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WASTE PICKING AS A SOURCE OF LIVELIHOOD IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR: A CASE STUDY OF RICHMOND SANITARY LANDFILL SITE BULAWAYO METROPOLITAN

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ABSTRACT

The general experience with urban livelihoods shows that while it is true that an increasing gap does exist among the urban poor, there is an enormous potential for creating livelihoods for the urban poor in the informal sector through self-employment and job employment. The study examines one such employment strategy of waste picking is a source of livelihood at the Richmond sanitary landfill site in Bulawayo. In this regard, the study went deep into the way in which the waste pickers conduct their activities in terms of materials that are picked, how they are used and how some people end up obtaining a livelihood from what others have already discarded as waste. With the main driver of the study being to assess the effectiveness of waste picking as a source of livelihood the use of the survey method was employed to gather quantitative and qualitative data from a sample of the waste pickers as well as conducting interviews with council officials. The study revealed key issues which point to the fact that indeed waste picking is viable economic activity and thus recommendations have been made to relevant authorities so as to ensure that it is taken more seriously and given due recognition.