HOMES ARE PRODUCTIVE PLACES OF WORK: Evidence from the Informal Economy Monitoring Study
AFRICA
ACCRA
NAKURU
DURBAN

ASIA
AHMEDABAD
BANGKOK
LAHORE
PUNE

LATIN AMERICA
BELO HORIZONTE
BOGOTÀ
LIMA

763
WASTE PICKERS

743
STREET VENDORS

447
HOME-BASED WORKERS

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Left: Jonathan Torgovnik;
Center: Jonathan Torgovnik;
Right: Paula Bronstein
/all Getty Images Reportage
Homes are productive assets. Homes are living spaces as well as economic spaces for storage, production and trading of goods.

Informal workers involved in home-based work, street trading and waste picking use their living space to facilitate and assist in activities related to their line of work.
“I buy my materials in downtown Lima; I store and make my products at my own house.”
-- Street Vendor (Acrylics), Lima, Peru

Employers drop waste plastic at their homes and pick it up when the sorting process is finished. Most of the focus group use their homes as their workplace except for Yay. She works at her employers’ house. Their homes do not have enough space to store waste plastic and each must therefore try to find available space near their houses.
-- Waste Pickers Focus Group, Bangkok, Thailand
Average Number of Rooms in Dwelling by Region and Sector

- **AFRICA**
  - Street Vendors: 2.4
  - Waste Pickers: 1.8
  - Home-Based Workers: 2.1
  - Total: 2.0

- **ASIA**
  - Street Vendors: 1.7
  - Waste Pickers: 1.5
  - Total: 1.8

- **LATIN AMERICA**
  - Street Vendors: 3.3
  - Waste Pickers: 3.9
  - Total: [VALUE]

Source: IEMS data (WIEGO)
Basic services are inputs for informal workers’ productivity, health and hygiene.

Water for preparing food, cleaning and disinfection. Electricity powers workers’ tools and machinery.
Cooking at home helped them because they did not have to spend on water, since there’s no water in the market stalls or at the market and they would have to buy it in drums. Besides, since their routine is finishing to sell and then going to buy what they need for the following day right there, they save a trip. They don’t live too far away, so cooking at home is of help.

-- Street Vendors Focus Group, Lima, Peru

“I live near Nueva Esperanza, 12 de Agosto. I bring everything ready from home.”

-- Infusions Seller (Street Vendor), Lima Peru
Access to Piped / Improved Water by Region and Sector (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Street Vendors</th>
<th>Waste Pickers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>40.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>89.8</td>
<td>88.8</td>
<td>77.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>89.3</td>
<td>96.7</td>
<td>94.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IEMS data (WIEGO)
“When there is no light, the water motor stops working and there is less water and there is darkness in the house and everything stops.”
-- Garment Worker, Lahore

“When there is no electricity they cannot make dye and we receive the work late and then our own electricity fails and we have to work around electricity schedule which is erratic.”
-- Garment Worker, Lahore
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Street Vendors</th>
<th>Waste Pickers</th>
<th>Home-based Workers</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFRICA</td>
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<td>36.0</td>
<td>89.1</td>
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<td>69.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASIA</td>
<td>71.7</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>LATIN AMERICA</td>
<td>82.7</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>84.7</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: IEMS data (WIEGO)
Workers Who Live in Dwelling Unit with Dirt Floors by Region and Sector (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Street Vendors</th>
<th>Waste Pickers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFRICA</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>25.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASIA</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LATIN AMERICA</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IEMS data (WIEGO)
Conclusions

Livelihood plays a direct role in access to decent housing.

Homes are living spaces, and productive assets and essential for work.

Basic services are essential inputs for informal workers’ production, health and hygiene.

Vulnerable livelihoods are strongly linked with lower standards of housing.

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