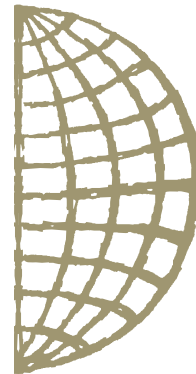


# Occupational Health and Safety *for Informal Workers*

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**W**elcome! This is the first eNewsletter of the four year programme: Occupational Health and Safety for Informal Workers. We would like to build up a network of people interested in OHS for informal workers. To help accomplish this, our eNewsletter will come out three times a year, and will help build the network, and share information about progress within the project. It will be interactive as well - please write to us with feedback, your ideas, and your OHS stories, we can only make this newsletter better by knowing what you want.

This project, directed by *Francie Lund* and assisted by *Laura Alfes*, falls under WIEGO's Social Protection Programme [http://www.wiego.org/program\\_areas/social\\_protect/index.php](http://www.wiego.org/program_areas/social_protect/index.php) The programme works in five countries: we are well underway in Brazil and Ghana; we have started in India and in Tanzania; and we are getting going in Peru. Wherever possible we work through WIEGO affiliates of informal workers (MBOs – Member-Based Organizations), with street vendors, waste pickers, homebased workers, domestic workers and others.



## What is the programme trying to address?

The field of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) covers only formal places of work – shops, offices, factories, and mines. But most of the world's workers are in workplaces such as in their own homes, on the streets, at traffic intersections, or on waste dumps. OHS does not usually cover such places. Also, OHS defines health problems very narrowly, and does not see the worker in the context of her or his family, living and working in very poor conditions.

We will find out how to develop OHS in a way that can better meet the needs of informal workers – an *inclusive* OHS. To do this, we have to meet the following objectives:

- raise awareness of the health and safety hazards faced by informal workers
- enable the voices of informal workers to be heard by setting up dialogues with local governments, and with those who control OHS institutions in each country



*Photos top to bottom: Headload porters, known as kayayei, working in Accra. The kayayei are migrant women and girls from the north of Ghana who come down to work in the cities of southern Ghana such as Accra and Kumasi. Their job is to transport heavy loads for the market traders. They earn very little for doing this physically difficult work, and find it difficult to pay for accommodation and food, let alone any healthcare they may need (photo by Laura Alfes); Francie Lund (photo by Leslie Tuttle); Laura Alfes*

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- improve statistics and overall dissemination of information about informal workers and so enable the economic contribution of informal workers to become more visible to policy makers
  - work towards a plan for the reform of OHS policy and implementation, so that it is more inclusive of the realities and needs of informal workers.

In this first eNewsletter, we introduce the project and the people involved. Please visit the OHS microsite on the WIEGO website at [www.wiego.org/ohs/index.php](http://www.wiego.org/ohs/index.php) for more details of results of the research so far, and other OHS-related resources.

### **The project design:**

Here are the main project activities in each country:

1. Background paper on the ‘size and shape’ of the informal economy of the country. This is a short paper which summarises what is known about the informal economy in the country.
2. Institutional mapping and analysis of occupational health and safety in the country: this covers who makes policy about OHS, who is responsible for implementing it, what resources are given to it (staff, equipment, operating budget), who controls the training and curriculum, what spaces are there for policy change, and which are the main worker organizations involved?
3. Formation of a Country Reference Group to advise and guide the project. It consists of representatives of informal worker organizations, government officials at national and local levels, OHS experts, and reps from formal trade unions.
4. Participatory research with informal workers, through their organizations wherever possible. We use many different methods – focus group discussions, health check lists, mobility mapping, and in-depth interviews. Through this, informal workers are able to identify what their main issues around OHS are. We match this up against the institutional mapping (in point 2 above), to see whether existing OHS can be relevant to the workers.
5. Multi Stakeholder Dialogues or Workshops, to bring the different interest groups together.
6. Analysis of the state of statistics about OHS in the country, with a view to working with those who design labour force surveys and household surveys to improve the data gathered.
7. Through all the above activities, we are networking and finding out how to influence policies.

Through the above steps, we learn where there are opportunities for intervening, with MBOs, in working towards a more inclusive OHS in the country, and outline a plan for doing that. Later in the project we will develop ways of sharing the knowledge and experiences, both within the countries, and in international platforms.



### Funders:

The OHS Programme is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Brazil, Peru, India) – and by the Netherlands MDG3 Fund for the Economic Empowerment of Women (Ghana, Tanzania). SEWA Health Cooperative and KKPKP in India are both contributing partial funding.

### The countries:

In this eNewsletter, we give a summary of the people and organizations we are working with, the sectors, and the Reference Group (where there is one) in Ghana, Brazil, India and Tanzania.



