

# Plastic Colloquium

# WELCOME



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## International Experiences of Waste Picker Integration

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Witwatersrand, Nov 22, 2019



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# What is integration of waste pickers?

Integration of waste pickers or waste picker integration?



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Separation  
outside source

# Approaches to integration can be categorized based on the extent to which:

1. **systems:** the focus is on integration with the solid waste management system, the recycling value chain, or both
2. **focus:** integration is about individual waste pickers, their organisations, and/or their 'separation outside source' (SoS) system;
3. **direction:** waste pickers, their organisations and the SoS system are being integrated into a formally planned recycling system, or the formally planned system is based on and integrated with the existing SoS system;
4. **perspective:** waste pickers are framed as recipients of charity or knowledgeable experts who lead integration processes and are collaborators vs recipients



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# Categorization of approaches cont

- 5. power:** waste picker integration is implemented as a top-down development initiative or as a participatory process driven by waste pickers
- 6. extent:** the objective is integration of waste pickers' work into the waste management and/or recycling systems, or the integration of waste pickers as whole people into all spheres of social, political, cultural, economic, and environmental life;
- 7. goal:** waste picker integration is seen as a goal in itself, or is also understood as part of broader processes and struggles for more fundamental social, political, economic, cultural and environmental transformation



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# Typical approaches

## Approaches to waste picker integration

1. Charity
2. Participation
3. Multi-faceted
4. Holistic and Transformative



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# What pricing mechanisms support integration?

- Payment for service – eradicate exploitation of black labour; end subsidization of municipalities and industries by reclaimers
- Approaches to payment
  - Per kg
  - Per household
- Stable and higher prices



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# How is integration implemented?

## KKPKP union – Pune, India

- Started by directly engaging residents and receiving payment from residents – voluntary
- Contract with the municipality – SWaCH
- Payment from residents mandatory
- Maintain direct relationship
- Collect waste and recyclables
- Cooperative scrap shop, lending,
- Health care, free education for children
- Pensions



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# Brazil (under Lula and Rousseff)

- Proactive local and national government
- National and state legislation
- First preference for collection
- Inter-ministerial council
- Local decision making forums
- Occupational classification
- Understood as social, political, economic and cultural
- Part of democratization and addressing inequality
- Payment for services + contracts
- Support for organizing and organizations
- Meaningful support for cooperatives
- Sustained, holistic initiatives



