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**CROP & CHILDWATCH INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH NETWORK**

CONVENE AN INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC WORKSHOP:

**RETHINKING POVERTY AND CHILDREN IN THE NEW  
MILLENNIUM: LINKING RESEARCH AND POLICY**

Oslo, Norway, September 17-19, 2007

**GROUP 2**

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS: A DRAFT**

**By Chair persons**

Usha Nayar, Sebastian Lipina

**Participants**

C. Ramachandriaha, Palash Kamruzzaman, Sok Serey, Maria Carmen Pantea, Renata Serra, Liz Kerrins, Marguerite Daniel, Keetie Roelen, Karunatissa Atukorala, and others who attended some sessions.

**1. CHILD POVERTY: MANIFESTATIONS AND STRATEGIES**

The papers presented in two days sessions focused on the concept, the measurement, and the theoretical debates on issues concerning manifestations of child poverty. In this category we found that four presentations were primarily concerned on dimensions and domains of child poverty. There were three papers that focused on specific groups of children facing poverty: (1) child labour; and (2) children affecting by war. In other three papers Education was the major strategy used for the analysis of child poverty, and also it was used the instrument of alleviating it.

**2. SUMMARIES**

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| <b>EDUCATION</b> |
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*(1) Denying children their future in a Globalising world poor status of government education in Hyderabad (India)*

Ramachandraiah C.'s paper emphasizes the continued neglect of government schools in Hyderabad, India, which are the only option to the poor children, is seen as a

systematic process of exclusion and marginalization of the poor people belonging in the minorities scheduled casts, and other backward communities. In an era of high economic growth and growing need for quality education to all, the government schools in Hyderabad are based with appalling levels of infrastructure because of which children from poor families are either dropping-out or getting very low quality education. Despite constitutional provisions (Article 45 and the declaration of the Right to Education as a Fundamental Right by the 86<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 2002 to the Constitution of India), the policymakers are showing scant regard to improve the educational status of the poor people.

*(2) Re-visiting children the role of primary education programme to help reducing child poverty in Bangladesh*

Kamruzzaman Palash's paper argues that primary education programme in Bangladesh is more focused on achieving international targets than to create a knowledge-based society that would have provided a better tool for poverty reduction, especially child poverty from the society. This paper explores the interconnections of primary and basic level of education and its desired role for poverty reduction. However, the paper suggests that "success stories" of Bangladesh are rather quantitative and only have demonstrative value. This paper recommends that policymakers in Bangladesh should understand the local situation and find the base to improve the quality, cut the drop-out rate, extend the free and compulsory education up to grade eight. Further, it is recommended to integrated community participation for future policies to help reducing child poverty from the society in contrast to improvements in enrolment and gender parity only.

*(3) Compulsory education in rural Cambodia: a comparative study between a State School (SS) and a State and NGOs Supported School (SNSS)*

Sok Serey's paper is based on his Master's thesis, where he empirically studied two school of Cambodia. Both schools have state involvement while one was supported by and NGO no well. It was interesting to observe from his finding that quality of teaching was better in the school that is solely supported by the state than the school supported jointly by the state and the NGO. The parents and students seemed to prefer the state supported schools although the NGO supported state schools were having better infrastructure facilities. It was observed by the participants that this paper comprises of a few interesting features and observation about the education in Cambodia. However, disertant and other group members have strongly raised their concern about these findings to be understood as general features of Cambodia's educational sector as the sample size was too small (only two schools).

## CHILDREN LABOUR

*(4) Transitional education for child labourers – A review of residential bridge camps for mainstreaming ex-child labourers into the formal education system.*

Pantea Maria Carmen presented a comprehensive review of literature of Residential Bridge Camps for Mainstreaming Ex-child Labourers into formal education system. Based on 786 abstracts the researcher concluded that this strategy had positive outcomes in terms of decreasing child labour and mainstreaming children into formal schools. However, the methodological quality of the literature varied. In spite of several limitations of the studies, it was demonstrated that Residential Bridge Camps on the whole created effective impact on child labour to the transition for mainstreaming education. The group and the discussant appreciated the systematic analysis of the existing data by the researcher. It was suggested that to fill up the gaps further research by visiting the programmes and using mixed bag of methodologies would be useful to understand this intervening strategy of bringing child labour into mainstream education.

*(5) The realities of child labour and the purposes of policy: children's labour in West Africa.*

Serra Renata paper highlight on the worst form child labour in cocoa agricultural and domestic service in West Africa. Within this context, child work in domestic services and in cocoa production involves often the child relocation away from home, thus prompting questions on whether these forms of child migration cum labor might also involve trafficking. In the face of these questions, the paper aimed to provide a framework by which understanding why children may be found in these types of labor and what may be the policy consequences. It was recommended, as child agency plays a major role in determining entry and exit in such forms of labor, policy interventions should be better prepared to square such realities and devise appropriate actions to combat child labor. During the discussion it was suggested that the various perspectives on definitions of the hazardous child labour like social and psychological may be also be included.

## CHILDREN AND WAR

*(6) Poverty of children in the war-affected boundary villages: understanding the situation from children's point of view and recommendations for child-centered development approach.*

Karunatissa Atukorala's paper addresses some very critical issues about children's lives in boundary communities (no man's land in a war zone) in Sri-Lanka. The researcher informed the group the presentation was made based on preliminary data and he has carried out full field-work in those areas, and those will be fed into the final version of paper. The alarming traumatic living conditions of children and their families were depicted through photographs. He expects to come-up with some useful insights and recommendations that will help the policymakers to understand the situation better and

to develop a reasonably workable and pro child policy. However, it has been suggested that this piece of work should be inter-connected and be reflected with the existing works on war, child poverty and child psychology so that it could create stronger impact on the policymakers action.

