

TIT BITS OF INFORMAL E-WASTE RECYCLERS IN GHANA

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BACKGROUND

- **Ghana Population = 31m**
- GDP per capita of **US\$2,565**
- Location: Sub-Saharan Africa
- Divided into 16 administrative regions
- The capital city of Greater Accra Region and Ghana is Accra (**5.4m population**)
- Accra is smallest region (**3,245 km² or 1.4%** Ghana's land area)



Credits: Shimelis 2022

SOLID WASTE MGT IN GHANA – AN OVERVIEW

- 2010-2020 Average solid waste generation was 14,130 m³/day nationwide
- Accra contribute about 21% of that; 67% organic matter
- About 88% of the waste is collected (in areas with collection services)
- Per capita was generation vary from 0.9kg/day in high income areas to 0.5kg/day in low income areas
- Household size 5 in high income areas to 50 in to income areas

(Oteng Ababio, 2022).

SOLID WASTE MGT IN GHANA

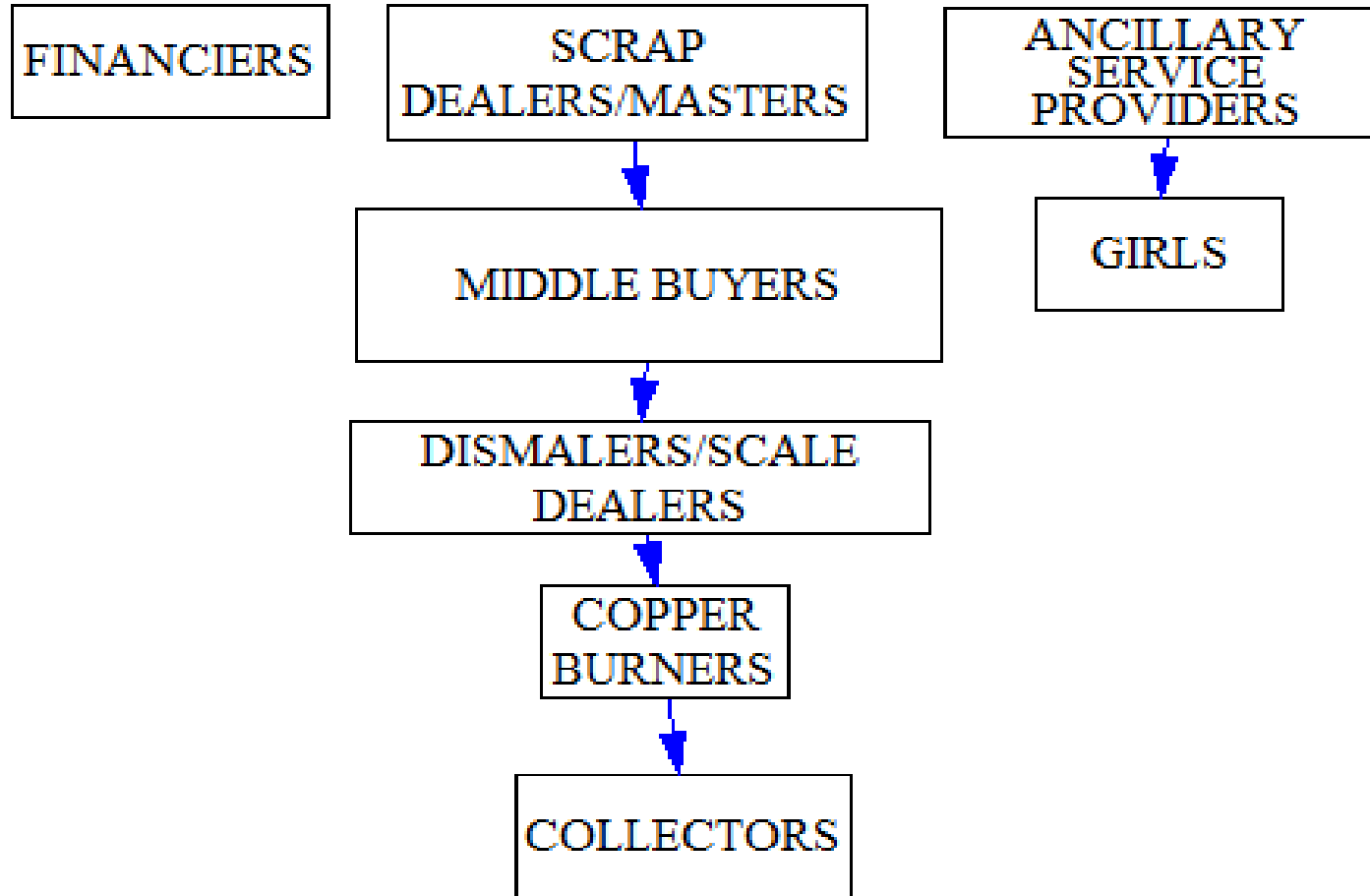
- Formal sector handles about 48% of solid waste; the rest by the informal sector
- About 600 registered informal waste collectors in Accra
- E-waste as a stream of solid waste is recycled about mostly informal sector (95%) (see Owusu-Sekyere (2018) for more information on e-waste material flow in Ghana).

