WIEGO

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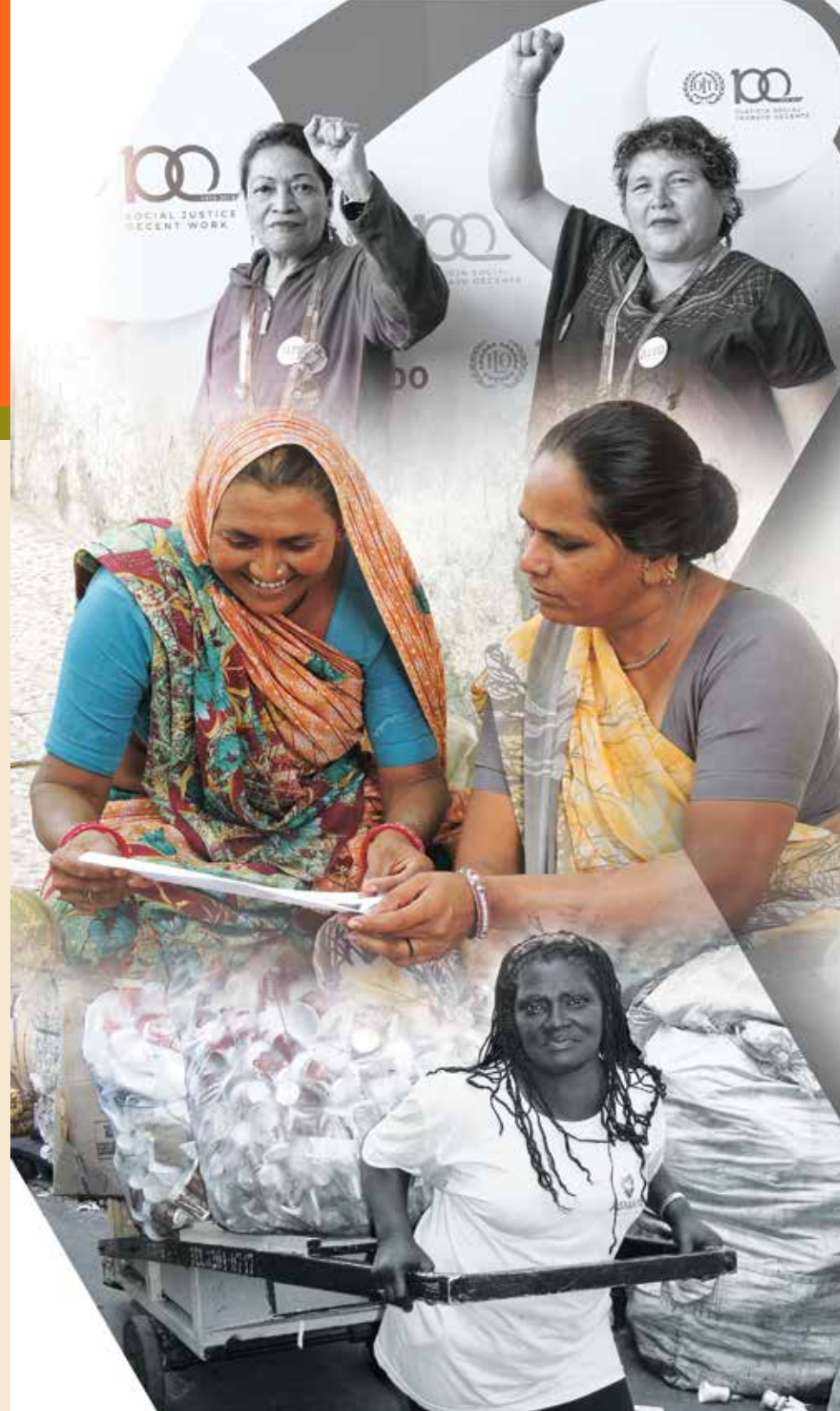Globalizing and Organizing**

WIEGO MONITORING, LEARNING AND EVALUATION TOOLKIT

TOOL 4

Where to find outcomes of research uptake and how to use them for learning and adaptation

Developed by: **BARBARA KLUGMAN**
with inputs from Carmen Wilson-Grau
and WIEGO team members

MAY 2022

WHERE TO FIND OUTCOMES OF RESEARCH UPTAKE AND HOW TO USE THEM FOR LEARNING AND ADAPTATION

MAY 2022

WIEGO'S MLE TOOLKIT has a series of tools, each with a different focus.
You may need to use some of them together.

