

XI ILERA European Congress, Università degli Studi di Milano,
Faculty of Political, Economic and Social Science,
Milano, Italy, 8-10 September 2016.



International wastepickers celebrating Labour Day in Pune, India, 1st May 2012. Picture by Pablo Rey.

The Collective Organization of Waste Pickers: a discussion of
national and international experiences.
Working Session 11, Aula Seminari Conservatorio, Thursday
8 September 2016.

“ORGANIZING DISPERSITY: LESSONS AND CHALLENGES OF WASTEPICKERS NETWORK BUILDING”

1. Introduction:

- wastepickers within the value chain
- wastepickers within the territory

2. Types of organization:

- around the world
- by region

3. Links and networking:

- through conferences & meetings
- wastepickers without borders

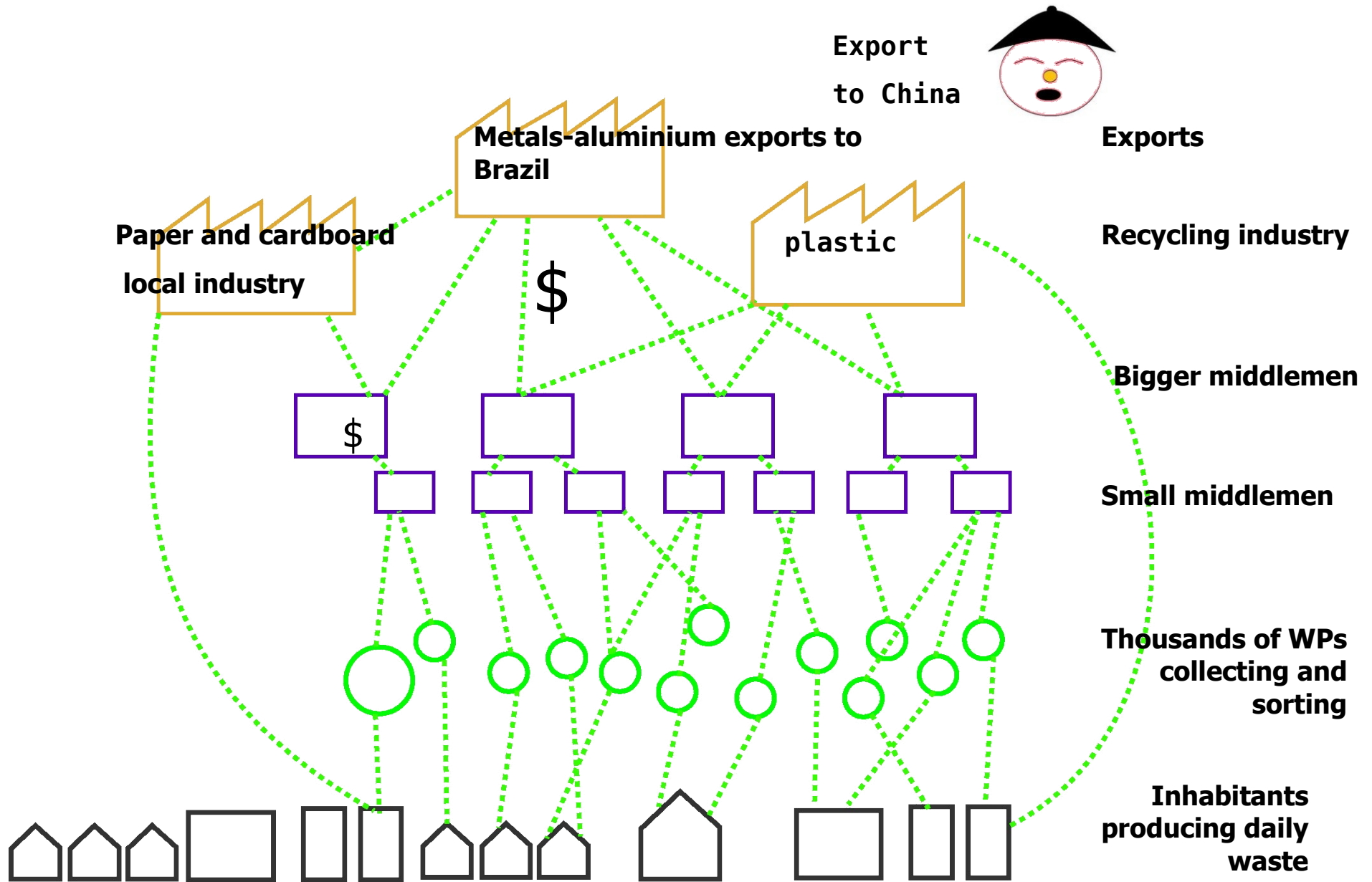
4. Representation:

- global platforms
- internal structure challenge

5. Lessons & Challenges

- arbitrary linkages
- current situation
- the rizome vs the tree

1.Introduction: wastepickers within the value chain

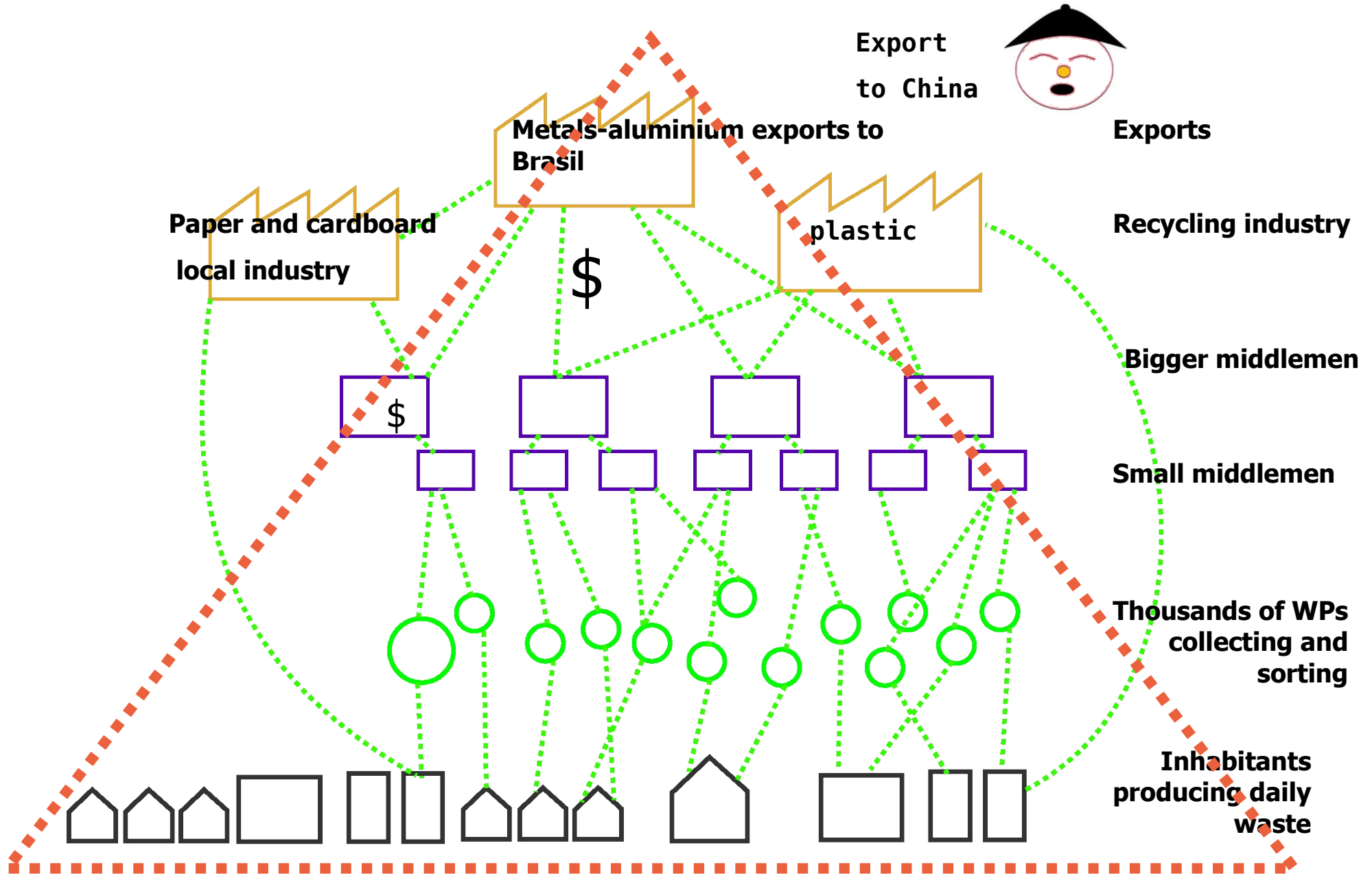


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“Organizing dispersity: lessons and challenges of wastepickers network building”

ILERA Conference, WS#11, 8/09/2016

1. Introduction: wastepickers within the value chain

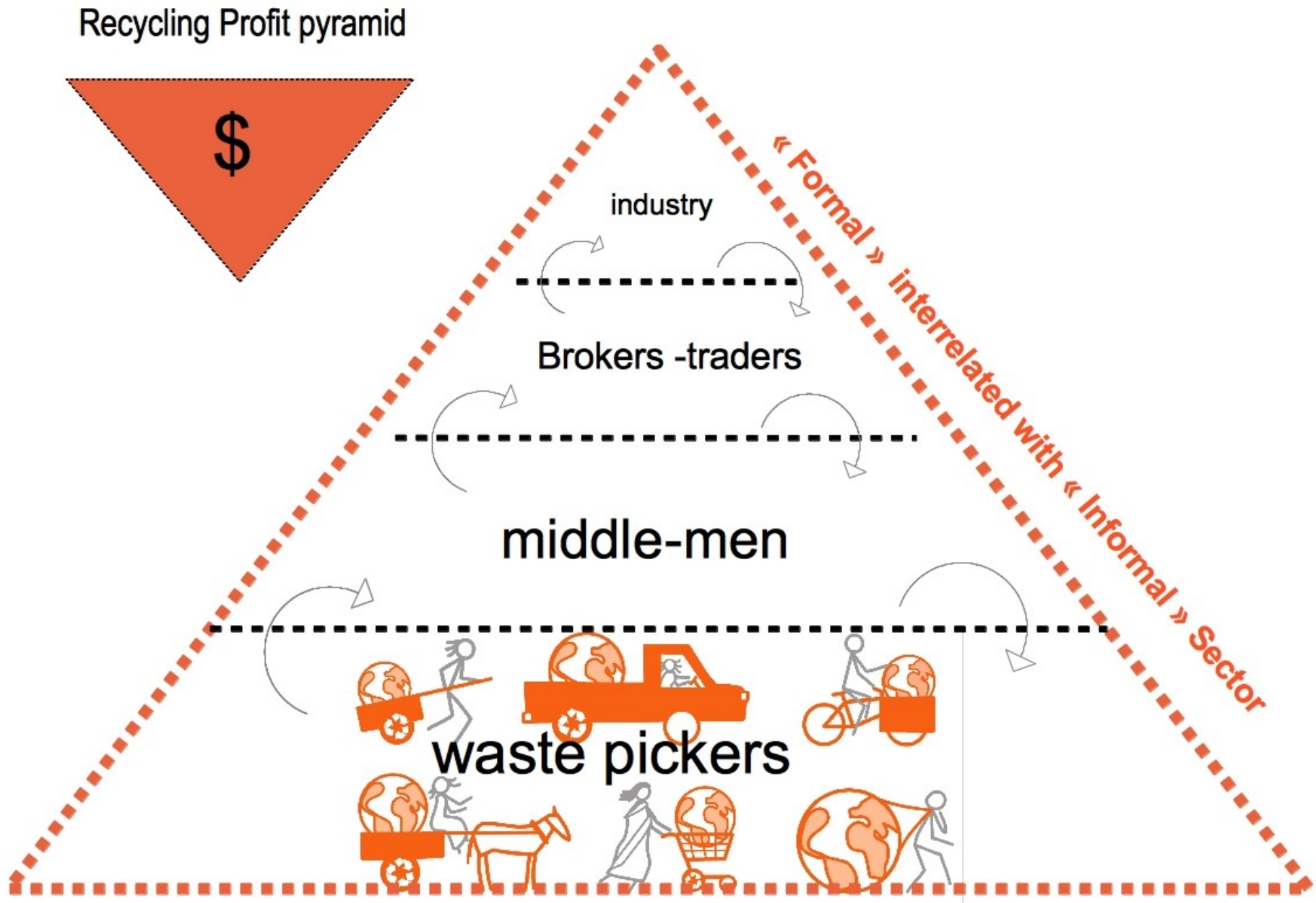


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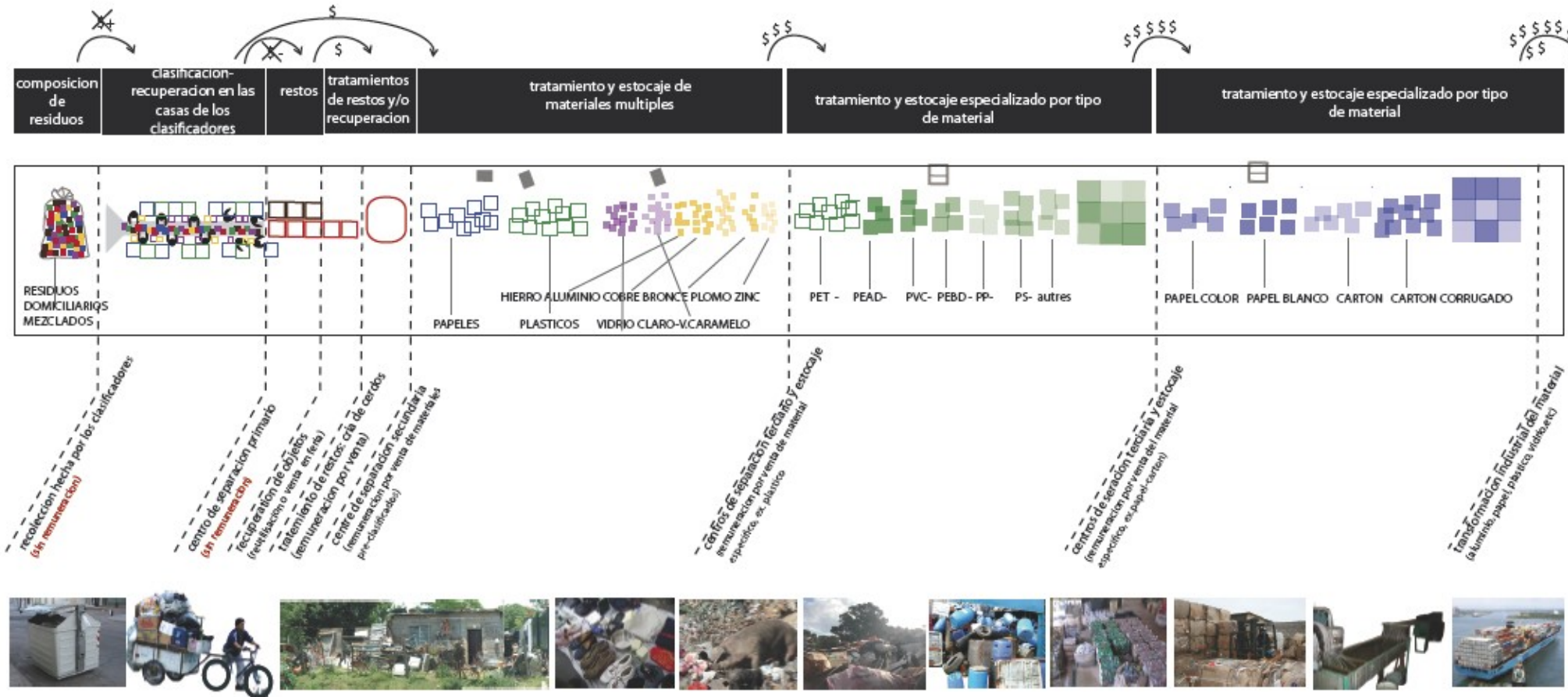
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1. Introduction: wastepickers within the value chain



1.Introduction: wastepickers within the territory

Post-Fordist *dispersed* chain

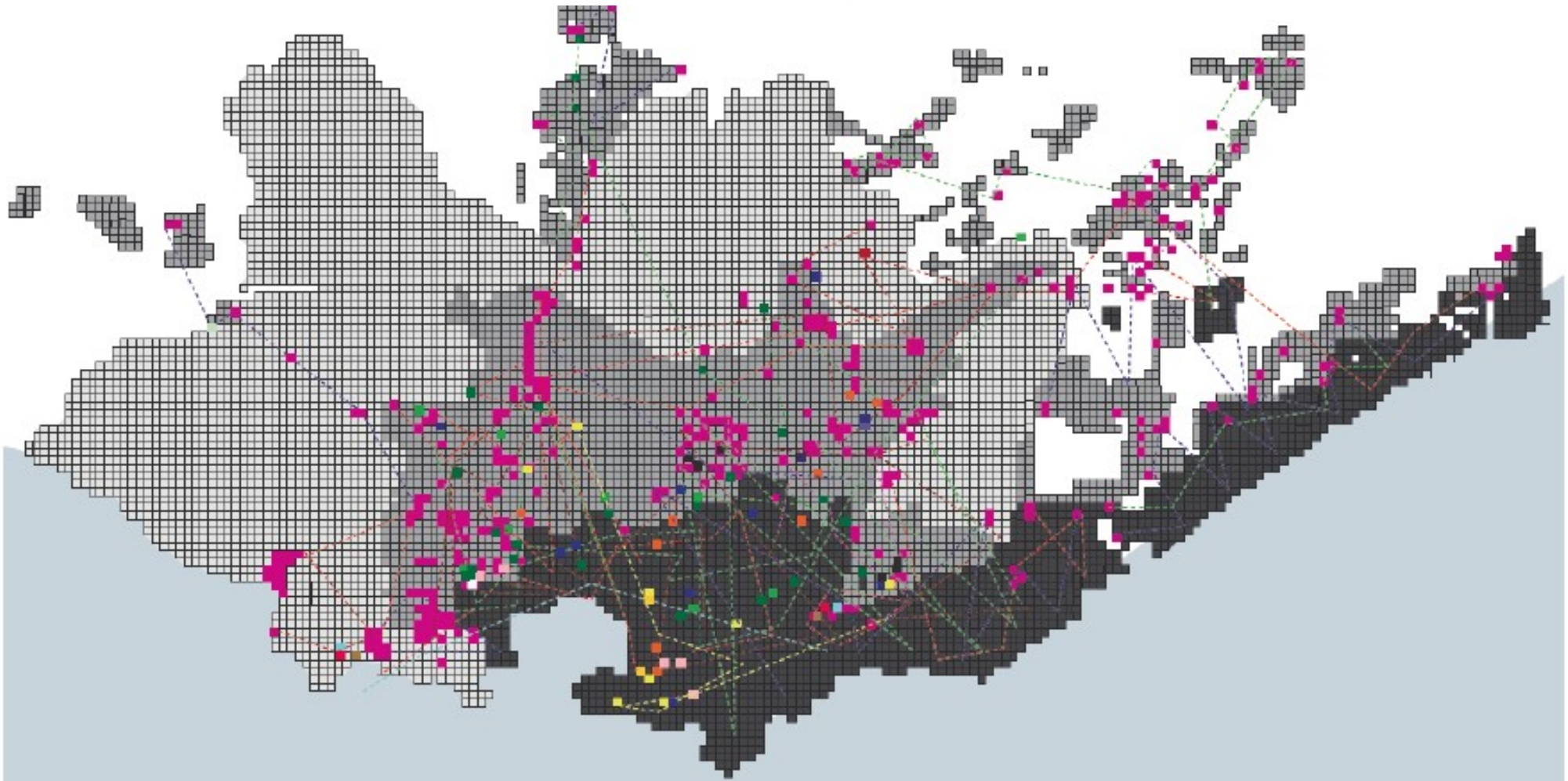


“Linea Imaginaria del Reciclaje” Lucia Fernandez, Master Thesis, 2010.

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1.Introduction: wastepickers within the territory



Montevideo map, Building networks through recycling. Lucia Fernandez, Master Thesis, 2010.

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2. Types of organizations



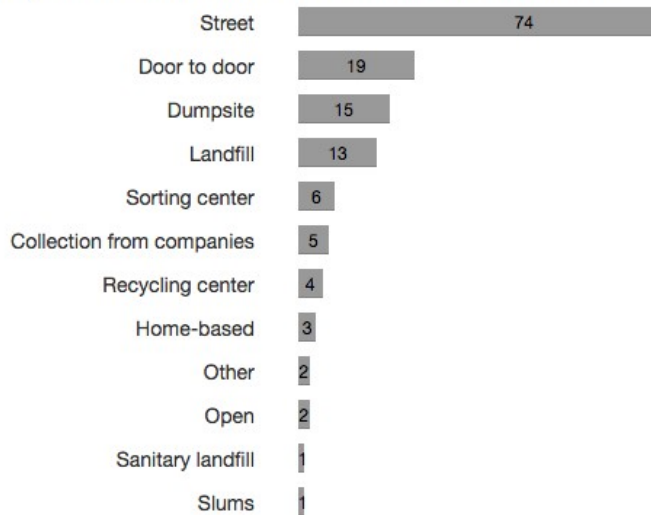
"A wastepicker with no access to waste is like a farmer with no access to land, we can't survive without it!"

"We need to keep our hands in the waste but our head out of it, looking far away"

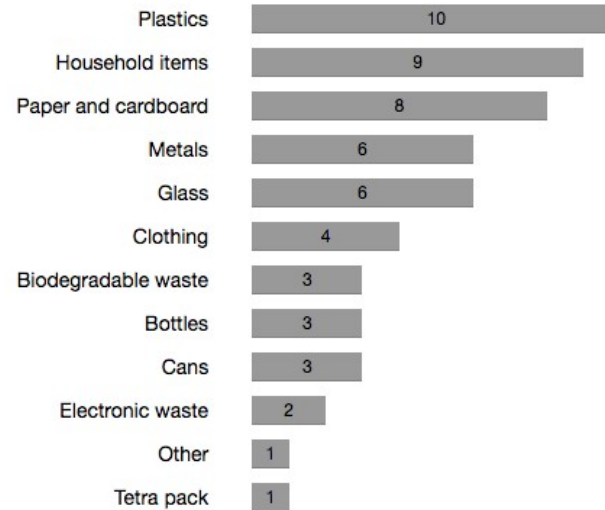
Silvio Ruiz, wastepicker leader from Colombia speaking. Picture taken at Pune Strategic Workshop 2012 by Lucia Fernandez

2. Types of organizations

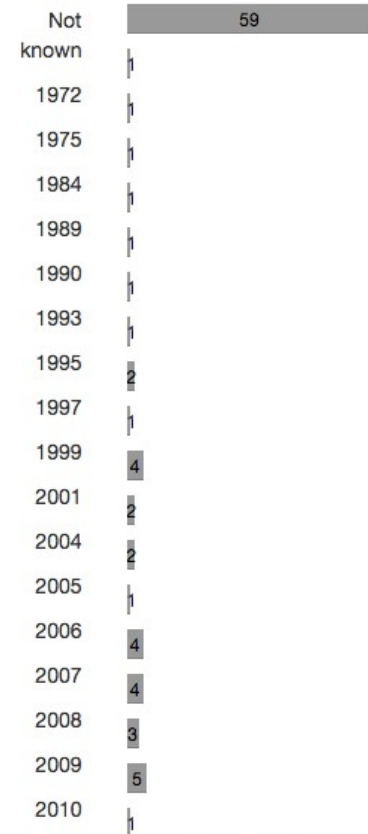
Workplace of Members number of organizations



Materials collected number of organizations



Year Formed number of organizations



WAW, Wastepickers Around the World, database and statistics prepared by Fernandez Lucia, Rey Pablo, Pena Pan Justina, 2014. Available at www.globalrec.org

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2. Types of organizations: around the world

By Scope « Waste pickers Around the World (WAW)

