

SURVEY REPORT

Towards Cleaner Communities: Strengthening Waste Management at the Grassroots in Nigeria

PROMOTING EFFECTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT

An Outcome of a waste management survey carried-out by the Initiative for Human Rights and Gender Empowerment on June 21st in Makurdi, Benue State.

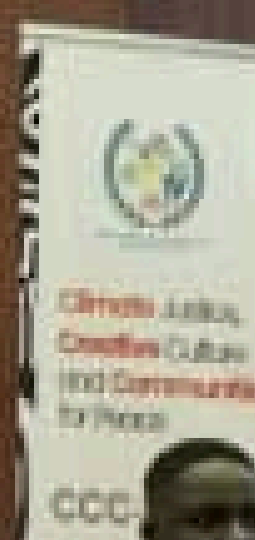
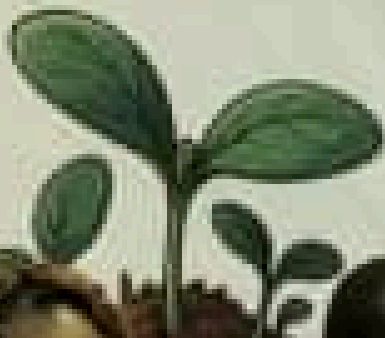
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1. Executive Summary

Nigeria is grappling with a mounting waste management crisis fueled by rapid urbanization, weak infrastructure, and low public awareness. Findings from a recent grassroots survey titled “Promoting Effective Waste Management” reveal gaps in policy implementation, citizen engagement, and institutional coordination. This brief highlights these challenges and proposes a comprehensive approach anchored in community engagement, education, and localized solutions to achieve cleaner and more sustainable environments.



Dumpsite or Clogged Drainage

2. Waste as a Development Challenge

Waste management is not merely a sanitation issue—it is central to public health, environmental sustainability, climate resilience, and economic development. In Nigeria, over 32 million tonnes of solid waste are generated annually, yet less than 30% is formally collected. The result: illegal dumping, open burning, pollution, and disease outbreaks.

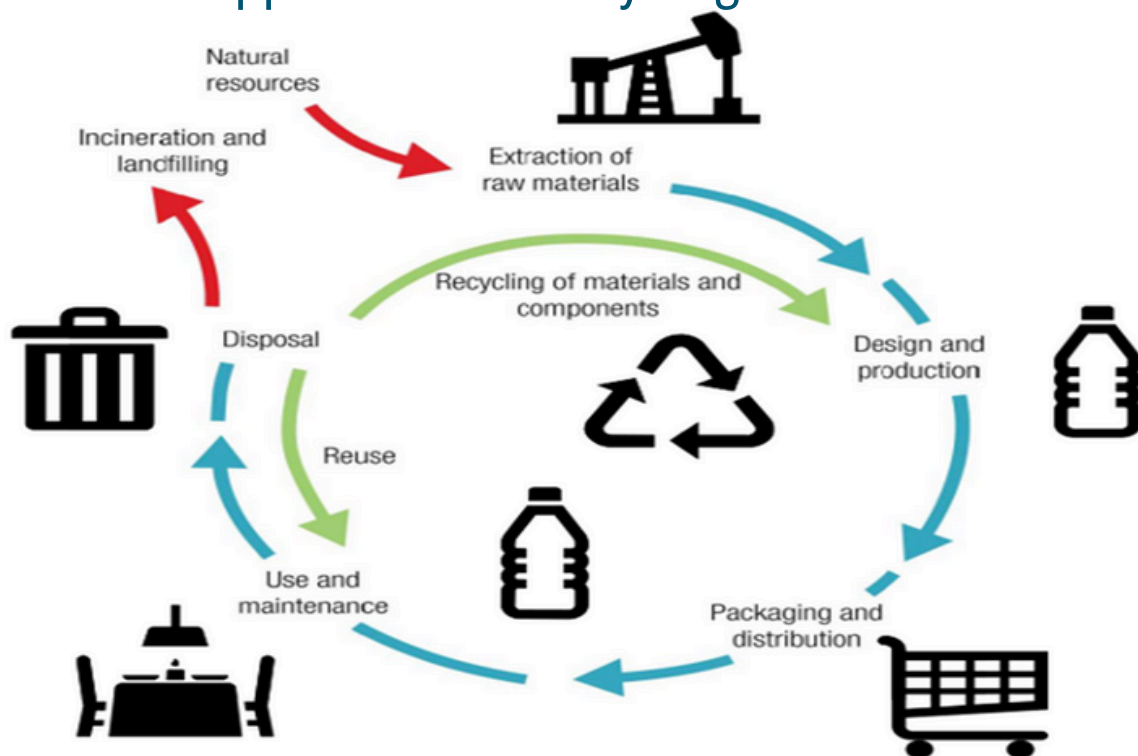
Poor waste practices contribute to:

