



WIEGO

Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing

WIEGO MBO Newsletter

A Newsletter for Membership-Based Organizations of
Informal Workers

Greetings friends and colleagues!

As always, we hope you enjoy this issue of the WIEGO MBO Newsletter. We love to hear from you! Starting this month, Megan MacLeod will be coordinating this newsletter. If you have questions or comments about this newsletter, or if you would like to submit content for the next issue, please email Megan at megan.macleod@wiego.org.

Contact us at WIEGO!

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What's going on at WIEGO?

Take a look at our [recent](#)
and [upcoming](#) events and
activities!

SYNATRA Conference to Pop- ularize Charter of Informal Transport Workers

*By Souley Zeinabou Habou Barma Fenasein Niger
and Synatra*

In October 2016, the National Union of Self-Employed Workers of the Informal Economy of Niger (SYNATRA) organized a conference to present and popularize the charter of informal transport workers. This conference was part of a week of action that takes place every year around the world for road, rail and urban transport unions. The events — including advocacy activities, lobbying, field visits, training and conferences — are organized by trade unions and other organizations affiliated to the [International Transport Workers' Federation](#).

The charter being promoted by SYNATRA is the result of a three-year project aiming to increase the visibility of informal women workers in the transport field. The charter includes several important points that aim to improve the living and working conditions of workers in the transport worker sector. These include: respect for the fundamental rights of trade unions; collective bargaining and consultation; recognition of all workers in the transport economy; women's rights; health and safety; access to social protection; eradication of harassment, exploitation and corruption; and international recognition.

More information:

- About this conference (in French):
 - <http://news.animey.com/h/73867.html>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9jpm9817WU>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E-6jo6l-FLbM>
- About SYNATRA (in French):

□ <http://news.animey.com/h/75932.html>

- About FENASEIN (in English with links to English and French news):

□ <http://www.wiego.org/wiego/federation-nationale-des-syndicats-fenasein>

Waste Pickers Organize in Three Cities Through the WISA Project

By Vanessa Pillay

Waste Integration in South Africa (WISA) is a three-year (2016-2019) organizing project funded by the Commonwealth Foundation to support organizing efforts among waste pickers in the cities of Johannesburg, Tshwane and Sasolburg in South Africa. The project coincides with a national-policy development process of the Department of Environmental Affairs involving the development of guidelines for municipal authorities to follow as they integrate waste pickers into local solid waste management systems. *(Continued on page 2).*



*A participant shows off the back of her t-shirt during one of the organizing events.
Photo: V. Pillay*

Punitive Tolls on Head Porters Abolished in Accra, Ghana

During the 2016 national election process, membership-based organizations (MBOs) from Accra, Ghana met with representatives from four of the major political parties in a town hall policy meeting. The meetings were facilitated by Dorcas Ansah, WIEGO's Accra Focal Cities Coordinator. The MBOs shared their concerns at the meetings. A major issue was the existence of tolls that were charged to kayayei (head porters) by the Accra municipality. The toll is for self-employed workers, but kayayei are wage workers hired by market traders and customers; they are not self-employed. During the town hall policy meeting, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) committed to abolishing the toll if elected. In December 2016, the election was won by the NPP. The kayayei immediately began to engage with the new government to remind them of their promise to abolish the toll. One of their first actions was to organize a [victory march](#). The kayayei were successful: on March 2, 2017, the new [Finance Minister announced that the toll would be abolished](#) (in English).

(Continued from page 1).

The overall objective of the project is to support waste pickers to organize themselves into strong democratic membership-based organizations that can negotiate with city authorities for their active integration into solid waste management systems. The project aims to achieve this objective through four priority areas:

1. Policy research in the project sites to understand current local government policies around solid waste management and any policy imperatives around waste picker integration into the system.
2. Worker education on city policies for waste picker integration into solid waste management systems in every city, so that waste pickers can develop their own demands around integration.
3. Negotiation skills training to empower waste pickers to negotiate for the inclusion of their demands into policy.
4. Strengthening waste pickers' organizations and helping to build and strengthen the South African Waste Pickers Association (SAWPA) as a National Association.

The three project cities were chosen based on previous research by WIEGO and others (see below) about the conditions and organizing potential of waste pickers in these areas, and the size of the waste economy. A project reference group has been established to offer strategic oversight to the project. The group includes waste picker representatives, groundWork — the environmental justice organization that has been supporting SAWPA since its inception in 2009 — and WIEGO.

A first step was to consult with the SAWPA national committee — which includes all nine provincial representatives of SAWPA from all three project cities — to introduce the WISA project. Then, in Johannesburg, a historic mass meeting between two types of reclaimers — those working on landfill sites and those working on the streets — was organized by WIEGO on December 3, 2016. This was the first time that reclaimers from both groups met to talk about their work and share experiences. The 105 reclaimers who gathered at the meeting elected representatives from the 7 work sites to form the Johannesburg representatives' committee. The WISA project was also introduced to the Tshwane reclaimers committee, which represents four areas of reclaimers, mainly those working on landfill sites. The Tshwane Rankuwa, Onderstepoort, Mamelodi and Soshanguve (ROMS) Committee must still reach out to organize reclaimers working on



George Goch women reclaimers. Photo: V. Pillay

the city streets. The WIEGO project team will also meet with the reclaimers in Sasolburg.

Next Steps:

Reclaimers in Johannesburg prepared for their engagement with the city authorities — the first in six years — which took place on May 17-18, 2017. Two representatives from the WISA project have been selected by the Johannesburg committee to represent their interests on a national working group to be convened by the Department of Environmental Affairs for the development of the national guidelines for waste picker integration. Participation in the national working group will give waste pickers a voice in the national policymaking process.

Previous research includes:

- Samson, M. [Organizing Reclaimers in Tshwane, South Africa](#).
 - Samson, M. [Reclaiming Reusable and Recyclable Materials in Africa - A Critical Review of English Language Literature](#) (in English and in French).
 - Samson, M. [Organizing in the Informal Economy: A Case Study of the Municipal Waste Management Industry in South Africa](#).
 - Schenk, R. and P.F. Blaauw. [The Work and Lives of Street Waste Pickers in Pretoria](#).
 - Theron, J. [Options for Organizing Waste Pickers in South Africa](#).
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Congratulations to IDWF!

The [International Domestic Workers Federation](#) (IDWF) was a 2017 recipient of the Justice and Peace Award from the Bishop Tji Haksoon Justice & Peace Foundation in South Korea. The [award letter](#) (in English) noted that foundation members “were very impressed by your dedication to defending the domestic workers’ rights globally.” IDWF received the award at the [Award Ceremony](#) (in English with Korean subtitles) in Seoul in March 2017.

International Waste Pickers’ Day 2017 Celebrated Around the World

On March 1, International Waste Pickers’ Day, many different events took place around the world. These included: a radio programme in India, a “thank you waste pickers” campaign in Colombia and demonstrations in Argentina, Colombia, France, and Senegal. More information about these events can be found on the [Global Alliance of Waste Pickers website](#). Also, WIEGO’s Waste Picker Sector Specialist, Sonia Dias, shared “[Four strategies to integrate waste pickers into future cities](#)” in a blog post (in English) in honor of International Waste Pickers’ Day.

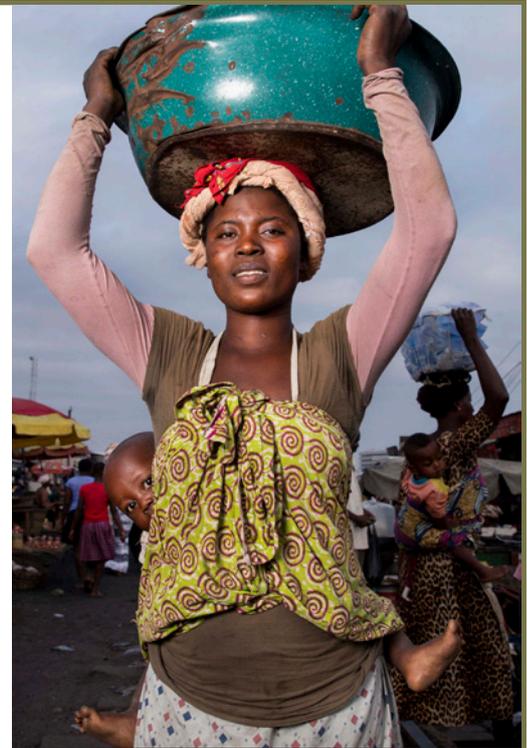
Update on WIEGO’s Child Care Initiative

In response to demand from membership-based organizations of informal workers (MBOs), the [Social Protection Programme](#) at WIEGO started the [Child Care Initiative](#) (CCI) in 2014. The first step the CCI took was to conduct research on child care and informal work in collaboration with MBOs in five countries: the Altimorjam Waste Picker Cooperative in Brazil, the Ghana Association of Markets (GAMA), the [Informal Hawkers and Vendors Association of Ghana](#) (IHVAG), the [Self-Employed Women’s Association](#) (SEWA) in India, the [South African Informal Workers Association](#) (SAIWA), and [HomeNet Thailand](#) (HNT).

We learned that every day, women informal workers face the difficult decision of what to do with the young children in their care while they work. Child care responsibilities can decrease productivity leading to lower incomes. Women informal workers end up working long hours to try to meet their households’ basic needs, leaving little time to care for themselves and their children. Many women informal workers face difficult trade-offs when it comes to child care. For example, street vendors often take their children with them when they go out to sell in crowded markets or streets. Many home-based workers care for their children and work at the same time. Migrant domestic workers usually leave their children behind with extended family members while they are working in another city or country. Waste pickers may have to choose between bringing their children to unsafe waste dumps and collection centers or leaving their children unattended at home. Many domestic workers and child care workers, who earn a living by caring for others, do not earn enough to afford the cost of child care for their own children.

WIEGO believes that the public provision of child care for informal workers must be a crucial part of implementing Recommendation 204 (R204) on the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy. R204, which was adopted by the 104th ILC on 12 June 2015, recognizes that, in order to promote gender equality, women informal workers need access to affordable, quality child care.

Through consultation with MBOs, WIEGO developed a [pamphlet](#) to be used for a campaign for public child care. We want national governments and local authorities to understand that women informal workers need quality public child care services so they can work and earn more income. The children



A Kayayee in Accra, Ghana, carries her child on her back while she works. Photo: Jonathan Torgovnik/Getty Images Reportage

of women informal workers deserve care to grow, learn, and be healthy. Workers of old age also have the right to rest without taking on the responsibility of earning an income and caring for young children.

We want societies that care for children, workers, and elders. All workers must benefit from maternity protections and have access to quality child care services wherever they work through national social protection systems.

The campaign describes [more ways](#) — in addition to the implementation of R204 — that women informal workers, their organizations, and allies are calling on national and local governments to take action. Read more about [informal workers mobilizing for childcare](#).

For more information or to provide feedback on the Child Care Initiative, please email us at childcare@wiego.org.
