Webinar meeting notes:

The webinar "***Perceptions and Systems of Urban Waste - Changing behaviors towards circularity beyond awareness campaigns"*** took place as part of the GIZ Urban October on 11 October 2023.

Perceptions and systems of urban waste and its prevention through circular approaches were addressed on different levels - individual/ societal, municipal, economical/commercial and governmental, asking the questions: How can behavioral aspects support a circular economy transition beyond awareness campaigns? What are methods that work? How should responsibilities be defined?

The webinar presented lessons learned from the global project "Environmental protection worldwide" (BMUV), specifically Management of Organic Waste (MOWI) in India (Soma Biswas), the certification program for zero waste cities of Zero Waste Europe (Manon Jourdan), experiences of becoming a zero waste city from the City of Kiel (Tatjana Lenz), and research perspectives about systemic and practical opportunities and limitations of circular economy in cities (Dr. Kathrin Eitel).

Dr. Kathrin Eitel conducted research on the urban waste recycling system in Phnom Penh (Cambodia) and shared insights. With regard to this she discussed shortcomings and opportunities of the circular economy model and highlighted important aspects to consider with regard to designing strategies and interventions to improve recycling activities. In addition to this, she introduced the Waste in Motion research network.

Shortages of the circular economy model:

- Sociocultural aspects are left out of the scope (people, setting, and consumer habits)
- The main aim of the circular economy model is the maintenance of the current economic status quo, reinforcing global inequalities
- Thought as one universal meta model
- 'Close the loop' paradigm cannot equally be achieved across nations, nor within. Theoretically all countries must work together to close the loop, but this is hard to achieve.

In summary, it does not promote dialogue on eye-level, as it is merely implemented top down or from transnational organizations

➔ Local approaches are needed!
➔ Following practices rather than (only) materials

Taking into account sociocultural aspects means looking at:

- Realities of local stakeholders (e.g. which political and social infrastructures determine how a recycling plant operates?)
- Aspects that unveil power asymmetries and inequalities that are on place and that should be addressed as well (e.g. with regard to women)
- Local understanding and notions of what waste is, and for what it can be used for (e.g. waste is not the same for everybody)
- Most importantly, how waste recycling is (already) practiced (e.g. there are often existing structures on site that should be considered and taking into account)

With regard to behavioral change, it is not effective to:

- Change political behavior by implementing and fostering formalized recycling models
- "Overrule" the informal sector as it is the way of doing economy in many countries
- Collaborate only with those stakeholders that are easily accessible (such as companies, political actors, or NGOs) - expand the search for local collaborators!

Opportunities:

- Shift the focus of the circular economy from materials to practices. This means to render the system inclusive and integral. An inclusive system actually aims at integrating to so called informal sector based on a system that works on site.
- An integral system instead promotes additionally the development of the recycling economy as a whole with other relevant actors, for example, in form of deliberation rounds or stakeholders initiate a central bottom up development process that includes waste pickers and depot workers, for example, but also recycling plant operators within the decision making process.

Waste in Motion research network

- Research network funded by the German Research Foundation
- With currently 20+ scholars
- Focus on how, where and when is waste constituted in the interaction of materialities, socio-spatial practices (e.g. disposal, repair, reuse, classification) as well as social and infrastructural conditions? How do its mobilities unfold in spatial and temporal terms?

Goals:

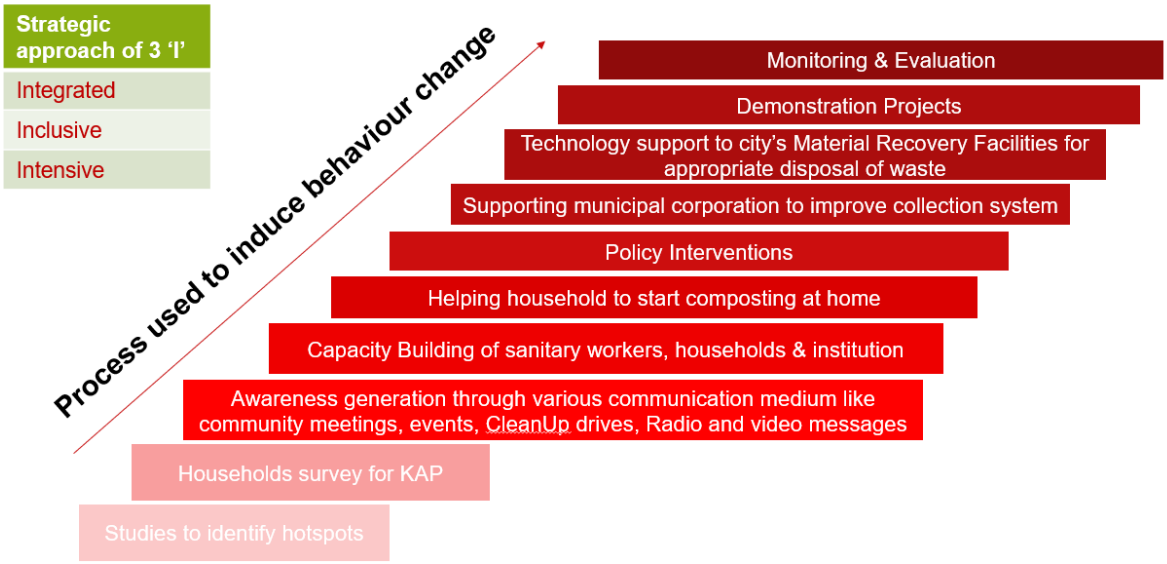
- interdisciplinary discussion on waste in motion
- contribute to a stronger perception of the research field beyond academia
- and transdisciplinary collaboration

