

Celebrating Martha Chen at WIEGO



Martha (Marty) Chen, International Coordinator

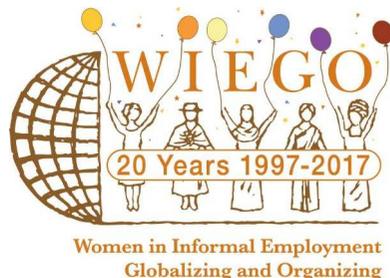
Co-founder and International Coordinator of Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing, Lecturer in Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and Affiliated Professor at Harvard Graduate School of Design.

An experienced development practitioner and scholar, Marty's areas of specialization are employment, gender, and poverty with a focus on the working poor in the informal economy. Before joining Harvard in 1987, she had two decades of resident experience in Bangladesh working with BRAC (now the world's largest non-governmental organization) and in India, where she served as field representative of Oxfam America for India and Bangladesh. Marty received a PhD in South Asia Regional Studies from the University of Pennsylvania and has authored numerous publications.

Marty was awarded a high civilian award, the Padma Shri, by the Government of India in April 2011; and a Friends of Bangladesh Liberation War award by the Government of Bangladesh in December 2012.



"In many developing countries, the workforce is overwhelmingly informal—and informal employment is here to stay. What is needed, most fundamentally, is a new economic paradigm: a model of a hybrid economy that embraces the traditional and the modern, the small scale and the big scale, the informal and the formal."





[1] 'The Light of Zartha is a special cosmic force that Zarthan Princess Lauranna left on her visit to Earth' – in *Men in Black II*.

[2] Boston pronunciation: 'Arthuh'



A Paean to Marty

There once was a woman named Martha
Whose journey compares with Siddhartha.
What she's done, Buddha,
I don't think he could'a
Transformed WIEGO like our Martha.

Her accomplishments far exceed normal.
Not even a tropical storm'll
Exceed the power
Of our gal of the hour:
The Guru of Workers Informal.

The awesomeness of our dear Martha
Should be enshrined in a Parthe-
non or a temple –
Not too simple –
She's our bright Light of Zartha.[1]

The WIEGO Board and Team are the
Knights of the table 'round Martha.
She alone
From the stone
Could draw the sword of King Arthur.[2]

She's modest, so let me say quick,
That such praise might make her sick.
Nonetheless, have no fear,
She'll be in good cheer,
'Cause she loves a good limerick.

Though retiring, Coordinator Marty
Remains both hale and hearty.
We wish her life long
Filled with song
And dance – like a WIEGO party!

Biff Steel, 2017

The Beginning of My Career Dhaka, East Pakistan

Dear Colleagues, My career began when a severe cyclone and tidal wave struck the Bay of Bengal on November 12, 1970. Lincoln, my husband, and I had arrived in Dhaka, East Pakistan in July that year with our one year old son, Greg. At my suggestion, Lincoln had opted to do his public health service at the Cholera Research Lab in Dhaka – rather than at the National Institutes of Health in the USA.

I was 26 – thrilled to be back in South Asia where I had grown up in neighboring India – working on my PhD dissertation.



1970s

When we got news of the cyclone, three women friends – two East Pakistani sisters and the wife of another US Cholera Lab doctor – and I started a cyclone relief effort on the island of Manpura in the Bay of Bengal. Thought you would be interested in where and how my career in development began and also in photos of me from that place and time:

November 1970 is a long time ago - 45 years ago – and yet my memories of that time are very vivid – as the 1970 cyclone in East Pakistan followed by the Pakistan civil war in 1971 - was such a formative part of my life and career – and that of my husband and our two children.



At Dhaka airport with US officials loading relief goods onto the US ambassador's plane to be taken to Manpura island.



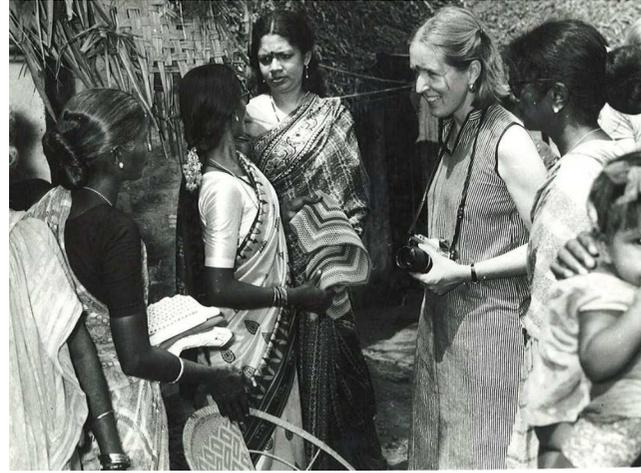
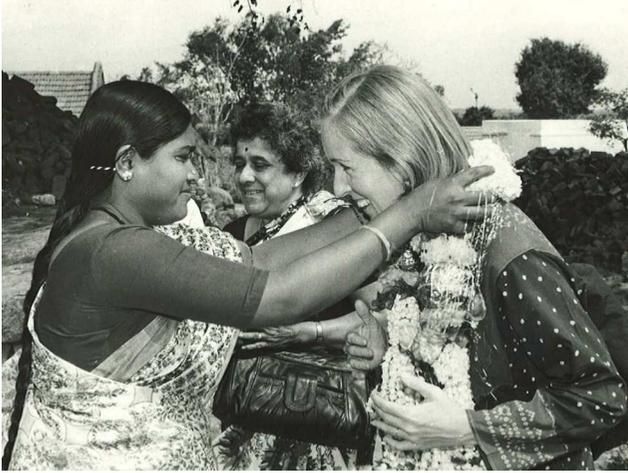
At Manpura island distributing collected relief goods.



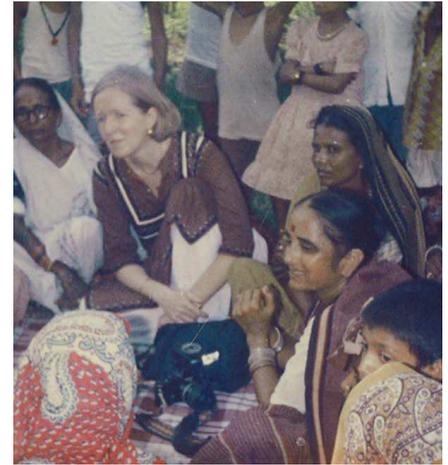
And here is a photo of me receiving a check for our relief work from the head of US Aid in Dhaka – my first effort at fundraising!!

Love – Marty





1980s



1990s

WIEGO Go Ahead

I feel happy to have lived to see WIEGO reach 20 and next year 21. In adulthood, it means having the right to vote, marry, to bequeath. How can the interest of a Harvard Professor be so strong that she nurtured it to steady growth and create a global face?

Marty, without your contribution and that of the WIEGO Team with you, WIEGO would not have a 'go' at such a steady and sustainable pace.

We are all very proud and grateful for your dedication, sometimes as an activist, sometimes as an academician. I cannot forget that morning breakfast (1995) we had at the roadside in Geneva; I wanted a Harvard 'stamp' on the statement of SEWA for the ILO session on home-based workers being workers and needing the lawful protection of basic labour standards. I had urged for reliable statistics from you and Jennifer Sebstead for the next year's debate so that we would not be ridiculed or discarded to a dustbin by the Employer Group. True, that was our situation in the first year (1995)... that is why we needed the Harvard stamp, and you did so and we won our ILO Convention 177 on Home Work, benefiting millions of women and men worldwide. They say that well begun is half done. True. But we need a charioteer to move ahead and it was you. Sure, Renana, our SEWA leader and a Harvard graduate, was again our buddy in the larger battlefield of making the informal workers, particularly women, visible, voiceful and their economic work validated.

Now, what we (I) wish is to establish the fact that Informal is the mainstream. A day will come when the informal economy will be the mainstream economy nurturing the people and the planet. That will take another 20 years... no problem... We will go and go and go ahead.

Marty, you have established the fact to your colleague and successor that WIEGO is not a project, it never was, not even on the first day at the roadside or today. WIEGO has been and is a global movement today that will go ahead with the collective strength of the poor working women of the world.

Marty, you are not retiring from WIEGO. Nobody retires from a movement for a public cause. God bless you and all of yours.

ELA BHATT



Bellagio 2005



2002



2007



2012



an INFORMAL FAREWELL TO BELLAGIO

We've had a great week in Bellagio—
 Though it went by *presto*, not *adagio*.
 We had a nice bed
 And were very well fed;
 But to climb up that hill: *corragio!*

Our work 9 to 6 took precedence,
 But pleasures were also in evidence.
 A very big plus
 Was the chance to discuss
 With Artists and Scholars in Residence.

Even though every night they did hector
 The term: 'Women in Informal Sector'
 Well, we're out of luck;
 With that term we're stuck...
 But we aim to make people respect 'er!

We've had a good time and some laughs.
 Many people worked on our behalf.
 Though we didn't deserve it,
 We had perfect service.
 So *grazia* to all of the staff.

