WIEGO

Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing

Start

# ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2020-***MARCH 2021***

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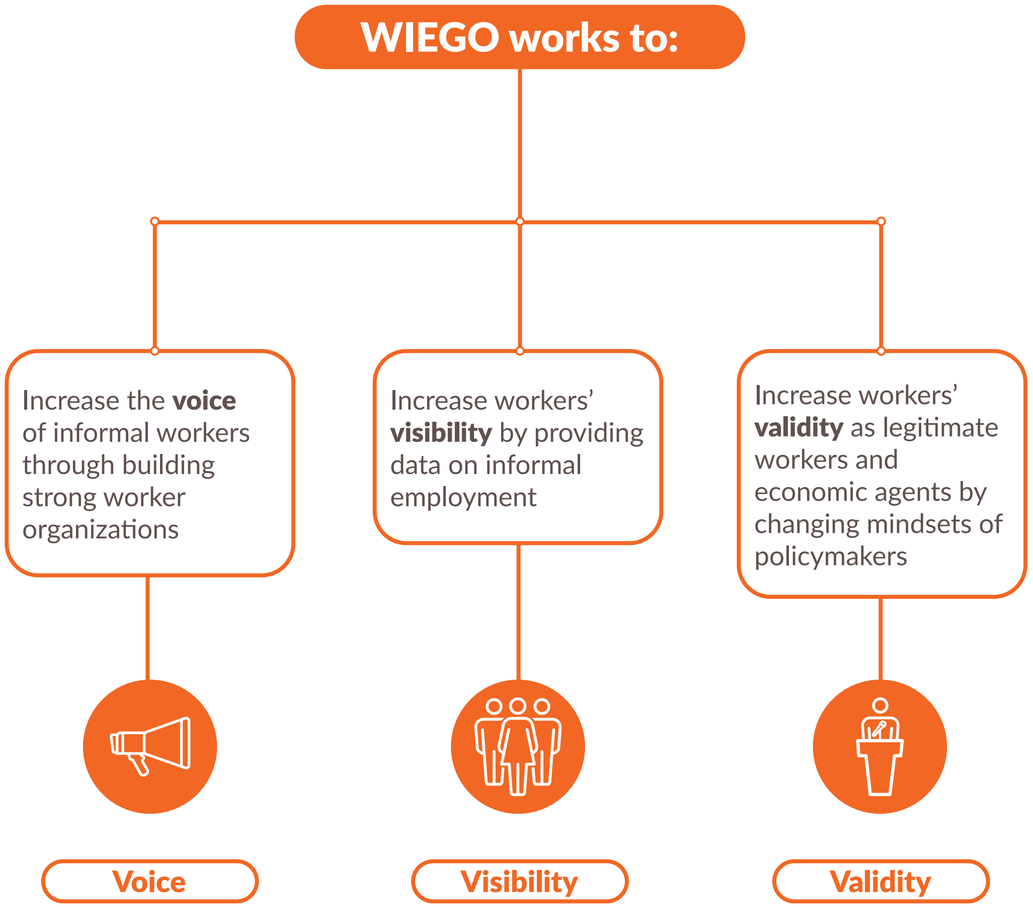
# Empowering Workers, Securing Informal Livelihoods

WIEGO is a network of organizations of informal workers and the researchers, statisticians and development practitioners who support them. WIEGO's mission is to improve the working conditions of the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy. We do this in two ways. First, we provide statistics, research and policy analysis on the informal economy. This information can be used for advocacy: **data in the hands of workers is power**. Second, we find and link up individuals and organizations of informal workers to build regional and global networks. We are building a social movement: **stronger together.**



# The Year in Review

**Mirai Chatterjee, Chair**, WIEGO Board of Directors

Dear WIEGO Family and Friends,

This past year we have witnessed and endured some of our greatest challenges ever. The serious consequences of systemic inequality and injustice, visible to all in the COVID-19 crisis, have left us mourning the loss of our leaders and members across the movement while coping with the devastating economic fallout of the global pandemic. So many workers have lost their livelihoods. So many have seen what few assets they held disappear. So many have seen their earnings drop to zero and barely recover, if at all.

The uncertainty of the pandemic and its consequences has remained with us throughout the year. What has also remained with us is the steadfast commitment of the women and men in our network to battle the injustices in these most difficult of circumstances. Collectively, membership-based organizations have mobilized around relief efforts, ensured that governments designate their members as essential, and developed new communication structures to ensure no one is alone. They have filled gaps where no one else could and brought hope where it was hard to find.

Our team, members and partners throughout the WIEGO Network have also helped to increase public understanding of the role informal workers play in communities, households and societies. They have come together across sectors and regions to join hands in solidarity and advocate for fairer policies and practices. They have formed new partnerships and alliances, developed new leaders and grown in number and diversity. They have helped to build resilience in their communities and families. They have shown us pathways to recovery by rebuilding local economies in an inclusive and fair manner.

Through everything we do as a network, our members' needs are central. The world of work as it existed before the crisis was built on unsustainable inequalities. There is now more recognition of the urgency to end those inequalities and put into place a world of work that is centred on justice and inclusion. Our strength is solidarity and we are united in our vision of a recovery for all workers.

**Mirai Chatterjee**
**Chair, WIEGO Board of Directors**
November 2021

**Sally Roever**, International Coordinator

Adaptation and learning have been at the centre of our journey through the harrowing months of 2020-2021. In April 2020, as the pandemic began to play out, we undertook an unprecedented mobilization of resources to quickly design and implement two studies – a rapid appraisal with our institutional members and a mixed-method study with partners – to assess the impact of COVID-19 on informal workers in 12 cities. Never before had our network conducted a study under the circumstances we faced at that time. But putting data in the hands of workers, now as throughout our history, was critical to their efforts to convince governments to include them in relief measures.

Several years of research, organizing and networking culminated in another monumental achievement despite the circumstances of the pandemic: the launch of HomeNet International in February 2021. Home-based workers' organizations from four regions found creative ways to continue their work towards building a democratic, representative global network, even while navigating the severe impact of the pandemic on home-based workers. In coordination with the launch, our Statistics Programme published briefs profiling the size and composition of the home-based work sector in several countries and globally, showing its crucial role in local and global production.

WIEGO's unique model combining research, organizing and advocacy shaped the way policy makers saw and understood informal employment at a pivotal moment in history. Our work with partners documenting barriers to social protection and how innovations can overcome them was disseminated through the world's most influential multilateral institutions. The garment sector work we undertook with members and partners in Asia shaped the way in which stakeholders see informality throughout the supply chain and its effects on working conditions. Local governments participated in dialogues with worker organizations as a result of our joint work with members and partners to produce policy-relevant research.

As we reflect on the lessons learned from the past year, we see our foundation of solidarity in action and the potential it holds for our common future. And as we join hands in the struggle for the future, the courage we have seen in the past year can be a source of inspiration and hope for a more just and inclusive world of work.

In Solidarity,

**Sally Roever, Ph.D.**
**International Coordinator, WIEGO**
November 2021

# The Formation of a Global Network of Home-Based Workers

The launch of HomeNet International – a global network for home-based workers – in February 2021 was the culmination of over two decades of organization building. This historic moment was witnessed by a huge number of workers and allies who attended the virtual launch at a time when an in-person meeting was impossible: there were 80 delegates from 36 affiliates from 20 countries, joined by around 200 home-based workers as observers and 200 allies.

The aim of the network is to build solidarity, share knowledge and information, take up home-based worker issues globally, raise a global voice in spaces such as the International Labour Organization, and to provide support to all regions and affiliate organizations.

The idea of a global network for home-based workers was born in the early 1990s when the issue of a convention on home work was placed on the agenda of the International Labour Conference. However, early attempts to form a global network didn't succeed and, instead, the formation and building of regional networks became the focus – HomeNet South Asia and HomeNet South-East Asia – with WIEGO in a supporting role. For the past 10 years, WIEGO has also supported organizations of home-based workers in Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe. In 2018, representatives of all five regions took the unanimous decision to form HomeNet International within two years.

WIEGO supported the formation of HomeNet International with capacity building, knowledge generation, statistics and network building. We will continue to support HomeNet International in the same way that we support the established global network organizations of street vendors (StreetNet International) and domestic workers (International Domestic Workers Federation).

# A Global Network of Waste Pickers

WIEGO is supporting waste pickers to work towards a global network to amplify their voice. Representatives of waste picker organizations from 13 countries participated in the first online meeting for the constitution of the Global Advisory Committee of the Global Alliance of Waste Pickers in June 2020. This is a significant step forward in a process that started in 2008.

# How Workers Mobilized During the Pandemic

The COVID-19 crisis has hit informal workers hard. Overnight, in places where governments enacted strict lockdowns, workers' livelihoods vanished and, to make matters worse, many found themselves stigmatized as the spreaders of the disease. Even as lockdowns eased, earnings recovered slowly and for many remained below pre-COVID-19 levels. With workers eager to get back to work instead of waiting for relief, informal worker organizations fought for the recognition of workers' essential roles in society and supported their members during this difficult time when governments failed to do enough. WIEGO has stood by them every step of the way.

## Here is what we have achieved together:

### Recognition as essential workers

When lockdowns were imposed, informal workers used WIEGO statistics and reports to formulate arguments to persuade their governments to allow them to return to work. Peru, South Africa and Colombia are some of the places where governments recognized informal workers – including waste pickers, street vendors and market traders – as essential workers, allowing them to work during lockdown. Waste pickers provide essential sanitation and solid waste management services, which contribute to public health and safety. Street vendors and market traders provide necessary goods and services and contribute to food security for the poorest and most vulnerable communities.

### Increased public awareness

The pandemic has increased public awareness of the working poor's essential roles and the hardships they face, not least because workers are standing up and telling their stories. In Peru, media reported on street markets' crucial role in the urban food chain – something WIEGO's Lima team has continuously raised with national media – and many were eventually allowed to reopen. In Senegal, WIEGO supported informal worker organizations to speak out publicly about their stigmatization as spreaders of COVID-19. In South Africa, resident organizations that had previously called for aggressive action against waste pickers now recognized the importance of their work.

### Receipt of cash transfers

Advocacy for cash transfers or grants to informal workers affected by the pandemic was successful in Peru, Ghana and South Africa. WIEGO supported this through media outreach and articulating workers' needs.

### Cross-sector solidarity

At the start of the pandemic, WIEGO organized a meeting of regional and global networks of informal workers. Since then, they have been holding weekly (now biweekly) meetings, which have significantly increased cross-sectoral solidarity – a crucial element for movement-building. The networks have worked together on various joint activities as a result, including a joint statement on May Day when they presented a global platform of demands, and the preparation of a common platform of demands for the International Labour Conference.

### Strengthened communications

In a series of Workers' Voices webinars – made possible by interpretation into various languages – WIEGO provided a space for exchange where workers' organizations and networks of informal workers could learn from each other and discuss experiences. They talked about innovative policy, advocacy, and organizing strategies during the crisis, as well as positive policy responses. Interventions led by workers' organizations to support informal workers in the pandemic were also discussed.

The pandemic contributed to the development of new communications structures, and the strengthening of existing ones, for organizations of informal workers to monitor the impact of COVID-19 and share news with their members. Information technology systems were set up to support members in applying for relief programmes and increase their use of online platforms and tools for virtual communication. The organizations also used crowdfunding platforms and created systems for food distribution among their members.

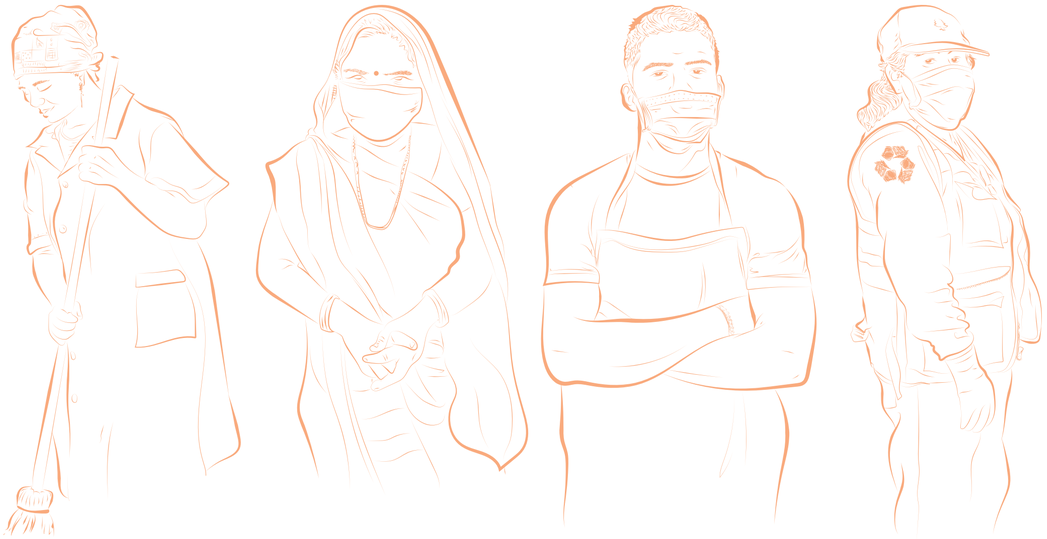
# WIEGO's Key Programmes

## Law Programme

The **Law Programme** strives for the recognition, inclusion and protection of the rights and work of informal workers in international instruments, national and local laws and regulations; and to build the capacity of informal workers and their organizations to use the law to fight for secure livelihoods and labour rights.

## Social Protection Programme

Informal workers need access to social protections that will protect and mitigate against risks to their incomes and help them cope after an event or shock. The **Social Protection Programme** is committed to helping informal workers access these rights.



## Organization and Representation Programme

The **Organization & Representation Programme** helps informal worker organizations build their organizational and leadership capacity, connect to each other and align with allies as they fight to improve the working conditions of their members.

## Statistics Programme

The **Statistics Programme** collaborates with official statistical agencies, statisticians and organizations of informal workers to develop official national statistics that make visible the size and significance of the informal economy and the situation of those working in it. This provides policy makers, researchers and advocates with tabulations on the number and characteristics of workers in the sectors of focus for WIEGO's work. The programme participates in high-level discussions to promote the use of the official international statistical definitions and methods for measuring the informal economy, and seeks to mainstream the measurement of the informal economy in official statistics at the national, regional and international levels.

## Urban Policies Programme

By working with informal worker leaders, policy makers and urban practitioners, the **Urban Policies Programme** strives to help the urban poor achieve better incomes, more secure places to live and work and the capacity to negotiate sustainable gains in urban policies and practices.

