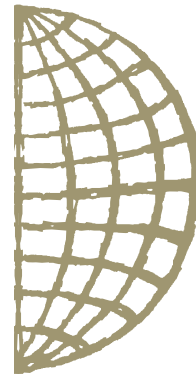


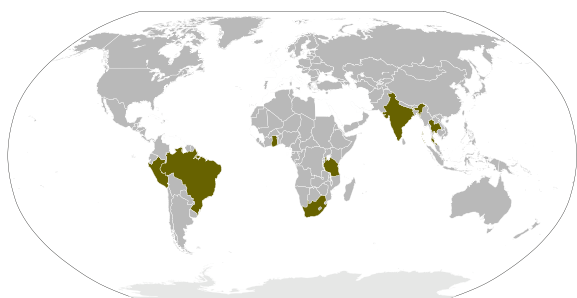
# Occupational Health and Safety *for Informal Workers*

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**G**reetings and welcome to the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Newsletter! This is the fourth newsletter of the OHS Project, which forms part of WIEGO's programme of Social Protection. The last newsletter focused on the OHS Learning Meeting, held in Durban in May 2011. In that issue, we reported on the progress made in each of the five countries: Ghana, Tanzania, India, Brazil and Peru, and also took a look at some of the work done with cardboard recyclers in Durban's inner city by Asiye eTafuleni, as well as work done by WIEGO's partner in Thailand, HomeNet Thailand.

This newsletter is full of further exciting developments and interesting news about OHS and informal workers from around the world. Our features include:



- a report on developments in Ghana
- the release of some findings from Brazil and Tanzania on OHS and domestic work
- an article by Vilma Sousa Santa and Eduardo Marinho Barbosa on the research being done with home-based workers in Salvador, Brazil by the Institute of Collective Health at the Federal University of Bahia
- a debate on the integration of OHS into public healthcare systems
- an update on the publications which have so far come out of the OHS project



## **The Multi Stakeholder Workshop in Ghana**

Thanks to the efforts of Ghana Coordinator Dorcas Ansah as well as our other Ghanaian partners, the OHS Project in Ghana has moved from strength to strength. On the 9th of December 2011, a successful Multi Stakeholder Workshop (MSW) was held in Accra, facilitated by the Institute for Local Government Studies (ILGS). The MSW is a key event in the project's work plan, designed to create a forum for even-handed negotiation and discussion between

*Madam Emma Boateng of the Kantamanto Banana Sellers Association addressing the Accra Multi Stakeholder Workshop. Photograph: Dorcas Ansah.*

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informal worker associations and government institutions around health and safety issues.

Present at the MSW in Accra were representatives from the StreetNet Ghana Alliance and the Indigenous Caterers Association. From government there were representatives from the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA – in some countries this would be called the city council, or the municipal council and officials), the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA), and the National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI). Negotiations around OHS issues focused on the provision of fire extinguishers in publicly owned markets, improving waste management, and on the clearing of clogged drains in and around market areas. With their newly acquired negotiation skills, which were developed during the year through a capacity-building process, the workers gained some important concessions from the government:



- A promise that fire extinguishers will be fitted in public markets was made. Market fires are common in Ghana, and can cause severe and lasting damage to the livelihoods of traders. Earlier this year one of Ghana's national television stations, TV3, ran a news item on the challenge of fires in Accra's Makola Market. To view this clip, go to the OHS website's Resources page at:

<http://wiego.org/ohs/resources>.

- A large, clogged drain which has plagued textiles traders in Makola Market will be cleared. The drain is a source of terrible smells, and is also a breeding ground for many diseases, including malaria.
- The AMA has asked for a monitoring committee to be formed amongst the trader associations to report on the activities and effectiveness of private waste management companies contracted by the AMA. This will assist the AMA in ensuring that the companies are performing their duties. Traders have complained that employees of these companies do not clean the market effectively. Some traders have also

reported that the waste company employees abuse their position by dumping rubbish near trading sites and then demanding extra money to take the rubbish away.

Monitoring will need to be done by the worker organizations over the coming months to ensure that these commitments from the AMA happen. The OHS Newsletter will also be watching, and we hope to be reporting on good news in 2012!



