

Rafaela Gutierrez Biography

Rafaela F. Gutierrez is a Social Scientist with a PhD in Science and Technology Policy from Institute of Geosciences, UNICAMP, Brazil. Since 2005 she has been studying and advocating waste policies with a focus on improving the socio-productive inclusion of waste pickers.

Dr. Gutierrez is experienced researcher with an ability to conduct qualitative and quantitative research. Her previous research includes data from different sources such as national government and industrial databases. She has published several papers and edited two books on waste related topics in Portuguese and was an assistant professor for postgraduate and graduate students.

Dr. Gutierrez worked for 3 years as a Research Coordinator for a Technological Incubator of Social Enterprises where she had the opportunity to work with a low-income community seeking strategies to create and improve businesses using waste as the main resource. She planned, monitored and evaluated activities and implemented solutions in order to achieve poverty reduction in the respective communities, working collaboratively in a team focused on developing strategies throughout data surveys, and metrics in a multi-disciplinary approach. She liaised with the community and with local authorities pursuing a solution to improve the insertion of waste pickers in the municipal waste management. During this time, she helped create and organize a National Conference for Waste, Recycling and Social Inclusion for over 200 participants. In addition, she organized workshops for undergraduate students on policy waste and environmental issues.

As a Research Fellow in the Food Systems Lab, Toronto, Dr. Rafaela worked on literature review, and conducted interviews with stakeholders across the food system including retail, farming, food processing, food businesses, and not for profits. She also assisted the Food Systems social innovation workshops. Recently, she started a collaboration coordinating an early-stage project at the University of Toronto exploring new technologies and outreach methodology to reduce waste in Toronto's rivers. In addition, she is currently participating in a project at the Royal Ontario Museum focusing on creating and updating database for a scientific project at the Department of Natural History.