Urban flooding from clogged drainages

Air and water pollution

Public health risks, especially in low-income communities

Missed economic opportunities in recycling and resource recovery



Waste Lifecycle or Pollution Impact, UNEP

3. Methodology of the Community Survey

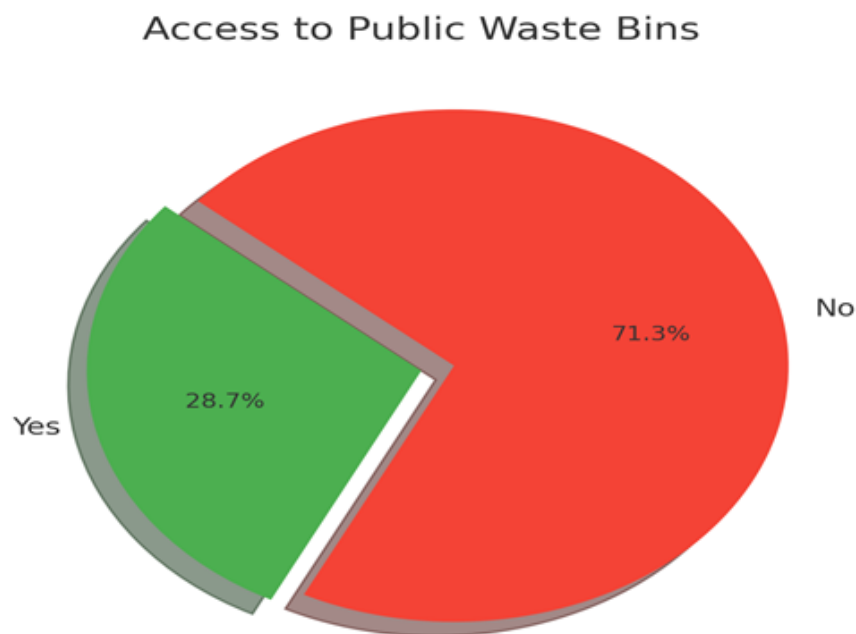
This brief draws on a mixed-method survey titled “Promoting Effective Waste Management,” conducted both online and offline across Nigerian communities.

- Sample Size: 52+ participants
- Demographics: All age groups
- Methods: Google Forms, focus group discussions, informal interviews
- Focus Areas: Waste disposal practices, government responsiveness, awareness, and attitudes

