

ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE

FROM MARGINS TO
BATTLE FOR
RECOGNITION



DEFINING THE ISSUE - RECLAIMERS

- Approximately 100 000 people in South Africa survive by salvaging recyclables from trash.
- These 'reclaimers' collect 80 to 90% of post consumer packaging in South Africa.
- We re-direct, sort, transport and sell materials of value – not 'waste'
- Thus they ensure that South Africa has recycling rates comparable to top 5 EU countries
- We are founders of a Billion Rand industry
- However, we do not receive recognition or payment for the service we provide.
- Instead, the City of Johannesburg (CoJ) contracts private companies to collect, sort and transport recyclables
- Thus, dispossessing reclaimers of their livelihoods in the industry they created.
- A story as old as colonialism itself; black people provide cheap labour that subsidises industry, municipalities and consumers.







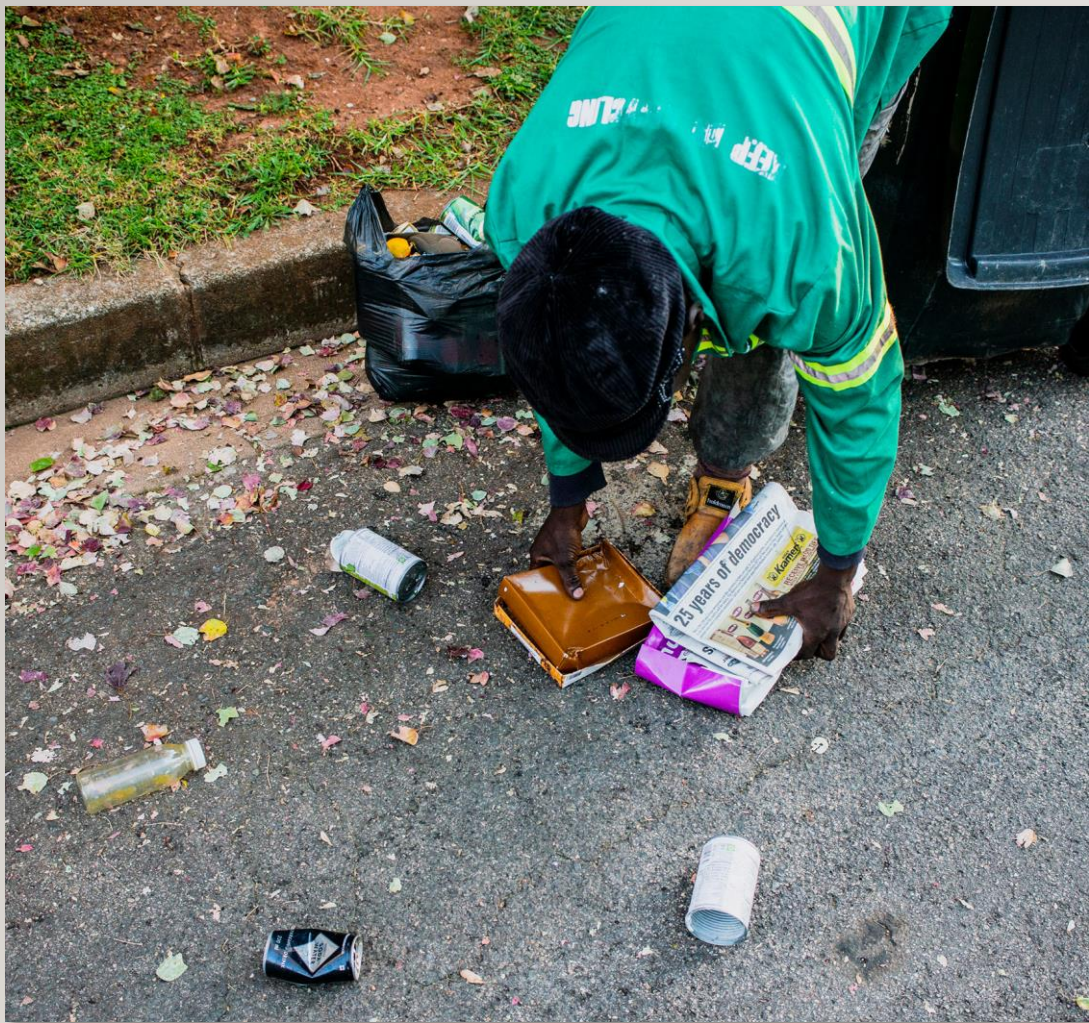
CIRCULAR ECONOMY & RECLAIMERS

- Traditional supply chains and the economy is based on manufacture, sell and dispose
- Other manufacturers in the recycling industry, need post consumer packaging inputs and where possible, recycled inputs are used
- Reclaimers are the chain that binds the two supply chains together
 - We provide a collection service
 - A Transportation service
 - A sorting service
- And thus bring the two economic processes into intimate contact with one another

POLICY = IDEOLOGY, NOT RESEARCH

- Whilst municipalities implement S@S policies that attempt to exclude Reclaimers from this critical function
- Reclaimers are forced to respond by cross-nighting, occupying open spaces, camping in residential neighborhoods
- These policies by municipalities are not based on evidence or research about existing systems pioneered by Reclaimers.
- In Joburg they resulted in up to 60% loss of income for Reclaimers
