



Africa

*Martha Mahlala works and lives in the home of her South African employer, who abides by government labour regulations. Many domestic workers, however, are vulnerable to exploitation. By expanding research and knowledge, sharing good practices, and connecting poor women workers to powerful decision-makers, **WIEGO puts a human face on complex issues.***

Photo: Jonathan Torgovnik/Getty Images Reportage

Informal workers around the world, especially women, face multiple barriers in securing their livelihoods. For two decades, WIEGO has worked with informal workers' organizations to find solutions that improve their day-to-day lives.

Our research—done in collaboration with workers, their organizations, and a broad range of allies—generates a grounded, credible body of knowledge that informs local, national and international policies and movements. For workers' organizations, knowledge is crucial. WIEGO equips them with practical tools, research and data that they can use to advocate for more secure livelihoods.

In addition to helping informal workers build stronger organizations, we help connect them regionally and globally, allowing them to share experiences and learn from each other.



Two-thirds of non-agricultural employment in Sub-Saharan Africa is informal, but the range is great. In Mali, 82% of workers are informal. In South Africa, 33% are informal. **WIEGO** has established a strong presence in Africa. We amplify the voice of informal workers, make them more visible—including through improvements to official statistical data—and increase their validity in the realm of public policy.

Generating New Knowledge

Making Sure Informal Workers are Counted

If informal workers are not included in official statistics, they are not seen, and their economic and social contributions are not counted. WIEGO works with national and international bodies to improve the measurement of informal employment in developing and developed countries. This includes working to improve classifications, concepts and methods for data collection, dissemination and analysis. In Africa, WIEGO has generated widely cited regional, country and city-level statistics on the size of the informal economy and informal workers.

Groundbreaking Research

The WIEGO-led Informal Economy Monitoring Study (IEMS) examined the contributions informal workers make to economies and communities, the challenges they face, and what influences can help or hinder them. The landmark study involved workers in ten cities, including street vendors and waste pickers in Durban, South Africa and Nakuru, Kenya, and street vendors in Accra, Ghana.

Setting an Agenda for Gender Equality

The United Nations Secretary General's High-Level Panel for Women's Economic Empowerment brought together leaders from private and public sectors and from civil society to set a practical agenda for advancing gender equality and improving economic outcomes for women. As one of the civil society organizations invited to participate, WIEGO produced a *Compendium of WIEGO-SEWA Case Studies*, as well as five policy briefs. Members of the WIEGO Team are on working groups tasked with identifying implementation priorities.

Training Tools for Urban Planners

Most of the global population now lives in urban areas. Livelihood issues should be central to urban policies and practices. To expand the discourse, WIEGO developed a Postgraduate Educational Toolkit on the Urban Informal Economy for the Association of African Planning Schools, a network of over 50 planning schools. The toolkit aims to raise awareness of the informal economy and contribute to better training of the next generation of planners. WIEGO also signed a

memorandum of understanding with the Association to boost their affiliates' ability to teach and research the informal economy.

Key Achievements in Health

WIEGO's Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) project for informal workers conducted a participatory research study in Accra and Takoradi, Ghana, to determine the key health and safety risks faced by market and street traders. The study also shed light on the institutional context of OHS in Ghana from the perspective of the informal economy. Next, we developed a case study to document statistics and good practices of the Ghana National Health Insurance Scheme.

WIEGO brought new insights into the connection between health and informal workers through a three-city international research project that included a focus on Durban, South Africa. The project explored ways in which informal workers can better access health services. Another project, with mHealth Alliance and Vital Wave, looked at how mobile phones could be used to improve access to health services and for health education.

WIEGO's Work

WIEGO aims to improve the status of the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy through:

- strengthening organizations and promoting representation of informal workers;
- promoting more inclusive policy processes that include informal workers;
- expanding statistics and research on the informal economy, assisting organizations to make their data needs known to national statistical offices, and helping those offices develop methods to produce the data;
- advancing more equitable trade, labour, urban planning and social protection policies to protect and promote the working poor in the informal economy.

WIEGO focuses on four occupational groups:

- domestic workers
- home-based workers
- street vendors
- waste pickers

Building Capacity and Strengthening Networks



Domestic Workers

The isolation of working behind closed doors can prevent collective approaches, so organizing efforts are extremely important for domestic workers.

WIEGO supported the launch of the International Domestic Workers Network (now International Domestic Worker Federation, or IDWF). Domestic workers around the globe are networking and building capacity so they can

fight for their rights. With IDWF and the global union IUF, WIEGO implemented Economic and Employment Rights: Advancing Domestic Workers' Leadership in 15 countries. In Africa, the project operated in Benin, Guinea, Kenya, South Africa, and Tanzania.

Outcomes included the establishment of an Africa Domestic Workers Network (AfDWN) in 2013, which now has over 100,000 members. At the network launch, domestic workers' representatives

Stella Nkosi is a domestic worker in suburban Johannesburg. Photo: Jonathan Torgovnik/Getty Images Reportage

from across the continent pledged to work collectively to achieve ratification of C189, which has been achieved in Guinea and South Africa. In Tanzania, domestic workers appeared before the Parliament committee of Social welfare, where they presented the issues domestic workers face in Tanzania and demanded ratification of C189.

Waste Pickers

WIEGO advanced the waste pickers' movement in Africa by convening a Climate Change Workshop that included South African waste pickers and mapping activities in Cameroon, Mali, Benin and Madagascar. Training was also provided to the Federation of Informal Workers Organizations in Nigeria (FIWON), whose field workers were then able to map several waste picker organizations in different Nigerian cities.

WIEGO also hosted a Global Strategic Workshop of Waste

Pickers in Pune, India. The event brought together 80 waste picker leaders from 34 cities on different continents, including Africa, to discuss strategies related to the integration of solid waste management systems. Then WIEGO helped expand the international exchange of waste pickers through development of a website for waste pickers, www.globalrec.org, which shares news, ideas and events.

Waste picker Justina Mokoena at the Boitshepi landfill in South Africa is a member of the women's Majakathatha Cooperative. Photo: Jonathan Torgovnik/Getty Images Reportage



Home-Based Workers

Home-based workers are those who produce goods or provide services in their homes. Too often invisible, they are a vital part of local economies and global value chains. By gaining recognition as economic contributors, they can improve their livelihoods. In this struggle, establishing a collective voice is one of their most powerful tools.

In 2015, more than 100 home-based worker representatives and supporters from 24 countries took part in a Global Conference on Home-based Workers, organized

by WIEGO and HomeNet South Asia in New Delhi. It was an important opportunity for home-based workers to exchange ideas and build solidarity.

Together, they produced the Declaration for Home-Based Workers, which sets out demands on issues ranging from wages to housing, from basic services to social protection. The Declaration includes a five-year global Action Plan that is being implemented.



Fair Trade Producers Gain Leadership & Business Skills

WIEGO worked with women fair trade producers, most of them home-based workers, in several countries to help build economic empowerment. The first phase, which included women from Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, demonstrated that when women organize into groups, they are more likely to improve their economic and social situation. In 2011, several participants shared their experiences at the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) Annual Meeting. It was the first time gender was included on WFTO's agenda, and started a process that resulted in the adoption

Working together has helped Maasai women who produce handicrafts in Kenya to increase their incomes and become leaders in their community. Photo: L. Vryenhoek

of a Fair Trade Principle addressing gender equality. WIEGO took a lead role in developing that principle.

In the next phase, WIEGO worked with fair trade affiliates to offer leadership and business training to women in Ghana, Kenya, and Uganda. Through a training-of-trainers approach, thousands of women learned about leadership skills, women's property rights, improved design and quality control, organizational development and accessing local and global markets.

Street Vendors

WIEGO partners with StreetNet International, the movement of street and market vendors in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In Africa, the focus was on Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, Togo and Zimbabwe. One recent outcome was the development of a *Street Vendor Manual* in 2014, specifically for use by informal traders in those four countries. The manual helps them understand their rights, and formulate strategies for protecting and advancing those rights.

WIEGO collaborated with the Ghana Trades Union Congress, the Liberian Labor Congress and StreetNet International to support the organizational development and capacity of the National Petty Trader Union of Liberia, which

represents street vendors and market traders in Monrovia.

Vendors who belong to the League for the Rights of Congolese Women (Ligue pour le Droit de la Femme Congolaise, LDFC) march. Photo: Y. Merveille



South African Street Vendors and the Law

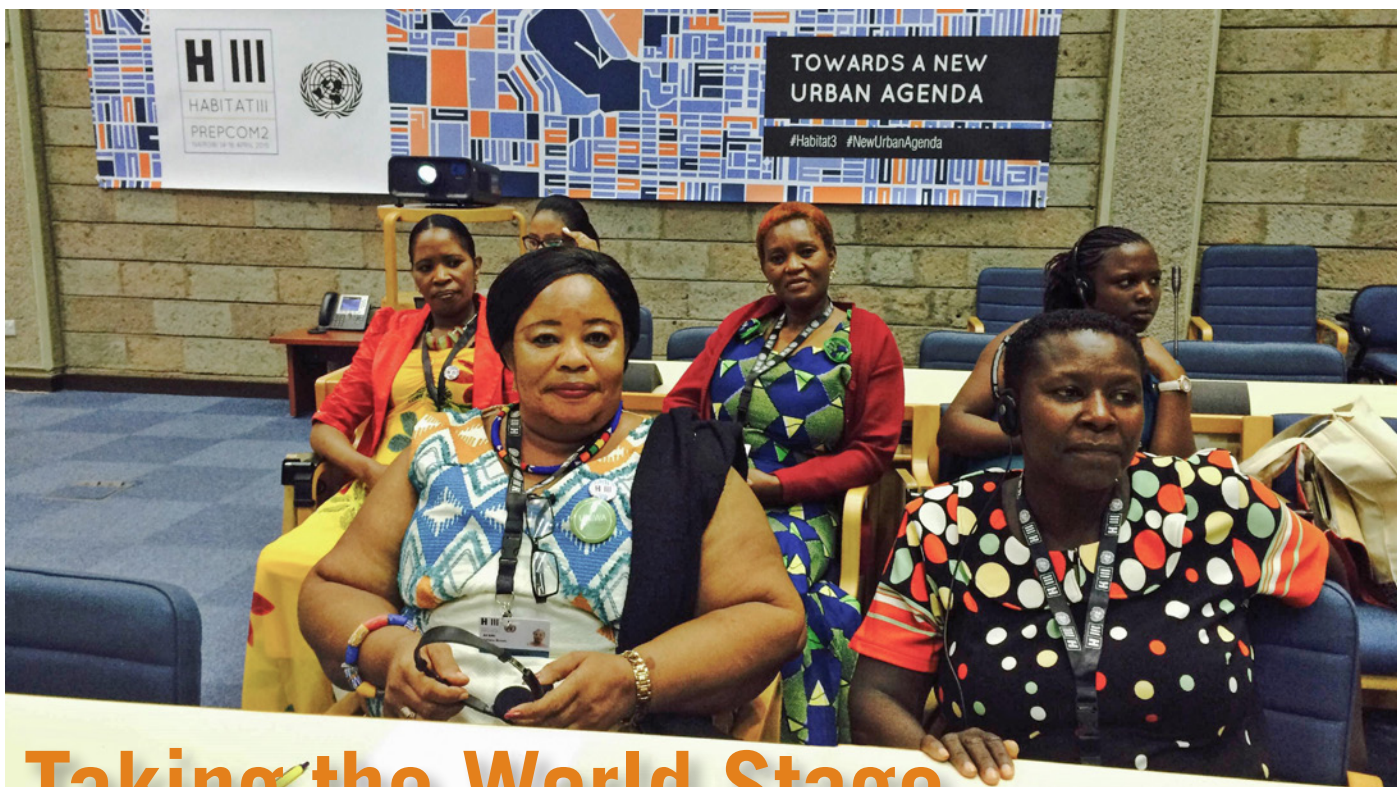
Law is an essential tool in improving livelihoods and lives, but legal and regulatory frameworks are designed for the formal economy. WIEGO's Law & Informality initiative analyzes how informal workers' demands for rights and protections can be transformed into law. In South Africa, WIEGO has helped informal street vendors use the law as an effective tool.