# How WIEGO Supports Domestic Workers

## Meet Pratima

**She is a domestic worker who found herself without work for three months during a strict lockdown in Delhi.**

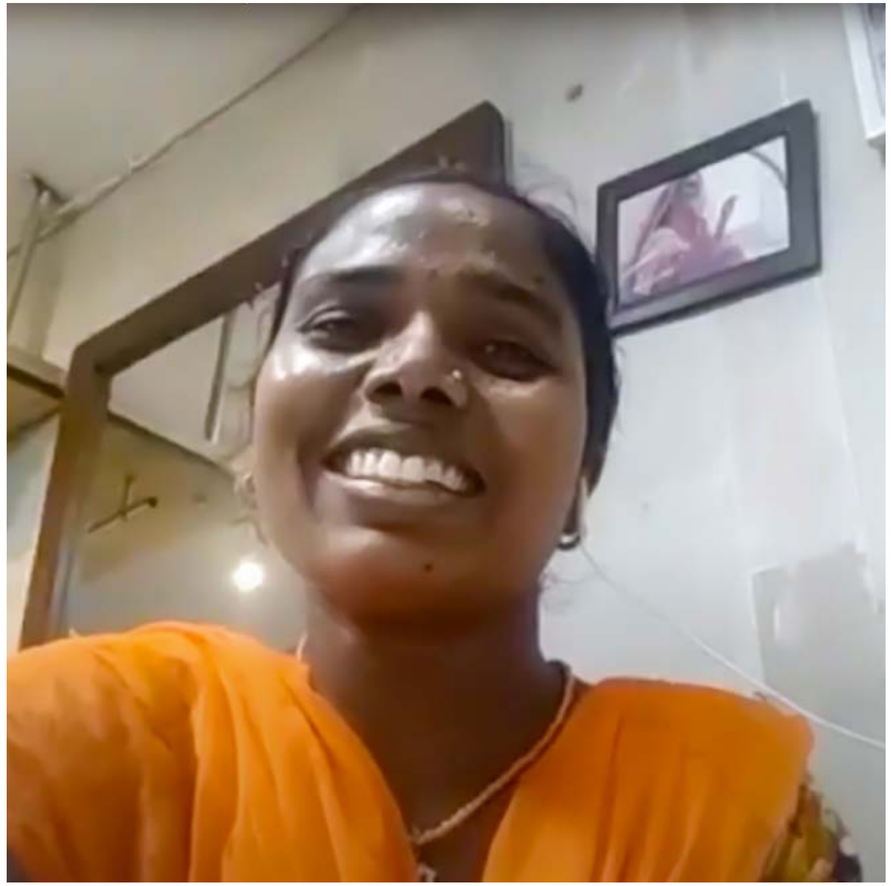
Pratima used to work in four different homes. She provides for her son, mother and brother, who live with her. For three months, during lockdown, Pratima didn't work at all. While two families continued to pay her, another only paid her half, and the fourth stopped paying her altogether.

> *"For those three months, life was very difficult. Whatever we earn, we use to run our household so, when lockdown started, we had no savings."*

By November, Pratima still worked only in two homes, instead of the four she had worked in before the pandemic.

> *"Some employers ask us to do work outside the house or to go buy vegetables. We are at greater risk of infection while going out. Our hands and feet itch all the time from all the sanitizing we have to do every time we enter the house."*

Her mother, who is also a domestic worker, has not yet been able to resume work. As a result, their overall household income has been cut in half. To eat, they receive basic rations such as oil, pulses, flour, rice and spices from the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), and also buy on credit from a shop.



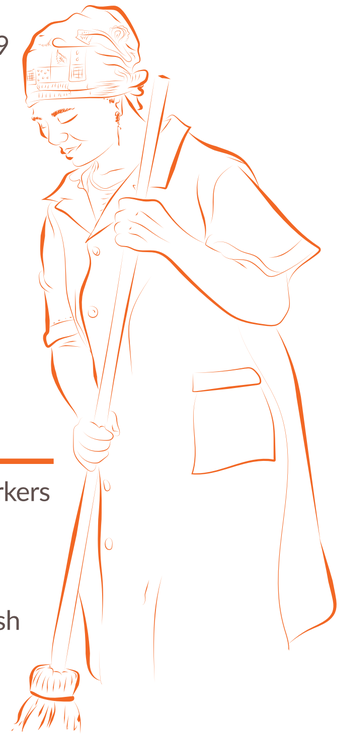
Pratima Das, a domestic worker associated with SEWA Delhi.

**Credit: SEWA**

# How WIEGO Programmes Support Domestic Workers

## Law Programme

The Law Programme builds the capacity of regional and global networks of informal worker organizations by providing technical input to support their strategies and advocacy, including on the COVID-19 response. Between March and November 2020, the Law Programme collected, collated and analyzed the laws and regulations adopted by 85 countries in response to COVID-19, with a particular focus on street vendors and domestic workers. The analysis for domestic workers focused on whether and how they were recognized as essential workers; whether and how governments protected domestic workers against lay-offs and whether they created health and safety obligations for their employers; and whether they were included in social assistance, social protection and stimulus measures.



## Social Protection Programme

WIEGO works continuously with the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF) to raise the profile of social protection among its membership. The Social Protection Programme raised funds and designed a social protection survey with IDWF's members, which helped the National Domestic Workers Union in Bangladesh and the All Nagaland Domestic Workers Union in India to better reflect on their social protection priorities and understand the needs of their members.

## Organization and Representation Programme

WIEGO has supported the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF) to become recognized as a relevant partner at the European level. European trade unions the Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT) and UNI Europa, and employers' organizations European Federation for Services to Individuals (EFSI) and the European Federation for Family Employment (EFFE) published a joint statement on the impact of the pandemic on domestic workers in 2020, and another demanding priority access to COVID-19 vaccines for home care workers. For the first time, following engagement by WIEGO and IDWF, IDWF was recognized as supporting the statements.

## Statistics Programme

The programme's Statistical Briefs provide statistics on all WIEGO sectors, including domestic workers, which bring visibility to these workers at the national and international level. Tabulations for informal workers, including domestic workers, in India, urban India and Delhi, as well as in Mexico, urban Mexico and Mexico City were provided in two new briefs. These are essential tools for planning and advocacy.

## Urban Policies Programme

To unpack the hardship, injustice and possibility for transformation within our economic system laid bare by the pandemic, the Urban Policies Programme is hosting the WIEGO-led COVID-19 Crisis and the Informal Economy Study. Together with worker organizations, WIEGO is listening to the experiences of informal workers, including domestic workers, in 12 cities. The study found that, among domestic workers, "live-out" workers were more likely to face unemployment, while "live-in" workers suffered deteriorating working conditions and terms of employment.

# How WIEGO Supports Home-Based Workers

## Meet Chevonne

**She encouraged garment workers from her community in Cape Town, South Africa into alternative work during the pandemic.**

When COVID-19 pandemic restrictions were imposed in early 2020 and all garment orders dried up, there was no relief from the government for Chevonne or the women in her family and community who sewed with her.

> *"We spent eight weeks at home with no orders. From being very busy we went to having nothing. Everything went quiet. It wasn't just my family, it was all of us… sitting in shock with nothing to do."*

> *"I thought 'I have to do something', so I went through old cupboards and found some bags of material and then I called the ladies. I said, 'come and take what you need and make skirts, pyjamas, masks'. Then at least they had something to sell – even if very cheaply – or to give their children to wear. It lifted their spirits a bit."*

Homeworkers in the garment industry are the most vulnerable and exploited link in the supply chain, largely because their role as workers is unrecognized. Although she wanted to work, Chevonne turned away two jobs she was offered.

> *"A man phoned and offered me an order to make masks for R1.50 [USD 0.09] per mask and I said no. That is slavery. No."*

When she's working late into the night, Chevonne uses this sewing machine in a small room in her home.

**Credit: Bronwen Dachs Muller**

# How WIEGO Programmes Support Home-Based Workers

## Law Programme

WIEGO seeks to influence key civil society organizations that are engaging with brands and in policy processes to include homeworkers in their strategies. In 2020, together with informal worker organizations and Asia Floor Wage Alliance (AFWA), the Law Programme called on global brands to extend a one-time Supply-chain Relief Contribution to all garment workers in their supply chains. The Law Programme also supported, together with the Organization and Representation Programme, organizations of home-based workers to provide information in an EU law-making process – a first – to compel EU companies to undertake a mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence in their supply chains. As a result, 12 organizations of homeworkers from 10 South and Southeast Asian countries developed and submitted a platform of demands to the European Union Commission.

## Social Protection Programme

The Social Protection Programme aims to enhance the knowledge and strategic capabilities of organizations of informal workers, including women within these organizations, to exercise voice and engage in alliance building for social protection. The WIEGO Briefing Note Violence at Work, spearheaded by WIEGO's Social Protection team, shows how informal workers, including home-based workers, can use the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention (no. 190) and accompanying Recommendation (no. 206) to draw attention to the domestic violence they experience in their homes and workplaces. Private homes in which domestic workers and home-based workers operate are considered high-risk workplaces due to the isolation of these workers.

## Organization and Representation Programme

Collective voice is key to improving the income, working conditions and status of workers in informal employment – especially women – whose voices are often not heard by those who make decisions that affect their lives. Through strong, democratic membership-based organizations (MBOs) that are created and led by workers, they gain the knowledge, skills, confidence and solidarity to change this. This year, as a result of the programme's support with organization building, HomeNet International and HomeNet Kenya were founded.

## Statistics Programme

Country-specific data on home-based workers are not commonly available and WIEGO has long worked to change that. This year the Statistics Programme, in collaboration with the International Labour Organization and HomeNet International, prepared the first ever global brief with cross-national comparable estimates of home-based workers by world regions and country income groups. Together with home-based worker statistical briefs for Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, they supported the HomeNet International founding congress. The briefs have laid the foundation and built interest in subsequent statistical briefs planned for countries in other regions, including Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa.

## Urban Policies Programme

To unpack the hardship, injustice and possibility for transformation within our economic system laid bare by the pandemic, the Urban Policies Programme is hosting a WIEGO-led COVID-19 Crisis Study. Together with worker organizations, we are listening to the experiences of informal workers in 12 cities. HomeNet South Asia (HNSA) and HomeNet Thailand used the COVID-19 study survey questionnaire to undertake further study of home-based workers in 17 additional cities, thereby increasing our understanding of the challenges workers are facing during the pandemic.

# How WIEGO Supports Street Vendors and Market Traders

## Meet Christiana

**Her child care responsibilities increased during the pandemic, affecting her ability to work at the market in Accra, Ghana.**

Christiana trades in second-hand clothing and has four young children. During the lockdown, she was unable to go to the market to sell as often as she would like, because her children were home from school.

> *"At first, I had to cook only once a day because the children were fed in school but, now, I have to provide food three times a day."*

> *"What is more is that I can't go to the market every day because the children are home and need to be given attention."*

WIEGO's 12-city study has shown that women informal workers who report an increase in their care responsibilities – including cooking, cleaning, child care and care for ill and older people – are working fewer days and earning less than other informal workers. Especially among street vendors, women are facing a significantly larger increase in care work than men.

In Accra, Ghana, women street vendors, like Christiana, faced difficulties related to child care and the ability to sustain their livelihoods. Workers who experienced an increase in care responsibilities are more likely to borrow money, draw on their savings or sell their assets to provide for their families. Beyond the immediate loss of income, this trend points to deepening poverty and gender inequalities in households with dependents requiring care.

Christiana at work at the market in Accra, Ghana.

**Credit: WIEGO**

# How WIEGO Programmes Support Street Vendors and Market Traders

## Law Programme

The pandemic has dealt a heavy economic blow on the African continent. The Law Programme analyzed the COVID-19 laws of 41 Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone African countries through an informal trading lens. The paper in which these findings are reported considers the implications of these laws for informal traders' continuity of work, measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and social dialogue and engagement with governments. The research will be used to provide online training and capacity building for organizations of informal workers and has been made available to a wide range of stakeholders. The project is being implemented together with WIEGO's Social Protection Programme.

## Social Protection Programme

The programme produced a series of briefs to analyze the Social Protection Responses to COVID-19, drawing from WIEGO's database of social protection responses to COVID-19, in order to support movements in their advocacy efforts to expand social protection to informal workers in this period of crisis. Various donors and organizations of informal workers have drawn on these briefs, including for advocacy. For example, StreetNet International used it in its presentation at the Global Platform on the Right to the City, and the International Labour Organization's influential Social Protection Spotlight policy brief included WIEGO's contribution based on one of the briefs.

## Organization and Representation Programme

From the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown in South Africa in March 2020, street vendors were not able to meet and became very isolated from each other. WIEGO supported the organization of virtual monthly meetings for street vendors in all nine provinces in the country. These meetings have created regular interaction and enhanced coordination among the workers, allowing them to keep track of what is going on in all the different provinces.

## Statistics Programme

Our statistical brief for urban Thailand, which included data on all informal workers including street vendors and market traders, was used by the Urban Design and Development Center (UDDC) to improve city planning to accommodate the number of street vendors and convince the Bangkok Governor to return street vendors to footpaths. The brief was also used by HomeNet Thailand to ask the National Health Commission Office (NHCO) to help facilitate a public policy for street vendors in Bangkok. NHCO agreed to discuss this issue with other stakeholders because of the large number of people affected, based on our figures.

## Urban Policies Programme

In July 2020, the Legal Resources Centre in South Africa used WIEGO's health guidelines for street vendors in a court case to secure the opening of markets in Cape Town. The health guidelines helped demonstrate that traders have taken health concerns seriously, including those related to COVID-19. The case was won and the ruling allowed traders to start working again. The guidelines were prepared together with occupational health professors, food security experts, Asiye eTafuleni – an NGO supporting informal traders in South Africa – and trader leaders.

# How WIEGO Supports Waste Pickers

## Meet Jennifer from Belo Horizonte, Brazil

**She is 25 years old and has been involved in waste management all her life.**

> *"I am a young black woman and a waste picker. I have worked at ASCITO, a waste picker association from the city of Itabirito – a town in the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte in the south-east of Brazil – since I was 16 years old."*
>
> *"Waste management has always been present in my life in different forms. As a child, my brothers and I used to go to the Ribeirão das Neves dump site with our mother to help with the work, because having more hands at work would decrease our chances of starving."*
>
> *"Even then, ASCITO was already part of the National Movement of Waste Pickers (MNCR) and therefore the waste pickers always participated in discussions and struggles for our cause. That was when I realized that I could help waste pickers by contributing to the political representation of the group. Through the bonds I developed with other waste pickers, I felt empowered."*

With support from WIEGO, As Bonitas – The Pretty Ones – was born in 2012. Bonitas refers to the Portuguese slogan mulher bonita é mulher que luta ("a pretty woman is a woman who fights"). From the start, WIEGO and As Bonitas have run workshops on gender issues and, despite COVID-19 hardships, a gender action plan for 2021–2023 has been set up.

Jennifer.