WIEGO MONITORING, LEARNING AND EVALUATION TOOLKITS:

1. How to write an outcome statement

2. How to harvest outcomes you notice in your day-to-day work

3. How to evaluate your training or workshop during and after

4. Where to find outcomes of research uptake and how to use them for learning and adaptation

5. How to conduct a participatory evaluation workshop: Harvesting outcomes

6. How to conduct a paticipatory outcomes evaluation workshop: Analysis and strategic learning

7. How to conduct *an online* participatory evaluation workshop: Harvesting outcomes

8. How to conduct *an online* participatory outcomes evaluation workshop: Analysis and strategic learning

THE FOCUS OF THIS TOOL

This tool supports WIEGO programme teams in deliberately seeking to document the influence of our research, that is, outcomes our research has contributed towards. The pathways of influence of research findings are complex and unpredictable. The tool considers what we know about how research influence works, and by implication, where to put our strategic energies and where to look for outcomes.

Throughout this tool there is mention of MBOs and Nets. MBO refers to 'membership-based organizations' such as organizations of street vendors or domestic workers or waste-pickers or home-based workers. WIEGO uses 'Nets' to refer to networks of such MBOs.

WHERE DOES RESEARCH 'FIT' INTO WIEGO'S THEORY OF CHANGE?

Most WIEGO programmes rely on evidence. Indeed, WIEGO's overarching theory of change embeds evidence into WIEGO's rationale. Evidence is key to validity – validating informal workers' claims about the role and importance of informal work in the economy, and about the need for recognition of informal work and informal workers' rights.

Making such evidence visible is one of the strategies of every programme.

This validity and visibility are both key to strengthening the confidence and impact of workers' voices. In many cases programmes engage informal workers' organizations in building evidence on the problem and on potential solutions. Programmes support informal workers' organizations in using evidence to strengthen their voice in their engagement with employers, corporations more generally, other trade unions, government from local to international levels and, at times, the courts. Programme team members also use WIEGO evidence in their own engagement with policymakers, officials, practitioners and academics as part of WIEGO's effort to influence the discourse and policy terrain on informal work.

In this way the entire framing of WIEGO's overarching theory of change is premised on production and use of evidence to influence others.

