

Abstract

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Towards a Sustainable Future: Opportunities for Impact in an Already Circular Economy

The World Bank Estimates that 1% to 2% of the global population --hundreds of millions of people --earn their income through picking trash in the world's waste dump sites. They are living invisibly in the dense urban slums on the outskirts of our major cities.

Trash Pickers are reliant on established supply chains to deliver the products they collect in the trash sites to the recycling companies who turn it into the everyday goods we use around the world. These supply chains erode the income of the trash pickers with each transaction, and can retain up to 95% of the income trash pickers should be taking home.

Engineers have the incredible opportunity to build for impact, design systems that benefit those on the bottom, and solve some of the world's greatest humanitarian crises through rethinking traditional models and disrupting economies and livelihoods so far removed from our own.

rePurpose founders Robert Dowling and Peter Wang Hjemdahl will help close the conference with a narrative of the potential of engineering and who we can impact when we build together.