## CHILD POVERTY

*(7) Taking a parental employment approach to ending poverty for children in lone parent families in Ireland: Balancing poverty elimination and child well-being.*

Kerrins Liz's paper is a policy analysis based on national and international survey data, in which Liz analyzed the *Proposals for Supporting Lone Parents*, as a strategy that the Irish Government considers as a key element of their antipoverty policy for children and families. She points out that a reading of these Proposals prompts questions not only on the Governments' capacity to appropriately deliver the required responses, but also the extent to which the potential impact could have on different children well-being outcomes. Interestingly, despite other national strategies including a child-centered contextualization of practices, the Proposals appear to neglect it. Lone parents are overrepresented by mothers, most of them with histories of disadvantage in terms of education. Specifically, the high poverty risk faced by these mothers and their children is related to their inadequate attachment to full-time, quality employment and the level, structure and delivery of social assistance and services. Almost all the lone mothers were recently involved in the One Parent Family Payment (OPFP) action, which engaged them or not in part-time paid employment. This strategy has also the effect of reinforcing women's dependency on men through a cohabitation rule which acted as a barrier to joint parenting or to the forming of a new family. The participants observed in Liz paper dissimilarities of such stigma in other countries in Asia and Latin America as well. Such an illustration provides how the combination of specific cultural barriers, such as the social representation of lone mothers in Ireland, and a lack of multidimensional policy approaches can maintain or increase the well-being of children that are already disadvantaged.

*(8) International aid: Cure, curse or catalyst for social unraveling? The impact on the community of humanitarian support for vulnerable children in Makete, Tanzania.*

Daniel Marguerite narrated people's "clived experiences" and "personal meanings" from a study in Makete District, Tanzania, to identify and support vulnerable children to stay in school. The discussion was very interesting to highlight that international aid does not always achieve its intended outcomes unless local communities' participation in decision making is done. The preliminary findings of the study indicated that when entire community is desperately poor and there is a little it can contribute to the material needs of the vulnerable children, the deep concern is how to make the programme sustainable. The discussion centered on the theoretical framework used in the study of "social cohesion" instead of "social capital".

*(9) Cognitive Neuroscience and childhood poverty: progress and promise.*

Lipina Sebastian and McCandliss Bruce's paper reviews the Cognitive Neuroscience framework involvement in the study of childhood poverty. Over the last ten years, several neuroscientists have begun to join collaborative efforts with other social scientists to contribute, both conceptually and methodologically, in the study of poverty effects on basic cognitive processes. Several of the topics focus on identification of brain plasticity mechanisms involved in learning, the study of the emergence of basic cognitive functions such as attention, emotional self-regulation, language processes, how these cognitive processes play out in early literacy and numeracy skills, and the possibility to modify the emergence of these skills through novel cognitive training methods. Specifically, these findings have started to be applied to interventions in the form of promising training programs, aimed to induce brain and behavioral changes in normal or disordered children. Although research at each of these levels of complexity, may potentially inform the specific ways in which poverty influences cognitive and brain development, it is likely that some of the most direct policy implications aimed at improving the development of children at risk due to poverty will come first from cognitive intervention efforts.

*(10) Constructing a child poverty approach – the case of Vietnam.*

Roelen Keetie's paper put forward a Vietnam-specific child poverty approach that aims to provide an overall picture of child poverty and serves as a new policy tool. In contrast to common practice for existence child poverty approaches, the various steps of the construction process are elaborately discussed to portray the choices and decisions made for every step. The approach builds upon the multidimensional concept of child poverty and is based upon the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the basic needs approach. There were few concerns from the discussant and group members. While it is the matter of participation and developing a consensus about the measurement of poverty and/or child poverty a strong caution should be taken in this regard. Also, it was discussed how can be operationalised that Vietnamese can define their own poverty and child poverty within their specific context not by external actors only.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The overall recommendations to reduce child poverty are presented at three levels:

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| <b>LEVEL 1: POLICY PLANNERS</b> |
|---------------------------------|

1. Specific recommendation for the country was re-visiting the role of primary education programme to help reducing poverty in Bangladesh.
2. Policy planner may be guided to sponsor and use the systematic transparent and reliable methodology designs based studies to reduce child poverty.
3. Explicit visibility for children, and children in poverty, in policy and decision making for the development agenda of the country.
4. Consider Right to Education as non-negotiable for child development.

5. The planning process must include all the services for children, such as health, education, stimulation, play, and opportunities for the development of full potential of countries' children, including children in poverty.
6. Standards for interventions by government organizations and NGO's must be set, monitor, and evaluated.
7. Varied perceptions of stakeholders regarding causes and consequences of child labour need to be included to identify policy options for eradicating child labour.
8. The role of child agency is to be recognized vis-à-vis child labour and trafficking.

