator towards waste pickers described by Mendonça (2015): According to GIZ, the municipality has confirmed its interest to participate in the pilot project by engaging in a cooperation agreement (GIZ 2015). The municipality is participating with the expectation of increasing recycling rates. For the waste operator in Pristina, the approach is promising because potentially reducing the amount of waste to be collected and transported to the landfill: Thereby the operator can save landfill gate fees. The advantages for waste pickers are: first, that they do not have to transport waste to one of the – formal or informal – companies and dealers outside town (making them inefficient); second, they have access to more and cleaner recyclables and they do not have to go

Box 1: Concept of “waste banks” in Pristina

GIZ is implementing a pilot project in Pristina with so-called “waste banks”, embedded in its project “Developing sustainable municipal waste services” (SMS): It involves a private recycling company, the waste pickers and the municipality of Pristina. In the project, the municipality temporarily provides public land for installing the waste bank; the waste bank is operated by the private company: It buys recyclables to everyone, processes and sells them for exportation and recycling. The company has verbal informal agreements with waste pickers who are allowed to exclusively operate container sites in the neighbourhood; in return they have to agree on minimum standards (e.g. no child labour, wearing uniforms, no littering). The private company takes the responsibility towards the city to control these conditions, in return for using public land. For citizens, the waste bank serves as “one-stop-shop” for recycling, information, awareness; and it offers them the possibility “contribute” with the value of their recyclables to activities of green clubs in the neighborhood school (incentive to separate waste at household level).

through mixed waste; in addition they have achieved a better perception of their work / status, being part of the value chain (e.g. by wearing uniforms, they achieve semi-formalisation). For

citizens, a successful implementation of this approach results in environmental and public health benefits (reduced environmental impacts in terms of groundwater and soil pollution as well as emissions).

In Gjakova, the CEO of the public operator Cabrati is tolerating the activity of waste pickers because she is aware that they depend from it. She makes the company managing the transfer station, K-Ambienti, responsible for the waste pickers and their working conditions. This attitude explains why a direct cooperation with waste pickers is considered as impossible and why waste picking is tolerated. In case the municipality's future policy for the transfer station leaves Cabrati a role in the recycling activities at the transfer station, Gola sees a role for informal waste pickers; in case the transfer station is managed by a foreign company, she sees no place for waste pickers because the international company would not consider the socio-economic reality of waste pickers

Box 2: Gjakova's transfer station as interface between LWM and waste pickers:

In Gjakova, the recycling value-chain including waste pickers is currently concentrated at the transfer station: The municipality has left the land to the company "K-Ambienti" (managed by the local Roma community) for five years, in order to establish recycling activities. The facilities set up in the meantime at the transfer station with administrative and financial support from Caritas Switzerland, are being managed by K-Ambienti: The company has been contracted for this service by Gjakova's public waste operator. K-Ambienti is separating waste at the transfer station with employees from the local Roma community, buying recyclables from waste pickers and preparing them for exportation (e.g. pressing plastic). In an attempt to increase recycling rates, the municipality is planning to replace the transfer station by a recycling centre.

and instead employ staff on market-based criteria (Interview with Gola 2016). The scenario of a new management scheme for the transfer station leaves the public waste operator, the company K-Ambienti and the waste pickers with an unclear perspective: Whereas the representative of the Caritas Switzerland Project in the informal Roma settlement of "Ali Ibra" (project ended in 2015) reports that the municipality was willing to make a long-term contract with K-Ambienti for using the transfer station (Interview with Tetrica 2015), the SWMP of Gjakova aims at contracting a future operator for managing the transfer station in 2016 (Municipality of Gjakova 2015).

In Shkodra (Albania), the chosen approach reflects the municipality's initial prohibitive attitude towards informal waste picking: In its attempt to stop this activity the municipality charged experts with

Box 3: The attempts of Shkodra and Lezha (Albania) to formalise waste pickers

Albania is implementing a formalisation strategy which involves local authorities. The municipalities are directly confronted with waste picking: Shkodra and Lezha have adopted different approaches to formalise waste pickers and to strengthen recycling:

a) The municipality of Shkodra wanted to formalise waste pickers: They were offered a "formalisation package": The recognition of their activity and the provision of fluorescent overalls to avoid accidents were offered against the duties of waste pickers to register themselves (for an overview of the sector) and to keep container areas clean after picking. From this package the fluorescent overalls were well accepted by the pickers.

