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# WIEGO MBO Newsletter



A Newsletter for Membership-Based Organizations of Informal Workers

## GREETINGS FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES!

We hope you enjoy this newsletter. Topics include:

- Organizing Efforts Pay Off (waste pickers)
- Health Activities with the Kayayei (headload porters) in Accra
- Workshop on Food Security, Home-Based Workers and Climate Change (HomeNet)
- Mapping of Home-Based Workers' Organizations and Supporters in Latin America
- Inclusive Cities Meeting
- Leadership and Organizing Training in Pakistan
- Recommended Resources



The historical line-up:  
Waste pickers have waited to  
get paid for their services for  
more than 20 years!

*Photos by Federico Parra,  
Latin America Waste Picker  
Programme Coordinator,  
WIEGO*



Waste picker MBOs (membership-based organizations) from Pune, India and Bogota, Colombia are finally getting official recognition from their local governments. This is not a coincidence, but rather the result of being organized and fighting for decades! While for centuries waste pickers have been collecting, sorting, selling and recovering recyclable materials, 2013 celebrates 20 years of the foundation of KKP KP (Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat) in India and 23 years of the creation of ARB (Asociación Recicladores de Bogotá) in Colombia. These, the oldest existing organizations exclusive to waste pickers, show us how organizing efforts create real change.

Waste pickers in the [SWaCH cooperative](#) (a collective formed by KKP KP) provide services to both the cities of Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad in Pune district. However, the latest government decided to give a contract to a dif-

ferent private firm, excluding the waste pickers organized under SWaCH and their ongoing, efficient work. Last February, the SWaCH members, who are part of the trade union [KKP KP](#), won a legal case at the High Court of India. The court proposed that the long-term contract to the new company should be modified to include waste pickers on a priority basis. The municipal government made a new call for public bids, saying the contractor must give preference to waste pickers already working in certain wards of the city. Another condition is that the contractor must abide by labour laws. It's not a complete victory but it's a huge step! [Read more about this victory.](#)

About 16,000 kilometers from India, the waste pickers from Bogota, Colombia, stood in a long line to receive the very first official recognition and payment by the municipality. They also won several cases at the Consti-

tutional Court of Colombia in order to arrive at this landmark moment. After more than a decade of several litigations and struggle with the Bogota Municipality, now [ARB](#) members are celebrating a well deserved achievement. Each waste picker will receive from US \$200 to \$300 dollars as part of the waste collection services done over the last two months. This is in addition to any value received from the selling of collected materials. Waste pickers are now seen by the government as service providers, the same as any other private provider contracted by the State--but much better, because now almost 2,000 waste pickers receive compensation for their work. [Read more about this victory](#) and [watch this special video.](#)

*~ Story contributed by Lucia Fernandez, WIEGO's Global Waste Picker Coordinator*



Marcia Marchena, General Secretary of Various Occupations Workers Union of San Judas, Nicaragua.  
Photo by Laura Morillo

## Inclusive Cities Programme Planning Meeting

A planning meeting of the Inclusive Cities project was organized by HomeNet South Asia in collaboration with HomeNet Thailand/Foundation for Labour and Employment Promotion (FLEP). The meeting was held in Bangkok in January. The main objective of the meeting was to discuss the activities of the first two years in accordance with the milestones committed to the project and to discuss the sustainability plan of the project. Around 40 participants including Executive Directors/Focal Persons, Programme Managers and Accounts Managers from eight South and South East Asian Countries (Cambodia, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand), as well as WIEGO representatives from Canada participated in the workshop.

~ Story contributed by Renu Golani of HomeNet South Asia (HNSA)

## Information about Different Occupational Groups

If you are looking for information about specific informal occupations (domestic workers, home-based workers, street vendors, waste pickers, construction workers, garment workers, smallholder farmers or transportation workers), you may want to look at [WIEGO's web pages on Occupational Groups](#). (While currently only available in English, this section of the website is being translated into Spanish and French this year.) Also, remember that there is always updated news posted on the WIEGO website's [news page](#), segmented by occupational group.

## Mapping of Home-Based Workers' Organizations and Supporters in Latin America

For many years, WIEGO has been supporting capacity building and networking among home-based worker organizations in South and Southeast Asia, and more recently, it has been supporting organizations in South-East Europe. We are now intending to work with organizations in Latin America. WIEGO's Organization and Representation Programme (ORP) carried out an initial identification (mapping) of home-based worker organizations and supporters in 2012.

