



# Bringing Informal Waste Pickers into Productive Economies



## Pilot on Community Engagement and Enterprise Models with Informal Waste Pickers in Sahiwal Pakistan



AHK-Foundation



[ahk-foundation.org](https://ahk-foundation.org)



Watch our Video: <https://youtu.be/zEdEMbwVNJ4>

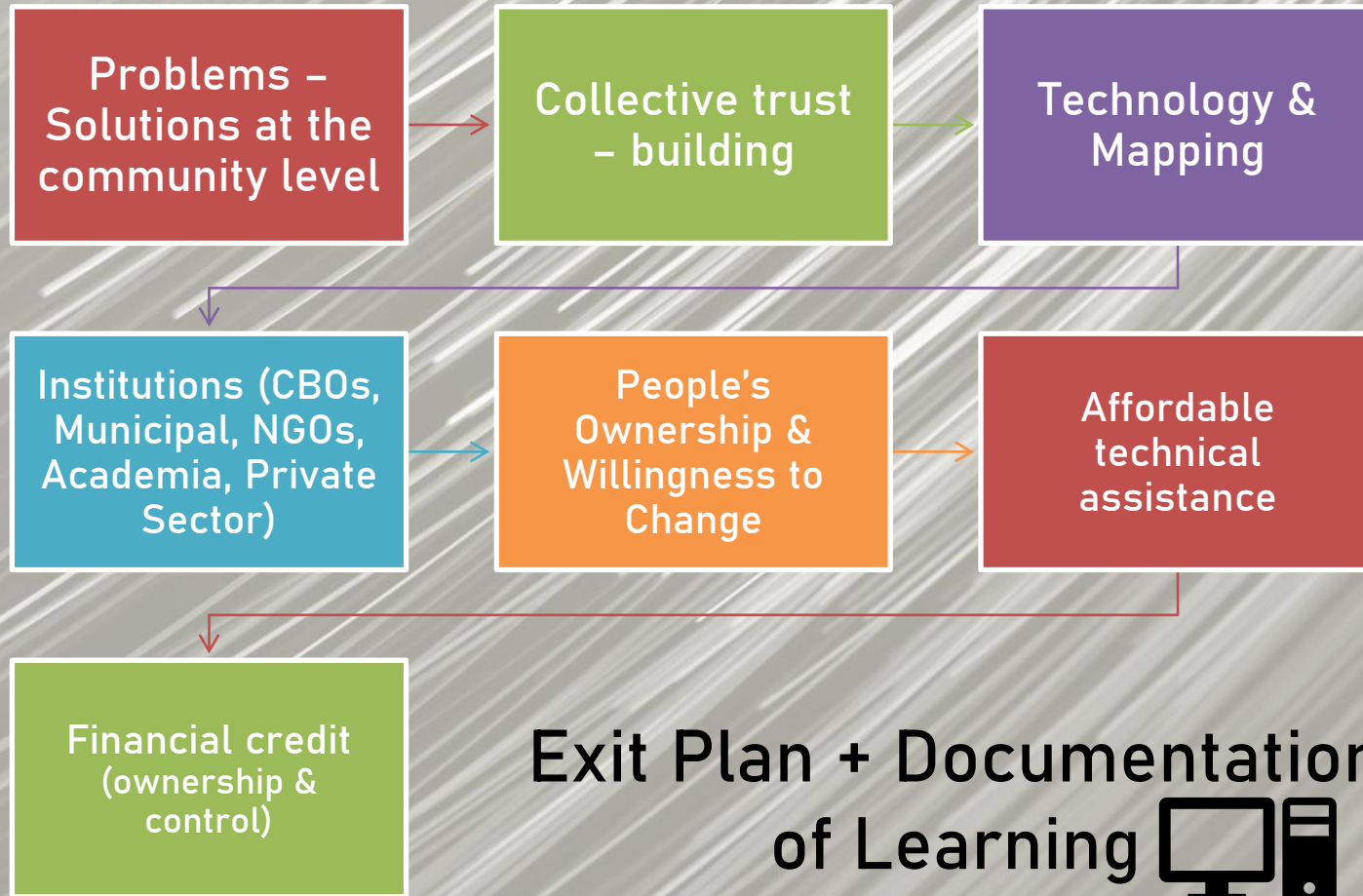


# Agenda

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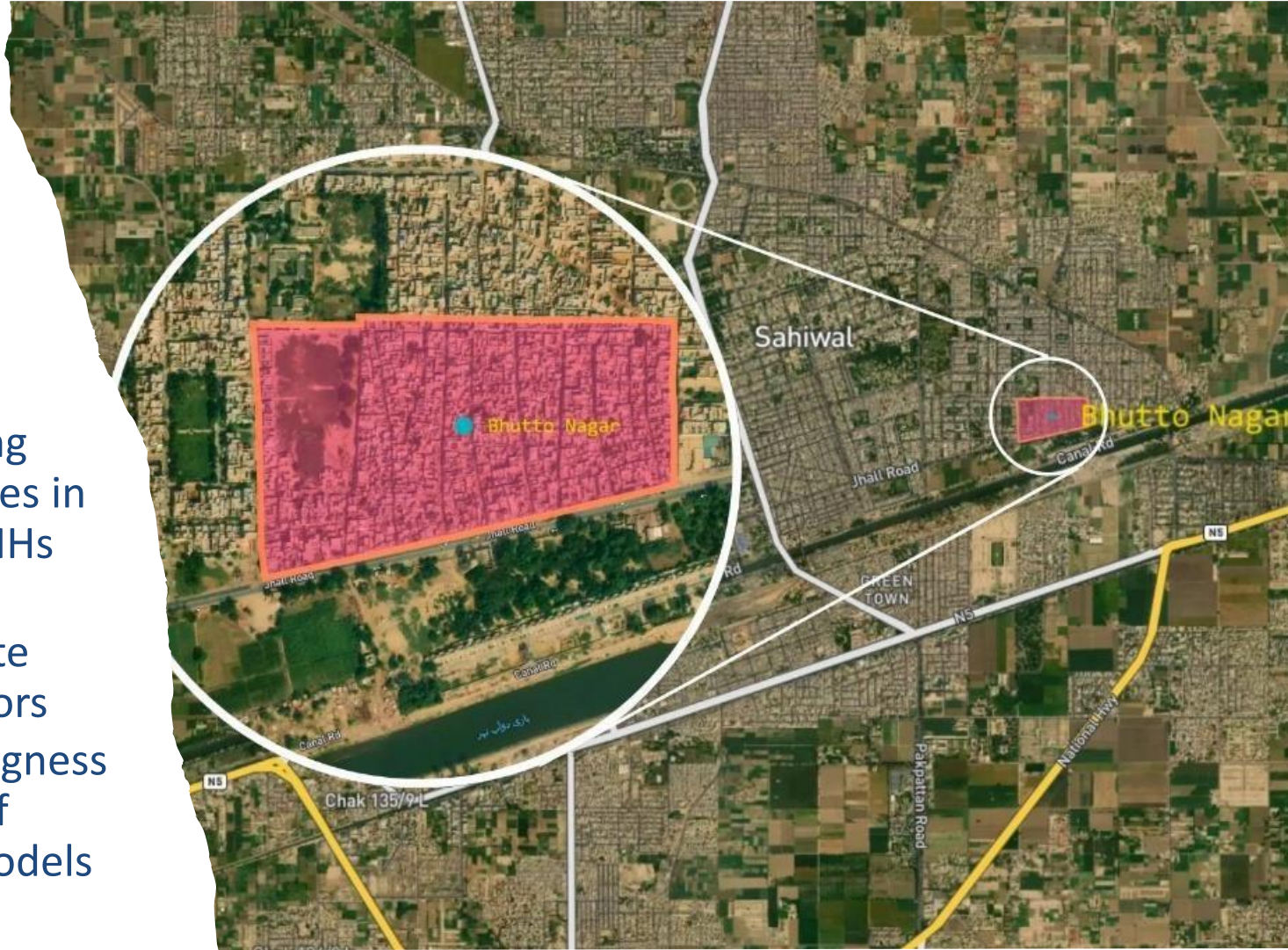
- Introduction to AHK Foundation
- Project objectives
- Process: Co-designed - community engagement and trust building
- Findings: Landscape of Informal waste pickers
- Outcomes: Learnings

# Approach – Community Self-Reliance



## Objectives:

1. Understanding waste practices in low income HHs
2. Mapping the informal waste economy actors
3. Explore willingness and uptake of enterprise models



Bhutto Nagar 1200-1500 HHs (USD 150 per month income, daily or unskilled labor)  
Waste generated is 0.3-0.5kg/day with 6.6 members/HH per day  
Waste recycled or sold approx. 1kg/day (30%-50% recycled)

# Project Approach:

Stakeholders  
Community

Informal Waste  
Pickers

Municipal  
Authorities

Private  
Recycling  
Industry



# Sahiwal: Informal Workers at the Heart of Recycling

**N = 451 informal workers (≈50% waste pickers, 49% scrap dealers) Mapping Study 2025**

- 94% are men; ≈60% are 26–45 years
- 97% work alone – no cooperative, no union, no representation.
- 30-40% Core materials recovered: plastics, paper/cardboard and glass from households, markets and dump sites.
- <1% report any social security, health insurance or union membership; PPE and training are rare.
