



QUALITY PUBLIC CHILD CARE FOR ALL WORKERS!



Every day women informal workers face the difficult decision of what to do with the young children in their care while they work.

Child care responsibilities can push them into more flexible, irregular and less well paid employment and decreases productivity leading to lower incomes. Women informal workers work long hours to meet their households' basic needs, leaving little time to care for themselves and their children. Street vendors often take their children with them when they go out to sell in crowded cities. Home-based workers care for their children and work at the same time, which affects their ability to earn and creates stress. Migrant domestic workers are usually forced to leave their children behind with extended family members while they are working in another city or country. Waste pickers and construction workers may have to choose between bringing their children to unsafe waste dumps and collection centres or leaving their children unattended at home. Agricultural workers take their children with them to the fields or leave them at home with older girls who stay home from school to care for their siblings. Most domestic workers and child care workers earn low wages and cannot afford the cost of child care for their own children. The *anganwadi* workers and helpers constitute the backbone of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and are considered to be 'honorary workers' despite their long-standing demand to be accorded the status of workers.

We want national governments and local authorities to understand that women informal workers need quality public child care services so that they can work, earn more income and lead a life with dignity. The children of women informal workers deserve care to grow, learn and be healthy to get a good start in life. Workers in old age also have the right to rest without taking on the responsibility of earning an income and caring for young children.



Women informal workers must benefit from maternity protection and have access to child care services as part of national social protection systems. The Indian State is the guarantor of the right of young children under six to child care and development services and the right to decent work for all workers.

It is primarily the responsibility of the government to help finance maternity protection and provide public child care services that reach women informal workers wherever they work. Investing in quality public child care services will help the Indian Government meet Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10 by improving nutrition, health and education outcomes among children, tackling poverty, and reducing high levels of gender, class and caste inequality.

Women informal workers, their organizations and allies can call on the national government to take action by:



- Ensuring that child care is recognized as part of the national social protection system and extended across India through the Restructured ICDS providing full-day, free, quality and holistic child care for children from 0 - 6 years old.
- Increasing government investment - at the central and state level - for quality child care, indexed for inflation.
- Recognizing that child care undertaken in a child care centre, such as ICDS centres and day care centres, is decent work that requires a living wage, access to social protection and appropriate skills training for all, including anganwadi workers.

- Urging States to enforce a universal maternity benefit of Rs 6,000 as per the National Food Security Act (2013).
- Ratifying ILO Convention 102 on Social Security, ILO Recommendation 202 on Social Protection Floors, ILO Convention 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities and ILO Convention 183 on Maternity Protection and using these as guides to making laws to implement the provision of maternity protections, child care and child benefits.



To give your feedback and input to the campaign or to share a story about how your organization is mobilizing around child care, please email childcare@wiego.org



Forum for Crèches and Childcare services (FORCES) is a national network representing over 400 organizations concerned with issues relating to women working in the unorganised sector and care of their children.

Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) is a registered trade union established in 1972 representing 18 lakhs self-employed women workers across 14 states in India.

Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) is a global network focused on securing livelihoods for the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy.

For more information please visit the FORCES, SEWA and WIEGO websites where you will find stories and experiences of women informal workers from around the world.

 <http://www.forces.org.in>

 <http://lokswasthya.org/>

 <http://wiego.org>

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