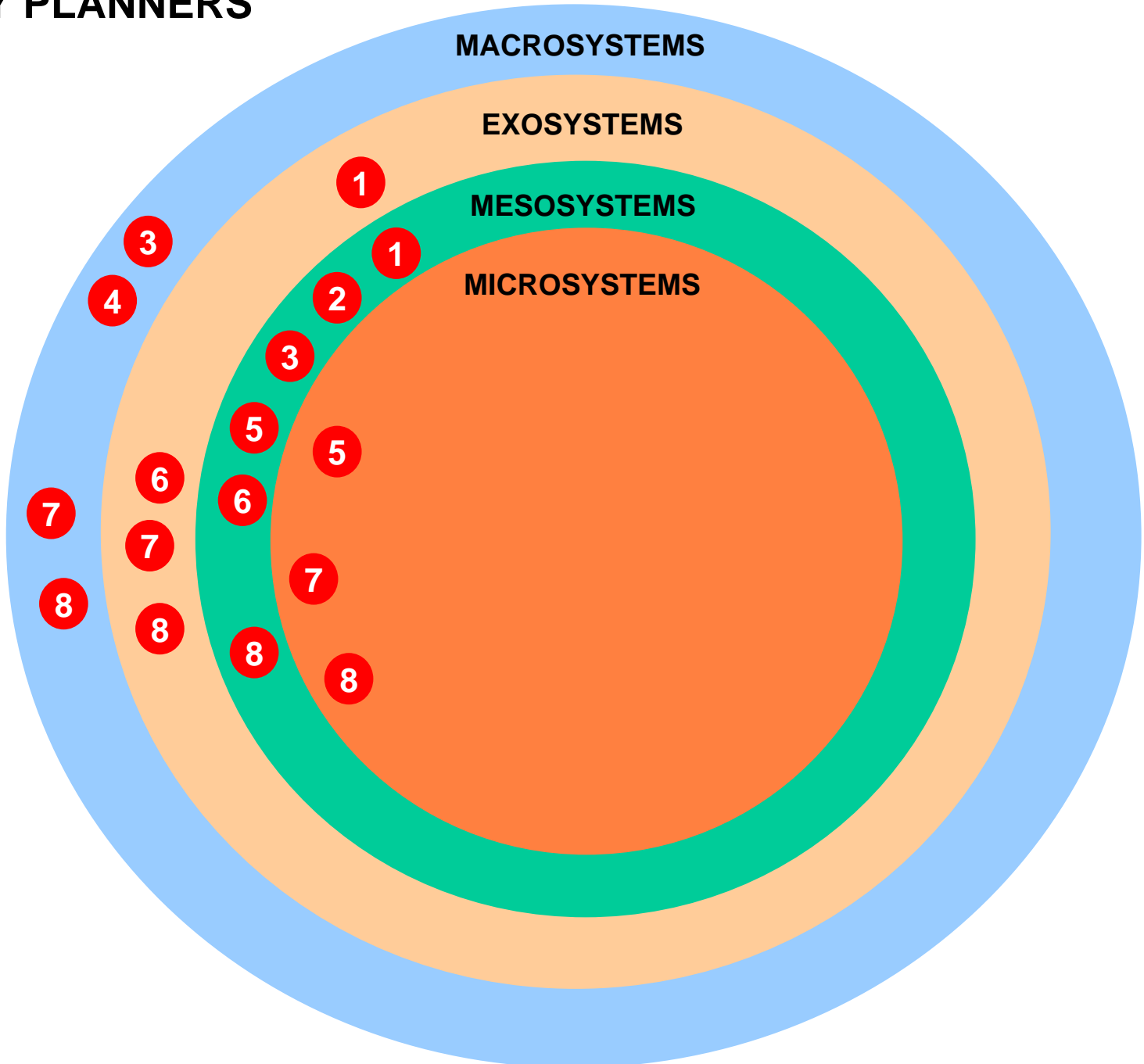
### **LEVEL 2: NGO's**

1. Choose evidence-based interventions to implement.
2. Be transparent about the methodology used in interventions.
3. Continued advocacy to keep the rights/preferences of children in poverty on public agenda, in policy, and political consciousness.
4. NGO's may take advantage of the recent findings and tools for formulating the strategies for interventions in child poverty.
5. NGO's may take development perspective of child development for the children in poverty groups instead off having a relief approach.
6. To maximize the benefits and to sustain the programmes, groups and communities may be targeted instead of individuals.
7. The interventions for children should be in accordance with their developmental life-span perspective.