E-WASTE MANAGEMENT IN GHANA

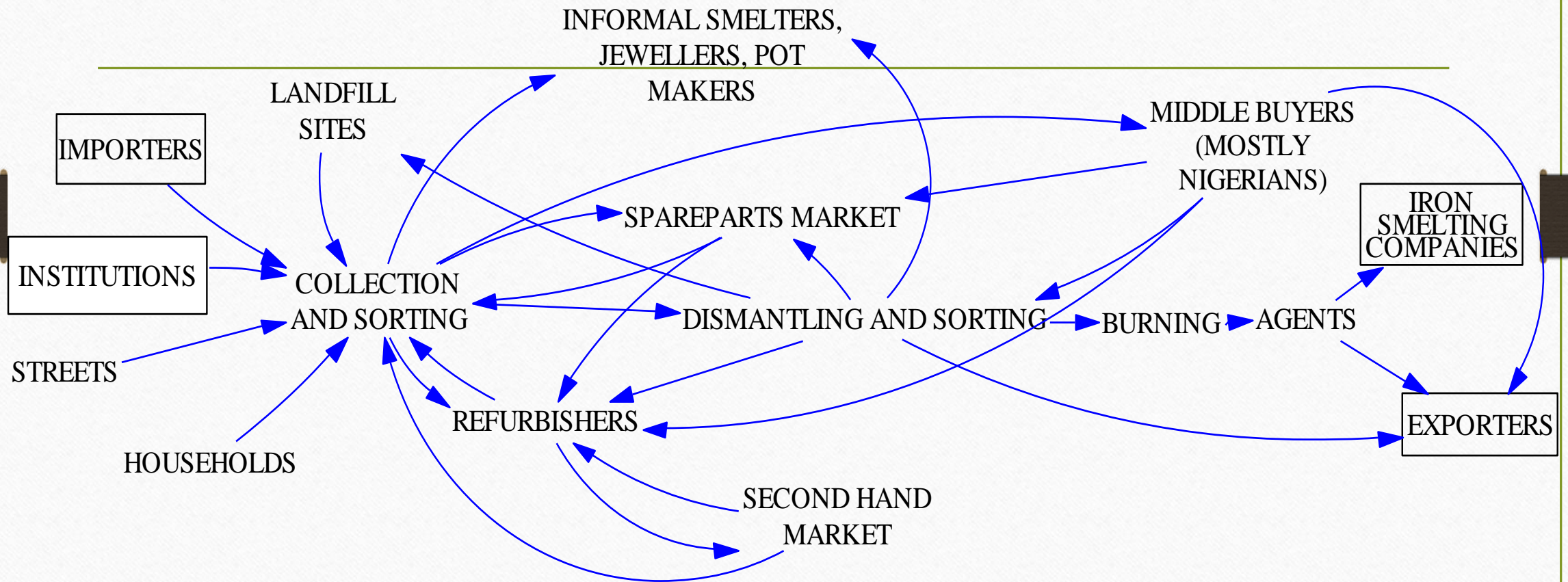


E-waste in Old Fadama (Korle Noli scrapyard)

HOW INFORMAL SECTOR WORKS: E-WASTE HEIRACHY



HOW INFORMAL SECTOR WORKS: SIMPLIFIED E-WASTE VALUE CHAIN



WHERE ARE THE E-WASTE RECYCLERS IN ACCRA

- Old Fadama/Sikkens/Sodom&Gommorrah/Konkomba and **Agbogbloshie**
- Mortuary road
- Ashaiman
- Gallawey
- Tema
- Kasoa (Obom Road Scrapyard in Central Regio).

