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Need assessment and capacity building of scavengers for sustainable solid waste management and resource recovery in Ibadan, Nigeria

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Third world cities have experienced a tremendous waste generating capacity as a result of decades of industrialisation, urbanization and economic prosperity. Scavengers are a form of informal workers in the waste management stream whose activities are pivotal in salvaging repairable, reusable, and rentable solid wastes from open dumpsites for recycling and reuse. Several studies have ascertained that, in spite of the economic potentials and latent entrepreneurship capacities of scavengers, scavenging practitioners are still facing serious social, economic, environmental and occupational hazards which are traceable to citizen's perception about scavengers and dearth of health awareness on the part of the scavengers. The study examines the needs' assessment of scavengers as agents of resource recovery and to improve their capacities through training, in order to achieve sustainability in the solid waste management in the 21st Century, using Ibadan as study setting. Data was collected using a mixed method of quasi experimental and qualitative design. Three phases of quasi experimental designed were adopted viz: pre-intervention, intervention and post intervention, having a control and experimental. The pre-intervention phase utilized a total of 200 questionnaires to elicit information from the scavengers on their needs'

assessment, while, total of 300 questionnaires were drawn to capture the perception of the public on scavenging, using systematic random sampling. Information gathered from both qualitative and quantitative methods were triangulated and findings were utilized to develop a training module for the study. Findings from the study reveal that there is an increase in the knowledge level of scavengers on the benefits and effects of adherence and non-adherence to personal and preventive measures on occupational and health hazards associated with scavenging. The paper equally reveals a reduction in the widespread public idea of scavengers as vagabond, nuisance and threats who always constitute menace to the society, but now being seeing as environmental agents and valued partners working towards achieving a sustainable waste management system in a sustainable human environment. The paper recommends that if governments of Third Word cities especially Nigeria can re-organize train and incorporate the scavengers and all other waste pickers into the standardization process, it will be more attractive to people even with high education, promote harmonious integrated waste management system and sustainability of recycling industries.

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