

Experiences with Solid Waste Fee in Essen and Fortaleza

Important & transferable lessons



A workshop was organised to discuss the importance of the implementation of a solid waste fee. Essen (Germany) presented how the municipality is financing solid waste recollection with the active participation of citizens and shared its experience with Fortaleza (Brazil).



State Waste Management Act of North Rhine-Westphalia

The bodies responsible for waste disposal formulate a "**Waste Management Concept**" that provides a **strategic 5-years-plan** (includes overview of waste disposable, collection recyclables, recycling, legal framework, etc.). Essen has to implement corresponding measures and meet the targets stated in the document, that are based on the forecast volume development of waste and recyclable.



The exchange of best practices between Essen and Fortaleza is key to develop and improve solid waste recollection policies and zero waste initiatives. In this regard, IURC Latin America facilitated workshops and discussions between both cities, that allowed to draw the following conclusions:

1

Even though the two cities have very different approaches to waste collection and solid waste service fees, it cannot be said that one approach is better than the other.

2

Essen can learn more from Fortaleza about how to reach the poorer sections of the population and how to raise awareness about the importance of solid waste collection fees.

3

Latin American cities can incorporate actions and concepts from European cities and adapt them to their local contexts.

4

Both cities have a common interest in raising citizens' awareness



LESSONS LEARNED FROM ESSEN

Essen introduced waste fees in 1969. These are regularly monitored and adjusted. The municipality charges a **flat fee for municipal services** (garbage collection, bulky waste collection, recycling center, etc.) and a **special fee for additional services**. Illegal disposal of waste is also considered in the fee calculation, enabling citizens to consider the impact of **individual behaviour** on the community.

To achieve general acceptance of the waste tax amongst citizens, Essen views as imperative to be **transparent** and share the information about its calculation to every resident, that can consult the information online.

Citizen's involvement in Essen

- 1 Projects in kindergartens and schools
- 2 Annual clean-up campaign "SauberZauber" Involvement of the long-term unemployed in the cleaning of public spaces.
- 3 Intensive public relations work via the press and political committees to reach all levels of the population
- 4 Encourage the development of private, voluntary initiatives such as WASTEWALK e.V., where citizens join forces to voluntarily clean their district.



5 Recommendations from Essen

- 1 **Transparent** presentation of fee calculation, so that it is open and comprehensible for the citizens.
- 2 **Environmental education** must start at kindergartens and schools.
- 3 Reach all population to **raise awareness**.
- 4 **Involve stakeholders and honorary institutions**.
- 5 The goals of the **"Waste Management Concept"** (the 5-years-plan) should be achieved, consolidated and continuously updated.



In cooperation with Fortaleza, possibilities are being discussed for involving citizens in this process, thus achieving a high level of acceptance. Both cities agree that they should raise awareness about the urgency to reduce waste production and therefore to reduce collection fees.



LESSONS LEARNED FROM FORTALEZA

The management of urban solid waste is one of the **greatest challenges** for large Brazilian cities. Fortaleza, a city with a population of 2.7 million people, process 130 thousand tons of waste per month, approximately.

Solid Waste Service fees have become mandatory at the municipal level by mandate of **Brazil's Federal Government in 2022**. In this context, Fortaleza is currently defining the principles and mechanisms of the fee policy. Therefore, Fortaleza has the opportunity to become a **reference** in waste management for other Latin-American cities.

The city is developing **innovative programmes** to revolutionise the **selective recollection of waste** and the cleaning of the city, such as the implementation of **ecopoints**, changes in the legislation, monitoring and **awareness campaign**. However, solid waste management is still a challenge in the city.

Fortaleza Cidade Limpa

(Clean City Fortaleza)

Initiative to detail the fee policy and all actions and programmes to be developed. Includes:

- 1 Implementation of innovative infrastructure for solid waste management (examples illustrated in the image below).
- 2 Engage citizens in selective collection practices.
- 3 Social inclusion of collectors and sustainability agents.
- 4 Environmental actions.

With the programme, Fortaleza expects to reach a 50% recycling rate of dry waste in less than 8 years, becoming a reference in recycling in Brazil and Latin America.



Source: Prefeitura Municipal de Fortaleza



5 Recommendations from Fortaleza

- 1 Solid Waste Service fees should be linked to programmes to change **citizens' behaviours**: engagement initiatives, innovative and technological infrastructure, income generation and **social inclusion mechanisms**, as well as environmental aspects.
- 2 **Environmental education** must be continuous and start at school.
- 3 Involve all **stakeholders** of the sector in decision-making.
- 4 Ensure **legal security**, defined by laws or decrees, involving all the powers of public management.
- 5 Agencies responsible for the solid waste policy should be aligned with **technology and innovation** development agencies, promoting pilot projects and initiatives.

