



## International and Multidisciplinary Symposium

# Social marketing and social entrepreneurship for behavioral and social change in waste management in Africa

## Call for papers

Department of Communication and Information Technology of The Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences of The University of Ebolowa (Cameroon)

and

The University of Félix Houphouët-Boigny (UFHB) of Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)

in collaboration with

the UNESCO Chair for Higher Education, Research, and Innovation in Responsible Global Management (Bern University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland), the UNESCO Chair in Interculturality, Good Governance and Sustainable Development (University of Bucharest, Romania) and The UNESCO Chair for the Training of Sustainable Development Professionals (University of Bordeaux Montaigne, France)<sup>1</sup>

**CONFERENCE VENUE:** Ebolowa (Cameroon)

**DATE:** 07th to 10th July 2026

**PURPOSE:** This international, interdisciplinary and intercultural gathering aims at bringing together researchers, lecturers, political and economic actors and African civil society organizations, to share experiences and reflections, in order to co-create innovative global models of responsible waste management adapted to the wide variety of African contexts; while actively involving all actors in the society, coordinated by the authorities of decentralized local entities, and developing models, methods and strategies for social entrepreneurship, as well as social marketing for behavioral change in waste management and for a more sustainable future.

<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.bfh.ch/en/research/research-areas/institut-marketing-and-global-management/unesco-chair/> and <https://unesco-chair.unibuc.ro/en/home/> and <https://www.u-bordeaux-montaigne.fr/en/university/university-unesco-chairs.html> for more information on these Chairs. The ideas and opinions expressed in this call for papers are those of the authors. They do not necessarily represent the views of UNESCO and do not commit the Organization

**MAIN OBJECTIVE:** Responsible waste management adapted to the wide variety of African contexts.

**SOLUTION APPROACH:** Develop social marketing models, methods and strategies based on social entrepreneurship.

**EXPECTED RESULTS:** Behavioural change in waste management for a more sustainable future.

## **CONTEXT AND PROBLEMATIC**

The African urban population is growing at an annual rate of 3.58%, the highest rate in the world, and according to estimates by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (it will increase from 1.276 billion (2018) to 2.5 billion (2050) (UNCEA, 2024). The evolution of consumption habits leads to an increasing waste production. In 2016, for example, Sub-Saharan Africa produced 174 million tons (Mt) (World Bank, 2018). According to estimates by the African Clean Cities Platform, waste production will reach 244 Mt by 2025. Some estimates predict that annual waste production in Sub-Saharan Africa will triple, from 174 MTs in 2016 to 516 MTs by 2050 (Assé-Wassa Sama & Bérenger, 2023). In most African countries, the collection rate is low, estimated at 55%; uncollected waste is dumped into the environment. In addition, the recycling rate remains low due to the lack of waste sorting and intermediate treatment, and their uncontrolled final disposal threatens the sanitation of cities and the health of populations (JICA, 2022).

The policies in place for sustainable waste management have an insufficient impact as compared to the increase in waste production and the resulting greenhouse gas emissions (Ngambi, 2015 and 2018; Assé-Wassa Sama & Bérenger, 2023) with consequences on both the environment and on the health of populations (Boudra, 2020). According to epidemiological data from the Ministry of Public Health of Cameroon, in 2019, hygiene-related diseases were the top 5 reasons for consultation and hospitalization in all regions of the country (MINSANTÉ, 2019). Similarly, the results of a study conducted in Ivory Coast shows that households dumping their solid waste in the street are more exposed to diarrhea and malaria, unlike those who would use the services of a pre-collection agent (Koné-Bodou et al 2019). This problem therefore represents an immense challenge for the continent. In the field of action, communication campaigns for development are often carried out by local authorities and the various stakeholders involved to encourage populations to adopt good practices in waste management, but the observation of the increasing waste in urban cities suggests that the behaviors suggested to populations are not actually practiced (Djadeu, 2024).

Alongside local authorities, several organizations (SMEs, micro-enterprises and civil society organizations) invested in social entrepreneurship and implemented various disparate and scattered actions to collect and transform recyclable waste into sources of wealth (Abossolo and Issepe Mawo, 2022; Bidoung, Fomethé, Yantio and Melo 2007; Djadeu, 2019; Mbiadjeu-Lawou and *al.*, 2020).

As for the populations, some express the desire to practice selective sorting of their household waste provided that they are clearly indicated how to do it and where to dispose of it.

Despite the efforts of governments and social entrepreneurs, responsible waste management in sub-Saharan Africa remains a major current challenge for decentralized local authorities (Arrey & Loumou Mondoleba, 2021; Bessala Ngoma, 2003).

To consider the effectiveness of responsible and sustainable household waste management, research agrees on the need for an effective and coordinated involvement of all stakeholders in the society (Deleuil, 2004; Djadeu, 2024; Mbiadjeu-Lawou, 2019; Ngambi, 2016; Rumpala, 1999;

Tarrisse-Vicard, Le Conte, Aznar, Antoni, Ferzli, & Gouet, 2013; Vaillancourt, Séguin, Maheu, & Cotnoir, 2000).

In this perspective, the solutions offered by the social marketing approach could be used to contribute to the transformation of our societies and behaviours in order to build a more fulfilling society for all (Djadeu and Coulibaly, 2024; Gallopel-Morvan and Crié, 2022). To trigger behavioural change and encourage the emergence of social entrepreneurship, a change of mindset is needed. To effectively accompany such an evolution, one of the key challenges is to adopt transformative learning approaches (Mezirow, 1981; Kitchenham, 2008) that can enhance changes in adult learners' frames of reference, leading to changes in perception and practice.

The ambition of this scientific gathering is to bring together researchers, political and economic actors and African civil society organizations to share experiences and reflections in order to propose a model of responsible global waste management, adapted to the African context involving all stakeholders in society coordinated by decentralized local authorities. In other words, it is about creating a framework for collaborative and partnership research promoting a dynamic of participation of all for the benefit of Africa's development.

This symposium is deliberately intended to be international and multidisciplinary: communication sciences, political sciences, economics and management sciences, sociology, anthropology, psychology, political and social history, geography, (applied) linguistics, sociolinguistics, semiotics, letters/literature, arts and theatre, (socio)didactics of languages and cultures, educational sciences, administrative sciences, information systems, law, etc.

More specifically, it aims to provide concrete answers to the following questions:

- Who are the actors involved in waste management in Africa? What are their operating methods and what relationships do they have with each other? What are the gender issues to be considered when analyzing stakeholders in the waste management sector?
- How can we capitalize on these private initiatives, pre-collectors and recyclers to improve waste management in local authorities?
- How can we achieve co-construction and create a social commitment to sustainable waste management?
- How can we build social and behavioral trust in waste management in Africa?
- How can we explain the persistence of trash on city streets?
- How is this problem posed? How can it be solved?
- What skills do sustainable development practitioners need to provide effective awareness-raising on waste management and transformative training on social entrepreneurship? How can they be trained by higher education institutions to acquire these skills?
- How are social marketing campaigns deployed for communication for social and behavioral changes in household waste management in Africa? To what extent are their objectives achieved? How can we explain the persistence of trash on city streets? What must be done (differently)?

The main objectives of this international and multidisciplinary conference are:

- To take stock of waste management strategies and methods, their potential and their limits.
- To take stock and profile individuals and legal entities (citizens, entrepreneurs, businesses, local authorities) involved in communication and waste management in Africa. In

particular, through social entrepreneurship, social marketing and communication for behavior change.

- To share experiences of good practices, models, methods and practices in communication and waste management in Africa.
- To propose a modeling of the social and behavioral ecosystem favorable to sustainable waste management in African cities, to change in communication and waste management in Africa.
- To develop approaches for training sustainable development professionals to enable them to initiate inclusive, gender-sensitive initiatives in waste management and to propose transformative training for responsible citizenship and social entrepreneurship in the waste management sector.

Contributions can be part of the following areas of reflection:

### **Axis 1: The contributions, issues and challenges of social entrepreneurs involved in waste management.**

Social entrepreneurship in waste management is practiced in at least three forms: pre-collection, sorting and recycling of household waste. The actors in these respective sectors contribute to the circular economy of waste (Ngambi, 2018; Mbiadjeu-Lawou and al., 2023) and to fighting global warming in their own ways. However, in addition to being exposed to certain diseases linked to unsanitary conditions, the economic profitability and social security of the latter is not always guaranteed. The contributors to this axis would have to answer the questions: what forms of social entrepreneurship in the waste management sector exist in a given local authority? How do they contribute through their activities to ecological waste management? How do they make their activities profitable for their well-being and social advancement? What are their challenges in this perspective? How public policies could contribute to promoting social entrepreneurship in this sector to encourage it.

### **Axis 02: Relationships between waste management stakeholders and strategies for accessibility of suggested behaviors**

From households to waste disposal points, several actors intervene in the waste chain and their respective implications would be complementary in the perspective of ecological management of household waste (Ngambi, 2018; Mbiadjeu-Lawou et al., 2023; Mbiadjeu-Lawou, 2019) if they were coordinated for this purpose (Djadeu, 2024). In reality, if some decentralized local authorities work with social entrepreneurs in this sector to offer populations sufficiently accessible behaviors, others are deployed in a dispersed manner, thus reducing the chances of accessibility of the suggested behaviors and consequently their adoption by the populations.

The contributions of this axis could therefore answer the questions who are the actors involved in the waste management chain with decentralized local authorities? What types of relationships do they have with each other? How do these relationships contribute to guiding populations on good practices for managing their waste?

### **Axis 03: Behaviors promoted by African decentralized local authorities as part of educating their populations on waste management**

In order to fight against unsanitary conditions in African cities, awareness campaigns are conducted to educate populations. Through these campaigns, good practices in managing their household waste are suggested to them. Only certain behaviors are difficult to practice due to the relatively

high cost (physical or psychological effort) that they could generate, or due to the unavailability of logistics likely to make the behavior more accessible to the targets. The contributions of this axis could therefore analyze awareness campaigns on household waste management in order to identify the behaviors promoted and to question their relevance and feasibility in relation to the socio-economic situation of the populations concerned.

**Axis 04: Strategies for accessibility of behaviors proposed by stakeholders**

To better analyze the household waste management chain and identify the limits and weaknesses that can be corrected. The contributions of this axis will involve questioning the various practical and logistical arrangements implemented by decentralized local authorities and the actors involved to facilitate households' access to good practices in terms of waste management.

**Axis 05: Obstacles and barriers for populations to adopt the behaviors recommended to them by the decentralized local authorities regarding responsible waste management**

The incivility of populations is often presented as one of the main causes of insalubrity in Africa (Lynda Louifi, 2023; Nogo Edongo & Tchuikoua, 2018; Mamadou Sene, 2019). This line of reflection aims to question the reasons for what is called the incivility of populations in household waste management. Based on the survey of populations and households, the contributions will therefore have to answer the central question: why do populations not adopt good practices in terms of managing their household waste? What are the obstacles and barriers to practicing the behaviors recommended to them by their respective decentralized local authorities?

**Axis 06: All other perspectives related to the theme of this symposium.**

**WORKSHOPS AND RESTITUTION WORKSHOP** for the modeling of an efficient waste management system in Africa

In addition to the symposium, workshop sessions will be provided for participants, and a restitution workshop will be held on the last day of the conference. It will bring together decentralized local authorities, and the various stakeholders involved in waste management to share experiences through panels and a session dedicated to the validation of an efficient model for responsible waste management in Africa.

**FORMAT OF EXPECTED ABSTRACTS**

**Please:**

- Indicate the name, first name, institution of attachment and email(s);
- Place the abstract under a specific thematic axis;
- Write a summary of 3000 to 4000 characters, including spaces;
- Present the problem related to the announced title, as well as the scientific and conceptual anchoring in which you are situated;
- Present the corpus (in the case of an empirical study: field of study; linguistic corpus, literary, case study, etc.), the methodology adopted (collection and analysis) and the argument or the main guiding ideas and their articulation (in the case of a substantive communication);
- Conclude on the main stages of the contribution;

- Put, after the summary, a list of 5 keywords maximum;
- Close with a short indicative bibliography.

Authors are invited to submit their abstracts and short biographies via the link <https://easychair.org/conferences?conf=mcs2cgda>

Please consult the conference website for more information. <https://www.mcs2-gda.com/>

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### **INDICATIVE CALENDAR**

- Launch of call of proposal: April 30th, 2025
- Date of submission of abstracts: June 30th, 2025
- Notification to authors: July 30th, 2025
- Sending of the complete text / first version: January 31st, 2026
- Notification of correction to authors: March 01st, 2026
- Return of the text revised by the authors (if necessary) for the pre-act which will be distributed During the conference: March 30th, 2026
- Conference planned: July 07th to 10th, 2026
- Sending of the final texts for the book on waste management in Africa: September 01st, 2026
- Publications of the book: December 15th, 2026

### **CONTRIBUTION**

- Teacher-researcher and researcher: 100 euros; 50,000 CFA francs
- Professional: 100 euros; 50,000 CFA francs
- PhD student: 50 euros; 30,000 CFA francs
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