



UN Volunteers who are part of the PEI project in Arequipa, Peru, demonstrate how to correctly separate solid waste. By using games for the demonstration, they caught the attention of people attending an environmental fair in Arequipa. (UNV Peru, 2014)

Gestion des déchets solides pour un développement durable inclusif

Improving waste management is the main goal of the UNDP-UNEP Poverty Environment Initiative (PEI) [Integrated Management of Solid Waste for Sustainable and Inclusive Development], which has involved UNV since 2013. UNV intends to use its involvement in PEI to utilize the potential of volunteerism, as well as the engagement of young people, to enhance the social and environmental impact of the project.

Solid waste management is a serious environmental and social concern in Peru. Waste is not separated but often dumped into rivers, contaminating the water. At the same time, illegal recycling is a widespread practice, seeing the poorest people collecting waste in dangerous conditions. Improving waste management is the main goal of the United Nations

Development Programme (UNDP)-United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Poverty Environment Initiative (PEI) "Integrated Management of Solid Waste for Sustainable and Inclusive Development", which has involved the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme since 2013.

So far, PEI has focused on the Peruvian district of Arequipa, making great progress to officially recognize the work done by the 250 informal recyclers in the city's waste dumps. These men and women have been trained, organized and formalized into two associations to fight the negative impact of waste on the environment and on people's health.

"We used to work in very bad conditions in the waste dump, recalls Roque Flores Calle, one of the recyclers who now belongs to the "Nuevo Mundo" recycling association. "Since we have become formalized, we have a special uniform, a badge that identifies us, together with the assigned zones for selective waste collection."

UNV intends to use its involvement in PEI to utilize the potential of volunteerism, as well as the engagement of young people, to enhance the social and environmental impact of the project. To support and scale-up a waste-friendly culture, UNV is creating infrastructures for volunteering, mobilizing Peruvian youth, and creating equal opportunities for marginalized groups. UNV also intends to promote the formalization of recyclers and enlarge partnerships with public and private entities.

Thanks to volunteers, the district of Arequipa will be an inspiration for the entire Peru. As Flores says: "We can be an example to other neighbourhoods. I would like to go to other cities of Peru and explain our experience, convincing my colleagues that we have an honourable role in reducing the waste problem in the country. Yes we can! Recycling provides me with a living, and the formalization has been the best decision I could make. I am optimistic about my families' future."

• Peru • UNEP • waste • environment

Sustainable Development Goal: