

Informal Economy Workers' Education in Zambia

Report of Project Seminar
17-20 October 2001
Andrew's Motel, Lusaka, Zambia

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The **Zambia Congress of Trade Unions**, and in particular the General Secretary and President, for their support and encouragement throughout the project;

The **WEAZ Branch Organisers and members** who, through organising the local consultation process with informal economy workers' associations, paved the way for an exceptionally successful seminar;

Colin Barnes, WEA Vice-President, for acting as seminar rapporteur;

John Zulu and **Annette Chola**, ZCTU staff members, for their invaluable support in ensuring the smooth running of the seminar.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between 17 and-20 October 2001, the Workers Education Association of Zambia (WEAZ), in partnership with Workers Education Association England and Scotland, held the seminar on the informal economy in Lusaka, Zambia.

The seminar was one of the key project activities under the informal economy educational project funded by the British Community Fund (formerly the National Lottery Charities Board).

Seminar objectives

- To discuss, clarify and adopt the report arising from the consultative process between and among informal economy workers' associations, the Workers' Education Association of Zambia and the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions;
- To share experiences and information with informal economy unions such as SEWU1 and SEWA;²
- To share experiences and information with Trade Unions organising in the informal economy, such as the Ghanaian Trade Union Congress and Uganda Public Employees Union;
- To build international collaboration;
- To formulate recommendations to the IFWEA-African region on the Organising of informal economy workers;
- To formulate recommendations to ILO on the ongoing discussion on organising the informal economy, and in particular on the forthcoming ILO conference on the informal economy in 2002.

Official opening

The official opening ceremony was marked by three speakers, namely WEA England & Scotland Vice President, Colin Barnes and Dan Gallin from Global Labour Institute, representing Women in Informal Employment Globalising and Organising (WIEGO) and Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) Secretary-General, Sylvester Tembo.

On behalf of WEA-England and Scotland, Colin Barnes informed the seminar of the WEA's commitment to the objectives of the seminar and the desire to see that the seminar is not only successful but that in the longer term the seminar outcomes are implemented to the mutual benefit of both the Workers' Education Associations and informal economy associations. Dan Gallin, who is also IFWEA President, gave a brief outline of the process of organising the informal economy and that seminar outcomes should provide an input into that process.

¹ Self-Employed Women's Union (South Africa).

² Self-Employed Women's Association (India).

ZCTU Secretary-General Sylvester Tembo equally emphasised the importance of organising the informal economy. In Zambia, for example, the informal economy has been growing rapidly due in part to structural adjustment programmes and privatisation programmes.

Currently the informal economy is employing about 80 per cent of Zambia's 4.5 million labour force.

He urged the seminar participants to come up with practical recommendation to trade unions on organising the informal economy.

Seminar outcomes

The seminar discussed the consultative report detailing the educational needs of informal economy workers and the needs of their organisations.

After lengthy discussion and clarification the seminar noted key areas in need of workers education provision.

To promote the economic livelihood of informal economy workers:

Vocational skills specific to certain trades (for example, tailors)

Marketing

Record-keeping

Business start-up

Micro-business management

Accountancy

1. Procurement of goods and services

To strengthen the organisation of informal economy workers :

Leadership training and confidence building

Organisational and financial management

Negotiation, representation and advocacy skills

Conflict resolution

Start-up and management of micro-credit schemes

Para-legal skills, especially legal rights for workers

Co-operation and alliance building with other informal employment workers' organisations and trade unions.

Education programmes for ZCTU affiliates

1. Promotion of greater understanding of problems faced by informal economy workers, developing appropriate local trade unions recruitment strategies and strategic alliances with associations currently outside the union movement.

Learning from informal economy unions:

The seminar received an intervention from South Africa's Self-Employed Women's Union (SEWU). SEWU is an informal economy union which has organised women only. Most of these women are street vendors.

SEWU is recognised as Union under the South African labour legislation, but is not affiliated to any Labour confederation including Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

Since inception, the Union has been implementing training programmes in leadership and literacy. Many of the present leaders were illiterate, but after going through the literacy training, they were able to read and write, and this given them confidence to assume leadership positions in the organisation.

The seminar did not have an intervention from Self Employed Women Association (SEWA) as the seminar participant failed to attend due to flight problems.

Trade Union experience in organising the informal economy

Francis Owusu, Head of the Informal Economy Desk at the TUC Ghana, shared the TUC experience in organising the informal economy workers.

The Ghanaian labour force is estimated at 11 million, of which 1.2 million are in formal employment. This is why the TUC has set up the Informal Economy Desk to urgently organise and unionise the informal economy workers.

International Collaboration

The seminar reflected on the global reality of the informal economy and identified the need for building strong alliances between and among the informal economy workers' associations, NGOs, trade unions, workers' education associations, academics, etc.

Even more importantly, the seminar recognised the ongoing StreetNet project as a positive step in building the alliance for informal economy workers' associations in different parts of the world.

Recommendations to IFWEA

The seminar recognised the important role of IFWEA Africa Region of workers' education provision in organising the informal economy; thus, the seminar recommended that:

2. IFWEA Africa Region should facilitate capacity-building programmes for the African affiliates to initiate and deliver educational programmes for informal economy workers and their organisations.

3. Assist in mobilising resources for the affiliates with limited capacity so as to enable the affiliates deliver workers education programmes for the informal economy.

Recommendations to ILO

The seminar noted and recognised the forthcoming ILO conference on the informal economy in 2002.

This being the first high level discussions by ILO on the informal economy, the seminar recommended the following:

4. Government should recognise the informal economy in their statutes;
5. Organisational structures should be created within government frameworks to represent issues of informal economy at local and central government levels;
6. All governments should ratify all conventions relevant to the informal economy and child labour;
7. The Workers' Group at ILO should include significant representation from workers in the informal economy;
8. Associations of workers in the informal economy should be integrated into the labour movement and thereby in the structures of the ILO;
9. The ILO should undertake education programmes for workers in the informal economy;
10. The ILO should co-operate with the WIEGO statistics programme in assisting all governments to produce proper statistics on the informal economy in their countries, and this should be a requirement of all governments, and
11. There should be social security for workers in the informal economy in all countries.

Achievements

In the light of the seminar's objectives, the seminar was a significant achievement. In addition, for the very first time, informal economy associations managed to meet, and discuss the future of their organisations with a high degree of mutual respect and seriousness. When this is viewed against the background of rivalry that exists between and among the associations, this was an achievement.

In fact, as result of their interaction, the informal economy associations held informal discussion to begin exploring possibilities for a National Alliance.

The seminar managed to offer an opportunity for the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions and informal economy associations to identify the need to work closely together, and where possible, to transform the associations into unions and become part of the trade union structures.

In the area of workers' education provision, the adoption of the consultative report by the informal economy association gave the Workers' Education Association of Zambia (WEAZ) a clear mandate and the priority areas which need urgent attention in strengthening livelihoods of informal economy workers and their organisations.

However, the seminar failed in some respects, particularly in not being able to learn from the considerable experience of the Self-Employed Women's Association of India, which is an informal economy union affiliated to the Indian Labour Congress. Its presence at the seminar would have added the Asian perspective of organising the informal economy.

The seminar equally failed to learn from HomeNet's experience of organising home based workers. The participant did not attend as she fell sick shortly before her departure, and it was difficult to have a replacement.

In the case of ASSOTSI, the Mozambique-based informal economy association, the problem was poor translation which made the ASSOTSI intervention difficult to understand.

Lessons for WEAZ

The main lessons for the (WEAZ) is related to the development of a workers' education curriculum. The seminar confirmed the need for education designed to promote and defend informal economy workers' rights.

There is a need to have methodology which is less intimidating, such as the community-based approach. This approach is actually more effective and appropriate with informal economy associations which have a high number of women members.

Official Closing remarks

Mr Fackson Shamenda, Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) President and ICFTU President, officially closed the seminar.

In his address he appealed to the international trade union movement and global civil society to address the informal economy with the sense of seriousness and urgency the matter deserves.

He said that there is need for unity across all ideological, political and personality divide to ensure that workers in informal economy are adequately represented.

Workers' Education in the Informal Economy Seminar, Lusaka, 17-20 October 2001

Report of Sessions

There were a number of keynote speeches followed by question and answer sessions.

What follow are summaries of the speeches and key points from the questions.

Thandiwe Xulu – Self-Employed Women's Union (SEWU) – South Africa

SEWU was been established in Durban in 1994 and expanded subsequently to the rest of South Africa. It has 2,500 paid-up members, and there are 10,000 lapsed members.

SEWU's aims are to:

- develop unity between women who work outside the formal economy
- build an alliance with workers in the formal economy
- achieve greater social justice for women.

It is establishing a strong leadership which will enable the organisation to:

- lobby on behalf of its members
- set up bargaining structures for its members
- develop a voice for women.

SEWU has set up a number of projects and campaigns, including:

- gaining access to bank accounts, banking services and credit facilities for its members
- literacy
- learning English
- dressmaking

SEWU is a successful and growing organisation.

Questions

Is SEWU a registered union?

Yes, it is not yet affiliated to the Federation of Trades Unions because of technical, constitutional problems. Once these have been solved it will affiliate. It does cooperate with other trade unions.

How does SEWU carry out its educational work?

SEWU now has a full-time educator, and it carries out education in a number of ways. The most popular and useful is the workshop approach. Some of the most popular subject areas are negotiating, conflict resolution and literacy.

One of the big problems many organisations face is the collection of dues: does the direct debit system help?

This system is of considerable help to both the organisation and its member. The organisation can count on a regular income, and women do not have to carry large amounts of cash around. It was not easy to get this facility, as most members were below the deposit limit the banks had set to establish a bank account. It took a long campaign to enable its members to get into the banking system. This may not be relevant in other countries.

Is there any link between the SEWU and the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India?

Yes: there is a very positive relationship, and an exchange visit has been arranged.

What is the challenge to men?

There is more of a challenge to women to develop strong leadership. Husbands and partners need to help.

The achievements of SEWU are impressive – what have been the problems and how were they resolved?

The main problem has been conflicts in the organisation. These arose because of organisational weakness and in-fighting. Conflict resolution was first on the educational agenda, and the workshops kept people working together, stopped the split and built leadership.

What other workshops have been organised?

As well as the ones already mentioned, SEWU, through the work of the full-time educator, has organised workshops on:

- legal rights
- skills training
- access to credit
- how to manage a bank account

SEWU also works with other educational institutes such as the Labour College in Durban. The work in Johannesburg is not as well developed.

How long are courses in English?

That depends on a number of factors, but SEWU emphasises the point that English is not necessary to be a good leader. English is needed when members travel abroad – Thandiwe herself learned English through SEWU.

SEWU exists to help people to clear obstacles and, while different approaches are used, the concentration is on empowering women.

Why is a single-sex organisation needed?

The problem is that mixed-sex organisations elect men while women-only organisations develop leadership amongst women. Programmes of women's empowerment can be established within mixed-sex organisations, and these encourage confidence in women.

In the WEAZ it has been found necessary to subsidise courses and ask for just a small amount of money from students. This enables people to join classes and workshops. What is the experience of SEWU?

The experience in SEWU is similar, and we have a system where either SEWU pays 80 per cent and members 20 per cent, or each pays 50 per cent.

Does SEWU work with local authorities?

Yes, it is supported by a growing number of local authorities.

Could the access to credit facilities issue be expanded on, as the experience in Zambia is that, even when you have an account, credit facilities are impossible because of excessive rates of interest.

The SEWU experience is that it is necessary to negotiate with the banks. The kind of things that SEWU had to negotiate/campaign about include:

- lowering opening balances
- not needing a pay slip from the employer
- stopping the practice by which men must sign for women

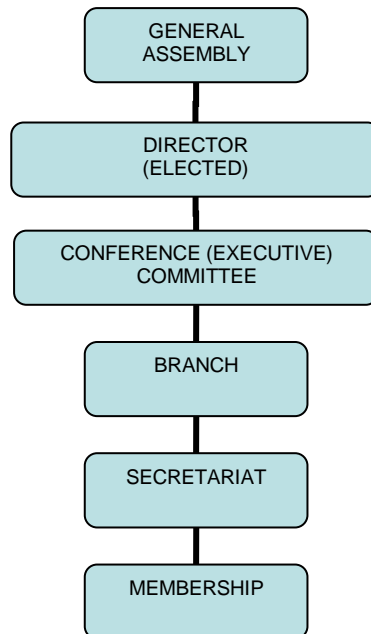
This involved building an alliance of many organisations, but it worked.

