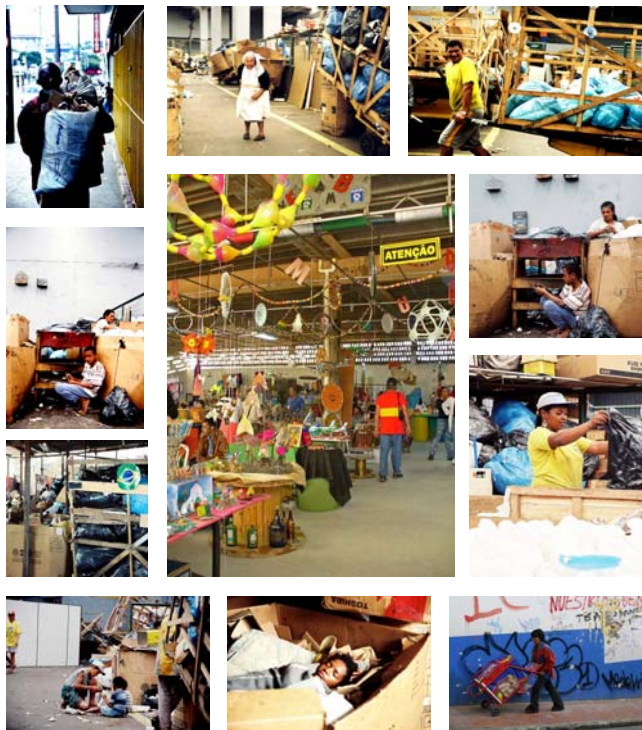


**WASTE PICKERS, SCAVENGERS OR CATADORES:
CONCEPTUALIZING 'ASMARE' AS A COMPREHENSIVE
AND HEALTH PROMOTING COMMUNITY INITIATIVE
IN BRAZIL**



By Christine H. Carrasco
February 27, 2009

Health Promotion Strategies CHL 5803
M. Goodstadt, PhD

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
BACKGROUND	4
A. Waste picking as a Health and Critical Social Issue	4
B. ASMARE as a Comprehensive Response	5
PART ONE: FOUNDATIONS	8
A. Goals and Objectives	8
B. Theories and Beliefs	8
C. Evidence	10
D. Values and Ethical Positions	12
E. Strengths and Limitations of the Underlying Foundations	15
PART TWO: THE SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL CONTEXTS	17
A. Nature and Origins of Waste Picking	17
B. ASMARE's Organizational Structure, Constraints and Opportunities	21
CONCLUSION	26
REFERENCES	27

INTRODUCTION

The impact of poverty and more specifically, wide income gaps within urban centres around the world has been without a doubt one of the major challenges faced by governments at local levels. Population growth has not only exacerbated these challenges, but has also led to insurmountable increases in waste production (Nguyen, Chalin, Lam, Maclaren, n.d). In under-developed regions of the world, where formal waste management systems are nascent or non-existent, waste pickers take on the work of collecting and sorting recyclable material as a means of survival (Dias, 2000). Waste pickers are characteristically poor, homeless, socially disadvantaged and are at continual risk for a myriad of health concerns. In Brazil, waste picking and waste pickers are pervasive, but so too are the increasing numbers of initiatives aimed to address this critical social issue.

ASMARE (Associação dos Catadores de Papel, Papelão e Material Reaproveitável or the Association of Paper, Carton and Recyclable Material Pickers) is an example of such an initiative where the simple idea of organizing waste pickers in Belo Horizonte Brazil has led to their integration into the formal waste management system, and subsequent improvements in their quality of life. Over time, ASMARE's initiatives have broadened in scope, stimulated partnerships, strived for social justice and enabled forms of training that have allowed waste pickers to construct a new self-image.

The goal of this paper is to develop an understanding of ASMARE as a comprehensive and health promoting initiative. To achieve this, this report consists of two major sections. The first will analyze the foundations underlying ASMARE, considering its goals and objectives, theories and beliefs, values and ethical principles, alongside its use of evidence and its overall strengths and limitations. The second part will examine the socio-ecological contexts in which waste picking (as a critical social issue) and ASMARE (as a response to this issue) are embedded.

BACKGROUND

A. Waste picking as a Health and Critical Social Issue

“Waste pickers contribute to the economy and benefit the environment. However, they are socially disadvantaged, discriminated against and harassed by the public, ignored or treated as a nuisance by government”
 - Marty Chen (Waste Pickers without Frontiers, 2008)

Human labour has existed since the beginning of mankind and it has invariably functioned to establish an essential relationship between humans and their respective societies. In the nineteenth century Karl Marx clearly articulated this relationship—that of the social dialectic by which “work creates man” and “man creates himself through his work” (Medeiros & Macêdo, 2006, p. 64)

The relationship between waste picking as a means of work, and the social construction of waste pickers or “catadores”, as they are referred to in Brazil, as vagrants in society exemplifies this perspective. Specifically, waste pickers constitute a heterogeneous group of people who contribute substantially to waste management systems by segregating and recycling waste, but their work often goes unrecognised in many areas around the world (Waste Pickers without Frontiers, 2008).

In Brazil alone, it is estimated that there are over 500, 000 waste pickers who collect recyclables as a regular means of subsistence (Medeiros & Macêdo, 2006). Hence, waste picking is a survival strategy, needed in order to meet basic needs for shelter, food and employment (Porto et al., 2004). A recent study conducted among waste pickers in Brazil, found that most began working as children, acting as assistants for their parents, who were also waste pickers (Porto et al., 2004). This latter point serves to highlight the centrality or embeddedness of waste picking in the lives of the poorest in Brazil.

The nature of this informal work has been noted to pose significant health risks and contribute to on-going forms of social exclusion, marginalization, discrimination and other social dilemmas. For instance, a waste picker’s work-day often exceeds 12 hours of uninterrupted work, involves heavy lifting (e.g. pushcarts often weigh 200lbs+) and traveling long distances to collect and exchange waste for cash from middlemen (Medeiros & Macêdo, 2006). In general, the collected waste originates from domestic, industrial and commercial sources (Hunt, 1996). The biggest concern however, is the poor quality of life of these individuals, which includes, but is not limited to, “poor housing [or homelessness], poor nutrition, low education, high birth rate, high crime, and [many] health problems” (Velloso, 2005, p. 49). For instance, the lack of available resources to facilitate the nature of waste pickers’ work (i.e. warehouses to store and sort material), invariably forces many waste pickers to sleep on the streets to guard their collected material overnight (Dias, 2000). This precarious situation often leads to permanent street dwelling (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997), and, as is already known, homeless individuals experience much lower physical and mental health status than the general population, and experience significant challenges in obtaining suitable health care (WHO, 2005).

Deleted: ,

Deleted: ,

Although it cannot be assumed to be the case in Brazil, studies in India and Nepal, have identified waste pickers as a high-risk group for poor individual and public health. For instance, health surveys conducted in these countries show that they have poor health status and a lower than average life expectancy (Nguyen, Chalin, Lam, Maclaren, n.d.). A suggested reason for this health disadvantage is their high level of unprotected contact with waste. Based on other studies in Bangalore, Manohar and New Delhi, tuberculosis, bronchitis, asthma, pneumonia, dysentery, parasites and malnutrition are among the most common diseases experienced by waste pickers (Cointreau-Levine, 1998).

From a critical social perspective, prior to the formal recognition of waste collection as an occupation by the Brazilian Classification of Occupations in 2002 (Medeiros & Macêdo, 2006), there had been little societal recognition of the importance of waste pickers. In Belo Horizonte Brazil for instance, waste pickers were perceived to be part of garbage itself, and consequently experienced social exclusion, prejudice, harassment and verbal insults, including being told that they “polluted the streets” (Resende, 1998). The municipal government at this time also contributed to their stigmatization by supporting “Cleaning Actions”, in other words, supporting their expulsion from the streets of Belo Horizonte, in addition to confiscating their collected materials (Dias, 2000).

Waste picking as means of work and the consequent health and social dilemmas experienced by waste pickers, reflects a complex interplay between socio-economic and political forces. It is evident then, that strategies or initiatives aimed to improve the quality of life of waste pickers must address key social determinants of health, including income and social status, employment security, working conditions, social and physical environments (i.e. housing, social exclusion), educational attainment, food security, and access to essential health and social services.

B. ASMARE as a Comprehensive Response

The establishment of ASMARE on May 1st 1990, marked the commencement of a variety of comprehensive and health promoting initiatives (although not always made explicit) to improve the quality of life of waste pickers in Belo Horizonte.

However, the organization of waste pickers began as early as August 1988, when they suffered violent aggression by municipal authorities, who under the pretence of trying to dissolve an illegal occupation, systematically tried to remove waste pickers from the streets of Belo Horizonte and from the warehouse they illegally occupied to live and store their collected materials (Resende, 1998). It is said that by attempting to resist this expulsion, waste pickers from this point onwards strived to achieve recognition as “relevant social actors” (Resende, 1998, p. 5). With the support of Benedictines and the Pastoral de Rua (The Street Pastoral Team), a Catholic group working with street dwellers, waste pickers participated in a series of advocacy strategies which led to the formation of ASMARE. ASMARE’s main objective at the time was to gain the legal right for waste pickers to work in the city and have a secure locale for sorting their collected materials (Dias, 2000).

