WIEGO

Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing

Reconciling Poverty and the Environment

Creativity and integration of the informal sector

Sonia Dias

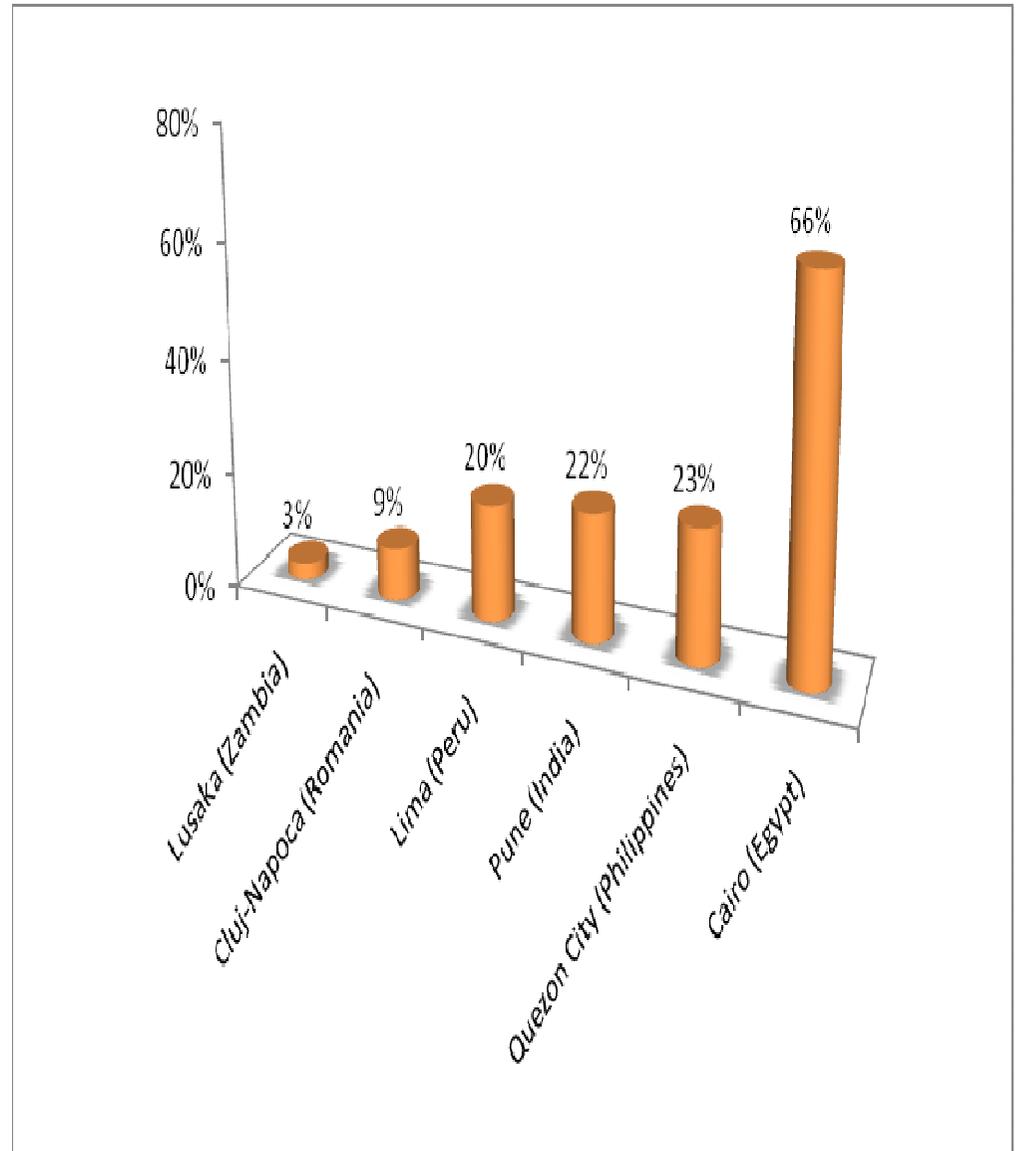June 2011

Poverty & Waste

- Poverty eradication goes beyond the design of policies for job and income generation.

- We should think of poverty in terms of citizenship empowerment, in terms of access to public services (health, sanitation, education) and *to the decision making process*.

- 1-2% of the urban working poor earn a living by handling waste.

Waste Pickers Facts & Figures

Contribution

- **2010 UN Habitat publication:** waste pickers perform between 50-100 per cent of all ongoing waste collection in most cities in developing countries – at no cost to the city budget.

