

CASE STUDY REPORT BELO HORIZONTE - MINAS GERAIS BRAZIL



City	Belém, Pará, Brazil
Organization	Instituto Nenuca de Desenvolvimento Sustentável - INSEA
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Introduction and Methodology

SYSTEMIQ developed a survey with the aim of evaluating the subsistence income of recyclable material collectors and also identifying the income capable of satisfying the basic needs for a dignified life.

The purpose of this report is to present the survey carried out in the city of Belo Horizonte/MG, conducted by the Nenuca Institute for Sustainable Development – INSEA. To gather information, the INSEA technical team relied on secondary data (using reliable sources) and primary data (structured interviews based on a questionnaire made available by SYSTEMIQ).

According to the latest census (2022), Belo Horizonte/MG has a population of 2,315,560 people, a population density of 6,988.18 inhabitants per square kilometer; Average monthly salary of formal workers [2022]: 3.4 minimum wages; Percentage of the population with nominal monthly per capita income of up to 1/2 minimum wage [2010]: 27.8%; Municipal Human Development Index (IDHM) [2010]: 0.810.¹

According to SNIS/Ministry of Cities (2020), 96% of the urban population of Belo Horizonte/MG is served by household waste collection and 387,719 people are served by selective waste collection. The municipality had 6 waste picker organizations and 202 members.²

To collect primary data, the team initially identified 4 waste picker organizations in different working conditions for a more diverse understanding of reality, 2 in more structured conditions (equipped warehouses, providing better working conditions) and 2 in more precarious conditions (without inadequate work equipment and structures). Contacts were then made with the leaders of these organizations to present the research objectives. After expressing interest in participating in the study, the technical team interviewed 13 women and 6 men in person and 1 person did not want to be identified, totaling 20 waste pickers who work in 4 associations and cooperatives in Belo Horizonte/MG.

The survey also covered another 20 independent workers. In this case, the sample size considered collectors who trade directly with collector organizations and “scrap iron and intermediary” companies. After presenting the objectives, all people agreed to participate in the research. 18 were interviewed men and 2 women. The interviews took place in person at their workplaces. In total, 40 workers were interviewed, 20 associates/cooperators and 20 independent workers, in the city of Belo Horizonte/MG between the months of June and July/2024.

¹ Source: Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics <https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/mg/belo-horizonte/panorama> accessed on 07/15/2024

² Source: Platform on basic sanitation in Brazilian municipalities.

<https://infosanbas.org.br/municipio/belo-horizonte-mg/#Manejo-de-res%C3%ADduos-s%C3%B3lidos> accessed on 07/15/2024

In order to qualify the study, the technical team interviewed two self-employed workers to compare information about decent income. A woman who works as a domestic worker and a man who works as a bricklayer participated in the research and their data will be presented in topic B, which deals with Subsistence Income.

A – Establishing a baseline

- Collectors who have been working in the collection area for approximately 51 years (i.e., they started working in 1973) and others who started in 2024.
- Reasons that led these people to work with waste: lack of job opportunities; drug use; family problems taking several of the interviewees to the streets and the fact that as children they needed to work to help support the family. In addition to autonomy regarding working hours.
- The main sources of waste collection: selective collection, in commerce, companies and homes, in the specific case of associated/cooperative interviewees. Regarding the group of interviewees who are not members and/or cooperated, the vast majority of the material originates from the streets, homes and businesses.
- Of the total number of interviewees, 37 reported having scavenging as their only income activity and only 03 reported having another activity.
- The daily working hours of waste pickers range from 6 to 18 hours, with these hours being distributed between the collection of recyclable materials, separation and sale. Some interviewees, associates and/or cooperative members reported that in addition to the work steps described previously, they carry out others, such as: organizing the work space, loading trucks, among others.
- Of the 40 interviewees, 26 reported that they have access to their own vehicles or those belonging to the association/cooperative. The vehicles are human-powered carts, animal-powered carts, and trucks.
- 03 (three) collectors of recyclable materials reported having obligations/debts with buyers of recyclable waste.
- The main reasons given by collectors for not increasing earnings are: lack of vehicles, appropriate equipment, precarious infrastructure, waste heavily contaminated with waste, little residue and the low price paid by groomers /intermediaries.
- 23 collectors reported having faced food insecurity in the last 12 months and 25 reported not having safe housing.

