

Socio-environmental entrepreneurship and the provision of critical services in informal settlements

This paper contributes to the understanding of processes by which small-scale entrepreneurs who provide household waste collection in informal settlements succeed in formalized co-production of such services. The paper draws on the social and solidarity economy and social and environmental entrepreneurship theoretical frameworks, which offer complementary understandings of diverse strategies to tackle everyday challenges. Two questions are addressed: How do informal waste collection initiatives get established, succeed and grow? What are the implications of this transition for the entrepreneurs themselves, the communities, the environmental governance system and the scholarship? A case study is presented, based on three waste picker entrepreneurs in Kisumu, Kenya, who have consolidated and expanded their operations in informal settlements but also extended social and environmental activities into formal settlements. The paper demonstrates how initiatives, born as community-based organizations, become successful social micro-enterprises, driven by a desire to address socioenvironmental challenges in their neighbourhoods.