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Challenges and opportunities for promoting decent work in the informal economy: the case of the Bottle-Ke-Tlhago Cooperative Limited

Kutywayo, Simbarashe

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ABSTRACT

Waste pickers suffer the problem of insecurity as they lack job security and social protection due to their location in the informal economy. Owing to labour market flexibility, formal employment is no longer easy to come by which has resulted in the enlargement of the informal sector. In this scenario, the informal sector deserves to be taken as an important sector for the sustenance of people's livelihoods as it is the only option left for the jobless, therefore it deserves to be labour law compliant for the achievement of decent working conditions. The study sought to find out if these problems of insecurity have been addressed or are being paid attention to by the state, private sector, cooperatives, unions and the reclaimers. Interviews were conducted in Diepsloot with cooperative reclaimers, informal street reclaimers and others were done in Johannesburg with key players in the waste management sector. It was discovered that, there is still largely a lack of job security and social protection for waste pickers although key players claim to be improving the working conditions of waste pickers through formalisation of the waste management sector.