By considering some of the major strategies WIEGO uses in this endeavour, we can identify where to look for the influence of WIEGO's research – that is where to find outcomes.
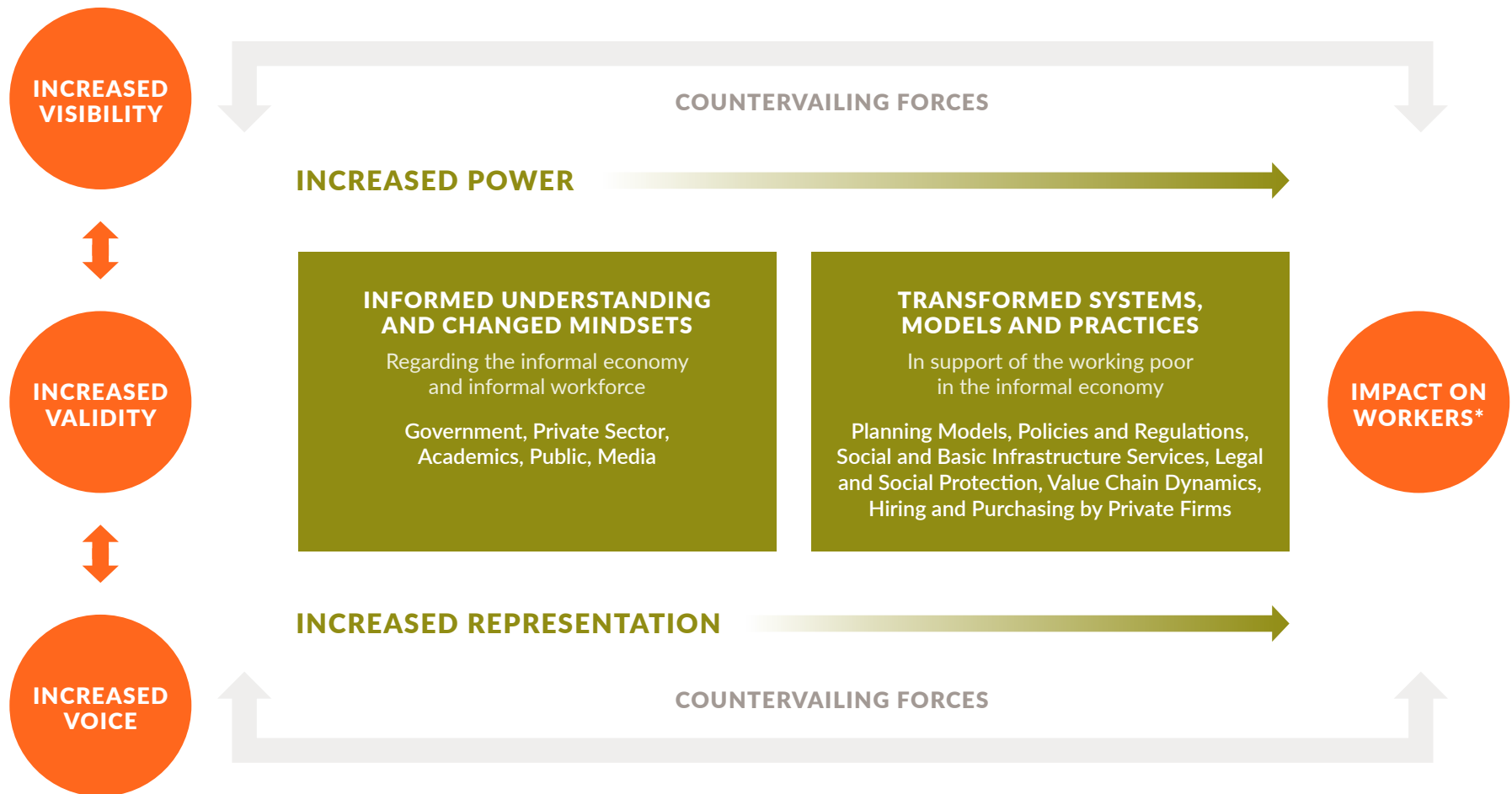
The multiple streams framework originally developed by Kingdon[i] and now widely used and elaborated, recognizes as entirely separate from each other, a 'problem stream', a 'policy stream' which includes all those involved in production of evidence and potential solutions to policy or practice, and a 'politics stream' which includes all the factors that influence policymakers', officials' and judges' decisions, including 'the national mood' or what we think of as the public sphere, public narratives and discourses. The multiple streams theory recognizes that individuals and institutions play key roles in bringing these together; and this is WIEGO's role.

WIEGO programme theories of change to a lesser or greater extent each aim to play 'brokerage' roles, producing and/or popularizing evidence and arguments based on evidence, to influence different influencers in:

- The framing of the problem

- The growing acceptance of specific solutions

- Shifts in policy, regulations, court precedents based on these understandings of the problem and appropriate solutions from local to national, regional and international levels

- Shifts in practice at all of these levels

WIEGO strategies aim to link these 'streams' by mobilizing and/or influencing diverse constituencies: from those who produce research; to informal workers and their organizations and networks; to decision makers at various levels in government, in corporations, in trade unions, in funding institutions and in international organizations. WIEGO aims to influence them to agree to WIEGO and informal workers' understanding of the problem, of appropriate solutions and of the policy and practice changes needed to address these problems and obstacles faced by informal workers.

WIEGO MODEL OF CHANGE

INCREASED VISIBILITY

INCREASED VALIDITY

INCREASED VOICE

COUNTERVAILING FORCES

INCREASED POWER

INFORMED UNDERSTANDING AND CHANGED MINDSETS

Regarding the informal economy and informal workforce

Government, Private Sector, Academics, Public, Media

TRANSFORMED SYSTEMS, MODELS AND PRACTICES

In support of the working poor in the informal economy

Planning Models, Policies and Regulations, Social and Basic Infrastructure Services, Legal and Social Protection, Value Chain Dynamics, Hiring and Purchasing by Private Firms

IMPACT ON WORKERS*

INCREASED REPRESENTATION

COUNTERVAILING FORCES

* Enhanced Ability to Voice Demands and Shape Wider Environment
* Increased Incomes, Reduced Risks, and Improved Well-Being

WHAT IS FEASIBLE FOR MONITORING WIEGO'S RESEARCH INFLUENCE?