b) Lezha's waste operator included waste pickers in the payroll to collect recyclables according to a defined scheme ("door-to-door collection"): Waste pickers collected in defined areas – mainly in market areas and in residential areas without any space for big containers – twice a week and were paid by the operator. This policy was stopped after the municipal elections in 2015.

analysing the property status of waste: with the conclusion that waste within municipal containers could be considered as municipal property (but not waste disposed elsewhere). Even if the municipality can thus consider taking out waste from containers as “stealing” recyclables of municipal property, it neither has the enforcement capacities to sanction waste pickers nor does it have the capacities to organise separate waste collection or waste separation on its own. The formalisation approach failed because the waste pickers feared that by registering themselves they would lose their right to social assistance. It will be interesting to see what the municipality learns from this experience: At least it knows that part of its support offered – the equipment (gloves and fluorescent overalls) – has been well received by the waste pickers. In addition, the municipality is aware now that the private waste operator should not engage in recycling activities since the containers are “screened” by informal waste pickers regularly (Interview with Kopliku 2016).

In Lezha (Albania), the support of door-to-door collection by waste pickers was started to support the marginalized Roma community. And there were own interests of the municipality contributing to this decision: The municipality acknowledged that waste pickers are more effective in collecting recyclables (selling it to a recycling company managed by the Roma minority) than the local waste operator, based on its three-stream collection. Saved landfill gate fees were an additional incentive for municipality to take such an initiative (Interview with Kopliku 2016). A similar approach is being implemented within the GIZ SMS Program in Gjilan: door to door collection of recyclables by informal waste pickers in pre-defined bags provided by the waste collection enterprise (personal comment by Hofmann 2016).

3.2. Lessons learnt in the case-studies with waste picking

There are lessons to be learnt regarding the perspectives of waste management stakeholders, the relevance of the examples analysed in chapter 3.1 in a comparative view and for municipalities and donors, in the way they can design their policies and projects, integrating waste pickers.

Integrating the perspectives of LWM and waste pickers – towards identifying synergies:

The analysed examples (Pristina and Gjakova in Kosovo and Shkodra and Lezha in Albania) have shown that a cooperation between municipalities and waste pickers is challenging. It requires an understanding of both waste pickers' and municipalities' interests (cf. table in annex 1). Figure 2 takes the human actor model of Wiesmann et al. (2012, p. 240) as a basis to identify common interests of municipalities and waste pickers for recycling policies. The figure shows that to achieve 'Inclusive Recycling' as a “*model of shared ownership, risks, and benefits, where each set of actors does what they are best at*” (Scheinberg 2011: p. 114), common interests should be identified at

three levels: a) searching for common intentions, b) identifying the resources and c) defining activities that are shared by all stakeholders.

