Garbage City

"Garbage City" is located at the largest settlement of Zabbaleen in Cairo, Mokattam Village. They have been the city’s informal waste collectors since the 1940s and they recycle 80-90% of the waste they collect.

The Zabbaleen are predominantly Copts and their local church is the ‘Cave Cathedral’ St Sama’a, which is the largest in the Middle East, seating 15,000.

Men collect the rubbish and bring it back to Mokattam for sorting. Pig's consume the organic waste. Rubbish collected in Cairo lines these streets where women sort through it by hand.

Amr & Karmel may struggle in the future as the government contracts Cairo's rubbish collection to foreign firms.

Hossam melts aluminium to make new sheets from, each family specializes in a material that they sort and sell.

Ahmed stands proudly near to a stack of aluminium sheets newly recycled by his father. These will be sold to a factory.

Maha sorts wires. The metals are sold by the kilo. Others sort plastics, paper and glass.

The recycling rates achieved by the Zabbaleen are far above those of any industrialised country. Although nicknamed 'Garbage City', it should really be called Recycle City.