4. Key Findings from the Field

a) Poor Access to Waste Infrastructure

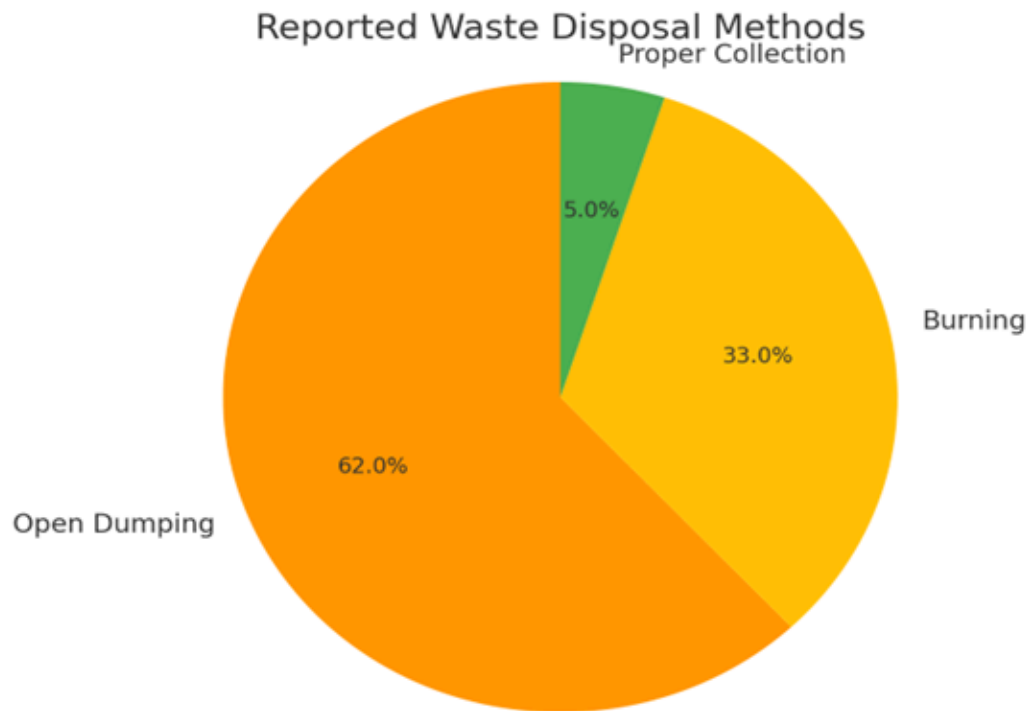
Over 71.3% of respondents reported no access to public waste bins, especially in residential areas and markets.



b) Unsafe Disposal Practices Dominate

Most common methods include:

- Open dumping – 62%
- Burning – 33%
- Formal collection – only 5%

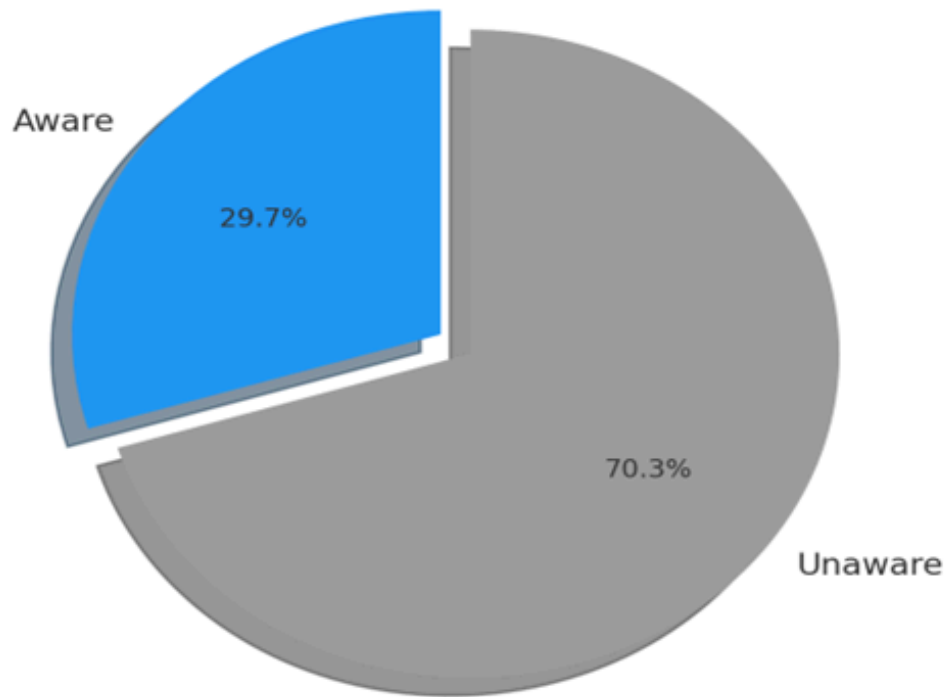


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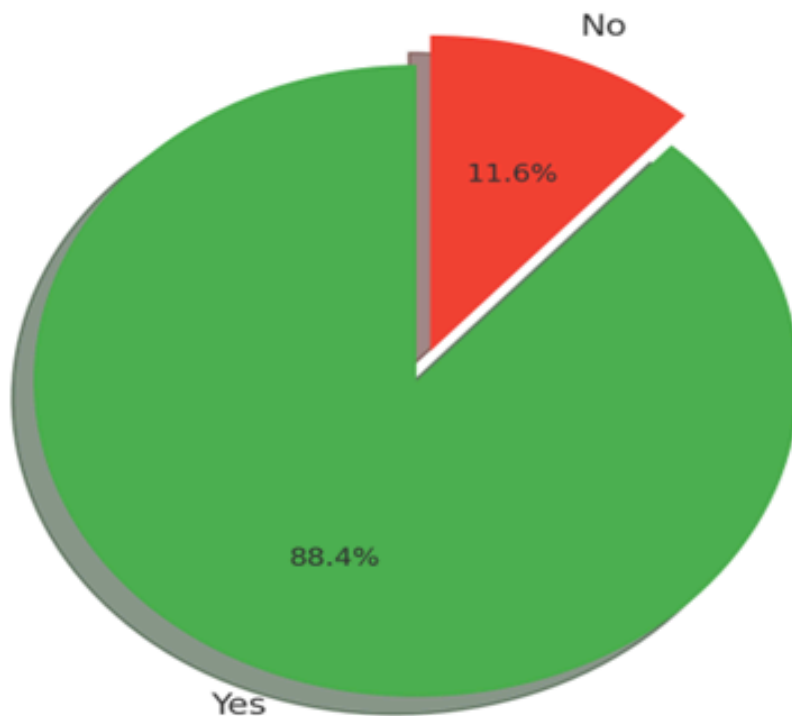
Awareness of Environmental Hazards