Dr. Kathrin Eitel is an urban anthropologist specializing in feminist science and technology studies and critical infrastructure studies and currently *a Walter Benjamin Fellow (DFG) at USSH University in HCMC (Vietnam), the University of Osaka (Japan), and the Polytechnic University in Turin (Italy). She has conducted extensive ethnographic research on the urban waste recycling system in Phnom Penh (Cambodia) and is currently carrying out research on flood resilience in Ho Chi Minh City and the Mekong Delta in Vietnam. She is a founding member of the Waste in Motion research network and has published the book "Recycling Infrastructures in Cambodia".*

Soma Biswas presented lessons learned from the GIZ global project "Environmental Protection Worldwide" – Management of Organic Waste (MOWI) as well as the project 'Cities Combatting Plastic entering Marine Environment (CCPME)' in India.

Behaviour Change and Awareness Generation was an important approach to establishing improved practices of solid waste management at household level, preventing litter, and following steps to reduce and recycle solid waste including wet and dry waste.

They follow an integrated, inclusive and intensive approach/ process to induce behavior change:



In their work with the cities of Kanpur and Port Blair they developed Behaviour Change Communication strategies for each city targeting at government action, educating about the topic and clarifying individual roles in solid waste management.

They engaged in the following activities:
- Events
- Meetings
- Door to door mobilisation
- Capacity Building of sanitary workers & decision-makers
- Handholding support to households in organic waste management
- Schemes
- Rewards
- Partnerships Door-to-door

Lessons learnt from the project are:
For sustainable behaviour change strategic approach the following is needed:
- Intensity
- Continuity
- Policy intervention
- Innovation
- Customised and solution-based communication
- Capacity building & handholding
- Monitoring & evaluation

Soma Biswas is a communication and behavior change communication (BCC) specialist, having worked in leadership positions across various organizations, and sectors. For the last 25 years she has been working as a behavior change, communications, monitoring, and evaluation professional engaged with International, bi/multi-lateral, and national organizations, including GIZ, Development Alternatives, IPE Global, CBMD, and more. Presently, She leads the communication output of numerous global/regional/national projects on municipal waste management and climate-smart cities in GIZ.

Manon Jourdan introduced Zero Waste Europe and shared insights of the Zero Waste Certification Program, criteria and good practices, challenges and gave some examples of zero waste cities.

- They help cities to put the Zero Waste principle into practice
- The ZW Network consists of 480+ cities who fully engage in the ZW model or at least implement best practices (e.g. organic door-to door collection)

Ljubljana, Slovenia:

- First European Zero Waste capital
- A civil society opposition against an incinerator sparked the movement towards zero waste in 2012 (Ecologists without Borders)
- This movement developed a ZW strategy which included:
    - Introduction of a door-to-door collection system, focused on the collection of organic waste
    - Lower the frequency of collection for residual waste
    - Strong communication strategy focused on prevention and reuse to engage citizens

How to become a ZW Certified City (Zero Waste Cities Certification by the Mission Zero Academy)? The measures are not mandatory, yet.
5-Step Program:

1. Expression of Interest
2. Commitment
3. Implementation
4. Certification
5. Yearly Improvements

The average period for implementation of a zero waste plan by a city or municipality is 2-3 years.

Current project:

- Plastic prevention plan:
    - Ban or Restriction on SUP items
    - City-Wide Tax on SUP
    - Introduction of a city-wide system that promotes the use of reusable tableware and take-away containers across various settings (food service establishments, public buildings, events)
    - Procurement criterias favouring the avoidance of single use purchase, and the promotion of reusable in key sectors (public buildings and canteens, events,)

- Support / Promote Bring Your Own (Refill) initiatives and the development of Bulk shopping (packaging free) through specific guidelines in event permits, incentives, public support, specific regulation
- Packaging free/Plastic free Policy in municipal facilities

Find more European City experiences here:
Best Practices Archive - Zero Waste Cities

Manon Jourdan works as an Implementation Officer at Zero Waste Europe working closely with ZWE network members, cities and partners, providing them with the technical guidance and support needed to accelerate the implementation of zero waste strategies at the local level. This includes capturing, showcasing, and disseminating best practices and methods related to waste prevention and management, reuse systems, organics collection and recovery as well as financing opportunities.

Tatjana Lenz introduced the Zero Waste strategy in the German city of Kiel and shared experiences from decision to implementation in becoming a Zero Waste city.

The city of Kiel started its journey in 2018, when the Kiel Council decides that state capital shall become a Zero Waste City, a strategy (comprising of 270 pages) was finalized in August 2020 and adopted by the Kiel Council in November 2020. After 2 ½ years of implementation they received the certification “Zero Waste Certified City”.

The Zero Waste Strategy was developed in a participatory approach to raise awareness and motivate the entire urban society to join in. Together with different stakeholders they identified 107 ideas for resource protection.

Kiel’s Zero Waste Strategy divides into 5 sectors:

1. Waste system transformation
2. Public administration
3. Households
4. Educational institutions
5. Industry, trade and events

The 2 main objectives are:

1. The total amount of waste per capita per year in Kiel is to be reduced by an average of 15 % by 2035.
2. Halve household and commercial waste (residual waste) by 2035 and reduce it to less than 50 kg per capita per year in the long term.

You can read more here: Kiel - Zero Waste City

Tatjana Lenz works for the Environmental Protection Agency of the German city of Kiel, she has been the Zero Waste project manager for the City of Kiel from 2019 until 2021, and is now the work group manager of the areas „environmental consulting, zero waste and resource protection“.