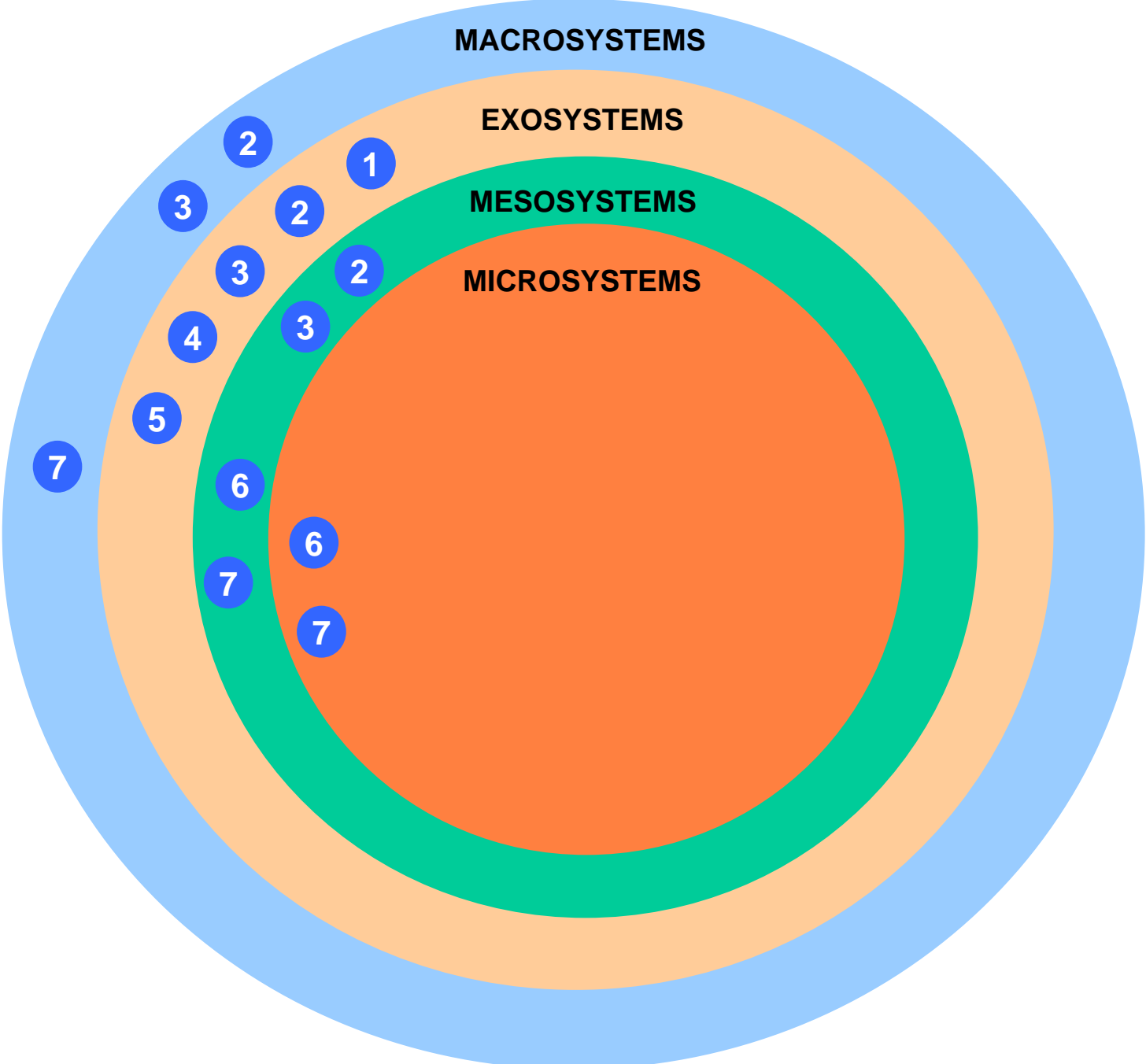
### **LEVEL 3: RESEARCH**

1. Child-centered research need to be emphasized.
2. In some countries the official statistics is needed to disaggregate by age, SES, children education, and ethnicity.
3. Ethics of child research may be strictly followed for undertaken research on issues related to child poverty.
4. Child poverty research designs must include the local context and the application of its findings.
5. Children's views, experiences, and voices must be incorporated in research on child poverty.
6. The designs may be developed to document the best practices and their replicability.
7. Identify the research methods for scaling-up the successful local interventions.
8. Since child poverty is a complex phenomenon, the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach in research is recommended.
9. Develop appropriate technological aids to intervene child poverty.
10. Create evidence-based knowledge for context-specific strategies to reduce child poverty.
11. Explore the methodologies to balance child agency with universality of rights.