This tool aims to strengthen WIEGO team members' confidence in identifying and harvesting outcomes influenced by its production and dissemination of data and analysis, and in using this for learning and adaptation of its strategies. This is because WIEGO is using Outcome Harvesting as its primary approach for assessing its progress in relation to its social change objectives.

Outcome Harvesting is effective in answering questions about the extent to which evidence has contributed towards influencing actors that WIEGO's strategies aimed to influence, and in providing insights as to what kinds of influence and WIEGO's contributions in this regard.

Arguably, having had an influence is the primary purpose of WIEGO's strategies, and hence the method is appropriate. If, however, WIEGO wanted to dive more deeply into the processes through which it decided to focus on a particular knowledge community or on a particular policy system – for example, to understand how well did it continually map the terrain and recognize opportunities? – this would require a different method, most likely a mix of case studies and engagement with other stakeholders in the same field.

If it wanted to understand how well it had framed its messages in relation to the interests of particular decision makers, again it may need to explore this with stakeholders closely aligned to those decision makers. If WIEGO wanted to know how satisfied workers were with WIEGO's process of engaging them in identifying and framing problems and of conducting research and analysing data, it would require deep engagement with those workers.

> While some of these questions are the subject of ongoing processes and conversations within WIEGO and between WIEGO and its MBO (membership-based organization) and Net (network of organizations) partners, at the times in which WIEGO wants to explore these issues in-depth, it would engage an external evaluator to do so.

WHAT TYPES OF OUTCOMES PROVIDE EVIDENCE OF RESEARCH UPTAKE?

From this perspective, WIEGO would seek outcomes of the uptake of its evidence and arguments by monitoring:

- When and **how informal workers, MBOs and Nets** *that WIEGO is working with,* **use evidence and arguments** in their negotiations with employers and with government to promote informal workers' rights.

- When and to what extent **official statistics of governments and institutions** *that WIEGO has engaged,* **improve their measurement of the informal economy and its workers** as well as the dissemination/publication of these statistics.

- When and to what extent **policies, regulations, court decisions and judgements** *that have been the focus of WIEGO strategies* **incorporate WIEGO evidence or arguments.**

While such outcomes are almost impossible to predict, they are reasonably straight-forward to harvest because WIEGO programme theories of change, and their related strategies identify who they aim to influence with their research and arguments.[1,ii] The key point here, as indicated by the *italicised comments* in the previous bullets, is that WIEGO's internal monitoring and learning system can only focus on identifying outcomes in relation to social actors it has deliberately aimed to influence, rather than trying to identify any possible influence its research dissemination may have had on any and all constituencies.

By monitoring the three areas described above, WIEGO identifies outcomes it has contributed towards influencing as indicated in the table on the next page:

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1   *Ebrahim (2019) notes that working in complex contexts where multiple actors are involved, it is essential that organizations such as WIEGO have what he calls "emergent strategy—a strategy where leaders may know their destination, but they do not know what pathways will take them there. Such a strategy requires a capacity to iterate and adjust actions in response to new opportunities, all the while staying focused on long-term objectives." This requires making clear which social actors and relationships and structures it will engage, with some sense of the boundaries of the system.*