Ramon Marrengula – ASSOTSI – Mozambique

ASSOTSI is an association of operators and workers in the informal sector. It was founded through a seminar in Maputo in November 1998 organised by the Mozambique Federation of Workers. ASSOTSI is affiliated to the Federation. A Commission prepared the groundwork for the launch conference in 1999.

Twenty-six Markets are represented, with over 20,000 people eligible to join: 13,066 women and 7,922 men. There are 2,642 members who subscribe and a large number who do not pay a monthly fee.

The structure of ASSOTSI is:



A reorganisation of the structure will emphasise the branch, and the Second Congress will take place next year.

ASSOTSI's main activities are:

- lobbying government to build covered markets

- building partnerships with national and international organisations
- improving organisational skills, financial management, leadership skills and conflict resolution.

The Association needs to respond to very complex problems in Mozambique. It needs help to build international links.

Questions

What is the difference between operators and workers?

Operators are self-employed traders, while workers either work by themselves or are employed by operators.

Does the Association receive help from the government?

No, and the Association polices the markets through security guards who are members. The operators make a contribution to the Branch. The Branch pays the security guards and sends dues to ASSOTSI. It has adopted this system because ASSOTSI defends all operators and workers in markets.

What are the specific achievements of ASSOTSI?

- It represents all market workers
- It has built toilets in markets
- It is forcing the government to do something about the situation in marketplaces.

What strategies does ASSOTSI have to get people to join?

- Defending operators and workers in markets
- Helping individuals with credit by negotiating with banks
- Becoming the first stop for people with problems and helping them to solve them
- Helping to release people from prison

How do you relate to the government?

ASSOTSI meets government representatives at a local level. The government is becoming aware that many workers who lose their jobs end up in the informal sector.

Do you aim to become a trade union?

Yes.

How many women are in membership?

About 70 per cent are women.

The informal economy, particularly street vendors, is growing everywhere. What is ASSOTSI doing to respond to this?

There are many empty markets but street vendors cannot use them without government support. ASSOTSI meets government representatives to discuss issues and try to get action.

In some areas the markets are full, which gives rise to other problems.

How long do people join up for?

Membership is permanent – the problem is collecting membership fees.

How many women are on the Executive Committee?

There are 30 people: 20 women and 10 men.

Where are you organised?

Only in Maputo at present: all of our 20,988 members are there. We are trying to expand into other provinces.

Francis Owusu – Trades Union Congress (Ghana) – Informal Economy Desk

Ghana TUC was established in 1945 and has 17 national unions in membership. The TUC uses the ILO definition of economic activities to define spheres of work (*have we got it anywhere???*).

The key issues facing the TUC are:

- the informal economy is the way in to many workers
- the informal economy is a massive part of the economy (in urban areas, 65 per cent of the total economy is organised informally, while in rural areas their figure rises to 85 per cent)
- even those in the formal economy supplement their income from informal sources
- the trades unions needed to change their constitutions and structures to accommodate the informal economy
- the link with the WEA is a strong organising point
- Ghana TUC sees that it must bring all workers into organisations

The informal sector covers all parts of the economy, including:

- food producing
- food processing
- carpenters/woodworkers
- undertakers
- domestic workers
- charcoal burners
- sex workers
- boat menders

And many more in all aspects of manufacturing and services. The most organised union is in public service and includes the Public Commercial Union, Public Service Workers and Local Government Workers, and they are becoming open to workers from the informal sector.

The role of Ghana TUC is:

- to coordinate activities
- to encourage people to join unions.

The government is encouraging the informal sector to play a positive role in the economy and is therefore giving some assistance “to promote and organise micro- and small-scale activities”.

The unions are organising in the informal sector because they are losing membership from the formal sector and will vanish unless they organise informal sector workers. One big problem unions and the TUC face is that there are so many organisations, which raises the question of who do we talk to? There is a great need to network nationally and internationally.

Questions

How can we work with sex workers?

It is difficult because the work they do is not legal in Ghana but, like it or not, they are a fixture in the informal economy and we can't abandon them. Working with them has real problems, but we need to find ways to do it.

How easy was it to get unions to change their constitutions?

It was not easy because people defend their constitutions. They were persuaded mainly by the argument that if they did not take on the informal sector their membership would fall. It is very difficult.

How do you collect dues and recover loans?

You need a good organisation and strong leadership. People need to be directed to the institutions and shown what to do – this is the role of education.

How do you identify members from sex workers and how do you ensure that the unions' objectives are achieved?

Everyone know where sex workers are, and some are organised. They contact us in order to build the capacity of their cadre. We also find and network organisations that help sex workers.

How can we ensure that informal workers' organisations link positively with the TUC?

You need to look at their constitution as well as your own. Informal economy workers must be treated in the same way as other workers.

What are the differences in organising the rural and urban sectors?

Meeting basic needs is very important in rural areas where people are working, to help them to:

- find tools of their trade
- become literate
- manage finance
- reduce soil erosion
- use chemicals safely

and so on. You need to visit and be there to see what is needed.

How do you transform associations into unions?

You need to find structures and models that are suitable. Very importantly, there needs to be the will to implement decisions. There will be opposition in TUCs and trade unions, but there is the need to persuade. If they do not take the lessons from the informal economy on board, trade unions will become irrelevant. It is the actions of capital and business that are creating the informal economy. Don't forget – and don't let trade unions forget – that these people used to be in the formal economy.

Why did the government support the informal economy?

We needed to raise awareness of issues of the informal economy and convince the government that it needed to support the informal economy. We researched and produced a document which recognised and proved the growth in importance and influence of the informal economy.

Think of your membership and the national economy: who are the stakeholders and how do you influence them? You need to consider new trends in the economy and make recommendations.

Wanzusi Robert Matukhu – Uganda Public Employees' Union

The first question we have to ask is why do we have to organise in the informal sector.

Workers have faced restructuring, cutbacks and retrenchment which have all had bad effects. The Public Employees' Union had a membership of 161,000 in 1981; in 2001 that membership is 17,000.

The constitution of the union had to be amended to enable it to organise in the informal sector. One of the tasks was to redefine the term "public employees" as not just being public servants. The key criterion now is "someone giving service to the public".

The union now has 1,800 members in the informal sector, but the potential is 7,000,000 members. The full membership of all unions in Uganda is 190,000.

Organising workers in the informal sector is not easy, mainly because people in the sector organise through small organisations. It is necessary to work with them to enable members and potential members to obtain services and to clarify what problems they face.

The trade unions can be seen as a potential threat by many because they can organise many millions of people. We have started organising in Kampala, and a number of unions are amending their constitutions to allow them to organise in the informal sector.

Questions

What is the role of government and relationship between the trade unions and government?

For some time the unions have not been effective, with the leadership compromising their members. There are changes now because new people are coming into leadership positions.

What are the benefits for members?

There are a number of programmes which have been initiated, and these are aimed at:

- Stopping harassment
- Finding alternative premises
- Establishing legislation friendly to the informal economy
- Raising issues of taxation at both national and local levels.

Does the union represent more than the street vendors?

We organise mainly with street vendors, but we are not restricted only to these. We want to organise domestic workers and those who work in the agricultural sector. We want to remain open to everyone in the informal sector.

Do you have informal sector associations? If you do, what are the legal relationships?

Yes we do, and we work with them – unity is a strength. We have to ask ourselves whether the formal sector can represent informal sector workers. Trade unions are seen as part of the formal sector and there are difficulties, but the experience of unions in such areas as legal rights can be helpful.

How do you change the market levy?

The union saw the imposition of the levy as being against the Income Tax law of 1997, so we campaigned against it through our union structures.

Street traders are harassed by the police – how can a union stop this?

The exact details of any campaign depend on local circumstance and structures. We need to take appropriate actions. We need to challenge in the courts and negotiate with authorities. Any action taken against a member must be on the agenda of, for example, joint consultative councils, which ensures that there is negotiation.

We must defend members.

Sandiso Ndlovu – Ishmael Nedziwe College of Labour Studies, Zimbabwe

Workers' education in Zimbabwe came from the trade unions. In 1987 they piloted workers' education and linked with British food workers to establish the Labour College. Its basic aim is to ensure that workers know their legal rights and be effective. It is an affiliate of IFWEA.

The unions are getting weaker, and there is a need to concentrate on new sectors such as the informal sector. The question is how to modify laws to allow the informal sector to thrive. The College is part of the IFWEA Regional Programme to support the informal sector.

Questions

The question session was started with a quotation from Exodus. Sandiso responded by accepting the principles behind the quotation and said that it was our job to teach people to be their own judges.

What impact does the farmers' trouble have?

The land invasion has meant that the Agricultural Union has gone, and this emphasises both the need to organise differently and the necessity to organise in the informal sector.

Why has the informal sector not been organised?

A legacy of colonialism has been that people expected jobs which no longer exist. The informal sector has grown and we are now trying to empower people. For instance, Zambian traders are harassed when they visit Zimbabwe to buy or trade. It is necessary for traders from Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe to join forces to stop cross-border harassment.

Does your college offer paralegal education?

Yes – at the moment we concentrate on labour law. We now need to examine local authority law. We shall start by looking at the experience of Lusaka, Kitwe etc.

What is the relationship like between the informal sector and the government in Zimbabwe?

There is now a minister responsible for the informal sector. This is very new, and we are still waiting to see how it develops.

We have the beginnings of cross-border arrangements, but at the moment there is very little concern for the welfare of vendors. We need to talk to local politicians in particular.

Do you enrol foreign students?

No: our students are mainly trade union members in Zimbabwe who come on short courses. I am sure that WEA Zambia and the Labour College can work together.

Workers' Education Association of Zambia

Informal Economy Workers' Education in Zambia Project

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17-20 October 2001, Andrew's Motel, Lusaka**

SEMINAR PROGRAMME

**Tuesday
16 October**

Arrival of participants

18.00 Meeting of foreign participants and guests

20.00 Dinner

**Wednesday
17 October**

9.00 **Opening Ceremony**

Speakers from Zambia Congress of Trade Unions, International Federation of Workers' Education Associations (IFWEA), Workers' Educational Association (England & Scotland).

10.00 Introduction to the project and seminar
Introduction of foreign participants and guest agencies

11.00 Break – and opportunity for press interviews

11.30 Introductions of participants

12.00 **Session 1: Workers' education needs in the informal economy**

Presentation of local consultation process and draft consultation report

12.30 Lunch

14.00 **GROUP ACTIVITY I**
Discussion of consultation reports from Mansa, Kitwe, Ndola, Lusaka and Kalalushi

15.00 Break

15.15 Plenary reports from group activity

16.30 Close of day

20.00 Evening Reception

**Thursday 18
October**

09.00 **Session 2: Learning from experiences from other countries**

Panel discussions between representatives of organizations from other countries, discussing education programmes to improve workers' livelihoods, strengthen the organisation of informal economy workers, and build collaboration between associations, trade unions, and NGOs.

Panel 1 (associations and unions representing informal economy workers).

Thandiwe Xulu, Self-Employed Women's Union (South Africa); and
Ramon Marrengula, Informal Sector Association (ASSOSTI),
Mozambique.

10.00 Break

10.15 **Panel 1** (continued)

11.15 Break

11.30 **Panel 2 (Unions organising in the informal economy).**

Wanzusi Matukhu, Uganda Public Employees' Union;
Francis Owusu, Ghana Trades Union Congress.