### Ghana

#### The people and the institutional partners:

We ‘cut our teeth’ in Ghana, and *Laura Alfes* has visited three times for setting the project up, identifying the Reference Group (see below), and doing some of the participatory research. *Mr Kofi Asamoah*, then chairperson of WIEGO Board, and Secretary General of the Ghana Trade Union Congress (GTUC) <http://www.ghanatuc.org/>, assisted in smoothing the way for the entry of the project, as did Streetnet Ghana Alliance <http://www.streetnet.org.za/>. We realized early on that we needed a locally-based facilitator who could be a constant WIEGO presence in working with the complex dynamics of politics and organizations. We have been extremely lucky to have *Dorcas Ansah*, an experienced facilitator and development practitioner, not only working with us, but becoming very committed to the project, its values and goals. Dorcas, Laura, and research assistants *Ruth Abban* and *Akosua Acheampong* did the research. We ‘found’ Ruth and Akosua through *Dr. Edith Clarke*, head of the Occupational and Environmental Health in the Ghana Health Service.

#### The sectors: In Ghana we are working with

- *street vendors (and market traders)*, through the Streetnet Ghana Alliance
- *indigenous caterers* who cook local food in chop bars, through the Indigenous Caterers Association of Ghana
- *women head load porters*, also known as ‘*kayayei*’.

*Photos top to bottom: Dorcas Ansah, Facilitator of the Ghana OHS Programme (photo by Laura Alfes); Laura Alfes helping to create a health checklist for informal workers at a focus group session with the Ga East Traders Union (photo by Adriana Quiroga); Ruth Abban talking to Makola Market women about their occupational health and safety (photo by Laura Alfes).*



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Through Streetnet International we got in touch with *Dr Esther Ofei-Aboagye*, of the Institute for Local Government Studies (ILGS) in Accra <http://www.ilgs-edu.org>. She and Dorcas ran a very successful workshop on the role of local government in the informal economy in

March 2010. This was followed in August 2010 by a further workshop on advocacy and negotiation skills, and all this is good preparation for the Multi Stakeholder Dialogues that we will hold later this year.

**The Reference Group:** The OHS project aims to set up an in-country Reference Group in each country, to ensure that the project is appropriate for the country, and so that connections can be forged from the beginning of the project with influential people who could steer policy reforms. In Ghana, the following are on the Reference Group:



- *Dr Edith Clarke*, Head of Occupational and Environmental Health at the Ghana Health Service.
- *Mr Sam Tettey*, former Head of the Department of Factories Inspectorate, now a freelance ergonomist.
- *Mr Freddy Ohene-Mensah*, Department of Factories Inspectorate
- *Mr Joseph Amuah*, Senior Industrial Relations Manager at the Ghana Employers Association
- *Mrs Philomena Dsane*, Women's Desk Officer at the National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI), a department of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The NBSSI plays a central role in the formulation of the Ministry's policy towards small scale businesses in Ghana.
- *Md Juliana Brown Afari*, the Welfare Officer of the Makola Market Traders Union and International Representative for the StreetNet Ghana Alliance.
- *Md Yemoteley Quaye*, Chairperson of the Makola Market Traders Union
- *Mr Seth Abloso*, Head of the Organization Department at GTUC
- *Md Rose Kwei*, Informal Economy Desk Officer, GTUC
- *Mr Daniel Boatey*, OHS Desk Officer at GTUC

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*Photo left: Members of the StreetNet Ghana Alliance and Indigenous Caterer's Association attending the second ILGS workshop in August 2010 (photo by Dorcas Ansah).*

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## Brazil

**The people and the institutional partners:** *Dr Vilma Santana*, of the Institute for Public Health at the Federal University of Bahia, in Salvador, Brazil <http://www.isc.ufba.br/index.php>, is the main coordinator and researcher for the OHS in Brazil. She is an epidemiologist who has long been interested in the health status of informal workers. She has published many articles on this, and her institute is widely known for its interest in workers' health. She is an active member of the Integrated Program of Environmental and Worker Health (Programa Integrado de Saúde Ambiental e do Trabalhador - PISAT), within the Institute for Public Health. She is well connected with people, throughout Brazil, in the discipline of occupational health and safety.



*Jorge Bernstein Iriart* is an anthropologist working in gender studies at the university, and *Marina Luna Pamponet* works within the Institute. They ran the focus group discussions with workers. *Maria Juliana* will join the team in 2010 as a research assistant.

**The sectors:** In Salvador City, the OHS work is being done with street vendors, domestic workers and waste pickers. Salvador relies economically on its world famous carnival every year. Thousands of poor workers come in from the countryside to work as street vendors. The city is aware of the risks posed by carnival to tourists and visitors;

it is not very aware of the risks carried by street vendors themselves. We hope there will be a policy intervention about this. There are a few unions of domestic workers, and focus groups with them showed how isolated the workers are, with many working without contracts.

**Influencing training institutions:** Through *Vilma Santana's* position of influence in OHS circles, and linked to changes at the national level in health policy, we think there is a good chance that we can learn a lot from Brazil about how to work towards a more inclusive OHS curriculum.

*Marty Chen, Laura Alfers* and *Francie Lund* visited Vilma and the institute in April 2010, after the WIEGO General Assembly in Belo Horizonte. We enjoyed amazing Salvadorian hospitality from Vilma and colleagues – an unforgettable experience.

## India

*Francie Lund* visited two WIEGO affiliates in India in March 2010. She went to Pune to meet KKPKP <http://www.wastepickerscollective.org/> and become more familiar with their work with waste pickers, and then to Ahmedabad, where SEWA Health Co-operative kindly held a

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*Photo left: Team Brazil: From left to right: Maria Juliana, Jorge Iriart, Vilma Santana and Marina Lunas.*

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joint meeting for WIEGO, SEWA Health Co-operative and KKPKP to plan the OHS project work.

SEWA <http://www.sewa.org> is the Self Employed Women's Association, with headquarters at Ahmedabad in India. It is a very big organization, consisting of trade unions and co-operatives. It has a well-known health insurance scheme for informal workers. KKPKP is in Pune in India. It works with waste pickers and has become influential in the climate change movement. It has recently produced an excellent video of its work.

**People, partner organizations and sectors:** In India, we are working in two different places, with two of our affiliated organizations. *Smitha Chekanath* will assist *Mirai Chatterjee*, head of SEWA's Social Security Programme in the work with papad workers, agarbatti workers, agricultural workers and embroiderers, in different regions. KKPKP, in Pune, will work in their specialist area of waste pickers, and *Neha Kagal* and *Tina Seguera* will assist *Poornima Chikarmane* with this work. Both organizations will do research and advocacy, and will concentrate on the actual development of better equipment (prototype development) for workers as well. Examples are better tables for the papad rollers, and lighter carts for wastepickers, and also better gloves for the waste

pickers – gloves that are tough enough to protect the hands, but also let air in so the hands can breathe, and light enough so that the fingers can move fast. They both have experience in working with design institutes in India, and we know that a lot of our other affiliates can learn from this experience.

**Reference Group:** Because the OHS project in India is in two different places, we decided not to have one country Reference Group. In its place, KKPKP and SEWA will instead arrange exchange meetings of people in their projects.



## Tanzania

*Laura Alfors* had a very successful visit to Tanzania in May 2010. Streetnet International gave an introduction to TUICO, the Tanzanian Union of Industrial and Commercial Workers, who provided us with invaluable start-up contacts. *Debbie Budlender*, who coordinated and supervised WIEGO's work on the Informal Economy Budget Analysis, gave us further contacts.

**The people and the partners:** *Vicky Kanyoka* is coordinating the project. She has been very active in organizing domestic workers, and is working part time with the IUF, the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (<http://www.iuf.org/>), as the IUF African Region

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*Photo left: A Waste Picker in Pune, India using a cart designed to ease the load (photo by Julian Luckham).*





Coordinator of the International Domestic Workers Network [http://www.wiego.org/occupational\\_groups/domesticWorkers/Domestic-Workers-Conference-2010.php](http://www.wiego.org/occupational_groups/domesticWorkers/Domestic-Workers-Conference-2010.php). Vicky will take the lead in coordinating the participatory research in the different sectors. *Masuma Mamdani* is an independent consultant and part-time researcher at the Ifakara Health Institute in Dar es Salaam <http://www.ihl.or.tz>. She is doing the overview paper, as well as the institutional mapping, and we hope she will do other research work as well.



**Sectors:** In the participatory research, we will focus on domestic workers, plantation workers, and street vendors. The work will be done through the women's desks of the relevant trade unions – TUICO for the street traders, TPAWU, the Tanzania Plantation and Agricultural Workers Union for the plantation workers, CHODAWU, the Conservation, Hotel, Domestic and Allied Workers Union for domestic workers - all co-ordinated by Vicky. Because so many women work in the agricultural sector, we are going to do an additional study on their working situation. And we will do a case study, including participatory research,

with the emerging group of women seaweed farmers in Zanzibar (who we contacted through *Elaine Jones*, director of WIEGO's Global Trade Programme). This study will be done by *Dr Flower Msuya* of the Institute of Marine Sciences at the University of Dar es Salaam <http://www.ims.udsm.ac.tz>.



## Peru

The work is just starting in Peru, and there will be more about it in the next Newsletter. *Carmen Roca*, WIEGO's Regional Coordinator in Latin America, is playing a key role in getting it started. She will link it there to the project on The Voice of Informal Workers in Social Policy Development, which *Francie Lund* is also involved in.

*Photos top to bottom: Vicky Kanyoka (left) and Masuma Mamdani (right) at a setup meeting for the Tanzania programme in May 2010 (photo by Laura Alfes); Laura Alfes and Vicky Kanyoka visiting Joyce Mwambungu (far left), Head of the Legal Unit at the Tanzania Occupational Health and Safety Authority in May 2010; Carmen Roca (photo by Leslie Tuttle)*

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### And finally:

*Subscriber list:* We compiled this first list of subscribers through our existing contacts in the Social Protection Programme, and WIEGO's other programmes. Please send us the names and email addresses of others who you feel would be interested in receiving this eNewsletter, or forward it on and tell them to click on the subscription link at the top of the first page.

*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!



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Photo above: Hazard list developed by market traders (photo by Laura Alferts).



**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).