

Fruitful Dialogue: policy influence

Helping to set up spaces for dialogue that can be made permanent over time has been an important contribution of WIEGO's work in Lima.

Examples of these are the two **Dialogue Boards** in place that bring together City Government officials with street and market vendors, respectively. The Multi-sector Government Board on Waste Pickers is another successful example that gathers Central and Local Government authorities. It has achieved progress such as the Labour Certification for Waste Pickers, and State-sponsored funding mechanisms for their purchase of motor vehicles for collection, and of collection and segregation sites.

An **Exposure and Dialogue Program** held in 2012 marked a "before and after" in the relationship with officials from different Ministries, and was effective in improving their understanding about the issues of access to social protection by informal workers. Important State authorities with whom dialogue has experienced continuous progress include:

- Ministry of Labour: for the Law of the Self Employed Worker, and for improving regulations for inspection of domestic workers work conditions, as well as a campaign to increase formal registration of domestic workers to expand access to benefits.
- Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion: for the provision of social programs to informal workers in prioritized areas of Lima.
- City Government: for the democratic process of consultation to arrive to a new Ordinance that replaces one from 1985 on street trade, draft Ordinances for retail markets, and market porters, and for the first time ever competition among retail markets.
- Systems for social security, universal health care, and municipal health: for better inclusion of informal workers.

An important vehicle to achieve policy influence in Lima has been the work performed before municipal, and also, presidential **elections**: collective platforms of demands and proposals of all sectors of informal workers have been elaborated through a step-by-step process, and shared with candidates running for the position of Mayor of Lima, and President of Peru, at respective Elections. The platforms of demands and proposals were the main focus of Mayoral Elections Debates organized by WIEGO in 2010 and 2014. Outcomes in the regulation and promotion of retail markets at the city level were achieved as a result of the first municipal elections debate, while advocacy resulted in new childcare and non-contributory old age pension programs as flagship components of the political campaigns for President of Peru in 2011.

More Information



www.wiego.org



@WIEGOglobal



www.facebook.com/trabajadoreseconomicainformal

Current programme work in Peru receives support from the Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women (FLOW) fund, set up by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.



Women in Informal Employment:
Globalizing and Organizing

Focusing Resources and Activities for Larger Impact:

WIEGO's Focal Cities Work in

Lima

Implementing several of WIEGO's initiatives in two cities - Lima, capital of Peru, in South America, and Accra, capital of Ghana, in West Africa - has proven successful in the achievement of better outcomes for workers.

Lima

Since 2010, WIEGO has been implementing several thematic initiatives in Lima, Perú, creating a critical mass of work on informal employment issues. The sum of a variety of projects and activities have helped to raise awareness, build the capacities of workers, generate new knowledge, create bridges for dialogue with Government authorities, and achieve policy progress for the working poor in the informal economy.



Membership-based organizations (MBOs) of workers in informal employment from seven different sectors have been part of these projects, most of them representing national federations:

- street vendors
- market vendors
- waste pickers
- domestic workers
- newspaper vendors
- market porters
- shoe-shiners



Participants of the first course that used on-line training became tutors of other participants in following courses. Newspaper vendor Bartolome Mitma at the Communications course.

June meeting of the Multi-sector Government Board on Waste Pickers focused on the municipal program for the collection of recyclable materials sponsored by the Ministry of Finance.



The main projects have been:

- Strengthening the Voice and Leadership of informal workers around Social Policy Decisions
- Legal Empowerment of the Working Poor
- Occupational Health and Safety for Workers in the Informal Economy
- Informal Economy Monitoring Study



Debate among the top 4 Mayoral Candidates and organized informal workers, September, 2014.

WIEGO partnered with local NGOs for implementation of the projects, such as the Peru Consortium for Economic and Social Research (CIES), the Labour Program for Development (PLADES), the Spanish Cooperation Institute of the Spanish Trade Union UGT (ISCOD), and the Consortium for Health and Development (ECOSAD).

Project activities created processes in Lima that went beyond the realm of established project objectives and outputs, generating opportunities that the WIEGO team was able to work with, such as the process to undertake a new City Ordinance for Street Trade, and the work around Elections for Mayor of Lima.

New Knowledge: research

Through these projects, new knowledge has been produced on informal employment from different thematic perspectives, which has been very useful in advocacy efforts and in building capacities of workers about their importance in the workforce and the economy of Peru.

A departing point for work in Lima was the production of current statistics on the evolution of informal employment and the segments that compose it, as well as the workers' socio-demographic profile. Useful findings inform that Self-employed workers represent the largest employment category within the Peruvian workforce, remaining as a constant 33% of total employment since 2005, despite the reduction in informal employment from 81% to 75% experienced by the country due to economic growth. The youth enter the labor market mostly as informal salaried workers in micro-enterprises. Women in reproductive years are overrepresented among the self-employed. The elderly end their work life also as self-employed. There is a large gap in the education level of the Self Employed as compared to other categories of workers in formal and informal employment.

Research has reviewed social policy and social programs, and how these overlook or include workers in the informal economy. For the working poor in Peru, there is very limited access to universal health care, childcare, and old-age pensions. Cash transfers are mainly accessible to rural population. There have been efforts by the State to expand access to health insurance and pensions for informal salaried workers, via small and micro enterprise laws that create special work regimes with reduced costs and benefits.

Another departing point of WIEGO's work in Lima was a study on the existing MBOs of informal workers in Peru: their history, their struggles, and their self-organized social protection schemes. Five of the main seven workers sectors have laws that regulate their work and grant workers access to social security, but these have never been enforced. Several MBOs rely on mutual help to face the costs associated with illness, funerals, and other risks. Collective savings are common among street and market vendor organizations as a mechanism to have future access to better infrastructure.

More recently, a qualitative study performed through 17 rounds of focus groups with 9 organizations of informal workers increased understanding about the barriers faced by informal workers in effectively accessing health services, such as discrimination, being forced to pay for services that should be free of charge, long line-ups and conflicting schedules. Informal workers end up turning to unregulated private health services. The study indicated that there is a willingness by the MBOs membership to pay, at their own capacity, for health services that would be inclusive and effective.

The Occupational Health and Safety research deepened the understanding of the perceptions that waste pickers, newspaper vendors, market porters, and women in the agro-processing industry have of the risks they face at work. Workers tend to overlook work risks or perceive them as own health problems, not as work related problems. The OHS team was able to timely approach authorities at the new Wholesale market of fresh produce in Lima, to map the risks faced there by market porters, who carry loads that exceed the maximum regulated by law, and who lack appropriate infrastructure to work safely. The results of the Map of Risks contributed to the decision of a group of potatoes wholesalers to be part of a pilot project to pack potatoes in smaller sacks of less weight right from the farms where potatoes are harvested.

Improved Skills: capacity building

Through its different thematic projects, WIEGO has held training programs for the leadership of the main organizations of informal workers in Peru. On-line training has been prioritized to build computer skills, as was demanded by the workers, and combined with face-to-face modalities. The main topics of the training programs have been:

- Social policy
- Advocacy
- Communications
- Regulatory and Legal Frameworks
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Sustainability and Fundraising
- Background and implications of the International Labour Conference 2014

Exposure to dialogue with authorities has been a great capacity building tool, as well as mutual learning from the experience of the other informal workers Federations. MBO leaders now independently organize events that involve City officials and other Central Government authorities. Moreover, joint training and other collective activities of Federations has united the MBOs of different sectors, which now work together on the advocacy for common demands under a Platform of Informal Workers.