Yet, a sequence of significant developments between the City and the Association thereafter led to a public policy that facilitated the integration of waste pickers into Belo Horizonte’s formal waste management system in 1993 (more on this in Part Two). This project was indeed meant to bind environmental concerns set by the City and quality of life concerns held by ASMARE. The continued success of this project has enabled the formation of a self-sustaining organizational structure within ASMARE, and its subsequent expansion to include a wide-range of activities and benefits aimed at building capacity and ensuring inclusion of former street dwellers (ASMARE’s specific goals/objectives will be discussed in later sections).

ASMARE is currently governed by a statute which provides regulations regarding membership criteria and entitlements, and how the entity will be administered. Some general rules include:

- ❖ It is forbidden to do sorting of material on the street
- ❖ It is forbidden to live on the street involved
- ❖ It is mandatory for children of members under the age of 16 to stay in school
- ❖ It vetoed the presence of children in the workplace
- ❖ The use of alcoholic beverages by uniformed members and dependents is forbidden

ASMARE currently has 250 members, all of which were former street dwellers and benefits over 1000 individuals, including members and their families (Dias, 2000). A possible reason for this relatively small number of members may be because many waste pickers have *resisted* becoming a part of ASMARE for reasons that will later be discussed. For waste pickers who do decide to join, they must contribute \$3.00/month, which gives them and their families, access to many services (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997). Below are some membership entitlements.

Benefits

- ❖ Transportation (bus tickets)
- ❖ Help with funeral and life insurance
- ❖ Agreements with drugstores to buy medicines at an affordable price
- ❖ Weekly payment (i.e. income) by production
- ❖ Division of quarterly profit
- ❖ Meeting monthly to provide accounts and discussion on topics of interest
- ❖ Guaranteed place for children of associates between 0 and 6 years in UMEI (Nursery)
- ❖ Social and government recognition
- ❖ Participation in any of the educational/social events offered (e.g. literacy training course)

Working Conditions

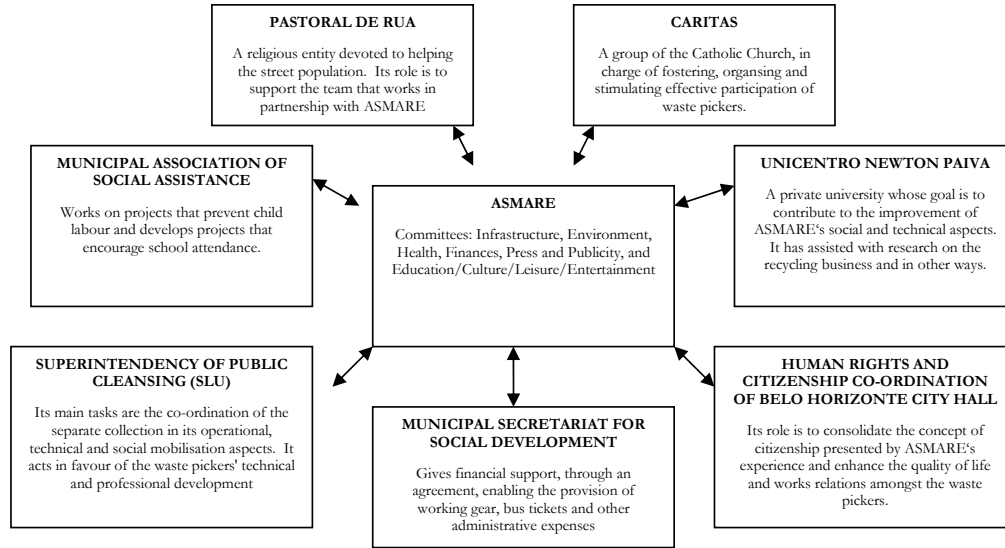
- ❖ Provision of collector cars for collectors
- ❖ Maintenance of carts made in the carpentry workshop
- ❖ Boxes available for sorting in warehouses
- ❖ Food prices below the market in ASMARE's cafeteria
- ❖ Uniforms available to members (ASMARE, <http://www.asmare.org.br/>).

On an administrative level, ASMARE consists of seven committees: Infrastructure, Environment, Health, Finances, Press & Publicity, Religion and Education/Culture/Entertainment (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997). Each committee is composed of five members and a coordinator elected by ASMARE's "General Assembly" (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997). Although each committee is responsible for the implementation of its activities, a Steering Committee, consisting of representatives from these seven committees, the municipal government and ASMARE's partners (Figure 1), functions to oversee ASMARE's work and administration (Dias, 2000). The Steering Committee also defines the specific roles of each stakeholder and constitutes a "forum for strategic planning and evaluation of actions" (Dias, 2000, p. 5).

It is without question that at the crux of ASMARE's structure and initiatives, there is a sustained commitment to empower, build capacity, engage, achieve social justice, equity, inclusion, dignity and support multi-sectoral action through partnerships. Not only are these principles consistent with the

core values of Health Promotion activities which aim to be empowering, participatory, holistic, intersectoral, equitable, sustainable and multi-strategy (Tones & Green, 2004), but they also comprehensively address key social determinants of waste pickers' health.

Figure 1. ASMARE's Partners (Municipal and Community Stakeholders)



Source: (Dias, 2000, p. 5)

PART ONE: FOUNDATIONS

ASMARE has not clearly identified its goals and objectives, nor has it explicitly articulated its underlying theories, beliefs, values and its use(s) of evidence. Nonetheless, there is a clear representation of such constructs in the nature of its administration and execution of its initiatives. Thus to describe ASMARE's foundations, I will use a combination of my own inferences and a synthesis of previous analyses undertaken of ASMARE.

A. Goals & Objectives

The relationship between a program's goals and objectives are interrelated in the sense that they both reflect a program's underlying values, beliefs and theories. Nonetheless, goals are usually broad statements about the program's intentions or purpose, while objectives are much more precise in that they spell out the intended outcomes that will contribute to the achievement of a program's goals (Tones & Green, 2004).

In the case of ASMARE, the deepened social exclusion faced by waste pickers in Belo Horizonte during the late 1980's and early 1990's propelled a series of responsive, rather than planned or reactive, initiatives to address the marginalization and deprivation of citizenship rights faced by this social group (Dias, 2000). Through inference from ASMARE's initial role and trajectory through time, it can be said that its **goal** has been to become a self-supporting community initiative that strives to build a more just and fair society for waste pickers. Its **objectives** on the other hand have been documented by a previous analysis of ASMARE. They are:

- 1) To implement a comprehensive system of separate waste collection in Belo Horizonte
- 2) To generate employment, income and training for waste pickers through the separate collection of the city's wastes
- 3) Improve of the waste pickers' working conditions
- 4) Reduce the number of street dwellers
- 5) Improve the quality of life of the waste pickers
- 6) Improve state of the city cleanliness and of the environmental quality of the city
- 7) Improve environmental consciousness and social solidarity among residents of Belo Horizonte (Dias, 2000)

B. Theories and Beliefs

Concepts, including theory, significantly influence health promotion practice (Kahan & Goosdstadt 2001), and thereby influence responses to discrete health or social issues. Yet unlike planned interventions where the assessment of multiple social and behavioural theories are used to suggest methods and points of intervention (Bartholomew et al., 2006), ASMARE has not made explicit use of formal theories, to respond to the poor quality of life experienced by waste pickers. Nonetheless, I infer that the principles of Paulo Freire's work on critical consciousness or Conscientization Theory, as well as Minkler and Wallerstein's typology of Community Organization, capture the essence of ASMARE as a health-issue response. Beliefs in a socio-ecological systems perspective and in governmental responsibility also inform ASMARE's community and policy-oriented initiatives.

Conscientization Theory

Conscientization is a process by which individuals “are led through a consideration of their own realities and the constraints they experience to an understanding of the social forces underlying the problem and their responsibility to act” (Bartholomew et al, 2006, p. 165). What is central about this theory and its relation to ASMARE, is its assertion that individuals can overcome their own oppression through a process of critical self-awareness or “praxis” (Bartholomew et al, 2006, p. 165). Praxis here, is understood as waste pickers’ ability to unite their identification and critical assessment of the roots of their own oppression with strategies or actions aimed at overcoming these obstacles. Prior to ASMARE’s inception, Benedictines from Sao Paulo came to Belo Horizonte to work with street dwellers, which included waste pickers. The major premise of their work, was that in order to contribute to a better “articulation” or “performance” of waste pickers in society, they (the Benedictines) had to first immerse themselves in waste pickers’ reality and only then be able to facilitate a process of critical self-realization (or critical consciousness) among waste pickers (Resende, 1998). Hence, with the assistance of the Benedictines, waste pickers became cognizant of the rejection and social oppression they faced and concomitantly became “prominent organizers and constructors” of their new role and self-image in society (Resende, 1998, p. 4). Empowerment, as a result of, and in relation to, critical consciousness has *implicitly* formed the basis of ASMARE’s identity and continues to be a principle by which its initiatives are embedded.

Community Organization Theory

Minkler and Wallerstein conceptualize community organization through an extended model of Rothman’s typology involving “locality development,” “social planning,” and “social action”. This extended model is based on *change method* (i.e. whether the change strategy is through consensus (power with) or conflict (power over)) and on a *view of the respective community* as being either strengths or needs-based (Bartholomew et al., 2006). ASMARE is centered on the community, by means of building on its strengths and assets. As already mentioned, the waste pickers of Belo Horizonte contributed substantially to the waste management system, and rather than seeking alternative forms of income generation and employment to fulfill its objectives, ASMARE has centered on their existing skills and thereby sought to legitimize and improve the work they were already doing. The municipal government has also recognized these strengths, and has correspondingly supported ASMARE rather than outsource collective to the private sector (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997). What is less obvious, is ASMARE’s change strategy. At the time ASMARE first organized, it utilized various forms of advocacy strategies to challenge the power of municipal authorities *over* their work, hence constituting a “conflict change method”. Yet overtime, ASMARE has developed partnerships *with* municipal authorities (i.e. a consensus change method), who were once the very source of their oppression. What is important to recognize, is that although ASMARE’s change methods have evolved, it has still been able to increase community competence, leadership development (Bartholomew et al., 2006, p. 169) and conscientization among its members.

Socio-Ecological Systems Perspective

Understanding that determinants of health are mediated through social systems, and determined by relations within those systems, is of paramount importance for the “efficacy, effectiveness and efficiency” of health promoting strategies or health-issue responses (Perkins et al, 1999, p. 126). The goals and objectives of ASMARE are rooted in an *implicit* belief that the determinants of waste pickers’ poor quality of life are systemic and embedded within complex, dynamic social interactions which are in turn determined by social institutions and higher organizational structures. The nature and levels at which ASMARE’s targets its responses (as will be described later) reflect this socio-ecological perspective (hence not explicitly stated).

Governmental Responsibility

In relation to the aforementioned relationship between health and social systems, it is my assumption that the municipality's investment in ASMARE corresponds with a longstanding belief that governments have an inherent responsibility to ensure the well-being of its people. Of course, this "belief" will vary among government administrations, as it clearly did in the case of Belo Horizonte, since only in 1993, when a new and more progressive Mayor took over office, did social inclusion become a priority (more on this in later sections). The new administration was well aware that "poverty and social exclusion result from the impacts of public policies, of priorities and choices made by public governments" (Dias, 2000, p. 9), and hence took significant action to ensure the inclusiveness of waste pickers into a newly drafted public policy for selective collection. ASMARE's persistent pressure on the City, to ensure that they acted on this premise/belief, ultimately facilitated governmental action.

Deleted: until

C. Evidence

Nutbeam (1996) identifies three types of health promotion programs, planned, responsive or reactive, which are said to use evidence in distinct ways and to different extents. *Planned programs* employ a systematic review of evidence to identify health needs and effectiveness of existing programs or interventions (Tones & Green, 2004). *Responsive programs* involve the community in identifying their needs and address such needs relative to the contexts of the community. Here evidence plays a limited role in the decision making process (Tones and Green, 2004). Finally, *reactive programs* often occur in response to a crisis and rarely allow enough time to implement evidence into planning (Tones & Green, 2004). I position ASMARE as a *responsive program*, which draws on various types of evidence to support its goals and objectives.

The Body of Evidence, Its Nature and Its Use

Experience as Evidence

One of the first types of evidence used to organize waste pickers and thereby establish ASMARE, was the experience of the Benedictine sisters who came to Belo Horizonte in 1987 (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997). Their experiential knowledge obtained through years of experience working with sex workers living on the streets of Sao Paulo, was used to "diagnose" similar social characteristics among waste pickers and initiate organizing efforts consistent with those they had previously undertaken (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997). Some of their observations included:

- 1) Entire families devoted to waste picking
- 2) Many slept on the street to ensure the security of the materials they collected due to lack of suitable space for storing
- 3) The absence of any type of guidance with respect to hygiene, appearance, security, social and personal health
- 4) The constraints on the level and nature of contact between the role of the collectors and the general population
- 5) Mechanisms of repression by municipal authorities (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997)

Hence, the experiential nature of this type of evidence helped inform the preliminary steps that were needed in order to initiate a response to the waste picking issue. Nonetheless it is important to recognize that the use of experiential knowledge as evidence, and the interpretation of this knowledge thereof, is laden with many presumptions about the value given to human experiences.

Research as Evidence

Surveys conducted in 1989 and 1993 by the municipality of Belo Horizonte in an attempt to obtain a profile of waste pickers, also served as a significant body of evidence. For instance, the 1989 study, which consisted of nearly 600 respondents (i.e. waste pickers) found that:

- ❖ 77% had lived more than 12 years in the city
- ❖ 48% came from the State of Minas Gerais, Brazil
- ❖ The vast majority were of reproductive age (21-44 years of age)

Due to the scarcity of information regarding this survey, it is unclear about its use. The Benedictines may have attempted to use it in order to help organize waste pickers. But given that violent measures by the City against waste pickers' work were underway during this time, and the fact that the survey was conducted by the City itself, it is my assumption that the information served to substantiate the need for "Cleaning Operations", rather than collaboration among waste pickers.

In 1993 however, the socio-political climate surrounding waste picking was quite different. ASMARE had been established and a new municipal administration had taken over (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997). Hence the objective of the 1993 survey was to obtain a record of the working conditions and lifestyle of waste pickers that would inform the conditions of a partnership between AMARE, the Pastoral de Rua and the SLU (which represented the City) (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997). Here are some of the findings:

- ❖ Males constituted 82%, while women made up 18%
- ❖ Regarding schooling, 22% were illiterate, 57% had studied up to the fourth grade, 17% had completed primary/elementary school, 3% had completed high school, and only one responded as having obtained a university degree
- ❖ Regarding housing, 56% had property, 13% lived in leased households, 5% lived with relatives or friends, 24% lived on the streets and 2% lived in illegal occupations or in boarding. Therefore 76% had some type of fixed residence
- ❖ Despite the fact that many had a formal residence, living on the street ensured the safety of their collected materials since there was no place to secure their collected materials.
- ❖ When asked whether they returned to their homes at the end of each work day, 47% said yes, 6% said they go home every 2 days, 22% said they would only return home at the end of one week, 1% were unable to specify, and 24% remained on the streets
- ❖ 19% of those interviewed said that they already received material that was separated by the residents of private dwellings (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997).

It is clear that the quantitative nature of this research evidence was used to identify problems, and thereby make explicit the poor quality of life as well as some of the strengths of waste pickers at the time. A large portion of waste pickers were in fact not "homeless" or vagrants, as previously imagined, and therefore their poor quality of life, really stemmed from a lack of resources, that would otherwise serve to ensure healthy working conditions (i.e. location for storing/sorting collected material). With the outcome of this research in mind, the Superintendency of Public Cleansing (SLU) planned a series of initiatives to tackle "immediate" problems, including the provision of warehouses to ensure that collectors could sort and safely store their collected materials (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997).

Impact/Evaluation as Evidence

The impact of ASMARE on waste pickers’ lives as well as on the collection and sorting of recyclable materials has served as evidence for sustaining and improving ASMARE’s existing initiatives. For instance, an evaluation of ASMARE’s productive output has shown an increase from an average of 15 tonnes per month of recyclable material collected in 1993 to 500 tonnes per month in 2000 (Dias, 2000). Correspondingly, up to a six fold increase in waste pickers’ income has also been observed (Dias, 2000). Such achievements have served as evidence of ASMARE’s positive impact on the environment and its members, and this in turn has functioned to ensure sustained funding and support from its partners (Dias, 2000). ASMARE’s social impacts such as significant decreases in alcoholism, robbery, violence and overall increases in literacy among its members have also served as evidence of the effectiveness of ASMARE’s programming. In this light, ASMARE has utilized this evidence to garner support and legitimacy for formulating new/improved initiatives, for instance, policies/programs to encourage the retention of children in schools, vocational-training for adolescents and investments in environmental education (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997).

D. Values and Ethical Positions

Comment: I appreciate your greatly extended and informative values analysis

Values, which are what is of greatest important to us (Kahan & Goodstadt, 2002), invariably affect “what we choose to act on and how we choose to act on it” (Perkins et al, 1999, p.12). In other words, our values and ethical principles, which are inextricably linked, guide our core decision-making processes (Kahan & Goodstadt, 2002). Although ASMARE has not explicitly articulated its values and ethical stance, inferences from the character of its programming and from previous analyses draw me to conclude that ASMARE upholds similar, if not the same values and ethical principles that guide health promotion practice. Below I present some of these similarities and elaborate on some key values and ethical principles.