# POLICY PLANNERS

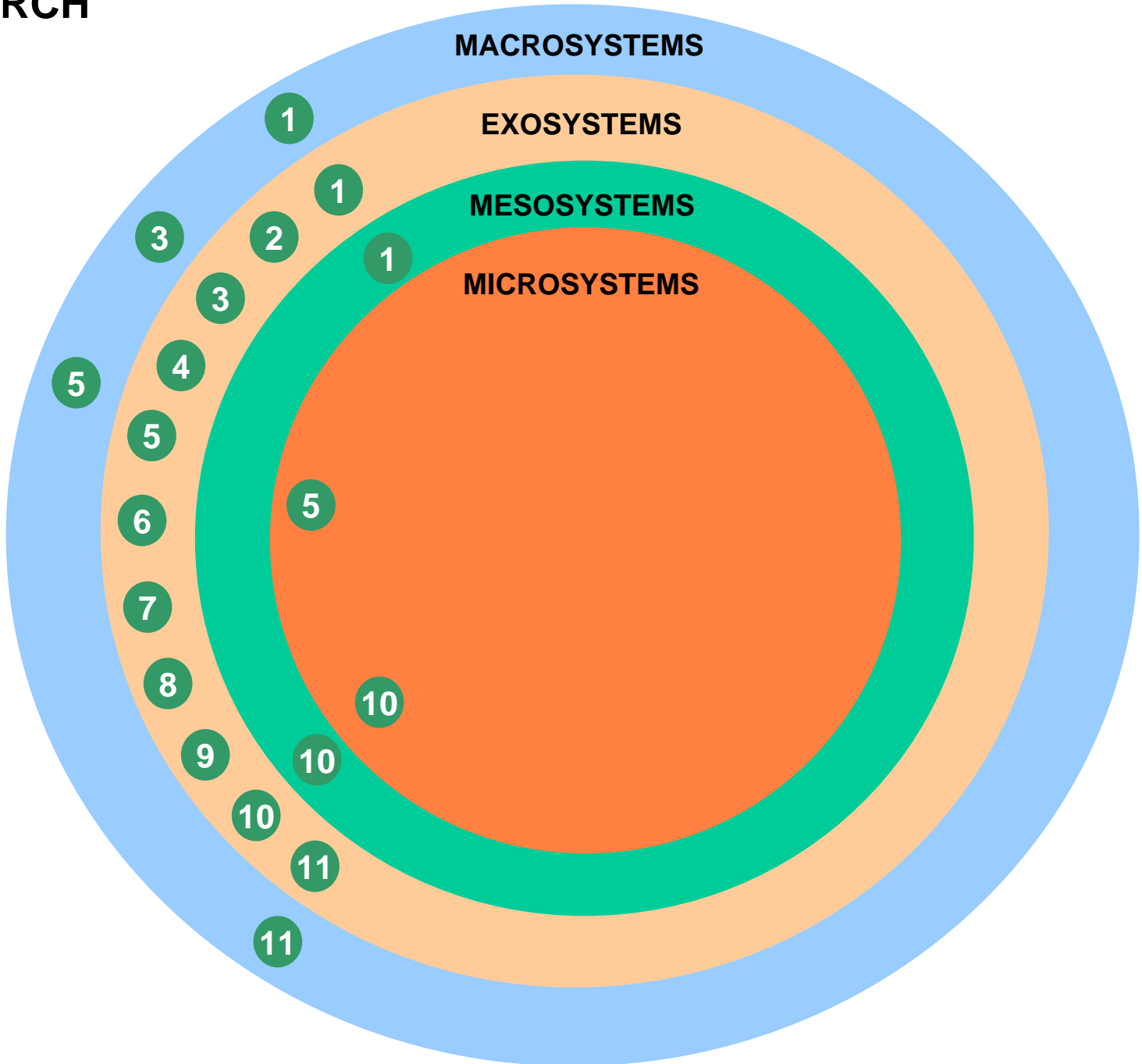


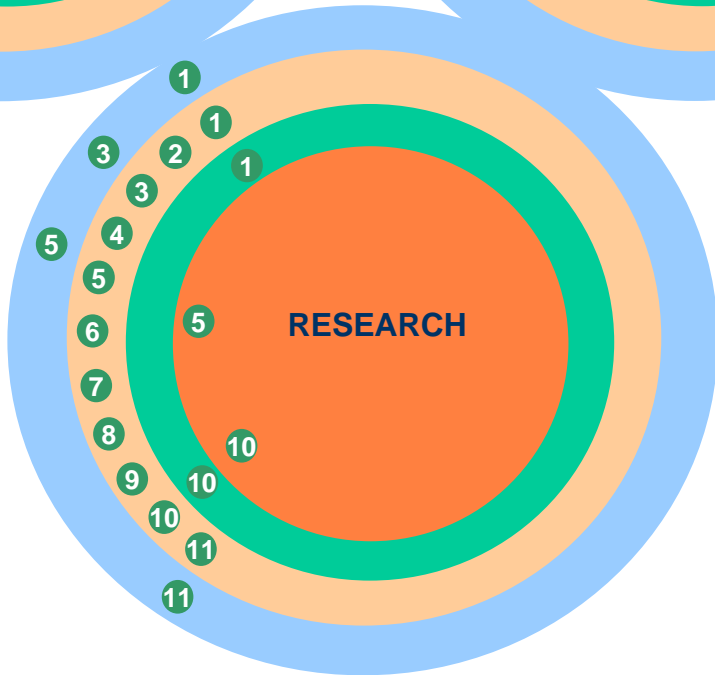
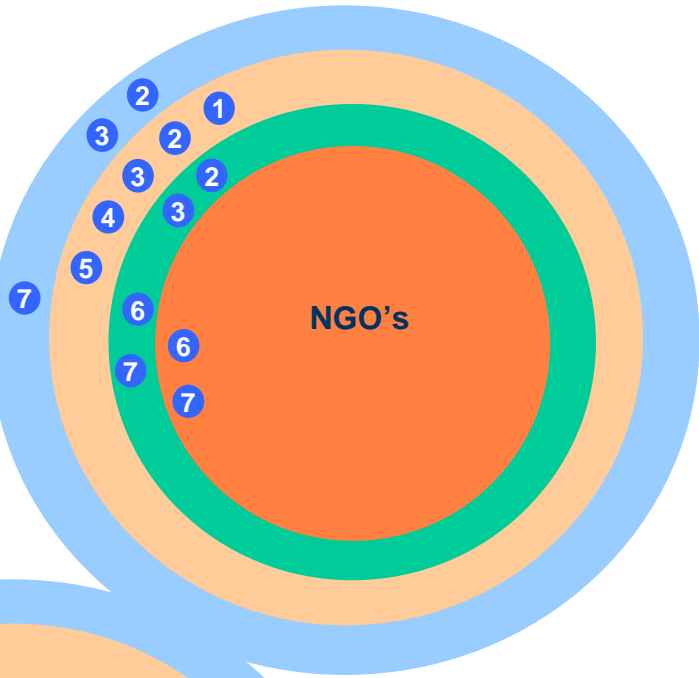
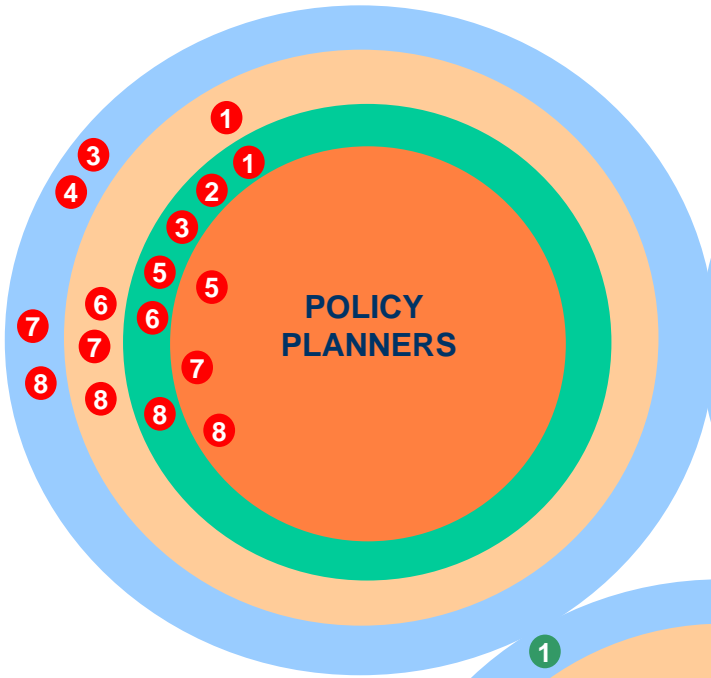
# NGO's