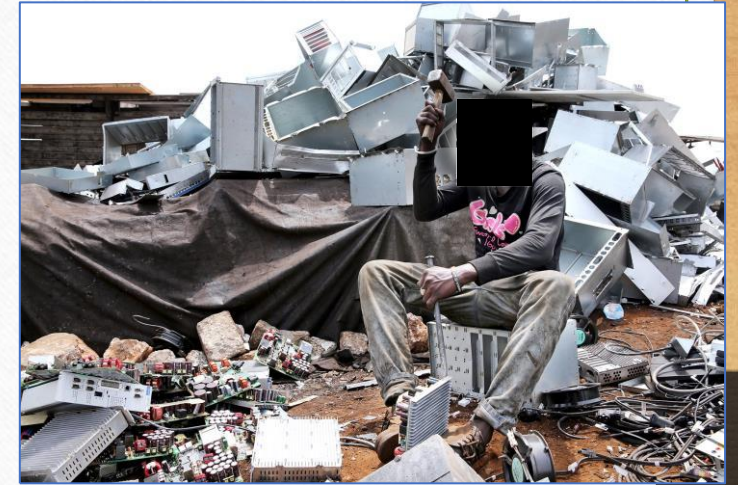
Mortuary Road Scrapyard



A pile of scrap metals



removing copper wires from old electric motors



E-waste being dismantled



Reclaimed parts being weighed

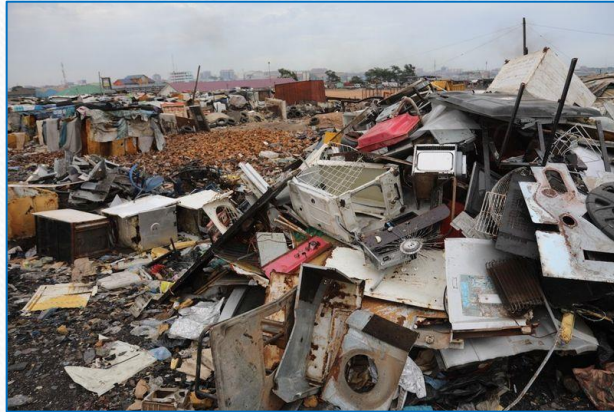


Young people busily extracting materials from scrap



scrap metals transported

AGBOGBLOSHIE



- Methods of waste processing - especially burning – which **emit toxic chemicals** (lead, mercury, arsenic, dioxins, furans, and brominated flame retardants) into the air, land and water.
- The site **demolished in July 1, 2021**: Affected **livelihood** of the city's urban poor. But also created a lost opportunity



Agbogbloshie scrapyards after the demolition and eviction

THE NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT



IMPORTANCE OF THE INFORMAL SECTOR

- They create jobs (20,000-34,000 people in Accra) especially unskilled/uneducated
- Reduce the volumes of waste landfilled
- They supply spareparts
- Provide raw materials for the iron smelting companies
- Provide indirect jobs
- Each scrap worker support an average of six other people
- Contributes significantly to Ghana's gdp

WHO ARE THE INFORMAL SECTOR E-WASTE WORKERS

- Ethnically they are mostly Dagombas, an ethnic group native to the Northern Region.
- Male dominated; **less than 1%** of e-waste workers in Accra are women
- Kumasi is quite different; there a distinct markets/scrapyard for women
- A small fraction of foreigners – Nigerians, Beninios, Malians, Burkinabes and Togolese – are also involved in e-waste work.
- In Accra Nigerians concentrate on PCBs, computers, copper and aluminium.

ABOUT THE DAGOMBAS/DAGBAMBA

- Can be found in nearly every major scrapyards (where e-waste is processed)
- Native to the Northern Region
- Speak Dagbanle/Dagbani
- Mostly Muslims
- Low level of education
- Their Kingdom is the oldest in Ghana dating back precolonial times
- Have inter and intra-ethnic conflicts that continue to this day
- The conflicts are politically linked and affects the scrap work
- There is hope of resolution

CULTURAL PERCULIARITIES TO BE CONSIDERED, ETC.

- Do: GREETINGS (Compulsory)
- Do: accept their gifts
- Do: Offer gifts (including money) when visiting a chief
- Do: Be friendly (laugh/smile).
- Don't: Don't shake hands with Hajias/Women (if you are a man, unless they offer you their hands).
- Don't: wear sandals into their rooms.
- Don't: point fingers at elders (or anyone. using left hand is forbidden, even a house!)
- Don't: wear a hat when interacting with a chief (there are various meanings to the hats they wear)
- Don't: Sit and cross legs

WHICH CHALLENGES MAY OCCUR DURING DATA COLLECTION?

- Fatigue
- Time and demand for money
- Language barrier (dagbani, twi, hausa, northern dialects); proverbs, indirect expressions.
- Pictures
- Privacy and women
- Data protection commission

Conclusion

- Material flow analysis is incomplete without the streams that go to the informal recyclers, particularly e-waste.
- Their invitation by SuCCESS24 to the SDG indicator workshop is perceived as a strong indication of inclusiveness.
- Going forward the informal sector must be treated as equal partners with the formal sectors.

DANKE!