

Solid Waste



Sector Challenges

Solid Waste Management (SWM) is among the essential services that keep urban centers clean. However, the lack of comprehensive SWM throughout India has led to environmental and health degradation. Informal workers commonly known as waste workers (or rag pickers) have long subsidized the Indian government's responsibility to provide the service, deriving income from the sale of recyclables to wholesalers, reclaiming items of value, and providing door to door waste collection services for a small fee in some cities. Despite waste workers' considerable capacity for keeping waste out of landfills, their contribution has only begun to be recognized. A national movement is underway to improve waste collection services by implementing policy changes aimed at improving waste workers' quality of life (QoL) and working conditions such as issuing government ID card and constructing Dry Waste Collection Centres (DWCCs). Despite these improvements, waste workers' livelihoods remain fragile as they often lack both the financial resources and business acumen to grow their services into small and medium-sized enterprises.

Outcomes Catalyzed



VALUE CHAINS
Strengthen corporate ethical supply chains



HIGHER QoL
Healthier work environments for waste workers & their families



NEW MARKETS
Local banks gain access to previously un-bankable client segments



EFFICIENT SWM
More efficient municipal waste collection & sorting city-wide



INCLUSIVE LENDING
Changing the ways in which local banks evaluate based on a double bottom line



RECYCLING
Increased recycling & up cycling city-wide, raising awareness of segregation

Market Level



SUSTAINABILITY
Positive global impact through increased recycling & circular economies



INCLUSIVE POLICY
Inclusive laws that provide protection for workers & the so-called 'low-caste'



PRO POOR
Multi-national corporate practices that consider potential for the BoP

System Level

Our Approach

S3IDF is strengthening the momentum of a national movement by fostering multi-stakeholder relationships and facilitating the recognition of waste workers by the formal system. Our projects and programs have had significant impacts on the individual, community, and systems level due to our interventions as well as the critical services provided by our partners. S3IDF supports waste entrepreneurs by working with local banks to create more inclusive lending practices and providing hands-on financial literacy training, guiding waste entrepreneurs to track their cash flows and mitigate risk.