

**TUC (GHANA)/WIEGO INFORMAL ECONOMY LEGAL PROJECT
REPORT FROM SENSITIZATION WORKSHOP FOR STREET VENDORS
HELD ON TUESDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER 2014 AT THE TUC CONFERENCE HALL, ACCRA**

1. Background

The Ghana TUC/WIEGO Informal Sector Project seeks to identify and address laws impacting on the work of informal sector workers. It focuses on street vendors, kayayei and domestic workers. The first phase of the project began in 2011 with research and consultation with the workers. The research identified legal provisions and practices which impact negatively on the working conditions of the workers. A stakeholder conference was held in 2012 to share findings of the research and engage policymakers and enforcers on issues that emanated from the research.

With regards to street vendors, the research highlighted issues like the passage of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) 2010 by-law, which criminalizes selling on prohibited streets in Accra. Cases involving accused street vendors studied showed harsh sentences. The project thus engaged the AMA with a view to amend the by-law. Currently, the AMA is reviewing its by-law and has received inputs from the TUC. Also, to minimize sentences, the project engaged Magistrates who committed to take the recommendations of the TUC into consideration when dealing with such cases.

This report covers a sensitization workshop undertaken under the fourth phase of the project. It sought to enhance the capacities of the leadership of street vendors so that they would be able to engage policymakers and law enforcers. The workshop was held on 3 September 2014.

2. Participants at the Workshop

The workshop was attended by 46 participants; made up of 36 women and 10 men. The majority of the participants were members of StreetNet. Also present were staff from the TUC, including the Head of the Organisation Department, the Informal Sector Desk Officer and the Head of the Women's Desk.

3. Methodology

The workshop involved delivery of speeches, presentations and discussions. These were delivered in five sessions as follows:

Session 1: Self-introduction was done by all participants. This was followed by a welcome address from Togbe Adom Drayi II.

Session 2: Ms. Osei-Boateng delivered a presentation touching briefly on the project background and achievements thus far. The project update focused on progress with the AMA with regards to the review of the 2010 by-law. The main theme of the presentation was on the rights and responsibilities of street vendors as contained in the Constitution of Ghana. For instance, the participants were informed of their rights to form a union or an association that can lead engagements with policymakers to influence laws that affect them. In line with this, participants were called upon to support the formation of CIWA (Council for Informal Workers' Associations) an umbrella body for all informal sector workers. This would give them greater voice as informal sector workers. Equally, participants were sensitized to honour tax payment as workers. The discussions which followed the presentation reinforced the need to have strong leadership and collective voice. For instance, participants from East Legon, a suburb of Accra, raised concerns over the lack of a market within the East Legon vicinity and the lack of appreciation by the Adenta Municipal Assembly to designate space for vending. Participants from the Makola Market mentioned threats to evict them from their vending places. In response, the TUC officials invited a written complaint from the leadership of StreetNet. They assured participants that the TUC would take steps to engage key stakeholders on the issue when the complaint is received.

Session 3: The second presentation was made by the Informal Sector Desk Officer of TUC, Mrs. Rose Kwei. The presentation touched on the need for the workers to form cooperatives that would support their business. For instance, credit unions, when formed by workers, can provide individuals with micro-credit at lower rates compared with other financial institutions. During the discussions that followed the presentation, it was noted that some associations (e.g. Ga East Traders Association) had already formed credit unions. These groups shared their experience with their colleagues in order to encourage them to start similar ventures.

Session 4: The fourth session had participants generate themes and messages for the upcoming campaign. Some messages given by participants were as follows:

- *The informal sector is growing*
- *The informal sector is the largest employer*
- *Traders contribute to the economy*

- *Street vending is not a crime*
- *Street vendors are neglected*
- *Street vendors pay taxes*
- *We want to see the benefit of the taxes we pay*
- *Create an informal sector Desk at AMA*
- *Informal sector operators are WORKERS*
- *We want to be recognized as workers*
- *Keep our markets clean with the taxes we pay*
- *Provide us social amenities at our markets*
- *We need security and power at the Pedestrian Mall*
- *AMA should seek our views during policymaking*

4. Conclusion and Way Forward

A closing remark was given by Togbe Adom Drayi, noting the importance of CIWA's formation. He reiterated the TUC's commitment to support the leadership of the association and to pursue the complaints when officially lodged. Participants expressed readiness to join the campaign to raise awareness about the contribution of street vendors to the economy and the fact that they need protection like other workers.

