

Awareness and Capacity-building for Women in the Informal Recycling Sector

Toolkit for Facilitators

Implementation Manual

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1. Purpose of this manual

In 2026, GRID-Arendal published the second edition of the *Awareness and Capacity Building of Women of the IRS Toolkit* (Tsakona et.al., 2026). This Implementation Manual outlines a comprehensive, structured approach to the design, implementation, and evaluation of capacity-building activities for women working in the informal recycling sector (IRS) based on the Toolkit (Tsakona et.al., 2026). It is intended for non-governmental organizations, municipal authorities, waste picker associations, development agencies, and professionals seeking to implement structured, gender-responsive, and powerful capacity-building activities.

The Implementation Manual moves beyond the concept of a one-time capacity-building training event and instead positions it as a sequenced, long-term process. Experience demonstrates that high-impact training outcomes are not only determined by the content of modules alone, but by the rigor of planning, the adequacy of preparation time, and the quality of follow-up mechanisms. In this sense, it emphasizes and integrates stakeholder engagement, Training Needs Assessment (TNA), Training of Trainers (ToT), logistical planning, participatory implementation, six-month impact review, and scale-up into a single operational architecture.

2. Rationale

The *Awareness and Capacity-Building for Women in the Informal Recycling Sector: Toolkit for Facilitators* was developed as a modular training resource containing session plans, activities, and learning materials to support awareness raising and capacity development among women working in the informal recycling sector. The *Toolkit* is organized into eight modules that can be adapted to different geographical contexts, literacy levels, and training priorities.

This *Implementation Manual* is intended to be used in conjunction with the *Toolkit* and should not be considered a stand-alone resource. While the *Toolkit* provides the training content, the *Implementation Manual* offers practical guidance on how to plan, organize, adapt, and deliver the training effectively as well as account for the training outcomes. It supports facilitators and implementing organizations in applying the *Toolkit* in a consistent, participatory, and context-sensitive manner while maintaining the core learning objectives and key messages.

The *Implementation Manual* provides additional guidance on issues that are not covered in detail in the *Toolkit*, including conducting training needs assessments, selecting and preparing facilitators, organizing logistics, adapting materials to different literacy levels and languages, managing time and group dynamics, and monitoring and evaluating training outcomes. Drawing on lessons learned from the experience, it also highlights practical considerations and recommendations that can help ensure the quality and effectiveness of training activities.

Together, the *Toolkit* and the *Implementation Manual* form a complementary package: the *Toolkit* focuses on one of event, while the *Implementation Manual* focuses on outcomes over time. This combination enables facilitators to adapt the training to local realities and participant needs while ensuring that essential topics and expected learning outcomes are consistently addressed.

3. Toolkit Implementation Pathway

Effective implementation of the *Toolkit* requires careful sequencing across multiple preparatory and implementation steps. The following steps are suggested based on experience from the *Toolkit* implementation in Kathmandu, Nepal, and Kisumu, Kenya.

Step 1: Stakeholder Engagement

Timeline: 3 months prior to training

The first step begins approximately three months prior to capacity-building training event. Its purpose is to secure institutional alignment, stakeholder engagement, and ensure sustainability. During this period, implementing organizations identify and engage relevant local actors, including waste picker associations, municipal waste departments, community leaders, local NGOs, and, where possible, private sector actors involved in waste value chains.

Based on previous implementation experience, stakeholder engagement has been facilitated through face-to-face meetings, one-day seminars, and complementary activities such as clean-up campaigns to raise overall awareness. Other forms of engagement, including focus group discussions, community dialogues, and online consultations, may also be appropriate depending on the geographical context and stakeholders involved.

The stakeholder engagement event agenda may include introductory and welcome remarks from representatives of key stakeholders, followed by an overview of the project, its activities, and objectives. Following this, participants could engage in a question-and-answer session to discuss the women's empowerment activities the project will undertake.

The stakeholder engagement event is an opportunity to identify potential women of the informal recycling sector to participate in the next step (Training Needs Assessment).

Furthermore, the stakeholder engagement event could also initiate a discussion on logistical support, explore potential co-financing or in-kind contributions, such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) provision, and identify opportunities to integrate trained women into formal or semi-formal waste systems after the training. Institutional alignment at this stage significantly strengthens sustainability and post-training continuity.

Communication about the stakeholder engagement event is important to disseminate the effort and significance of the training and to increase awareness and visibility of the informal recycling area, locally and nationally. Therefore, it is also important that the local media are invited to relevant events for the duration of the project (e.g., the stakeholder engagement event, during the training, and especially on the first day and the last day of the training, as well as at the post-training evaluation).