- WIEGO supported street vendors in the Warwick Junction area of Durban during the lead up to the 2010 FIFA World Cup, when plans to demolish the market and build a mall, displacing vendors, were announced. The city was forced to abandon the proposal due to a legal case. WIEGO was an expert witness on the case, providing advocacy and research support.
- WIEGO prepared "Vending in Public Spaces and the Law, 2014," which is a review and analysis of experiences of Asiye eTafuleni (AeT), a non-profit organization that focuses on urban design and planning with informal workers in Durban.
- WIEGO supported the legal case of a South African street vendor who successfully contested the confiscation of his goods by local authorities in Durban. In February 2015, the High Court ruled in the vendor's favour, acknowledging that street vendors are engaged in legitimate activities but remain vulnerable to unfair practices by local authorities. The legal arguments can be used by street vendors around the world in their struggle for economic justice.
- WIEGO also assisted in advocacy, including responding to Operation Cleansweep in which over 6,000 inner-city Johannesburg traders



Street vendors in Durban, South Africa have won legal victories with the help of WIEGO. Photo: M. Chen

were removed and legislation was proposed—the Business Licensing Bill—that would have criminalized many informal sector jobs if it had become law. A particular focus for WIEGO was generating information to support membership-based organizations and their allies, including lawyers.



Taking the World Stage

International bodies and experts regularly convene to discuss and make decisions that directly impact the lives and livelihoods of informal workers. Too often, these discussions happen in the absence of informal worker representatives.

In the process leading up to Habitat III—the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development—in 2016, the WIEGO Network successfully advocated for integration of informal workers and their livelihoods into the New Urban Agenda. Photo: V. Okoye

WIEGO facilitates the participation of informal workers in forums around the world by including them in our delegations. This involves providing financial and logistical support for travel, as well as technical support at conferences and events to ensure their voices are heard by decision-makers. These snapshots represent just a small number of events at which, with WIEGO's support, informal workers helped negotiate favourable outcomes.

Waste pickers have taken to the world stage to publicize how their recycling efforts reduce climate change while providing much-needed income and helping municipalities manage waste. Simon Mbata, a leader with the South African Waste Pickers Association, was part of the WIEGO delegation at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change negotiations in Cancun, Mexico in 2010. Photo: WIEGO



Making International Standards—and History

WIEGO ensures informal workers are included in its delegation to the International Labour Conference (ILC), which brings together 186 member States every year.

WIEGO coordinated a sustained and successful international campaign, led by domestic workers and supported by WIEGO and allies, to secure the adoption of a Convention and accompanying Recommendation on Decent Work for Domestic Workers (C189) at the 100th International Labour Conference, June 2011. Photo: WIEGO



Informal workers had a voice throughout the two-year standard-setting discussion on transitioning from the informal to the formal economy. In 2014 at the ILC, informal workers delivered a platform, developed in workshops hosted by WIEGO. In 2015, (photo), informal workers were at the ILC for the adoption of a first-ever international labour standard specifically for the informal economy. In 2016, WIEGO helped organize a workshop of South African informal workers and allies to begin formulating concrete proposals for government action. Photo: WIEGO

WIEGO's General Assembly, held every four years, brings people from around the globe to discuss the way forward. Informal workers are always a crucial part of those discussions. In Indonesia in 2014, Lucy Nyambura from Kenya, a home-based worker, spoke on a panel about the significance of WIEGO's programming in improving women's leadership. Photo: WIEGO



Focal City: Accra, Ghana



For more than five years, Accra, Ghana has been one of two Focal Cities where WIEGO implemented several thematic initiatives, creating a critical mass of work on informal employment issues in the city.