B - Subsistence Income Estimate

B1 – Research on Healthy Diets

According to the Inter-Union Department of Statistics and Socioeconomic Studies - DIEESE (2024), recent studies showed that the costs of the basic food basket in the city of Belo Horizonte/MG suffered a monthly variation of (0.03%) and in the last 12 months of 6.54 %.

**Pesquisa Nacional da Cesta Básica de Alimentos
Custo e variação da cesta básica em 17 capitais
Brasil – abril de 2024**

Capital	Valor da cesta	Variação mensal (%)	Porcentagem do Salário Mínimo Líquido	Tempo de trabalho	Variação no ano (%)	Variação em 12 meses (%)
São Paulo	822,84	1,18	63,00	128h12m	8,12	3,54
Rio de Janeiro	801,15	-1,37	61,34	124h50m	8,47	6,71
Florianópolis	781,53	-1,22	59,84	121h46m	3,04	1,58
Porto Alegre	775,63	-0,23	59,39	120h51m	1,19	-1,01
Campo Grande	732,75	0,37	56,10	114h10m	5,03	-0,68
Brasília	727,76	-2,66	55,72	113h23m	4,15	1,49
Vitória	726,82	-0,35	55,65	113h14m	5,51	3,26
Curitiba	726,64	-0,20	55,63	113h13m	4,22	4,70
Fortaleza	714,68	7,76	54,72	111h21m	13,37	6,70
Belo Horizonte	712,70	0,03	54,57	111h02m	8,60	6,54
Goiânia	701,01	-0,36	53,67	109h13m	4,73	-0,56
Belém	681,45	2,09	52,17	106h10m	5,58	3,13
Salvador	640,12	3,22	49,01	99h44m	14,14	9,24
Natal	632,23	4,44	48,41	98h31m	13,70	4,34
Recife	617,28	4,24	47,26	96h11m	14,72	6,01
João Pessoa	614,75	5,40	47,07	95h47m	13,36	5,01
Aracaju	582,11	4,84	44,57	90h42m	12,54	5,09

Fonte: DIEESE

The table shows that the value of the basic food basket in Belo Horizonte/MG is R\$712.70, equivalent to 54.57% of the national minimum wage.

Despite this, eating outside the home has become more expensive, as a meal (prepared dish) in the central region of Belo Horizonte, where most of the collectors interviewed spend most of their time, costs an average of R\$25.00 reais. According to the Anker methodology , it is advisable to withdraw 30% of the expected profit from the sale of ready-to-eat food. **The resulting value is R\$17.50.**

When asked about the cost of food, the collectors reported an expense that varied between 120.00 and R\$4,000.00 reais per month and the expenses of the other 2 workers (cleaner and bricklayer) varied between 400.00 and 800.00 per month. month.

Eight (08) independent collectors reported having a minor expense on food as they frequent popular restaurants daily. It is a municipal public policy managed by the City of Belo Horizonte/MG. In addition to adequate food, with nutritional monitoring, meals are provided to these workers free of charge.

B2 - Decent Housing Survey

Property prices in Belo Horizonte/MG vary in value. The collectors who participated in the research live in peripheral neighborhoods or in municipalities bordering the capital, namely: Barreiro, Serrano, Jaqueline, Jardim Leblon (Belo Horizonte), Morro Alto (Vespasiano), Veneza (Ribeirão das Neves).

The average rental price in these locations for a two-bedroom apartment measuring 70 m² in these regions, according to real estate websites, varies between 1,600.00 and 2,500.00 reais per month. It is important to highlight that 19 of the independent collectors are homeless and without housing.

