

## Waste recycling to help in economic recovery — study

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Two Philippine cities — **Quezon City** and San Fernando City — have been cited for their waste recycling collaboration with informal waste pickers that helped stymied poverty as recycling creates jobs in their localities and supports the recovery amid the economic difficulties during the pandemic, according to a global study on the impact of waste recycling by informal sector.

A new report by the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA), released today to mark the International Waste Pickers' Day celebration, demonstrates that by local governments recognizing the essential role informal recyclers already play and partnering with them, they can collaboratively work to create local jobs and provide better recycling and composting services.

In relation to that, the GAIA reported that the job creation potential for inclusive recycling systems is estimated to be on average 321 jobs per 10,000 tons per year of recyclables.

The World Bank estimates that between 88 and 115 million people will fall into extreme poverty as a result of the pandemic. The informal sector, representing 60 percent of the global workforce, is particularly vulnerable, having been affected to a greater extent by this pandemic than by any previous global crisis.

“The work of waste pickers often serves as a cushion for extreme poverty,” according to the report stressing that “In times of crisis, income from the sale of recyclables helps combat hunger in places out of the government’s reach.”

In the Philippines, the report cited the Payatas landfill in Quezon City. The report noted that Philippines is a country where 30 percent of households, or around 7.6 million, have suffered from involuntary hunger in 2020.

Also mentioned in the report is the City of San Fernando, which hired informal waste workers to be part of their zero waste system, performing the tasks of collection, street sweeping, waste classification, and management of the materials recovery facility. The city has surpassed the 80 percent waste diversion rate from landfill, and provided salaries and better working conditions to contracted workers.

Between 12.6 and 56 million people work in the informal recycling sector, the report said. Accounting for 19 percent of municipal budgets on average, waste management is the single largest expense of most municipalities in the Global South.

According to the report, the percentage of waste that is disposed of instead of usefully recycled or composted reaches up to 96 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean, 93 percent in subSaharan Africa, and 79 percent in South Asia.

Recycling rates achieved by the informal sector range from 20 to 50 percent in China, Pakistan, India, and the Philippines; informal recyclers collect 90 percent of what is recycled in Brazil and 80 to 90 percent of postconsumer packaging and paper recovered in South Africa.