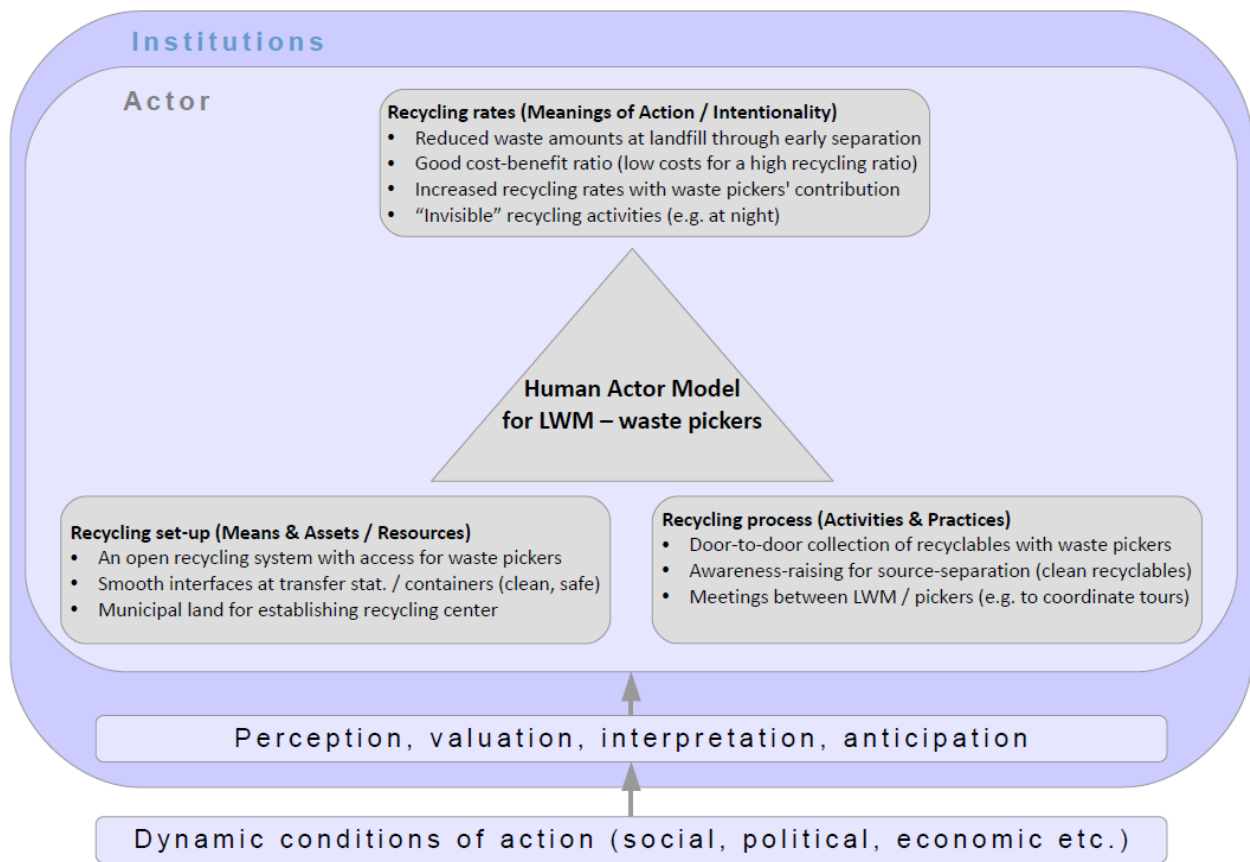


Figure 2: Identifying synergies between LWM and waste pickers (own representation, based on the 'Human Actor Model' by Wiesmann et al. 2012)

The cases in Kosovo and in Albania have shown that there is common ground for shared intentions: the need for increased recycling rates and the priority of cheap solutions both for municipalities (problems with financing basic waste collection) and for waste pickers (costs for transportation). It is more challenging to reach consensus at the practical levels of organising the services and providing the basic conditions. In this regard, much depends on the will to cooperate between municipalities and operators and waste pickers. Best practices from other regions (mainly Latin America and Asia) make clear that successful cooperation with informal waste pickers is a key for building recycling systems (Scheinberg 2011), namely in low- and middle-income countries (World Bank 2012).

Specifics of waste picking "in the Balkans"?

Table 3 depicts common or global characteristics as well as identified regional or case-specific characteristics, based on the analysed cases in Kosovo and Albania and on studies analysing the situation in other regions, as cited in the table.