WIEGO's Informal Economy Budget Analysis found informal workers generate over 70 per cent of the city's revenue, yet the city was spending almost nothing from its budget on informal workers. Through advocacy, this improved. Accra Metro's expenditures relating to informal street vendors rose from 0.9 per cent in 2012 to 5 per cent in 2013; in 2014 it was 4.3 per cent.

government agencies, civil society and international organizations (such as the ILO), and membership-based organizations of informal workers.

- In collaboration with Institute of Local Government Studies, WIEGO delivered over 15 capacity building programmes and workshops for informal

Iris Lamiorkor sells snacks at Kwame Nkrumah Circle Market in the late afternoon and evening, targeting end-of-day commuters. Through the years, she has changed what she sells to tap into consumer demands. Iris belongs to an association affiliated with the Ghana Trade Union Congress, which offers support and helps resolve conflicts with officials. Photo: Jonathan Torgovnik/Getty Images Reportage

workers, ranging from understanding local governance systems, the impact of health and safety on the informal economy, OHS conditions of informal workers, and advocacy and leadership skills.

Networking and Capacity Building

- WIEGO actively invested in building organizational and institutional relationships with key stakeholders, including

Faustina Kai Torgbe, a well-established vendor in Accra's East Legon neighbourhood pays daily, monthly, and annual tolls to the Accra Metropolitan Assembly. Photo: Jonathan Torgovnik/Getty Images Reportage



- WIEGO also facilitated learning sessions to give informal workers a better understanding of governance systems and elections in Ghana.

The Law and Informal Workers

WIEGO has pioneered analysis on how informal workers' demands for rights and protections can be transformed into law, and

how to build the capacity of informal workers to achieve legal empowerment. In Accra, WIEGO partnered with Ghana Trades Union Congress (GTUC) to implement the Law and Informality Project to create a regulatory framework that protects informal workers' rights in the workplace, balances the needs of all stakeholders, and promotes a climate of stability and security. The focus was on changing regulations

and laws for domestic workers and street vendors. Informal workers in Accra (particularly women leaders) were made aware of the laws that governed them and how they can engage with officials to demand their rights. WIEGO also critiqued a draft Regulation on Domestic Workers and suggested amendments to a National Taskforce on Domestic Workers established by government.



Policy Dialogues Get Results

A policy dialogue is a carefully planned event that involves people from different groups sitting together to focus on an issue in which they have a mutual, but not necessarily common, interest. Policy dialogues are designed to lead to outcomes, not just awareness.

In Accra, WIEGO initiated eight policy dialogues to bring together informal worker leaders and local and national service providers, authorities, ministries and government agencies. First, however, informal worker leaders were trained in advocacy skills and developed a clear set of demands. Practice clinics help them frame these in an appropriate and strategic manner.

Kayayei (head porters) like Percent Boateng (left) and Lusaka Fuseina (right) are often migrants from the poor northern regions of Ghana. They often start this work very young, and are vulnerable for many reasons. Carrying heavy loads can cause many physical problems. In 2012, WIEGO facilitated a health policy dialogue between 100 kayayei and representatives of the Ministry of Health and National Insurance Scheme. As a direct result, 1,000 kayayei were able to register for the Ghanaian National Insurance Scheme. Photo: Jonathan Torgovnik/Getty Images Reportage

In addition, about 1,000 vendors met with Accra city authorities on key implementation and policy issues. One policy dialogue involved informal street traders and officials from the Accra Metropolitan Assembly and the Ghana East Municipal Assembly. It succeeded in bringing traders' concerns to the attention of the authorities and paved the way for continuing, mutually-beneficial engagement.

