

Letter from WIEGO's Coordinator

Dear WIEGO Members, Associates, and Friends:

The highlight of 2006 for the WIEGO Network was the launch of our formal governance and accountability structure at our General Assembly in Durban/eThekweni, South Africa in April.

The decision to formalize the WIEGO network was taken by our Steering Committee in July 2002 at a strategic review and planning retreat to mark our 5th anniversary. At that retreat, the Steering Committee deliberated on the governance and accountability principles that should be enshrined in our constitution and set up a committee to draft the constitution. In October 2005, the Steering Committee ratified our Constitution and set up a) a Transition Committee to review which individuals and member-based organizations affiliated with WIEGO met the criteria of membership and to issue invitations to potential members; and b) an interim Nominating Committee to solicit nominations from the membership for a new Steering Committee.

According to our Constitution, members of WIEGO are drawn from one or another of three constituencies:

- member-based organizations of informal workers;
- researchers and statisticians doing research, data collection, or data analysis on the informal economy; and
- professionals in development agencies (inter-governmental, governmental, or non-governmental) providing services to or shaping policies towards the informal economy.

Member-based organizations of informal workers are invited to join WIEGO as Institutional Members: their representatives to General Assemblies are called Delegates. Individuals from the other two constituencies are invited to join WIEGO as Individual Members.

In all, 100 participants from 32 countries participated in the General Assembly:

- 38 of the participants were Delegates from the 14 member-based organizations that were the first Institutional Members of WIEGO;
- 37 of the participants were new Individual Members of WIEGO; and
- 25 participants were interested individuals from South Africa and elsewhere.

Sixty other new Individual Members of WIEGO were not able to attend but were consulted beforehand by email about the proposed candidates for the new Steering and Nominating Committees. An additional eighty persons participated in the Urban Policies Colloquium that WIEGO co-organized with StreetNet International and the University of KwaZulu Natal immediately following the General Assembly (see below).

At the General Assembly in eThekweni/Durban in April 2006, key provisions of our Constitution were formally instituted: the membership met in constituency sub-groups, elected candidates for the next Nominating Committee, and reviewed WIEGO's activities, plans, and budget. Also, the old and new Steering Committees met before and after the General Assembly, respectively.

As you can tell, the April 2006 General Assembly marked an important threshold in the maturation of the WIEGO Network. We are hopeful that our new structure will guarantee WIEGO's accountability to our members and our stability into the future. To ensure our institutional stability, we have also registered as a not-for-profit organization in the UK. And to mark our 10th anniversary in 2007, we have launched a comprehensive review and planning process. We look forward to collaborating with many of you in our joint commitment to the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy.



Martha Chen, WIEGO Coordinator

***Women in Informal Employment:
Globalizing and Organizing***

Annual Report 2006





Key events and achievements for 2006

Advocacy Activities and Policy Forums

Urban Policies Colloquium in Durban South Africa April 24 – 25, 2006

International colloquium makes the case for inclusive urban planning for the working poor in the informal economy

“World Class Cities’ and the Urban Informal Economy: Inclusive Planning for the Working Poor” was the topic of a WIEGO-sponsored public colloquium held in Durban after the General Assembly. StreetNet International and the University of KwaZulu Natal were the co-organizers. The colloquium focused on how to engage public policy makers and planners in addressing the needs of urban informal workers and, more specifically, of WIEGO Institutional Members who organize urban informal workers.

This was the fourth time WIEGO has held a public event highlighting one of its key themes in conjunction with a General Assembly meeting. Seventy-seven WIEGO members remained in Durban for the colloquium and were joined by another 80 participants. Half were international and half were South African, including representatives from the Durban/eThekweni municipality, the provincial government of KwaZulu Natal, the South Africa Cities Network, various South African trade unions, the University of KwaZulu Natal, several other universities, and the media. The colloquium opened with the presentation of a vision for inclusive urban planning. This set the stage for a session on workers’ perspectives featuring representatives of home-based workers, waste collectors, and migrant workers. Another session featured comparative international experiences of implementing urban policies in support of the urban informal economy. The conference concluded with two policy dialogues on the informal economy: one on policies within South Africa, the other on policies in other countries.

Exposure Dialogue Programme at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York (November 3 – 5, 2006)

Ground-level activists and researchers working on the informal economy continue dialogue with mainstream economists on key assumptions of neo-classical economists

WIEGO has been involved in a series of “Exposures and Dialogues” with activists from Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) and economists from Cornell University. The basic objective of this initiative is to explore several key assumptions of neo-classical economics, and neo-liberal economic policy, which “trouble” ground-level activists and researchers. The hope is to deepen understanding on both sides through serious dialogue.