	Common / global characteristics of waste picking	Specific / regional characteristics of waste picking
Socio-economic profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste pickers are mainly from disadvantaged groups and minorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Balkans: Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians (RAE) ➢ Egypt: Christian minority of Zabbaleen (Ezeah et al. 2013) • Waste pickers live in economic poverty and have low levels of education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ In Kosovo, the RAE minorities (involved in waste picking) have the lowest levels of education and employment (OPM 2008) ➢ In Brazil, a study showed that only 14% of men / 6% of women engaged in waste picking have attended school (WIEGO 2011) • Economic reasons – incomes from waste picking – drive waste pickers worldwide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ In Kosovo a survey shows that incomes from waste picking nourish families (ECMI 2015) ➢ Waste picking secures livelihoods of many urban poors, with incomes partly above the minimum wages (Linzner and Lange 2013) • The lack of alternatives is another driver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ The analysed minority waste pickers in Kosovo lack skills for other jobs (ECMI 2015) ➢ Waste picking offers livelihoods to people without other options (HABITAT 2010) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are case-specific differences in gender ratios and roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ In Kosovo, Mendonça (2015) indicates that in the region of Pristina few women pick waste (e.g. if they are single or their husband cannot work) and usually close from home (short distances of carrying) ➢ Globally, both men and women are picking waste; in some areas there are more women (e.g. India) than men (UN HABITAT 2010); gendered roles are common, e.g. with women cleaning recyclables at home (Ezeah et al. 2013) • The recognition of waste picking is an exception: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Examples from Latin America show that recognition can help secure / stabilise this livelihood (UN HABITAT 2010): In Brazil, the creation of the job title 'catador' has made waste picking less stigmatised and has introduced standards (Gutberlet et al. 2013) ➢ In the analysed cases in Kosovo, waste pickers are being acknowledged by municipalities, but not recognised as part of LWM (Mendonça 2015)
Waste picking as a livelihood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal-informal linkages in value-chains make up recycling in low / middle-income countries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ In different countries of the Balkans, waste pickers collect recyclables and sell them to formal / informal dealers (Mendonça 2015, ECMI 2015, Scheinberg 2008, Interviews) ➢ Scheinberg (2011) identifies 'Inclusive Recycling' in Latin America / Asia: where many organised informal waste pickers sell materials to formal-informal value-chains • Informal waste pickers are the main drivers of recycling in low and middle-income countries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ A survey of 20 cities showed that formalised recycling was relevant in high-income but not in low and middle-income countries (Scheinberg 2012; cf. also World Bank 2012) ➢ In Kosovo and Albania, municipal recycling is inexistent (Interviews); mainly waste pickers provide the recycling materials even after modernisation (cf. waste banks: GIZ 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separation at source has different forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Itinerant Waste Buyers buying recyclables from households are the “source separation system in developing country cities”, mainly in Asia (Wilson et al. 2009, p. 630) ➢ Professionals in Kosovo and Albania do source-separation for big waste generators, not households (Mendonça 2015) • Waste pickers operate individually or in groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Cooperatives and networks help waste pickers articulate political interests (Ezeah et al. 2013) and are mainly observed in Latin America and in Asia (Scheinberg 2012) ➢ In Kosovo and in Albania, waste pickers tend to operate individually or in small groups on a family basis (often with their children); in addition, there are also other categories such as professionals (Mendonça 2015; Interviews with Gola and Kopliku, 2016)
Informal Sector Recycling (ISR)		

Table 3: Comparing waste picking in Kosovo / “the Balkans” with other regions, especially with Latin America.

Many of the findings in Kosovo and in Albania are confirmed by international studies, such as the characterisation of the waste pickers and of their main motivations such as the lacking access to formal job markets (Scheinberg 2012; Ezeah et al. 2013; Wilson et al. 2009; Linzner and Lange 2013). The finding that the waste sector like *“any sector of economy [...] is mingled of informality and formality all the way in the value chain”* (Interview with Mendonça 2016, p. 1) also applies more generally to recycling systems in low- and middle-income countries:

“The informal sector is partially separated from, but partly mixed with and integrated in the formal waste management system, a model we can label modernised mixtures” (Scheinberg 2011, p. 71).

On the other hand, table 3 highlights case-specific aspects of informal waste picking, e.g. the degree of organisation: In Latin America cooperatives of waste pickers are well-established and strengthen waste pickers internally (by building capacities and consensus) and towards politics and businesses (Scheinberg 2012). This goes with the recognition of waste pickers as stakeholders in waste management in Latin American countries such as Colombia (Interview with Mendonça 2016), routed in the tradition of partnerships between civil society and the state (Scheinberg 2011). In contrast, waste pickers in Kosovo and in Albania operate as isolated, unorganised stakeholders in most cases: This makes it difficult for municipalities and waste operators to cooperate with them (Interview with Gola 2016).

Capacities at the Center of (waste pickers-) inclusive policies:

There are lessons to be drawn from the analysed examples in Kosovo and Albania and from common best practices, in order to better use of synergies between municipalities and waste pickers. These lessons shall be structured according to the “capacity development butterfly” (SDC 2006):

- **Human Resources Development:** Waste pickers are experts in their field: *“They have been doing it since the end of war, they have experience, they know the materials, they know the markets”* (Interview with Mendonça 2016, p. 6). These experiences are worth being valorised for building up recycling systems, e.g. for reaching the objective of the SWMP of Gjakova to reduce final disposal rates from 95% to 85% by 2020 (Municipality of Gjakova 2015). Taking waste pickers seriously (e.g. as a donor) means strengthening their capacities, e.g. to add value to the materials in skills trainings (Ezeah et al. 2013). For municipalities to use waste pickers' potentials means means to make municipal staff familiar with participatory planning approaches, e.g. in the process of developing the SWMP. And waste operators need to instruct employees to let waste pickers do their work, intervening only in case of nuisances (e.g. littering).