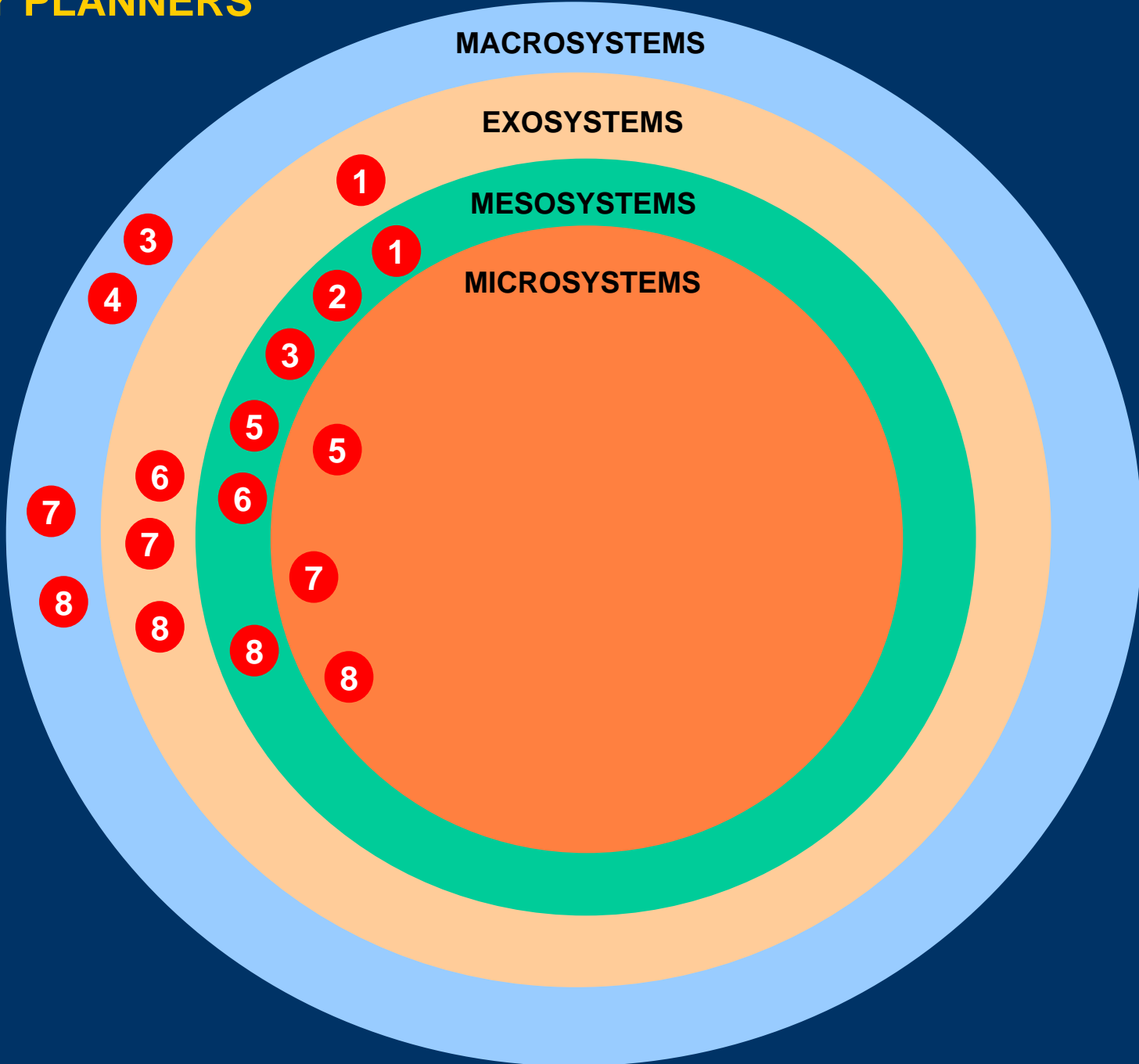
# RESEARCH



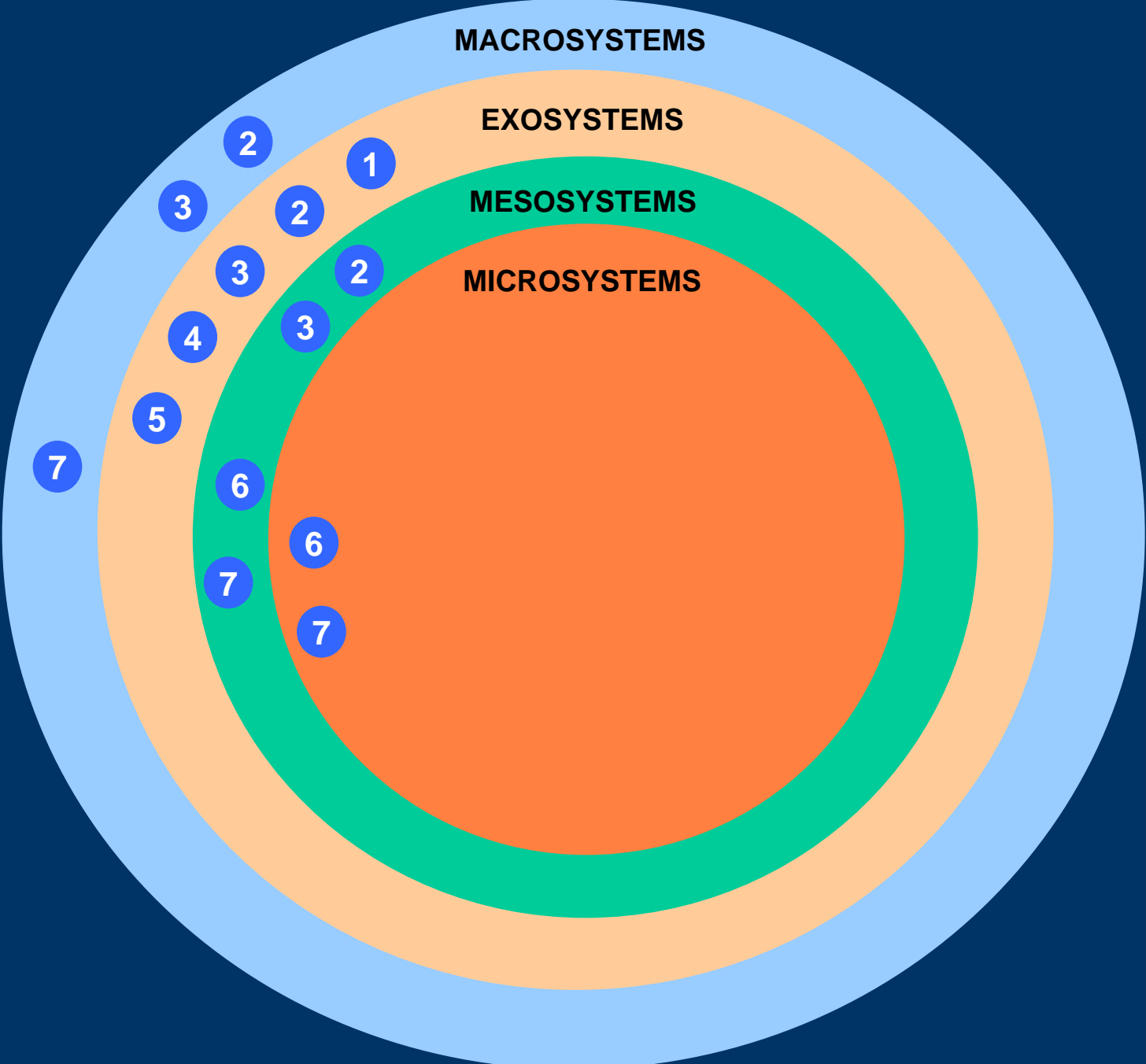


**MICROSYSTEMS: 7 (14%)**  
**MESOSYSTEMS: 10 (20%)**  
**EXOSYSTEMS: 22 (44%)**  
