



Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing

WIEGO MBO Newsletter

A Newsletter for Membership-Based Organizations of
Informal Workers

February 2018

Greetings friends and colleagues!

As always, we hope you enjoy this issue of the WIEGO MBO Newsletter. We love to hear from you! If you have questions or comments about this newsletter, or if you would like to submit content for the next issue, please email the coordinator of this newsletter, Megan MacLeod, at megan.macleod@wiego.org.

Contact us at WIEGO!

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What's going on at WIEGO?

Take a look at our [recent](#)
and [upcoming](#) events and
activities!

WIEGO General Assembly, 2018

The WIEGO Board has just announced the dates for its next General Assembly (GA). Held every four years, the goal of all WIEGO GAs is to bring together grassroots women leaders, activists, researchers, and policy-makers in order to share experiences and knowledge, set priorities and frame issues, and review WIEGO's past activities and future plans. A further purpose has been to expand and strengthen the WIEGO network. Our next GA will be held 11-14 November 2018. For more information, please see WIEGO's [GA website page](#).

Victory for the Waste Pickers in Popayán, Medellín, & Montería in Achieving Payment for Service

By Federico Parra

Members of four waste picker organizations in Medellín, Popayán, and Montería — RECIMED (Cooperativa Multiactiva de recicladores de Medellín) and ARRECICLAR (Asociación de Recicladores de Antioquia) in Medellín; AREMARPO (Asociación de Recolectores de Materiales Reciclables de Popayán); and COOPRESCORDOBA (Cooperativa de Recicladores de Córdoba) in Montería* — have received their first payment for waste collection, transportation, and recycling services.

This feat was achieved through the legal claims that Asociación Cooperativa de Recicladores de Bogotá (ARB) filed to demand their rights, which resulted in seven rulings by the Constitutional Court of Colombia in favour of waste pickers.

The Constitutional Court's pronouncements and orders command municipalities and national authorities to create the necessary guarantees for waste pickers' safe and secure transition to formalization. Among them, the most important are as follows:

1. that all waste pickers (organized or not) have access to recyclable materials during the transition to formalization (regardless of the time required);
2. that real programmes of technical, organizational, and administrative support be created to comply with the requirements waste pickers need to fulfill;
3. that waste pickers remain able to continue their work in this occupation and move upwards in the value chain.

For more information on the history of the struggle of waste pickers in Bogotá, Colombia, read:

- ARB: [Fighting for An Inclusive Model for Recycling in Bogota](#).
- Blog: ["Inclusive recycling with waste pickers in Medellín?"](#) & ["Waste pickers in Medellín, Popayán, and Montería receive their first payment as recycling public service providers"](#).

* Payment was also successfully negotiated in the municipality of Diutama.

**NUESTRO
TRABAJO ES UN
SERVICIO**



OUR WORK IS A SERVICE. Promotional material recognizing waste pickers as public service providers. Produced by ANR and WIEGO.

Bangkok Study

Sarah Orleans Reed

A recently released study, “Informal Workers in Bangkok: A Scan of Four Occupational Sectors”, uses evidence gathered through a series of focus group interviews to gain an understanding of the role that domestic workers, home-based workers, motorcycle taxi drivers, and street vendors play in the city and about the federation they have formed to fight for more inclusive urban development. WIEGO, in partnership with HomeNet Thailand (HNT), initiated the research after the launch of the Bangkok Focal City project, which builds on HNT’s and WIEGO’s previous work on inclusive urban development with informal workers in Bangkok.

Late last year, four membership-based organizations (MBOs), each representing one of the four sectors of the study, decided to come together to form a federation, now known as the [Federation of Informal Workers](#) or FIT Thailand. In developing this research, the goal was to help FIT’s leadership understand the issues facing workers across these four sectors in Bangkok, and to provide an evidence base to support FIT’s advocacy. Worker leaders encouraged the researchers to focus on barriers to livelihoods in each sector, challenges in accessing health services and urban housing, and the relationship between informal workers and city institutions.

To read the full study, see [here](#).

Launch of the Child Care Campaign

By Rachel Moussie

In July 2017, WIEGO launched a global campaign calling for quality public child care for informal workers. The campaign was developed with MBOs such as HomeNet Thailand and SEWA based on the demands emerging from women informal workers. This campaign brings attention to the fact that a lack of quality child care services leads to a loss of income for women informal workers and puts their health and wellbeing, and that of their children’s, at risk. The campaign is taking on different forms around the world. In Ghana, WIEGO supported IHVAG and GATA — representing street vendors and market traders in Accra — to come together and outline a city-level campaign for more child care centres in markets. [There is already a good example of a child care centre in Makola Market in Accra](#) run by the market traders association that could be replicated in other markets with the support of the government and municipality. In India, the Forum for Creches and Child Care (FORCES) and SEWA are launching a national campaign for child care. FORCES represents over 400 child rights, women’s rights and workers organizations, like SEWA and NASVI, and seeks to promote holistic, quality public child care services that are open all day to match the working hours of informal workers. In Delhi, a first consultation was held with MBOs representing waste pickers, construction workers, street vendors, home-based workers, and domestic workers to get them involved in the campaign and explore city-level policies in support of child care services adapted to workers’ needs. Similar meetings were held with MBOs in Mexico City and with MUFIS in Malawi.