- Limited routes – no cooperation, technology facilitation, hazardous risk, harassment by police

**There is strong willingness to change practices and engage with formal waste services but missing Enabling systems – Trust, dialogue and financial inclusion**





# How Integration Makes Rational Sense

## Economic, Environmental & Social

- **Batool SA et al (2008) – Lahore** informal sector generates PKR 271 m/year

PKR 65 million/year can be saved in Municipal costs

PKR 530M – potential industrial revenue.

PKR 866m/year in 1 city

- **SWaCH Pune (PPPs) @200+tons/day – India (savings 16m in transport + 187 m in worker fees)**
  - PKR 8,000 (10,000 workers in 15 largest cities) – 960m/year income increase for urban poor
  - Karachi 15,000 tons/day = 9,000 tons/d MS + 3000 tons/d informal
  - 1000 tons/d additional formal partnerships – **Savings + Income!!**

# What Next for the Informal Workers Model in Sahiwal

## Member-based organization plus social enterprise

- **Recognition into the Formal Economy**- Identity tools (N = 200+ workers)
- **Enterprise Models** – 2 Cooperatives, contracts, partnerships with user fees, income streams
- **Formal institutional contracts** – Municipal or Contractor
- **Capacity building** – enterprise, safety, segregation, recycling and MRF for a circular economy
- **Community Engagement** – full loop
- **Policy Advocacy** - Secure livelihoods and dignity with public and private sector industries
- **Technology & Tracking**





**Thank you**  
**Development Thinking in a Changing World**

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