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*Top: The clogged drain at Makola Market. Bottom: Rubbish blocks a drain at Zongo Junction, a street trading area near Madina, Greater Accra. This area is serviced by a waste management company. Photographs: Laura Alfes.*

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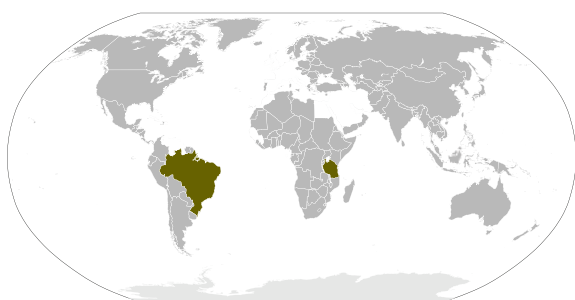
## Informal Workers in the News in Ghana

In September and October 2011 an external evaluation of the capacity-building part of the OHS project in Ghana was done by Erika Osae, an independent consultant. Erika recommended that the project should engage more with the media in Ghana around the topic of OHS and informal workers. Dorcas Ansah quickly followed this up and arranged for representatives from the StreetNet Ghana Alliance and the Indigenous Caterers Association to appear on a popular women's programme in Ghana called Mmaa Nkomo, which airs on Ghana Television (GTV). Representatives of the AMA were also invited to attend along with the workers, but they refused this invitation.

Over 400 informal workers attended the event on the 4th December 2011. It was an opportunity for the workers to air their grievances about the health and safety situation in and around markets in Accra. They congratulated the AMA on some of the efforts that have been made to improve health and safety, but called on them to enter into further dialogue with the worker associations in order to ensure that this progress could continue. Dorcas Ansah reports that she was very impressed "at the level of confidence and clear focus" of the workers when they presented their arguments. Clearly, the capacity-building process is paying off! The recording of the programme Mmaa Nkomo will soon be made available on the OHS website.

Since then another national television station, TV3, has expressed an interest in showing a weekly half hour programme, which will focus on the work and working conditions of urban traders. Watch this space for more news!

## OHS & Domestic Workers: Synthesis Report from Tanzania and Brazil



The OHS Project released a synthesis report, by Laura Alfes, on research findings from studies on OHS and domestic workers conducted in Tanzania and Brazil. The Brazil study was carried out in 2009 by Jorge Bernstein Iriart and Marina Luna Pamponet, both affiliated to the Institute of Collective Health at the Federal University of Bahia. The Tanzanian study was done in 2010 by Deograsias Vuluwa of the Conservation, Hotel, Domestic and Allied Workers

Union (CHODAWU). The synthesis report was prepared to coincide with the International Domestic Workers Network (IDWN) Steering Committee Meeting held in Accra in December 2011. You can download it from the OHS website in English and in French. Vicky Kanyoka, who has coordinated the OHS work in Tanzania, is a member of the IDWN Steering Committee. For more information on the activities of the IDWN, visit their website at: <http://idwn.info/>.



### Did you know?

The ILO Convention concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers (Convention 189), passed at the 100th session of the International Labour Conference in 2011, includes in its text an article relating to Occupational Health and Safety.

Article 13(1) states that:

*Every domestic worker has the right to a safe and healthy working environment. Each Member [country] shall take, in accordance with national laws, regulations and practice, effective measures, with due regard for the specific characteristics of domestic work, to ensure the occupational safety and health of domestic workers.*

For more about the convention, visit WIEGO's web page on the campaign for a Domestic Workers' Convention (<http://wiego.org/informal-economy/campaign-domestic-workers-convention>).

### Conference on OHS in Small and Medium Scale Enterprises held by the International Commission on Occupational Health, and the Ghana Health Services

The International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH), together with the Ghana Health Services (GHS), ran a conference in Accra from the 18th to the 21st of October 2011 on the theme of "OHS in Small and Medium Scale Enterprises: Learning from Good Practices in Small Workplaces." The conference was organized by Dr Edith Clarke, who heads the Environmental and Occupational Health Unit at the Ghana Health Services. She is chairperson of the WIEGO OHS Ghana Reference Group.

