WORKING POOR IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY

In Unregulated Factories:
- garment makers
- shoe makers

In Small Workshops:
- scrap metal recyclers
- shoe makers
- weavers
- garment makers and embroiderers
- paper-bag makers

On Streets or In Open Spaces:
- street vendors
- push-cart vendors
- garbage collectors
- roadside barbers
- construction workers

In Fields, Pastures, and Forests:
- small farmers
- agricultural labourers
- shepherds
- forest gatherers

At Home:
- garment workers
- embroiderers
- shoemakers
- artisans or craft producers
- assemblers of electronic parts
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY
FOR INFORMAL WORKERS

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Learning Meeting, May 4th to 6th, 2011
Cutty Sark Hotel, Scottburgh, KwaZulu-Natal
WIEGO approach to informal work and poverty

• Most of the world’s poor – especially in developing countries – are working.

• The vast majority of the working poor – those who earn less than US$ 1 per day - earn their living in the informal economy where:
  – average earnings are low
  – risks are high

Poverty reduction is not possible without

a) increasing the assets and earnings, and

b) reducing the risks

of those who work in the informal economy.
Occupational Health and Safety

• Past WIEGO social protection work has focused on
  – Understanding risk for specific groups of informal workers
  – Access to core contingencies – e.g. health insurance, protection when older
  – Value chain analysis to identify potential contributors to better provision of health and other services

• What about risks and hazards in the workplace itself?
• What different types of risks and hazards, and possibilities for measures of protection, are presented in different places of work?
• The formal occupational health and safety ‘regulatory regime’ does not ‘see’ informal work places at all.
Our vision

An inclusive discipline and practice of occupational health and safety that

- Understands and measures the working conditions and health status of poorer informal workers;
- Includes informal places of work in its scope;
- Accepts and negotiates with organisations and associations of informal workers as workers.
The objectives

(mostly the focus of the first half of the project)

- Understand better the risks faced by poorer informal workers in the main places where they work
- Identify how to modify legal and institutional barriers to the inclusion of informal workers and work places into OHS
- Support and assist MBOs of informal workers in shaping focused demands for OHS interventions, and in negotiating for policy change and implementation
- Understand the allocation, control and flow of resources to OHS in order to identify spaces for reallocation or increased allocation to informal workers and work places
- Help build in-country research and organising capacity in OHS for informal workers
Objectives (continued)
(mostly the focus of the second half of the project)

- *Improve the collection and reporting of country-based statistics on OHS* for informal workers to international regulating agencies (such as ILO and WHO)
- Develop a *module for data collection on OHS* for informal workers in labour force surveys
- Contribute to the development and implementation of an *expanded or alternative curriculum* which integrates OHS for informal workers and work places into mainstream OHS training institutions
Programme design

• Main variable – place of work of occupational groups
• Five countries:
  – Ghana and Tanzania
  – Brazil and Peru
  – Two places in India
• Choosing for country differences such as the scope of legal and institutional OHS regime, and the mandate and capacity of local governments
• Focus on three or four different occupational groups in each country
Countries and sectors

- Ghana – market traders/street vendors, kayayei (women headload porters), chop bar operators (indigenous caterers), either home based, or at transport hubs
- Brazil – waste pickers, street vendors, domestic workers
- Tanzania – domestic workers, agricultural workers, street vendors, seaweed farmers
- India SEWA – agricultural workers, agarbattis (incense stick rollers), embroidery workers, papad makers
- India KKPKP – wastepickers
- Peru – newspaper vendors, market porters, wastepickers, export processing in agriculture
In general, in each country we start with:

- Two country papers
  - ‘Size and shape’ of the informal economy
  - ‘Institutional mapping’ and audit of OHS in government at all levels

- Identification of programme partners

- Setting up a multiple stakeholder Reference Group, with strong representation from MBOs and their allies

- Participatory research with MBOs
Participatory research with Streetnet Ghana Alliance

Focus Groups and ‘risk cards’
Health check list for market traders
And then go on to

• Multi-interest group policy dialogues
• Possible exposure dialogue programmes
• Interaction with those who control OHS curriculum
• Dissemination through media, journal articles, popular materials
• Written tools for organising, for worker groups
• Contribute to the development of physical prototypes for working equipment for informal workers
We have space and time to include and add the best of the ideas that we develop and share at this Learning Meeting

SO, LET’S GO!!!