This villa was just like our home-o!
 It's really a shame we must go now.
 I've already missed ya—
 That beautiful vista:
 The comet, the Alps, and Lake Como.



by William (Biff) Steel
 Team Residency on Women in the Informal Sector
 April 14-19, 1997

Bellagio 1997



Women Weavers in Bangladesh, photo by Marty

2000 and beyond



Durban, 2000



Durban, 2000



Geneva, 2002



London, 2009



Bellagio, 2017



Bellagio, 2017

Madame Martyben La Blonde

Your wisdom, your matrices, your love of dance
Your ability to set and keep boundaries
Our birthdays, our Mums, our families

Your Mussoorie and Himalayas
My Valley of a Thousand Hills

Autumn colours near Bear Island
Temples in Delhi, a jeep in Bona Manzi in Zululand
The reservoir in Brookline

Your textures and colours and elegance
(Not your speedboat steering skills ...)

The laughter, and the love.
With so many thanks. Francie



EDP Technical Dialogue, Boston 2004

Team Retreat, Boston 2008





StreetNet Founded, Durban 2002



General Assembly, Ahmedabad 2002



Bellagio 2002



2003



Cape Town 2011 (*above*), Amsterdam 2017 (*below*)



Working with Marty in WIEGO has been one of the best things that ever happened to me. I first met Marty in Ahmedabad, in December 2003. This was at the first global conference of informal workers' MBOs and trade unions (Combining our Efforts; Organizing in the Informal Economy). I had just arrived, and as the brand new ORP Director was feeling very nervous. Marty immediately came to my room to welcome me. She was dressed most beautifully in an Indian silk outfit. Her thoughtfulness, caring and warmth, striking appearance and wonderful dress sense were some of my first impressions of Marty. These were later to be confirmed as key Marty characteristics, together with a focused and piercing intelligence, an ability to inspire and to lead and manage – seemingly effortlessly and with enjoyment- a highly complex organization.



Manchester, 2015

Marty, in our golden years, I hope we will have many more opportunities to be together for work and play. The time we Golden Girls (formerly Old Soldiers, Marty, Joann, Francie and Chris) spent together in Bellagio, Amsterdam and Stockholm (April-May 2017), exploring archiving and history writing, as well as having fun, was so special for me. Inspired by your vision and ability to make things happen I hope we can ensure that WIEGO's work- and your outstanding contribution in support of informal workers- is not forgotten.

Love, Chris





EDP India, 2004



Photo by Marty

A Typical Scene

The front room of Kamlaben's house. Napad village, Kheda district, Gujarat state. You enter the front room from the verandah, and the front room leads to the back room of the two room house. We are sitting on the floor—Martyben, Kamlaben, Jyotiben and Leenaben. Martyben and I are the outsiders. Jyotiben and Leenaben are SEWA organizers. Two others are watching and listening from the back room—Kamlaben's two sisters.

We are finding out about Kamlaben's life and her struggles. Married at two, living with her husband at thirteen, first child at fifteen. We learn about two children who died due to inadequate health care. We learn about the death of her husband, and ill treatment from in laws that is the lot of widows in India. I am quiet—unusual for me. Martyben is asking the questions. Without having discussed it, we know that such questions are best put by a woman.

The door to the front verandah has been closed against the evening winter chill. It opens and in streams a family of women, children in tow. They have heard that there are guests in the village, and they have come to meet and greet.

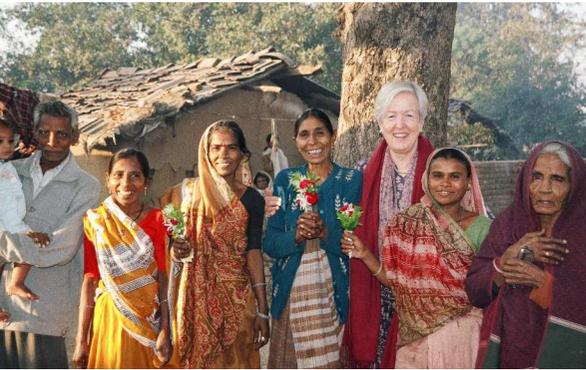
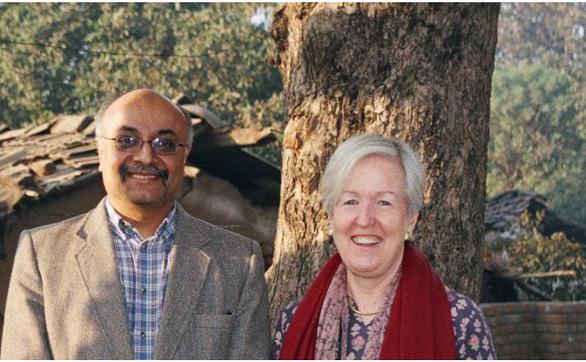
The news of guests in the village spread fast, and it is easy to guess why. Earlier in the day we were walking to the shop where Kamlaben buys her provisions. Martyben's fair complexion and light colored hair was of course attracting a lot of attention. Young children stopped flying kites and fighting to stare. Old men started talking to each other, animated. I imagined the conversation they were having:

"So, who is that white woman surrounded by all those Indian women?"

"Oh that. You know there's an election coming. Congress wants to win here. That must be Sonia Gandhi."

"Yes, and that Indian man next to her, the one in the black trousers and blue shirt who nods at everything she says—he must be her Commando bodyguard."

My mind drifts back from the imagined conversation to the scene in front of me. A typical scene of friends visiting friends. The women have settled down on the floor, arms linked with Kamlaben and her sisters. Attention is focused on the youngest of the children in tow—a six month old baby girl. She is passed around for hugs and admiration. She is of course passed to Martyben, and then after a while the mother takes her back, worried that the baby is about to do what babies do do.



A typical scene. Except that the baby's name is Hina and the mother's name is Mumtaz. This is a Muslim baby being passed around a Hindu house for hugs and kisses. A house in a district that was racked by the communal riots of 18 months ago. The conversation naturally turns to the riots, in which unspeakable acts of communal violence, rape and murder were committed. But there was no trouble in Napad. The visitors said that Kamlaben had told them to come to her house if there was any trouble. Any Hindu who came after them would have to deal with her first. And Kamlaben said the same about her neighbors—their Muslim house would be a sanctuary for her. Ever since the organized communal violence in Gujarat I have been searching the internet, almost obsessively, for journalistic reports of individual acts of courage and kindness in the middle of the mayhem. Sitting on Kamlaben's floor I realize I can stop my search. I have found my own story.

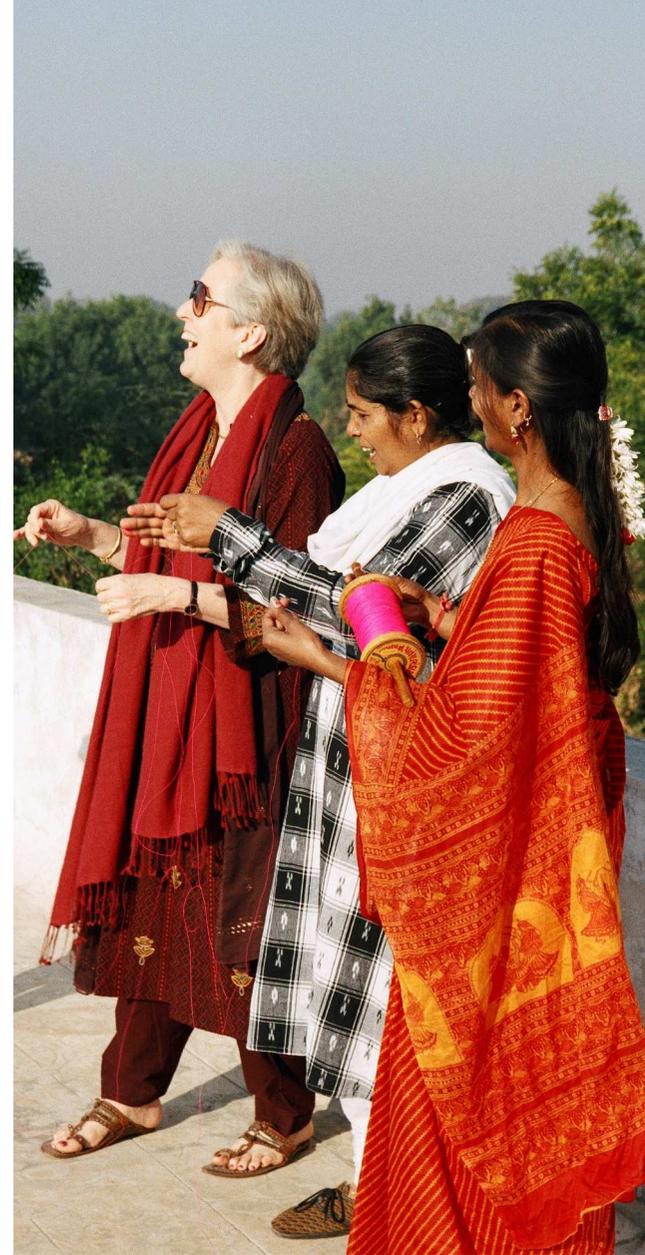
Unclean analytical thoughts keep bubbling up in the face of this purity of the human spirit. This is a Muslim majority village. But the Muslims are in a minority in the surrounding area. Rational choice calculations might then suggest that Hindus and Muslims in this village might actually behave in this way. My thoughts turn also to work I have been doing with Indraneel Dasgupta on mathematical models of communal division and tension. I think back to one of our models, in which cross communal activity lessens communal tension. The women in the room all belong to SEWA, and are part of the SEWA savings group and other groups. I realize that I am sitting in the middle of our theoretical proposition. I also get excited about how one of our models can be modified based on the realities I have observed, leading to a new model, a new paper, and a new publication in a refereed journal—the holy grail of academic existence.

Analytical thoughts erupt uncontrolled for a while. Such eruptions are an occupational deformity of the academic mind. But I suppress them for now. Let me savor what I am seeing in Kamlaben's front room, a scene that is typical as it unfolds, and yet so remarkable because it is happening at all.

Ravi Kanbur*

27 January, 2004

* Personal reflection after the Cornell-WIEGO-SEWA Exposure and Dialogue Programme, Gujarat State, India, January 10-15, 2004. Marty Chen and I stayed for two nights in Napad village, in the home of Kamlaben, a member of SEWA.





EDP MBO Conference, January 2005



Photo by Marty, 2005



General Assembly– Durban, April 2006



Bellagio 2007



Dear Martita,

I am sure you will enjoy this book that has been put together with so much love from everyone, especially Sofia. You and WIEGO have been and will continue to be such important parts of my life. I met you when I was expecting Mariana, who is now back in Ottawa studying by herself. You were so supportive that year that Gabriel, and so many WIEGO babies, came along. But you were even more supportive at the most difficult moment in my life, when the separation came in my marriage, back in 2002. You knew me, but not so much, but you were so caring and tried to help in many ways. I have tons to thank you for, not only for the opportunity to work in many different things, with the freedom and trust that starting something new requires, but for what I constantly learn from you as a leader, a family person, a boss. I feel so blessed. It has been a magical road, and it will continue to be. And I know you will enjoy the years ahead even more than the past ones, because less pressure will be on your shoulders. And remember you promised to visit with more time this side of the world. As you always say to us: "with love and admiration.

Love, lots, Carmen



Team Retreat, London 2007



Board Meeting, Geneva 2008



"Waste Pickers Without Frontiers" Bogota, 2008



Official visit to Cambodia, 2008



Team Retreat



Endicott House, MA 2008





EDP Oaxaca, 2009







Team Retreat, MA 2009

To Marty,

Who could imagine the emergence of a world-wide coalition of grass roots women (and men), academics, officials and statisticians working together to improve the livelihood of the world's poor workers? Indeed our Marty did and what an organization it became!!! The values and approach that make WIEGO so unique and successful come from the essence of Marty: a strategic focus, solid grounding in research and official statistics; high-level contacts, understanding of and care for poor workers and tenacious persistence. Throughout your leadership you have instilled these qualities in WIEGO. I hope in a new role you will continue to give guidance to WIEGO.

It has been exciting and inspiring to work with you. You have given me the opportunity to take my expertise to another level, one with more direct policy consequences for the poor and to do it in places and with people I have never dreamed of going to or knowing. It has been a joy to work with someone so dedicated to the working poor and so concerned with others rather than personal promotion. I am reminded of the song "Who can I turn to." Whenever I had difficulty you helped me come to a solution- sometimes even with a better understanding of statistics than I.

Early in our working together we became close friends and for that I most grateful. We have had wonderful times together enjoying our similar interests. It is often the little things that one remembers most and for me it is your personal warmth, care for others and our conversations sharing the ups and downs of the day and our little stories.

Much love as always, Joann



Joann and I in the Himalayan Foothills

Feb 2014

Dear WIEGO Team - Greetings from New Delhi.

As most of you know, I have been mainly off-line for the past 8 days - on a marvelous holiday trip in India to mark my 70th. birthday.

There were 20 of us total in two places - Maheshwar in Madhya Pradesh and Mussoorie in the foothills of the Himalayas.

Here is a photo of Joann and I at around 7,000 feet in the foothills looking out across several ranges to the permanent snow range of mountains which far to the east includes Everest. One snow peak shows in the far distance of the picture. The photo is taken at a look-out spot about 1 hour's drive from the town where I grew up - Mussoorie.

...

Warm regards to one and all - Marty



Bellagio 2017



When Françoise plus Marlese and Family Visited our Summer Home

Aug 2017

Dear All - Thought you would enjoy this photograph taken on the day Françoise plus Marlese, her husband Deon and daughter Ami (between Deon and Françoise) visited our summer home on Bear Island in a large lake, Lake Winnepesaukee, in New Hampshire (two hours north of Boston).

The other two girls are the middle and youngest daughters of our son Greg and his wife Laura. Natalie, their eldest, took the picture. The large golden retriever belongs to that family. The small maltepoolo belongs to our daughter Alexis and her family.

After a lot of gatherings of family and friends during July, Lincoln and I are on the island for a month of quiet concentrated work - with the two dogs as both of our children and their families are travelling. You would be amused to see me jogging through the woods with the two dogs on leashes.

Love to all - Marty



Dearest Marty,

Where to start except with an armful of gratefulness and joy for knowing you and for all that you do for so many, close in, and far out. And for all that you have given to me over the years.

When we first met, it was in the Radcliffe environment which, at the time, I found a cold environment, not an easy one in which to be true to myself. Your stance in interacting with economists, particularly development economists was incredibly refreshing. It was the best thing in my work there, and career since, to have a chance to work with you on the WIEGO conference, "Dialogue between academics and activists." At the time, in my usual work on other projects, I would get a lot done and would get occasional credit and very little fun. On this joint project, I got to work on something I loved, I got to work with activists in the developing world (a chance to reconnect to my own personal experience with low-income countries and interest in development) and I got to have fun. Most important, it was easy to work with you, a very rich partnership and you gave me a lot of credit for the work and making things go well. What a gift.

You will hear/read a lot from all of us about all that makes you so special and dear—unique really. So I will only say a few. You may not remember this but I still remember how responsible you were when we were running the joint inter-university seminar and, one time, the other co-chair was scheduled to miss and you fell ill. You called to ask me if you could skip and I equivocated (unsure). With help from Marilyn Carr, who pushed me, we came up with a plan. I called you home and there you were, sick with a flu/cold, all dressed up and about to walk out the door. At the time, there was no one else in a similar senior position with whom I dealt that would have behaved that way.

You were working with me the week that started when my father died suddenly and offered that we postpone our meeting and showed compassion. Another time, you showed up to run our joint conference after having spent the night/early morning in the birthing room with your daughter in law helping/watching over the birth of your granddaughter. (I think, this, you remember!)

Brazil 2010



Tala 2014



Of course, there also is the resilience with which you sustained the passing of your mother as we were in the middle of retreat and about to start a GA in Yogyakarta a few years ago. A momentous time in your life –even if anticipated— and you found a way to stay focused on the work and help everyone else deliver on their responsibilities. We could not have had a better leader.

When I had a year-long spell of health trouble and treatments, you kept tabs on me and took me to breakfast to keep me company, engaged and up to date on WIEGO developments. I still so regret missing the GA in Ahmedabad – but I still remember it coming alive for me when you told me of the events and particularly the fashion show that SEWA members put on to showcase the products of SEWA enterprises.

I think you know how much the opportunity to work with WIEGO and with the exceptional people (women and some honorary men J) on the team—and I think you hear this from everyone. But through the work, and watching you cut your way through to decisions, I have learned a lot about working in a large team, about re-assessing decisions, and about working with allies many of whom are more powerful and not easy to deal with. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Not at all sure I have learned everything I need to know from you so I very much hope you stay connected to WIEGO as long as possible and also to me. I do wish that when organizational responsibilities abate, I will get you to come up to Chesterfield, take you for a walk along the gorge, and cook you a meal!

With love and deep gratitude for your generosity and steadfastness and with admiration for your wisdom.
Françoise

Yogyakarta 2014



Bellagio 2017





Team Retreat



Madrid 2010



Spain 2010

*"We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time"*
(J. Fowles)

Marty, is one of those people who will always reinvent things, issues, people... She will be missed in ways more than one. Love and admiration, Sonia



India 2013 (above) & Indonesia 2014 (below)



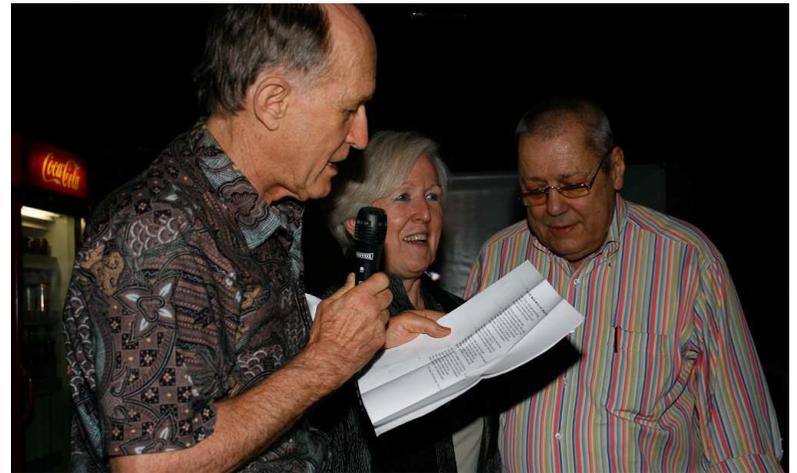
South Africa, 2011





Waste Pickers, Brazil 2010. Photo by Marty

General Assembly, Brazil 2010







I entered WIEGO as a young, enthusiastic, post-graduate wanting to make a contribution to change. It was the dying days of apartheid, exciting times indeed, but the shape and form of what I could actually do, was in its infancy. Then three dynamic, inspiring and rather intimidating, women entered centre stage – Francie Lund, Pat Horn and the Marty Chen. I had no idea at the time, how profoundly you would shape my life path. So now when I look back over the last nearly 20 years, this is what I see.

A visionary – Marty you formulated and implemented a model of change, that has inspired so many. It forms the foundation stones of what I do, and especially the work I am most proud of.

An activist – whose sharp intellect constantly sees the points of leverage, both big and small; who is brave enough to always speak truth to power and act when action is needed.

A unique academic – who contributes to knowledge, never simply for its own sake, but always to lead to a more justice world.

An egalitarian – I have witness the humility with which you engage with informal workers, in India, Brazil, South Africa. I have watched how they have opened up, ignited by your empathy and the sense of possibility for change.

A leader – I seen close up how you manage people, how you tap into the best within us. You have established an ethos within WIEGO which is feminist, feminine and deeply human.



Photos left: Durban 2002, Brazil 2010, Durban 2012



A mentor and a role model – You have gently nudged me along the road to many a good thing including working on my Ph.D., but also you have inspired me to see what’s possible not only in a work realm, but as a parent and grandparent.

A friend – you have walked alongside me in many a dark moment, the loss of the twin, the loss of my dad and when I was younger, many a heart break. You have also been with me during many of my happiest times, including letting me use your exquisite blouse to wear at my wedding in Rome. We have had enormous amounts of fun together - from walks on Bear Island, through Lodi Gardens, and the KwaZulu Natal bush; to singing Bollywood songs in Bellagio, to drinks in that bar constructed out of ice in Helsinki or sneaking into your hotel room in Ahmedabad to have a clandestine whiskey.

Having you in my life has deeply enriched it. I do feel you have contributed so much, at such a pace, for so long that you are owed a new role and path, one that allows for more space to think and breathe. I look forward to this next phase and all the new types of collaboration and fun we will pursue.

Caroline Skinner

Bellagio, 2017





Eyjafjallajökull

pronounced: AY-uh-fyat-luh-YOE-kootl-uh

For clarity, that's that is--ay as in day, -fy as in few, -oe as in French "coeur", -uh as in boot, the -tl as in atlas. The (uh) is "a" as in ago

In Icelandic, "Eyja" means island, "fjall" or "fjöll" means mountain, and "jökull" means glacier - so "the islandmountainglacier volcano" might do the trick for those still struggling.



Women in Informal Employment
Globalizing and Organizing



The ripple effect of Eyjafjallajökull

The following members were planning to attend this week's General Assembly but were unable to because of another matter (Eyjafjallajökull's eruption)

R.F.

Hongkong Thailand
(Bangkok)

Khansook Salar (Bangkok)

Karnika Khan

Chapat TSC

Makinda Market Union

Amey Patel

Individual Members

Juliana Kishi (Doha)

Esther Rubio (Newcastle)

Poomjai Tulaporn (Bangkok)

Narumon Kongsompong

Khanjira Salar (Bangkok)

Karl Gustafsson (Doha)

Jahida Akhtar (Amman)

Juliana Rivera (Amman)

Christina Gombosi

Urova Kulkarni

Alison Bennett

Bevlynn Chapman

Debra Wilson

Jan Kelly

Leah Higgins

Rajendra Lakshmanan (Singapore)

Lin Liu

Juliana Kishi (Doha)

Kathy Papp

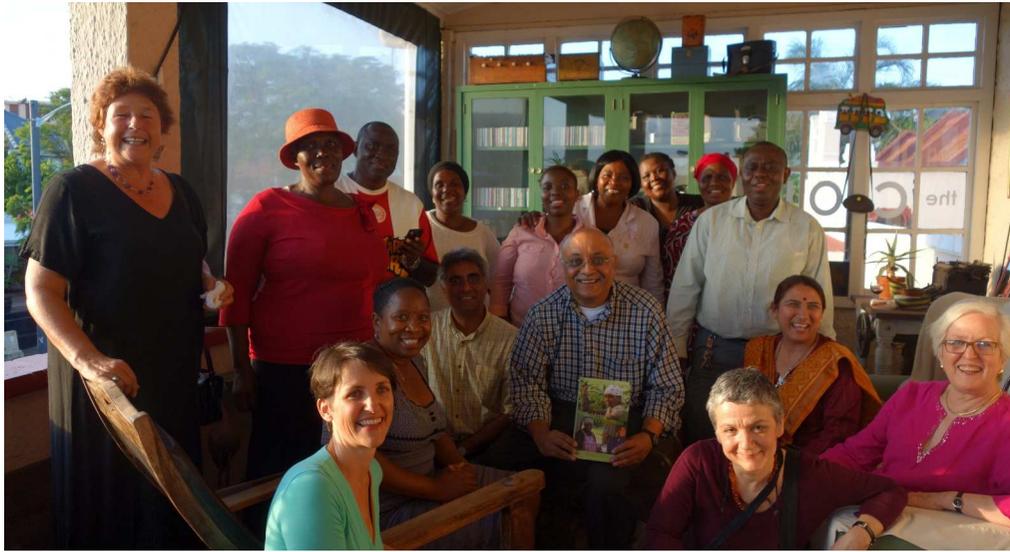
Debra Wilson

Carol White



Padma Shri, by the Government of India in April 2011

In 2011, Marty was awarded a Padma Shri by the Government of India in recognition of her work around issues of employment, poverty, and gender in India. Padma Awards are India's highest civilian awards.



EDP, Durban 2011



GEC Meeting, London 2011

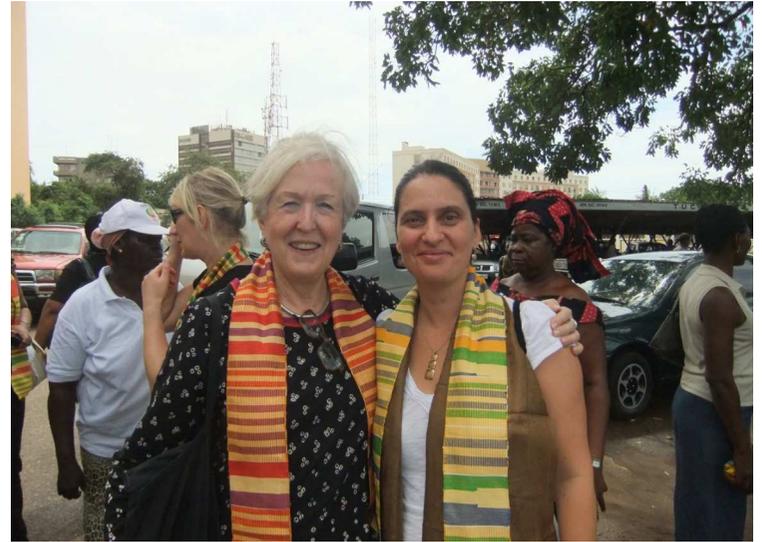


Photo by Marty

Dear Marty,
What a pleasure it has been to work with you at HKS and at WIEGO. I learned so much from you these past few years about the informal economy and I enjoyed it immensely. The opportunities I had to sit in on your class and meet your students were also great ones. I also won't forget the Secretariat retreats at beautiful Bear Island and the yummy desserts at Harvest. Mostly I won't forget how lucky I was to work for WIEGO and for you.

Love, Karen

Team Retreat, Accra 2011



Dear Marty,
It has been an enormous privilege working with you. Your passionate leadership and your dedication to WIEGO, and to the workers we serve, will always be an inspiration to me. But what I will always remember most fondly is the love and consideration you have shown for all the individuals that make up your "WIEGO family". That has been truly exceptional.

With much love,
Demetria

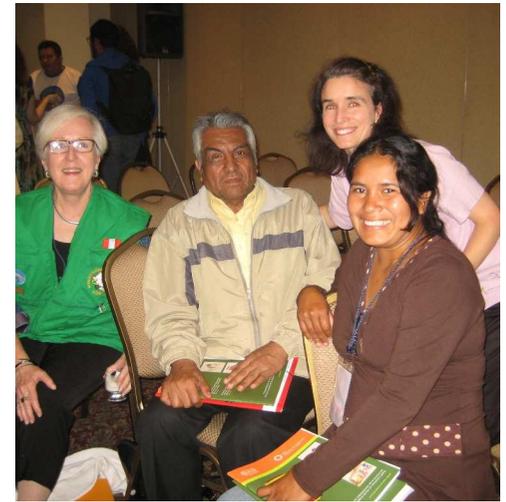


Bellagio, 2017





Photo by Marty



IC AIM, Lima 2011



Marty and me, in the Reducto Number 2 Park in Lima, where people from different generations meet -especially for kissing, dance and sharing typical Peruvian instruments. The name of this experience is "La Esquina Musical" ("The Musical Corner"). Marty made me happy with this visit, taking time out of her usual agenda.

Un abrazo,
Carmela



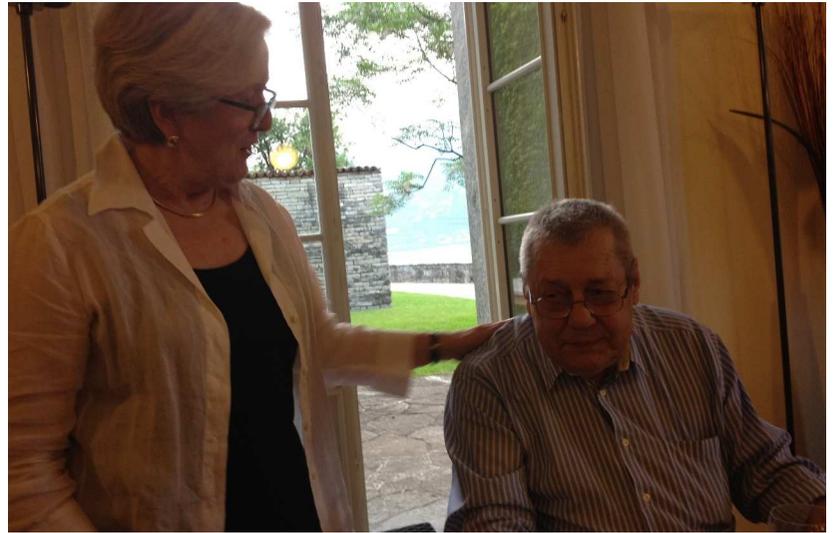


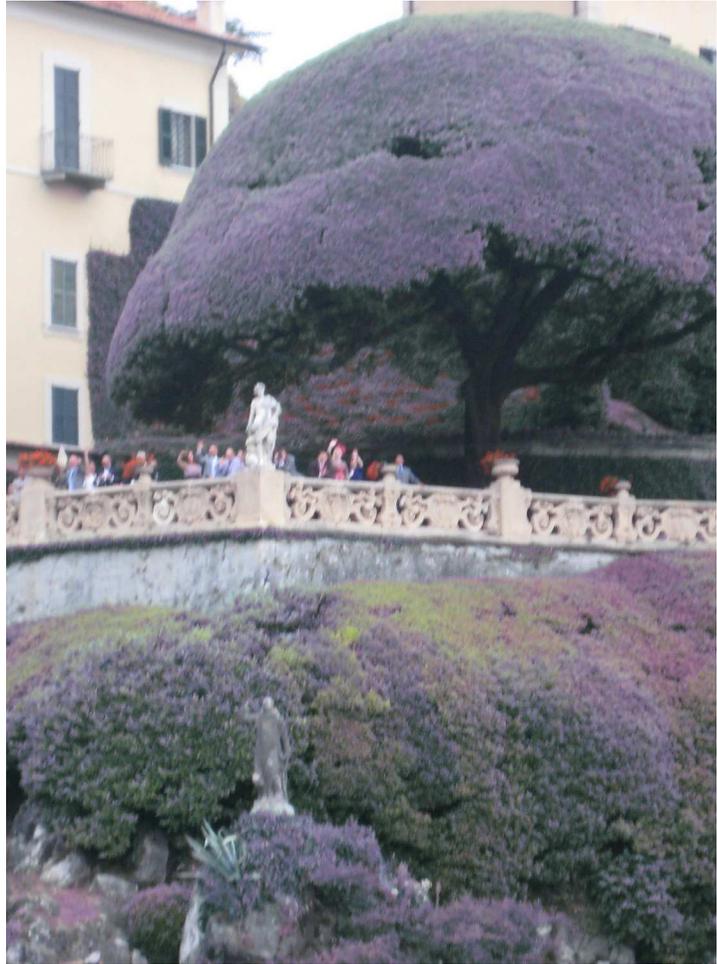
Ela Bhatt, 2011 Radcliffe Medalist





Bellagio 2012











Team Retreat, MA 2012



A boss such as you deserves an international holiday for being so wonderful! Thanks just for being you.... Dr Marty Chen.

I may not have ever told you this is person; however this is a written record. You are an absolute inspiration to me in so many ways! Intelligent, courageous, tactful, caring, loving, ambitious, fun, diligent, honest, reliable and these are only a few words to describe your personality. You are simply FABULOUS! We will miss you dearly as our leader. Thank God for people like you in this world. It has been an absolute honour having you as "Chief Commander at WIEGO" since the day that I started here.

Lots of love, Henrial





Rio +20, 2012

It is not a great picture but it was certainly a great moment! The very first time we met in person in Bogota in March 2008...and Marty speaking to the big audience I think for the first time in LatinAmerica! The beginning of a long story of waste pickers' networking process that was possible thanks to your vision and trust in this sector. We will always remembered you Marty, specially Silvio, Nohra and many waste pickers that had the possibility to get to know you and understand how special you are for them and for all informal workers worldwide. I miss my lovely lunches with you in Boston but I hope to have many more who knows where and when. Wishing you the very best in the years to come, I am sure full of wisdom and incredible production, as always...much love, Lucia



IEMS, Durban 2012



Bogota, 2008



*Mozart Requiem, Lincoln Center
18 March 2012*

Marty receives Friends of Bangladesh Liberation War Award 15 December, 2012

The citation accompanying Marty's award read: “During the cyclone of 1970, Dr. Martha Alter Chen (Marty) Padmashree conducted a major relief work for the victims. She witnessed the massacre by Pakistani troops during the early days of the Liberation War. After returning to Washington, DC, she played an important role in founding 'Friends of Bangladesh', an advocacy NGO which created public opinion in USA, built awareness against the Nixon-Kissinger policy on Bangladesh. She helped raise funds to assist Bangladeshi refugees. For her great contribution towards the Liberation War, Dr. Martha Alter Chen (Marty) Padmashree is awarded Friends of Liberation War Honour”.





Happy New Year 2013

Dear WIEGO Colleagues - Happy New Year and greetings from Bangkok airport en route to Yangon where I will be on holiday with Lincoln and friends for a week or so.

Thought you be amused by this picture of Lincoln and me taken on Christmas Day - we drove this bicycle rickshaw built for two around the tiny charming resort town in Virginia where we celebrated Christmas with my Mother and brother and his family

All the best to all of you, dear colleagues, for peace, joy, health, and justice in 2013 - Marty

2013

Ahmedabad, India 2013



Chiang Rai, Thailand 2013



Board Meeting, Montevideo 2013



International Domestic
Workers Federation Founded,
Montevideo 2013

Photo by Marty



The joy, honour and learning from being part of WIEGO has always been so much because of you - your wise and calm leadership, your ability to efficiently keep track and deal with so many responsibilities, your sensitive approach to dealing with issues and people, your intellect - and most importantly, the wonderful human being you are. I greatly admire you as a colleague and value you as a friend. My very best wishes for the future and lots of love.

Lin



Team Retreat, Montevideo 2013



Dear Marty,
Congratulations on a remarkable career. Your tireless dedication to creating necessary change (and I don't just mean in documents!) inspires me every day, as it does so many others. You have transformed lives, South and North. I know this next phase of your career will be every bit as valuable and as productive – and I hope it will be truly enjoyable, too!

With love and admiration,
Leslie Vryenhoek

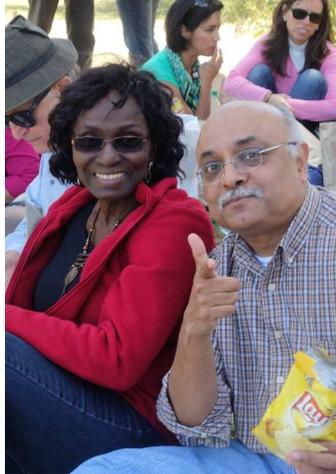




Photo by Marty

Marty,

There are so many fun memories from over the years! I remember singing with you on a bus in Indonesia, en route to visit women who made Batik cloth in their village. Remember the time we paraded down a street in Uruguay in Halloween costumes? I also remember the decadent chocolate desserts we shared at Secretariat holiday meals in Cambridge! Thank you for all the work and dedication you've invested into making lives better for so many women throughout the world!

Pat



Sometimes all that is needed to effect change is to start, to take a small action. The ripple effects of that change could maybe not be perceived fully by the person that took that first step. Yet, for us that are observing, the magnitude of those ripple effects is not just visible, it is inspiring. Like the rhythm of a drum, they are inciting all of us to continue that path. Thank you so much Marty for letting us participate in this dream.

Olga



Marty @ 70, 2014

Some folk think that birthdays are icky.
At 70 the message gets tricky.
Do we give her a roast? Or propose a toast?
To do both, I get limericky.

Of India, we know she's quite fond.
BRAC called, and she did respond.
Anywhere she may roam
She feels quite at home.
A true citoyenne du monde.

Women workers – she's a great propounder.
Her data couldn't be sounder.
To achieve good results
She networked a cult
By becoming a WIEGO founder.

She's benevolent – not a dictator.
Though we know that sooner or later
She may aspire
To actually retire,
She's always Our Coordinator!

How to characterize Marty Chen?
Both serious and comedienne.
Those that she's touched
Love her so much.
She's The Greatest! Amen! Amen!!

Biff Steel Marty's 70th Birthday
February 9, 2014



Bellagio 2017



Mother's day cartoon and message, May 2014

Dear WIEGO Mothers...

Hope you all had a good time with your children - and were surrounded by love and admiration, which you deserve so much. In a different vein, thought you would enjoy the joke cartoon sent by a friend.

*With love and appreciation for all you do for WIEGO while also honoring and juggling your responsibilities to your family -
Marty*

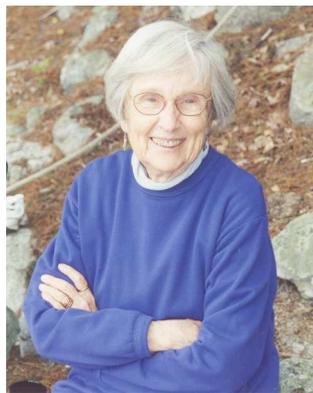


September 2014

Dear All - Thought this photo would brighten your day - as it did mine.

Antonia turned 4 months last week - but looks so much older. And has a smile to die for!!! Her mother looks pretty happy too!!!

Cheers - Marty



A Tribute to Mothers



Photos by Marty



Tala Game Reserve, SA 2014



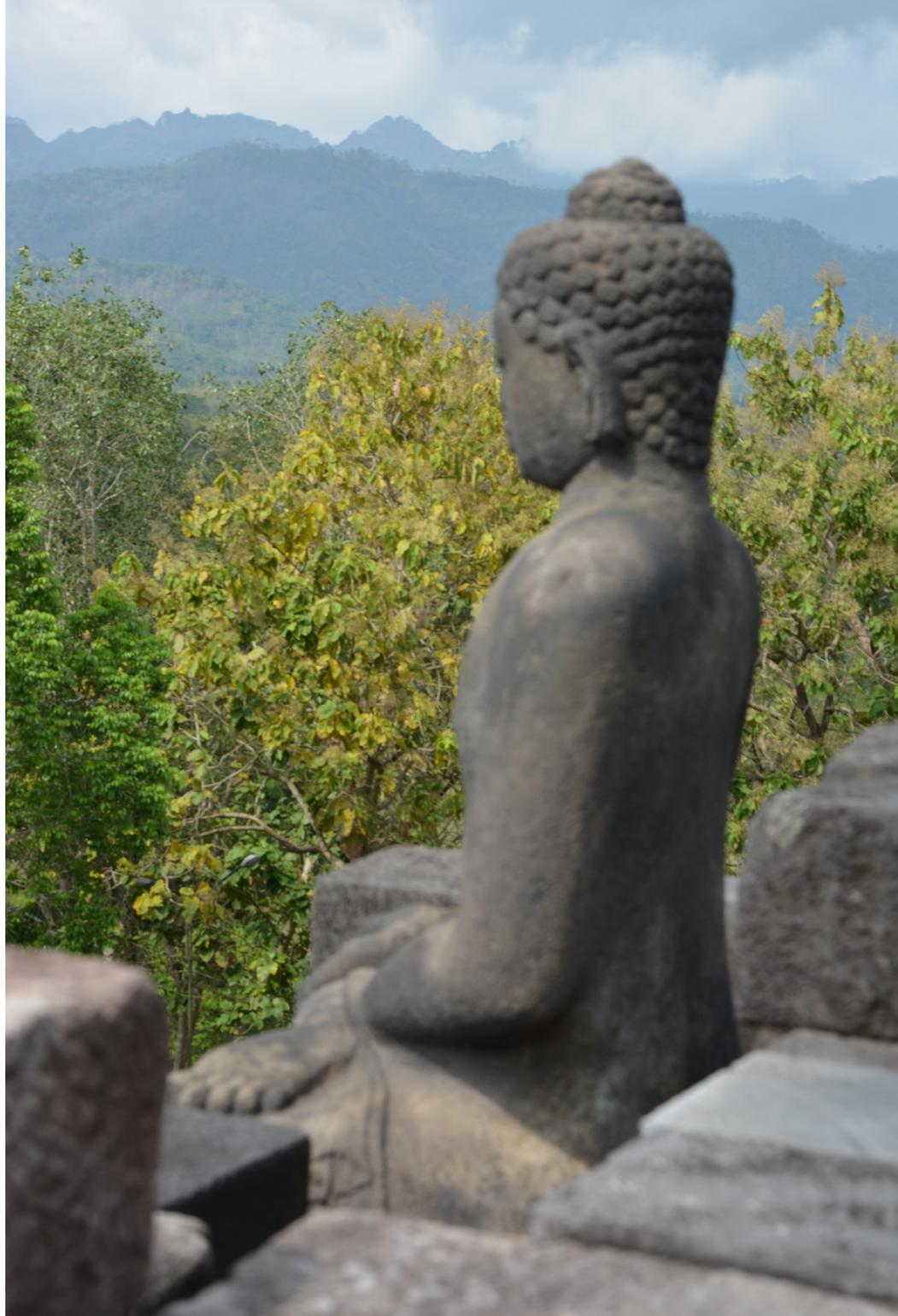
SDI, Durban 2014



IC ALM, Bogota 2014

**General Assembly,
Indonesia 2014**

Photo by Marty





Dear Marty:
It's been a journey together of nearly a quarter
of a century. Wishing another quarter century of
togetherness taking the informal economy
forward!
Lots of love, Jeemol





Sólo puedo decir que tuve un flechazo con Marty desde el primer día que la ví en Jogja y siento una profunda admiración por ella. Miguel





WIEGO
Estas mujeres contribuyen a la economía.

WIEGO
Women in Informal Employment
Globalization and Organization



Delhi, 2015



Dear Marty,
Thank you so much for all!
For having such a warm heart.
For letting us learn from you, as a person and
as a professional.
For working so hard to make WIEGO a reality
and create always a Team Spirit among us.
For sharing your vision and having the courage
to improve the living standards of workers in the
informal economy.
With Love and admiration,
Laura Morillo





Rugby, 2015



Thailand, 2015

Dear Marty,

It has been such a pleasure to work with you - a true pioneer activist-academic in the study of informal work and the informal economy. Over the years, I've been inspired by the way you've been able to shift people's thinking across disciplines: from economists to legal professionals to activists to worker organizers and representatives. My favourite memory of you is when I was relatively new to WIEGO and traveled to one of the Inclusive Cities Annual Learning Meetings in Chiang Rai, Thailand to assist with interpretation. We were having a discussion at the meeting about organizing and a male colleague expressed that WIEGO should be pushing informal workers to only organize into trade unions. At this point, you gave him a dressing down in - to my surprise - Gujarati (I think) about the validity and importance of organizing workers into various forms of democratic MBOs. I couldn't provide a translation to the Spanish-speaking participants but we got the gist when the SEWA and HomeNet sisters applauded your speech! Thank you for giving us (the WIEGO Team) and the millions of informal workers in the movement so many years of hard work and dedication as WIEGO's International Coordinator. I'm sure this is not the end of your activism and leadership on the informal economy and hope that "retirement" will allow you to explore new horizons.

Best wishes and lots of love,
Kendra

Connecticut College, May 2015

Marty receives The College Medal from her alma mater, Connecticut College.



Geneva, 2015



Team Retreat, Manchester 2015



I frequently tell my friends that my CEO actually thanks me for my work on a regular basis....this is a whole new experience for me and a very refreshing one!
It is a great pleasure working with you Marty. Your charisma and your passion affects everyone you come into contact with, not just the Team at WIEGO.
Jacqui



Hi Marty
What a great time I am having working with the wonderful WIEGO people, you should be very proud of what you have achieved and its such an experience and lots to take in what you have done and I think you are Super Women.
Wishing you the best Team Retreat ever as our International Coordinator in Cape Cod.
Love and best wishes for the future,
Shirley





Querida Marty, as I finish collecting this photo journal for you, I feel truly humbled and honoured that I have witnessed your power in transforming lives and in making our world a better place!

I also feel blessed for your invitation to join the WIEGO family in 2008 as it changed my life and allowed me to follow a professional dream with much love, respect and commitment to our work.

For your leadership, your trust and unconditional support, I am forever grateful.

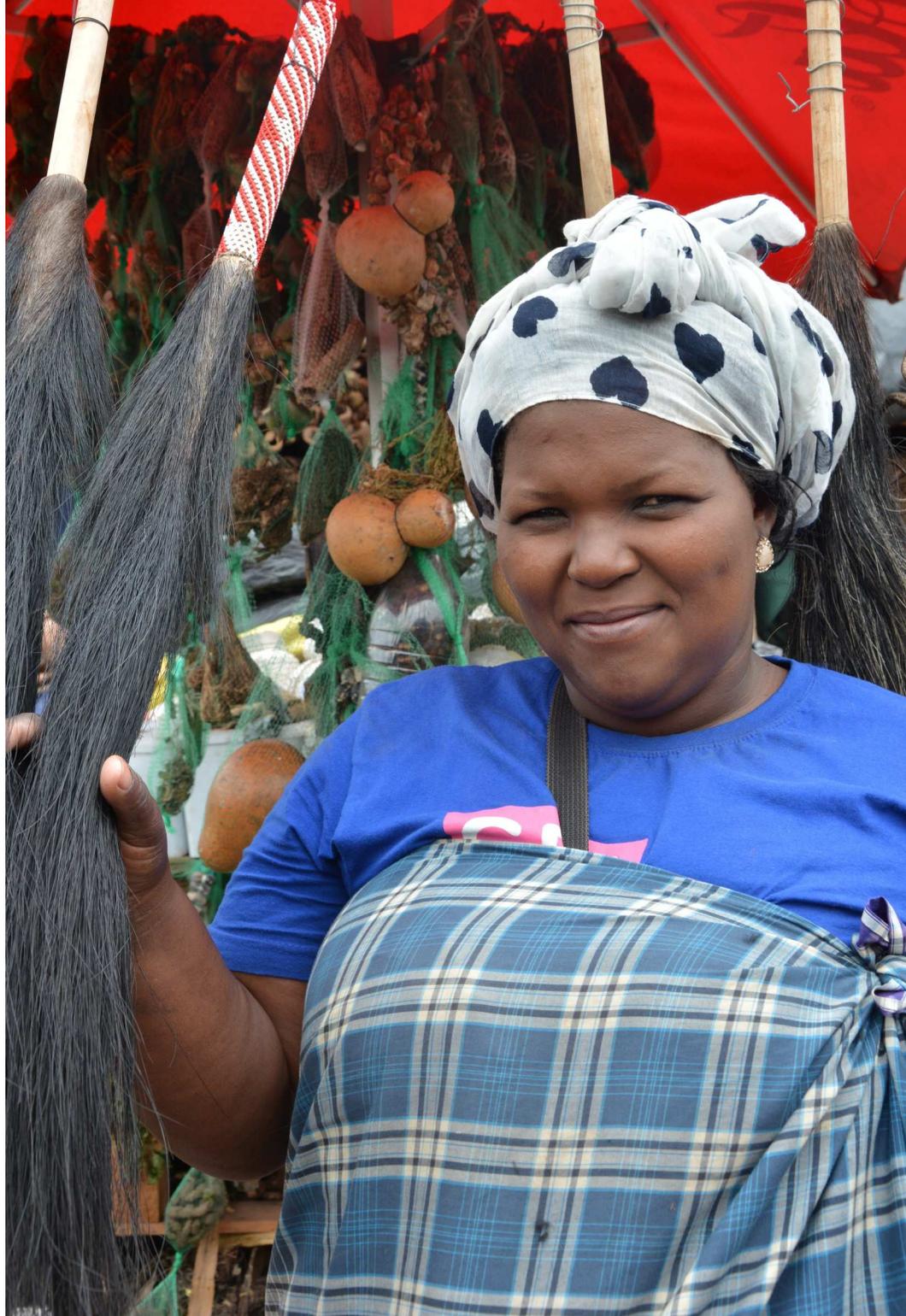
In solidarity *y con mucho cariño*,
Sofia





2016

Photo by Marty





New York City, 2016

Dear Marty,
The past year and a half that I have been at WIEGO I have had some of the best times and richest learning experiences of my life. I can't thank you enough for welcoming me in to the WIEGO family, and for allowing me to spend much of my first year supporting the UN HLP process. I learned SO much (and had so much fun) accompanying you and Renana to the events and strategizing with you about the process. It was an experience that I will never forget and I am so grateful to you for bringing me in to it and involving me in such an inclusive way. I have also loved working together at the Secretariat, going to Henrietta's and Harvest for meetings and helping out with classes. It has been a joy to work with and learn from you, and during my time at WIEGO you have truly made me feel like family.

With love and endless gratitude, Jenna



Costa Rica, 2016



India, 2016

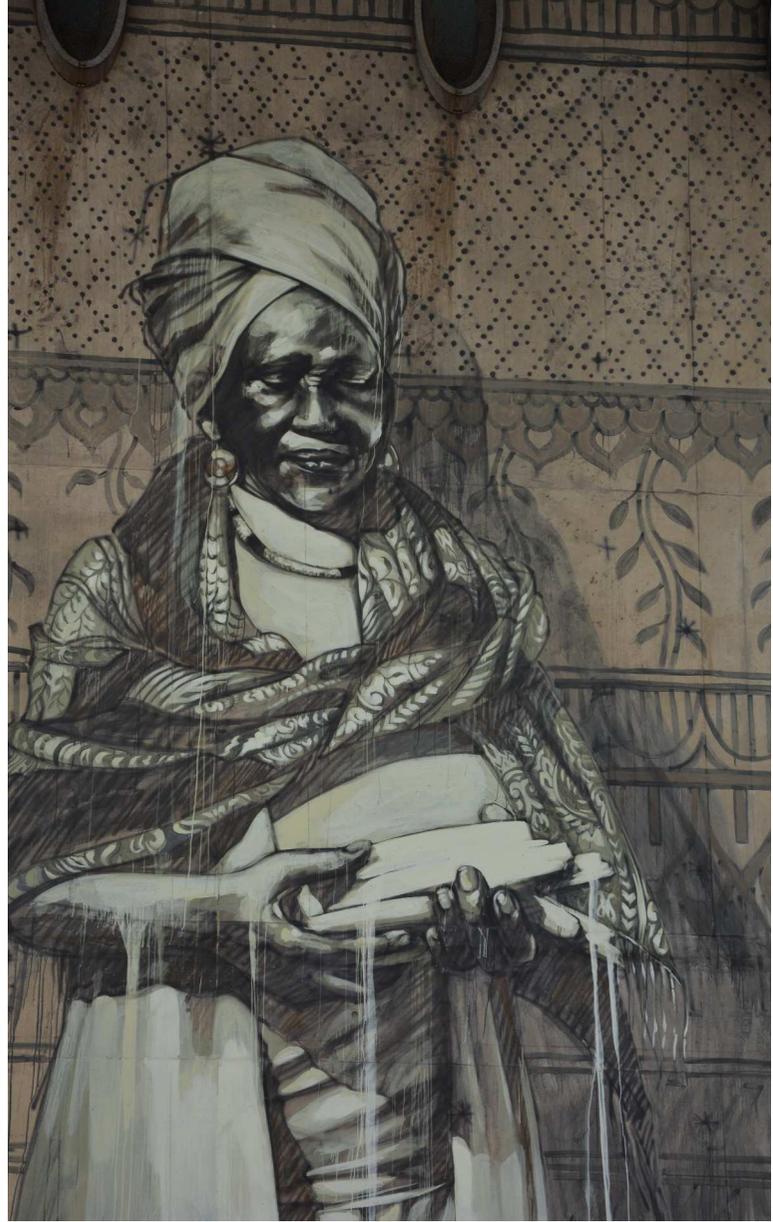


Buenos Aires, Argentina



Dear Marty, thank you for your tireless work to improve so many people lives. With admiration. Pilar

Quito, Ecuador



Photos by Marty

Team Retreat, Durban 2016



Marty Chen! My term of endearment for Marty...what a woman.
Vanessa

Dearest Marty,
Thank you for being such an amazing example of a leader. Thank you for your vision, sense of social justice and generosity. While I'm still new to WIEGO, I will fondly remember your emails to the team and how they served to connect all of us in so many different parts of the world. They have always made me feel like part of the special family that WIEGO is. I hope the transition to retirement brings you all the joy you truly deserve.
Abraços com carinho e admiração, Ana Carolina



Dear Marty,
I want to thank you for letting me be part of this wonderful project and team. To work with the working poor has been shaping me since the beginning. I hope to be helpful to transform mindsets and improve livelihoods with my work. Your example is always inspiring to continue in that pathway. Feel happy that you are transforming the world in a better one. We are going to miss you!
Tania



Dear Marty,
You are such an inspiration to me. Thank you so much being so diligent and dedicated to the cause of informal workers. You have done so much towards improving their livelihoods, and your legacy all around the world will continue. Wishing you peace, joy, and much-needed rest as you begin your walk into the sunset!!!

May God bless you and keep you!
Love Pamhi





Marty, whom I affectionately call Marty-ben, has had a strong influence on my life. I admired her almost as soon as I met her, much before I joined WIEGO – she has such a warm and scintillating personality.

Over the years, I have learnt so much from her— not just professionally but also at a personal level. I have observed her lead the WIEGO tribe with compassion and love, finding talent in each one of us, and nurturing us with care. She has contributed to building strong bonds, not just with her, but amongst us all, creating a robust and loving WIEGO family where professional partnerships walk hand in hand with personal trust and friendship.

On a personal front, when I did not work with WIEGO for a year due to illness in the family, Marty's support and love was invaluable. She kept in touch with me, remembering me not just on Christmas and New Year but wrote to me on all Indian festivals and other special occasions and found time to meet with me whenever she was in Delhi. When my mother passed away, and I found it difficult to concentrate alone in my home office in Delhi, she sensed it, long-distance, to my utter astonishment, much before I could even articulate it and immediately offered me a task which would lift my spirits.

I have seen her extend this compassion and deep empathy to so many others. Once when we were visiting Ahmedabad, a bedraggled rickshaw puller, ran towards us grinning from ear to ear. Marty hugged him and introduced me to him - he was her friend of thirty years, who used to take her around when she visited Ahmedabad in the early years. She tries to meet him on her every visit to the city, and this time too she asked about all members of his family with genuine concern and comradery. The delight and happiness on his face cannot be described in words. Over the years, I have had the pleasure of meeting many of Marty's friends from the working class; witnessed SEWA sisters crowd around her, happily and willingly sharing their life struggles; and there is always a beeline of people - academics, activists, researchers, students, to meet her when she is here in India. Recently when she lost a beloved family member, many many people talked about her to me - they did not know her brother but wanted to reach out to her in her hour of grief.

From Martyben, I have learnt not just how to work professionally, but how to live life - with compassion, care, mutual respect and dignity. Shalini

Late one evening at the 2016 team retreat in Durban I volunteered to join a group of people for a swim *early* the following morning. On the morning in question I woke carrying a sad residue of an experience I had left behind at home, and jumping in the ocean was the last thing my body wanted to do. I started to rationalize (like you do) that it was too early, that those people could not have possibly been serious, that I really didn't have to go. I looked out the window of my hotel room and the very first thing I saw was Marty Chen in a bathing suit with a towel draped around her neck, alone. That was the inspiration I needed to suit up and head out.

The important thing about this story for me is that it illustrates the many-faceted mentorship that Marty offers those lucky enough to work with her. What she has accomplished with WIEGO is nothing short of game-changing - and I am so proud to have played some small part in that. But on a more personal level, Marty is peerless. She inspires by living well, and gracefully, and always heart-first.

There was a small crowd of swimmers by the time I arrived on the scene; Marty would not have been alone for long, but I'm still grateful I rose to the challenge. The memory of that morning has become a sparkling talisman that gets pulled out when I need to remember how to be the best person I can be.

Thanks *always* for that. Pauline



Dear Marty, I am yet a WIEGO baby (2 years and counting!) – but what a rewarding two years it has been. When I attended the 2015 Team Retreat in Manchester, I was barely a month into the job, and must admit that much of the content went right over my jet-lagged head. What I still keenly remember is this: the feeling of being in a room where the mutual love, admiration and appreciation people felt for each other was palpable; and where the legacy of having the courage of one's convictions, over the long haul, was astonishingly evident. Every day that I sit down to do WIEGO work, I am inspired. Thank you for what you have built. Most importantly, thank you showing me what it is possible to build, and to be, in our world.

Love, Rhiana

Dear Marty

It's been a pleasure and a privilege to have worked with you over the last eight years. Your passion, hard work and diligence have made WIEGO what it is today and I'm proud to be a part of the WIEGO family. I know that you'll continue to guide and inspire us and I hope that we can all follow your stellar example.

I also hope that this next chapter allows you to indulge in and enjoy other passions and interests.

With much appreciation and gratitude,
Justina



All the very best Marty – you continue to inspire and motivate. Mike R.







Bellagio 2017





How lucky am I? Best job I've ever had, or can imagine having, and my boss is one of the best friends I've ever had, or can imagine having..!
Love - Mike



Dearest Marty,

Twenty years ago, did you imagine this? Were we a twinkle in your eye, even then?

Such great luck that we met! I want to thank you for these incredible ten years with WIEGO, which really have changed my life. I have learned so much from you in that time, but the two words that come most to mind are "Love" and "Excellence" – which you bring to everything that you do. Without excellence, WIEGO wouldn't have the influence and reputation it does, and informal workers would not have the extent of Voice, Visibility and Validity that they do today. And without the love that you've brought to this Team, there would not be a committed group of people continuing on with WIEGO, determined that we should and will achieve even more in the next 20 years.

Blessings on you, Martyji. I kiss your feet.

xo

Rhonda





Dear Marty

It is one of the great privileges of my life to have worked alongside you and to count you as a mentor, fellow traveller, and friend. Your deeply felt commitment to, and compassion for, poor women workers; your remarkable (audacious even) vision; your ability both to think strategically and to have a detailed grasp of several fields and contexts, combined with your gift of leadership and extraordinary inter-personal skills, make you a rare human being. Perhaps what I value about you most is that you love deeply, and it permeates all you do. What a legacy you leave! May this next season of your life, as you take on a different role in the movement, be deeply fulfilling.

With love, gratitude and admiration, Marlese



Marty Chen: Fundamentally respectful of informal workers; deeply knowledgeable and generous with that knowledge; insatiably curious; self-assured but humble at the same time; graceful, gracious and fun loving. How lucky I am to have had two years of your leadership Marty. Thank you for your mentorship. It will stay with me forever. All the very very best for the next phase of your rich life. With love, Jane







Marty Chen: Intellectual, activist, career, builder, teacher, leader, mentor, and elegance personified.



Since joining WIEGO, I am struck by the generosity and support within the team. Your kind and strong leadership brings this out. Thank you for your continuous encouragement and trust, Marty. I have no doubt that WIEGO will continue to leave its mark on the world thanks to the clear vision with which you all started this organisation. With much love and respect, Rachel

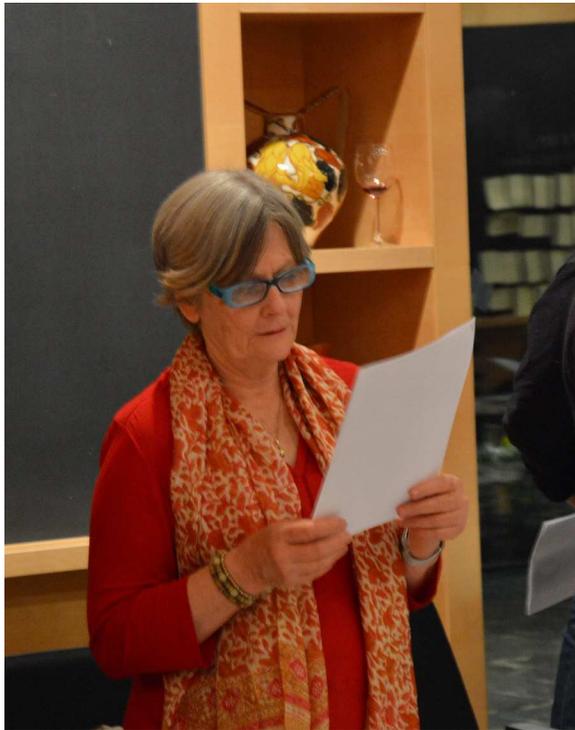


Dear Martyben,

You have impressed me since the very first time we met in conjunction with the ILO discussions on Home based workers back in 1995-96. It was such an incredible turn of power relations and victory for the most vulnerable of workers when your study stamped Harvard University was distributed during the second discussion of the future convention! Your strong commitment combined with academic sharpness and innovative thinking have continued to strengthen women workers all over the world in their struggle for basic rights, dignity and confidence in their own capacity to organize for change. One of your many qualities is that you are such a careful listener and observer and can translate academic language and concepts so it becomes understandable for workers and the language and needs of workers' into academic language.

On behalf of the IUF, I wish to thank you for the huge role that you and WIEGO have played in supporting home based workers' and domestic workers' (among others) VVV. We also hope that this new period of your life will allow you to focus on those things that are close to your heart and commitment. Your wisdom and mentorship will be needed for as long as possible.

Love, Barbro





Marty has not only shaped the operational part of WIEGO but also the WIEGO culture. One of the reasons why we are all so over-worked is that we are passionate about our work and that we like to work together with our colleagues in WIEGO. Marty was always clear that everybody's work is important and contributing to WIEGO's vision and success, no matter if someone is a member of a programme team or support team. She has the rare ability to provide space and autonomy for programmes and individuals by on the other hand keeping all the threads together. She always made sure that we keep our WIEGO focus, which has been in particular important during the phase of growth within WIEGO. On the other hand, she was open for experiments. I remember that she encouraged me to do a local pilot project in my home town - which in the end did not bring the expected results. She was very patient and in the end, it was me who decided that it was not worthwhile to continue the work. There is no better way of learning! WIEGO will step into a new phase now, but we have a strong fundament on which we can build. We also know that we can still rely on Marty's expertise and experience. So, I am not saying "good-bye" or "fare-well", I am saying "Auf Wiedersehen" - which means we will see each other again.

With great respect and lots of love, Karin





Marty is a remarkable person. I have known her really well for nearly four decades and over those decades she has revealed so many different personas and so many different talents. She is an activist, a researcher, a writer, a teacher, a leader, a motivator, a public speaker, a matriarch, a singer., and many more things that I am sure I still do not know about. She seems to evolve everyday, getting better and better at what she does. She has enriched many people's lives, including mine, with her ebullient personality, her generous heart and her incisive mind. I really love her and look forward to many, many more years of working together. Renana Jhabvala





Dear Marty:

It's a long way from Mussoorie to Missouri, but it turns out there is a road in between those two places. It's a road where streetside vendors offer carrots, potatoes and ginger to passersby; where kids and dogs play, and where women sit on flattened cardboard mats in small groups chatting while they embroider. A radio brings news of rising prices, but the people there already knew, of course. Trucks hurtle by carrying important people to important meetings; the people go on working. I'm so glad I met you on that road.

With enduring love and admiration, Sally



Threats to workers

Work = Pink

Opportunities for workers

Threats