d) Youth are Eager to Act

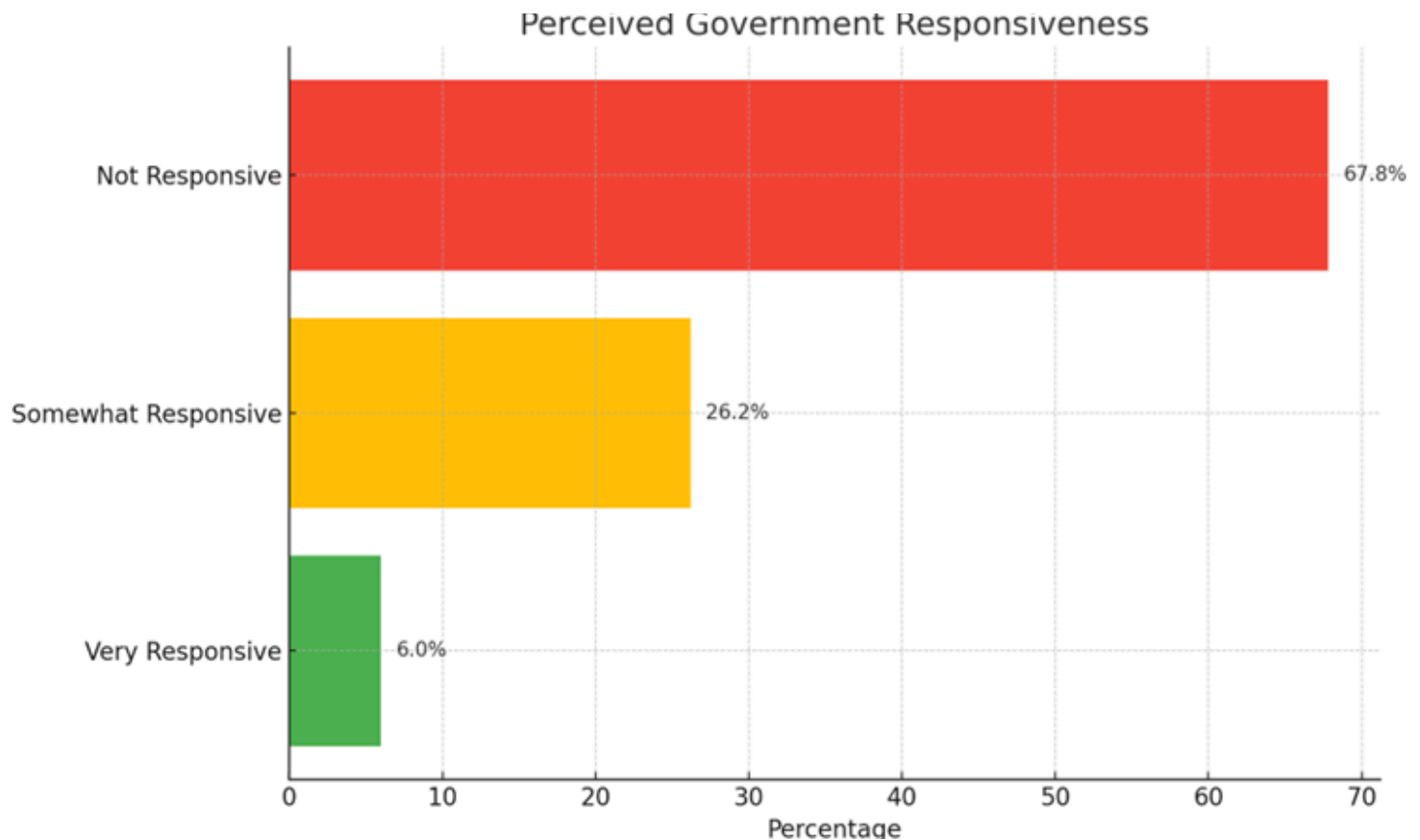
88.4% of young people said they would participate in clean-ups, recycling drives, and awareness campaigns—if given support.

Youth Willingness to Participate in Clean-Up Activities



e) Government Seen as Unresponsive

67.8% felt their local government was not responsive to waste issues. Services were described as inconsistent and enforcement lacking.



5. Recommendations

1. Expand Local Waste Infrastructure

- Install community-level waste bins and transfer stations.
- Engage small private collectors to reach underserved areas.

2. Institutionalize Waste Education

- Integrate environmental education in school curricula.
- Partner with local media for public awareness campaigns.

3. Create Incentive-Based Recycling Programs

- Establish buy-back centers for recyclables.
- Provide mobile airtime or food vouchers for collected plastic/metal.





4. Empower Youth-Led Solutions

- Launch a Youth Environmental Corps with training and small grants.
- Use social media to coordinate clean-up campaigns.

5. Strengthen Sanitation Law Enforcement

- Update and enforce local bylaws against open dumping.
- Monitor waste contractors for service quality and coverage.

Five Pillars of Reform for Grassroots Waste Management in Nigeria

Pillar	Action Focus	Target Outcome
 Infrastructure Expansion	Install public bins, build local transfer stations engage micro waste collectors	Improve access to proper disposal channels
 Waste Education	Integrate into school curricula Use radio/media for awareness	Boost public understanding and behavior change
 Incentivized Recycling	Set up community buy-back hubs Reward recyclers with tokens	Drive citizen participation in recycling efforts
 Law Enforcement & Monitoring	Update bylaws Enforce penalties Monitor contractors	Ensure compliance and long-term system integrity

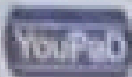
‘Clean communities start with empowered citizens, localized systems, and clear accountability.’

6. Call to Action

The time for fragmented, reactive waste management is over. Nigeria needs a coherent, inclusive, and community-driven strategy that combines infrastructure, education, innovation, and enforcement. Local governments, development partners, and private actors must invest in scalable systems that work with the people and for the people.



Community Clean-Up or Recycling Hub, Istock Photos



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