12.30 Lunch

14.00 GROUP ACTIVITY II
Discussion of ideas and opportunities for workers' education
programmes in Zambia.

15.00 Break

15.15 Plenary reports from group activity

16.30 Close of day.

**Friday 19
October**

09.00 **Panel 3 (Workers education organisations).**

Sandiso Ndlovu, Ismael Nedziwe College of Labour Studies,
Zimbabwe;

Eddie Conway, WEA (England & Scotland);
WEAZ Representatives.

10.00 Break

10.15 **Session 3: Building International Collaboration**

Discussions on current work to build regional and global collaboration between informal economy associations, and between associations, trade unions, NGOs and workers' education organisations.

Presentation from:

Pat Horn, StreetNet (international network of street vendors); followed by discussion

11.15 Break

11.30 Presentations from:

Dan Gallin, Organization and Representation Program of WIEGO (Women in Informal Employment Globalizing & Organizing);

Dave Spooner, Programmes Team, IFWEA, (International Federation of Workers' Education Associations); followed by discussion

12.30 Lunch

14.00 **GROUP ACTIVITY III**

Discussion on the prospects for African regional collaboration for informal economy workers' organisations, trade unions, and workers' education organisations.

15.00 Break

15.15 Plenary reports from group activity.

Recommendations to WEAZ and IFWEA Africa Region for the development of education programmes with workers' organisations in the informal economy.

4.30 Close

**Saturday 20
October** **Report of Conclusions and Recommendations to WEAZ**

Seminar Participants

Colin	Barnes	Workers' Educational Association (England & Scotland)	UK
Gertrude	Bwalya	Railway Workers Union of Zambia NEC member, WEAZ Lusaka Branch	Lusaka
Regina	Chanda	WEAZ Kalulushi Branch	Kalulushi
Paul	Chibu	WEAZ NEC Member	Mansa
Oswald	Chibwe	WEAZ Kalulushi Branch	Kalulushi
Hyginus	Chikoyi	Zambian National Marketeers' Association (ZANAMA), Mansa	Mansa
John	Chilambe	Street Vendors' Association	Ndola
Chisanga	Chilufya	informal traders association	Lusaka
Annette	Chola	Seminar secretary	Lusaka
Malama	Chongo	Street Vendors' Association	Mansa
Mike	Chungu	WEAZ National Co-ordinator	Kitwe
Eddie	Conway	Workers' Educational Association (England & Scotland)	UK
Dan	Gallin	Global Labour Institute	Switzerland
Pat	Horn	Co-ordinator, StreetNet	South Africa
Gwyn	Kabelu	WEAZ Mansa Co-ordinator	Mansa
Cletus	Kabwe	WEAZ Kitwe Co-ordinator	Kitwe
Lameck	Kashiwa	Zambian National Marketeers' Association (ZANAMA) General Secretary	Kitwe
Irene	Katele	WEAZ Hon. Treasurer	Lusaka
Albert	Kawila	WEAZ Mansa Branch	Mansa
Eddie	Lubunda	Kantemba Association	Kalulushi
Brenda	Machila	Transport & Allied Workers' Union, WEAZ Lusaka Branch	Lusaka

Ramon	Marrengula	Informal Sector Association (ASSOTSI)	Mozambique
Wanzusi	Matukhu	Ugandan Public Employees Union	Uganda
Josephine	Mazimba	WEAZ Ndola Branch	Ndola
Iron	Mbewe	Carpenters & Marketeers Association	Lusaka
Margaret	Musole	WEAZ Co-ordinator, Lusaka	Lusaka
Charles	Mumba	WEAZ Vice-President	Ndola
Stephen	Mumbi	WEAZ Kitwe Branch	Kitwe
Mwewa	Muonga	WEAZ Mansa Branch	Mansa
Merebi	Mushiwe	ZCTU Women's Committee	Kitwe
Chris	Mwamba	WEAZ Acting Co-ordinator	Ndola
Francis	Mwansa	National Arts & Crafts Association	Ndola
Rose	Mwanza	WEAZ General Secretary	Ndola
Evans	Mwila	Railway Workers Union of Zambia Kitwe Branch Secretary, WEAZ Kitwe Branch	Kitwe
Sandiso	Ndlovu	Ishael Nedziwe College of Labour Studies	Zimbabwe
John	Ngosa	Zambian National Marketeers' Association (ZANAMA) Kalulushi	Kalulushi
Francis	Owusu	Trades Union Congress	Ghana
Roxie	Phiri	WEAZ President	Lusaka
Charles	Phiri	WEAZ Ndola Branch	Ndola
Victor	Phiri	Informal Traders Association	Lusaka
Fackson	Shamenda	Zambian Congress of Trades Unions President, ICFTU President	Ndola
Moses	Shebele	Special Tailors' Association	Lusaka
Cecilia	Siwale	Centre for Informal Sector Employment Promotion	Kitwe
Ms	Siyuba	Centre for Informal Sector Employment Promotion	Chingola

Dave	Spooner	Workers' Educational Association (England & Scotland)	UK
Bernard	Tembo	Chibolya Carpenters Association	Kitwe
Sylvester	Tembo	Zambian Congress of Trade Unions Secretary-General	Kitwe
Thandiwe	Xulu	Self-Employed Women's Union	South Africa
John	Zulu	Seminar driver	Kitwe

Workers' Education Association of Zambia

Informal Economy Workers' Education in Zambia Project

**Project Seminar:
17-20 October 2001, Andrew's Motel, Lusaka**

**REPORT OF CONSULTATION MEETINGS ON EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF
INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT ORGANISATIONS IN
KITWE, NDOLA, KALULUSHI, MANSA AND LUSAKA, ZAMBIA.**

Introduction

The Informal Employment Workers' Education in Zambia Project was conceived by Workers Education Association of Zambia (WEAZ) in partnership with the Workers Education Association (England & Scotland).

This is in response to major economic changes in Zambia over the recent past resulting in the number of men and women seeking to make a living in the informal economy.

The project was planned as a result of local and national discussions with WEAZ in Kitwe, Ndola, Mansa and Lusaka that revealed the full extent and potential of WEAZ's activity with workers in informal employment.

The WEA and WEAZ agreed that this was an important and distinct area of activity for WEAZ that should be explored and encouraged. It was agreed that there was a need for WEAZ and partner organisation members to be given an opportunity to exchange experience and ideas within a more sustained process of consultation.

The broad aims of the project are to support workers in informal employment through workers education programmes designed to:

1. Strengthen informal Employment workers' organisations in Zambia;
2. Build the confidence and capacity of informal Employment organisations;
3. Expand and strengthen the partnership between the WEAZ and organisation of informal Employment workers;
4. Expand and strengthen workers' education programmes designed to support the organisations and livelihoods of informal Employment workers;
5. Establish co-operation with workers organisations and informal Employment organisations in other developing countries to share experiences and innovative approaches to organisations of the informal Employment.
6. Build and sustain partnership between trade unions, the informal Employment, and local agents of economic development such as local authorities, NGO's and Church organisations in Zambia

7. Establish co-operation or strengthen international collaboration between informal Employment workers' organisation in Zambia and abroad.
8. Provide training opportunities to informal Employment workers wishing to develop workers co-operatives or community based enterprise.

In pursuit of the above aims, the project has specific objectives, including to

- provide support and encouragement to representatives of informal Employment workers, members, organisers and tutors of WEAZ, along with trade union representatives to assess past and current workers' education activities with informal employment workers' organisations, share experience and ideas, and consider possible new initiatives.

The project attempts to achieve this through a sustained process of consultation between WEAZ, informal employment workers' organisation, and other partner organisations at local and national level.

This report aims to provide an outcome of the structured consultative meetings held in Kitwe, Ndola, Kalulushi, Mansa and Lusaka.

The report does not claim to be completely comprehensive due to constraints in finance and time which would not permit the participation of wide range of all informal employment organisations operating in the five districts.

However, it offers an outline of current educational needs that are sufficiently representative of almost all informal employment organisations including those that did not directly participate in the consultative meetings/or workshops.

Mike Chungu
WEAZ National Co-ordinator
October 2001

KITWE

The branch held two meetings with District Committee of Zambia National Marketeers' Association and Chibolya Carpenters Association.

- ZANAMA KITWE DISTRICT:

Initially the association was called Zambia National Traders Association until 1999 when it became Zambia National Marketeers Association (ZANAMA) and was registered as such in the same year.

There are branches in all markets in the district and membership is open to all those trading at markets. Members are required to pay membership fee of k 2500 and an annual subscription fee of k 5000.

- CHIBOLYA CARPENTERS ASSOCIATION:

The association was formed in 1998, and registered in 1999. It comprises 12 members each one with his own business in carpentry/upholstery, blacksmith, fence wire making and shoe making.

The association operates from a plot sold by the Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines at the cost of K11 Million, and the association has already obtained title deeds.

The association has already assumed social responsibility by providing drop-in facility for street kids in the neighbouring community.

INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT ORGANISATION	REQUIRED ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS	REQUIRED INDIVIDUAL BUSINESS SKILLS
ZANAMA KITWE DISTRICT	LEADERSHIP SKILLS, NEGOTIATION SKILLS AND RECORDING KEEPING.	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT, PROCUREMENT SKILLS
CHIBOLYA CARPENTERS ASSOCIATION	LEADERSHIP SKILLS, PREPARATION AND TACTICS IN NEGOTIATIONS, AND BUILDING AND SUSTAINING DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES	BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, ACCOUNTING SKILLS AND PROJECT MANANGEMENT.

LUSAKA

The branch held meetings with four informal employment organisations including

- INFORMAL TRADERS ASSOCIATION:

The Association was formed in 1998 has 80 members mostly men, and they operate in Lusaka. Members are required to pay membership fee of K50 000 per year and K20 000 as monthly subscription. The Association faces problems of no office accommodation and lack of skills.

- LUBURMA SPECIAL TAILORS ASSOCIATION:

The Association was formed in 1997, though registered in 1998; it has 54 members comprising 41 males and 13 females. All are trained tailors; members pay K50 000 as membership fee and K20 000 as monthly subscription. The Association is in need of machinery and accommodation.

- CARPENTERS AND MARKETEERS ASSOCIATION:

Formed in 1994 and has currently 120 fully paid up membership. Upon entry, members pay membership of K50 000 and K20 000 monthly subscription.

- WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS DEVELOPMENT OF ZAMBIA:

The association was established in 1995, and has about 300 members. Membership fee is K50 000 per year. All the Associations agreed to join Trade Unions on condition that there are clear objectives in the constitution to support the Associations; otherwise, they can only form an alliance with Trade Unions.

INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT ORGANISATION	REQUIRED ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS	REQUIRED INDIVIDUAL BUSINESS SKILLS
LUSAKA INFORMAL TRADERS ASSOCIATION	FORMULATION OF PROJECT PROPOSALS, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT	PUBLIC RELATIONS, MARKETING AND RECORDING KEEPING.
LUBARMA SPECIAL TAILORS ASSOCIATION	FORMULATION OF PROJECT PROPOSAL, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING .	DESIGNING AND CUTTING, RECORDING KEEPING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS.
CARPENTERS AND MARKETEERS ASSOCIATION	FORMULATION OF PROJECT PROPOSAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT	MARKETING RECORD KEEPING PUBLIC RELATIONS
WOMEN	CREDIT	START YOUR

ENTREPRENEURSHIP ASSOCIATION OF ZAMBIA	MANAGEMENT MUSHROOM GROWING FOOD PROCESSING BATIK, TYE AND DYE.	BUSINESS IMPROVE YOUR BUSINESS SMALL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
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MANSA

The branch held meetings with four meetings: -

- STREET VENDORS ASSOCIATION OF ZAMBIA

The Association was formed a result of ever growing numbers of street vendors in the district. The total membership is currently 57. The Association has no office and normally hold meetings at the market place.

The Association would like to have training in leadership skills, financial management, and minute taking and record keeping.

The Association is very keen on affiliation to Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU).

- ZAMBIA NATIONAL MARKETEERS ASSOCIATION (ZANAMA) MANSA DISTRICT:

The national office launched the District in May 2001. It has a membership of 250, of which 147 are female membership, the association draws it membership from those trading at markets.