**Credit: Lina Mintes**

# How WIEGO Programmes Support Waste Pickers

## Law Programme

When the Kpone landfill in Accra, Ghana, was suddenly being decommissioned without consultation in June 2020, it came as a shock to the hundreds of waste pickers who rely on their work at the site to survive and feed their families. The Law Programme engaged the Accra-based Advocates for Community Alternatives to support the Kpone Wastepickers' Association to engage the World Bank on the government's lack of compliance with the Bank's safeguarding policies – requiring consultation and the development of a livelihoods restoration plan. The World Bank did not ultimately assume responsibility for safeguarding, and waste pickers are now advocating with the government to secure waste management contracts, finance and infrastructure to operate as an independent cooperative in the waste value chain.

## Social Protection Programme

The programme's Informal Economy Podcast: Social Protection is a source of accessible information that raises awareness about research and debates on social protection for informal workers, including waste pickers. This year, it featured topics such as universal basic income, social protection needs for older workers, and the impact of the pandemic on workers. Socialprotection.org – the leading web-based platform for dissemination of social protection resources – featured WIEGO's social protection work in Lima after it was discussed on our podcast.

## Organization and Representation Programme

WIEGO's Reducing Waste in Coastal Cities Project supports waste picker organizations in preventing ocean waste pollution by improving the capacity of waste picker organizations to be formally integrated into solid waste management in their cities. In September 2020, the city of Mangalore, India, issued occupational ID cards for 156 waste pickers as a result of enumeration of workers conducted as part of the project. This is a clear recognition by the state that informal waste pickers are part of the solid waste management infrastructure of the city. The ID cards also make the workers eligible for certain social welfare benefits, including health insurance, and allows them to open a bank account.

## Statistics Programme

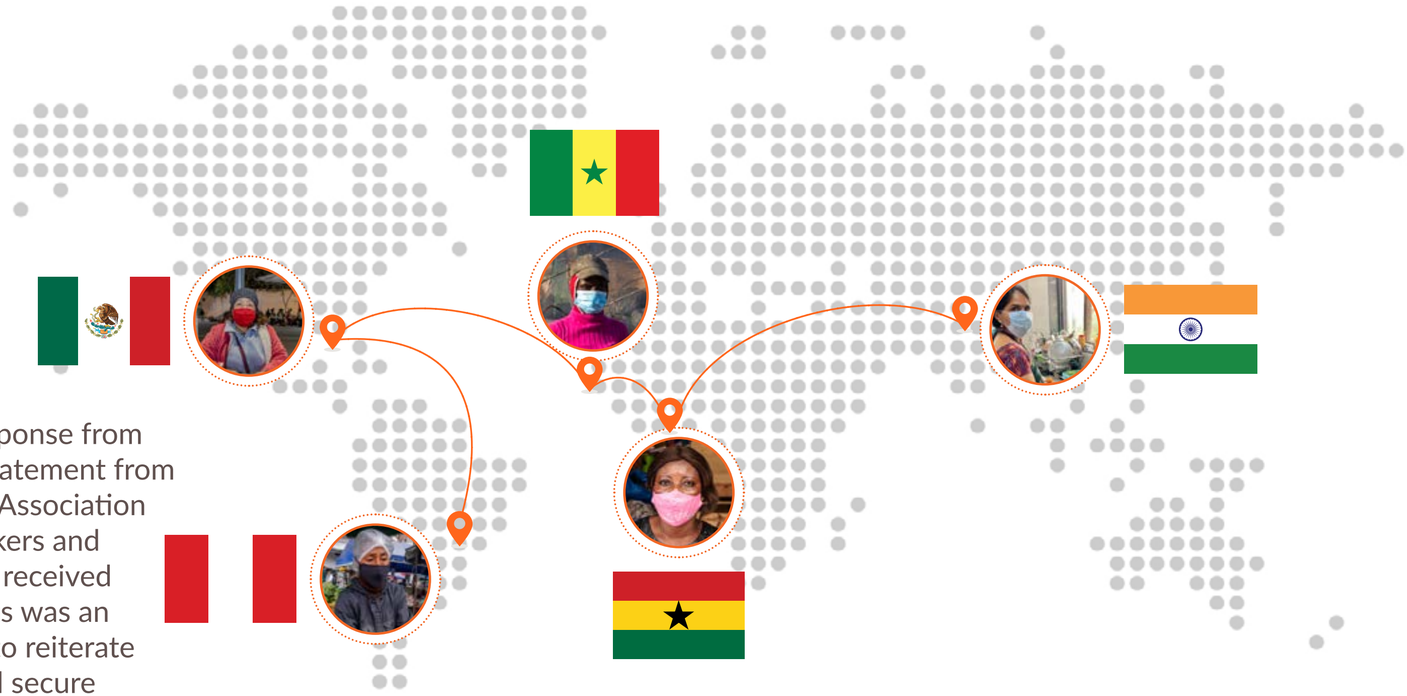
There is particularly little data on waste pickers, relative to other informal worker groups, in country and international statistics. WIEGO prepared statistical briefs on informal workers, including waste pickers, in India, urban India and Delhi and Mexico, urban Mexico and Mexico City. This affirms the importance of the continued collection of data, which makes tabulation of these workers possible.

## Urban Policies Programme

The Urban Policies Programme supports informal workers in their efforts to transform urban systems, including through raising the visibility of waste pickers in important debates. Marli Beraldo, a waste picker leader from the Acamares association in Minas Gerais, Brazil, participated in a webinar led by Brazil's National Health Foundation about the impacts of COVID-19. She shared the health and economic impacts felt by waste pickers during the pandemic. The invitation was a result of WIEGO's ongoing interactions with the Foundation on COVID-19-related work.

# How WIEGO's Focal Cities Teams Support Informal Workers

WIEGO's Focal Cities approach supports informal worker organizations to engage with government officials to secure more inclusive laws and regulations, improved urban services and a voice in urban planning and policy-making processes. WIEGO's five Focal Cities are Accra, Ghana; Dakar, Senegal; Delhi, India; Lima, Peru and Mexico City, Mexico.



## Accra, Ghana

The team works with **market traders, street vendors, waste pickers** and **kayayei /market porters.**

After a fire in a shopping mall, WIEGO reached out to worker leaders to find out the extent of the impact on informal traders and to offer support with a statement to demand a response from the authorities. The joint statement from the Greater Accra Markets Association (GAMA) and Informal Hawkers and Vendors of Ghana (IHVAG) received a lot of media attention; this was an opportunity workers used to reiterate their demand for a safe and secure working environment. Following the statement, the National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI) agreed to increase the number of eligible beneficiaries of a COVID-19 alleviation programme – although support has remained limited.

## Dakar, Senegal

The team works with **home-based producers, street** and **market vendors, waste pickers, taxi drivers, laundresses, carpenters** and **construction workers**.

WIEGO is working to secure waste pickers' livelihoods in the process of the eventual closure of the Mbeubeuss dumpsite. In partnership with strategic allies, WIEGO works to strengthen the capacity of Bokk Diom – the association of Waste Pickers of Mbeubeuss – to defend its members rights and interests as workers. Bokk Diom leaders are now holding the authorities to account for the protection of their livelihoods and are demanding inclusion in the project. In March 2021, Bokk Diom began the process of becoming a union. With the International Labour Organization and WIEGO, Bokk Diom worked in the development of two feasibility studies for the creation of a cooperative, identifying potential areas where they could participate within the waste management chain.

## Delhi, India

The team works with **domestic workers, home-based workers, street vendors** and **waste pickers**.