WIEGO Experts in Africa

Jane Barrett, Director, Organization & Representation Programme, is a trade unionist based in Johannesburg with over 30 years' experience in the labour movement, and a former General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union (now the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union). She worked for the International Transport Workers Federation at its headquarters, and served as the Affiliate Support Officer in the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), where she was instrumental in forging links between the formal trade union movement and informal workers' organizations. Jane has a degree in Social Work from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, an Industrial Sociology honours degree from the University of the Witwatersrand, and an MPhil from SOAS, University of London. Her specialist interests include precarious workers, minimum wage regulation, women's empowerment and, more recently, climate change and the working class. She has published widely.

Caroline Skinner, Director of Urban Research, is a Senior Researcher at the African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town in South Africa. Caroline interrogates the nature of the informal economy with a focus on informing advocacy processes and policy responses. In addition to research and teaching, she has done policy and advocacy work at a local, provincial, national and international level. In South Africa, she assisted the Durban City Council in developing an informal economy policy; worked with the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape, and advised national government departments, including the Presidency and Department of Trade and Industry. She has written policy papers for United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank.

Marlese von Broembsen, Director, Law Programme hails from Cape Town, South Africa and currently resides in Boston, USA, where she is a Visiting Researcher at the Institute for Global Law and Policy, Harvard Law School. She holds law degrees from Stellenbosch, the University of Cape Town, and Harvard University. A qualified attorney with a Masters in Development Studies, Marlese has worked for a Cape Town NGO active in the informal economy, taught Social Policy at the University of the Western Cape, and pioneered an interdisciplinary Masters Degree in Social Justice in the Law Faculty, University of Cape Town. She has published in the areas of development, labour law, global value chains, and legal empowerment of the poor. She is passionate about contributing to securing recognition and voice for working poor men and women, and in challenging structural inequality and mal-distribution in the context of work.

Christine (Chris) Bonner, Advisor and Emeritus Team Member, spent 20 years working in the trade unions in South Africa during the apartheid era: including as the Regional Secretary of the Chemical Workers Industrial Union and as the union's National Educator. She helped set up the Development Institute for Training, Support and Education for Labour (DITSELA) in Johannesburg and in 1996, was appointed by the trade unions as its founding Director, a position she held until 2003. She is the former Director of WIEGO's Organization & Representation Programme. In that position she focused on collecting and documenting information on organizations of informal workers, and on facilitating and supporting global networking, particularly among domestic workers, waste pickers, home-based workers and street vendors.



WIEGO undertook exploratory research in Accra, Ghana and Durban, South Africa on child care and women's economic empowerment. Photo: M. Chen

Francie Lund, Advisor, Emeritus Team Member is the former Director of WIEGO's Social Protection Programme and a Senior Research Associate in the School of Built Environment and Development Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban, South Africa. She trained as a sociologist and community organizer, and developed an abiding interest in social policy and social security issues. More recently she has been working on the link between women's paid and unpaid care work, and also on occupational health and safety for informal workers. She has worked as a research and policy consultant for a wide range of international organizations, and for local, provincial and national government in South Africa. She chaired the Lund Committee on Child and Family Support, which resulted in a new form of cash support to poor children.

Laura Alfery, Deputy Director, Social Protection Programme, works with WIEGO's Social Protection Programme. She managed Occupational Health & Safety for Informal Workers, a project in Ghana, Tanzania, Brazil, Peru, and India. In 2013, she was one of 10 winners in the Rockefeller Foundation's Centennial Innovation Challenge for The Phephanathi Project. In 2015 Laura completed her PhD at the School of Built Environment and Development Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. She is currently a post-doctoral research fellow at the Institute for Social & Economic Research at Rhodes University in South Africa.