Francie Lund presented a keynote address on "The changed world of work: towards an inclusive discipline and practice of occupational safety, health and environment." We organized a WIEGO panel session which was very well attended. Vilma Santana, coordinator of the OHS Brazil Project, gave a presentation on the structure of OHS within the public health services in Brazil, focusing particularly on systems for the collection of OHS data from both formal and informal workers. Laura

Alfers, who assists Francie in coordinating the OHS Project, presented the research done in Accra on the relationship between urban health systems and informal workers. Mrs Magdalene Kanna of the Institute for Local Government Studies presented details of the provisions for health and safety in Ghana's local government legislation. All of the WIEGO presentations from the conference are available on the OHS website. We are sincerely grateful to Dr Edith Clarke for creating this opportunity for the WIEGO project to connect with the ICOH in such a prominent way.



*Participants at the International Conference on Occupational Health and Safety in Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Accra, Ghana.*

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## Update from Brazil: Integrating Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) to the Family Health Program (FHP) – A Pilot Study in the Health District of Liberty (DSL) in Salvador

*By Vilma Sousa Santana and Eduardo Marinho Barbosa*

In Brazil informal jobs represent 47 per cent of all jobs according to government data from 2010. This represents a decline in informality in the country. Throughout the last decade a consistent and complex array of social policies and programs have been put in place in an effort to overcome social inequalities. The success of these policies and programs in reducing informality is clear, but there is a lot of work to be done to extend labour protections to informal workers.

Since the creation in 1988 of the national health system, SUS, which provides universal health care under the full responsibility of the State, OHS has been developing from the old occupational medicine practice into a public health orientation – the so-called Workers' Health model. This model is based on the development of health surveillance that targets both formal and informal enterprises to assess workplace safety, occupational risks, the health conditions of workers and their surroundings, including the impact on the environment or the community living nearby. One major component of this model is the National Network of Workers' Health (Renast) launched in 2002, which is made up of 190 regional centers run by multi-disciplinary teams. Renast provides specialized consulting to other SUS levels, particularly to Health Surveillance practitioners, and Primary Health Care (PHC) teams.

PHC comprises walk-in clinics, outpatient services from community health centers, and a Family Care Program (based on monthly household visits) supported by Community Health Agents (lay personnel living in the same community). However, until now this structure has not been fully receptive to the OHS needs of informal workers. There is a general lack of knowledge, technology and resources to target informal workplaces or informal workers. Not surprising, recent data shows that only 17 per cent of reported cases of occupational-related injuries are from informal workers.



Knowing that many informal workers work from home, or outdoors on the streets, the potential for PHC to extend OHS to informal workers is enormous. Our aim is to develop a pilot experience of integration of PHC/OHS in one health district of the city of Salvador (DSL) testing the feasibility and cost-benefit of this strategy. This area is where our institution, the Institute of Collective Health, Federal University of Bahia, has been carrying out a teaching/ services integration program since 2009. A specific objective of this program is to train

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*Vilma and Eduardo presenting their work at the WIEGO  
OHS Learning Meeting held in May 2011.*

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the PHC teams about OHS issues, and particularly about the needs of informal workers. Another objective is to map informal workplaces, both home-based and outdoors, in the area covered by PHC within the DSL boundaries. A third objective is to develop a Job Exposure Matrix tailored to identify hazards and exposed subjects in informal workplaces, to be further used for surveillance purposes by PHS teams. And the last objective is to describe how the family is organized toward production, and how women and minors, the youth and children are involved.

Two graduate students, Eduardo Marinho Barbosa, an engineer by training, and Professor Margareth Santos are working on this recent development of our project. Preliminary procedures consisted of setting up contact between the DSL staff and the Institute for Collective Health at the Federal University of Bahia, which coordinates the program, presentation of our proposal, receiving feedback and adjusting our methodology to the routine of PHC in DSL, and mapping informal economic activities. The study methodology is based on qualitative / quantitative research integrated to an intervention (training) closely articulated to the DSL system. Some focal groups will be performed under the direction of Professor Jorge Iriart, who is focusing on child labour and groups of interest such as recyclable waste pickers, street vendors, and domestic workers.

*Some preliminary data:* The DSL has about 150,000 inhabitants and is located in an area of 6.74 km<sup>2</sup> of Salvador (2.8 million inhabitants). There are approximately 30,000 families and the main cause of death for those between the ages of 5 to 39 years is external causes (trauma, lesions, occupational injuries, etc.). PHC covers only 16 per cent of the population, around 4,500 families, whose health and socio-demographic data is monthly recorded and is available as a digital database. These data come from the Information System of Primary Health Care collected by the PHC teams. Currently, no data on OHS has been reported and our project will be training the teams to improve recognition and registration of informal workers, and also preventive and health promotion strategies.

**OHS & Public Health: Taking the “Worker” out of “Workers’ Health”?**

Brazil has shifted OHS resources away from the labour department to the health department (see our August 2011 Newsletter 3). In many ways this can be seen as a positive development for informal workers. Labour departments are usually only able to protect workers who have a clear employment relationship, and who work in places that are formally defined as workplaces. As we already know, many workers in the informal economy do not have a clear employment relationship, and they work in unconventional places of work such as roadsides, waste dumps, or in their own homes. Moving OHS away from the labour department and into the health department means that informal workers are more easily included in OHS. This is because having a clear employment relationship and a formal workplace does not determine whether workers can access health services. Public health services are also more easily able to cover both homes and workplaces, which means that the blurring of the workplace/home divide discussed earlier is less of a problem.

But is there also a downside to this? The problem with moving workers’ health into public health is that there is a real danger that the worker focus might be lost, especially when it comes to informal workers who have no protections under the labour department. Public health departments do not necessarily have an interest in ensuring that a worker perspective is maintained – they are geared towards serving the public, rather than serving workers. Also, if one believes, as WIEGO does, that informal workers should be afforded the same worker rights as formal workers, then is it acceptable to settle for an OHS service that falls outside the usual framework of worker protections? Or, could this lead to a downgrading of workers’ rights for informal workers?

We would love to know your opinions on this! Please contact us with your views through the WIEGO website: <http://wiego.org/contact> (there is an online form for input). Or please email your ideas directly to Francie [lundf@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:lundf@ukzn.ac.za) or Laura [laura.alfers@wiego.org](mailto:laura.alfers@wiego.org).



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## List of WIEGO OHS Publications and Reports

Alfers, L. 2010. An Institutional Analysis of OHS and Informal Workers in Ghana.

———. Occupational Health & Safety and Market and Street Traders in Accra, Ghana.

———. 2011. Occupational Health & Safety and Indigenous Caterers in Accra, Ghana.

———. Occupational Health & Safety and Domestic Workers: A Synthesis Report of Research Findings from Tanzania and Brazil.

Iriart, J.A.B. and M.L. Pamponet. 2010. Occupational Health & Safety and Domestic Workers, Waste Pickers, and Street Vendors in Salvador, Brazil.

Lund, F. And Marriott, A. Occupational health and safety and the poorest. Research Report No. 88. Durban, School of Development Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal. (A reprint of the 2005 study for the Department for International Development, United Kingdom.)

Mamdani, M. 2011. An Institutional Analysis of OHS and Informal Workers in Tanzania.

Msuya, F. 2010. Health Risks and Seaweed Farming in Zanzibar.

Santana, V.S., E.C. Dias, F.D. Vasconcelos, G.F. Netto, H.C. Filho, J.F.S. Da Silva, V.G. Pena, and R.M.P. Veiga. 2010. An Institutional Analysis of Occupational Health & Safety and Informal Workers in Brazil.

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*OHS microsite as a resource:* We will be developing the OHS microsite, which you can find on WIEGO's website at [www.wiego.org/ohs/index.php](http://www.wiego.org/ohs/index.php). We hope it will become a valued resource of information for people interested in and studying OHS for informal workers. Let us know what you would like to see there! Send us references and toolkits you know about!



**About WIEGO:** Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing is a global research-policy-action network that seeks to improve the status of the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy. WIEGO helps to build and strengthen networks of informal worker organizations; undertakes policy analysis, statistical research and data analysis on the informal economy; provides policy advice and convenes policy dialogues on the informal economy; and documents and disseminates good practices in support of the informal workforce. For more information see [www.wiego.org](http://www.wiego.org).