During a field visit to Latin America, WIEGO was able to make contact with several organizations and researchers in four cities: Lima (Peru), Buenos Aires (Argentina), Sao Paulo (Brazil) and Managua (Nicaragua). We were able to begin to get to know the situation of home-based workers in those cities.

Some of the findings of the field visit were:

### Organizations

- We found some small organizations of home-based workers. In addition some unions are organizing textile work-

ers, self-employed workers, and other workers in the informal economy but they are not focusing specifically on organizing home-based workers.

- Non-governmental organizations are supporting textile workers, migrant workers, women workers, and people in poor living conditions—but they are not focusing specifically on home-based workers either.

### Who are the home-based workers?

- Home-based workers are dependent (sub-contracted) workers, self-employed workers or micro entrepreneurs.

- Home-based workers make a variety of products from yarn, wool, and cotton, such as sweaters, scarves, shawls, hats, pants, coats, dresses, socks, ponchos, etc. Furthermore, they make embroidery, bijouterie (necklaces, bracelets, and earrings), shoes, handbags, key chains, wall hangings, little boxes, and bakery items.

### Legal and contractual situation

- Home-based workers have verbal agreements, not written contracts, and assume the risks of the jobs.

- There are difficulties with enforcement of and compliance with current laws. This prevents home-based workers from exercising their labour and social security rights.

### Other findings

- One of the important ways that the working poor survive is through home-based work. Home-based work provides jobs to women with childcare responsibilities, retirees and unemployed people.

- There is a lack of information about what home-based work is and about the difficulties of self-recognition as home-based workers.

- There is a lack of current statistics and research about home-based work.

We are now following up with our contacts in the four cities. We want to strengthen ties with those organizations and supporters, and also wish to contact more organizations and supporters of home-based workers in the Latin American region.

~Story contributed by Laura Morillo and Chris Bonner

## Training on "Leadership and Organizing" in Pakistan

Training on "Leadership and Organizing" was organized for a group of home-based worker (HBW) leaders from Pakistan from 22– 24 December 2012 in Lahore, Pakistan. The training was conducted by SEWA Academy, facilitated by HomeNet South Asia and hosted by HomeNet Pakistan. There were around 32 HBW leaders from 10 target cities of Pakistan under the Inclusive Cities project.

The workshop participants were involved in different trades like embroidery (Sindh, Jasti), mirror work, stitching, bangle making, rilly/ribs making, shoe making, football making, quilt making, gabba work and other handicrafts. The main objective of the training was to build the leadership skills around organizing and livelihood issues in urban areas. Topics covered in the sessions included the importance, steps, benefits and tools of organizing; developing leadership and communication skills, interaction and dialogue with city officials, and improving bargaining skills.

~ Story contributed by Renu Golani of HNSA

## Some Recommended Resources

### Newsletters

You may want to visit these websites to sign up for additional newsletters:

- [Global Alliance of Wastepickers](#): On this page are links to a variety of newsletters about waste pickers around the world in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.
- [StreetNet International](#): StreetNet Newsletters are available here in English, French, Russian, and Spanish.
- [NASVI](#): NASVI newsletters are available here in English.
- [IDWN](#): IDWN newsletters are available here.

### Websites

- [WIEGO](#)
- [WIEGO on Facebook](#)
- [Follow WIEGO on Twitter](#)
- [Women's Economic Empowerment](#)
- [Inclusive Cities](#)
- [Inclusive Cities on Facebook](#)
- [Follow Inclusive Cities on Twitter](#)
- [Inclusive Cities blog](#)
- [National Domestic Workers Alliance](#)
- [International Domestic Workers Network](#)
- [Global Alliance of Waste Pickers](#)

### Videos

- [First Congress of Latin American Waste Pickers](#): video from this meeting in Managua, February 2012
- [We, SWaCH](#): video from SWaCH on their operations and the benefits they provide to the Pimpri Chinchwad municipality and the 230,000 households they collect waste from on a daily basis

### Publications

- WIEGO's [Workers' Lives Series](#)
- [Durban Street Traders](#) (produced by StreetNet under the Inclusive Cities project)
- [Trading our Way Up: Women Organizing for Fair Trade](#)
- [The Only School We Have](#)

## Interested in receiving more news and updates from WIEGO about the informal economy?

WIEGO sends out newsletters and weekly news roundups about membership-based organizations and about domestic workers, home-based workers, street vendors, and waste pickers. If you would like to be added to any of the following lists, please [write to Karen at the WIEGO Secretariat](#) ([karen\\_mccabe@hks.harvard.edu](mailto:karen_mccabe@hks.harvard.edu)) and tell her which list (or lists) you would like to be on. Please include your language preference(s).