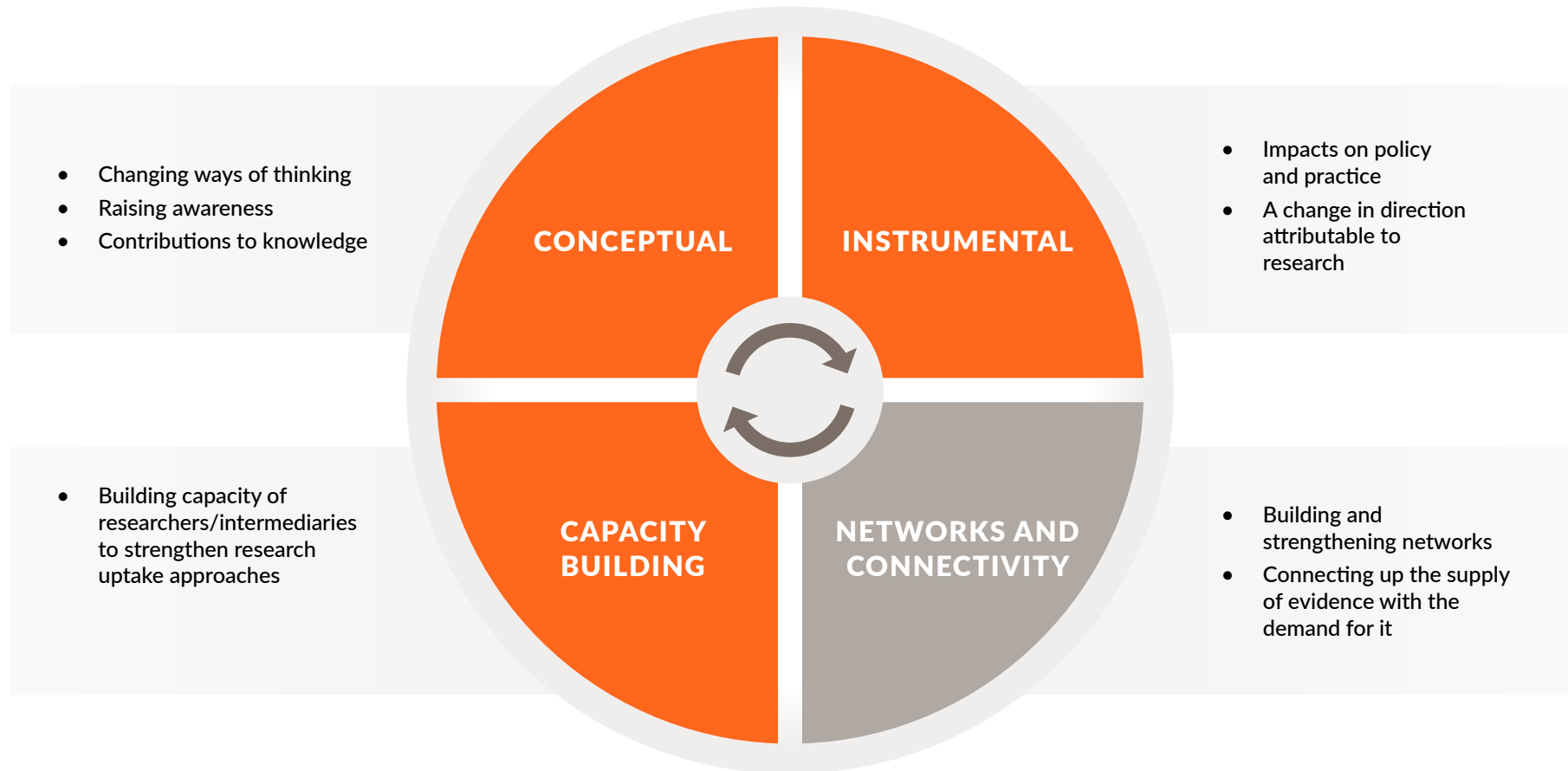| Type of outcome	How to harvest	What to harvest
Informal workers' use of evidence/arguments	• WIEGO observes these through engaging with MBOs and Nets it works with. • WIEGO systematically monitors some of its interventions, such as training of informal workers, using interviews, workshops, and surveys.	• When and where workers and their organizations have taken forward specific ideas or arguments and used such evidence. • When and where these workers' actions have, in turn, influenced other social actors (including those listed below left) to do things differently.
	While this approach will not identify every case of worker action or worker influence, it provides WIEGO with enough information to assess if and how well its strategies are working. While other MBOs and Nets may also pick up and use WIEGO's evidence and arguments, at minimum, WIEGO will be able to identify its direct influence. Where WIEGO happens to identify these indirect outcomes, for example, when participating in ILO events or in negotiations with a wider range of MBOs, WIEGO team members will document them.	
Type of outcome	How to harvest	What to harvest
Official statistics use of evidence/arguments	• WIEGO observes.	• Changes made by national Statistics Departments and various UN agencies that WIEGO works with over time.
	While other government offices may also institute changes, and while other researchers may rely on WIEGO presentations that highlight Informal Worker numbers, at minimum this enables WIEGO to identify its direct influence. Where WIEGO team members come upon changes made by other government departments, they will document this indirect influence.	