**EXOSYSTEMS: 11 (22%)**

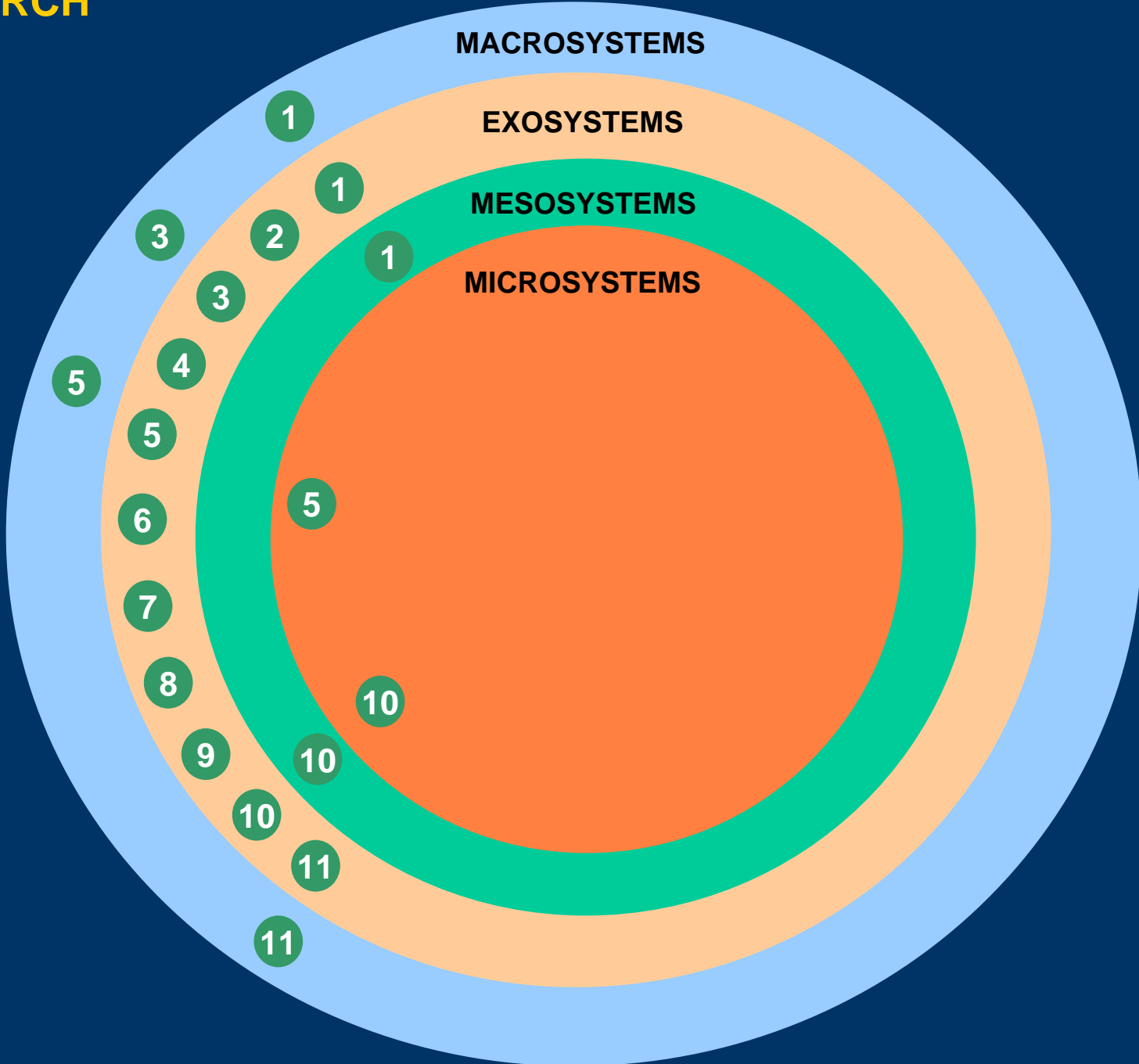
# POLICY PLANNERS

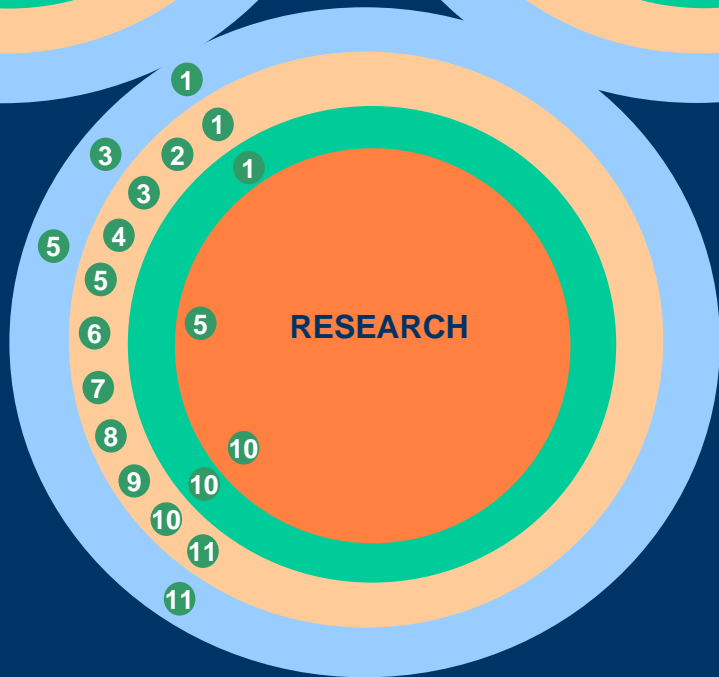
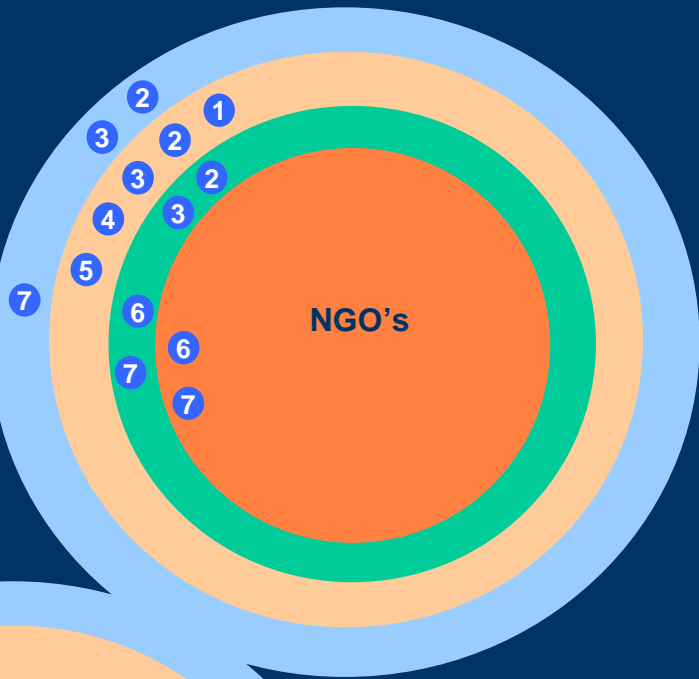