Waste Pickers' Organizations

Waste Pickers' Organizations

Type of Organization

Cooperative

Association

Trade Union

Network of cooperatives

Movement

Federation

Federation of cooperatives

Self-help group

Scope

Local

Regional

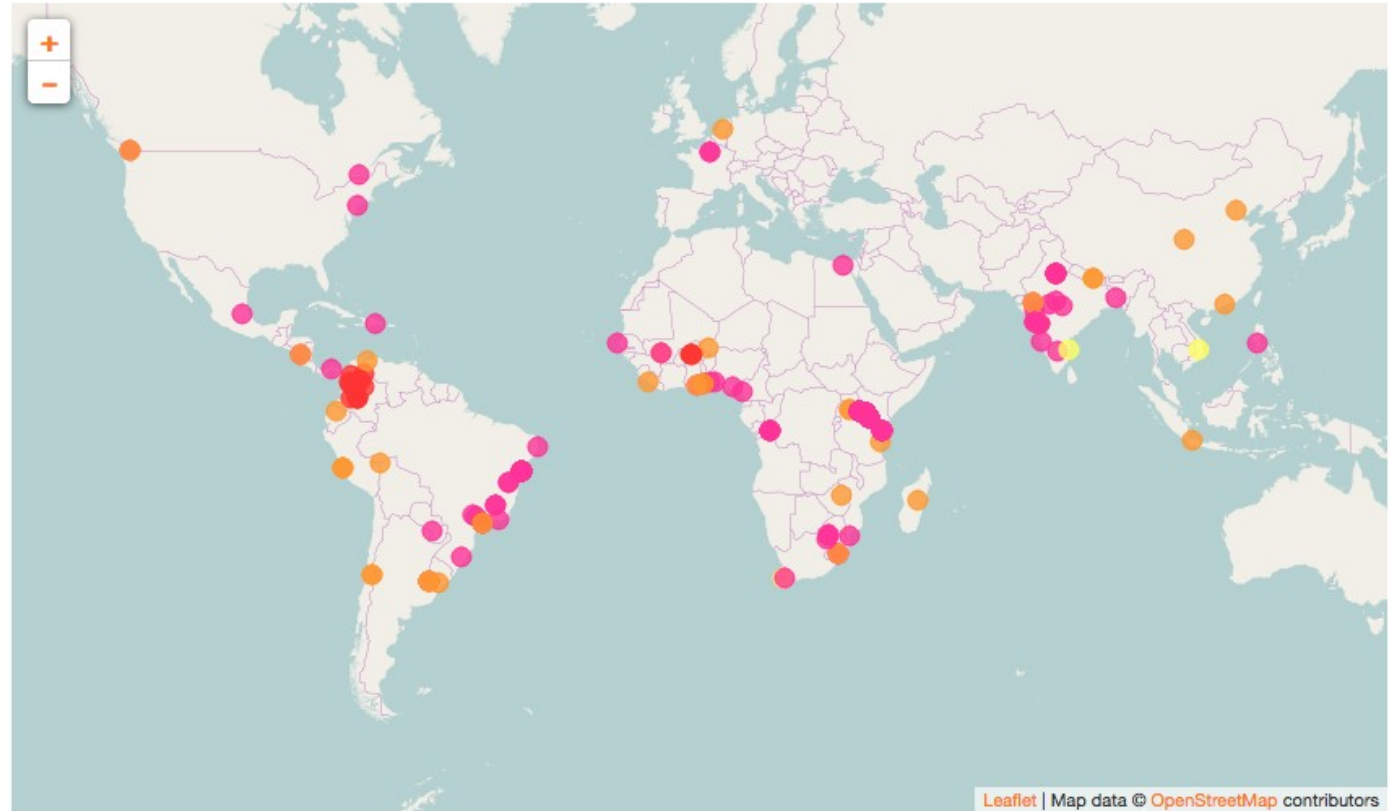
National

International

Supporters

Waste picker support organization

Potential supporter



Map by Scope

Organizational Reach number of organizations

(%)

Local (58.8%) 57 (58.8%)

Regional (13.4%) 13 (13.4%)

National (23.7%) 23 (23.7%)

Not known (4.1%) 4

(Total organizations formed by waste pickers: 97)



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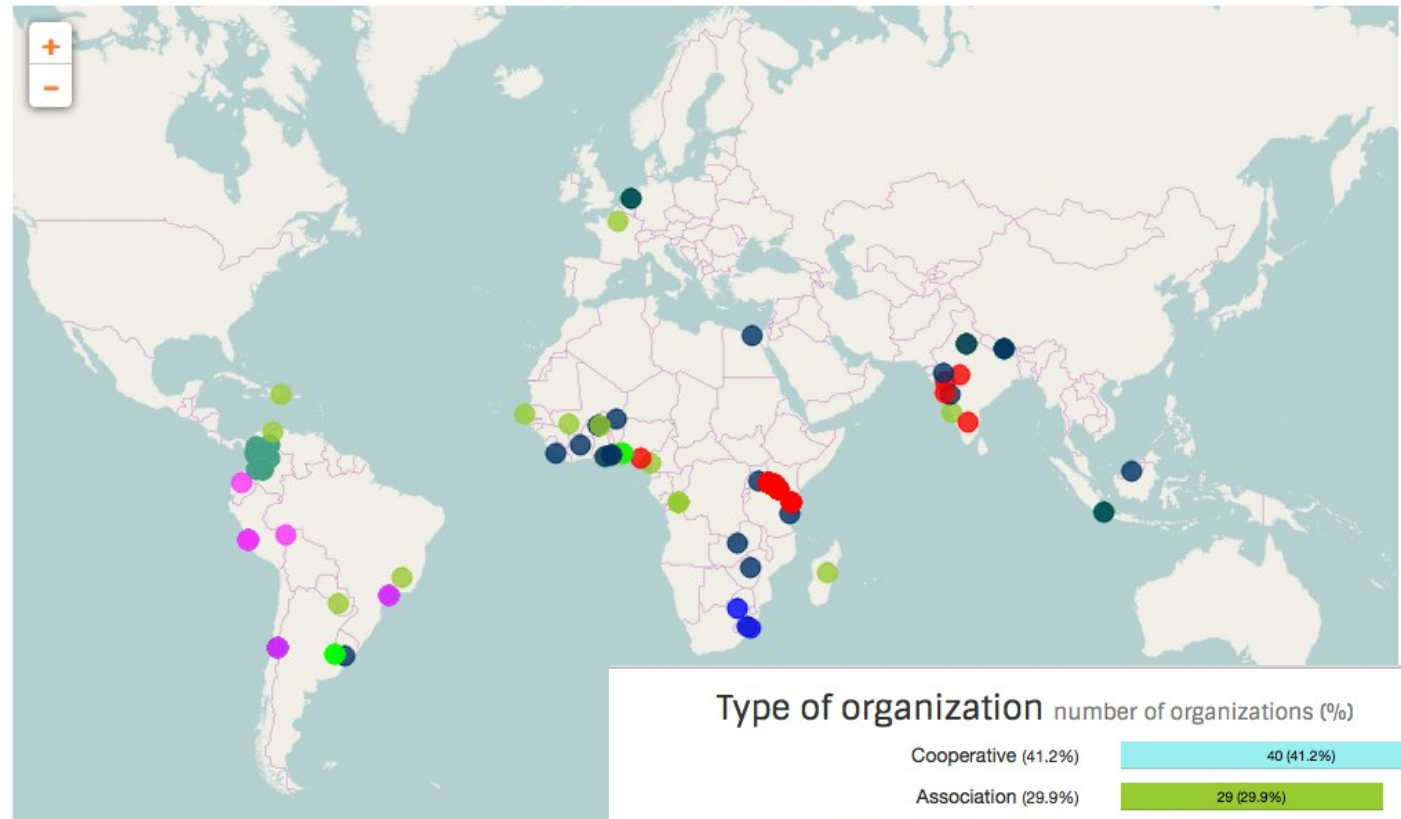
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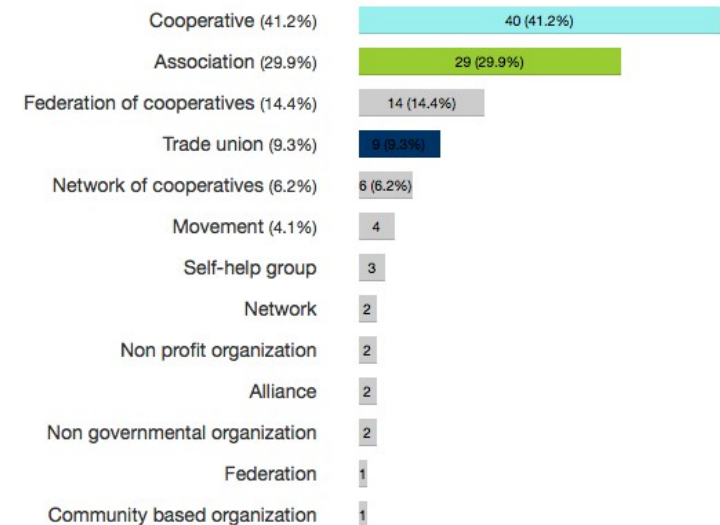
Waste picker support organization

Potential supporter



By Organizations' type

Type of organization number of organizations (%)



(Total organizations formed by waste pickers: 97)

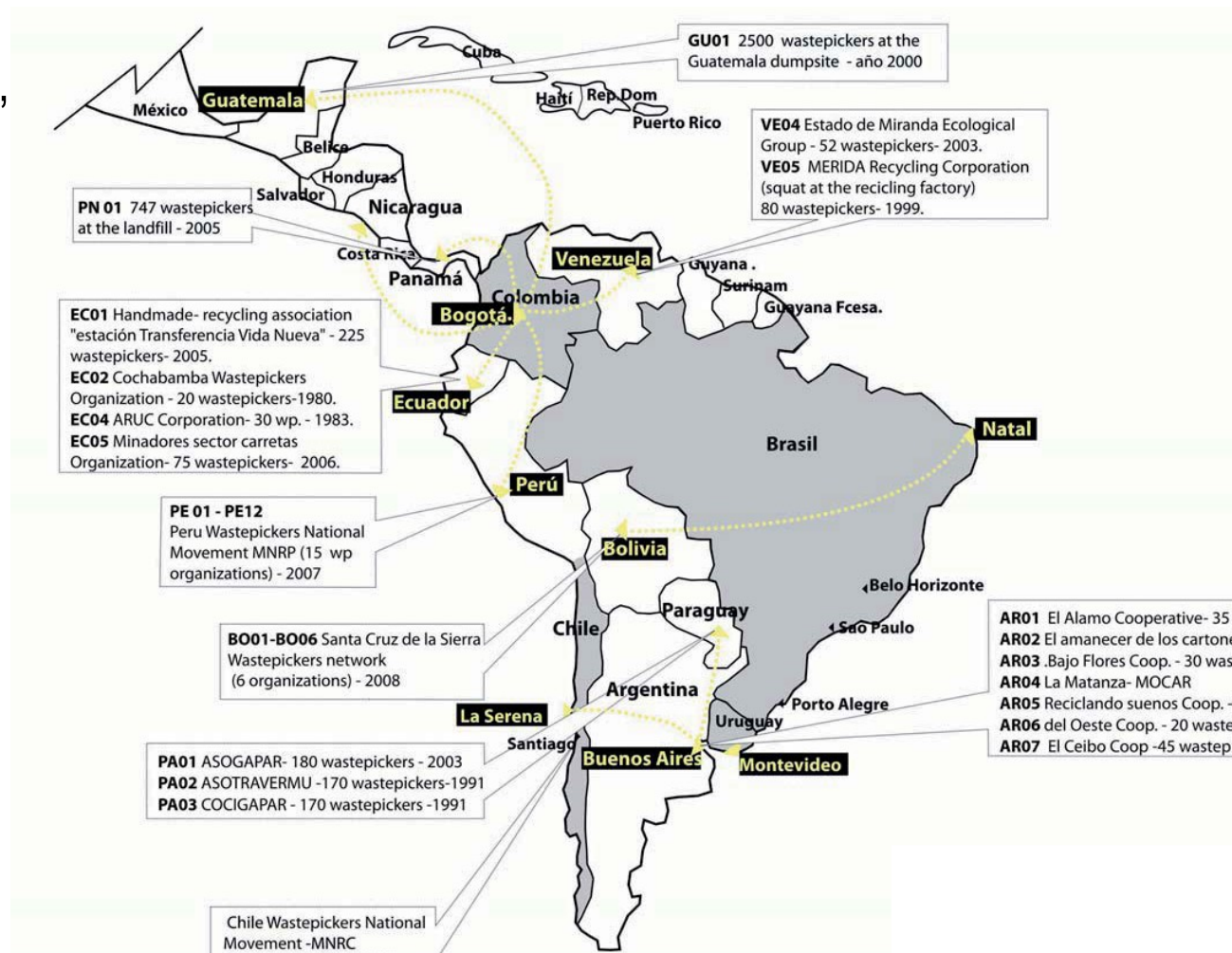


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2. Types of organizations: by region

RedLacre: LATIN AMERICAN WASTEPICKER NETWORK:

- 12 national movements, networks and associations are members of the LAWPN, created in 2005.
- Most are cooperatives' networks (Ecuador, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Peru) some are Federations (Argentina, Peru), other Movements (Chile, Brazil) just one trade union (Uruguay) and some, only local orgs (Venezuela, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico)
- They have done 4 Latin American Conferences and extended contacts in Central America via a WPs ground-mapping exercise done in 2011 in 8 countries.



RedLacre mapping drawing, Lucia Fernandez, 2007.

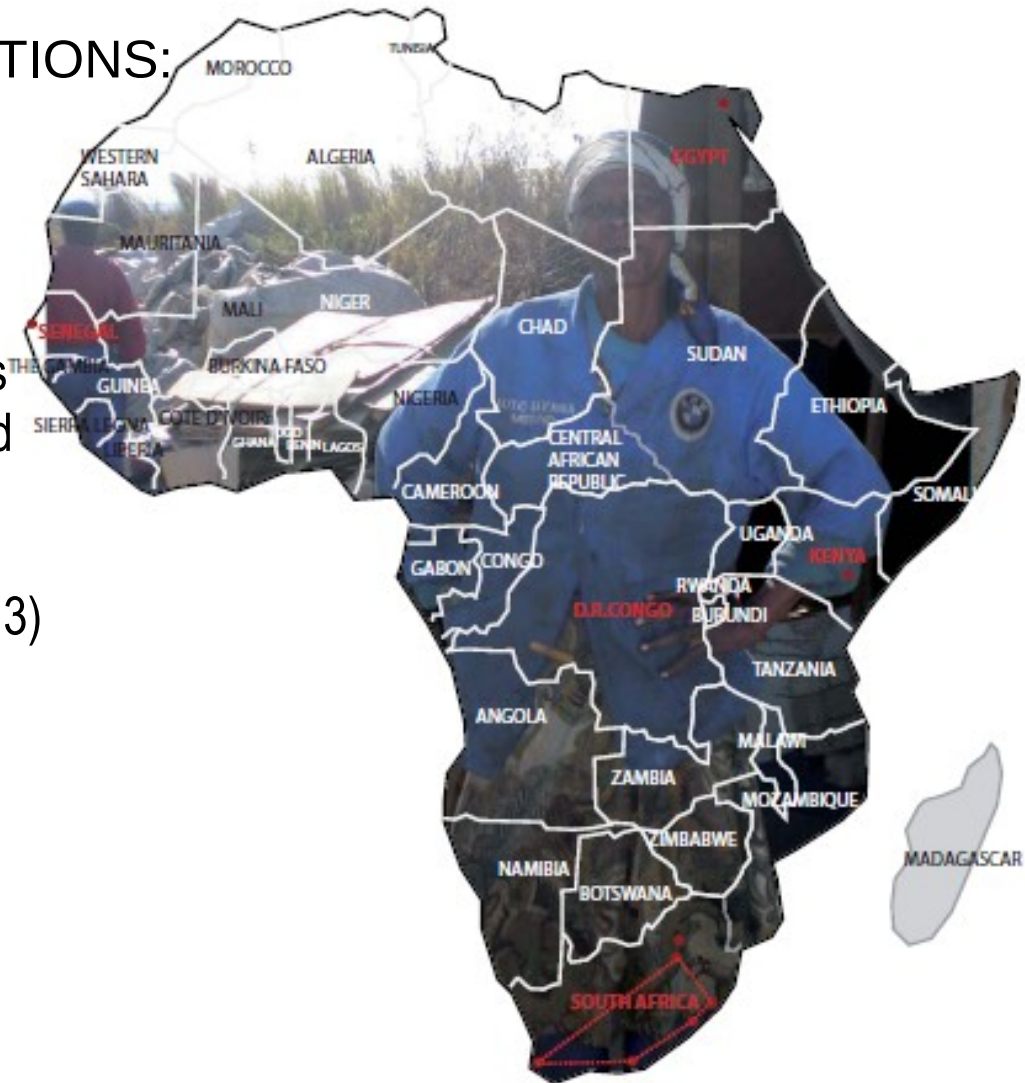
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2. Types of organizations: by region

AFRICAN WASTEPICKERS ORGANIZATIONS:

- South African Movement of WPs created in June 2009, now leading the African organizing process
- Kenyan nascent National Alliance in place (2013), as well as Dakar dumpsite association Bok Diom, formed in 1997
- Nigerian Wastepickers organized in many cities (2013) as well as Tanzania Wastepickers Alliance recently formed (2014)
- Cairo Syndicate of Zabaleens formed in 2012/13
- Ghana (Accra) wastepickers dumpsite's association,
- Contacts expanded to Mozambique, Mali, Madagascar, RDC, Benin



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2. Types of organizations: by region

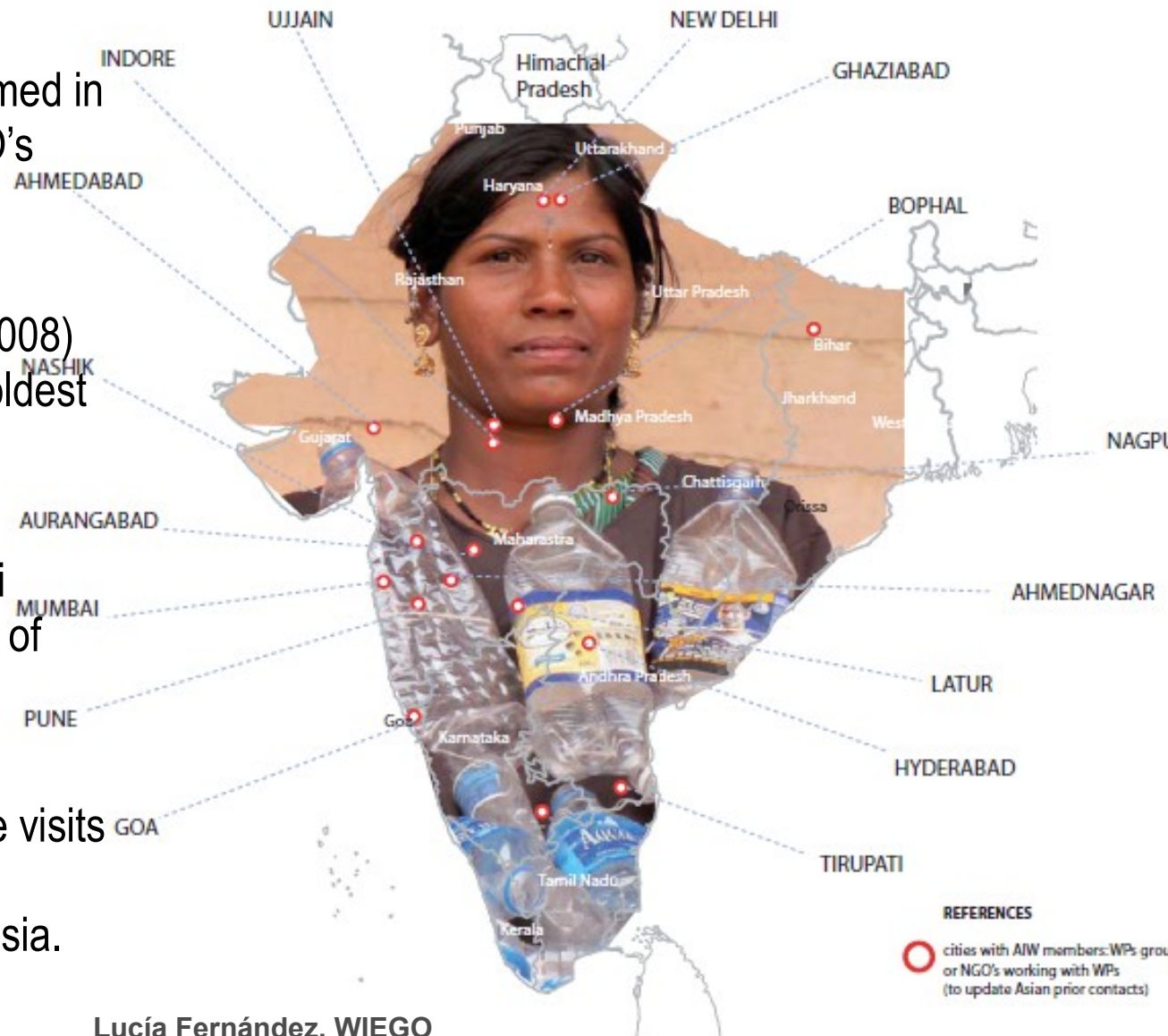
ALLIANCE OF INDIAN WASTEPICKERS:

- India Alliance of Wastepickers (AIW) formed in 2009 with 37 wastepickers orgs and NGO's groups all around India.

- Biggest cooperative, SWaCH in Pune (2008) delivering SWM at city level, member of oldest trade union of WPs KKPKP (1991).

- Hasiru Dala (Bangalore, 2013) and Safai Sena (Delhi, 2009) more active members of AIW

- AIW hosted several learning & exchange visits with Asian wastepicker groups from Philippines, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Indonesia.



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3. Links and networking



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3. Links and networking: through conferences & meetings



2003 Caxias do Sul, Brasil (1st Latin America Conference, 4 countries)

2005 Sao Leopoldo, Brasil (2nd Latin America Conference, 6 countries)

2008 Bogota, Colombia (3rd LatinAm 1st Global, 34 countries)

2009 Durban, South Africa (1st Steering Committee Meeting)

2010 Peru (4th Latin American, 12 countries)

2010 Belo Horizonte, Brazil (2nd Steering Committee Meeting)

2011 Bangkok Thailand (3rd Steering Committee Meeting)

2012 Managua, Nicaragua (1st Central American, 17 countries)

2012 Pune, India (2nd Global, 1st Workshop, 32 countries, 4th Steering committee mtg)

2013 Geneve, ILO Conference

2009-2010-2012-2013-2014-2015- Expocatadores, Brasil

2009-2010-2011-2012-2014-2015- UNFCCC/COPs meeting

3. Links and networking: wastepickers without borders

THE 1ST WORLD CONFERENCE OF WASTEPICKERS , BOGOTA 2008

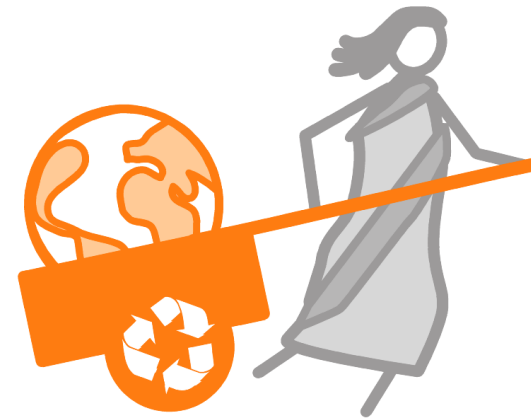
- 3rd Latin American Congress of Wastepickers.
- 34 countries (5 continents united for wastepickers recognition.
- 700 participants, including wastepickers, researchers, NGOs, Foundations, etc
- 60 participants from Africa, Asia, Europe and North America, 130 from Latin America, 100 from Colombia
- 50 technical experts from all over the world



3. Links and networking: wastepickers without borders

GLOBAL ALLIANCE OF WASTEPICKERS (est. 2009)

- Involves thousands of Wastepickers organizations in 21 countries and 5 continents
- 2 major WPs Organizations Networks were leading the Global Alliance Process (LAWPN+AIW)
- Active participation in UNFCCC meetings, CDM meetings, International Events, Intercontinental Exchange & Learning visits Programme and Global Steering Committee



GLOBAL ALLIANCE OF
WASTE PICKERS

GlobalRec logo, produced through
participatory consultation in 2011/2012.
Pablo Rey.

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4. Representation: global platforms

WASTEPICKERS GLOBAL ALLIANCE AND CLIMATE CHANGE

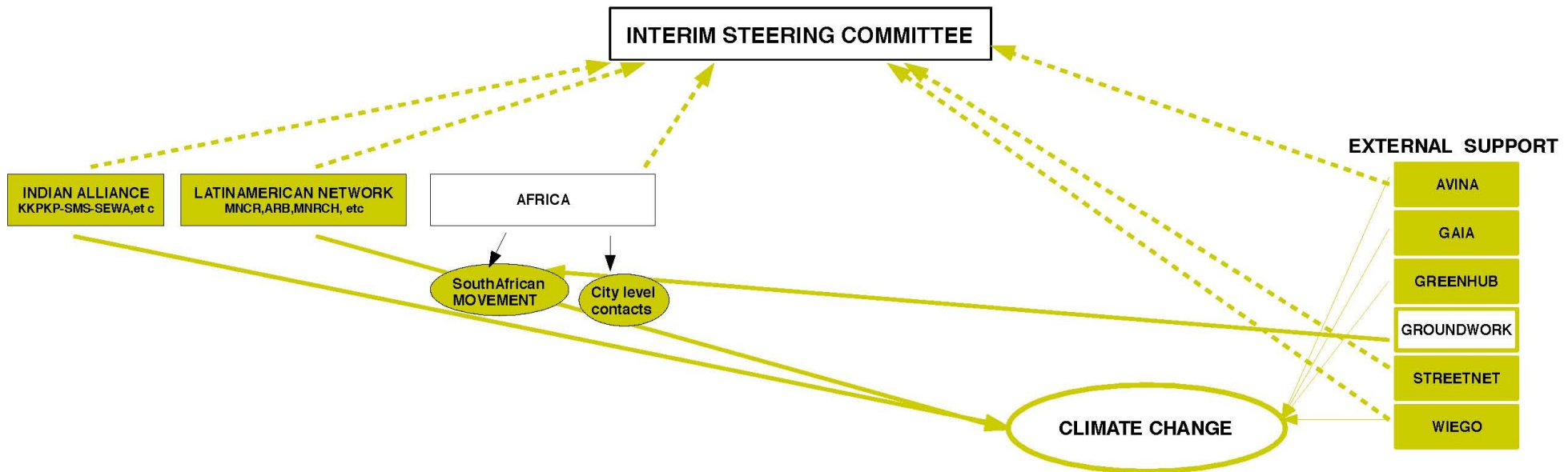
- Participation in several UNFCCC meetings since June 2009 (Copenhagen, China, Cancun, Bonn) as well as ILO Conference on Green Jobs and many other UN Habitat events.
- Global WPs Statement against Waste to Energy Projects, privatization of waste, pro-inclusive recycling.

Colombian and Indian wastepicker leaders at first UNFCCC process, Bonn, 2009 meeting. Picture by Lucia Fernandez



4. Representation: internal structure challenge

References:
Step 1: Actual situation:



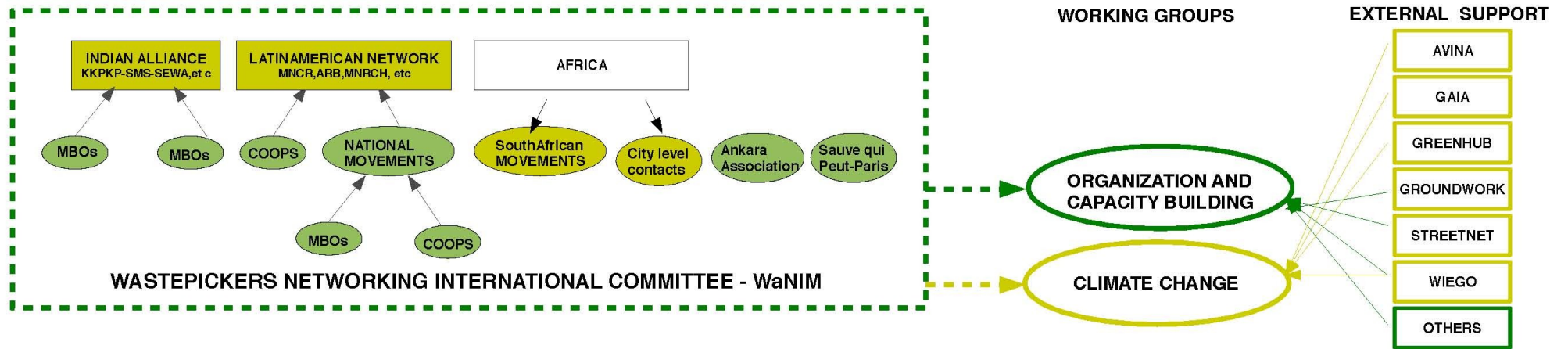
Structural drawings for discussion at 3rd Interim Steering Committee, Bangkok, March 2011, by Lucia Fernandez

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4. Representation: internal structure challenge

References:
Step 1: Actual situation:
Step 2 2010: WaNIM+Working Groups

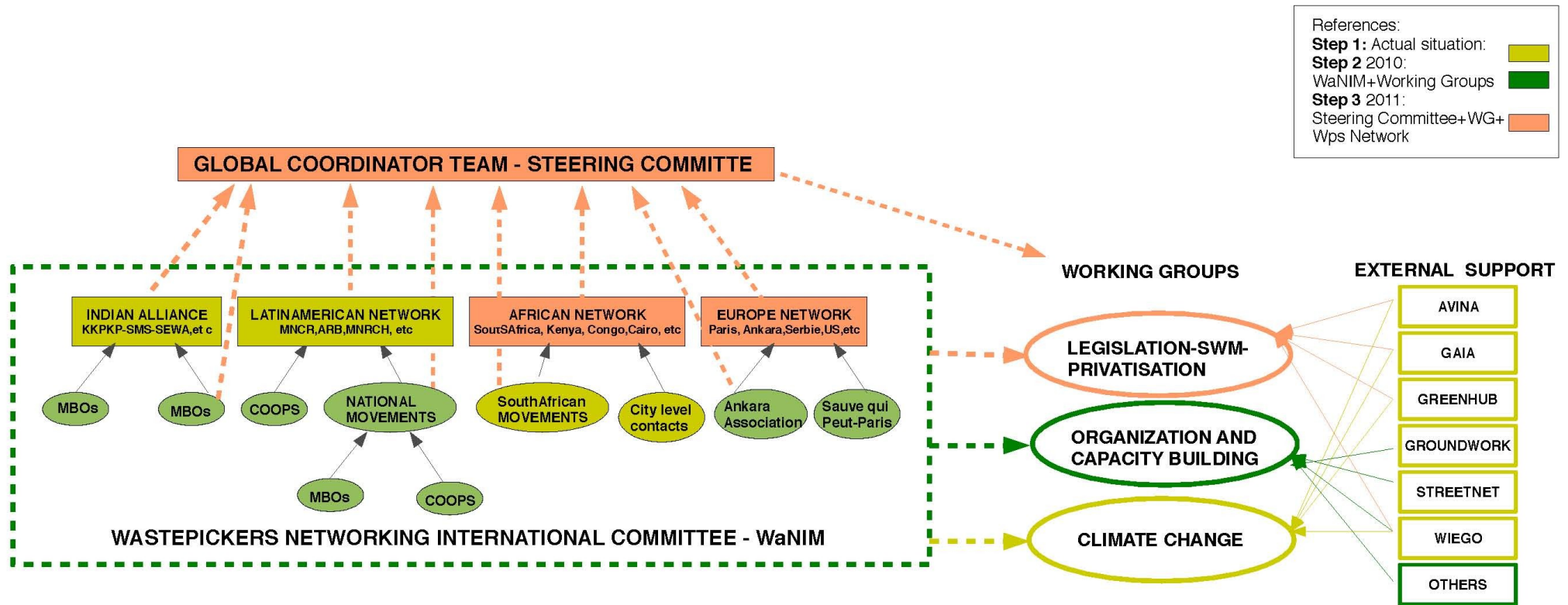


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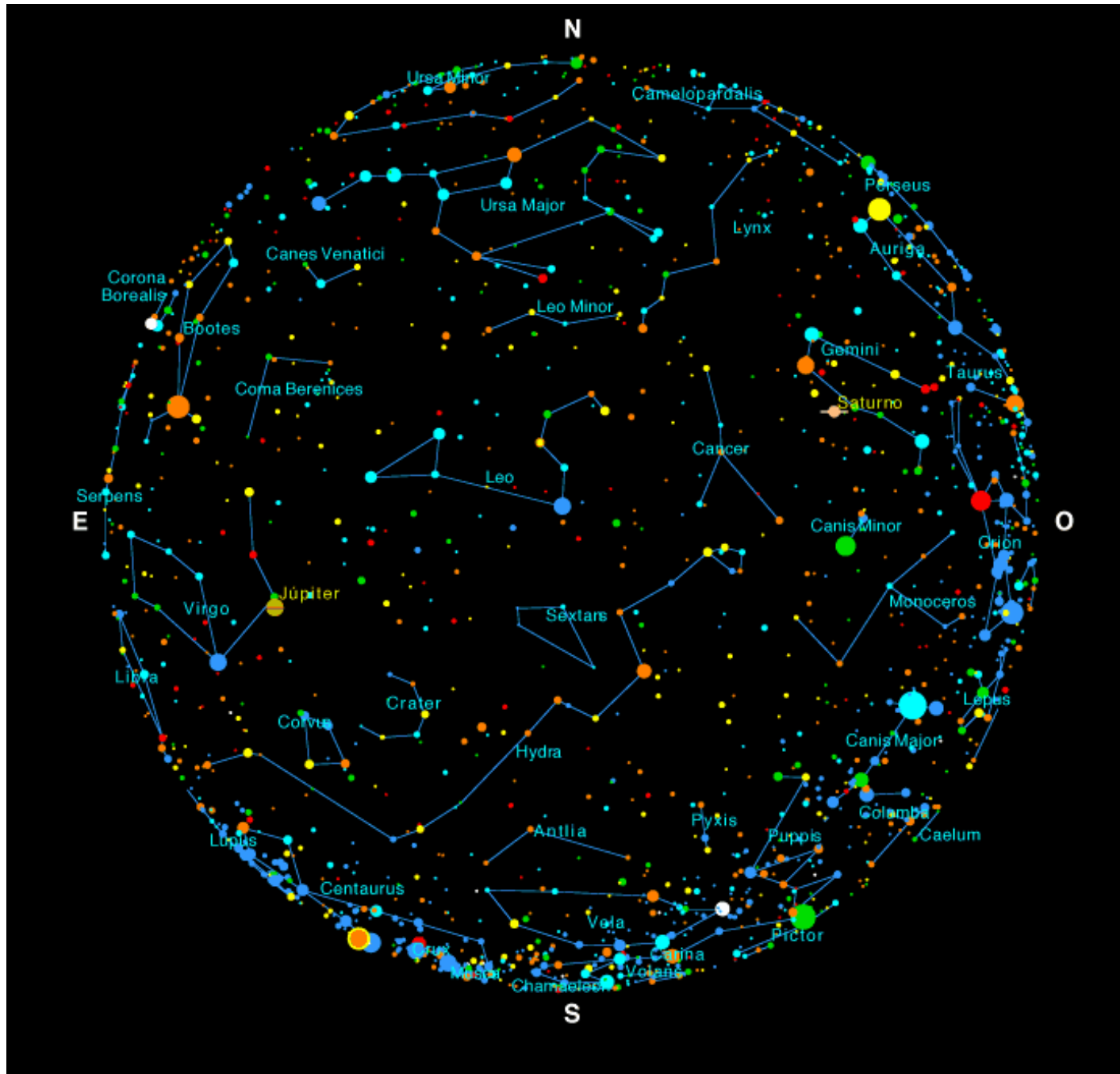


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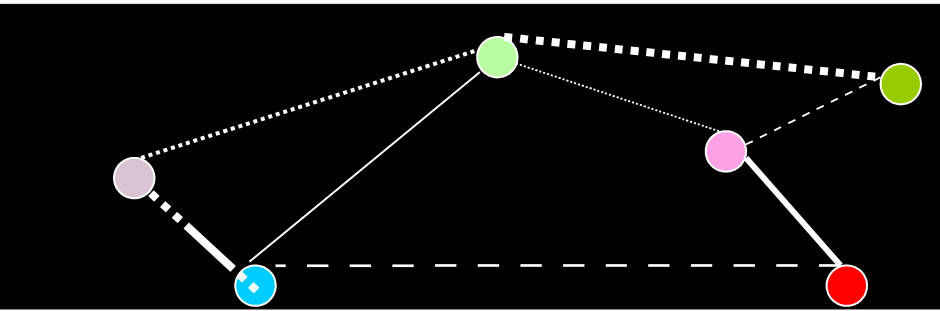
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5. Lessons & Challenges: arbitrary linkages



Ptolemy's' constellations

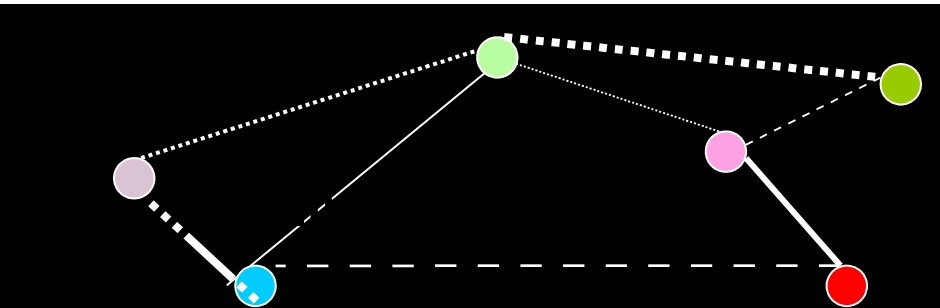
5. Lessons & Challenges: arbitrary linkages



“Affective” (friendly) linkages

Based mostly on very frequent meetings and conferences

Main plan is to share experiences and advocacy



Political linkages

To share common problems faced by wastepickers.

Main plan is to propose action to defend wastepickers livelihoods

Milestones' linkages

To achieve concrete goals

Main plan is to influence global agenda and international platforms

→ “Friend' s network”

- Need to meet frequently
- Tendency to centralized power among closest friends
- Not need for strong based-organizations

→ “Action Network”

- Need campaigns for action
- Tendency to be very email-based
- Problems of difference among political interests

→ “NGO Network”

- Rush process
- Conflicts between workers and ngo staff
- Not affected local level

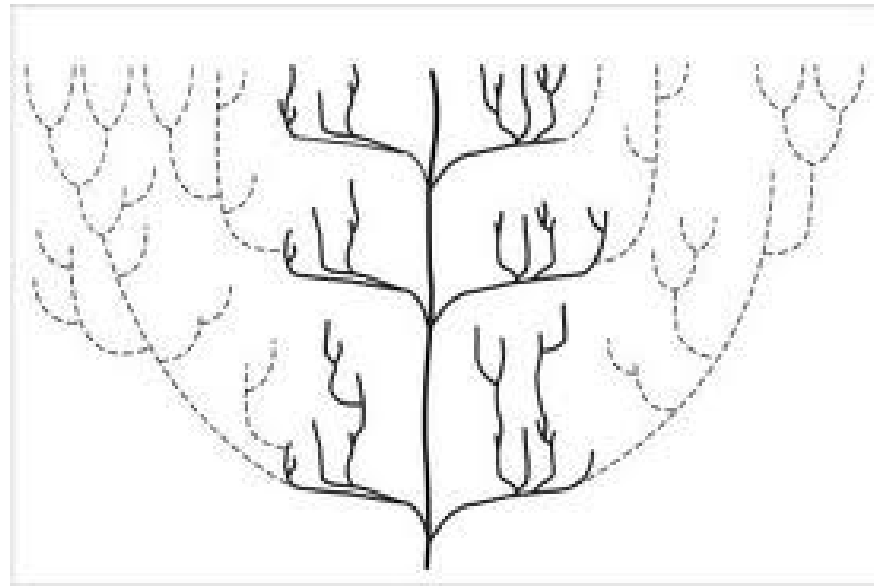
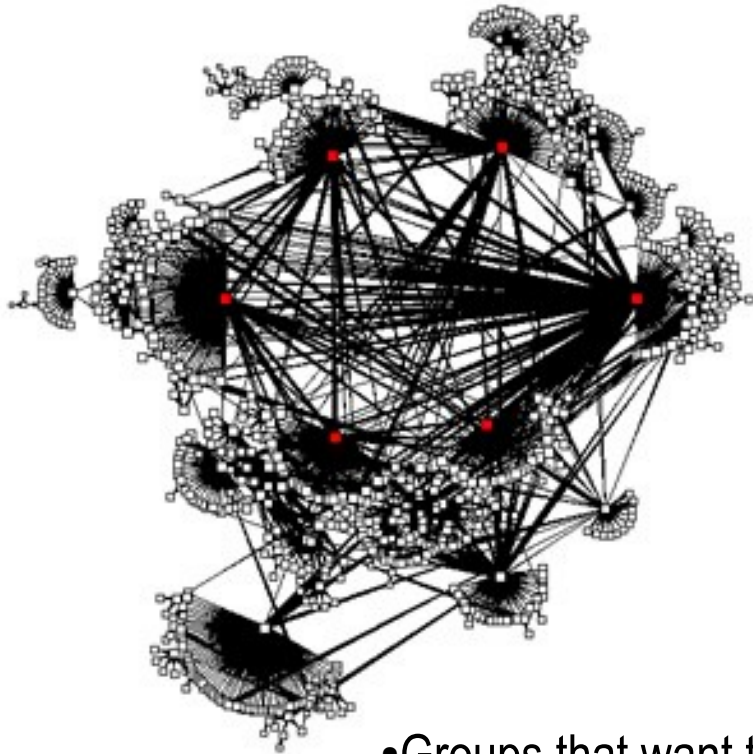
5. Lessons & Challenges: current situation

- Regional/National Networks (Redclaire and AIW) has same similarity of being networks with itinerant secretariats, no elections held, no president or regular positions appointed.
- Europe emerging, 2nd regional conference held end of september, mostly covered eastern europe.
- More african organizations in place, potential regional networking.
- Still a challenge to organize in Asia apart from India.
- Global representation keeps happening, at national or international events where Global alliance gets “showcase” even in the absence or proper structure.



5. Lessons & Challenges: the rizome vs the tree

from Ancient Greek: *rhízōma* "mass of roots",
is a modified subterranean stem of a plant that is usually found underground, often sending out roots
and shoots from its nodes. **It has no central trunk**, so if it's separated into pieces, each piece may be
able to give rise to a new plant.



- Groups that want to be part of it, but of what exactly?
- The impossibility to build decision making international committees
- How to understand and approach contemporary organizing paradigms?
 - Connectivity and horizontality replace structuralism and formality?
 - The need of post-structuralism debates around organizing models!