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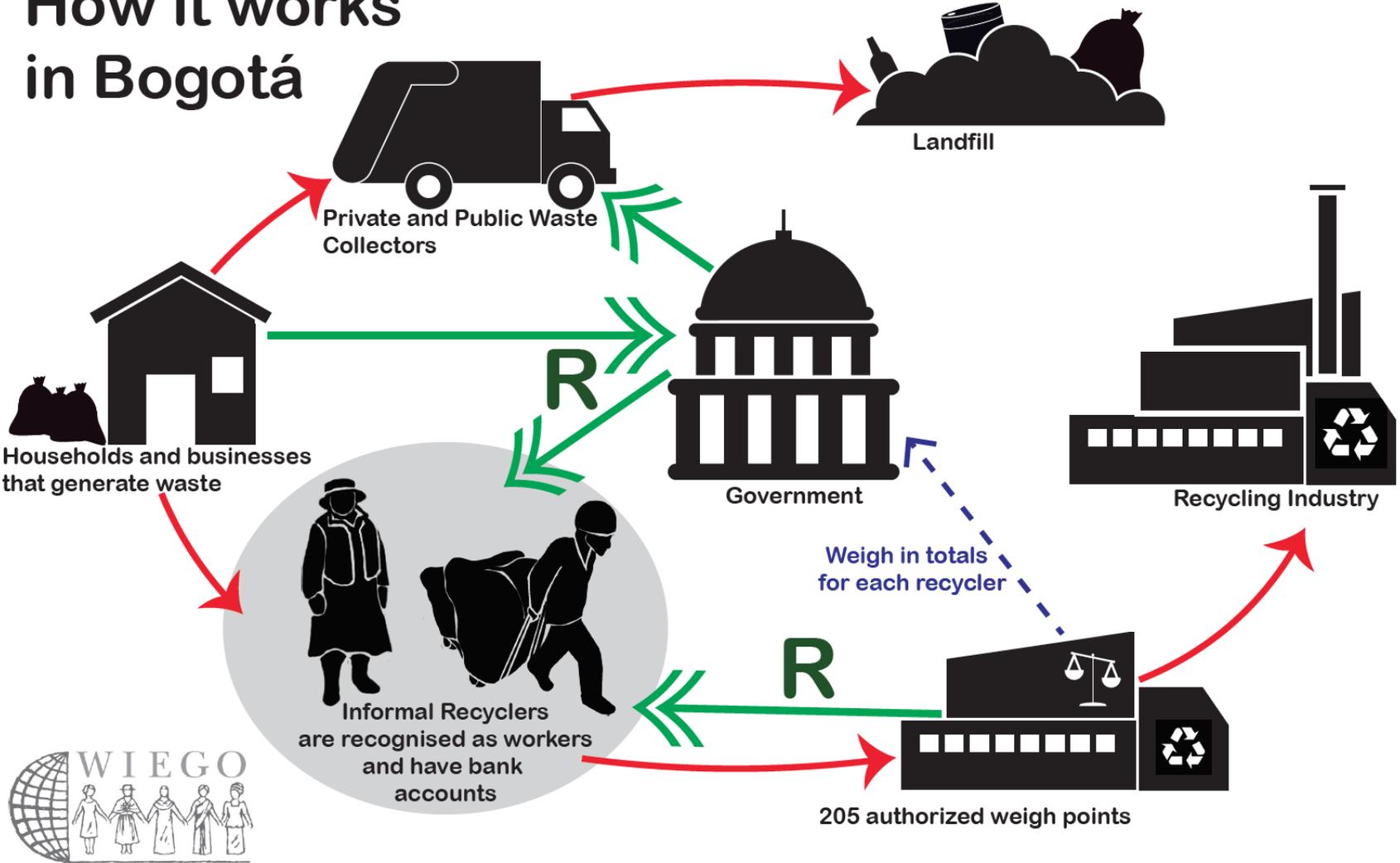


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# How it works in Bogotá



# What are the enablers of integration?

- Understanding that we only have one recycling system
- Understanding that we only have one economy
- Recognition of the SoS system and reclaimers' expertise and crucial contributions
- Proactive national legislation (eg Brazil)
- Legal requirements for municipalities and industries
- Truly collaborative decision making bodies
- Fit for purpose funding from government and industry



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# Enablers of integration cont.

- Commitment to end exploitation of free labour ie payment for services + pricing + paying lost earnings
- Commitment to start from what exists
- Holistic approach
- Having long-term initiatives vs pilots or piecemeal projects
- Meaningful funding to support and ensure organizing by reclaimers and building reclaimer organisations



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# Final remarks

- Waste Picker Integration Guideline for SA was deeply informed by international experiences (Brazil, India and Colombia)
- Vs cookie cutters – social, political, cultural, economic factors, history and form of waste management and recycling
- identify principles, objectives, key aspects and questions



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- Can't have one approach to integration and another to S@S
- Can't just say S@S by private companies won't have a negative effect on reclaimers
- Holistic approach
- Reclaimer integration is a way to meaningfully address key national challenges
- Example for other sectors



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# SA Definition

Waste picker integration is the creation of a **formally planned** recycling system that **values and improves** the present role of waste pickers, **builds on the strengths** of their **existing system** for collecting and revaluing materials, and includes waste pickers as **key partners** in its design, implementation, evaluation and revision.

Waste picker integration requires changes in a number of spheres and includes the integration of waste pickers' **work**, as well as the **political, economic, social, legal and environmental integration** of waste pickers.



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# Which way forward for SA?



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