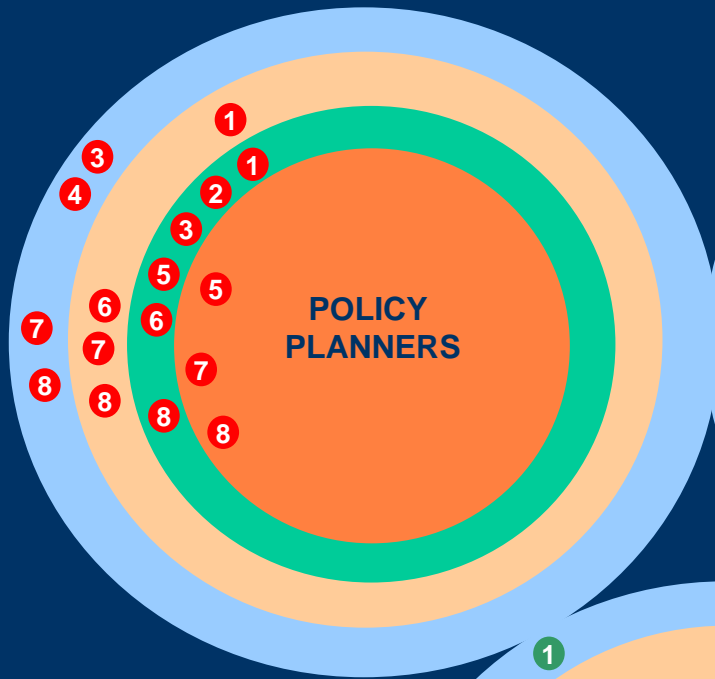


**NGO's**



# RESEARCH





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# ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

