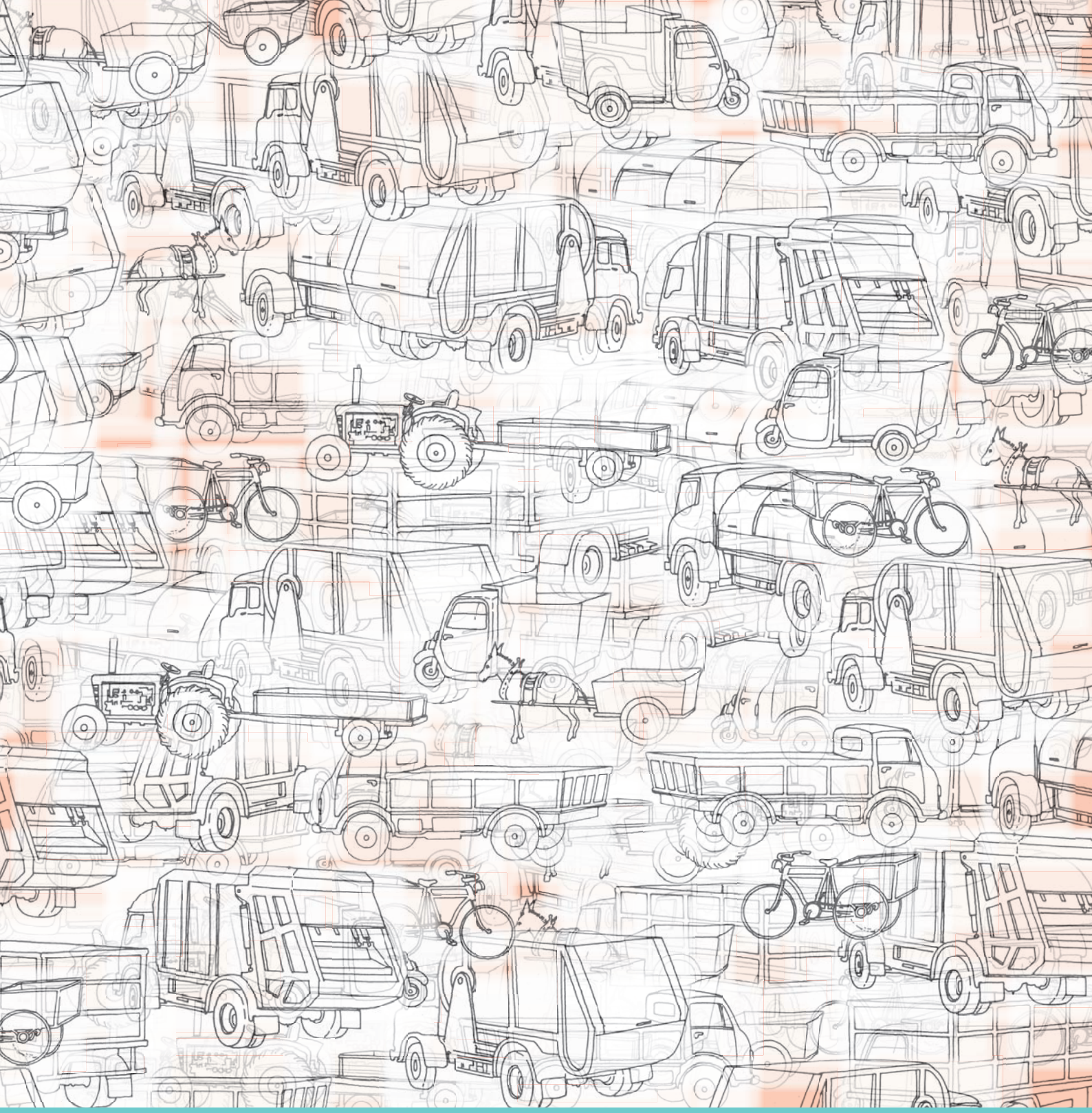

Collection of Municipal Solid Waste in Developing Countries

UN-HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

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United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)
P.O. Box 30030, Nairobi 00100, Kenya
Tel +254 20 762 3120
Fax +254 20 762 3477
www.unhabitat.org

Authors: Manus Coffey & Adrian Coad
Design and layout: Daniel Vilnersson
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FOREWORD

One of the most intractable problems for local authorities in urban centres is the management of solid waste. Efficient waste management requires considerable political commitment, sufficient budgetary allocations, and a dedicated work force. Deficiencies in management of solid waste are most visible in cities and towns of developing countries, with many areas within these urban centres receiving little or no attention at all. Rapid urbanisation, low levels of revenue collection and competing needs have combined over recent decades to place an inordinate strain on the capacity of many local authorities to deliver efficient waste management services, steadily reducing their areas of service coverage and diminishing the quality of services offered. Consequently, efforts by many local authorities to manage urban solid waste have failed to keep pace with demand. The insidious social and health impact of this neglect is greatest among the poor, particularly those living in informal settlements.

Inappropriate technological choices, particularly in small and medium sized towns, have led to unaffordable costs, bringing the entire solid waste management process to a halt. This publication is UN-HABITAT's response

Lessons drawn from various cities indicate that sustainable waste collection systems for towns and cities in the developing world can only be achieved through the adoption of appropriate technological options designed to meet varying needs. Such equipment must be affordable and easy to operate and maintain, with ready availability of spare parts on the local markets. Sophisticated imported equipment, mostly procured by towns and cities through donor support, has often not lasted long, quickly becoming moribund and creating equipment graveyards at the local authority depots.

This publication will be a valuable tool for policy makers, municipal engineers, independent service providers, planners, consultants, researchers and other professionals engaged in designing solid waste management systems in the towns and cities of the developing world. It is our hope that the principle of technological choice and design demonstrated in this publication will guide solid waste collection, handling and disposal, thereby inspiring many local authorities to commit themselves afresh to creating a waste free environment that will enhance the quality of life for their residents. It should serve as a useful starting point in raising awareness about the potential social