- **GTZ/CWG 6 cities study:** waste pickers recovered approximately 20 per cent of all waste materials in three of the six cities studied; in one city, the rate was even higher due to the collection of organic matter for pig feeding
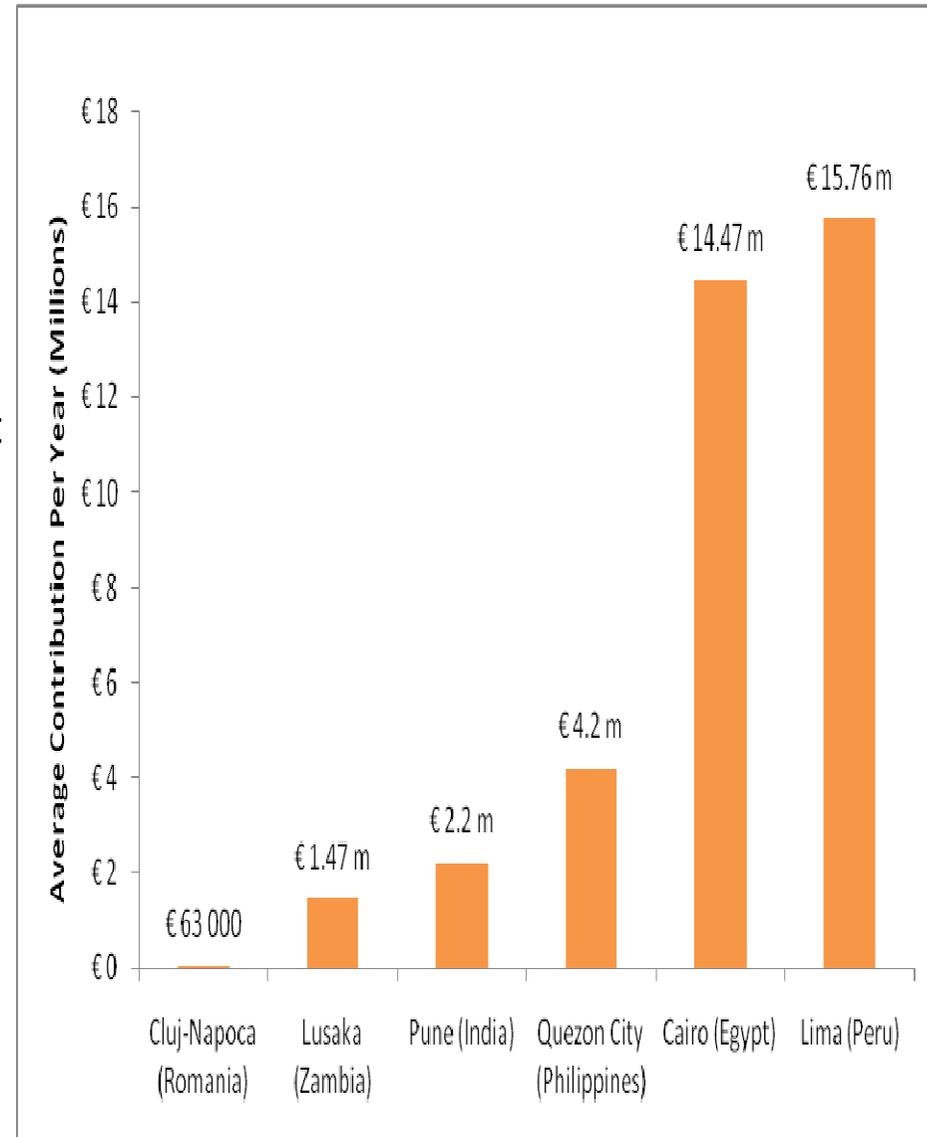

Source: original data from GTZ/CWG study. This version from wiego.

Waste Pickers Facts & Figures

Contribution

- Growing consensus that informal recycling supplements formal solid waste management in varied ways.

- The high rates of recovery of informal recyclers are a "positive externality which the municipality enjoys without having to pay for it because the environmental gain is a by-product of the economic interests of informal recyclers" (WATSAN 2010: 131).