Previous sessions included discussions about the structure and dynamics of labour markets along with neo-classical assumptions about minimum wage policies and international trade. The Cornell dialogue focused on alternative models of labour markets, possible interventions into these markets, and the pros and cons of “de-linking” social protection from employment/labour markets. To illustrate the nature of this debate, the participants discussed whether the predictive power of models is enhanced or diminished by distinguishing between different categories of self-employment and wage employment.

Research and Publications

“Tools for Advocacy” Dissemination of Asia Social Protection Dialogue

New booklet provides tools for hands-on training in social protection

Participants in a Regional Dialogue on Social Protection organized by WIEGO and HomeNet Thailand in 2004 underscored a strong need for advocacy materials promoting social protection for informal workers. In response to concerns voiced by policy makers, activists and researchers, WIEGO and HomeNet Thailand produced and disseminated a booklet entitled *Tools for Advocacy: Social Protection for Informal Workers*. In 2006, it became available in eight languages common to the Dialogue participants. The booklet presents clear examples, in non-academic terms, of successful initiatives to protect informal workers and identifies the steps that informal worker organizations can take to start similar campaigns. The booklet also reviews the research and policy priorities discussed at the Asia Social Protection Dialogue. It is available in English on the WIEGO website.



Key events and achievements for 2006

Research and Publications continued

Organizing: Networking

“Street Trade in Latin America” Regional Reviews and Global Volume on Street Trade

Six case studies highlight the key attributes of Latin American street traders, their problems and struggles

Sally Roever, from the University of Leiden was commissioned to write a review of street trade in Latin America. In 2006, she produced, *Street Trade in Latin America: Demographic Trends, Legal Issues, and Vending Organizations in Six Cities*. This is now available on the WIEGO website. In her review she examines street traders in Bogota, Columbia; Caracas, Venezuela; Lima, Peru; Mexico City, Mexico; Santiago, Chile; and Sao Paulo, Brazil. She concludes that in spite of the need for more systematic cross-regional research, certain commonalities are already clear and deserve specific policy responses.

The Roever Latin America Review is the third in a series of regional reviews commissioned by WIEGO. In 2004, Sharit Bhowmik (Director, Urban Policies) completed a review of street trade in Asia. This was later published in the well-known Indian journal, *Economic and Political Weekly*. Winnie Mitullah (former Director, Urban Policies) completed a review of street trade in Africa. Sharit Bhowmik has been in touch with Routledge Press, India, which is interested in publishing an edited volume on street trade worldwide that will include these three regional reviews plus some additional country studies.

Manual on Surveys of Informal Employment and Informal Sector

Work begins on an ILO manual on surveys of informal employment and the informal sector

Preparations for an ILO publication entitled *“Manual on Surveys of Informal Employment and Informal Sector”* – a guide aimed at national statisticians to provide technical and operational advice on the development of statistics on informal employment and the informal sector – began in 2006. Joann Vanek, Director of the Statistics Programme is the editor of the manual and author of several chapters in it.

Database on Organizations of Informal Workers

Building a Database strengthens the Network

Over 400 entries are now registered in the growing data base that has become an important building block in the Organization and Representation Programme’s efforts to share information among organizations of informal workers world-wide. Each organization’s activities, contact details, membership, affiliations, objectives, and organizing strategies are noted, to the extent possible, in the database. There is also information about the position of women in each organization. Although updating this data base is an on-going priority, it has already been put to use in developing educational materials for a range of informal workers and increasing their organizational capacity to network directly.

Membership in and Collaboration with the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI)

Promoting responsible corporate practices takes broad collaboration.

The mission of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) is to improve the lives of workers in global supply chains. By creating a tripartite organization including companies, trade unions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), ETI seeks to promote responsible corporate practices. Many of the informal workers who are WIEGO members are contributors/links to various global supply chains.

WIEGO hopes to enable these workers to achieve fairer compensation for their labour by participating in ETI.

Since its establishment in 1998, ETI has become widely recognized as a global leader in developing tools for implementing voluntary codes of practice to address supply chain labour conditions. British-based, its membership includes a number of high end (and High



Key events and achievements for 2006

*Organizing: Networking
continued*

Conferences

Street) retailers such as Marks and Spencer, The Body Shop International, The Gap, Next, Monsoon, Boots and big supermarkets such as Sainsbury's, Tesco and Asda. Trade unions, including the International Trade Union Confederation, are involved and international NGOs such as Oxfam, Save the Children, Tradecraft and others complete the tripartite structure of ETI.

