

WIEGO

Women in Informal Employment:
Globalizing and Organizing

Securing Economic Rights for Informal Women Workers



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Women Fair Trade Producers Taking the Reins

A project that is equipping women fair trade producers to run productive enterprises and earn better income is in full swing in Africa. By late 2013, hundreds of informal women workers were trained through their fair trade organizations in Ghana (cocoa farmers), Kenya (handicraft producers), and Uganda (coffee farmers and handicraft producers).

Inspiring new stories of women (text and audio/video) who have learned, grown and are seeing improvements in their lives and livelihoods are available at [Leadership & Business Skills for Women Fair Trade Producers](#).

Domestic Workers Transforming the World

The International Domestic Workers' Network transformed itself into the first global federation of unions and associations run by women: the International Domestic Workers' Federation (IDWF). The move occurred at the organization's founding Congress in Uruguay in October 2013. Supported by the WIEGO-led "Advancing Domestic Workers' Leadership" project. [Read more](#).



Also in October, "[Yes, We Did It!](#)" *How the World's Domestic Workers Won Their International Rights and Recognition* by Celia Mather was launched. The publication details the road to success in getting employers, trade unions and government representatives to adopt Convention (C189) and Accompanying Recommendation on Decent Work for Domestic Workers at the 2011 International Labour Conference. Read "[Yes, We Did It!](#)" in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Strengthening the Movement of Home-Based Workers aims to overcome the isolation that a vital but often invisible informal workforce experiences. Ongoing work is identifying organizations in Africa, Eastern Europe and Latin America, helping to forge connections, and training women leaders in governance, workers' rights and policy advocacy strategies. [Read more](#).

Securing Economic Rights for Informal Women Workers is a multifaceted project supported by a Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women (FLOW) grant from the Government of the Netherlands. The project is strengthening the organizing and leadership capacity of women working in informal employment.

Implemented by WIEGO's partner networks and organizations, it has seven elements:

- Strengthening the Movement of Home-Based Workers
- Advancing Domestic Workers' Leadership
- Developing Leadership & Business Skills for Informal Women Workers in Fair Trade
- Strengthening Voice of Informal Women Workers Around Social Policy Issues (Peru)
- Strengthening the Global Movement of Street & Market Vendors
- Law and the Informal Economy
- Women's Leadership Assembly 2014

Visit the [project site](#) to learn all about it.



Women Leaders in Peru Gaining Strength & Voice



In Peru, WIEGO and its partners are building on the work done in Lima in the first “Voice” project, which built capacity through training and helped worker organizations connect to relevant government departments to have informal workers’ needs heard. New initiatives are expanding the scope of the project to more categories of workers, including domestic workers, and in more regions of Peru. By 2015, the project aims to help about 6,000 informal workers who live in poverty attain improved social protection, reflected in new access to childcare, health coverage, and/or old-age benefits. Key to achieving this will be stronger organizations engaged in more dialogue with the state, and increased voice for about 200 women worker leaders.

In addition to focusing on four districts of Lima prioritized by worker leaders – Independencia, La Victoria, Lima Cercado, and San Martín de Porres – the project has expanded into three cities in sub-national regions of Peru: Arequipa, Chiclayo and Tarapoto. [Read more about this project.](#)

Using Law to Inform Informal Economy Debates

WIEGO added a new element to its FLOW-funded activities in late 2013. **Law and the Informal Economy** cuts across all other elements of WIEGO’s Securing Economic Rights project. It challenges current notions of law that favour formal enterprises/workers over informal enterprises/workers, and men over women. In its work in this area, WIEGO has found that law can be an effective tool for improving the lives of informal women workers. [Learn more.](#)

In March 2014, the law project is funding an opportunity for informal workers to participate in drafting a platform on formalizing the informal economy. In advance of the International Labour Conference (ILC) 2014, WIEGO is hosting a series of workshops to gather feedback from representatives of domestic workers, home-based workers, street vendors, waste pickers and other informal workers. The three workshops will take place in March in Argentina, South Africa and Thailand. A participatory approach will be used to ensure the voices of informal workers—through their membership organizations—are integrated into the platform before it goes to the 2014 ILC. WIEGO will also invite informal worker representatives to join WIEGO’s delegation to ILC, which opens at the end of May.

Strengthening the Global Movement of Street & Market Vendors project is facilitating the advocacy work of street vendors in 10 countries. Most recently, regional leadership workshops were held in Moldova and Togo. [Find out more about this project.](#)

Coming Together at the Women’s Leadership Assembly

In November 2014, a Women’s Leadership Assembly will be held to enable informal workers to network, share information, document their common needs and plan for future activities. This five-day event, planned for Yogyakarta, Indonesia, will combine cross-sectoral capacity-building of women leaders, sharing learning on policy-advocacy, and organizing strategies. Representatives from all project elements will come together to share experiences and lessons learned, discuss challenges and gain from capacity-building workshops, seminars, field visits, constituency meetings, panels and discussions.



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