- \* WIEGO newsletter
- \* Inclusive Cities newsletter
- \* Domestic Workers news roundup
- \* Street Vendors news roundup
- \* Membership-Based Organizations newsletter
- \* Occupational Health and Safety newsletter
- \* Home-Based Workers news roundup
- \* Waste Pickers news roundup

## Health Activities with the *Kayayei* (Headload Porters) in Accra

*Kayayei* is a term from the Ga language used to describe the female headload porters who migrate from the poor regions of northern Ghana to work in and around Accra's markets. In 2010 WIEGO's Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) project spent some time interviewing *kayayei* about their access to healthcare through Ghana's National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). The small study found that the *kayayei* who were interviewed were not able to access the scheme because the cost of the premiums was too high. Further research revealed that even when the women had managed to pay the premium to the NHIS, they often received poor treatment at clinics and hospitals.

These research findings fed into a Health Policy Dialogue, which was organized by WIEGO and HomeNet Thailand in Bangkok in January 2012

with support from the Rockefeller Foundation. Present at the dialogue were representatives from the Ghana NHIS as well as health activists from Ghana. There were some heated debates, but eventually it was agreed to hold a second dialogue in Accra that would focus on the *kayayei* and their access to healthcare. This second dialogue was held in July 2012.

Careful preparation of the *kayayei* was undertaken by Dorcas Ansa, WIEGO's facilitator in Accra. The *kayayei* had never met with government officials on equal ground before, and rehearsed the position they would take. The Ghanaian officials and policy advisers in turn took the dialogue seriously. At the end, they committed on record to assist WIEGO with widespread registration of *kayayei* for the NHIS at a substantially reduced rate. There was also a commitment to identify

specific members of a task team at five specific health facilities in areas where traders work, to deal with this vulnerable group of women.

In September 2012 the first registration drive was held, and over a thousand *kayayei* were registered with the NHIS, most for the first time. In January 2013, a second registration drive was held where a further 759 *kayayei* were registered. The OHS project is now running a monitoring study with those who registered during these campaigns. We hope to use this to feed into further activism around the improvement of health services for the *kayayei*.

For more information about Occupational Health and Safety in the Informal Economy, see the [WIEGO OHS microsite](#).

*~Story contributed by Laura Alferts, Francie Lund, and Dorcas Ansa*

## Subregional Workshop on Food Security, Home-Based Workers and Climate Change

A Subregional Workshop (SRW) on "Food Security as part of Social Protection for Home-based Workers to address the Adverse Impact of Climate Change" was organized by HomeNet Southeast Asia in collaboration with HomeNet South Asia and held in Manila, Philippines in November 2012. This workshop was under the "Inclusive Cities" project. The SRW featured environmentally sustainable urban farming methods to address the threat of food insecurity brought about by global warming and disasters. Practices and initiatives from local communities on crop diversification and food production for self-help and sustainability were highlighted. Experts presented the use of green technology applicable to women producers of food crops in urban areas. The

SRW also aimed to increase understanding and build upon the links between people's livelihoods, food security status, and access to social protection.

The main objectives of the SRW were: i) To raise awareness on the concepts, dimensions and rights to food security (food availability, food access, utilization and stability) as an essential component of social protection in the era of climate change; ii) To learn about the urban dimensions of food security to increase the adaptive capacities of home-based and informal workers against the problems of hunger, malnutrition, livelihood and related risks brought about by climate change and disasters; iii) To share information about programs, interventions, and initia-

tives of both government and civil society organizations as well as social enterprises that may be adopted by local communities applicable to urban areas to address the issue of food security; iv) To be able to work with local governments, civil society networks, workers' and women's associations, community-based organizations, private business, and other possible partners and stakeholders in the adoption of policies and programs that ensure food security, and help communities of women and home-based workers sustain green jobs and community projects on food production and livelihood.

*~ Story contributed by Renu Golani of HNSA*