- **Nevertheless,** they are treated as nuisances by authorities and with disdain by the public; *face exploitation and intimidation by middlemen;* have the lowest pay in the recycling chain; ***loose their livelihoods in privatization processes***.
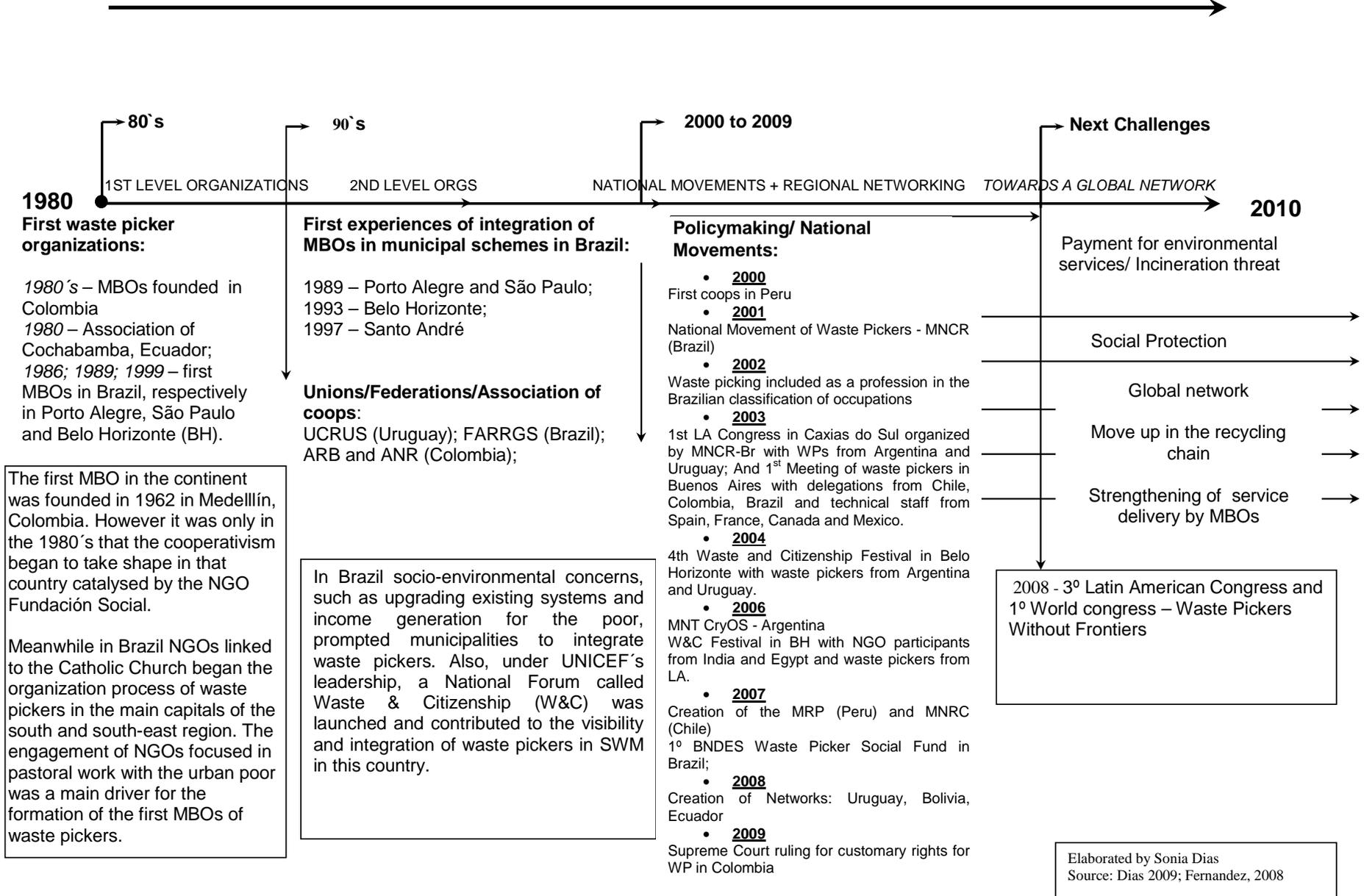

Source: original data from GTZ/CWG study. This version from wiego.

Shift Towards Integration:Examples from Brazil and LA

ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESS OF WASTE PICKERS IN LATIN AMERICA

MAIN DRIVERS AND CHALLENGES

80`s**     **90`s   **2000 to 2009**   **Next Challenges**

1ST LEVEL ORGANIZATIONS   2ND LEVEL ORGS   NATIONAL MOVEMENTS + REGIONAL NETWORKING   *TOWARDS A GLOBAL NETWORK*

1980   **2010**

First waste picker organizations:

1980´s – MBOs founded in Colombia
1980 – Association of Cochabamba, Ecuador;
1986; 1989; 1999 – first MBOs in Brazil, respectively in Porto Alegre, São Paulo and Belo Horizonte (BH).