The Association would like to have capacity building programmes in leadership skills, financial management and para-legal skills.

The Association would like to align itself to the trade union movement. But, within informal employment organisations, the association would like to closely co-operate with the Street Vendors Association.

- MANSA DISTRICT BUSINESS ASSOCIATION:

The Association was formed in August 2000 after realising that the Zambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry did not offer effective representation to small scale and medium sized businesses.

The Association has 70 members- 47 are female and 27 are male.

- TRADITIONAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER ASSOCIATION OF ZAMBIA:

The Association started in 1977, in 1978 the District affiliated to the national association. Currently, there are 45 members who are scattered throughout the district. The association has no permanent places except for the market and homes.

- DISTRICT CONSULTATIVE MEETING:

The branch held a consultative meeting with other stakeholders including the City Council and Trade Unions.

The District Planning officer representing the council presented the council's policy frame work- He said that Mansa District Council was using instrument number 115 which empowers councils to employ planning officers to address social and economic situation of the councils.

In order to formulate economic policy framework, he intends to consult all stakeholder, he will also constitute a district development committee that will be all inclusive of all sectors of social, political and economic life of the city.

INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT ORGANISATION	REQUIRED ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS	REQUIRED INDIVIDUAL BUSINESS SKILLS
ZAMBIA NATIONAL MARKETEERS ASSOCIATION (MANSA DISTRICT)	LEADERSHIP, ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND PARA-LEGAL .	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT, NUMERANCY AND ACCOUNTING
MANSA DISTRICT BUSINESS ASSOCIATION	RECORD KEEPING, PARA-LEGAL AND LEADERSHIP	PUBLICITY AND MEDIA BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
STREET VENDORS ASSOCIATION	LEADERSHIP AND ORGANISATIONAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	ENTREPRENEURSHIP , AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
TRADITIONAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS OF ZAMBIA	LEADERSHIP, ORGANISATIONAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND TAKING MINUTES	OFFICE ADMINISTRATION, ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

KALULUSHI

Two meetings were held in the branch This includes Zambia National Marketeers Association (Kalulushi District) and the Kantemba Association (street vendors association).

- KATEMBA ASSOCIATION:

The Association was formed on 14th may and officially registered on 18th October 1999. The Association is open to all Tutemba (street vendors) who are required to pay k5000 as membership fee. The Association has 280 active members.

The Association has acquired a plot for the construction of a new market site so that all vendors trading along the streets can be accommodated, but the local authority is short of money to build the plot.

- ZANAMA-KALULUSHI DISTRICT:

The association was registered in the district February 1999. Membership is open to all people trading at markets in Kalulushi district; and currently the association has 230 members. Members pay k1000 as membership fee and k3000 as monthly contribution.

The association does not enjoy formal recognition from the local authority, thus there are often tensions between the two parties particularly around levy collection and the demand for service such as garbage collection, sanitation, etc.

INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT ORGANISATION	ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS	BUSINESS SKILLS
KATEMBA ASSOCIATION	LEADERSHIP SKILLS, ORGANISATIONAL, AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND RECORDING KEEPING	ACCOUNTING, PROCUREMENT SKILLS AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
ZANAMA-KALULUSHI DISTRICT	CHAIRING MEETINGS, LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND PARA-LEGAL SKILLS.	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT, LITERACY TRAINING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

NDOLA

The branch had four meetings with Zambia National Marketeers Association Ndola District, Street Vendors Association, National Arts and Craft Association Ndola District and a joint workshop for all associations, Ndola City Council (local authority) and ZCTU district officials.

- ZANAMA-NDOLA DISTRICT :

Started operating illegally in 2000, but was registered with the registrar of societies in June 2001.

The district is part of the National Marketeers Association that represents all traders at markets within Ndola.

Besides representing members to the City Council all issues such high levies and poor services including lack of garbage collection, poor sanitation, etc, the Association provides soft loans for the membership who often run into insolvency.

The Association has over 500 members in Ndola.

- STREET VENDORS ASSOCIATION:

The Association was registered in 1998, the aim was represent the street vendors particularly against Council and state police harassment. To raise awareness about the rights of street vendors, etc.

The association has about 600 members who are required to pay membership fee of k5000 per year. This is often paid in instalments.

- NATIONAL ARTS AND CRAFT ASSOCIATION:

The Association was founded in the 70's but due to poor organisation, the association lost it's ground. The District Committee is reviving the association and it is now active in Ndola (with membership of 250), Kitwe and Mufulira.

The Association represents artists and craftsmen dealing in visual art and handicraft. They do not have trading places, sell mainly along the streets. To avoid council and state police harassment, they have identified their association with the ministry of community under cultural department. The department often intervenes on behalf of the association once they are evicted from their trading sites.

- DISTRICT WORKSHOP:

The aim of the workshop was synthesize the organisational meetings, and get the views from other potential stakeholders including the trade union and local authority.

The workshop received an intervention from City Council director for housing and social services who highlighted the council's vision as outlined in the strategic plan 2002-2006.

The plan aims to promote economic revival through incentives such as concessionary rates and tax exemption. The plan does not make any explicit mention on the informal employment, but is entirely opposed to street vending.

The workshop received an input on the strategies of organisation for informal employment workers from the ZCTU district officials. They officials expressed the difficulties they have encountered in trying to mobilise the informal employment workers ranging from apathy and suspicion.

The workshop resolved to hold a consultative forum involving all stakeholders to address the informal economy in Ndola that presently contributes 60-70 % towards the Gross Domestic Product.

The workshop also recommended closer collaboration and cooperation among the informal Employment organisations and that WEAZ should facilitate more educational and training programmes to raise the capacity of informal employment organisations in administration, negotiations, leadership, organisation and financial management.

INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT ORGANISATION	ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS	BUSINESS SKILLS
ZANAMA NDOLA DISTRICT	ORGANISATIONAL AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP SKILL AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION SKILLS.	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
STREET VENDORS ASSOCIATION	LEADERSHIP SKILLS, ORGANISATIONAL AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, MINUTE TAKING AND CHAIRING MEETINGS	PROJECT MANAGEMENT, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND LITERACY TRAINING
NATIONAL ARTS AND CRAFT ASSOCIATION	LEADERSHIP SKILLS ORGANISATIONAL AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT NEGOTIATIONAL SKILLS	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT PROJECT MANAGEMENT

CONCLUSION

The consultative meetings have revealed the key areas in which the association can and should play a strategic role in building effective informal employment workers' organisations. This is mainly in providing education in areas such as leadership, organisational and financial management; others include areas such as preparation and negotiation tactics, dispute resolution and micro credit management.

Educational needs for individual skills be it in business management can be provided by other or in partnership with other partner organisations that are already providing training in start your business, or improve your business, etc.

More specifically, the meetings highlighted the demand for workers' education provision in certain key subjects.

To promote the economic livelihood of informal economy workers:

- Vocational skills specific to certain trades (e.g. tailors)
- Marketing
- Record-Keeping
- Business start-up
- Micro-business management
- Accountancy
- Procurement of goods and services

To strengthen the organisation of informal economy workers:

- Leadership training and confidence-building
- Organisational and financial management
- Negotiation, representation and advocacy skills
- Conflict resolution
- Start-up and management of micro-credit schemes
- Para-legal skills, especially legal rights of workers.
- Co-operation and alliance building with other informal employment workers' organisations and trade unions.

Education programmes for ZCTU affiliates

- Promotion of greater understanding of problems faced by informal economy workers, developing appropriate local trade union recruitment strategies and strategic alliances with associations currently outside the union movement.

INFORMAL ECONOMY WORKERS' EDUCATION IN ZAMBIA

Project Seminar
October 16-20 2001
Andrew's Motel, Lusaka

SEMINAR DISCUSSION PAPERS

Seminar Discussion Papers

To assist participants in their discussions, we have reproduced a small number of papers which provide what we hope will be useful background reading.

- Page 3. ***Workers' Education and the Organisation and Representation of Workers in the Informal Economy*** (2001). A draft of a discussion paper commissioned by the ILO³ task force on the informal economy from the Workers' Educational Association (England & Scotland) and the International Federation of Workers' Education Associations.
- Page 10. ***Informal or Unprotected Work*** (2001). A draft discussion paper produced by the ICFTU⁴ for its first meeting of the ICFTU Task Force on Informal or Unprotected Work, held 25-26 September 2001.
- Page 21. ***Organisation and Representation of Workers in Informal and Unprotected Employment: Twelve Theses*** (2001). Document produced by the Organization and Representation Program of WIEGO⁵.
- Page 24 ***Vision Statement for the International Organization of Workers in Informal Employment (Revised June 2001)***. Organization and Representation Program of WIEGO.

Mike Chungu
National Co-ordinator
Workers' Education Association of Zambia

³ International Labour Organisation. The United Nations tripartite agency that deals with questions of international labour standards.

⁴ International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. The international federation of national trade union centres, such as the Zambia Congress of Trades Unions.

⁵ Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing.

Workers' Education and the Organisation and Representation of Workers in the Informal Economy.

This discussion paper has been drafted by Dave Spooner on behalf of the Workers' Educational Association (England & Scotland) and the International Federation of Workers' Education Associations (IFWEA), in consultation with IFWEA affiliates and others⁶.

Introduction

1. This discussion paper is an initial exploration of the potential of workers' education to contribute the decent work strategy for the informal economy and, in particular, the effective exercise of the right to freedom of association and collective representation.
2. It does not claim to be based on rigorous or systematic research, but rather on anecdotal evidence and experience from IFWEA affiliates and partner organisations. In particular, it draws from the experience of the Workers' Education Association of Zambia (WEAZ), its work with informal economy workers, and its partnership with the Zambian Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU). While WEAZ doesn't necessarily suggest a model of workers' education organisation that could be replicated elsewhere (it was created in the context of Zambia's specific economic, political and trade union development), there are nevertheless some useful observations to be made.
3. A more systematic approach is needed, as outlined within the paper, but that requires a longer-term study and evaluation beyond the remit or time-scale of this paper. First and foremost, it requires a thorough understanding and analysis of the experiences of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and the SEWA Academy: their *members' university*, which could probably claim greater experience in workers' education for informal economy workers than any other organisation in the world.

Workers Education

4. This paper refers to the term *workers' education* throughout. It is used to describe programmes of adult learning associated with, or originated from, trade unions, co-operative movements, political parties associated with organised labour or social movements.
5. Trade union education and training accounts for a substantial proportion of workers' education, but is not the only form of workers' education. It also includes broader traditions of liberal, political, community and women's education.
6. Trade union education and much of the broader workers' education provision associated with it, is primarily an organising tool. Its main objectives are to build local, national and international organisational strength, and to ensure that the representation of members is democratic and effective.
7. Workers' education, in its best traditions, is inherently a process of democratic organisation – in the governance of workers' education institutions, in the design and management of education programmes and in the delivery of the education process.
8. Workers' education places a strong emphasis on education methods and philosophies that promote the active participation of the learner education programmes, including the traditions of study circles and student-centred learning, for example.

⁶ Particular thanks to the Advisory Group to the WIEGO Organisation & Representation Programme, ITGLWF, ITF, WEA Zambia, WEA (AOF) Norway, Taj Workers' Education Institute Society (Pakistan), T&GWU (UK), and the Community Learning Programme of the WEA (England & Scotland),

9. There are different organisational models of organisations responsible for programmes of workers' education, including education departments of national and international trade unions; voluntary associations affiliated to by trade unions; education and training organisations set up by trade unions, or NGOs and foundations associated with the labour movement.
10. Workers' education organisations are independent of employers and governments (as distinct from government training institutions, for example), although many have close relations with state institutions, training agencies, further or higher education institutions, and development agencies. Most receive some level of financial support from governmental agencies – directly or, particularly in the case of many workers' education organisations in developing countries, indirectly through partnership with international trade union or development agencies.
11. Many, but not all, workers' education organisations are affiliated to the International Federation of Workers' Education Associations (IFWEA).