- **Organisational Development:** Different models of door-to-door collection show how Itinerant Waste Buyers and collectors (Wilson et al. 2009; Scheinberg 2009) can reduce the burden of municipalities in waste collection: E.g. in Lezha itinerant waste pickers were included in the payroll of the local operator; and in Shkodra businesses are paying waste pickers for fetching the waste at their door-step, avoiding containers in touristic areas (Interview with Kopliku 2016) and saving collection-time to the waste operator. Regarding recycling, the organisation of waste pickers in cooperatives shows the potential of this model for building recycling rates: E.g. cooperatives in Brazil deal with administrative issues (licenses) and help acquire project funds (Ezeah et al. 2013). For donors and municipalities this means supporting waste pickers to organise themselves in (micro-) businesses, following the examples of minority-led companies in Gjakova (Interview with Tetrica 2015) and Lezha (Interview with Kopliku 2016).
- **Network Development:** The Organisation Women in Informal Employment Globalising and Organising (WIEGO) shows how waste pickers in Asia and Latin America have built up local networks within value-chains, national trade unions or cooperative networks and a global movement with international conferences of waste pickers (UN HABITAT 2010). In Kosovo and in Albania, individual waste pickers are neither employees of businesses nor are they organised in networks: Mendonça (2015) sees a potential in networks to strengthen the waste pickers' bargaining power: If they are jointly organised, waste pickers might have a better position in negotiating prices. In Pristina, an NGO of waste pickers is currently being supported by ECMI, in order to strengthen the waste pickers' negotiating capacities with the municipality (GIZ 2015).
- **Systems Development:** The example of Brazil shows how a highly conducive framework can foster a step-by-step formalisation approach: The creation of a job title for waste pickers and the law regulating waste pickers' cooperatives are but examples of how waste pickers are being integrated in the waste management system (Gutberlet et al. 2013). In Kosovo and in Albania, municipalities can support waste pickers by avoiding administrative burdens for micro-businesses, e.g. when designing municipal regulations (focus on the service-level, avoiding expensive licenses). This allows municipalities to limit administrative structures – such as the planned waste sector in the SWMP of Gjakova (Municipality of Gjakova 2015) – and to comply with their legal obligations. More importantly, municipalities can include waste pickers in policy-making by inviting them to contribute to the development and revision of SWMPs and designs for recycling centers: Such a participatory approach has been at the basis of operationalising the concept of 'waste banks' in Pristina (GIZ 2015).

4. Conclusions

This policy essay provides insights into challenges and opportunities of waste picking, mainly putting forward the perspective of municipalities and waste operators. It answers the introductory research questions 1 – 3 as follows (based on expert interviews about cases in Kosovo and in Albania):

1. Which is the role of waste pickers in Local Waste Management (LWM)?

Waste pickers in Kosovo and in Albania usually intervene at public containers next to collective housings where mixed household waste is disposed of. They extract different types of recyclables. Many waste pickers work individually or are organised in small groups (often with other family members, including children). They often tour the containers on foot (e.g. equipped with a wheelbarrow). Once they have a sufficient amount of recyclables, they walk to a company or a dealer in the urban periphery or to a transfer station and sell the materials there. Besides this most individual waste pickers, there are also professionals equipped with vans and with direct contacts to big waste generators such as supermarkets.

2. How is informal waste picking perceived by the interviewed waste management experts?

The interviews show that there is a general perception of waste pickers as poor people, often from the marginalised RAE minorities. Beyond this consensus, the perceptions vary among the experts and their partners from municipalities, waste operators and businesses:

- The interview partners acknowledge that waste pickers are driven by the economic necessity to make their living and that they lack alternatives. They mention positive impacts such as reduced waste amounts, problems such as littering and health and safety risks for the waste pickers.
- The municipalities and waste operators are more ambiguous, putting forward negative impacts of waste picking such as littering around containers or image problems for the city; even reduced waste amounts are partly seen as a problem: Both in Pristina and in Shkodra waste extraction from containers is seen as stealing municipal property (potential for recycling).
- Local businesses are not unanimous either: Some see waste pickers with a positive eye (working, instead of begging); others perceive challenges, e.g. image problems (in touristic Shkodra).