Expected Outcomes

- Strengthened political and institutional legitimacy
- Alignment between training scope and local policy environment and community needs
- Increased likelihood of post-training institutional support
- Enhanced collaboration between women waste workers and authorities
- Identified women of the informal recycling sector who are willing to participate in Step 2
- Media engagement in the coming activities for coverage and visibility

Step 2: Training Needs Assessment

Timeline: 2-3 months prior to training

A structured Training Needs Assessment (TNA) should be conducted ideally two (2) to three (3) months prior to the implementation of the training and no later than one (1) month before the training. This timeframe allows for contextual adaptation and material customization for training participants.

The Training Needs Assessment should collect both quantitative and qualitative data. It must identify prevailing occupational hazards, income patterns, value chain positioning, local regulatory frameworks, literacy levels, and gender-specific constraints.

Below are indicative steps for carrying out the Training Needs Assessment:

- Preparation – Prepare data collection methodology including a questionnaire.
- Translation of the questionnaire from English to the local language(s) - ensure broader participation and more accurate data collection, also allowing participants to understand the survey questions in their language.
- Participant sampling – Identify the areas and/or organisations from where to source participants (e.g., members of waste pickers associations, street pickers, working on landfills/dumpsites, informal junk shop owners, door-to-door collectors, etc.).
- Field data collection team - A team of at least two persons to be trained for one day through an in-depth and interactive training, including coverage of research ethics. This is important because it equips them with the necessary skills and knowledge to accurately collect, record, and manage data, leading to more reliable and actionable insights.
- Pilot data collection - A dummy survey to be done, and recommended improvements discussed and changes to be made as needed.
- Logistics - All the logistics for field data collection are to be organized prior to the activity. This included the field team, supervision, local transport, and necessary allowances, e.g., lunch for the team.
- Implementation of the data collection – It involves the main data collection activities with attention to both the project needs and data efficiency.
- Data Ethics - Consent should be obtained from all participants through signed consent forms before administering the survey. This needs to be done to inform the participants about the survey/project, to assure them that the data collection team will safely and confidentially collect, store, and back up the collected data using appropriate applications, and to get their permission to ask them the questions. To ensure inclusivity for participants with low literacy levels, consent procedures should not rely solely on written signatures. In such cases, the consent form should be read aloud and explained in clear and simple language, and participants may provide oral consent or indicate agreement through an alternative method such as a thumbprint or mark.
- Data Analysis - Cleaning the survey data and providing a cleaned database with all responses, as well as a report explaining response coding, in Microsoft Excel or other formats.

Implementation experience shows that when Training Needs Assessments are rushed or omitted, training risks delivering generalized content that fails to resonate with participants' lived realities. By contrast, robust assessment enhances engagement and increases the likelihood of medium-term behavioural adoption.

Expected Outcomes

- Participant profile matrix
- Increased relevance and participant ownership

- Clear baseline for future evaluation
- Evidence-based prioritization of training needs
- Data and information for tailoring training content

Step 3: Identify the Local Trainers/Facilitators

Timeline: 5-7 weeks prior to training

An effective facilitation team ideally combines expertise in gender empowerment, waste management, occupational safety, and financial literacy, supported by a local mobilizer familiar with community dynamics.

Expected Outcomes

- Confirmed facilitation team.

Step 4: Training of Trainers (optional)

Timeline: 3-6 weeks prior to main training

The Training of Trainers (ToT) process ensures methodological consistency, contextual adaptation, and sustainability of the *Toolkit*. It is strongly recommended where external experts are involved or where facilitators are newly trained in participatory and gender-responsive methodologies.

The ToT could be conducted either online or in person and would require the involvement of competent experts to train local trainers (facilitators) during a 4-to 5-day workshop. Recording online training is recommended so that the local facilitators can access it after their training. For online recording, you need to secure consensus from international experts and local facilitators, as well as the terms of use.

The ToT should include a structured review of all *Toolkit* modules, including objectives, session flow, participatory exercises, and key messages. Competent experts should train local facilitators in facilitation techniques, conduct simulation exercises based on the *Toolkit's* modules, rehearse time management, and advise on how to moderate sensitive discussions, particularly those related to gender-based violence and discrimination.

This process also serves as a quality control mechanism. It allows local facilitators to internalize content, build confidence, and identify areas that require simplification or adjustment before implementation.

Expected Outcomes

- Increased facilitation confidence, knowledge, and methodological consistency
- Reduced dependence on international experts
- Stronger contextual adaptation of content
- Higher-quality participatory delivery

Step 5: Design the training

Timeline: 3-4 weeks prior to implementation

The design phase transforms the training needs assessment findings into a structured, context-specific training agenda. While the *Toolkit* provides a flexible, modular framework, the final configuration must reflect local realities, literacy levels, logistical constraints, and priority needs identified during assessment and stakeholder consultation.

This step requires setting the agenda of the workshop by selecting relevant modules from the *Toolkit*, determining the session sequence, allocating time per session, and ensuring that daily training hours maintain cognitive absorption and active participation. The design should incorporate recap sessions, reflection periods, and sufficient time for participatory exercises.

This process should be carried out collaboratively by the implementing organization and the local trainers who have participated in the Training of Trainers (ToT) programme. Drawing on the findings of the Training Needs Assessment and their knowledge of the local context, the local trainers play a key role in identifying priority topics, adapting the agenda to participants' needs, and proposing appropriate timing and facilitation approaches. Their involvement helps ensure that the training is relevant, culturally appropriate, and responsive to local realities.

Local facilitator roles must be clear for all sessions, and measurable learning objectives must be defined to support evaluation. Training workshops could be delivered through a co-facilitation approach, whereby one or two competent experts work alongside local facilitators who have participated in the Training of Trainers (ToT) programme. Throughout the preparation and delivery of the workshop, experienced facilitators provide mentoring and practical support to local facilitators, including guidance on facilitation techniques, time management, participant engagement, and adaptation of activities to the local context.

As local facilitators gain confidence and experience, they will progressively assume greater responsibility for leading sessions. This approach aims to strengthen local ownership and build the capacity of local facilitators to independently organize and deliver future training workshops without the need for external support.

Furthermore, facilitators have to adapt the relevant *Toolkit* sessions' activities and materials to the local context; this includes contextual translation of examples, terminology, and legislative references to ensure cultural and regulatory relevance. Translation of materials into the local language is required.

This step also includes identifying and securing the training location and venue well in advance of the training. While a minimum lead time of four weeks is generally recommended, longer preparation periods may be required depending on local procurement procedures, administrative requirements, and venue availability.

Expected Outcomes

- Context-specific, needs-based workshop structure
- Realistic and implementable daily schedule -draft workshop agenda in place

- Clear alignment between modules and intended impact
- Translation of materials
- Identification of the location and venue of the training

Step 6: Final Adaptation and Logistics

Timeline: 2–3 weeks prior to training

Approximately two to three weeks before implementation, materials are finalized and translated. Visual aids and participatory tools are prepared, and facilitators' responsibilities are confirmed. Logistical arrangements, including venue layout, seating configuration, and audio-visual requirements, must support interactive learning. Information on the appropriate venue and room setup is provided in Chapter 4 of the *Toolkit*. Consideration must also be given to childcare arrangements, accessibility for participants with disabilities, and scheduling aligned with women's work and caregiving responsibilities. These operational details significantly influence attendance and engagement.

At this stage, facilitators should have finalized the agenda, the materials and tools to be used, and secured their availability for the training. On their side, facilitators should rehearse activities, time management, and moderating sensitive discussions for the sessions they will lead during the workshop.

Expected Outcomes

- Finalized training agenda
- Venue and logistical confirmation
- Accessibility and childcare arrangements
- Training material packages
- Readiness of facilitators

Step 7: Test Training (optional)

Timeline: 2 weeks prior to full training

A structured pilot simulation is suggested to be conducted with four to five volunteer participants who are representative of the target group. This test training is not a symbolic rehearsal; it is a practical quality assurance mechanism.

Selected sessions should be delivered in full format, allowing facilitators to assess clarity of explanation, pacing, effectiveness of participatory tools, adequacy of visual materials, and appropriateness of language. Facilitators should observe comprehension levels, note where participants struggle, and evaluate whether exercises generate meaningful discussion.

A structured debrief session should follow the simulation. Facilitators should review timing, identify sections requiring simplification, and confirm logistical readiness. Adjustments made at this stage prevent implementation risks and reduce delivery inconsistencies.

Expected Outcomes

- Improved time management
- Enhanced clarity of facilitation methods
- Reduced risk of participant overload
- Increased confidence in delivery readiness

Step 8: Training Implementation

Timeline: Five-day modular workshop (indicative)

Training delivery should follow a modular and participatory structure based on a selection of sessions from the eight core Modules of the toolkit, as outlined in Chapter 5 of the *Toolkit*.

Training sessions should not exceed four (4) hours per day, as longer sessions reduce cognitive absorption and diminish participatory engagement. When content is compressed into intensive formats, participants frequently report feeling rushed and facilitators tend to prioritize lecture-style delivery over interaction.

Participatory time must be protected deliberately. Under time pressure, facilitators often shorten exercises first, despite their importance for behavioural adoption. Effective scheduling, therefore, prioritizes depth of engagement over breadth of coverage.

If needed, revise the agenda, including during the training implementation. The session should be adjusted after the first day of training, specifically on timing.

Each session should combine conceptual input with practical exercises, demonstrations, peer discussions, and reflection sessions.

Participatory components are not optional enhancements; they are central mechanisms for behavioural change. Role-play, sorting demonstrations, negotiation simulations, and small-group problem-solving exercises facilitate experiential learning and reinforce confidence.

Expected Outcomes

- Completed training
- Daily reflection summaries
- Increase awareness and capacities of participants
- Strengthened peer networks

Step 9: Daily Evaluation

Timeline: At the end of each training day

Daily evaluation should be conducted at the end of each training day and upon completion. These tools assess participant satisfaction, clarity of instruction, perceived relevance, and logistical adequacy. While immediate feedback does not measure behavioural change, it provides insight into delivery quality and areas for adjustment.

Expected Outcomes

- Enhanced quality assurance
- Improved future implementation design (lessons learnt and recommendations)
- Transparent reporting to stakeholders

Step 10: Medium-Term Impact Assessment

Timeline: six months after the training (indicative)

A structured follow-up should be conducted approximately six months after training. This will measure adoption of personal protective equipment, changes in injury frequency, improvements in sorting practices, savings behaviour, collective initiatives, negotiation confidence, and emotional resilience.

Robust monitoring systems enhance accountability and strengthen funding justification.

Expected Outcomes

- Verified behavioural change
- Evidence of medium-term impact
- Strengthened accountability to donors
- Data-informed toolkit updates (Lessons learnt and recommendations)

Step 11: Scale-Up and Institutionalization (optional)

Timeline: Initiated 6–12 months after the first implementation cycle

Scaling up the *Toolkit* implementation should build on the capacities and networks created during the initial training cycle. While evaluation and medium-term impact assessment provide valuable insights for improving future interventions, scale-up should extend beyond simply delivering additional training workshops. Instead, it should focus on empowering trained facilitators and participants to act as local champions and catalysts for change within their communities and organizations.

Through the Training of Trainers approach, local facilitators can progressively take ownership of future training activities, mentor new facilitators, and adapt the *Toolkit* to evolving local needs. Likewise, trained participants can share knowledge with peers, strengthen existing groups and cooperatives, initiate community-based activities, and advocate for improved recognition and working conditions. In this way, the *Toolkit* can support the emergence of multiple, interconnected centres of learning and leadership, enabling change to spread organically while maintaining quality, local ownership, and long-term sustainability. This phase builds on documented lessons learned from the first implementation, including the medium-term impact assessment, facilitator reflections, and participant feedback. Scaling up should be evidence-driven.

The scale-up strategy should include three interrelated dimensions: geographic expansion, institutional integration, and capacity consolidation.

Geographic expansion involves replicating the training for additional workers in the informal waste sector across more communities or municipalities, using trained local facilitators. Institutional integration focuses on embedding the *Toolkit* within waste pickers' associations and/or municipal training programmes, waste management strategies, cooperative development initiatives, or NGO programming cycles. Capacity consolidation refers to strengthening the local trainer pool through refresher Training of Trainers sessions, peer-learning networks, and standardized quality assurance mechanisms.

A formal scale-up plan should define target regions, resource requirements, partnership structures, and monitoring indicators. Funding diversification at this stage becomes critical.

Standardization must be balanced with contextual flexibility. While core modules and learning objectives of the Toolkit should remain consistent to preserve methodological integrity, examples, case studies, and delivery approaches should continue to reflect local realities.

Scaling up also presents an opportunity to strengthen advocacy. Aggregated evidence from multiple training cycles can be used to demonstrate measurable impact on occupational safety, income stabilization, leadership participation, and collective organization. This evidence can inform policy dialogue and strengthen recognition of women in the informal recycling sector.

Expected Outcomes

- Replication of training across additional geographies
- Increased number of trained women in the informal recycling sector
- Institutional embedding of the *Toolkit* within municipal or organizational programs
- Strengthened sustainability through diversified funding
- Improved policy recognition and advocacy leverage

Reference

Tsakona, M. C., Nitzsche, G., Garcés-Sánchez, G., Narayan, L., & Chikarmane, P. (2026). Awareness and Capacity-building for Women of the Informal Recycling Sector. Arendal: GRID-Arendal.