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Short communication

### Improving garbage collection in Latin America's slums: some lessons from Machala, Ecuador

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#### Abstract

The challenge of improving garbage collection in Latin American slums is illustrated by the case of Machala, Ecuador, a port city with a population of approximately 200<sup>000</sup>. For many years, solid waste services have been provided exclusively by a unionized municipal department. By and large, it has performed inefficiently, and virtually no garbage is collected in the city's poor neighborhoods, where 100<sup>000</sup> people reside. Better service for Machala's slums requires the use of appropriate technology. To be specific, large tricycles equipped with a 1 m<sup>3</sup> box lend themselves well to garbage collection in areas through which motorized vehicles cannot easily pass. With support from international development agencies, a small independent enterprise has been created to operate the tricycles as well as a truck for hauling garbage from transfer

points to the city dump. Although the new system is cost-efficient, there are impediments to the replication of this scheme in other locations. Legal and institutional reform is needed to facilitate municipal contracting with enterprises like Machala's.



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## Keywords

Solid waste management; Latin America; Economics; Appropriate technology

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