

# NEWSLETTER

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## WASTE REDUCTION DAY EVENT

*~ A panel discussion and exhibition on inclusive recycling ~*



On October 19th, as part of Canada's Waste Reduction Week, the Community-Based Research Laboratory hosted a Waste Reduction Day featuring an exhibition of local waste related businesses, screenings of waste documentaries and a panel discussion on inclusive waste management.

*Waste Reduction Exhibition and Video Screening*

The exhibition hosted a variety of venues including the Compost Education Center, Breakdown Recycling, re-FUSE, the International Composting Corporation, Tony's Trailers, the Urban Binning Unit, UVic Facilities Management, the PSWM project, and Era to the Ground 'Speakers Corner'. Video screenings included *Benoit Raoulx's 'Traplines'*, a documentary on binners in Vancouver; *Dale Devost's 'Everything Old Can be New Again'*, a visit to the popular Hornby Island recycling depot; and an *'ekosTV pro duction of Cooperpires: The Recycling of Citizenship'*.

### *Panel Discussion on Inclusive Waste Management*

The panel participants included Tom Watkins (Environmental Services Division, CRD); Ann Johnson (Southern Gulf Islands Recycling Coalition), Ken Lyotier (Director of the United We Can Bottle Depot), Mike and Larry (Representatives from the Urban Binning Unit Project); Sarah Fraser (Director of Inner-City Partnerships Branch, Ministry of Community Services); and Malcolm Harvey (Communications Officer, Encorp. Pacific).



*Panel participants discuss opportunities for inclusive Waste Management. Photo: C. Tremblay.*

### *Why not resource recovery and recycling with Binnners?*

The focus of the panel discussion is to bring together representatives from the government, industry, and the binning community to discuss opportunities for inclusive waste management alternatives. Despite current partnerships and dialogue between the United We Can bottle depot (a social enterprise located in Vancouver) and the City of Vancouver, this was the first of a series of panel discussions that address the assets and barriers for inclusive waste management strategies.

This event has contributed to turning public some of the many problems Binnners face in their day-to-day activity: from harassment by law enforcement agents or the general public to the negative stigma that is attached to them by the wider community. During the panel discussion, we heard witnesses from this population of impoverished and often socially excluded individuals whose livelihood depends on the collection of beverage containers from dumpsters in Vancouver and Victoria. Binning is a common phenomenon particularly in poor countries and it is becoming more widespread also in the North. The community-based Research Laboratory is committed to help shed more light on quality of life issues regarding the Binning population. With our research we intend to contribute to the search of more appropriate public policies that can tackle the social and economic needs of these people and that are integrated in the local community development. This means to develop diverse strategies for inclusive, organized and well structured waste management systems, where the participants are empowered, the environment benefits and new employment is created. *(Photo: Binnners in Vancouver, M.Strutt)*



### Major highlights from the discussion

There are many challenges awaiting us on the path towards participatory sustainable resource recovery. We believe that a paradigm shift now is imperative; recognizing 1.) that nothing can be wasted, that waste is a valuable resource and needs to be recovered and 2.) that binners are already doing this important environmental service of recovering material out of the waste stream and that this service needs to be recognized and valued. Resource recovery with binners tackles part of the most critical social and environmental problems. It is ultimately a social and economic win-win situation. (For full panel proceedings please visit the PSWM website).

#### Beetlejuice, Victoria Binner



Binners must deal with municipal bylaw officers if caught taking refundable bottles from blue boxes. "That's our biggest issue here, is the CRD," **Beetlejuice**, one of the Victoria Binners, said. "Not only do they take all our bottles, they slap a fine of \$100 on you too." Binners face many challenges. Restrictions in access to materials and legislative constraints are major barriers. Furthermore, binner's dignity and integrity is challenged by society's negative perception, which has in many cases lead to harassment and exclusion.

Photos: J. Gutberlet.

#### Malcolm Harvey & Tom Watkins



**Malcolm Harvey**, communications officer for Encorp. Pacific, a not-for-profit stewardship corporation, expresses the need to expand depots in Vancouver, since there are only half as many depots that are needed. There is neighborhood opposition for extending depots services to some areas, such as the West End, due to the stigma associated with binning. Harvey cautioned that binning is not a substitute for social policy. **Tom Watkins**, CRD waste management, reinforced this point by stating that recycling programs are strictly environmental initiatives.

#### Sarah Fraser, Mike & Larry



Humiliation and degradation towards binners is a common reaction from the community at large. Support from the community is needed to improve the quality of life of these individuals. Binning has provided **Mike and Larry** the ability to become independent, and is an important source of their income. Binners need a venue to voice their experiences and this panel is the first chance that they have had. **Sarah Fraser**, Ministry of Community Services, outlines the Vancouver Agreement and Olympics projects that aim to improve the situations for disadvantaged people living in inner-city environments. While inclusive recycling has not been an issue previously considered by the department, Sarah stressed the importance of partnership arrangements in tackling social inequality.

#### Ann Johnson & Ken Lyotier



**Ann Johnson** states that "we need all the recyclers we can get." She repeatedly emphasizes her belief that industry should take full responsibility for waste produced. **Ken Lyotier** emphasizes that more material resources should be valued as bottles are, stressing that material "from cardboard to pickle jars" need to be valued. There is opportunity, through collaboration between government, industry, and non-profit groups to increase the value of more types of materials. There also remains a disconnection between how environmental and social policies can be complementary. Lyotier concludes "that there really needs to be thought as to how our social policies link together to how we integrate people into society," he said. "I think anybody working in government needs to be making those links."

## NEWS FROM BRAZIL

**PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES SUPPORT FOR COLLECTIVE RECYCLING**

A ruling signed on October 25, 2006 by President Lula represents another step towards social inclusion for the recyclers of Brazil. The agreement establishes that recyclable material collected from all public agencies will be directed to associations and cooperatives of recyclers. The associations must be formally and exclusively comprised of recyclers who have this work as their only source of income.

At a recent ceremony to celebrate the ruling, Lula stated that the work of those who collect our garbage must be "recognized as a noble activity." Also attending the celebration were members of the National Movement of Recyclers and the National Movement in Defense of Homeless Rights.

Non-sanitary landfills exist in 65% of municipalities and only 6% of municipalities have recycling programs. To date, only 43% of municipalities with recycling programs have partnerships with recycling cooperatives. The new legislation will see seventeen thousand boxes distributed throughout the offices for collection of recyclable paper products. According to the Ministry of Social Development, 80% of the waste produced in the offices is high quality recyclable paper.

Financial support will be available to recycling cooperatives through the National Bank of Economic and Social Development's social fund. Exact figures are not available at this time; however, the funding will contribute towards the federal government's target of generating jobs for more than 39,000 recyclers. Money will go towards infrastructure, technical assistance, and capacity-building in the country. To be eligible, cooperatives must have been established for at least six months and have no sanitation problems, amongst other criteria.



This ruling will provide support for the enhancement of recycling programs to Ministerial offices and provide jobs for recyclers. Mandatory collection of recyclables within the Ministry by recycling cooperatives will set a positive example to other offices of public administration.

*Thanks to Larissa Didone for translating this story!*

*Photo: Recyclers in Santo Andre. Photo: J. Gutberlet.*

## RECYCLING CO-OPERATIVES ESTABLISH MICRO-CREDIT FUND

The last PSWM Newsletter featured a story on building the capacity of recycling groups to commercialize their materials collectively and in so doing cut out the middlemen to earn better prices. A major hurdle however, is the lack of starting capital necessary for recycling groups to be able to participate in collective selling. In order to sell collectively the groups need to accumulate a significant quantity of material, usually taking several days. The groups that return their recyclable materials need to receive the payment as soon as possible since their families depend on this daily/weekly income. Therefore, there is an urgent need for capital to bridge this time interval, so that collective commercialization can thrive.



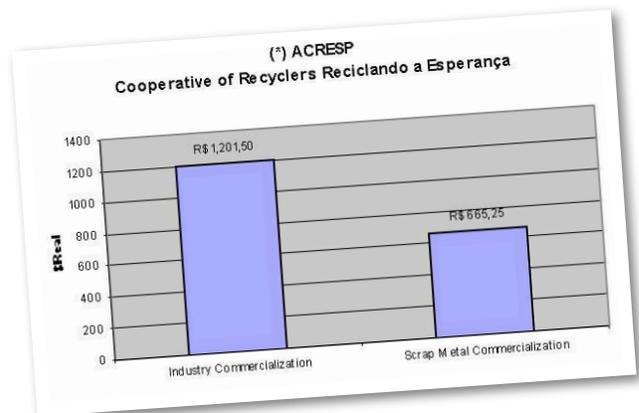
Photo: Recycler in Santo Andre. J.Gutberlet.

In August, the PSWM project launched a workshop on micro-credit with the participation of more than 25 leaders from the recycling movements in the six cities in the metropolitan area of Sao Paulo. One of the objectives was to discuss the establishment of a micro-credit fund specifically for collective commercialization. This fund is a new initiative, investing money as an incentive to get a credit system started by the leaders of the coop. A committee of 8 leaders from the recycling groups (all of them are women, representing the various municipalities and regions) are taking the lead in setting up the credit fund. The fund started with donations from project participants and sup-

porters. A bank account has now been set up and the necessary formalities have been completed. The process is being closely accompanied by the PSWM management committee (University-FSA, recyclers and government). So far, this has been a wonderful learning experience.

The committee has developed rules and regulations for the micro-credit. One of the suggestions which was unanimously accepted was to establish a membership fee of \$1 Real per participant. Support is being sought in Brazil and Canada with fund raising activities to increase the micro-credit fund so that more groups can benefit. Your contribution is important and your funds will be directly benefiting the strengthening process of the Recycling Coops and the quality of life of the recyclers.

The collective commercialization has already been started by some groups. In September 2006 ACRESP (\*) commercialized with Central Granja Julieta and reported a significant income increase (see graph below)



For more information please contact: Dr. Jutta Gutberlet or Crystal Tremblay at (250) 721-7360 or email us at [pswm@uvic.ca](mailto:pswm@uvic.ca).

Your donation can be made by cheque or cash to:  
Bank: BANCO DO BRASIL  
Bank number – 4273-0  
Account number – 8078-0

In the name of  
Maria Monica da Silva and/or Luzia Honorato

## CONFERENCES

**2006 CONGRESS OF THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN STUDIES (CALACS)**

From Local to Global in Latin America and the Caribbean: Where Have We Come from and Where Are We Headed?

September 28-30, 2006  
University of Calgary  
Calgary, Alberta

The 2006 congress of the Canadian Association of Latin American and Caribbean Studies was held at the University of Calgary. Dr. Jutta Gutberlet presented her paper 'Resource Recovery and Recycling: an opportunity for social and economic inclusion' as part of the session: 'Civil Society, Public Engagement and Democratization in Brazil' (session 162; Friday, September 29).

The conference provided an opportunity to bring together three of the CIDA funded UPCD projects working in the Southeast of Brazil: Ellie Perkins, Cecilia Rocha and our PSWM project. The CALACS conference provided the opportunity to create a joint working initiative between the three projects, with planning a collaborative workshop on gender issues. The workshop will take place at the beginning of December 2007, in Sao Paulo. The objectives are to promote exchange of gender related learning experiences between the projects and to collectively address specific gender aspects of the projects. In the next Newsletter we will have more information about the ongoing planning process for this upcoming event. Information and papers presented at the conference can be viewed at the following website under News & Events, Conferences: [www.larc.ucalgary.ca](http://www.larc.ucalgary.ca)

**INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON UNIVERSITIES AND PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT**

The Praxis of Participatory Action Research

November 20-22, 2006  
University of British Columbia  
Vancouver, BC

The purpose of the forum is to initiate institutional action-research and an ongoing dialogue among universities, development agencies, and others, on ways that Northern universities can enhance support for social inclusion and sustainability in the South. Experiences around the world indicate that universities can make significant contributions to participatory development, leading to sustainable poverty reduction, empowerment, gender equality, social inclusion, and respect for human rights. These same experiences also indicate that direct engagement with development can help universities better serve their teaching and research missions.

Unfortunately, the potential for linking universities in the global North to participatory development in the South has received little systematic attention from international development agencies, governments, or universities themselves. Academics in a number of countries are now proposing that the potential be explored through an ongoing program of collaborative, action-oriented research.

Jutta Gutberlet participated in this conference with a presentation on participatory waste management in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

## UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA WELCOMES CLÉCIO VARJÃO

In order to provide a way for "catadores" to do a collective commercialization, the PSWM project has chosen Clécio Varjão, a Brazilian student, to do an exchange at UVic, and develop an internet-based program for "catadores". Clécio Varjão has a Bachelor of Information Systems from CUFSA (Centro Universitário Fundação Santo André). He has received a scholarship, provided by CIDA, to take a masters degree in Computer Science. In essence, the program he will elaborate will help collective commercialization of the binners, and it will establish a unique tool to

virtually maintain the stock of recyclables to be sold for better prices. Consequently, "catadores" will be encouraged to organize themselves, work together, and build a consciousness of collective work.



### IN THE NEWS

Lavigne, Andrea (October 25, 2006). Binners Seek Respect. [Victoria News](#)

MacLeod, Andrew (October 19, 2006). Recycling Solutions: A UVic panel looks at improving life for Victoria binners. [Monday Magazine](#), p 15.

### Participatory Sustainable Waste Management

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