B3 – Healthcare Costs

The collectors interviewed reported that they use the SUS – Unified Health System, which covers a set of individual, family and collective health actions, through Primary Care, up to organ transplantation, guaranteeing full, universal and free access for the entire population. country's population. Therefore, any expenses with medicines are not significant as the SUS, in addition to the medical service, also provides free medicines to users.

B4 – Education Costs

According to the collectors interviewed, there is no cost for education, however, expenses for children's education are not significant because the Brazilian education system, accessed by the interviewees, is free and provides uniforms and basic school materials annually.

B5 – Costs of decent work

To detail the costs of decent work, INSEA relied on price research recently carried out with the main safety equipment used by collectors' associations and cooperatives. The following table shows the unit cost of gloves for collecting and sorting recyclable materials, caps, pants, shirts and boots.

PPE Kit Price - Average price				
Qty.	Item	Value	Duration	Monthly value
1	Pair of collection and sorting gloves	R\$ 9.00	15 days	R\$ 18.00
1	Flat cap	R\$ 13.94	semi-annual	R\$ 2.32
1	Denim pants	R\$ 66.90	quarterly	R\$ 22.30
1	Short sleeve knit shirt	R\$ 29.77	bimonthly	R\$ 14.89
1	Long sleeve knit shirt	R\$ 34.90	quarterly	R\$ 11.63
1	Pair of boots	R\$ 99.99	semi-annual	R\$ 16.67
	Average kit value	R\$ 254.50		R\$ 85.81

INSEA survey, February/March 2024.

Another cost for decent work is transportation. Local bus ticket prices are set by municipal governments. According to the news page Neon.com.br (2024), the average price of a bus

fare in the capital of **Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte**, is R\$4.50, that is, the worker spends an average of R\$9, 00 daily commute from your home to your workplace.³

B6 – Savings

Savings are estimated at 10% of final living income.

C – Compiling Reference Income

The lowest income found in the survey carried out among collectors in Belo Horizonte/MG is R\$480.00, while the highest income is R\$6,000.00 reais per month. The value of the national minimum wage is R\$1,412.00, in 2024. According to the list of occupations and salaries published on the Salario.com.br website based on official data from Novo CAGED, recyclable materials collectors in the state of Minas Gerais earns an average of R\$1,501.94 for a 43-hour⁴work week .

The average monthly income of the cleaning lady who participated in the research is R\$1,800.00 per month and the bricklayer R\$3,000.00, in the city of Belo Horizonte/MG.

Rural workers earn an average of R\$1,664.32/month in the State of Minas Gerais⁵.

Civil construction workers earn an average of R\$4,025.83/month in the city of Belo Horizonte⁶.

Observations and lessons learned

Collectors of recyclable materials, essential workers in the recycling chain, perform their functions both in large urban centers and in small and medium-sized municipalities, collecting waste separated at the source or disposed of for conventional collection, without any type of separation.

The guarantee of the necessary subsistence income for these professionals cannot come from a single source, the sale of recyclable materials, as they work on several work fronts, namely: waste collection, separation, environmentally correct disposal, environmental education, among others. others.

Waste picker organizations, in addition to all the services mentioned, also generate work and income for a population excluded from the formal job market. For all these reasons, the

³ Source:

<https://neon.com.br/aprenda/financas-pessoais/quanto-custa-a-passagem-de-onibus/#Quanto-custa-a-passagem-de-onibus-nas-capitais-br-asileiras> – Access on July 14, 2024.

⁴<https://www.salario.com.br/profissao/catador-de-material-reciclavel-cbo-519205/mg/>

⁵ <https://www.salario.com.br/profissao/trabalhador-rural-cbo-623110/mg/> accessed on 07/27/2024

⁶ <https://www.salario.com.br/profissao/construtor-civil-cbo-710205/belo-horizonte-mg/> accessed on 07/27/2024

composition of these workers' income should be the sum of the remuneration for these various services provided.

Payment for services provided for collecting and sorting recyclable materials by Municipal Governments and payment for the correct disposal of packaging by the private sector can significantly change the working and living conditions of these workers.