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EUROPE/SPAIN - An army of women and children who collect garbage to earn a living

Madrid (Agenzia Fides) - About 15 million people live and work all over the world collecting and recycling waste. Among these, the most vulnerable are women and children. However, this activity begins to be seen as a positive contribution as it brings cost savings to municipalities and contributes to the cleanliness of the city where there is no budget for this activity. Furthermore, the people involved begin to organize themselves and are beginning to convince themselves that their work among garbage is a job just like any other job, which allows them to earn a living. They collect the garbage and recycle it.
To cope with the phenomenon, the Spanish Catholic NGO Manos Unidas is pursuing projects to combat poverty, inequality and injustice in Coban (Guatemala), Phnom Penh (Cambodia) and Akouedo (Cote d' Ivoire). In Coban, where there is the greatest poverty rate, the Spanish NGO is working with the Asociación Comunidad Esperanza, to expand the Center for Integral Formation Ciudad de la Esperanza, which offers children and young people, mostly indigenous people, the ability to have access to education, as well as attending professional training workshops. In Akouedo, a village suburb of Abidjan, there is the main center for waste collection. In this inhospitable place thousands of working children between 5 and 15 years are exposed to poverty, AIDS, abuse and prostitution. The members of the communities in the area have obtained land and built a center where 89 children are cared for.
The economic growth that Phnom Penh is experiencing is widening the gap between rich and poor, and thousands of families have been forcibly evicted and expelled toward the peri-urban areas. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 04/04/2014)

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