



MNCR – 25 years of stories and memories, resistance and achievements.





25 years ago, we didn't imagine that congress would be so important for our lives. We didn't imagine that something was being born there that would transcend organizations, projects, and governments. There, our great family was born: the National Movement of Recyclable Material Waste Pickers – MNCR.

By celebrating these 25 years, we also want to remember and thank those who walked alongside us from the beginning, when few believed that waste pickers could build a strong, autonomous, and respected national movement. There were organizations, entities, pastoral groups, social activists, researchers, and supporters who saw, before many, the potential existing in our category and believed in the possibility of a more dignified future for thousands of waste picker families. Our recognition and gratitude to the Fraternal Aid Organization, the Nenuca Institute for Sustainable Development - INSEA, PANGEA Socio-environmental Studies Center, the National Pastoral of Street People, Caritas Brasileira, and so many other organizations and activists who shared dreams, challenges, and achievements with us.

From that meeting, not only the history of waste pickers in Brazil changed. The history of waste pickers worldwide also changed. For the first time, historically invisible workers built their own voice, their own organization, and their own project for the future. A movement was born that would fight not only for its members but for the entire category, for the environment, for another economy.

MNCR never fought only for MNCR. It always fought for all waste pickers from landfills, streets, and sheds. It was the movement that was at the forefront of the struggle for the end of child labor and the closure of landfills, in the fight against incineration and privatization, for the defense of street waste pickers, for the organization of cooperatives and associations, and for the construction of public policies capable of guaranteeing dignity and rights for those who live from recycling.

We were present at the most important moments in the history of the category. In the construction of national waste policy, basic sanitation, in the creation of the interministerial committee of waste pickers, in the Pro-waste pickers and Popular Recycling programs. We were at the





closing of the largest landfills in the Americas, the Jardim Gramacho Metropolitan Landfill, the Aurá Landfill, and the Estrutural Landfill. And we were not just watching these processes happen. We were acting, negotiating, caring, and fighting so that every comrade was respected and had their work, income, and rights guaranteed.

If today waste pickers have national and international recognition, it didn't happen by chance. If large companies, multinationals, governments, and institutions sit at the table to dialogue with us, it is not out of favor or benevolence. It is because they respect us. It is because they recognize our capacity for organization, mobilization, and execution. The partnerships built throughout this trajectory are the result of the credibility gained by thousands of waste pickers who dedicated their lives to building the movement.

If today we have the support of institutions such as Fundação Banco do Brasil, Itaipu Binacional, Petrobras, the National Bank for Economic and Social Development, Caixa Econômica Federal, and many other public and private organizations, it is because there is an organized movement, capable of presenting proposals, executing projects, and transforming resources into concrete results for the category.

That is why we organized our own institutions, cutting out resource intermediaries, we created the National Association of Waste Pickers – ANCAT and the National Union of Waste Pickers – Unicatadores, institutions coordinated and managed by waste pickers, becoming tools that operate in social structures, as a social, technical institution, with great capacity for mobilization and execution of strategic projects for waste pickers across the country.

If there are public policies, investments, support programs, sheds, trucks, equipment, and opportunities for thousands of waste picker families, this was not a gift from anyone. It was an achievement. It was the result of organization, mobilization, and collective struggle.

These are 25 years of resistance, of marches occupying the streets of Brazil. These are 25 years of mobilizations, occupations, negotiations, and confrontations. These are 25 years of struggle for the closure of landfills, for the valorization of waste pickers' work, and for the





construction of a more just and sustainable society. These are 25 years of memories of those comrades who have already departed, among them Erik Soares and supporter Diogo Santanna, in their memory, remembering every comrade who shared, but left a path.

But these are also 25 years of victories. These are 25 years of celebrations, of sheds built from scratch, of strengthened cooperatives, of trucks delivered, of contracts won, of equipment acquired, and of opportunities created for thousands of workers.

Every shed built, every press installed, every truck delivered, every association organized, every cooperative strengthened, every service contract, every event we organize, and every approved public policy carries a bit of MNCR's history. None of this was ready-made. Everything was built by the hands of the waste pickers.

Expocataadores has become the largest popular recycling meeting in the world. A space created and organized by the waste pickers themselves, where experiences, knowledge, social technologies, and proposals to strengthen the category circulate. This demonstrates the strength of our organization and the dimension the movement has achieved over these 25 years.

At the same time, this organization bothers. It bothers those who preferred waste pickers isolated and disorganized. It bothers those who profited from the exploitation of the category's work. It bothers those who see waste only as merchandise and cannot understand that behind each recycled material there are workers, families, stories, and rights.

Throughout these 25 years, MNCR's green flags have crossed cities, states, and borders. They have been present in congresses, marches, occupations, sheds, cooperatives, landfills, dumps, and communities. They have become a symbol of struggle, resistance, solidarity, and hope.

It is because of this flag that today we have an organized category. It is because of this flag that we built a collective identity. It is because of this flag that thousands of workers stopped being seen as isolated individuals to recognize themselves as part of a national movement.





MNCR's green flag represents much more than an organization. It represents the history of men and women who refused to accept invisibility. It represents the courage of those who transformed waste into work, exclusion into organization, and suffering into hope.

When this flag is raised, it carries the memory of all those who built this trajectory and the responsibility to continue fighting for the next generations of waste pickers. These are 25 years of history. These are 25 years of resistance. These are 25 years of achievements. These are 25 years of popular organization.

And if today we are recognized, respected, and heard, it is because thousands of waste pickers believed that it was possible to collectively build what seemed impossible. MNCR is living proof that when waste pickers organize, they not only transform their own lives. They transform cities, they transform public policies, and they transform the world.

If incineration has not advanced, it is because we exist and are organized; if PPPs will have to include us, it is because we are resistance; if popular recycling is a project for saving the planet, it is because we work with our heads, our feet on the ground, and our hands on recyclable materials, which in these 25 years of history, we can affirm. Recycle or not recycle? No, no, no, incineration, with rain, with wind, does not stop the movement.

Brasília, June 11, 2026.

LONG LIVE OUR STRUGGLE, LONG LIVE OUR FLAG, LONG LIVE THE 25 YEARS OF MNCR

National Commission MNCR.