The promotion of international labour standards to protect informal workers is one of WIEGO'S Global Markets Programme's key planks. The ETI undertakes pilot efforts in sourcing countries, many of which are home to WIEGO members. WIEGO's entry into the ETI offers a great opportunity to combine forces with other organizations that share common goals and constituents. SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association), a founding member of WIEGO, is participating in one of ETI's pilot activities documenting the status of homeworkers in India.

International Conference on "Organizing in the Informal Economy" (Ghana, Sept. 25 – 29, 2006)

WIEGO programme staff provides technical support to the International Coordinating Committee (ICC) set up at the first international conference on "Organizing in the Informal Economy" in December 2003.

The second international conference on "Organizing in the Informal Economy", held in Accra, Ghana, was organized by the International Coordinating Committee (ICC) and hosted by the Ghana Trades Union Congress, an Institutional Member of WIEGO. For the second time, Chris Bonner (Director, WIEGO Organization and Representation Programme) contributed to the development of the conference and represented WIEGO. She also contributed to the initial ICC conference held in Ahmedabad, India in 2003. The third international conference on organizing in the informal economy is scheduled for Mexico in 2009.

International Seminar on "Protection for Domestic Workers" (Netherlands, Nov. 8 – 10, 2006)

Domestic workers explore organizing and networking.

An international seminar on domestic workers organized by IRENE (International Restructuring Education Network Europe) and hosted by the national trade union federation, FNV, was held in the Netherlands, in Amsterdam, in November 2006. The event was attended by 60 representatives from domestic/household workers' trade unions, associations and regional/international networks, Global Unions and national trade unions, and international NGOs. Chris Bonner (Director, WIEGO Organization and Representation Programme) served on the steering committee for the event along with the Committee for Asian Women (CAW), IRENE, and the FNV. Conference attendees decided to establish an interim working group to explore the possibility of creating an international network of domestic worker organizations and an ILO Convention on the rights of domestic workers.

Programme Summary

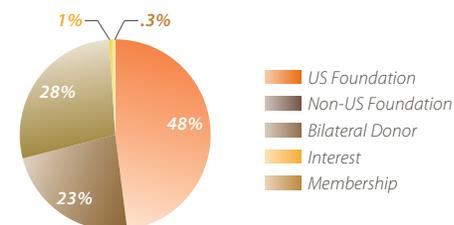
WIEGO has five major programmes with the following objectives:

- **GLOBAL MARKETS:** Fostering ethical and fair trade policies and practices, especially for homeworkers (who work on sub-contracts for global supply chains) and small producer groups
- **URBAN POLICIES:** Promoting inclusive urban policies and regulations, especially for street vendors, waste collectors, and home-based producers
- **SOCIAL PROTECTION:** Promoting social protection policies, including health insurance and old age pensions, covering all categories of informal workers
- **ORGANIZATION AND REPRESENTATION:** Building stronger organizations of informal workers with women members and leaders; increasing the representation and amplifying the voices of informal workers, especially women, in decision-making and collective-bargaining
- **STATISTICS:** Developing and improving official labour force and economic statistics that fully count and value all categories of informal workers and informal enterprises; and making these statistics available to policy-makers, organizations of informal workers, and other users of data.

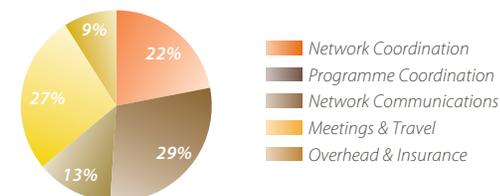
Financial Report 2006

This financial report pertains to WIEGO's core funding. In addition, WIEGO raised USD 483,600 in project funding of which only a small portion comes directly to WIEGO. Expenses in 2006 were higher than usual because WIEGO held a General Assembly in Durban/eThekweni, South Africa in April that greatly increased travel and meeting costs. These costs had been built into WIEGO's budget and were funded by revenue received in both 2005 and 2006. A new revenue line was added in 2006 – membership dues – as WIEGO formalized its membership structure. Although small in dollar terms, receiving membership fees represents a significant development for the WIEGO network.

Revenue by Source	US Dollars	Percentage of Total
US Foundation	375,000	47.73%
Non-US Foundation	183,207	23.32%
Bilateral Donor	218,910	27.86%
Interest	6,301	0.80%
Membership	2,247	0.29%
	785,665	100.00%



Expenses	US Dollars	Percentage of Total
Network Coordination	188,138	22.41%
Programme Coordination	238,591	28.42%
Network Communications	110,366	13.15%
Meetings & Travel	225,567	26.87%
Overhead & Insurance	76,781	9.15%
	839,443	100.00%





Donors to Thank

Publications 2006

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