The analysed cases also show how perceptions evolve, such as documented for Pristina: Whereas the SWMP from 2012 mentions waste picking as a challenge, the same municipality has committed to a pilot project with a recycling company in 2015: In this project, the municipality hands over responsibilities to a private company and to waste pickers, in order to increase recycling rates. And what is also shown in the interviews: Informal waste picking is but a part of informality in waste management and might not be sufficient to exclude waste pickers from waste management. In

addition, all interview partners are aware that the 'formal' waste management system is involved in informal practices as well (e.g. when formal businesses buy from informal waste pickers).

3. Which synergies with waste picking could municipalities make use of?

Taking the relative perspectives that LWM and waste pickers have from each other, it is possible to identify synergies, where “both sides” have common interests. The policy essay has identified synergies for building up recycling systems, based on a strong actor-orientation. Accordingly, there is quite much consensus about the intentions: the need for increased recycling rates and the priority of cheap solutions both for municipalities (problems with financing basic waste collection) and for waste pickers (costs for transportation). The analysed cases in Kosovo and Albania have also shown that for finding consensus at the more practical levels of organising the services and providing the basic conditions, much depends on the will to cooperate between municipalities & operators and waste pickers. Together with best practices from other regions (mainly Latin America and Asia) it becomes clear that successful cooperation with informal stakeholders such as waste pickers is at the basis of building recycling systems in low- and middle-income countries. So-called 'Inclusive Recycling' systems have proven more efficient, as compared to pure 'Municipal Recycling' Systems often adopted with an approach of 'modernisation'. The acceptance of a certain degree of informality has proven to be a success factor in the process establishing recycling: be it by accepting unusual working times (working at night has the advantage for waste operators that there are less interferences) or by tolerating non-registration of waste pickers. Examples from Latin America show that by applying a step-by-step formalisation process until being recognised as part of the waste management system nowadays, public authorities have been rewarded by notably decreased waste amounts and, consequently, reduced costs.

The policy essay argues for cooperation between the 'formal' and the 'informal' stakeholders of LWM. It also shows that cooperation requires knowing and meeting each-other. Again with a reference to Latin America, it is shown that both municipalities and waste pickers take advantage by building the capacities of waste pickers and by supporting the process of building networks (Capacity Development Approach): Waste pickers get in a better position for negotiating and municipalities can save costs by delegating certain services to organised waste pickers (associations, micro-businesses). Such a cooperative, inclusive approach towards informal waste pickers well reflects the IWSM framework that calls for including all stakeholders – be they formal or informal – in waste management. This is crucial if municipalities want to go a step towards reaching the Sustainable Development Goal Nr. 11: “Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable by 2030”.

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Interview 1: Marina Mendonça, expert in local waste management. 25 January 2016. Experiences from her master's thesis on waste pickers in Pristina / Fushë Kosovë. (cf. Transcript: Annex 5)

Interview 2: Nora Gola, director of public waste company Çabрати in Gjakova (tbc). 27 January 2016. Experiences with waste pickers in Gjakova. (cf. Transcript: Annex 6)

Interview 3: Arben Koplaku, project officer from DLDP Albania. 09 February 2016. Formalisation initiatives in Shkoder and Lezha. (cf. Transcript: Annex 7)

Interview 4: Rreze Tetrica, project officer of Caritas Switzerland project in Gjakova. 10 November 2015. Interventions of Caritas Switzerland in the RAE settlement "Ali Ibra". (Not transcribed interview; cf. summary of the interview: Annex 8).

Contact 4: Kai Hofmann, GIZ programme manager of Sustainable Municipal Services (SMS). 28 April 2016. Project of a 'waste bank' in Pristina. (email communication, including proofreading of the policy essay).

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Annex 1: Overview to identify common interests of LWM and waste Pickers

The following table is based on the 'Human Actor Model' of Wiesmann et al. (2012): The three categories “Meanings of actions”, “Means & assets” and “activities & practices” are applied to the interests of LWM, of waste pickers and to derived recommendations for using common interests.

	<i>Interests of LWM (ECMI 2015; Mendonça 2015, Interviews)</i>	<i>Interests of Waste Pickers (ECMI 2015; Mendonça 2015, Interviews)</i>	<i>Recommendations for using common interests / synergies (based on the described cases in chapter 3.1)</i>
Meanings of actions / intentionality	<p><i>(based on political objectives in waste management plans)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good / payable service level for all citizens • Increased recycling rates at minimal costs • Saved costs for landfilling • R businesses are licensed by the municipality and paying property taxes • User fees are paid, clients are satisfied 	<p><i>(based on the vision of waste pickers identified in studies)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient family income from waste picking • Efficient work: less time for collecting recyclables; clean materials • Self-recovery of workers (no accidents, healthy) • Recognition of waste picking as a job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced waste amounts at the landfill gate through early separation • Good cost-benefit ratio (low costs for a high recycling ratio) • Increased recycling rates with waste pickers' contribution • “Invisible” recycling activities (e.g. at night)
Means & assets / resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The municipality and the waste operator have defined their cooperation (operator model) • Tariffs representing the costs of services (often not paid / not enforced) • Containers and trucks for waste collection • Transfer stations used in Gjakova (not in Pristina) before final disposal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wheelbarrows, bikes and plastic bags as main means of transportation • Collection by hand (no gloves, safety clothing or tools) • (Own) backyard as storage facility • Family support structure (based on child labour) • Municipal containers and transfer stations as main working places 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An open recycling system with access for waste pickers • Organised interfaces at transfer stations and containers (clean, safe) • Municipal land for establishing recycling center
Activities / practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste collection from containers in urban areas (partly in villages) • Waste transportation (to the transfer station respectively to the landfill) • Fee-collection (by municipality or by operator) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picking of recyclables from containers and at transfer stations • Loading and transporting recyclables • Storing recyclables until having quantities worth to transport to dealers • Selling recyclables to formal / informal dealers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Door-to-door collection of recyclables including waste pickers • Awareness-raising to households for source-separation (clean recyclables etc.) • Round tables between LWM and pickers (e.g. to coordinate tours)

Annex 2: Short description of the Qualitative Content Analysis (interviews)

This policy essay is based on the content analysis of expert interviews and relevant documents (scientific papers and project documents from donor-financed projects in Kosovo and in Albania).

The interviews with the following experts were analysed with qualitative content analysis:

- Marina Mendonça, advisor for informal waste picking in Bogotá / Colombia; interviewed for her expertise regarding the situation of waste pickers in Prishtina (analysed in her master's thesis)
- Nora Gola, CEO of the local waste management company Cabrati; interviewed for the company's direct contacts with waste pickers in Gjakova, third city of Kosovo
- Arben Kopliku, deputy project manager of the HELVETAS project DLDP in Albania, interviewed as an expert for the waste management policies of the cities Shkodra and Lheza in Albania, policies that have been supported by the project.

The following steps were part of the Qualitative Content Analysis, based on Mayring (2015: pp. 398):

1. Transcription of the Interview (based on Flick 2010: pp. 381) (cf. annexes 5 – 8 for transcriptions / summaries)
2. Determination of the material
3. Analysis of the situation in which the text originated
4. Formal characterisation of the material
5. Determination of the direction of the analysis
6. Theoretically informed differentiation of questions to be answered (based on Kruse 2015: p. 213) (cf. Annex 3: Interview guideline)
7. Selection of the analytical techniques (summary, explication, structuring)
8. Definition of the units of analysis
9. Qualitative Content Analysis.

The content analysis was based on the summary technique, using the following steps:

9. Developing a coding agenda with categories and sub-categories (cf. Annex 4: Coding agenda)
10. First round of categorisation of the interviews, using the coding agenda (rough attribution of text to categories)
11. Second round of categorisation of the interviews (final attribution of each unit of analysis to one category)
12. Summaries of categories for each interview
13. Comparative overview of all interviews, compiling the summaries per category

14. Use of the interview material for the policy essay (interpretation).

In addition to these transcribed and analysed interviews, the following experts were contacted:

- Reze Tetrica, project officer of the Caritas Switzerland Housing project in the RAE neighbourhood “Ali Ibra” in Gjakova, interviewed for her experiences with supporting the RAE minorities in the neighbourhood in economic development (also waste management) (cf. annex 7 for a short summary of the interview)
- Kai Hofmann, programme manager of the SMS project of GIZ, contacted for the project of 'waste banks' in Pristina, involving waste pickers (email communication and proofreading of the policy essay on 28 April 2016)

Annex 3: Interview guideline for semi-guided expert interviews

(structure of the guideline according to Kruse 2015, p. 213)

Question	Aspects to be treated	Questions to keep conversation ongoing	Questions to receive specific information
THEMATIC BLOCK 1 “INFORMALITY”: I am interested in learning more about “informality” in the waste sector. May I ask you to explain me your understanding of this concept?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - waste pickers as part of the informal sector - other informal activities, e.g. of waste dealers or by not tendering out services - informality vs. illegality (e.g. dumping waste illegally) - informality of waste picking: a) not buying a license to do the activities; b) not paying taxes on the services; c) taking valuables from official municipal containers (“stealing”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you think of other aspects of informality? - Would you like to add anything? - And how would you describe the informal waste pickers? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How would you draw the borders between the official municipal / local waste management system and informal activities? - Which relevance do you see in informal activities for a local authority? - Which other informal activities in waste management do you think of, besides waste picking? - Which socio-economic characteristics do waste pickers have?
THEMATIC BLOCK 2 “INTER-CONNECTIONS BETWEEN WASTE MGMT AND WASTE PICKING”: Which are the impacts / side-effects of your activities [in the project / in your company] on the livelihoods of waste pickers and their families and how are you and municipalities affected by waste picking?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - consciousness of the relevance municipal waste management has for waste pickers - livelihoods approach and the importance of waste picking for disadvantaged groups - sustainability of waste projects for the poorest - competition of the formal and informal “sub-systems” - position of waste pickers in local waste management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - can you think of other – positive or negative – impacts? - And have you observed that other livelihoods assets of pickers are affected? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where do the formal and the informal “sub-system” meet / clash against each other? How? - Which is the position of informal waste pickers in waste management? And specifically, in recycling value-chains? - How do waste pickers feel the presence of local waste companies and of donor-supported waste projects?
THEMATIC BLOCK 3 “STAKEHOLDER-SPECIFIC INITIATIVES FOR WASTE PICKERS”: As a [representative of a donor / a local waste management company] what are you doing and what can you more to improve the livelihoods of waste pickers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - different possibilities to improve livelihoods assets / increase resilience - win-win situations for the NGO / company and the waste pickers - impacts on the municipal waste management system - possibilities of an NGO resp. a company - realistic measures with a visible, lasting impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which other interventions would you mention? - Can you do anything else? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In your work, which are your experiences with waste picking? - Are specific framework conditions necessary to support waste pickers [as an NGO / a local waste mgmt company]? - How to take into account the municipal waste mgmt system in your interventions? - What could you do in addition?

<p>THEMATIC BLOCK 4 “POLITICAL SOLUTIONS TO WASTE PICKING”: <i>As a mayor, how would you address waste picking and waste pickers, both legally and practically?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - perspective of an advisor [from an NGO / company] - role of municipalities - perspective of municipal waste management on waste picking: nuisances or potentialities? - prohibition or regulation? - legal possibilities vs. practical solutions - responsibility for waste pickers as most disadvantaged group (e.g. social welfare policies, RAE policy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would you do anything else? - Are other solutions both legally and practically viable? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - And what would you recommend the mayor as an advisor? - Do you know of any policy examples? Which ones have been successful and why? Why have certain policies failed? - Do you think mayors could and should do more about waste picking? - Which responsibility do municipalities have both in terms of services and for waste pickers? What to do in case of conflicts between these two duties?
<p>THEMATIC BLOCK 5 “MODERNISATION”: <i>Which changes in local waste management do you expect in the next years and how might they affect waste pickers?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - aspects of modernisation: underground containers (e.g. in Albania), less human resources, municipality-led recycling - conditions for waste pickers to re-arrange their livelihoods in a “modern” system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you think of other changes and trends in local waste management? - Can we expect other impacts of these changes on waste pickers and their livelihoods? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do you understand the term of “modernisation” in the context of local waste management? - How could the strengthening of municipal recycling initiatives affect waste pickers? - If waste pickers's livelihoods are put in danger by such trends, what could you do to help them find their position in the future waste management system?