- Currently it is an industry based on the free, unpaid labour of black people. THIS HAS TO CHANGE!!





ACCIDENTAL ENVIROMENTALISTS

- We started working in the industry as a means to survive, we saw value in what society throws away
- However, we realized that picking through 'waste' we also helping society and the planet, in South Africa we remove metric tonnes of materials per day
- We ensure that things that are thrown away, are reclaimed, re-used and recycled.
- However, there is little support in some municipalities to collect statistics. In Joburg, the city has stopped a registration drive. Only South Africans can be registered
- Not recognising our role in environment, means not recognising the service we provide



RESPONDING TO THE ISSUE

Registering reclaimers is crucially important for a number of reasons. It will allow both ARO and CoJ to know how many reclaimers are in the city and what materials are being diverted from landfills. It forces the city to acknowledge reclaimers and makes it easier to fight for inclusion and compensation for negative effects. Travelling to all corners of the city to promote registration also enables the ARO team to meet new reclaimers and start to organise them.

ARO includes South African and non South African reclaimers. The negotiations with CoJ took over a year due to CoJ's initial refusal to recognize and register reclaimers from other African countries. Although they eventually agreed, without oversight by reclaimers, the process is likely to be slower and will fail to reach all the intended beneficiaries.

The 9 member ARO organizing team is making great gains. However, given that ARO is fighting for reclaimers to be paid, the organising team should not lose their own income and incur costs to work on registration. By paying for the team's transport, food and a small stipend this project will ensure that they do not have to make this sacrifice and that registration can continue.