Workers' Education and the Informal Economy

12. The nature of the informal economy, and the status and conditions faced by workers within it, demands an approach to workers' education that is distinct from provision for workers' in formal employment, drawing from different strands of the workers' education tradition (trade union, women's movement, and community development etc).
13. Programme design has to be flexible, informal, and highly responsive to participants needs.
14. Local education activity needs to be located in a wide variety of settings, whether in people's homes, places of work (within markets, in the street, etc), or in local premises provided by supportive organisations (churches, NGO offices, union buildings etc).
15. Educational meetings/sessions need to be held at times that do not interfere with participants' economic activities.
16. In many sectors where the informal economy is prevalent, educational methodology has to cope with the likelihood that basic skill in literacy, numeracy and so on are poor, with a high incidence of educational disadvantage.
17. Participants in education activity to support workers in the informal economy are not necessarily trade union members, although the long-term objective may be to bring them into union membership. Many are members of informal economy workers' associations, that may or may not be allied to the unions movement; that may or may not regard themselves as potential unions; or may or may not be democratic in structure.
18. Many participants will not be organised into any structure whatsoever, but are individually attracted to education programmes to gain practical skills that can enhance their working conditions or livelihoods.
19. Workers' education provision for workers in informal employment should be based on the active engagement and participation of the workers and/or their representatives in the design, management and delivery of education programmes.
20. Extremes of poor working conditions and poverty found within the informal economy necessitate innovative and imaginative approaches to ensure sustainability of education provision; they need to be low-cost, affordable or free to participants, rooted in the community, informal and flexible.
21. The relatively high proportion of women in the workforce of the informal economy demands an approach to workers' education that is highly gender-sensitive – in participation, in facilitation, and in leadership.
22. The growth of the informal economy is not restricted to developing countries. Educational strategies to support the development of workers' organisation and

representation must be relevant in a wide variety of legal, economic and social contexts.

Scope of workers' education provision in the informal economy

23. The development of **awareness and understanding of the informal economy** in the context of rapid economic change, the impact of globalisation, structural adjustment programmes etc, is an essential and basic element of educational provision needed to promote and defend the interests of informal economy workers. There are several ways in which this could be achieved.
24. Courses for union organisers designed to boost union recruitment have obvious potential to include a substantial element of work to develop an understanding of the informal economy, although this may be more obvious in those countries, primarily developing economies, or industries where the informal economy is prevalent.
25. There has to be recognition, however, that many unions will not necessarily be willing to prioritise education work to boost recruitment in the informal economy, when it may be more cost-effective or politically more pressing to strengthen recruitment in more easily organised workplaces.
26. Even for unions without the capacity to organise informal economy workers, an understanding of the informal economy is increasingly important, whether to address fears that informal economy workers are undermining union strength, or to encourage the extension of basic principles of worker solidarity towards them. Although on the decline, there are many misconceptions - that the informal economy is a temporary phenomenon, exists only on the fringes of the global economy, is inherently anti-union, and so on.
27. Within trade union education for those in formal employment, there is a growing interest in and demand for courses for senior workplace representatives and union officers that develop an understanding of globalisation processes and international trade union strategies. There are a growing number of individual unions, national centres and international trade secretariats that are running specific courses or developing new education materials on globalisation⁷, all of which - to a greater or lesser degree - include consideration of the informal economy.
28. Experience suggests that the more tightly defined by industrial sector, or even individual employer, the design and participation in the programme, the more effective courses be in achieving practical results.
29. There is considerable scope for the development of an understanding of the informal economy within community-based and women workers' education programmes, either undertaken directly by unions, or by workers' education organisations based in the community.
30. Many community-based or women's education programmes, especially those working in areas of high unemployment, inevitably include participants from the informal economy. Frequently, participants are operating illegally, face acute discrimination within the community, or face employers or contractors with particularly hostile anti-union attitudes. In such cases, the overt inclusion of an organising agenda or questions of workers' rights within the curriculum can be fearful or indeed dangerous.
31. In these conditions, a community-based approach can be less intimidating for the participants and less susceptible to intimidation or influence from hostile forces than formal trade union provision. This is particularly pertinent where the informal economy has a particularly high proportion of women workers and or workers in minority communities suffering discrimination, whether from within the family, the community or public authorities.

⁷ IFWEA experience suggests that demand for such initiatives is equally evident from unions in developed countries and developing countries.

32. Whether organised by unions or by other groups in the community, the approach has to be highly sensitive. In some cases, the education programme has to be clandestine.
33. Education designed to promote and defend informal economy **workers' rights** is clearly a high priority.
34. At the most basic level, workers' education programmes need to be developed to build and awareness and understanding of workers' rights - especially freedom of association - amongst informal economy workers, linked to education to encourage organisation.
35. There are also opportunities for trade unions representing workers in the formal economy to support the rights of informal economy workers through negotiation with employers, particularly where informal economy labour is significant in the supply chain (garment manufacture, food processing, etc).
36. There is considerable scope for the development of training programmes for trade union negotiators to include the promotion of informal economy workers' rights within collective bargaining. This would encourage local and national negotiators to consider entire supply chains in production, encouraging employers to accept responsibility for workers' conditions, including those of sub-contractors along the chain.
37. Internationally, there is considerable potential in courses designed to develop codes of conduct with employers, or international framework agreements that include specific reference to informal economy workers. Education programmes undertaken by international trade secretariats could be of great assistance, for example, in providing workplace representatives with sufficient knowledge and confidence to work towards negotiation of international framework agreements that include informal economy workers' rights through the supply chain. There are some good examples of this to work from, such as the IKEA agreement with IFBWW. There is considerable potential for the development of such agreements to include specific reference to workers in the informal economy.
38. Such education programmes, to be of real value, need to be transnational in scope, including a representative cross-section of unions and, where appropriate, democratic associations of informal economy workers
39. If the basic principle of democratic participation of informal economy workers in the design and management of education programmes is followed through, experience suggests that programmes must offer both practical skills needed to improve workers' livelihoods, enhance productivity and job quality alongside the organisational and political skills required to defend and promote collective interests.
40. Such skills may be needed to improve individual economic well-being, such as basic literacy/numeracy, elementary accountancy, marketing, business planning, access to micro-credit and so on, in addition to trade and artisan skills specific to sectors (embroidery, weaving, furniture-making etc).
41. There are also those skills required to improve collective economic well being, such as co-operative development, credit union management, and promotion of access to social security and insurance.
42. The most important role of education is to develop **effective organisation and representation**.
43. A primary task is to help develop skills in democratic organisation, including constitutional, financial and organisational structures, democratic processes, recruitment of members, fund-raising, conduct of meetings, roles and responsibilities of representatives, financial integrity etc.
44. Many of these skills are identical to basic trade union organisation in the formal sector, and trade union education specialists are potentially able to provide valuable assistance to the development of informal economy worker education. Unless they are in unions with substantial informal economy experience, however, they will need training to help develop an understanding and awareness of the informal economy.

45. Good quality workers' education programmes, where participants are encouraged to take an active role and responsibility in the democratic governance and management of provision, are inherently designed to develop democratic organisational skills. For many, participation in workers' education is their first experience in democratic life.
46. There are also important education initiatives needed to develop skills in representation: advocacy, media skills, lobbying and campaigning, including basic research skills in mapping the local/national informal economy, such as surveys and statistical interpretation. (How many workers? what are the conditions of work? what is the contribution to the economy?).
47. Effective representation of informal economy workers also requires education to develop understanding of local and/or national/international governmental processes, including policy formation in urban planning, rural development and so on.
48. Workers' education can also support the construction of alliances - between unions representing informal economy workers, unions that don't, informal economy associations, community and women's organisations, NGOs etc. In some cases, workers' education programmes can offer an important bridge and meeting point between these organisations.

Practical steps for the development of education provision

49. **Mapping potential education providers.** An important first step is to identify those organisations that have the capacity, or potential, to develop education programmes for and by informal economy workers.
50. It is assumed, as a matter of principle, that such education programmes should be under the direction of informal economy workers themselves, whether they are organised within unions, or within other democratic workers' associations.
51. There are also, however, a range of organisations capable and appropriate to assist with the development of education provision, or to undertake the work on behalf of representative organisations of informal economy workers.
52. Informal economy workers' education programmes could be developed in a number of different ways, with a number of different agencies - each able to be effective in one or more strands of an overall educational strategy.
53. Informal economy associations or unions with a membership drawn exclusively from the informal economy rarely have the capacity to organise education programmes for their members, although there are some exceptions (notably SEWA Academy). Nevertheless, wherever possible, these would be the most effective education providers, assuming sufficient support from unions and other agencies. In some countries, it may be possible to consider the creation of new training organisations, perhaps as partnerships of unions and informal economy associations, specifically to develop the educational skills of workers' representatives in the informal economy.
54. The primary role of education programmes run by informal economy associations and unions themselves would be to develop skills in organisation and representation but, depending on the specific needs of the workers concerned, might also include: recruitment and democratic organisation, negotiation skills, co-operative development, and vocational skills.
55. National trade union centres are central to the development of national education programmes. In many countries, they are the only workers' organisation with the capacity to run sustained education programmes. National centres are also uniquely placed to:
 - develop strong and effective representation of informal economy workers' interests to government and governmental agencies;

- encourage national unity between informal employment workers' associations, particularly in countries where there is a large number of local, regional and sectoral organisations, often in competition for scarce resources and political influence;
- train and support educators from affiliated unions working with informal economy workers; and
- promote dialogue and co-operation between unions and informal sector associations - locally and nationally.

56. National unions, where they have capacity, are obviously best suited to run programmes specific to their sector, industry or trade. Particularly those programmes designed to support the recruitment of informal economy workers into union membership, and/or the creation of local or national alliances with informal economy associations organised by sector (taxi drivers, garment workers, small-holders etc).

57. NGOs and community-based groups, working closely in co-operation with unions, often have the best capability of organising education programmes that are capable of reaching informal economy workers in the community or at the grass-roots, designed to strengthen - or in some cases, create - associations or unions of informal economy workers, and develop skills in democratic and representative organisation. There is a need to ensure clarity, however, on the relationship between unions and NGOs in this context. NGOs can clearly provide considerable assistance in the development of education programmes for informal economy workers, but they cannot claim to represent or organise them.

58. There are obviously also considerable local, national and regional variations in the most likely appropriate workers' education partner organisations. This to some extent depends on the prevailing context of civil society development. Where civil society is weak, trade unions are often the only democratic institutions capable of sustaining appropriate workers' education programmes. Elsewhere, there may be a considerable range of organisations engaged in education with sufficient experience and commitment to support or strengthen the organisation and representation capacity of workers in informal employment.

59. There are many other institutions and organisations engaged in education and training for workers, which might offer opportunities for those in the informal economy. Obvious among these would be vocational training institutions, major employers, government departments, tertiary colleges and training organisations in the private sector. Others might include development NGOs or religious institutions.

60. Many such organisations may offer education and training opportunities that are wholly legitimate and useful, especially in the provision of vocational training for individual workers, and (dependent on local circumstances) important partners with workers' education organisations. They are not, however, generally appropriate as lead organisations for workers' education in the context of an organisation and representation agenda, which depends on a strong commitment to a democratic and participatory approach, as outlined above.

61. International organisations are crucial in the design and delivery of training and support programmes, regionally and globally. Discussions on the most appropriate and effective forms of international organisation and representation are yet to be finalised, but in principle, the strategic

educational direction of such training needs to be under the direction of democratically determined representation of informal economy workers, however that is to be expressed.

