

Pereira, Colombia

The proposed City Lab in Pereira, COLABORA, on Circular Economy and Inclusive Waste Management takes integrated, multi-level and inclusive waste and environment governance approaches to the challenges facing **informal solid waste pickers and recyclers**. Sustainable waste management requires attention to sustainability, inclusivity, employment, governance, regional cooperation and public-private partnerships.

Project activities

- Facilitation of coordination of the City Lab on inclusive waste management
- Support municipality for the development of a material flow analysis and circularity assessment
- Support municipality for training recyclers' organisations on entrepreneurship (business management, finance, logistics, etc.)
- Facilitation of coordination of inclusive recycling forum in the city
- Support and facilitate coordination of communication, public awareness and education strategy and activities for inclusive waste management
- Support to review and update risk studies of informal settlements
- National forum / workshop on risk and economic assessment of informal settlements
- Citizen engagement activities for education on waste management and improving conditions on informal settlements (e.g. workshops for families on waste separation, musical instruments fabrication, discussion platforms)

Context

The 6th city of Colombia, Pereira has 443,554 inhabitants (census of 20 June 2005), others estimate the population of Pereira at 700,000. In comparison to the other cities in Colombia, Pereira is the most urbanising. Urban poverty (14.4% poverty, 6th city in Colombia with least poverty) and inequality (0.41 GINI, 2nd city in Colombia with least inequality) in relation to the local governments' sphere of influences concern people living in immitigable high risk zones and people informally recycling waste. Changing governance perspective in both the issue of housing and integrated waste management generates opportunities for sustainable development of the city on the long term.

The challenge for solving the problem of settlement in high-risk areas is to align the expectations of the municipal governments and the inhabitants creating a mutually beneficial relationship that replaces the zero-sum game in which they are trapped. A city deal between the involved waste management stakeholders could help the sustainable implementation of the formalisation of waste pickers in Pereira. The results of the 2018 census on the amount of informal waste recyclers is soon to be known. The City has started a process of formalisation for the now estimated 1,000 recyclers according to decree 596 of April 2016.



Results

Improved capacity of Pereira municipality for integrated, multi-level and inclusive governance approaches to the challenges facing illegal settlers in immitigable risk zones and informal solid waste recyclers.

Involved parties

- *City departments:* Secretaría de Desarrollo Rural y Gestión Ambiental de Pereira, Secretaría de Planeación de Pereira, Secretaría de Desarrollo Social de Pereira, Secretaría de Gobierno de Pereira and Secretaría Jurídica de Pereira
- *Governmental:* Aseo de Pereira, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Housing, Drinking Water and Sanitation regulatory Commission (CRA), and the Metropolitan Area Centro Occidente (AMCO), Public Services Superintendence (SSPD), Technological University of Pereira (UTP)
- *Non-governmental:* The community and waste pickers of Pereira, Entrepreneurial Agreement for Recycling (CEMPRE), Regional Initiative for Inclusive Recycling (IRR), Fundación Grupo Familia, Ekored, National Open and Online University (UNAD)



“Separate, be patient and keep recycling”

What role does the community play in this whole process? **Luis Felipe Vásquez:** “Regardless of what is done by public and private institutions and organizations, the importance of this process is in the hands of

the citizens, in learning to separate at source and the idea is that at some point the two routes come together removing the stigma we have about waste pickers. The first association that one has of a recycler is that he or she is a street inhabitant, but we do not really see the number of families that do not have problems with drug consumption, that are not street dwellers and that live on recycling and that with it they educate their children. Removing that stigma and generating trust between the citizen and the recycler is very important. So the main message is that at home we must learn to separate, to be patient and keep recycling and set aside that urge to be taking out the garbage permanently.”

