

## "Empowering Women Through Innovative Flower Waste Management" Cities Combatting Plastic Entering Marine Environment

### Brief introduction



India is taking long strides in improving its solid waste management systems. In this cycle of improvement, women sanitary workers are playing a very crucial role. They are collecting waste from household, managing the segregation, and ensuring sustainable waste management until the last leg. Yet the role of the women sanitary worker is never considered dignified as their work is often viewed or termed as 'scavengers', not to mention the ad hoc basis of working processes. This initiative of the GIZ India Sustainable Urban and Industrial Development Cluster is along with Kanpur Municipal Corporation has been able to provide 'dignity of livelihood' to more than 100 women in the temple city of Uttar Pradesh, India. With a gender responsive approach towards creating better working conditions, livelihoods and ensuring women's economic empowerment at the same time combatting waste entering Marine Environment, the focus on flower waste management in the city of Kanpur is noteworthy. A video has been developed to demonstrate

how this initiative has been approached and also a sneak peek into the lives of the women [workers: and we encourage you to watch it HERE!!](#)

The flower waste management initiative in Kanpur represents an innovative and sustainable approach that not only addresses environmental concerns but contributes significantly towards gender equality. Collaboratively undertaken by the Kanpur Municipal Corporation, private businesses, and facilitated by GIZ India, this gender

responsive approach aims to transform waste into a resource while empowering women through dignified employment opportunities.

### Objectives:

- **Environmental Impact:** Addressing the disposal of tons of flower waste, often contaminated and unsuitable for conventional composting, thereby preventing pollution in the holy river Ganga.
- **Gender Equality** with a focus on Women Empowerment for Women Sanitary Workers

### Overall Strategy and Implementation:

- **Identification and Segregation:** Detailed strategies were employed to identify, segregate, and redirect flower waste from religious places (temples) to designated upcycling facilities.
- **Partnership and Collaboration:** A collaboration between municipal authorities and private businesses facilitated the upcycling of flower waste into innovative products like incense sticks, flower leather, and thermocol.



- **Gender Responsive Approach focusing on women:** Providing women, previously engaged in hazardous scavenging jobs, with dignified and sustainable employment opportunities, better social schemes for workers.

#### What the Gender Responsive Approach Initiative has achieved

- **Transformation of Livelihoods:** The initiative has replaced hazardous jobs for women with dignified employment opportunities, resulting in sustainable livelihoods.
- **Social Empowerment:** Women now have access to and are covered under social entitlements, including pension schemes, insurance, and also scholarships for their children.
- **Sustainability and Replicability - Scalability:** The success of this model in Kanpur demonstrates its potential for replication in other cities, emphasizing its scalability and also its impact on gender equality.
- **Collaborative Approach:** Highlighting the pivotal role of collaboration between municipal bodies, private enterprises, and facilitation by GIZ in achieving sustainable outcomes.

The flower waste management initiative in Kanpur exemplifies the power of sustainable waste management strategies in not only tackling environmental challenges but also significantly empowering women. It stands as a testament to the impact of collaborative efforts in creating innovative solutions that positively influence gender equality and sustainable development.

#### 1. Promoting gender equality within the program / sector (40% of marks)

The flower waste management program in Kanpur significantly contributes to promoting gender equality within its framework. Here's how:

**1. Creating Employment Opportunities for Women:** The initiative has replaced hazardous and undignified scavenging jobs with employment opportunities in waste management and upcycling for women.

**2. Dignified Livelihoods:** Previously, women engaged in scavenging jobs faced various health hazards and social stigma. Through this program, they now lead dignified lives with steady incomes, social entitlements like insurance, pensions, and access to scholarships for their children.

**3. Skill Development and Economic Empowerment:** This engagement has led to skill development and economic empowerment, allowing them to contribute meaningfully to their households' finances.

**4. Social Inclusion and Recognition:** The program's success has contributed to recognizing the importance of women's roles in waste management and sustainable practices. It emphasizes their own individual rights as workers (Rights) inclusion in decision-making processes (Resources) and societal recognition and representative voices (Representation) – very much in line with the 3R's of Germany's Feminist Development Policy.

**5. Replicability and Influence:** By showcasing the success of this gender-responsive approach, the program influences other cities and regions to adopt similar strategies, thereby expanding the positive impact on gender equality across diverse communities.

#### 2. Gender as a quality feature of our work (20% of marks)

The flower waste management initiative in Kanpur had integrated the gender equality aspect from its planning stage. The initiative and gender approach was planned, developed, and implemented for managing a very sensitive aspects of solid waste management in the city as well as bring the women sanitary workers into the mainstream of business of solid waste management. Aspects of gender equality, following gender sensitive to creation of successful solutions that brought dignity to women, improved their health, and gave them voice for demanding their equal rights. The project builds their capacities, improves their life skills and integrates them into a system that will contribute towards



sustainable livelihoods - even beyond the project duration, it also contributed significantly towards enriching the condition of her family and children.

### **3. Implementing feminist core principles (20% of marks)**

Here's how it embodies the feminist core principles outlined in the German Feminist Development Policy:

#### **1. Rights-Based Approaches (FDP 3 R's - Rights):**

**Human Rights Emphasis:** The initiative prioritizes the rights of women, ensuring equal access to dignified employment opportunities, healthcare, social entitlements, and education for themselves and their children.

**Workforce Rights:** By offering meaningful work and social protections, it safeguards the rights of women previously engaged in hazardous scavenging jobs, promoting their well-being and security.

#### **2. Access to Resources (FDP 3 R's - Resources):**

**Economic Empowerment:** Women's involvement in waste management activities provides them access to economic resources, fostering financial independence and contributing to their empowerment.

**Skill Development:** Equipping women with skills in waste management and upcycling creates resources in the form of expertise, allowing them to contribute meaningfully to the workforce.

#### **3. Equal Representation (FDP 3 R's - Representation):**

**Gender-Inclusive Workforce:** By promoting gender diversity within the waste management sector, the initiative enhances representation, offering equal opportunities for women to be active participants in decision-making and implementation processes.

#### **4. Gender-Transformative Approaches (Dismantling Structural Causes):**

**Structural Inequality Addressed:** The initiative aims to dismantle structural causes of gender inequality by creating pathways for women's economic empowerment, breaking traditional stereotypes regarding women's roles in waste management, and offering avenues for equal participation.

### **4. Cooperation (20% of marks)**

#### **1. Cooperation Partners:**

The program collaborated with various stakeholders:

**Colleagues:** Interdepartmental collaboration within GIZ, fostering a cohesive knowledge exchange approach toward gender equality initiatives.

**Partners:** Engagement with the Kanpur Municipal Corporation, private businesses, and NGOs for waste management and women's empowerment initiatives.

**Donors:** Potential engagement with donor agencies supporting gender-focused programs.

**Civil Society Representatives:** Involvement of local civil society groups and women's organizations in project implementation and community engagement.

#### **2. National Commitments and Policies for Gender Equity:**

- Alignment with the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and its initiatives for waste management along the Ganga River.
- Adherence to national policies promoting women's economic empowerment and environmental sustainability.

#### **3. Partnership Creation and Impact:**

- **Public-Private Collaboration:** Collaborations with private enterprises enabled innovative approaches to upcycle flower waste, creating economic opportunities for women.
- **Community Engagement:** Engaging with local communities and civil society groups fostered better waste segregation practices and local community action and involvement.
- **Government Engagement:** Collaborating with the local government facilitated systematic waste collection from religious places, ensuring sustainable waste diversion.



- **Community-Based Groups Women's Collectives:** Formation of local women's collectives or self-help groups focused on waste management and upcycling initiatives. These groups provide a platform for women to collaborate, share knowledge, and collectively contribute to waste management efforts.
- **Partnership with Religious Institutions:** Collaborating with temples and religious places to establish segregated waste collection points for flower waste. This also ensures community engagement and systematic waste diversion.

#### 5. Key Learnings :

- **Policy Alignment:** Aligning with national policies for waste management and women's empowerment to create an enabling environment for such initiatives.
- **Stakeholder Collaboration:** Emphasizing the importance of public-private partnerships and collaborations with civil society for sustainable waste management and gender equality.
- **Community Engagement:** Empowering local communities through workshops, collectives, and outreach programs to encourage waste segregation and women's participation in waste management.
- **Institutional Capacity Building:** Developing institutional capacity within the municipal corporation for gender-inclusive waste management practices.
- **Impact on Women:** Transforming individual lives through dignified employment, social entitlements, and skill development programs.
- **Behavioral Change:** Encouraging behavioral change within communities for better waste segregation and environmentally responsible practices.

#### 6. Competition related information

- **Innovative Gender Approach:** It pioneers a unique approach to waste management, integrating gender-inclusive practices by providing dignified employment for women and ensuring their access to social entitlements.
- **Community Empowerment:** The initiative fosters community engagement and partnerships, showcasing the transformative power of collaborative efforts for gender equality and environmental sustainability.
- **Demonstrated Success:** Tangible outcomes include transformed lives of women, reduced waste pollution in the Ganga River, and the creation of sustainable livelihoods through upcycling initiatives.
- **Exemplary Impact:** The initiative serves as a model showcasing how waste management practices can be gender-inclusive, transformative, and impactful within local communities.
- **Scalability and Replicability:** The success in Kanpur sets a precedent for similar initiatives across other cities, highlighting its scalability and replicability. The adoption of gender-positive waste management strategies as a model for change management.
- **Intersectional Impact:** The initiative goes beyond waste management by addressing gender equality, providing sustainable livelihoods for women, and empowering marginalized communities.

**Utilization of Award Resources:** If the program team wins the award, we could utilize the resources for extensive capacity-building programs targeting women's skill development and leadership training for women workers.

