

How to mainstream gender into national waste management policy

Case study from Jamaica

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Jamaica has two overarching national policies to guide gender mainstreaming in the country, Gender Sector Plan Vision 2030 and the National Policy for Gender Equality (2011). Despite these policies, however, gender has not been mainstreamed into Jamaica's national waste management policies, including the National Solid Waste Management Policy (2000) and the National Solid Waste Management Act (2002).

In terms of the current state of gender in waste management, women and men are observed to be represented in the waste sector at different levels. For example, women and men tend to be represented across all levels within the government, and several of the privately owned waste management firms in the private sector are led and owned by women. In the informal sector, waste picking, sorting and recycling seem often done by women. However, there is not enough sex-disaggregated data and gender information to support this observation.

Key challenges in mainstreaming gender into waste management includes:

- Lack of sex-disaggregated data and gender information
- Lack of understanding as to what 'gender' is, its relevance to development - or what 'gender equality' is - and a perception that these terms only refer to women
- Perception that gender equality and gender mainstreaming will disempower men and somewhat of a backlash to women's perceived advancement
- Pervasive gender stereotypes
- Little interest, political will, or commitment from policymakers
- Funding not available to implement the Gender Sector Plan Vision 2030
- Lack of budget to carry out gender analysis that underpins gender mainstreaming in any sector
- Lack of training and technical skills to mainstream gender
- Lack of time and human resources
- No gender focal points in some (or many) ministries, departments and agencies, and the gender focal person may not be trained or gender-aware or committed (despite the requirement for this in the National Policy for Gender Equality)

To overcome these challenges, there is a strong need for raising gender awareness and collecting sex disaggregated data and gender information in waste management, including gendered attitudes and behaviors with respect to waste. Provision of funding and employment of gender-sensitive participatory methods are also needed.

(Edited by Junko Fujioka, Gender Focal Point, UNEP-IETC)

For more details, please watch the recording of UNEP-IETC's webinar, '[Gender and Waste: How to mainstream gender into national waste management policy](#)', organized on 28 November 2023.