

From Trash to Cash

The Inequality Challenge. Innovative Solutions to a Global Issue

The Challenge

Tagant, the pilot region for the 'From Trash to Cash' project, is located in the rural centre of Mauritania and characterised by desert climate, low population density and harsh living conditions. It is comprised of ten municipalities which accommodate its population of 82,000 people. Tagant belongs to Mauritania's poorest regions with a percentage of 60 – 70% of its population living below the poverty threshold.

As one of Mauritania's poorest regions, the overall household income is amongst the weakest in the country. The revenue base in the municipalities is low and local authorities are barely able to mobilise their own financial resources. As consequence, the quality and quantity of local service delivery, in particular basic services such as waste management, are insufficient.

The Objective

The main objective of the project is to improve the quality of local waste management and at the same time make women-led *Haratin* households less vulnerable to extreme poverty. In order to reach this goal, the project aims at increasing the income of 30 selected households in its three pilot municipalities, Tidjikja, Rachid and Tamourt N'aaj. It moreover tackles the municipalities' capacity to improve public waste management through engaging citizens and relieve the local expenditure budgets.

The Target Group

The population of the *Haratin*, former slaves or descendants of slaves, constitutes 40% of the overall population. After the abolishment of slavery in Mauritania in 2007, they were partly



Project title	From trash to cash – through crowdsourcing and local economic development to social inclusion of marginalised groups in Mauritania
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released into liberty but are still structurally marginalised in the political and economic life throughout the country.

Haratin women and in particular women-led *Haratin* households are most affected by discrimination, a low quality of local service delivery and extreme poverty. Many of those women do not have any education and therefore no viable alternative livelihoods except farm work on the lowest income bracket. In addition, unmarried *Haratin* women with children are socially and legally stigmatised due to Mauritania's Sharia-based law system.

Most of those women-led *Haratin* households are extremely poor, which also has a negative impact on access to education for their children, migration, crime and fundamentalism.

The Approach

During the Habitat III conference in 2016, Smart Cities received a particular role for a sustainable and inclusive development of urban spaces. More than ever Smart Cities are considered a sustainable model to react to economic, social and political challenges of our society in the new millennium. The proposed project targets four levels of smartness: Smart Economy, Smart People, Smart Environment and Smart Living.

The 'From Trash to Cash' project seeks to address the challenges of both women-led *Haratin* households as well as Smart Cities

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through combining two approved approaches into an innovative novelty: crowdsourcing meets local economic development.

Crowdsourcing is a problem solving oriented production model, which outsources deliverables through the public or the private sector to a network of people through an open call. Members of the public, the so-called 'crowd', submit their solutions to the problem. The contributor of the solution will receive a monetary compensation.

Local economic development seeks to improve the comparative advantage of cities, strengthens investments and encourages a sustainable use of resources. Local economic development can be an instrument for strengthening local business cycles, creating employment and reducing inequality.

The 'From Trash to Cash' project intends to initiate a change process by crowdsourcing waste management to citizens, which is an innovative approach to public-private partnerships, to overcome the public sector's incapacity to deliver services and goods. It creates a large win set between a local government and its citizens by enhancing the quality of service delivery, creating employment, boosting the local economy and improving social inclusion.

In a first step, the target group elaborates and selects the best ideas on how to generate income from waste recycling through

an idea competition and innovation contests. In a second step, the selected ideas will be coordinated with the local authorities, women's cooperatives and the target group so that they contribute to the quality of local waste management. During the third step, the target group defines a number of value chains for the processing of waste. In the fourth step, the target group elaborates a simple plan on how to implement their business ideas. During the fifth and final step, material for implementing the business plan needs to be acquired and business owners receive training in how to bring their ideas efficiently into action.

The Milestones

So far, 30 women have been selected throughout an innovation contest in the three municipalities Tidjikja, Rachid and Tamourt N'aaj. In each municipality 10 women each founded altogether three cooperatives which started to grow agricultural produce. All women have been professionally trained on how to use farming methods based on recycled material such as used plastic bottles. All cooperatives developed business plans which help assure the economic sustainability of the micro-enterprises.

About the Inequality Challenge

The Inequality Challenge supports innovative approaches that tackle inequality and the 'leave no one behind' principle of the 2030 Agenda with the ultimate goal to integrate and upscale those approaches into German Development Cooperation's portfolio. Initiated by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), it supports ten projects in India, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Mongolia, Jordan, Serbia, Nigeria, Mauritania, Brazil and Mexico with up to 100,000 EUR.

GIZ manages the Inequality Challenge. For further information, please visit www.inequality-challenge.com or contact Tiffany Sacher, fundmanagement@giz.de.

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