Victoria Okoye, Urban Advocacy Specialist leads WIEGO's global urban advocacy, including strategies, tactics and key messages on inclusive urban development, and coordinating the participation and representation of WIEGO at meetings related to the urban advocacy agenda. Victoria has been deeply involved in community development and engagement work at the rural and urban levels in West Africa. In Ghana, she led the USAID-funded Ghana Water, Sanitation and Hygiene project; she supported research and mapping for the Accra Creative City project, creating an interactive map of cultural and historical sites to boost tourism; and she led a transportation and land use research study for the Millennium Cities Initiative at Columbia University. Victoria also created African Urbanism, an online initiative exploring West African cities' urban development trajectories, and an offline initiative to engage residents in improvements of public and community spaces.

Vanessa Pillay, Organization & Representation Programme Officer was the Director of a Vocational Skills Training Centre for disadvantaged youth before joining WIEGO. As a graduate from the University of Cape Town, she holds an MPhil degree in Adult Education. Vanessa spent most of her adult working life serving the South African labour movement, first as a shop steward in a white-collar union and then as a worker educator. She worked for the DITSELA Workers Education Institute from 2000 until 2011. Her areas of focus in workers' education have been women's leadership development and organizational development in a trade union context. She is especially interested in the application of learning in academic and social frameworks to build democratic working-class organizations.

Dorcas Ansah, Accra City Coordinator brings 15 years of development experience and a background designing and delivering adult learning programmes to her work with WIEGO. Dorcas has worked extensively in facilitating processes, organizing development interventions, gender mainstreaming, monitoring and evaluation, as well as training and capacity-building from the informal sector to civil society to parliament. She is a graduate of the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland OSD Center, the University of Ghana Legon, and the Central University College and Corporate Administration Institute of Professional Studies, with an MA in social policy.

Pamhidzai H. Bamu-Chipunza, Africa Coordinator, Law Programme was born and raised in Harare, Zimbabwe. She holds an LLB, LLM (Labour Law) and a PhD (Labour Law) from the University of Cape Town. She worked as a researcher in the Institute of Development and Labour Law at the University of Cape Town, and for the Social Law Project at the University of the Western Cape and has undertaken and published research on various labour issues in South Africa and Southern Africa. She recently completed a Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship at Stellenbosch University; her project considered the Zimbabwean labour market with a focus on the development and regulation of its informal economy. She has consulted for agencies such as the International Labour Organization and SADC Secretariat on labour and human rights issues.



Occupational Health and Safety Project Wins Innovation Challenge

WIEGO expanded its occupational health and safety (OHS) project for informal workers—already active in Ghana—to South Africa. A particular focus there is on safety in Durban’s Warwick Junction, where as many as 8,000 informal workers make their living in

A recent project helped market traders manage workplace hazards in Warwick Junction. Photo: P. Carney

the markets. The Phephanathi Project (*phephanathi* means “be safe with us” in Zulu) offered fire safety and first aid training and equipment. In 2013, it won the Rockefeller Foundation’s Centennial Innovation Challenge Award.

Going Forward

The movement of informal workers has grown on multiple fronts over the past 20 years. Achievements include concrete policy gains, a robust set of statistics and well-organized, well-informed workers.

Building on the success of the Focal City approach that concentrated activities and resources in Accra, WIEGO is making Dakar, Senegal a Focal City for our work.

Much still needs to be done to advance informal workers in Africa. New groups and new areas need to be reached. Existing policies need to be enforced and improved policies implemented to ensure workers’ rights are protected. And, most importantly, for real, lasting change to happen, informal workers need to be recognized as valuable contributors to society.



Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) Limited

**521 Royal Exchange
GTR Manchester
M2 7EN
United Kingdom**

**Phone: 44-161-819-1200
Email: wiego@wiego.org
Web site: www.wiego.org**

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