In Delhi, WIEGO joined a diverse coalition of allies who together formed the Main Bhi Dilli ("I, too, am Delhi") Campaign – to advocate for the need for a more participatory and inclusive approach to the next Delhi master plan, which sets the tone for the city's development for the next 20 years. As a result of the campaign's advocacy efforts, the city opened up its most inclusive public consultation process yet – accepting for the first time citizen input on the master plan before the release of a draft rather than after.

## Lima, Peru

The team works with **domestic workers, home-based workers, street vendors, waste pickers, "canillitas"/newspaper vendors** and **market porters**.

COVID-19 restrictions in Peru were among the strictest and longest in the world. Informal workers were not able to go to work for almost four months. Team Lima worked closely with membership-based organizations, government officials and the media to advocate for cash grants for self-employed workers. At the start of the pandemic, the national government granted cash support to households categorized as poor or "extremely poor", but the urban directories were not up to date and the majority of informal workers were left out of the benefit. A cash grant for self-employed workers was approved a couple of weeks after WIEGO's advocacy started and improved the reach of the cash grants to include many informal workers.

## Mexico City, Mexico

The team works with **domestic workers, street vendors, waste pickers and non-salaried workers** including **mariachi musicians, coffee vendors, shoe shiners** and **organ players**.

Through the "Rifados de la Basura" (Champions of Recycling) campaign, launched by WIEGO in April 2020, waste pickers drew attention to their working conditions through the media and gained visibility and recognition from government officials and the public. The Mexico City Human Rights Commission issued a press release soon after the start of the campaign urging Mexico City's government to protect informal waste pickers due to the high risks they faced in the COVID-19 crisis, incorporating two of the central demands of WIEGO's campaign.

# Improving the Accessibility of Our Work

Making our research available in **accessible formats** and disseminating it on various channels and in a **wide variety of languages** contributes to an inclusive environment in which workers can use our materials to inform their advocacy. Over the past year, our new **trilingual website**, increasingly visual social media messaging, and media outreach conducted by a **dedicated press team** have contributed to improved accessibility.

These strategies were, for example, used for the dissemination of WIEGO's 12-city study, which is conducted in collaboration with organizations of informal workers and assesses the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on specific groups of workers and their households. The results and outputs from the study have been widely shared by donors and multilateral international organizations, as well as by workers who have used it in their advocacy for better working conditions and rights during the pandemic.

In Peru alone, the study results were featured in 80 news and interview pieces; the ministries of labour and production in Peru took action on a recommendation of the study to provide access to small credit to informal workers; and, following a public parliamentary session on climate where the results were presented, the Lima municipal government designated informal recyclers as essential. The ILO's flagship online publication – the International Labour Review – accepted for publication two WIEGO-authored papers on the study findings. Various news outlets around the world reported on the impacts of the crisis on informal workers after receiving a press release from WIEGO.

The Law Programme commissioned the creation of **engaging materials** for their Waste Pickers and Human Rights work, which aims to improve working conditions for waste pickers through a human rights perspective and to extend the right to work to include informal workers. The materials (Spanish only) included a comic, a snakes and ladders game and a guide to recyclers' rights.

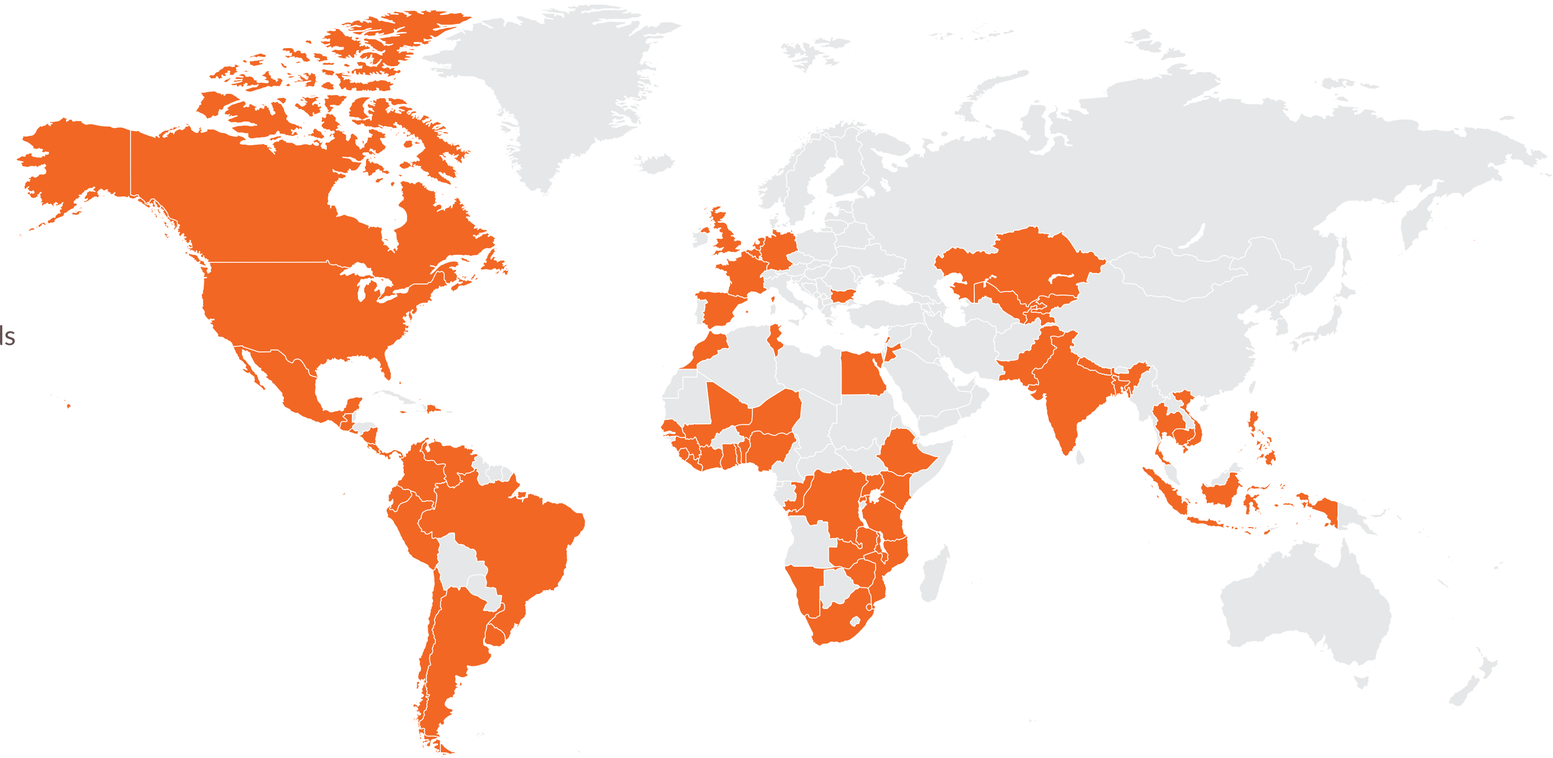
**Disseminating** our work **in partnership with donors** and large international organizations makes it more accessible for a larger audience and thus increases the reach of our work. In partnership with Ford Foundation and UNU-WIDER, WIEGO co-hosted an online event to celebrate the book The Informal Economy Revisited: Examining the Past, Envisioning the Future and to call attention to the future of informal work. This 34-chapter open-access book brings together leading scholars from a broad range of disciplines to investigate recent conceptual shifts, research findings and policy debates on the informal economy. Edited by Marty Chen and Françoise Carré, the volume is the culmination of WIEGO's first 20 years of pioneering work on the informal economy. As a whole, it calls for a paradigm shift in theory and research as well as policies, laws and regulations on the informal economy.

**Increased availability of translation and interpretation** provided by the communications team makes trainings and workshops accessible for a wider audience and has **improved representation** from our constituencies, also in global campaigns – such as the 16 Days Campaign to call for the ratification of ILO Convention 190 to end all forms of gender-based violence – which focused on women in informal employment.

For International Women's Day, WIEGO amplified the voices of women leaders – **in their own words**, made possible by translation – whose organizations stepped up to provide relief when governments failed to do enough during the COVID-19 pandemic.

# Where WIEGO Worked in 2020-2021*

- Argentina
- Bangladesh
- Brazil
- Bulgaria
- Cambodia
- Canada
- Chile
- Colombia
- Congo
- Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Ethiopia
- France
- Germany
- Ghana
- Guatemala
- Guinea
- India
- Indonesia
- Ivory Coast
- Jamaica
- Jordan
- Kenya
- Laos
- Lebanon
- Liberia
- Malawi
- Mali
- Mexico
- Morocco
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- Nepal
- Nicaragua
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Pakistan
- Panama
- Peru
- Philippines
- Senegal
- Sierra Leone
- South Africa
- Spain
- Swaziland
- Tanzania
- Thailand
- The Netherlands
- Togo
- Tunisia
- Uganda
- UK
- Uruguay
- USA
- Venezuela
- Vietnam
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe



* Includes countries where WIEGO has Team Members or Key Partners.

# The Year in Numbers

## Financial Report: Year ended 31 March 2021

### Summary

WIEGO's total incoming resources were US $11.5m for the financial year ending 31 March 2021. This compares to US $5.4m in the previous year.

Total expenditures for the year were US $7.2m, compared to US $7m in the previous year.

The full statutory financial accounts, on which the auditors Crowe U.K. LLP gave an unqualified opinion, were approved by the Directors on 4 August 2021. The figures shown here are extracted from management information. These extracts may not contain sufficient information to allow a full understanding of the financial affairs of the company.

The auditors have confirmed to the Directors that the 2020-21 figures extracted from management information are consistent with the statutory financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021.

For further information, the full statutory accounts should be consulted together with the Auditors' Report and the Directors' Report. These are available from the Company Secretary at the company's registered office in Manchester, UK.

| BALANCE SHEET | 2020-21 | 2019-20 |
|---|---|---|
| | USD $000 | USD $000 |
| **CURRENT ASSETS** | | |
| Accounts Receivable | 161 | 267 |
| Cash at Bank | 6,862 | 2,358 |
| **TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS** | 7,023 | 2,625 |
| **CREDITORS** | | |
| Accounts Payable | -690 | -636 |
| **NET ASSETS** | **6,333** | **1,989** |
| **FUNDS** | | |
| Restricted Funds | 2,999 | 705 |
| Unrestricted Funds | 3,334 | 1,284 |
| | | |
| | **6,333** | **1,989** |

*Source: Extract from the statutory accounts*

## Financial Governance

The Finance Committee of the WIEGO Board reviews the budgets and reports of all WIEGO funds and accounts. Budgetary and financial controls are reviewed continuously to reduce the risks of under or overspending and to mitigate the effect of a drop in income in any one financial year. This risk is further mitigated by the building of designated reserves, which currently stand at a level of $290k. The Finance Committee reports to the WIEGO Board for final decisions on budgets and risk management.

## Revenue and Expenditure

This report combines the income received and expenditure incurred through our accounts in the UK and reflects the organization's results overall.

## Source of Funds 2020-21

We are very proud of the number of funders who generously support WIEGO in our efforts to empower informal workers and secure informal livelihoods around the globe.

Our thanks to the organizations, foundations and governments for their generous financial support of WIEGO programmes and projects.

| SOURCE OF FUNDS | 2020-21 | 2019-20 |
|---|---|---|
| | USD $000 | USD $000 |
| The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation | 5,970 | 995 |
| Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) | 2,732 | 2,875 |
| Open Society Foundations | 1,418 | 697 |
| International Development Research Centre, Canada | 362 | - |
| The Ford Foundation | 354 | - |
| Comic Relief | 127 | 137 |
| DFID Work Opportunities for Women | 120 | 184 |
| Wellspring Philanthropic Fund | 100 | - |
| UN Women | 44 | - |
| Cities Alliance | 27 | 30 |
| FES | 24 | - |
| ILO | 20 | 14 |
| Echidna Giving | - | 150 |
| FMO | - | 42 |
| Other Sources | 246 | 292 |
| | | |
| **TOTAL FUNDING** | **11,544** | **5,416** |

*Source: Extract from the statutory accounts*

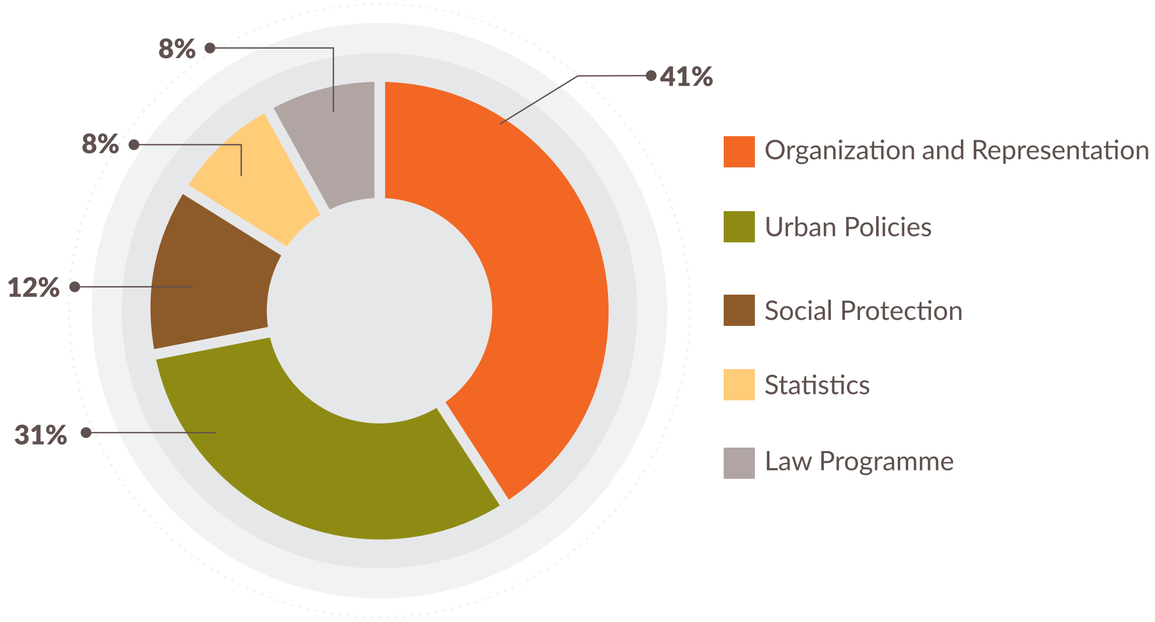
## Use of Funds 2020-21

The charts below summarize expenditure on the core categories of the organization and a breakdown of the core programmes.