62. Whatever international structures emerge, it is certain that the capacity required to deliver large scale education programmes will need a long-term partnership between informal economy workers, and the ICFTU, the ITSs, IFWEA, and other agencies - such as the International Co-operative Alliance.
- 63. Promotion of effective and sustainable models of workers' education.** It is important to develop models of education for workers in the informal economy that have proven practical impact and sustainability. For this, the obvious starting point must be the education experience of SEWA and other organisations that have demonstrated considerable success in building democratic organisations.
64. The transfer of skills and experience between such organisations and other associations, trade unions or NGOs with an interest in supporting the organising agenda of workers in the informal economy is the necessary first step in building a coherent international strategy. There are of course major important differences in local circumstances that will preclude the wholesale translation and transfer of education programmes from one setting to another, but there will be important principles, strategies, and experiences that have universal value⁸.
65. Pedagogical development and technical assistance. From such lessons, it should prove possible to develop programmes of support to organisations representing informal employment workers and their partners and allies in workers' education to encourage and facilitate the development of new or expanded programmes in support of the organisation and representation agenda.
66. Adaptation of study circle methods to meet the needs of informal economy workers.
67. Primary measures of support would inevitably include the provision of training programmes for workers' education programme developers, managers and tutors/facilitators, and the production of new techniques, materials, course designs and so on, that can be shared as a common resource for local adaptation.
68. Inevitably, particularly in developing countries, and especially where organisation of informal economy workers is found to be weak or non-existent, there will need to be a sustained commitment of financial resources to ensure delivery of programmes on the ground. In no circumstances, however, should the scale of such resources be allowed to undermine the sustainability of the informal economy workers' organisations themselves. Emphasis should be on support for transnational co-operation and mutual support, and for programmes that strengthen the local educational capacity of the informal employment workers' organisations themselves.

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⁸ The forthcoming Workers' Education Association of Zambia seminar in Lusaka in October 2001 is a modest attempt to initiate this process, enabling workers' education and informal economy workers' organisations to present and learn from experience in Zambia along with Mozambique, South Africa, Uganda, Ghana, Zimbabwe and India.

Informal or Unprotected Work

Unprotected Workers

The trade union movement was built by unprotected workers who, through self-organisation and solidarity, gained rights, benefits and social protection. This was never a process that was simple nor was the fight for freedom or justice limited to one arena. Then as now, there are multiple reasons that workers are unprotected as well as dramatic differences among regions, among countries, within countries, and among sectors of activity. These differences have resulted in many different forms of organisation that grew out of the special characteristics and needs of workers in particular industries and trades. It also calls for a range of complementary strategies.

Trade unions can draw on the experience on all continents and in all sectors in organising and taking other actions to defend the rights and extend protections to workers in unregulated work and in precarious work. In both developing and developed economies, there has generally been a weakening of the employment relationship with consequences for social protection and the coverage of labour laws. This ranges from employment where less than complete coverage and social protection exists on the one hand to survival, subsistence work on the margins of society on the other. This multiplicity of situations requires a multiplicity of responses and the engagement of multiple actors, including governments and employers. This is particularly important in a global economy where exploitation is an ingredient in commerce and the concern of all.

This document was prepared by the ICFTU secretariat based on the mandate of the ICFTU Durban Congress in 2000 to establish a Task Force on Informal or Unprotected Work. It incorporates major elements, including recommendations, of the discussion that took place at a small preparatory meeting held in Brussels on 15, 16 March 2001. Participants in that meeting were designated by ICFTU Regional Organisations and International Trade Secretariats.

Reflected in this paper is some of the considerable discussion that took place at that meeting concerning the term "informal sector," which has often served as a barrier for understanding and responding to the needs and aspirations of unprotected workers. It is clear that such work is most often carried out in situations of deplorable exploitation and abuse. Indeed, if a more appropriate and accurate term had been found, for example, "indecent work," it would have been much more difficult for international bodies and some academics to sound reasonable in advocating its promotion. The meeting felt that our approach should be based on various measures to produce decent rather than informal or unprotected work and should be centred on the needs and aspirations of the workers themselves.

“Informal Sector”

The serious consideration of work performed beyond the scope or application of labour law and social security protection has been ill served by the invention of the term “informal sector.” Although the term is used in more than one way and is applied to many and different situations, it has proved for various reasons a convenient term to support ways of thinking that are, in one way or another, detrimental to workers. Because the term sounds benign, it can make work carried out under appalling conditions sound acceptable.

The benign nature of the term always made it easier to overlook the failure of governments to perform some of their most proper and basic functions. In fact, the notion that one needs to facilitate “employment” growth in the “informal sector” has become a rationale for abandoning government regulation. If any responsibility is placed on social actors by some who make that argument, it is not on governments that fail to protect workers’ rights, including the right to organise, and not on employers taking advantage of exploitation in their supply and production chains, but on trade unions for their failure to organise such workers.

The term “informal sector” was introduced by the ILO in the early 1970’s to describe activities of the “working poor” who were “not recognised, registered or protected by public authorities.” In its original use, the term was meant to describe fairly specific activities taking place in the urban areas of developing countries. The definition was refined to include certain situations in agricultural areas and further refined to refer only to survival activities of the poor and not to include “illicit” activities that deliberately sought to avoid government attention. The term was no doubt chosen to avoid any implicit criticism of either the workers or of developing country governments. An even more positive spin was given to the “informal sector” by work in the ILO over many years concerning the need for the “promotion” of such “employment.”

Although the ILO has a fairly specific definition of the term that has been further elaborated by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians, there is, in practice, no generally accepted definition. It would, perhaps, be useful to assemble all of the contradictory definitions of the “informal sector” if for no other purpose than to discredit the term. In some cases, it seems to be interchangeable with “private sector.” In other uses, it can mean the self-employed or small and medium sized enterprises. In some cases, it includes the illegal but as already noted, in other cases, it does not.

One of the most confusing aspects of the term “informal sector” is that it is not, in fact, a “sector” in the sense of a kind of economic activity. This has led to some extremely faulty thinking. For example, there are situations where it may make sense to argue that the tourism sector should be promoted because this sector creates jobs. Because the “informal sector” is not a sector in this sense the same logic does not apply. Yet many governments and the ILO have argued that the informal sector should be promoted because it creates jobs.

Using the term “informal sector” makes it easy to avoid understanding what is actually happening. All economic activity can be described as taking place in real sectors. By robbing the work of this sectoral context, the term “informal sector” makes it more difficult to address issues related to the transition of this work into the mainstream economy. A worker in the “informal sector” making a part for a sub-contractor that is provided to another sub-contractor and so on could be fairly described as being in the automobile parts sector if what was being made was an

automobile part. This vertical way of thinking about this work may be more useful and have greater potential for positive change than the horizontal view encouraged by the term ‘informal sector.’”

One conception of the “informal sector” does not always involve the “informal sector” as a phenomenon of developing economies created by surplus labour from the countryside as much as a revolt against onerous government regulation. Another conception views the “informal sector” not as a transitory phase in economic development but as a return to an earlier more primitive phase before formal labour markets and rules developed. Although these are opposing conceptions, it is interesting to note that neither conception is limited to developing countries and could be applied to developed countries.

The term “informal sector” has become a handicap to understanding and a barrier to targeting the real problem of a growing number of workers on the margin of society. They are living and working in a shadow economy, related to, but not part of the economic and social mainstream.

Labour law and employment relationships – the “informal sector” as a legal problem

The only common element to most conceptions of the meaning of “informal sector” is that of economic activity occurring outside of any legal framework. This is a good point of departure for a trade union approach in this area. The trade union experience of over 100 years is that there are only two ways in which workers are protected from abuse and exploitation. The first is through the application of labour law and the second is through trade unions and especially from collective bargaining. It would be difficult to overstate the importance of labour law. Even organising into trade unions and bargaining collectively work best where a legal framework protects these activities. Indeed, without protection, activities such as organising and bargaining rarely occur and can be revolutionary where they do.

For trade unionists, the main characteristic of “informal” work is that labour law does not apply. It is more useful and accurate to describe this work as “unprotected” work or work performed by workers who are unprotected. Alternatively and as useful would be to describe “informal” work as “excluded” work. This suggests the broader social dimension of the problem and would be consistent with the trade union concern over “social exclusion”.

If examined as an alternative to recognised employment, which it now often replaces, “informal” work is clearly inferior and cannot, in any sense, be viewed as an improvement. If, however, “informal” work is viewed as an alternative to starvation, the people involved would, of course, see it less negatively. However, it is more useful to see “informal” or unprotected work as a negative alternative to decent work and as something that should be improved so that workers affected can move into recognised relationships where protection is possible. The perspective of treating this kind of work as “better than nothing” is a defeatist attitude that can make people lose their sense of injustice at the mistreatment and lack of protection of fellow workers. This attitude cannot be part of a trade union response.

One central element to a trade union response would be to recall the reason for, and importance of labour law. The idea of labour law, as distinct from commercial law, is that it is meant to address situations where there are contracts among unequals – that is between the worker and the employer. What labour law does is to create certain protections for the worker and to impose certain obligations on the employer

in order to make up for the difference in power between the two parties. In order for most labour law to come into play however, it is necessary to recognise the existence of an employment relationship. Although the definition and criteria for recognising an employment relationship vary in national law and practice, the general principles involved are fairly common. The issue centres on whether work is being performed under conditions of subordination and dependency and the extent to which the worker shares the risks and rewards of the activity.

Of course, “Informal” work can be performed under conditions that would otherwise meet criteria for determining the existence of employment relationships or it could be performed under conditions that would otherwise be considered the same as self-employment. In this connection, it is useful to recall that the self-employed in the mainstream economy are treated as legitimate businesses and often receive protection from the law, including some parts of labour law such as social security.

“Informal” work can be treated as a legal problem. In this sense, it is only the most extreme set of situations in which workers are increasingly finding themselves. These situations could be described as work performed under conditions where the worker should be protected but is not. This would include situations outside of the law referred to as work in the “informal sector”. But it would also include situations where the law does not apply because it has not been tested in a given instance. Included here would be the abuse of “disguised employment” where the employer treats a worker as being self-employed who really should be treated as an employee. Other situations would be those where deficiencies in the legal criteria for determining the existence of an employment relationship have allowed a grey area to develop where the difference between self-employed and employed is no longer clear. Still other situations involve the failure of labour law to keep up with changes in the labour market and in economic organisation. Included here would be the triangular relationships involving workers, user enterprises and temporary work agencies. It could also include other forms of atypical work not adequately provided for in traditional labour legislation. Indeed, one of the reasons “atypical” work is often “precarious” work is that the traditional law is unable to protect the right to organise or to collectively bargain because it did not anticipate new forms of work organisation.

It is better to place “informal” economic activity in the context of history, rather than something that is a brand spanking new discovery. It could fairly be said that historically almost all work was “informal” or unprotected. In fact, the history of the trade union movement is that unprotected workers from all sectors have joined together to form trade unions and to bring about protection, including social protection, from governments, and have achieved respect from employers. In doing so, formerly horrible conditions have become decent and the work and the sectors have been transformed. The focus of attention should not be to help the “informal sector,” but to help the victims of it. In this sense the growth of “informal” economic activity in developing countries could be treated as a failure to develop. In developed countries the rise of “informal” work could be viewed as regression.

Government Responsibility

Governments have a fundamental responsibility to protect the rights of their citizens. The growth of the “informal” economic activity took place in many countries without even any attempt to enforce labour laws. At least in some instances, such enforcement could have produced some formal private employment that could have formed the basis of healthy economic development. The approach to the “informal sector” as an opportunity, rather than a problem, including, in some cases, a law enforcement problem, encouraged governments to abdicate their responsibilities.

The failure to protect workers or to enforce law is evidence of a non-functioning government. Indeed, the breakdown of formal employment is related to a larger deterioration of structures in society. It is related to the collapse of public infrastructure, not only physical infrastructure, but also education, health care, housing, and other services.

Government mismanagement has also led to the growth of “informal” economic activity. Often it was government policy or, more accurately, government inaction that led to the growth of large urban population centres and ultimately the large-scale erosion of decent and formal employment in these centres. At the international level misguided policy and mismanagement by the international financial institutions promoted the growth of “informal” over regular economic activity.

In many developing countries and in the transition countries when they had “planned” economies, economic management, including investment and industrial policy decisions was extremely poor. The pursuit of flawed development models, at a time of unprecedented growth in the labour force, led to the disruption of traditional societies and to the migration of large numbers of people from rural areas to urban areas. This misguided form of industrialisation often resulted in employment in large, inefficient state owned or subsidised enterprises that was, in fact, a form of hidden unemployment.

The introduction of structural adjustment programmes of a “one-size-fits-all” variety in these economies led to the collapse of many enterprises and to the informalisation of formerly recognised employment. A good deal of this was preventable. The programmes disregarded the disastrous and disruptive effects of their prescribed measures on society in general and on employment, in particular. The importance of labour law to economic development was just not taken into account.

The pursuit of an ideological approach by international bodies pushing liberalisation, deregulation and privatisation without regard for local conditions and capacities was highly irresponsible. Instead of abrupt closures of enterprises and massive redundancies of public service workers, assistance should have been channelled in a manner that would help transform enterprises and develop new employment possibilities, including in areas such as agriculture and processing of agricultural products. If a privatisation strategy is to be implemented, its success depends on the creation of viable enterprises that can sustain production and some level of employment. Unfortunately, “shock therapy” most often produced a great deal of shock, but little therapy.

Consideration of the responsibility of governments for the growth of the “informal sector” should also include the role of corruption. For many developing and transition countries economic mismanagement was accompanied by the outright theft of public assets and capital flight. In both developing and developed countries improvements in the status of agricultural workers has been inhibited by the disproportionate influence of landowners in the political system.

Not all informal economic activity is survival oriented. A great deal of money is being made and, in some countries, the expansion of this form of entrepreneurship may well have taken place with the connivance of authorities through ownership relationships, corruption and shakedowns. “Informal work” can be a tax avoidance strategy of otherwise legitimate enterprises.

Of course, governments and employers are not entirely responsible for the growth of “informal” or unprotected work. Africa, for example, has seen a succession of human

and natural disasters, from genocide and war, to explosive population growth in some areas, to long droughts, and the effects of HIV/AIDS and other diseases. The contribution of these factors and events to increasing “informal” work is more easily appreciated where such “informal” activity is considered a failure to develop. It is useful to recall that in many developing countries, formal employment, in the best of times, was never available for more than a small minority of citizens.

Responsibilities of employers

There are significant relationships between “informal” and recognised economic activities. Some of these relationships are direct as in the global supply chains of production found in some labour intensive manufacturing sectors such as clothing and footwear. One visible example is the manufacturing of footballs by children in Pakistan; footballs that ended up in the mainstream of world commerce. Examination of these links in increasingly complex production and service chains could provide leverage to improve the conditions of workers who may form the bottom links of those chains.

There has been sufficient public embarrassment of multinationals in recent years to create a climate in which such an examination might be able to take place. The ongoing debate over “corporate social responsibility” might provide an opportunity to obtain the active co-operation of some major corporations in addressing the problem of “informal” work in their supply chains. Such a sectoral approach through the International Trade Secretariats could be very useful especially in situations where trade unions are actively seeking to transform “informal” work through organising, by putting pressure on suppliers, or through efforts to secure government enforcement of labour laws.

Another element of corporate social responsibility relates to the social effects of corporate decisions. Companies have their own “structural adjustment programmes” that often fail to take negative consequences into account. Closures or redundancies in subsidiaries and suppliers ought to be considered by the firms ultimately in control as among their responsibilities. This means that alternative formal employment possibilities, including other production in existing facilities, should be fully explored before measures affecting employment are carried out. This should be done in co-operation with trade unions and local authorities.

The most direct responsibility by employers to increasing “informal” work is through the avoidance of the obligations of the employer. This is reflected in the changing forms of business organisation particularly with respect to contracting out of work and through outsourcing.

The social dimension

Employment is related to other formal structures in society, including social security and, in a broad sense, social protection. The exposure of workers to harsh realities at work is complicated by the lack of protection in the event of injury on the job, disease or old age. Part of the transition process to recognised economic activity may be finding ways to provide minimal social protections and services in order to address immediate needs and facilitate eventual integration into the full rights and protections of a social security system and other society-wide social protections. Such measures should be designed in such a way that they do not replace or undermine the coverage of those in recognised employment.

The existing situation in many countries exposes workers in recognised employment to the risk of losing their protections as the financial basis of systems are undermined. This also poses the question of tax revenue in general. It is difficult to imagine development in a situation where governments cannot collect taxes because the economy is “off the books.” It is not surprising under these circumstances, that, in some countries, soldiers are collecting “taxes” from motorists and people on the street.

The concentration of women relative to men performing “informal” work, particularly in certain sectors, also reveals connections with other difficulties in society. Once again, there are different ways to view this question, with elements of truth in more than one approach. Such work can be seen as opportunity that was formerly denied. It can also be seen as further, often convincing, evidence of the marginalisation of women in society.

The status and role of women is also related to social protection. In many traditional societies, a degree of solidarity is provided at the village level within extended families, but also within a village or a community. When those structures are uprooted as people migrate to urban areas, much of the burden of caring for people still falls on women even though the base of support may be very narrow or may not exist at all. In situations where women or girls are forced by economic desperation to separate from their families, conditions may be even worse. Not only may the conditions of work and life for the women be abysmal, but the life of the family may be seriously damaged.

In many societies, women are forced to assume the responsibility for providing both the economic means to sustain family life as well as taking care of families. They are often denied even basic education. Levels of illiteracy among workers performing “informal” work are often very high. In other words, the concentration of women in performing certain kinds of work on an “informal” or unprotected basis is directly related to long traditions of discrimination and abuse. In such situations, it is not enough to address the employment problems of these women, even to help them defend their rights. It requires determined efforts to support women in general in a struggle for dignity, power, and the right to be treated like first-class citizens.

Organising

Freedom of association is a protection of the right to organise of people who perform work. In one way or another, they are all workers. Freedom of association is for employees, but also for employers and for the self-employed. Regardless of their employment status or lack of it, the right to associate exists and must be protected. The forms that such organisation takes may vary. They could include something close to traditional union organising for groups of currently unprotected workers who, in fact, have an employer. They could include employer or self-employed workers organisations. All would share the common right to organise and have the potential to transform the work and make it protected, formal, and decent.

It is important to properly frame the responsibilities of trade unions in the area of organising the “informal sector”. A common mistake begins by always thinking of trade unions as already established institutions and not as something workers can bring that into existence themselves through a process. Rights are to be guaranteed to workers, not trade unions. If the right of workers to organise is violated, it is not the fault of trade unions if workers are unable to form or join their own organisations. After all of the destruction of society wreaked by governments and employers, it is

too easy to sit back and place the responsibility for the conditions of unprotected workers on the doorsteps of trade unions.

The central issue in organising is the effective protection of the right of all workers to organise. It is up to workers themselves to decide whether they want to form their own trade unions or other organisations or join existing trade unions, but it is wrong and counter-productive to confuse the right of workers to organise with the obligation of trade unions to organise.

Free trade unions do, of course, have a number of obligations. Among them is to represent their existing members and use the collective resources of trade union members wisely. Even in formal employment, leadership is often necessary to convince members that a wise use of their limited resources, including the time of their representatives, is to organise other groups of workers. If, in addition, there are large numbers of unorganised workers in the formal economy, particularly if they are related by sector to organised workers, it may be difficult to argue for diverting organising activity into the “informal sector”. This has to be seen in a context where often a very small number of over-burdened trade union officers are struggling to meet the legal and representational demands put on them by their existing members. Such positions are reasonable and must be respected.

In the area of moral obligations, however, trade union principles as well as self-interest, solidarity among workers, and the larger interests of the community mean that trade union action is necessary if exploited workers are to be helped. This is not necessarily done by organising alone, however. Labour laws and social protections are often put into place because of the power of trade unions to influence government policy and through social dialogue and collective bargaining. The trade union role in insisting that labour laws be enforced, including the right to organise, is vital if “informal” work is to become recognised employment. In some situations, a combination of enforcement of labour law and extension of collective bargaining agreements to uncovered workers might formalise work.

Trade unions as social partners have moral obligations both nationally and internationally in this area. A company may argue that certain abuses outside of a firm may be necessary for competitive reasons and to protect the jobs of union members. Without arguing whether, in any circumstances, this argument has a basis in fact, it points out the necessity of a broad policy approach combined with specific measures. The economic context of the “informal” economic activity, in particular, for certain sectors and companies must be taken on board if solutions are to be found to the problems of workers in the informal economy. These issues will not be confronted if they are not articulately and effectively raised by the trade union movement.

In some cases, building trade unions may require organising on a geographical or community basis. In others, organising may benefit from links within sectors. Or, both considerations may be relevant.

In spite of all of the barriers and difficulties, groups of workers have succeeded in organising unions or other self-help organisations. It would be very useful to compare and exchange experience of successful organising strategies of workers in the informal economy.

Sustainable Economic Measures

Not all economic activity in the “informal sector” involves work that should be protected through recognised employment relationships. Much of this activity corresponds to self-employment or to small enterprises and the transformation of this activity into mainstream economic activity might be facilitated through the organisation of co-operatives and similar institutions. In addition co-operatives can formalise economic activity by creating viable business organisations capable of meeting the obligations of the employer. Relationships between co-operatives and trade unions have played an important, historic role in strengthening trade unions in many countries. In addition, co-operatives, as viable economic entities, in some cases, become employers and open the door to decent work opportunities.

The trade union movement has been involved in efforts over many years related to the establishment of various kinds of co-operatives. Producer and consumer co-operatives as well as credit facilities may be relevant as part of larger strategies to change unprotected work into decent work. This has not necessarily taken the form of unions actually establishing and running co-operatives, although in some cases that has been the practice. In others cases, there has been useful co-operation with others that has produced better conditions for workers. There are economic factors, including capacity and economies of scale that are vital to building strong, sustainable, and formal economic activity.

Trade unions have also been involved in efforts to provide training for unprotected workers. Often, a lack of basic skills or trades limits the possibilities for workers to enter formal employment or transform their work into activity that is formal and viable. This includes, in some cases, literacy training.

In fact, training is an important part of nearly all strategies that can be used to deal with this complex and difficult challenge. In addition to vocational and basic skills training, for example, education on the concepts of trade unionism, including the practice of solidarity and co-operation, can help create the conditions for transformation of the situation on the ground. The atomisation and distrust that is often inherent in survival strategies of individuals can block the escape route from indecent work.

Conclusions and Recommendations

As indicated in the resolution adopted by the last ICFTU Congress resolution, exposed and excluded workers need legal protections, social security, and a collective voice to represent their interests and engage in the struggle for improved living and working conditions. This requires multiple, complementary strategies. In order to develop further these strategies, a task force (including affiliates from both industrialised and developing countries) will be established.

The preparatory meeting, composed of representatives of regional organisations of the ICFTU and International Trade Secretariats, laid the groundwork for this task force. It identified several areas of possible work for the task force and made a number of recommendations.

Two fundamental questions were at the centre of the discussion in the preparatory group. One was the need to defend rights of workers, including through ensuring that those rights were protected in a legal sense as well as through organising and other methods. The other was the issue of social protection, including finding ways to provide such protection leading to integration in comprehensive social security systems.

The participants recognised that the situations of unprotected workers vary widely among and within countries, regions, and sectors, but that they share little or no rights and social protections. Similarly, the role that unregulated work plays inside of economies is not the same in different contexts. They rejected the term “informal sector.” Not only was the word “sector” questioned, but “informal” as well, with some participants indicating that some of the economic and social protections. Much “informal” work has no future and is not, in reality, freely chosen. It is, rather, carried out by people who have no other choice than engaging in precarious and marginal activities in order to satisfy essential needs. It is work without a future.

Whether or not workers are employees and have employment contracts, they are still workers and must have the right to organise and defend their own interests. They should have decent work and conditions and social protection. They need to be part of social solidarity.

The long experience of the ICFTU, its regional organisations and the International Trade Secretariats needs to be shared and used to develop stronger and more effective strategies to help vulnerable workers help themselves. This requires not only a sharing of experience and best practices, but better co-operation to respond to the deterioration of conditions and protections and the informalisation of the economy in the context of globalisation.

Points for Consideration

The meeting recommends that the Task Force consider the following points:

- The term “informal sector” must not be allowed to obscure the real interests of workers and their trade unions. The specific situations where workers require protection but do not receive it need to be clearly identified and addressed by the task force.
- The use of the term “informal sector” as the ILO is now employing it should be countered. One example of how to counter it is has been provided by the conclusions of the Committee on Human Resource Development and Training, which called for training, but with the object of helping workers and not of promoting any “sector.”
- The international trade union movement must undertake serious work on the whole issue of the employment relationship. The development of an ILO convention in this area would be a major accomplishment on a threshold issue for workers’ rights. The ICFTU should give high priority to promoting a basic international standard on the scope of the employment relationship. This should be the subject of a major international campaign.
- Sectoral and supply chain relationships with “informal” or unprotected work should be examined. This argues for the early and active involvement of International Trade Secretariats in designing and carrying out activities in this area.
- The role of employers in mitigating the situation of “informal” workers should not be overlooked. This could include framework agreements and other social dialogue opportunities with enterprises and industries, consumer pressure and,

working with TUAC on the application of the newly revised OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.

- The trade union activities with respect to “informal” work should be consistent with trade union principles and designed to achieve the best results in terms of the rights and protections of workers engaged in informal or unprotected work. These activities should not be driven by definitions from donors or by an approach that takes “informal” economic activity out of context and treats it as something to be encouraged as a development objective.
- The trade union movement should renew or strengthen its relationship with the co-operative movement nationally, regionally, and internationally. The role of co-operatives should be part of the trade union strategy for combating unprotected work.
- The trade union movement must engage other organisations and be prepared to work with others in addressing this issue. This includes trying to correct the course of the ILO, the World Bank and other international bodies. It also means engaging development NGOs, women’s organisations, co-operatives, and others.
- Information about trends in “informal” or unprotected work and the experience with efforts, including organising and collective bargaining, to achieve a transition to formal employment should be collected and disseminated.

The job of the task force is to carefully examine policy questions, trade union experience in this area and other information in order to identify priorities and develop effective strategies. This can become the basis of better co-operation inside the trade union movement. This would include national, regional and local levels as well as both sectoral and inter-sectoral in the many areas mentioned in this document, including, but not limited to project work.

WIEGO Organization and Representation Program

Organization and Representation of Workers in Informal and Unprotected Employment

Twelve Theses

Prefacing Statement

Over the past two decades, the informal economy has expanded in most countries of the world, including developing, transition, and developed economies. Over the past decade or more, informal work is estimated to account for more than half of the new jobs in Latin American and over 80 percent of new jobs in Africa. As a result, the informal economy today accounts for a significant share of employment - from 10-30 percent in different developed countries to 55 percent in Latin America to 45-85 percent in different parts of Asia to nearly 80 percent in Africa – and is comprised of a wide range of informal work arrangements, both resilient old forms and emerging new forms.

Economists did not anticipate the notable shifts in recent years from mass production to flexible specialized production or back to sweatshop production. Neither did they predict the ways in which global integration and competition would serve to erode employment relations and the willingness or ability of governments to provide social protection and guarantee worker rights. Due varyingly to the pattern of economic growth, to economic reforms, or to economic crises, traditional forms of non-standard wage work (e.g. casual jobs) and self-employment (e.g. street vending) have persisted and new forms of non-standard wage work (e.g. piece-rate subcontracted jobs and temporary or part-time jobs) and self-employment (e.g. high-tech home-based work) have emerged. Today, there is increasing recognition among development scholars and practitioners that the informal economy is here to stay, in both new and old guises.

The persistence and expansion of old forms of informal employment and the emergence of new forms of informal employment pose both a challenge and an opportunity to the international labour movement. Informal workers, almost by definition, do not receive worker benefits and are not covered by social protection measures. Most informal workers work from their homes, on the streets, or changing work sites, rather than in factories or firms. Organizing informal workers is, therefore, quite demanding and requires innovative approaches.

(1) Workers in informal employment do not have a social identity separate from other workers and should not be identified with other social classes or groups, regardless of their employment status.

(2) Workers in informal employment aspire to decent and secure incomes, access to basic social services, such as housing, education and health care, and a social and political environment where their rights are respected and guaranteed. They form organizations, including unions, in order to secure the social, economic and political power necessary to achieve these objectives.

(3) Voluntary organizations of different types, including unions, have historically played a role in providing social protection to their members, and organizations of informal workers today in some cases provide a broad range of social protection measures for their membership. This should not obscure the basic responsibility of the State to protect the rights of its citizens, including their social and economic rights, nor the responsibility of employers to provide work under conditions consistent with internationally accepted standards and social obligations (insurance, pensions).

(4) Unions are self-help organizations created by workers to defend and advance their interests through collective action. The right to form unions is a fundamental human right of any workers anywhere. Workers in informal employment, like all other workers, have the right to protect themselves through organization and to resist, through their collective action, the exploitation to which they are subjected.

(5) In order to establish unions, or to conduct union action, workers do not need to be in a formal or direct employment relationship. Unions may engage in collective bargaining with specific employers or employers' associations, but they may also engage in social and political bargaining with public authorities or legislative bodies. In either case, they meet the needs of their membership through collective action.

(6) A larger share of women workers than men workers are in the informal economy worldwide. Because women are often marginalized at all levels of social life, including in the labour movement, women in informal employment have in some instances created their own unions and may again do so whenever appropriate. This in no way reflects a form of gender isolationism but rather the need to preserve the capacity for advancing the specific priorities of women workers as forcefully as may be necessary, also in the context of the wider labour movement.

(7) Workers in informal employment, as other workers, depend on collective action, through unions, associations or cooperatives, to advance their interests as individuals and as a group. This is also true for self-employed workers, where the great majority needs mechanisms of mutual aid and solidarity to rise out of poverty and dependency.

(8) Macro-economic policies and processes often serve to undermine the bargaining power of the informal workforce. Without organizing the informal workforce, both the self-employed and waged workers, no amount of technical services, such as micro-finance and business development services, will eliminate poverty.

(9) In their efforts to organize, workers in informal employment welcome assistance from any source (unions, churches, advocacy groups, public authorities, international organizations, foundations, etc). However, it should be stressed that the objective of organizing is in all cases to establish self-sustaining organizations based on membership and accountable to their membership by the mechanisms of representative democracy.

(10) Workers in informal employment organizing may opt to join existing unions originating in the formal economy or they may decide to form their own independent organizations. There are advantages and disadvantages to both approaches. Independent informal sector organizations ensure that issues facing informal economy workers receive undivided attention. Inclusion in unions based on formal sector employment assists informal-formal worker solidarity. Internationally, there are clearly advantages in informal employment workers being organized and represented within trade sectors (through ITSs), within national union centers (through the ICFTU)

and independently through informal employment workers' own international organization(s).

(11) Workers in informal employment have a right to be represented through their own organizations and to express their views and demands without self-appointed intermediaries. The usefulness of conducting seminars, symposia, conferences and working parties about workers in informal employment, but in their absence, can be doubted. There is a real risk that, through lack of serious knowledge and experience, such meetings may result in misleading conclusions and in the hardening of ideological misconceptions.

(12) Workers in informal employment need to be represented at all levels where decisions are made that affect their situation. In the first place they need, of course, to be represented in the institutions of the labour movement, i.e. in the governing bodies of the international trade union organizations (ICFTU, ITS, ETUC) and of the labour NGOs (IFWEA, SOLIDAR). Some limited representation at that level already exists (IFWEA and IUF); much more is needed. In the second place, they need to be represented at the ILO, i.e. in the Workers' Group.

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WIEGO Organization and Representation Program

Vision Statement for the International Organization of Workers in Informal Employment (Revised June 2001)

At meetings held on December 3-4 2000 and June 9-10 2001 in Geneva, the Advisory Group of the WIEGO Organization and Representation Program formulated and developed a number of recommendations on a proposed international organization of workers in the informal economy, as a basis for dialogue and debate with partners and allies.

Background

(1) A majority of the world's workers are in informal employment and this proportion is growing under the impact of globalization: the mobility of capital, the restructuring of production of goods and services and the deregulation of labour markets is pushing an increasing number of workers into informal employment.

(2) This majority is largely unorganized and, because it lacks organization, it is largely invisible and powerless. Unless and until it becomes organized, it will be unable to effectively defend its own interests and to participate, together with organized labour in the formal sector, in the shaping of global economic and social policies aimed at securing an adequate income and dignified conditions of work and life for all workers.

(3) Over the past two decades, an international movement has grown up in support of informal sector workers globally. Much of the international impetus has come from the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) founded in India in 1972, a trade union that is at the same time a women's movement and a cooperative movement. Subsequently, other unions of informal sector workers were formed (such as SEWU in South Africa) and unions originating in the formal sector started organizing home-based workers (for example SIBTTA in Madeira, Portugal and TCFUA in Australia) domestic employees (FILCAMS in Italy and unions in several African countries), street vendors (in Latin America) and casual agricultural workers (in Africa and Latin America). In the mid-90s two international alliances were formed, HomeNet and StreetNet, to organize home-based workers and street vendors. In 1997, Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) was formed, a worldwide coalition of institutions and individuals concerned with improving the status of women in the informal sector. SEWA is a founding member of both HomeNet and StreetNet, and both these networks are part of WIEGO. In April 1997, the founding members of WIEGO, who now largely comprise the Steering Committee, decided to establish an Organization and Representation Program, which was more clearly defined in May 2000.

Principles

(4) WIEGO recognizes that international trade union organizations, in particular certain International Trade Secretariats (ITS) and the ICFTU, as well as a growing number of national trade union organizations, have become aware of the necessity of organizing workers in informal employment. However, it is also aware of the scarcity of resources that places severe financial constraints on most trade union organizations and it recognizes that in most cases trade union priorities will have to

remain the organization of as yet unorganised sectors of wage earners. Therefore it believes that the primary responsibility for organizing workers in informal employment rests with these workers themselves and that it is the task of the international movement of informal sector workers to create the tools for its own organization.

(5) The international movement of workers in informal employment regards itself as a part of the international labour movement and is based on its principles, foremost of which are democratic organization and solidarity. It shares the historical vision of the labour movement of a society based on justice and freedom for all and will contribute to the full extent of its ability to the struggle for such a society.

(6) Women are over-represented in informal employment; therefore the issue of organizing informal sector workers is intimately related to defending the rights of women at work and in society at large. An international organization of workers in informal employment will reflect this reality in its structure and in its policy objectives.

Objectives

(7) The medium-term objective is to establish a self-managing international organization of workers in informal employment based on the principles of representative democracy. This organization will be formed by democratically organized and run membership organizations, such as unions and cooperatives, but will also be open to other types of organizations (in particular women's organizations) not necessarily based on membership, which would fall within different membership categories with more limited constitutional rights.

(8) The main functions of such an international organization should be:

(a) *solidarity*: to provide mutual support and defense of its member organizations and between these and the labour movement in general;

(b) *capacity building and organizing*: to help strengthen and develop existing or new organizations, in particular through education and training programs;

(c) *exchanges*: to promote exchanges of experience, information and research findings between member organizations;

(d) *advocacy and representation*, to promote representation of informal sector workers directly via their organizations, through lobbying, in regional and international bodies, both governmental and non-governmental.

How to Get There

(9) The new international organization will be formed in stages:

- Regional meetings to identify and consult with local and national organisations representing workers in the informal economy and their partner organisations, and to build or strengthen dialogue and alliances (2001);
 - Formulation of a platform that states the principal demands of informal sector workers, and to lobby for their adoption, in view of the research and discussion process engaged in the ILO leading up the International Labour Conference of 2002, where informal sector issues will be on the agenda;
 - International consultative conference followed by regional meetings to discuss and elaborate options for democratic structures appropriate to the needs of international organization and representation of workers in the informal economy, and appropriate relationships with allies in the international trade union movement, NGOs, and inter-governmental agencies (2002-03);
 - Once consensus has been secured, an international founding conference to launch the organization (2003-04, if feasible).
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