Health Promotion Values	ASMARE’s Values
HEALTH: optimal health for all	❖ Eco-Health & Spiritual Health: all levels of health, from protecting the waste pickers’ health to improving environmental health (identified implicitly in ASMARE’s goals/objectives), or to improving ones faith/spiritual health (implicit through ASMARE’s strong religious base)
SOCIAL JUSTICE: <u>equity</u> regarding the fair distribution of resources; respect for diversity	❖ Social or Distributive Justice (see below) ❖ Human rights (i.e. right to health, shelter, etc) ❖ Accessibility (e.g. health, social security rights) ❖ Social Recognition (legitimization of work)
POWER SHARING: reduction of power differentials; individual and community <u>empowerment</u> ; <u>participation</u> by relevant stakeholders in decision making, <u>partnerships</u> , etc.; individual and community capacity development	❖ Empowerment ❖ Solidarity-Trust ❖ Partnerships (see Figure 1) ❖ Equity
THE ENVIRONMENT: ecological respect and sensitivity	❖ Sustainability (in extension to eco-health, and ASMARE’s commitment to recycling) ❖ Green consciousness (as seen through ASMARE and SLU’s public education initiatives)
ENRICHMENT OF INDIVIDUAL & COMMUNITY LIFE: authenticity; creativity; <u>critical reflection</u> (reflexivity); joy; meaningfulness; <u>social connectedness</u>	❖ Self-Respect (and self-esteem) ❖ Social Capital ❖ Social Inclusion and Community Action ❖ Critical reflection (as seen through the work of the Benedictines) ❖ Political Will
Source: (Kahan & Goodstadt, 2002)	

Health Promotion Ethical Positions	ASMARE Ethical Positions
Benefit rather than harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Non-Maleficence "first, do no harm": Rather than taking waste pickers immediately off the street and stripping them of their identity, (in other words, deliberately intending to do harm) the Benedictines and the Pastoral de Rua emerged themselves in their reality to understand the complexity of their situation and only then facilitate beneficial solutions (this continues to guide ASMARE's on-going practices). ❖ Beneficence: ASMARE takes positive action to help waste pickers and other marginalized individuals (i.e. uses strengths-based approaches, participation rather than top-down strategies and empowerment to maximize benefits)
Consideration of consequences of any action (i.e. harm or benefit)	
Consideration/reflection of the whether an action is the best one	
Conflict resolution based on decision making or values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Compassion/Empathy: Beginning with the Benedictines and the Pastoral de Rua, who felt compassion towards the people on the streets which propelled them to take (and continue to take) actions to improve their situation ❖ Social or Distributive Justice (see below) ❖ Equity
Recognition of competing ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Consensus through Partnerships/Collaboration (ASMARE's steering committee reflects the value placed on reaching consensus among partners to move forward with goals and objectives)
Guidelines above self-interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Respect for persons (i.e. The Golden Rule): This is a famous Kantian principle and Religious principle, which is that all humans must be treated with respect in a way that recognizes their dignity, and in proportion to their ability in their circumstances (ASMARE respects the needs and strengths of those marginalized) ❖ Human Dignity: ASMARE recognizes that waste pickers should be acknowledged as an inherently valuable members of the community, which is in line with the Catholic understanding of the term that is, everyone has a unique expression of life, with an integrated bodily and spiritual nature

Source: (Kahan & Goodstadt, 2002)

Empowerment

In 1986, the Ottawa Charter placed empowerment at the heart of health promotion through community action. In the late 1980's when ASMARE was beginning to form, the Benedictines and the Pastoral de Rua also placed empowerment at the center of their work with waste pickers, by promoting their organization as a means to strengthen their identity (i.e. gain self-esteem and self-awareness), gain control over and eventually transform the repressive conditions in which they lived and worked. Hence ASMARE's work has represented a synergistic interaction between individual empowerment of waste pickers, organizational empowerment, and community empowerment through social and political action. But rather than conceptualizing empowerment on a continuum, ASMARE has shown through its history and existing operations, that the community empowerment is dynamic, complex and most importantly, context specific (i.e. political climate, windows of opportunity, etc) as will be discussed in later sections.

Comment: Very good addition

Social Capital

Social capital embodies those features of a community or organization that “facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual respect” (Perkins et al, 1999, p.132). ASMARE has established both social and political networks, *as well as* individual relationships within these networks, in order to fulfill its goals and objectives (Fig. 1). Such relations have been maintained by horizontal organization (rather than top-down), which has ultimately ensured the enrichment of individual and community life through solidarity, trust, cohesion and interconnectedness. These relationships have not only reinforced co-operation, but have more significantly reinforced respect for and recognition of waste pickers and their work through shared values, behaviours, and reciprocity.

Social or Distributive Justice

Distributive justice is a central concept in the Catholic tradition and is tied to much broader concepts that include human dignity, the common good, and human rights (Ascension Health, http://www.ascensionhealth.org/ethics/public/key_principles/main.asp). It speaks to what the broader society owes its individual members in relation to (1) individual members’ needs (2) the society’s available resources (3) the society’s responsibility (or duty) to the common good (Ascension Health, http://www.ascensionhealth.org/ethics/public/key_principles/main.asp). ASMARE’s focus on the relatively disadvantaged position of waste pickers in society has driven it to ensure the fair distribution of society’s benefits through its programming. Prior to the formal recognition of waste pickers’ work, waste pickers were not granted social security rights, and their low income prevented their ability to obtain the basic necessities to protect and promote their own health and well-being. ASMARE has attempted to address these forms of injustices by supporting the integration of waste pickers into the formal waste management system, which has in turn secured a stable source of income, benefits and healthy working conditions.

Solidarity, Trust

When ASMARE first organized, not only did it have the support of Benedictines, but it also had the vital support from the Catholic Church, through the Pastoral de Rua. Waste pickers formed a network of solidarity composed of various members of civil society and environmentalists, to work towards a social movement that would legitimize their work and defend their rights (Jacobi, & Teixeira, 1997). Trust formed the crux of these relationships, especially since the Pastoral de Rua first had to gain the trust of the waste picking population in order to help them organize to fight for better living conditions (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997).

Political Will

The values of Belo Horizonte’s administration in 1993 (rather than during earlier years) were centered on social inclusion, social justice and sustainability. Overall, the strong political will of the administration at that time to push forward these values through public policy has been fundamental for the development of a public-public partnership between the City and ASMARE, and the subsequent improvement in the quality of life, self-esteem and recognition of waste pickers (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997).

Comment: The preceding section dealing with values has been greatly strengthened. Thanks.

E. Strengths and Limitations of the Underlying Foundations

ASMARE, as an organization initiated and sustained by (former) waste pickers since 1990, unquestionably represents a success story within the context of grassroots (or bottom-up) community development initiatives. Yet in the face of evidence-based health promotion, ASMARE's underlying foundation has many limitations. Below I present both strengths and limitations in an attempt to highlight areas to be modeled and areas needing development.

ASMARE's Strengths

ASMARE's vision is very much aligned with the core values of health promotion, by striving to be empowering, equitable, participatory, holistic, sustainable, intersectoral, multi-strategy and reflexive. Not only are these later principles central to health promotion practice (Tones & Green, 2004), but they also ensure that all determinants of health and all aspects of health (i.e. physical, social and emotional) are addressed to thereby achieve optimal health for all (Kahan & Goodstadt, 2002).

Sustainability through Partnerships

Since its inception, ASMARE has been grounded on the principle of partnerships and meaningful collaboration. First with the Benedictines and the Pastoral de Rua, second with municipal authorities and more recently with other community groups (see Figure 1). ASMARE has existed for nearly 19 years, and during this time, it has evolved from being a mere group of waste pickers on the street advocating for the legitimization of their work to what it is now—a comprehensive organization spanning three locations in Belo Horizonte (ASMARE, <http://www.asmare.org.br/>). The convergence of humanitarian values (i.e. equity, social justice and dignity) among waste pickers, the church and the local government, has functioned to keep concern about the reality of poverty alive, along with awareness of its potential impact on quality of life if it is not addressed.

Comprehensiveness

ASMARE's has tackled poverty and addressed the poor quality of life among waste pickers in many ways. Mostly notably it has ensured a source of stable income, improved working conditions, and a gradual decrease the number of waste pickers on the streets through the legitimization of waste collection as an occupation (Dias, 2000). But ASMARE has also incorporated literacy and adult learning programs, child-care services and health and social benefits, among many other things, that indirectly address a wide array of social determinants of health. ASMARE has generated new job opportunities for street dwellers outside of the waste-picking community (Dias, 2000). For instance, such individuals often work in ASMARE's restaurant as cooks, or in its production sector by producing stationery (i.e. notepads) from recycled material (Dias, 2000). Hence, ASMARE has responded to waste pickers' concerns at individual, community, societal, and governmental levels while enabling waste pickers themselves to become agents of change in their own lives.

Leadership

ASMARE has expanded its initiatives beyond the municipal level to create a national movement of waste pickers or "Solidarity Network" (Dias, 2000). Central to this movement is a comprehensive strategy to create a national public policy that formally recognizes "waste pickers as priority partners in recycling programs around the country" (Dias, 2000, p. 8). Undoubtedly, the inclusion of socially disadvantaged populations, like waste pickers, into economic sectors comes with huge challenges—the greatest being challenging the status-quo. ASMARE's experience and success in this endeavour within the local context of Belo Horizonte, has made it a national leader, and has given similar initiatives in Brazil an example to look up to, when trying to affect social change (Dias, 2000).

ASMARE's Limitations

Ad-hoc Evaluation

Although ASMARE devotes an entire section to “statistics” on its website, this only captures the impact of ASMARE’s productive activities (i.e. waste collection and sales) rather than its impact on the quality of life of its members. External analyses of ASMARE have described its significant contribution to the reduction of street dwellers, substance abuse, violence, illiteracy and the like (Dias, 2000; Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997, Resende, 1998), but this information has generally been obtained through ad-hoc interviews with key informants. Also worth noting is that, of the six committees constituting ASMARE’s organizational structure, none is explicitly devoted to Research and Evaluation—a major limitation that contributes to the lack of analysis surrounding ASMARE’s past, present and projected performance. ASMARE’s Steering Committee on the other hand, is said to serve as a forum for the strategic planning and evaluation of its actions, yet information pertaining to this is not publicly available. The possibility that formal evaluation has been carried out by ASMARE’s partners cannot be discounted. Yet, if true, this information has also not been made available to the public.

Nature of Evidence

As already noted, ASMARE has relied primarily on experiential knowledge and ad-hoc surveys to guide its programming. These in addition to “windows of opportunity” have made it possible for ASMARE to expand and seek continued support from its partners. For instance, in 1993, a new municipal administration took over Belo Horizonte which catalyzed a series of events that led to the garnering of financial support from the municipality for ASMARE, to help guide the integration of waste pickers. Thus despite this being neither a sustainable nor a reliable method of program planning, opportunistic events have historically guided a significant part of ASMARE’s initiatives.

Intra-universal approach

The comprehensive nature of ASMARE’s initiatives has undoubtedly contributed to an overall improvement in the quality of life of its members. Yet, one of ASMARE’s limitations is that it has applied the same approach with all waste pickers to achieve this end. I refer to this as an *intra-universal approach* to capture ASMARE’s application of uniform strategies to address waste pickers’ concerns. In this light, ASMARE has indirectly perceived waste pickers as a homogeneous group. Yet waste pickers, as already described, significantly differ in gender, age, education, experiences and most of all, in needs and concerns (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997). Differences in waste pickers’ backgrounds and ways of life have also made it difficult to construct a uniform “identity” among ASMARE’s members (Dias, 2000, p. 7). Many waste pickers express a strong attachment towards living on the streets because of the sense of liberty it provides, and they consequently resist the social and work organization that ASMARE upholds (Dias, 2000). The implementation of tailored interventions or initiatives within ASMARE to address these individual experiences and needs would serve to ameliorate this limitation.

PART TWO: THE SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL CONTEXTS

“the tallest oak in the forest is the tallest not just because it grew from the hardiest acorn; it is the tallest also because no other trees blocked its sunlight, the soil around it was deep and rich, no rabbit chewed through its bark as a sapling, and no lumberjack cut it down before it matured.” (Gladwell, 2008, p. 19)

Individuals' health and responses to a health-issue, are much like the height of a tree—they are a function of their own characteristics and traits, as well as the environment in which they are embedded (i.e. family, social networks, organizations, communities and societies) (Bartholomew et al., 2004, p. 9). Waste picking as a critical social and health issue, and ASMARE as a comprehensive response, are no different; they are products of much larger systemic forces, reinforced by existing needs at very individual levels. Below I will attempt to use a socio-ecological approach to analyze the nature and origins of waste picking as a health-related issue and the constraints and opportunities imposed by the broader environment and organizational structure within which ASMARE operates.

Deleted: An i

Deleted: '

Deleted: or

Deleted: response thereof

Deleted: . T

A. Nature and Origins of Waste Picking

Waste picking as a global phenomena (Medina, 2007), is complex, multifaceted and context and time specific. Therefore for the purpose of this analysis, I will focus on the nature and origins of waste picking within the context of Belo Horizonte, Brazil, and only refer to national and supranational phenomena to better situate and describe the interconnectedness of waste picking in this locale to much broader systems. With respect to time, I examine the forces shaping waste picking, and its consequent relationship to health, up to ASMARE's inception in 1990. But by describing ASMARE's role as a dynamic and evolving organization in the next section, I hope to capture the changing nature (rather than the origins of) waste picking in Belo Horizonte.

Supranational and Nation

On an international scale, the changing global system has placed new demands on the economies of developing nations to increase GDP and per capita income, with little to no plan to alleviate poverty (Dias, 2000). These new demands have had a negative effect on resource allocation, employment and even political will (Daly, 1996). In Third World cities, such demands have increased population growth, immigration and have led to the creation of inner-city slums (Medina, 2000). Furthermore, a lack infrastructure in addition to the growth of Third World cities, as just described, has resulted in the massive production and inefficient collection (i.e. no recycling) of waste (Medina, 2000).

In Brazil, the rapid expansion of its economy since 1968 has resulted in the uneven distribution of income, and unemployment, especially in urban centres to which most people migrate in search of work (Baer, 2001). In the early 1970's, market forces in Brazil favoured skilled labourers, technicians and managers, which meant that those who benefited from real increments in income during this economic expansion were those who possessed scarce human capital, for instance higher education or formal training (Baer, 2001). Ultimately, this selective market demand resulted in the exclusion of uneducated or unskilled Brazilians from formal market sectors. In other words, Brazil's rise as the second largest economy in the Americas, after the U.S. (CIA World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>), has come at the expense of gross income and social inequalities, especially as those who were already at the margins of society became further excluded from participating in the formal economy. This in turn has left the poor and marginalized with no choice but to participate in precarious/informal work economies, such as waste picking, as a means of subsistence.

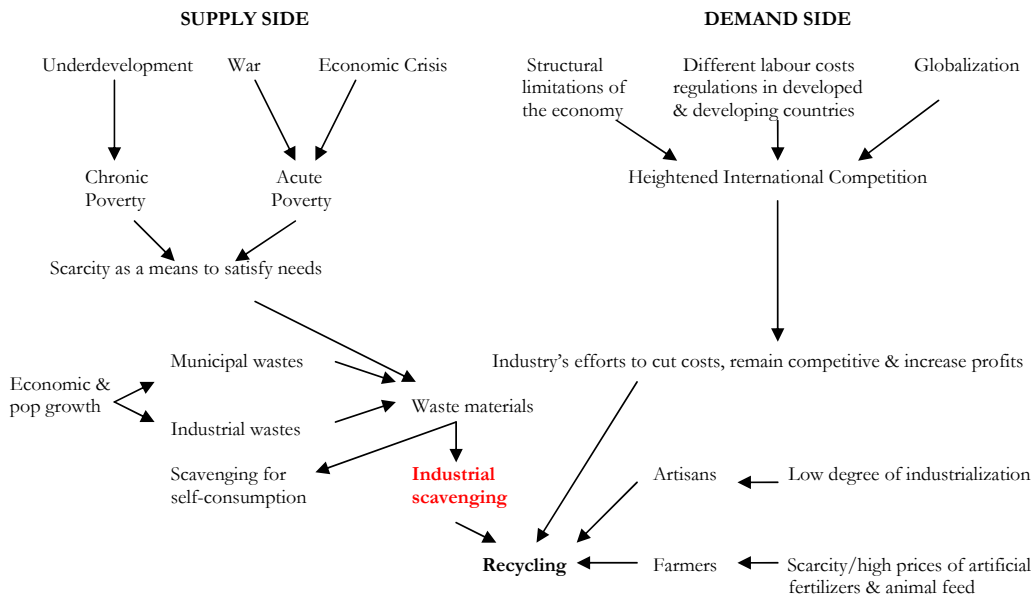
Deleted: where

Deleted: to

Brazil's uneven development (and its consequent uneven distribution of income) has also exacerbated the environmental impact of poverty (Baer, 2001). For instance, it is said that the top 10 percent of Brazil's income groups, are made up of those who have access to most goods and services, and thereby are the ones who generate the largest flow of waste (Baer, 2001). The urban poor, on the other hand, are often victims of the harmful environmental effects that result from the accumulation of waste (i.e. poor sanitation, crowding, contaminated water and housing near waste sites) (Baer, 2001). Not only do the poor lack access to adequate infrastructure and basic services to sustain their health, but the increases in waste production in urban centres and the absence of formal recycling programs in many Brazilian cities, make it likely that the poor would engage in waste picking (Dias, 2000). A more comprehensive understanding of the supply and demand factors that contribute to waste picking (or scavenging) worldwide is shown in Figure 2 below.

- Deleted: i.e.
- Deleted: receiving
- Deleted: the ones
- Deleted: who
- Deleted: to
- Deleted: they
- Deleted: also
- Deleted: for
- Deleted: to
- Comment: I really appreciate this socio-ecological model of your issue
- Deleted: can be found
- Deleted: f
- Deleted: two

Figure 2. A Model of Scavenging



Source: (Medina, 2007)

Society

In Latin American cities, it is estimated that two percent of the population survives off waste picking (Medina, 2000). Although two percent may not seem significant, when referring to heavily populated urban centers such as Belo Horizonte (i.e. 2, 000, 000 + people), this percentage translates to over 4000 people (Romani, 2004). Hence the rather pervasive nature of this form of work would make it seem generally acceptable in society, but this cannot be further from the truth. Waste pickers in Brazil, and just about everywhere in the world, experience "strong prejudices and often humiliating or disrespectful treatment when collecting material in the street" (Gutberlet, 2008, p. 663). Waste pickers are often associated with dirt and disease, and are perceived as being part of the garbage itself, as a nuisance or even criminals (Gutberlet, 2008).

- Comment: And we would expect a higher percentage in the poorer urban areas—hence more than 4,000 people?
- Comment: Why does this follow?
- Comment: What?
- Comment: This is too colloquial—and also unclear.
- Deleted: genuinely

These associations place waste pickers at the lowest ranks in society and function to reinforce their social and labour market exclusion (Gutberlet, 2008). In many cases (as will be described shortly), such prejudices also lead to repressive actions by governmental authorities, aimed at removing waste pickers altogether from society. Ultimately, such negative conceptualizations and actions lead to stigma, feelings of hopelessness, and the complete removal of self-esteem among waste pickers, which not only compromises their health (i.e. physical, mental, emotional, spiritual), but also impedes their ability to seek alternative forms of employment, and thereby improve their quality of life (Gutberlet, 2008, Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997).

Comment: Which?

Comment: Meaning?

Comment: There is something about "complete removal" that I am having trouble with.

Community

At the more local or the community level, Belo Horizonte exemplifies many of these broader structural and societal forces. Located in the state of Minas Gerais in south east Brazil, Belo Horizonte is one of the few cities that was planned to be a state capital (in 1897) (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997, p. 11). Nonetheless, accelerated population growth since then, caused the disorganized expansion of the city beyond its previously established boundaries (Resende, 1998). The result has been the creation of slums at the city's periphery that lack clean water, proper sewage, light or transportation (Resende, 1998). During the early 1980's, Belo Horizonte experienced a profound unemployment crisis, which had a dramatic impact on the poorest sectors of its population—including on its slum dwellers (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997). For the most part, such individuals were forced to seek informal forms of work, such as waste picking at the city's center, in order to support themselves and their families.

Deleted:

Deleted: ,

Deleted: marked

This is not to say that waste picking had not existed before that time (i.e., the early 1980's?); however, the magnitude and the negative connotations linked to this type of work became augmented from this point onwards. For instance, the municipal authorities of Belo Horizonte took very repressive measures in the 1980's to prevent waste pickers from doing their work (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997), for example, by initiating "Cleaning Operations" which focused on removing waste pickers off the street and confiscating their collected materials, based on the premise that waste pickers dirtied the streets and compromised the security of the people (i.e. the city's residents) (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997). At this time, waste pickers were blamed for burglary and the poor maintenance of public roads, since many of them lived and sorted their collected material on the streets, and would consequently scatter garbage on the sidewalks (Resende, 1998). However, to understand why waste pickers resorted to this type of behaviour, more must first be said about the organizational constraints governing waste pickers' day-to-day activities.

Deleted: this

Deleted: —it most certainly did, yet

Deleted: on

Deleted: . For instance, the municipality

Deleted: ted

Deleted: involved

Deleted: under

Deleted: a lot

Organization

In 1973, Belo Horizonte's sanitary landfill became walled off and guarded in an attempt to deter waste pickers from entering, and thereby collecting and sorting material at this site (Dias, 2000). The need for work, and limited options for alternative forms of employment, forced waste pickers to continue their work at the city's centre (Dias, 2000). Unlike at the landfill, where materials could be collected at a single site, working in the city required walking laboriously in search of materials. To haul these materials through these long distances, waste pickers needed pushcarts. Pushcarts in turn, were lent by middle-men, who would then buy the collected material off waste pickers (by weight), and make the majority of the profit by selling it to recycling companies (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997). Therefore, waste pickers in Belo Horizonte were very much dependent on middle-men, since they could not produce the volume of material required by the recycling industry on their own (Gutberlet, 2008). Of course, this dependency came at the cost of exploitation, considering that waste pickers earned 1/3 to 1/5 of what the recycling industry paid middle-men (Gutberlet, 2008).

Comment: editing

In many cases, waste pickers knew they were being cheated, so they would purposely wet their collected cardboard to increase the weight, and thereby increase the cost of the material they sold (Dias, 2000). With respect to the actual retrieval process of material, waste pickers would not only collect recyclable material off the street, but would also routinely scan through garbage bags to retrieve material to sell (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997). The absence of locales designated for sorting collected materials, left waste pickers with no other option but to perform these scans on the street and leave scattered garbage behind (Dias, 2000). The lack of such a locale for sorting or storing also made it impossible for waste pickers to return to their homes after a working day, since they could not leave their material unguarded overnight, or haul their days-worth of collected material back home—since “home” was usually outside city limits (Dias, 2000). In many other cases, waste pickers just did not have enough money to return home or did not have a home (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997). Invariably, these adverse working and (sometimes temporary) living conditions took its toll on the health and quality of life of waste pickers. For instance, poor hygiene, unprotected handling of waste, malnutrition, exposure to harsh weather and high car traffic were among the most pervasive health or risk factors associated with waste pickers’ daily activities (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997).

It is clear that the constraints placed on waste pickers’ day-to-day activities functioned to create misconceptions about the nature of their work and their role in society among Belo Horizonte’s residents and municipal authorities. Living on the streets in impoverished cardboard shacks and sorting garbage in public spaces was stigmatized and thereby perceived to be socially unacceptable and repulsive (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997). This was despite the fact that waste pickers played a pivotal role in resource recovery, and that many actually had homes and were therefore not “vagrants”, as the city commonly referred to them as. Repressive actions, such as closing off of the city’s landfill, and the “Cleaning Operations”, worsened waste pickers’ working and living conditions. Yet the greatest impact was the lack of recognition given to waste picking as form of work and the ~~consequent~~ lack of social security rights given to waste pickers (Dias, 2000).

- Deleted: thereby
- Deleted: the

Interpersonal and Individual

It is clear that, ~~until~~ the 1990’s, there was little societal recognition of the importance of waste picking to Belo Horizonte’s economy. As a result, waste pickers had no concept of their critical role in society (Dias, 2000) or their contribution to environmental health and global sustainability (Gutberlet, 2008). Therefore, ~~the~~ stigma and low social rank afforded to waste pickers by society, functioned to constrain waste pickers’ work choices and thereby reinforced waste picking. As mentioned earlier, this reinforcement is most clearly seen by the central nature of waste picking in the family unit (i.e. spouses and children), given that most waste pickers’ engaged in this type of work from an early age by assisting their parents. It can also be assumed that the perpetual cycle of poverty, marginalization and social exclusion is compounded by individual factors such as illiteracy and innumeracy, resulting from the need to work at an early age.

- Deleted: up to
- Deleted: to no
- Deleted: the
- Deleted: altogether
- Deleted: in an
- Deleted: section
- Deleted: engage

The individual need for freedom and independence also reinforce waste picking (Dias, 2000). Many waste pickers resist other forms of employment or more organized forms of waste collection, because waste picking affords individuals the benefit of direct cash income (Gutberlet, 2008), the ability to be their own boss (Resende, 1998), and to engage in behaviour that is otherwise deemed inappropriate in other lines of work (i.e. alcohol consumption) (Dias, 2000). Overall it is clear that both the determinants and consequences of waste picking are inextricably linked to key social determinants of health, including income and social status, employment, working conditions, social and physical environments, education and access to essential services (e.g. social security rights).

- Deleted: with

B. ASMARE’s Organizational Structure, Constraints and Opportunities

ASMARE’s organizational environment through time has and continues to be influenced by a variety of broader socio-economic and political forces. A brief outline of ASMARE’s organizational structure has already been provided (see Background Section). Hence the purpose of this section is to revisit some aspects of ASMARE’s structure with a critical lens and provide an examination of ASMARE’s inter-organizational relationships (i.e. the roles played by key organisational?? partners identified in Figure 1) and some the constraints and opportunities which have shaped: (i) the formation of these partnerships and (ii) ASMARE’s operation since 1990.

Comment: very good

ASMARE’s Inter-Organizational Relationships

The Pastoral de Rua has played a pivotal role in ASMARE’s growth since even before its formal establishment on May 1st, 1990. With the help of the Benedictines, the Pastoral de Rua helped organize waste pickers who lived and worked at various places?? throughout the city, and helped draw attention to their pressing social situation (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997). They did this by supporting and aiding waste pickers during peaceful protests and petition-writing, especially?? during the early 1990’s (Dias, 2000). Since ASMARE’s inception, the Pastoral de Rua has continued these initiatives, and has also helped ASMARE strengthen solidarity and partnerships with municipal authorities and other community groups (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997). The Pastoral de Rua has also contributes financially towards ASMARE’s management and administrative sectors (Resende, 1998). Although not specifically stated, it is my belief that ASMARE’s commitment to Religion (i.e. through its “Religion” Committee) has also been sustained by its strong partnership with the Pastoral de Rua, which is a Catholic group.

Deleted: that

Deleted: points

Deleted: specifically

Deleted: ,

Deleted: ,

The SLU (Superintendency of Public Cleansing) has represented the municipal government and thereby has played a key role in facilitating waste pickers’ working conditions through infrastructure and policy measures. In 1993, the SLU began a selective handling and treatment system for?? solid wastes in Belo Horizonte as a means to reduce the harmful effects of waste on the environment and maximize the “social and economical benefits of the city” (Dias, 2000, p. 3). This waste management policy resulted in?? the integration of ASMARE as a priority partner and, since then, the SLU has maintained this partnership through their own waste collection operations and through social mobilization endeavours which help strengthen ASMARE’s institutional and operational capacity (Dias, 2000). For instance in 1993, the SLU created a Social Mobilization Department consisting of 29 full-time staff (sociologists, psychologists, education specialists, geographers, artists, architects engineers), and 30 trainee students that would visit schools, churches and public/private events throughout the city to increase environmental awareness, encourage new partnerships with ASMARE and to clarify previous misconceptions of waste pickers’ role in society (Dias, 2000).

Deleted: of

Deleted: sparked

University Center Newton Paiva (Unicentro), which is a private university, provides technical support to help improve ASMARE’s entrance into the market of pre-processed recyclable materials (Dias, 2000). Unicentro also provides financial support to many of ASMARE’s social and educational initiatives (Resende, 1998).

Caritas, which is a Catholic Church group, contributes financially to the maintenance of ASMARE’s cabinet-making shop, which allows waste pickers’ children (who are generally young adolescents) to participate in a vocational-training course (Resende, 1998).

The Municipal Secretariat for Social Development (SMDS) is responsible for the agreement between the City and ASMARE and is therefore responsible for providing mainly financial assistance to ASMARE (Resende, 1998). This contribution is used to pay administrative staff, machine operators and the rental of ASMARE’s three warehouses (Resende, 1998). SMDS has also contributed to ASMARE’s development by providing social educators to lead many of its programs (Dias, 2000).

Municipal Association of Social Service/Assistance (AMAS) assists ASMARE with a project called “Bolsa-escola” which gives families with children between the ages of 7 and 14, the equivalent of a minimum wage to encourage their school attendance (Dias, 2000).

The Human Rights and Citizenship Co-ordination provides legal assistance to ASMARE and promotes human resource training (Resende, 1998).

Other Partnerships: In 1994, the LIFE programme (Local Initiatives For Urban Environment) of the United Nations Development Programme helped ASMARE with the construction of pushcarts and equipment for its warehouses (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997). In 1996, Brazil’s Ministry of the Environment also supported ASMARE, with significant financial resources which allowed the purchase of 110 recycling containers for the expansion ASMARE’s program (Dias, 2000). Since 1999, ASMARE has received financial support by the Inter-American foundation which has allowed the purchase of more recycling containers, the production of media and the provision of training courses for ASMARE’s members, among many other activities (Dias, 2000). Finally, ASMARE has also engaged in an informal partnership (i.e. more like an agreement) with a local hospital—Santa Casa de Misericordia (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997); **more specifically**, ASMARE only collects paper/cardboard, plastic and metal, but not glass materials, since these are intended to generate income for Santa Casa. In exchange for this exception, Santa Casa has negotiated to provide a health plan to benefit ASMARE members and their families (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997).

Deleted: . Particularly,
Comment: what? I don't follow your meaning here

Although ASMARE directly administers all of its resources, the provision of financial and human resources is largely determined by contributions made by its partners as just described. Table 1 shows the financial contributions, in **percentages**, made by these respective partners in 1998. **It is striking that**, overall, a significant percent (i.e. nearly 40%) of ASMARE’s revenue is **derived from** the sale of collected material. Not only does this **demonstrate/support???** ASMARE’s potential to be self-sustainable, **it also shows** that waste pickers’ remuneration, resulting from the sale of collected material, is not static, and is likely to increase from year to year as improvements are made within ASMARE (Resende, 1998).

Deleted: percentile
Deleted: What
Deleted: about these figures is
Deleted: obtained
Deleted: through
Deleted: serve to outline
Deleted: but
Deleted: serves to
Comment: how does it demonstrate this?

Source of Revenue	Contribution (in percentile)
Agreement with the City	45.23%
Sales	39.18%
LIFE Project	4.37%
Caritas Project	3.02 %
Pastoral de Rua	1.85
Other contributions	6.35%

Source: (Resende, 1998, p. 14)

Constraints and Opportunities

(i) The Formation of Partnerships

The partnership between ASMARE and the City of Belo Horizonte` has been shaped by a variety of constraints and windows of opportunity. In 1990, the city's mayor, Eduardo Azeredo, was drafting an Organic Law that would introduce a policy requiring selective collection (i.e. recycling) in the city (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997). ASMARE was in favour of the policy, but felt threatened by the possibility that collection would be outsourced to the private sector (Resende, 1998). ASMARE's lack of a secure locale for sorting collected material, and the prejudices that still existed towards waste pickers, served as a major constraint in making ASMARE competitive (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997). Thus, with the help of the Pastoral de Rua and the Benedictines, ASMARE organized protests in front of City Hall to advocate for their incorporation in the policy (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997). Joao Bosco Senra, a municipal councilman in favour of ASMARE's integration, also gathered resources to allow ASMARE's members to take qualification courses, and thereby make them more qualified for selective collection (Resende, 1998, p. 7). These efforts were aimed to make the City sensitive??? to the idea that any policy warranting selective collection should incorporate the work of those who were already carrying out collection (i.e. ASMARE's members) (Resende, 1998).

Deleted: sensible

The proceeding years marked the greatest opportunities in ASMARE's development and future partnerships. After pressuring the City to grant them full ownership over an abandoned warehouse, the City finally donated the property by the end of 1990; this served as a major milestone in the development of a physical space to sort and store collected material (Resende, 1998). Then in 1993 a new Mayor, Patrus Ananias, took over office (Resende, 1998). Ananias had a very progressive outlook on environmental issues and was known for his previous engagement with social movements in the City (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997). It was at this point that the partnership between the City and ASMARE emerged, since ASMARE would now be integrated into the new policy

Deleted: and

The City, represented by the SLU, would commit to the regulations instated under the Organic Law, and ensure the provision of appropriate work spaces, by renting two additional warehouses in 1994 and 1996 respectively, for ASMARE's operations (Resende, 1998). Specifically, the partnership was based on a drop-off system that required the distribution of recycling containers (LEVs – Locias de Entrega Voluntaria) at various points in the city (e.g. parks, gas stations, churches, etc), so residents could drop-off their recyclables (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997). The SLU would then collect the material from the LEVs and drop them off at ASMARE's warehouses for waste pickers to sort and sell (Dias, 2000). Some of ASMARE's members continued to individually collect recyclables from commercial areas or offices in downtown Belo Horizonte using pushcarts. The profit made from the sale of these recyclables, went to and continues to go to ASMARE (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997).

The local government's support was crucial in the development of a public-public partnership between ASMARE and the City. Yet the local government's change in attitude, which has now embraced waste management from an inclusive perspective, did not occur instantaneously. It took protesting, petition writing, organizing and the change in?? conservative municipal administrators'???? repressive misconceptions regarding waste pickers to the building of an integrated waste management community. Thus the successful genesis of this partnership can be said to have been a threshold or opportunity for the formation of ASMARE's subsequent partnerships. These latter partnerships have emerged in organic ways, but most notably through

Deleted: turn-over

Deleted: to move from

SLU’s social mobilization efforts which have promoted the benefits of partnering with ASMARE (Dias, 2000).

(ii) *ASMARE’s Operation*

Substantive Partnerships (Opportunity)—As seen through the examination of ASMARE’s inter-organizational relationships, both old and new established partnerships have provided ASMARE with an opportunity to expand its services and address much broader structural and societal issues. Through partnerships with the Benedictines and the Pastoral de Rua, ASMARE has been able to legitimize the work of waste pickers, secure a safe and sustainable work environment, and secure income. Through subsequent partnerships, ASMARE has more comprehensively addressed the clear link between social determinants and health. ASMARE has been able to support education (e.g. incentives to stay in school, literacy courses, vocational training) as well as access to health (e.g. health benefits) and social services (i.e. legal support), among many others.

Abolishing??? Middle Men (Opportunity)—As already described, waste pickers’ dependency on middle men to generate income, was one of the greatest forms of exploitation and repression experienced by waste pickers. Hence the abolishment of middle-men through the establishment of ASMARE has posed significant operational gains for ASMARE’s members, since by negotiating directly with industry representatives, members are given the opportunity to generate higher income. Now, the average income of ASMARE’s members varies between two to six times the??? minimum wages, which is significantly greater than middle-men would pay (Jacobi & Teixeira, 1997).

Deleted: The
Deleted: ment of

Deleted: 2-6
Deleted: . A
Deleted: amount
Deleted: what
Deleted: are

Dependency on External Sources (Constraint)—As outlined in Table 1, a significant portion of ASMARE’s financial resources is provided by external contributors. ASMARE recognizes that, “getting the poorest of the poor organized and with a high level of autonomy takes years and a lot of professional help” (Dias, 2000, p. 9). The need for time and professional help primarily stems from the recognition that waste pickers are generally a group of people with low levels of education and who have been marginalized, stigmatized and repressed (Dias, 2000). Hence the time required for waste pickers to learn and acquire the necessary skills to manage ASMARE can be considered an operational constraint, since the time required??? limits ASMARE’s autonomy and self-sufficiency, and increases its dependence on external agents, who may or may not be sustainable entities themselves.

Deleted: alone
Deleted: it

Avoiding the Marginalization of the Marginalized (Constraint)—The incorporation of (former) waste pickers into the local economy has also posed a great operational challenge for ASMARE. In addition to having to deal with persistent forms of social exclusion and negative stereotypes towards these individuals, ASMARE has had to invest a significant amount of resources to capacitate waste pickers with much needed technological savvy, and administrative know-how. ASMARE has done this to ensure its own sustainability as a self-governing association, but, even more, to ensure that it does not reproduce social inequalities or the further marginalization of waste pickers through inaction (i.e. failing to capacitate, train or support the advancement of waste pickers).

Deleted: in order
Deleted: ,
Deleted: more so
Deleted: itself
Comment: Is there such a word as “capacitate”?
Deleted: significantly posed
Deleted: n
Deleted: at the time

The Status Quo (Constraint)—At the beginning of ASMARE’s establishment, both the community (i.e. municipal authorities) and the wider “society” were reluctant to accept the tangible contributions made by waste pickers throughout the city. This posed a significant operational constraint for ASMARE, who sought to legitimize the work of waste pickers.

Restructuring (Constraint and Opportunity)—*With respect* to the *status quo*, *until* 1993, the SLU had sole responsibility over conventional waste collection, street sweeping and waste disposal in Belo Horizonte (Dias, 2000). This meant that SLU underwent a process of major restructuring in order to incorporate its “shared” recycling program with ASMARE (Dias, 2000). At first glance this restructuring *might* be perceived as a major operational constraint, since it diverted significant financial and human resources, which could *otherwise* have been used for other programs and initiatives. Overall however, this re-structuring also provided ASMARE the opportunity to foster a new and respected self-image and significantly improve waste pickers’ quality of life.

- Deleted: In connection
- Deleted: to
- Formatted: Font: Italic
- Deleted: up
- Deleted: can
- Deleted: otherwise

The Recycling Economy (Constraint and Opportunity)—Recycling, as shown in Figure 2, is very much a downstream approach for addressing wider societal or supranational issues such as war, underdevelopment, poverty, globalization, economic crises or differential labour costs. It is therefore not the “ultimate environmental solution” since it does not prevent resource production or consumption (Gutberlet, 2008, p. 667). With respect to ASMARE, the successful recycling partnership with the SLU has created an *opportunity* for waste pickers to legitimize their work, generate income, regain citizenship rights and improve their quality of life. But it must be recognized that because much broader factors influence the existence (and possibly the “non-~~???~~existence”) of a recycling economy, the *core??* of ASMARE’s operations *is* extremely vulnerable to collapse. This can also be said of ASMARE’s *partnership* with the local government, since changes in administration, political agendas, or emerging problems can *easily* shift policy in *opposition to??* ASMARE’s goals and objectives, and thereby compromise its very existence. A careful consideration of these operational limitations *are* warranted if ASMARE wishes to continue providing (former) waste pickers, their families and other marginalized groups, an *opportunity* to improve their quality of life.

- Deleted: in
- Comment: editing
- Deleted: crux
- Deleted: are
- Deleted: existing
- Deleted: easy
- Deleted: disfavour of
- Deleted: should be
- Deleted: d

CONCLUSION

This paper has shown that the relationship between waste picking as a means of subsistence, and the consequent social and health issues experienced by waste pickers is complex and influenced by **very** broader socio-economic and political forces. In the midst of this complexity, ASMARE, as a response, has managed to comprehensively address key social determinants of health as a means to improve waste pickers' quality of life. Generating employment and income, supporting education, in addition to reducing the number of street dwellers and improving the living conditions of waste pickers, are just some of ASMARE's many achievements described herein, which have also had substantive social returns (i.e. empowerment, community action, community capacity, social change, social justice, equity, etc).

Deleted: much

Overall, this analysis has provided a thorough foundation on which to further analyze the strategies, activities and process employed by ASMARE in subsequent sections of this project. I am also confident that the insights provided **regarding** ASMARE's strengths and limitations, including its operational constraints and opportunities, will facilitate my ability to propose an ideal **response** consistent with health promotion best practice principles, and my **subsequent** ability to design an action plan for moving ASMARE closer to this "ideal".

Deleted: herein

Deleted: en

Deleted:

Deleted: thereof

REFERENCES

- Baer, W. (2001). *The Brazilian Economy: Growth and Development*. Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Bartholomew, L. K.; Parcel, G. S.; Kok, G., & Gottlieb, N. H. (2006). *Planning Health Promotion Programs: An Intervention Mapping Approach (2nd ed.)*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Cointreau-Levine, S. (1998). Solid Waste. In J.A. Herzstein, W.B. Burn, & L.E. Fleming (Eds.) *International Occupational and Environmental Medicine* (pp. 620-630). St. Louis: Mosby Inc.
- Daly, G. (1996). *Homeless: Policies, strategies, and lives on the street*. London: Routledge.
- Porto, M.F.; Juncá, D. C. M.; Gonçalves, R. S., & Filhote, M. I. F. (2004). Lixo, trabalho e saúde: um estudo de caso com catadores em um aterro metropolitano no Rio de Janeiro, Brasil (Garbage, work and health: A case study with collectors in a metropolitan landfill in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil). *Cadernos de Saúde Pública*, 20(6), 1503-1514.
- Dias, S. M. (2000). *Integrating Waste Pickers for Sustainable Recycling*. Superintendency of Public Cleansing. Presented at CWG Workshop, "Planning for Sustainable and Integrated Solid Waste Management" 18-21 September, 2000. Manila, The Philippines. Retrieved on February 3, 2009 from: www.chintan-india.org/others/brazil_recyc.doc
- Furedy, C. (1993). Working with the Waste Pickers: Asian Approaches to Urban Solid Waste Management. *Alternatives*, 19(2), 18-23.
- Gladwell, M. (2008). *Outliers: The Story of Success*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.
- Gutberlet, J. (2008). Empowering collective recycling initiatives: Video documentation and action research with a recycling co-op in Brazil. *Resources, Conservation and Recycling*, 52, 659-670.
- Jacobi, P. & Teixeira, M. A. (1997). Criacao do Capital Social: O Caso Asmare- Associacao Do Catadores De Papel, Papelao e Material Reaproveitavel De Belo Horizonte. *Cadernos Gestao Publica e Cidadania*, 2(June).
- Kahan, B., & Goodstadt, M. (2001). The Interactive Domain Model of Best Practices in Health Promotion: Developing and Implementing a Best Practices Approach to Health Promotion. *Health Promotion Practice*, 2(1), 43-67
- Kahan, B., & Goodstadt, M. (2002). IDM Manual: *IDM Manual for using the Interactive Domain Model approach to best practices in health promotion*. Retrieved February 9, 2009 from: <http://www.utoronto.ca/chp/bestp.html>
- Medeiros, L. F. R. & Macêdo, K. B. (2006). Catador de material reciclável: uma profissão para além da sobrevivência? (Recycled garbage pickers: A profession beyond survival?). *Psicologia e Sociedade*, 18(2), 62-71.

- Medina, M. (2000). Scavenger cooperatives in Asia and Latin America. *Resources, Conservation and Recycling*, 31, 51-69.
- Medina, M. (2007). *The World's Scavengers: Salvaging for sustainable Consumption and Production*. Rowman Altamira.
- Nguyen H.T.L.; Chalin C.G.; Lam T.M., & Maclaren V.W. (n.d.). *Health & Social Needs of Waste Pickers in Vietnam*. Unpublished Manuscript.
- Perkins, E. R., Simnett, I. & Wright, L. (1999). *Evidence-Based Health Promotion*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Resende, F. (1998, November). *Case Study on the Project ASMARE- Association of Paper, Cart and Recyclable Material Pickers- Belo Horizonte*. Retrieved February 3, 2009 from: www.undp.org/governance/programmes/life/index.htm
- Tones, K., & Green, J. (2004). *Health Promotion: Planning and Strategies*. Sage Publications.
- Velloso, M. P. (2005). Os catadores de lixo e o processo de emancipação social (Waste material pickers and emancipation process). *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, 10, suppl., 49-61.
- Waste Pickers without Frontiers (2008). Report of Conference Proceedings. First International and Third Latin American Conference of Waste-Pickers. Bogotá, Colombia 1-4 March 2008.
- World Health Organization (2005). *How can health care systems effectively deal with the major health care needs of homeless people?* Health Evidence Network, WHO Regional Office for Europe.

COMMENTS

1. Many thanks for a greatly expanded and, hence, strengthened analysis and report.
2. I particularly appreciated your more in-depth analysis of ASMARE's underlying values.
3. As you point out in your conclusion, your report's additional sections related to the analysis of the socio-ecological context of your issue and ASMARE's response provide a very solid basis for the detailed analyses of ASMARE's strategies etc., leading to identification of potential "gaps" between ASMARE's current intervention and a health promotion "ideal" response resulting, finally, to an action plan for bridging this gap. I am very much looking forward to reading your Assignment 2 report.
4. I am giving this final report for Assignment 1 an A-plus grade (i.e., 90%). Many thanks for your outstanding work. Michael.

Formatted: Bullets and Numbering

Formatted: Font: (Default) Garamond

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman