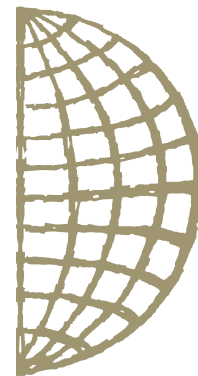

Occupational Health and Safety *for Informal Workers*

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Welcome! This is the second newsletter of the four year Occupational Health and Safety project, which is part of WIEGO's programme of Social Protection. In our last newsletter, we concentrated on the work in Ghana and Brazil. The project is now also well underway in India and Tanzania, and progress is being made in Peru.

In this issue of the OHS Newsletter, we focus especially on:



- the work in Tanzania
- the approach to workers' health taken by our partner in Brazil – the Integrated Program of Environmental and Workers' Health (PISAT) at the Federal University of Bahia
- progress in Ghana
- SEWA's work on designing better equipment for informal workers in India.

Tanzania

The past issue of this newsletter gave details of the sectors we are working with in Tanzania – domestic workers, plantation workers and street vendors. In most of the countries where we are doing the

OHS project, we set up a Country Reference Group made up of different interest groups. Vicky Kanyoka of the International Union Federation (IUF), and coordinator of the Tanzania OHS project, convened the first meeting of the Tanzania Reference Group on the 15 October 2010 at the Msimbazi Centre in Dar es Salaam.

The meeting was an introduction to the aims of the OHS project and gathered together informal worker representatives, researchers, and representatives from the Ministry of Labour, as well as from local



The Tanzania Reference Group – Front sitting: Anna Mbunda (Domestic Worker Rep). Front Row: Adwoa Saki (IUF), Mary Frederick (Plantation Workers Rep), William Mallya (Sociologist from University of Dar es Salaam), Pilly Samwell, Helen Charles (Street Vendor Rep), Deograsias Vuluwa (CHODAWU Researcher). Back Row: Dr. A.A. Omary (Occupational Health & Safety Authority of Tanzania), Peter Ngowi (Association of Tanzania Employers), Onesmo Kweyamba (Community Development Officer), Mkama J. Nyamwesa (Labour Officer), Phillipina Moshia (TPAWU Researcher). Absent: Margaret Ndagile (TUICO Researcher), Anna Marie Mavunjina (Tanzania Women Lawyers Association). Photograph: Vicky Kanyoka.

government, the national OHS agency, the Association of Employers, and the Tanzania Women Lawyers Association. A sociologist from the University of Dar es Salaam also participated. An additional bonus was the inclusion of Adwoa Saki, the IUF Regional Coordinator for Africa, who was visiting from Ghana. The Reference Group will act as the main advisory committee for the project in Tanzania.

Participatory research has been completed with the domestic workers, plantation workers, and street and market vendors. And a case study on seaweed farmers in Zanzibar was done by Dr. Flower Msuya (see below). Masuma Mamdani has also completed the OHS institutional mapping and analysis, and the annotated bibliography.

Tanzania case study: Seaweed farming in Zanzibar

The export of seaweed from Zanzibar started in the 1930s when red seaweed, which lives naturally around the island, was harvested and sent to France, Denmark and the USA. In 1989 commercial seaweed farming began. Since then, the seaweed industry has become a large part of the island's economy. The gel from the seaweed is used to make toothpaste, shampoo, perfume, ice cream, and many other products. Recently the industry has begun to have problems, mainly because of changing environmental conditions that have had a bad effect on the growth of the most profitable crop species. According to a draft



report recently provided to WIEGO by Dr. Flower Msuya, Marine Sciences Institute of the University of Dar es Salaam, many men farmers have left to seek more profitable employment in construction and tourism, and women now make up 80-90 per cent of seaweed farmers on the island.

Dr. Msuya was asked by WIEGO to conduct a study of Zanzibar's seaweed farming sector to provide a clearer picture on the overall state of the industry and its workers, as well as the types of the health and safety risks faced by the farmers.

The report shows that seaweed farmers face health and safety challenges on a number of levels, many relating to their place of work. These include itching skin and burning eyes from extended contact with seawater. More seriously, farmers are sometimes stung by poisonous *stonfish* whose sting can leave a farmer ill for up to a month. Seaweed farming is also physically demanding work: harvesting seaweed and then dragging sacks up to the beach can take a heavy toll on the body, with many workers complaining of exhaustion and aches and pains.

Finally, Zanzibar is a Muslim society where women traditionally stay in the home and wait for their men to return with household goods. Seaweed farming has changed that. It has given women a personal and

Women tending to their seaweed farms off the coast of Zanzibar. Photo by Flower Msuya.

financial freedom they did not have before, but it has also meant that patterns of family life have changed, with women being too busy to perform household work. This has created stress within families, and is clear example of how occupational issues can spill over into the home.

Dr. Msuya's study also found that there are no state OHS services for the seaweed farmers, many of whom are self-employed. Seaweed farmers in Zanzibar sell to local companies, who then sell onto larger multinational companies overseas. Some farmers are provided with protective equipment – such as boots, gloves and hats – by the companies to which they sell.

One of the most practical ways to start extending OHS to these seaweed farmers may be to put pressure on the end sellers and consumers to enforce health and safety standards through ethical trade initiatives.

Brazil

Focus on PISAT

Epidemiologist, workers' health expert, academic, and health activist, Vilma Santana wears many hats. Vilma, who also leads WIEGO's OHS Project in Salvador, Brazil, is able to combine these different roles with her work at the Institute for Collective Health at the Federal University of Bahia, where she heads up the Integrated Program of Environmental and Workers' Health (PISAT).

PISAT conducts research into workers' health issues, and is also involved in a number of activities to promote workers' health across the country. This includes running workshops for workers, state institutions, health professionals and academics; developing manuals of good OHS practice; developing OHS training courses for primary health care professionals; creating distance learning multimedia resources; running a diploma course on workers' health; and

maintaining a website that makes available databases on non-fatal work-related injuries as well as learning resources. The website can be found at www.ccvisat.ufba.br (in Portuguese only).

Under Vilma's leadership, PISAT has developed a progressive philosophy to workers' health. The programme includes both ethnographic and epidemiological methods in its research, meaning that it can produce work that is both scientifically accepted, and takes into account the wider social context in which workers are situated.



One of PISAT's guiding principles is that work needs to be defined widely for the purposes of OHS research and prevention. As a result, PISAT produces data on informal jobs, domestic employment, and housework, and other types of work that are not usually included in official statistics. PISAT believes that worker participation is essential

A focus group with seaweed farmers at Kidoti, Zanzibar. Photograph: Flower Msuya.

to the development of effective OHS policies and practices. It therefore works in close association with worker associations such as the National Federation of Domestic Workers and the Domestic Workers' Labour Union.

PISAT is closely involved in a project led by the Brazilian Health Ministry to develop the capacity of the Brazilian Unified Health System. This state healthcare provider delivers 70 per cent of all health services in Brazil. PISAT's project aims to collect data on occupational injury and disease for all groups of workers, both formal and informal.

The Integrated Program of Environmental and Workers' Health, PISAT, has the following guiding principles:

1. a comprehensive concept of work that encompasses all forms of work – including informal jobs, domestic employment, and housework – which are not always visible in the occupational or health research, prevention, health promotion programs, or official statistics
2. the workers' right to know about occupational and environmental risks, and their discretion to refuse work in unsafe or unhealthy workplaces or jobs that affect workers' dignity
3. workers' participation, including the recognition of the importance of the workers' role on OHS policies and programs, as well as the need to incorporate social organizations, labour unions, non-government organizations, and any other body in civil society that is committed to improved and inclusive occupational health and safety policies and regulations.

Ghana: StreetNet Ghana Alliance presents OHS research at the Realising Rights Workshop

Realising Rights is an organization founded by the former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson. Its goal is to put human rights at the centre of global governance and policy making. On 23 July 2010, Realising Rights hosted a workshop in Accra titled *Promoting Decent Work and Social Protection: Can We Achieve at Country Level?* The StreetNet Ghana Alliance was invited to speak at this event. Other participants at the workshop included Mary Robinson, Dr. Yaw Baah, Deputy Secretary General of the GTUC, Qaiser Khan of the World Bank, Nii Moi Thompson, who headed the ILO's Decent Work Programme in Ghana, Kamil Kamaluddeen from the UNDP Ghana, as well as Laura Alfes and Dorcas Ansah from WIEGO, and Enoch Bioh, also from the StreetNet Ghana Alliance.

Juliana Brown Afari, coordinator of the StreetNet Ghana Alliance, gave her speech in the first panel session: *The World of Work – What are the Challenges for Ghana Today?* In her speech, Juliana used research results from the WIEGO OHS Project to highlight the poor working conditions of informal workers.

She offered data about the costs of maintaining a clean and healthy work environment in Accra. The information was collected during a survey of 20 chop bars (informal eating establishments). The results of the survey are shown below:

| Services/equipment | Annual cost to business owners, averaged across study group: Ghana cedis GH¢ | Annual cost to business owners, averaged across study group: US dollars \$ |
|---|--|--|
| Water | 400 | 285 |
| Refuse removal | 277 | 198 |
| Toilet ^{*1} | 198 | 141 |
| Cleaning equipment | 388 | 277 |
| Employee health licences ^{*2} | 150 | 107 |
| Total | 1413 | 1008 |
| Fire fighting training and/or equipment ^{*3} | 187 | 134 |
| Total, including fire fighting training and/or equipment | 1600 | 1142 |

^{*1} Figures represent personal use by business owners and do not include costs to employees, and assume three visits to the toilet daily.

^{*2} Calculated at GH¢20/employee, and assumes that these licences have been paid by business owners.

^{*3} Cost of this equipment is generally a one-time expense, and so is not an annual expense. Only five out of the twenty participants had acquired fire fighting equipment.

It showed that in addition to tolls and taxes, the chop bar operators, on average, spent \$1,142 US annually on water, refuse removal, the use of toilets, cleaning equipment, employee health certificates, and fire fighting equipment. This is a lot of money for many poorer operators, and leads to a lack of incentive to maintain clean working

environments. There is a real need, then, to think about ways in which to make occupational health and safety more affordable for informal businesses in Accra.

Juliana's speech was very well received, and showed how much impact this kind of research can have on advocacy. The speech brought about a lively discussion amongst the workshop participants, and dominated the panel discussion. Qaiser Khan of the World Bank even went so far as to change his speech, which followed Juliana's, saying: "I had thought of making a bland



Juliana Brown Afari (seated far left), about to present at the Realising Rights Workshop. Seated from left to right: Afari (StreetNet Ghana Alliance); Nii Moi Thompson (ILO); Mary Robinson (Realising Rights); Dr. Yaw Baah (GTUC). Photograph: Dorcas Ansah.

presentation, but after Juliana's speech I think I need to get out of 'World Bank mode' and present something more interesting."

India

Prototype design with SEWA

In India the OHS project is working in two places with two organizations: with SEWA (the Self Employed Womens' Association), based in Ahemedabad, and with KKPKP (Kagad, Kach, Patra Kashtakari Panchayat), based in Pune. In this issue of the newsletter, we focus on the work done by SEWA.

WIEGO is supporting SEWA with their work on the design of equipment for three groups of informal workers – waste pickers, papad rollers (papad is a thin crispy flatbread), and agricultural workers – to improve their health and safety at work and to enable them to be more productive. SEWA will be working with the Maers Institute of Design (MIT) in Pune, India on the project. Students from MIT will work on the prototype designs as part of the coursework for their degrees.

The first stage of the project was a participatory needs assessments amongst the worker groups. These were conducted by SEWA in late 2010. These showed that:

- waste pickers would like equipment that can help with the efficient sorting and collection of waste, and at the same time prevent the need to bend too much.
- papad rollers would like to have a more efficient wooden stick with which to roll the dough they work with.
- agricultural workers would like better sickles, as well as face masks and possibly gloves.



Further needs assessments will be done. Then the the students at MIT, supervised by Professor Dhimant Panchal (MIT Director) and Professor Arvind Tiwari (MIT Academic Director), will begin the design process. Initial prototype designs will take 8-12 months to complete.

The design of appropriate protective equipment is not the only concern in this type of project. Many OHS professionals say that the greatest difficulty they have in promoting work health and safety is to get workers to actually *use* protective equipment. This is especially so if the equipment is expensive and/or affects productivity. This should not be a problem for the SEWA project, argues Smitha Chekanath of SEWA. She says that the needs assessment process has paid attention to how much workers would be willing to spend on equipment, and MIT will use that as a guide when designing and pricing it. There is also a strong focus on developing

The SEWA OHS Team, from left to right: Mirai Chatterjee, Ila Shah, Roshan Pathan, Smitha Chekanath, and Yasmin Sheikh. Photograph by Jayshree Parmar

equipment that will not only protect the workers, but actually increase their productivity. Therefore, the equipment should be able to both protect workers' health and also help them earn more money – which in turn may lead to better equipment use.

In the next OHS Newsletter we will develop this theme of using protective equipment by drawing on KKPKP's interventions with waste pickers in Pune, India.

Features

Get reading...



Primary Health Care Development and the Integration of Occupational Health, produced by HomeNet Thailand, an affiliate of WIEGO, shares experiences and lessons learned during the Programme for the Development of Quality of Life amongst Informal Workers, funded by the Thai Health Promotion Foundation between 2004 and 2007. Among other things, the Programme experimented with the integration of OHS services into the primary healthcare network in four regions of Thailand, as well as Bangkok. It is a “must read” for those interested in how OHS services could be institutionally positioned to better serve the needs of informal workers.

For more information about this publication and how to access it, email HomeNet Thailand at center@homenetthailand.org, or visit their webpage: <http://homenetthailand.org>.

Get involved...

The Clean Clothes Campaign and the Solidarity Committee of Denim Sandblasting Labourers of Turkey, supported by trade unions and labour-rights NGOs, have made a call to retailers to stop the selling of sandblasted jeans. They are also asking governments to place import bans on the garments. Sandblasted jeans, which have a faded, worn look, are a profitable business for suppliers and retailers, but the cost to the workers who do the sandblasting is high. Exposure to the sand particles leaves workers vulnerable to an acute form of silicosis, which damages the lungs. Forty-six cases of sandblasting silicosis have so far been reported in Turkey, although the actual number of cases is thought to be much higher.

If you would like to sign the online petition to ban the practice of sandblasting denim, go to:

<http://www.cleanclothes.org/news/killer-jeans>.

For more information visit:

www.kotiscleri.org or www.cleanclothes.org/news/killer-jeans.

Primary Health Care Development and the Integration of Occupational Health, by Homenet Thailand (picture source: Homenet Thailand website)

OHS Project Partners

| Country | Country Team Leaders | MBOs Involved |
|----------|---|--|
| Ghana | Dorcas Ansah Laura Alferts | StreetNet Ghana Alliance Indigenous Caterer's Association of Ghana |
| Tanzania | Vicky Kanyoka Masuma Mamdani | TUICO CHODAWU TPAWU |
| Brazil | Vilma Santana | Sindomestico Novo Republica Sindicato dos Vendedores |
| Peru | Estela Ospina | Watch this space! |
| India | Poornima Chikarmane Mirai Chatterjee | KKPKP SEWA |

And finally:

Subscriber list: We compiled the first list of subscribers through our existing contacts in the Social Protection Programme, and WIEGO's other programmes. Please send us the names and email addresses of others you feel would be interested in receiving this eNewsletter, or forward it on and tell them to click on the subscription link at the top of the first page.

OHS microsite as a resource: We are continuing to develop the OHS microsite, which you can find on WIEGO's website at www.wiego.org/ohs/index.php. We hope it will become a valued resource of information for people interested in and studying OHS for informal workers. Let us know what you would like to see there! Send us references and toolkits you know about!



About WIEGO: Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing is a global research-policy-action network that seeks to improve the status of the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy. WIEGO helps to build and strengthen networks of informal worker organizations; undertakes policy analysis, statistical research and data analysis on the informal economy; provides policy advice and convenes policy dialogues on the informal economy; and documents and disseminates good practices in support of the informal workforce. For more information see www.wiego.org.