Type of outcome	How to harvest	What to harvest
Policies, regulations, court decisions and judgements, government or corporate practice	• Where WIEGO's strategy is to influence a specific policy or regulation or government or company practice directly, or by supporting informal worker organizations to do so, WIEGO will monitor those it aimed to influence and keep track of changes they make.	• Individual policymakers pick up WIEGO arguments. • Other researchers or policymakers invite WIEGO to participate in any kind of research-policy partnership, notwithstanding the inequitable power relationships within these.[iii] • Policy committees invite WIEGO or an MBO or Net partner to give evidence or to support them in drafting policy documents. • Policymakers or officials make actual changes to policy or other official documents.
	WIEGO may not identify all such changes, but by intentional monitoring, it tracks and records key changes it has aimed to influence. WIEGO cannot systematically monitor all governments and corporations. For this reason, where other governments or corporations make changes also drawing on WIEGO's evidence and arguments, WIEGO may not be aware of this indirect influence. When team members do become aware of such influence, they will document these outcomes.	

The bigger challenge for identifying the influence of WIEGO's evidence and arguments is in relation to the broader knowledge and policy communities that WIEGO engages. Current understanding of policy influence – that is, of which problems and which solutions get onto the agenda of decision makers and implementers – recognizes the role of intermediary groups in influencing policymakers and/or officials. Sanjuro[iv], for example notes that in many Latin American countries, "legislatures and political parties are weak, whereas powerful interest groups can exert a very strong influence over executives that dominate policymaking". The literature on 'knowledge translation' notes that frequently ongoing processes of 'sustained interactivity' between research producers and users is key to policy influence.[iii]

"The links between decision makers and their information providers are not a simple process that involves the research community on one side and themselves on the other, bridged only by the communication of research findings to their policy audiences. A range of other actors, some of which are advocates for a particular moral or policy position, often mediates this relationship."[v]

The Impact Initiative[vi] offers an interactive model of the research to policy relationship which it describes as 'the Wheel of Impact', depicted below and elaborated by Georgalakis and Rose. [iii]

WHEEL OF IMPACT

- Changing ways of thinking
- Raising awareness
- Contributions to knowledge

CONCEPTUAL

INSTRUMENTAL

- Impacts on policy and practice
- A change in direction attributable to research

- Building capacity of researchers/intermediaries to strengthen research uptake approaches

CAPACITY BUILDING

NETWORKS AND CONNECTIVITY

- Building and strengthening networks
- Connecting up the supply of evidence with the demand for it

This framing and particularly the focus on building and strengthening networks, explains the underlying rationale for some WIEGO programme strategies including efforts to create or influence a 'knowledge-making community' – the language Montgomery and Neylon[vii] use for describing one of the roles of academic publishing. Walker describes 'invisible colleges' – "they are thought of as groups of scientists from distant geographic locations who exchange information. Implicit in the concept is the understanding that these social circles, sometimes called 'innovation cliques', trade on different forms of social and reputational capital to support one another. These unseen processes, which may include interpersonal relationships, reciprocity, education, group memberships and voluntary activities, concentrate cumulative advantage, in effect operating as a 'black box.'"[viii]

Hence WIEGO programme theories of change, or related strategies, sometimes include building relationships with members of an academic community of practice or with editors of specific journals, and publishing in those journals; or that online community of practice publishing or commenting on WIEGO blogs. Given the high degree of inequity in the knowledge production and publishing world, this is a critical step required to win recognition – both visibility and validity – on WIEGO's issues. The Wheel of Impact framework similarly explains why WIEGO strategies may require ongoing relationship-building with policymakers and implementers and with the technical support people that such groups rely on.[2] They may also require building relationships with, and influencing other 'policy entrepreneurs' in the field, who carry and promote models, policies and practices. It also explains why some WIEGO programmes aim to influence university curricula and, in turn, the interests, frameworks used and understandings of a new generation of researchers.

This understanding suggests the need for WIEGO programme theories of change to make explicit which 'brokers' or intermediary groups it is aiming to influence, so that team members can actively monitor their efforts to build relationships with these. Hence WIEGO's influence in the first instance may not be these groups' or individual's use of WIEGO research, but simply shifts in WIEGO's access to, relationships with and within such intermediary groups, and its access to and relationships with decision makers[ix] and with bureaucrats and implementers[x]. Indeed, access to key influencers and decision makers is a recognized requirement for evidence and arguments to be effective.[xi]

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2   *Described and further explicated by Ebrahim (2019).*

Using the 'wheel of impact' framework, we have already covered the quadrant: 'impacts on policy and practice and change in direction attributable to research' in the outcome categories above. This table addresses the other three quadrants of the framework:

Type of outcome	How to harvest	What to harvest
Networks and connectivity - new or stronger relationships with key intermediary groups (policy or epistemic communities)	• Invitations to WIEGO documented as outcomes. • Where such groups accept WIEGO's invitations this is documented.	• Invitations received by WIEGO to participate in think-tanks or communities of practice or conferences. • Invitations received by WIEGO to sit on editorial committees or co-edit special editions or to co-edit books. • Others from these groups accepting WIEGO's invitations to co-research, write, talk at WIEGO events, attend dialogues.[3,xii]
Type of outcome	**How to harvest**	**What to harvest**
Changing ways of thinking[4] - a) Individuals and groups of knowledge brokers or policy intermediaries WIEGO is intentionally aiming to influence.	• To the extent that WIEGO is involved in these communities of practice, team members observe and document as outcomes, changes in discourse as well as specific actions such as decisions on how to frame conference agendas, or what to publish. • Recording all invitations to WIEGO to publish or speak and all acceptances by others of WIEGO's similar invitations.	• Shifts in the conversation and the shaping of policy ideas and agendas[xiii] – how others in these groups use concepts or arguments or data that reflect WIEGO's perspectives or WIEGO's data or findings. • These groups/individuals invite WIEGO to publish journal articles or blogs or books or to speak at their conferences. • These groups/individuals include WIEGO concepts or foci in conference agendas or journal issues. • Peer reviewed journals accept articles submitted by WIEGO team members.

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3 *"Deliberative dialogues informed by evidence" are recognized as being particularly effective in influencing evidence-informed health policymaking community. (El-Jardali et al 2014).*
4 *This quadrant is described by Georgalakis and Rose (2019) as 'conceptual shifts'.*

Type of outcome	How to harvest	What to harvest
b) Members of academia, researchers, media or 'the public'.	• WIEGO uses online tools such as google analytics and google scholar to do basic monitoring of the less targeted influence of its research in the 'knowledge' terrain and on broader publics.	• Authors of journal articles or working papers cite WIEGO publications. • Members of the public download research reports or other evidence-based material from WIEGO's website. • Other media cite WIEGO materials.
Type of outcome	How to harvest	What to harvest

Increased capacity of researchers - inclusion of WIEGO evidence or arguments on a one-off or full, sustained basis in training of future researchers.	• Documentation of invitations.
	• Ad-hoc documentation of inclusion of WIEGO materials in others' courses or within WIEGO team members' courses.
		• University professors or departments invite WIEGO to:
		  ○ do presentations to students
		  ○ contribute material, modules or entire courses to university curricula
		  ○ co-write text books
		• Shifts in WIEGO team members' academic appointments or affiliations.

ANALYSIS AND SENSE-MAKING ON OUTCOMES OF WIEGO RESEARCH

Once outcomes are harvested, they can be aggregated to help WIEGO understand what patterns of influence it is having over knowledge communities, over policymakers and so on. But they can also be organised into webs or chains of contributions and outcomes to trace the flow of WIEGO's evidence and arguments, demonstrating how they influence diverse social actors and how these cumulatively support WIEGO's efforts to influence the social actors it is aiming to influence. Since WIEGO is institutionalizing Outcome Harvesting, analysing outcomes influenced directly and indirectly by WIEGO's research will build WIEGO's understanding of the time involved in the uptake of its evidence by diverse constituencies.

The analysis would also allow WIEGO to assess whether the effort it is putting into building relationship with communities of practice, knowledge brokers and policy intermediaries is worth it, in terms of the types of outcomes that it is delivering over time. Does it need to be more targeted? It would allow internal debates about the relative value, in terms of WIEGO's mission, between influencing a next generation of researchers, and supporting informal workers with evidence to address immediate concerns.

WIEGO teams involved in generating or using research findings build into their routine meetings time to reflect on the implications of the outcomes they have observed. In their focused learning and strategy meetings, they use the outcome webs and chains to share stories of change and collectively consider what insights these give about how WIEGO is doing the research and using the research findings and how their target audiences are responding. Using the After Action Review process (see Tool 3), they also consider what these insights suggest they should continue to do, and what they should do differently going forward.

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ABOUT WIEGO

Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) is a global network focused on empowering the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy to secure their livelihoods. We believe all workers should have equal economic opportunities, rights, protection and voice. WIEGO promotes change by improving statistics and expanding knowledge on the informal economy, building networks and capacity among informal worker organizations and, jointly with the networks and organizations, influencing local, national and international policies. Visit www.wiego.org.