JOBURG REGISTRATION DRIVE

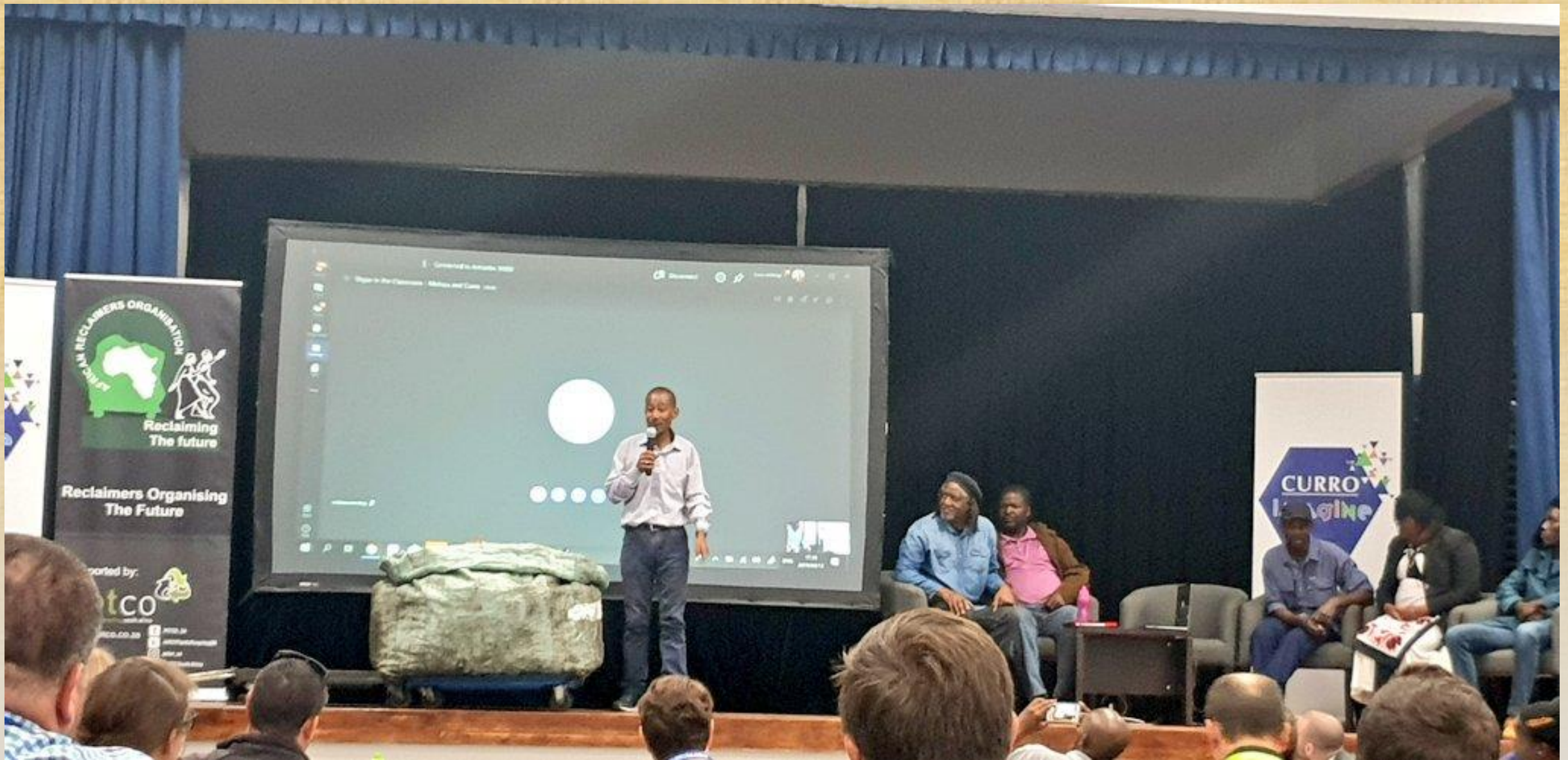


INNOVATION - IMAGINATION

- Reclaimers reach areas of the City that the Waste collection system does not reach. From illegal dumps to open spaces that have been abandoned
- ARO is forming partnerships with Curro Schools, to collect materials and to participate in educating children of separation of materials. We are also exploring being part of the curriculum in EMS, Science, Social Science, Technology etc. We will be launching this programme in their schools in Midrand
- We want to provide alternative sources of income for landfill based workers and women. We want to collect organic waste from landfills, Residents, Businesses etc to supply Gas to energy plants
- We want to expand into construction waste etc
- We want to build recycling hubs with bailing machines, transportation, ablution facilities etc.
- We want to run MRF's with rehab facilities, semi processing plants, spaces for artists, food gardens, food banks to feed the homeless – our visions are big and entirely achievable

PILOT WITH UNILEVER – COMPENSATION FOR INDIVIDUAL RECLAMERS





ARO AT CURRO TEACHERS CONFERENCE





Reclaimers the Future



MISSING



MISSING



MISSING



MISSING



WHAT MUST BE DONE?

- Certification bodies are in a unique position to influence manufacturing standards
- We must require manufacture of packaging and products capable of recycling and reuse
- Allow for re-used products repaired by reclaimers to have warranties
- Support us in getting manufacturers to recognize Reclaimers' roles in supply chains
- Find ways of including us in your certification standard and protect labour intensive and environmentally friendly disposal policies
- We must encourage the manufacture of materials that easier to re-use, remanufacture