First experiences of integration of MBOs in municipal schemes in Brazil:

1989 – Porto Alegre and São Paulo;
1993 – Belo Horizonte;
1997 – Santo André

Unions/Federations/Association of coops:
UCRUS (Uruguay); FARRGS (Brazil); ARB and ANR (Colombia);

Policymaking/ National Movements:

- **2000**
First coops in Peru
- **2001**
National Movement of Waste Pickers - MNCR (Brazil)
- **2002**
Waste picking included as a profession in the Brazilian classification of occupations
- **2003**
1st LA Congress in Caxias do Sul organized by MNCR-Br with WPs from Argentina and Uruguay; And 1st Meeting of waste pickers in Buenos Aires with delegations from Chile, Colombia, Brazil and technical staff from Spain, France, Canada and Mexico.
- **2004**
4th Waste and Citizenship Festival in Belo Horizonte with waste pickers from Argentina and Uruguay.
- **2006**
MNT CryOS - Argentina
W&C Festival in BH with NGO participants from India and Egypt and waste pickers from LA.
- **2007**
Creation of the MRP (Peru) and MNRC (Chile)
1º BNDES Waste Picker Social Fund in Brazil;
- **2008**
Creation of Networks: Uruguay, Bolivia, Ecuador
- **2009**
Supreme Court ruling for customary rights for WP in Colombia

Payment for environmental services/ Incineration threat

Social Protection

Global network

Move up in the recycling chain

Strengthening of service delivery by MBOs

The first MBO in the continent was founded in 1962 in Medelllín, Colombia. However it was only in the 1980´s that the cooperativism began to take shape in that country catalysed by the NGO Fundación Social.

Meanwhile in Brazil NGOs linked to the Catholic Church began the organization process of waste pickers in the main capitals of the south and south-east region. The engagement of NGOs focused in pastoral work with the urban poor was a main driver for the formation of the first MBOs of waste pickers.

In Brazil socio-environmental concerns, such as upgrading existing systems and income generation for the poor, prompted municipalities to integrate waste pickers. Also, under UNICEF´s leadership, a National Forum called Waste & Citizenship (W&C) was launched and contributed to the visibility and integration of waste pickers in SWM in this country.

2008 - 3º Latin American Congress and 1º World congress – Waste Pickers Without Frontiers

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How to Build Formal/Informal Bridges? Key Messages

- *"Nothing for us without us":* respect informal workers MBOs.

- Integration into SW systems but no subordination.

- Formalization: definition and content to be defined by representative organizations of the informal workers.

- Build SW systems on what you have works: the vision of a modern SW have to include existing informal waste workers.

Photo credits: waste picker in India; WASTE.

Coop in Brazil. SD photo library

How to Build Formal/informal Bridges? Key messages

- Technical ambitions/Privatization processes need to be modified to protect livelihoods.

- Comprehensive policies: participatory channels (regular not sporadic); recycling chain needs fair distribution of profits; legal framework; mechanisms for empowered integration; formal recognition of wp as a profession.

- The role of the State: shape SW systems addressing environmental and social concerns; implement comprehensive policies not *ad-hoc* solutions.

- Prepare WP´s social plans as part of SW Master Plans.

Waste and Citizenship Forum BH city, Brazil
Photo credits: Sonia Dias

Masters Plans and Waste Pickers
Social Plans

Guidelines:

- ***Working conditions and income generation*:** identification of integration strategies in municipal selective collection and/or alternatives for employment and income generation; implementation of sorting units;

- ***Housing, health and living conditions*:** Identification of social programs to target waste pickers (school allowance; family allowance etc); application of compensation policies for loss of work in landfills;

- ***Eradication of child labor*:** identification of actions to stimulate education of children and young people (supplemental programs and school supervision; professional training courses etc).

- ***Organization and institutional strengthening*:** initiatives to development/strengthen the organizational process; Training programs (business management, cooperativism principles, waste and environment etc).

- ***Public Policies and legal framework*:** Identification of training actions for technicians and social agents so that they are qualified in their particular work with this social segment and identification of public awareness and mobilization actions aimed at the adoption of socially aware practices, in relation to this social segment; Legal framework: identification of changes necessary in municipal legislation to support the social integration of waste pickers; dissemination and engagement of legal framework supporting existing social inclusion on a federal level; establishment of covenants or service provision contracts.

- ***Efficiency, productivity and increased value*:** identification of strategies for increasing capacity to compete on the market; project for processing or semi-processing of recyclables; management training.

- ***Supervision and monitoring,*** identification of supervisory and monitoring mechanisms for implementation process of waste picker social inclusion strategies. Source: Dias, 2011 (forthcoming).

... the millions of informal waste workers around the world demand:
respect and Comprehensive policies

For examples visit:

www.wiego.org

www.inclusivecities.org

Thanks!

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