In November, WIEGO, in collaboration with FES South Africa, co-hosted a global meeting on child care bringing together MBOs from South Africa, Ghana, Thailand, and Peru alongside global union federations (i.e. ITUC, PSI, and IUF) and UN agencies such as UNICEF and the ILO. The meeting was held in Durban, South Africa, where participants learned of the specific child care needs of market traders operating in Warwick Junction represented by SASEWA, Umbumbano and SAIWA. We discussed campaign strategies and developed plans to take forward the campaign either at the city or national levels. In South Africa, for instance, the MBOs present discussed the opportunities to push for better child care services through the ongoing negotiations on the implementation of Recommendation



A Joburg reclaimers holds up the sign he made for the protest. Photo: WIEGO

204, where child care is specifically mentioned as a form of social protection that is essential for informal workers. The final notes from the meeting can be accessed [here](#).

If you would like to find out more about the campaign, the campaign materials can be downloaded in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Thai, Hindi and Zulu from [WIEGO’s Child Care Campaign page](#). WIEGO is calling on all MBOs who are interested to sign onto the campaign by sending a copy of your organisation’s logo to childcare@wiego.org to add to the campaign website. The more MBOs who show their support, the greater our collective demand for quality public child care for all workers!

Joburg’s Win Victory in the Fight Against Privatization

Carlin Carr

On July 13 2017, hundreds of Johannesburg’s informal waste pickers (known locally as “reclaimers”) took to the streets to protest a municipal decision that could put them out of work essentially overnight.

The march was in response to a move by the state-owned Pikitup, the official waste management service provider for the City of Joburg, to contract out the separation of recyclable waste-at-source services to private recycling companies. The new separation-at-source contracts came into effect on 1 July 2017, with no consultation along the way. Reclaimers responded with a campaign, including public protests and media appearances, to bring attention to their struggle.

A long struggle for recognition

Waste pickers have been appealing to Pikitup and the City of Johannesburg since September 2016. That’s when they learned that a tender was issued to appoint private

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Negotiations & Collective Bargaining

On October 13th to 15th, 2017, leaders of the Federation of Informal Workers (FIT) Thailand representing four occupational sectors (home-based workers, domestic workers, street vendors and motorcycle taxi drivers) met for negotiations and collective bargaining training sessions, in Bangkok, Thailand.

Led by WIEGO's Jane Barrett, the training sessions sought to improve informal workers' negotiations skills. Elements of the training included how to keep all the members involved in the negotiations process; how to follow-up negotiations; how to draft an agreement to consolidate what has been agreed in the negotiations; and how to enforce negotiated agreements. A further goal was to develop the confidence of the participants so they can share what they have learnt with other leaders in their organization.

To learn more, see [here](#).

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companies to do separation at source in high-income areas. Supported by WIEGO and the [South African Waste Pickers Association](#) (SAWPA), the reclaimers wrote letters to Pikitup, asking them to disclose and discuss with them their intentions.

Lacking a response, Joburg's reclaimers organized in the streets and on the landfills. They held mass meetings to elect a representative committee that could continue the appeal to the city to suspend the appointment of private companies. They also devised a list of demands that includes a call for their right to work, suspension of private contracts, inclusion of their needs in future planning, and implementation of facilities to effectively carry out their services.

The Joburg reclaimers' efforts paid off and they scored a big win in their fight: Pikitup's managing director, Lungile Dhlamini, put a halt to signing any new contracts and acknowledged waste pickers as principle stakeholders in the city's waste economy. He has also proposed to establish a waste picker forum under Pikitup and scheduled an initial workshop on 10 August to begin the process of structured engagement. In fact, the managing director himself led the workshop. The turnaround left Joburg's reclaimers feeling vindicated in their struggle for recognition as waste recycling industry pioneers.

To find out more, see the following:

- Read this article in its entirety on the WIEGO blog: "[Joburg's win victory in the fight against privatization](#)".
- [Listen to a radio interview](#) with Vanessa Pillay of WIEGO, Eva Mokoena from Orange Farm, and Steven Leeu from Newtown on the situation in Joburg.
- Read more about [inclusive waste management models](#).

IDWF Executive Committee meets in Cape Town, South Africa, 20-23 November 2017

Karin Pape & Sofia Trevino

The Executive Committee of the [International Domestic Workers Federation](#) (IDWF) had their annual meeting at Community House in Cape Town, South Africa. The team, which included regional coordinators and strategic allies from IUF and WIEGO, met to discuss lessons learned, plans and future strategies as a Federation currently representing 65 affiliates in 53 countries (600,000+ work-



Collective Bargaining workshop participants pose for a photo in Bangkok. Photo: WIEGO

ers). In preparation for IDWF Congress, it was agreed to use the Community House as the venue to host this important 5-year event in November 2018.

During the last year, the IDWF has increased in size, expanded to the Middle-East and North African (MENA) region and strengthened its structures. It continues to work with different partners in developing resources and campaigns and strengthening domestic workers' organizations and leadership. The Federation received two awards, the 20th Justice and Peace award and the Sr. Jeanne Devos award.

In moving forward, the IDWF will continue its efforts in ensuring domestic workers rights. To this end, it will prepare for engagement at the International Labor Congress in 2018 given the importance of the standard setting item on "Ending violence and harassment against women and men in the world of work." Strong international instruments are needed to ensure a non-violent working environment, especially for domestic workers in private homes. The IDWF believes this challenge can be addressed with a Convention, supplemented by a Recommendation. "We are a strong united force that once again will shake the foundation of the International Labour Organisation" (Myrtle Witbooi, IDWF President).