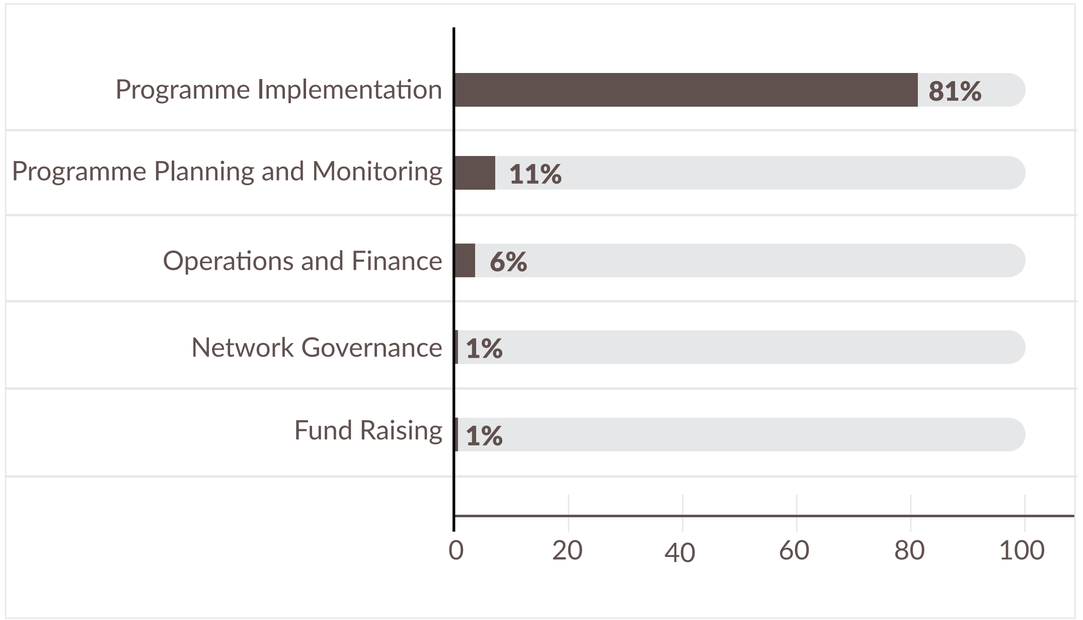
WIEGO's strategy is designed to ensure the maximum possible resources are channelled directly into programmes to meet the objective of delivering quality improvements in research, policy advocacy and capacity building.

Spend for the Urban Policies Programme includes the work in WIEGO Focal Cities.

### Total Spend by Programme




### Total Spend by Category 2020-21



# Publications & Resources

## Peer-Reviewed Publications

Every year, WIEGO researchers write and contribute to multiple academic journal articles. For a complete list of edited volumes, book chapters, journal articles and peer-reviewed working papers, visit our website.

- Chen, Martha and Carré, Françoise, 2020. *The Informal Economy Revisited: Reflections on Academic and Policy Debates*. London: Routledge.

## WIEGO Publication Series

**Working Papers** feature research that makes either an empirical or a theoretical contribution to existing knowledge about the informal economy. All WIEGO Working Papers are peer reviewed by the WIEGO Research Team and/or external experts.

- Chen, Marty, Erofili Grapsa, Ghida Ismail, Mike Rogan, Marcela Valdivia, Laura Alfers, Jenna Harvey, Ana Carolina Ogando, Sarah Orleans Reed and Sally Roever. 2021. *COVID-19 and Informal Work: Distinct Pathways of Impact and Recovery in 11 Cities Around the World*. WIEGO Working Paper No. 42

**Briefs** aim to provide user-friendly documentation for those involved in advocacy, policy and research on the informal economy.

**Policy Briefs:**

- Skinner, Caroline, Jane Barrett, Laura Alfers and Michael Rogan. 2021. *Informal Work in South Africa and COVID-19: Gendered Impacts and Priority Interventions.* WIEGO Policy Brief (Social Protection) No. 22

Highlight

**Statistical Briefs:**

- Bonnet, Florence, Françoise Carré, Martha Chen and Joann Vanek. 2021. *Home-based Workers in the World: A Statistical Profile*. WIEGO Statistical Brief No. 27

**Law and Informality Insights:**

- Pamhidzai Bamu, 2020. *The Impact of COVID-19 Laws on Informal Workers: A Review of 51 Countries*. Law and Informality Insights, No. 2

**Workers' Lives** use descriptive profiles of individual workers to explore informal employment.

- Bronwen Dachs Muller. 2020. *Hungry: A Migrant Domestic Worker in Cape Town, South Africa*. WIEGO Workers' Lives No. 10

**Resource Documents** include WIEGO-generated literature reviews, annotated bibliographies and papers reflecting the findings of new empirical work. They provide detail to support advocacy, policy or research on specific issues.

- Brittany A. Thomas, Sonia M. Dias, Cynthia Deng, Mariana Pereira Guimarães. 2021. *Ecosystem of Waste: The Role of Waste Pickers and Street Vendors in Curbing Coastal Pollution at Carnaval in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil.*WIEGO Resource Document No. 18

### WIEGO Publications Catalogue

**WIEGO Publications Catalogue**

This catalogue is a full guide to our latest publications.

## Social Protection Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic

WIEGO produced a series of briefs to analyze the social protection responses to COVID-19. The briefs aimed to support movements in their advocacy efforts to expand social protection to informal workers.

Devenish, Annie and Cyrus Afshar. 2020. Issue #1 *Government grants and cash transfers to informal workers.*

### Informal Economy Podcast: Social Protection

The podcast is a source of accessible information that raises awareness about research and debates around social protection for informal workers.

Episode #16 - Challenges to Protect Informal Workers' Livelihoods in Peru and Mexico.

## Tools for Membership-Based Organizations

### Health guidelines for workers during the COVID-19 pandemic:

WIEGO researchers partnered with health professionals and worker organizations to develop materials for waste pickers, informal traders and domestic workers.

### Worker Group Advocacy Materials:

Advocacy Materials for Home-Based Workers; Domestic Workers; Street Vendors; Waste Pickers

### E-book:

Moussié, Rachel, Laura Alfers and Jenna Harvey. 2020. *Informal Workers in the COVID-19 Crisis: A global picture of sudden impact and long-term risk*

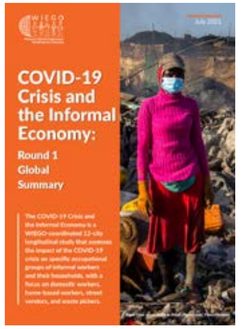
This e-book shows the global picture WIEGO found as it conducted a rapid assessment in an immediate response to COVID-19 to understand how the pandemic and the related public health measures were affecting informal workers in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

## Other Resources

### Summary of Demands:

WIEGO. 2021. There is No Recovery without Informal Workers - COVID Recovery and Post-COVID Reforms: Demands of Informal Worker Organizations.

### Highlights from the COVID-19 Crisis and the Informal Economy Study




The COVID-19 Crisis and the Informal Economy Study is a WIEGO-coordinated 12-city longitudinal study that assesses the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on specific occupational groups of informal workers and their households, with a focus on domestic workers, home-based workers, street vendors, and waste pickers. For a complete list of publications and resources from the first round of the study please visit our website.

**Global Findings:** *COVID-19 Crisis and the Informal Economy: Round 1 Global Summary*

**Executive Summary:** English, French and Spanish

City Fact Sheets

Policy Insights

Roever, Sally and Michael Rogan. 2020. *Informal Workers See a Long Road to Recovery Ahead – Unless Governments Act.* Policy Insights No.1

# WIEGO's Work

- Annual Reports
- WIEGO Digest
- WIEGO Membership-Based Organizations Newsletters
- Law & Informality Newsletters

## WIEGO Online Resources

Blogs | Videos | Webinars

## WIEGO Social Media Channels

WIEGO

Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing