



WIEGO

Women in Informal Employment  
Globalizing and Organizing

# Building Inclusive Cities

Highlights from the Inclusive Cities Project



Edited by Rhonda Douglas

# Building Inclusive Cities: Highlights from the Inclusive Cities Project

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WIEGO is a global network focused on securing livelihoods for the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy. Informal workers need voice, visibility and validity. WIEGO creates change by building capacity among informal worker organizations, expanding the knowledge base, and influencing local, national and international policies.



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- Avina Foundation
- HomeNet South Asia
- HomeNet South-East Asia
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- Latin American and Caribbean Network of Waste Pickers (Red Lacre)
- Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)
- StreetNet International

The specific case examples and worker profiles included have been written by writers contracted by WIEGO or its partners, and have been edited down to shorter summary versions from their original form. Any errors or omissions are the fault of the Editor.

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# About the Inclusive Cities Project

From 2008-2014, WIEGO coordinated the Inclusive Cities Project – a multi-country 5-year project involving 9 primary partners with activities in 3 regions: Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the project began as a collaboration of membership-based organizations (MBOs) of the working poor, regional/global alliances of MBOs, and technical support organizations who worked together to improve the situation of the working poor.

The aim of the project was to strengthen MBOs in organizing, policy analysis, and advocacy so urban informal workers had the tools necessary to make themselves heard in urban planning processes.

WIEGO and its Inclusive Cities partners agreed upon a mutual vision of inclusive cities that value all people and their needs and contributions equally. The project defined “inclusive cities” as those that ensure all residents – including the urban working poor – have a representative voice in governance, planning, and budgeting processes. Inclusive cities ensure the working poor have access to secure and dignified livelihoods, affordable housing, and basic services such as water/sanitation and electricity supply.

In addition to WIEGO, primary partners in the Inclusive Cities Project included: Asiye eTafuleni (South Africa), Avina Foundation (Latin America), HomeNet South Asia, HomeNet South-East Asia, Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (India), Latin American and Caribbean Network of Waste Pickers, Self-Employed Women’s Association (India), and StreetNet International.

The project was initially funded in September 2008 and ran for 6 years, supporting activities in 3 regions: Asia, Africa and Latin America. Impact highlights from the project can be found at [www.inclusivecities.org](http://www.inclusivecities.org).



# Building Inclusion: Working with Organizations of the Urban Working Poor

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By Rhonda Douglas

The world's urban population has more than doubled in the past 30 years. With the agreement on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the signing of the New Urban Agenda (NUA), the pressure is increasingly on city governments to build more inclusive cities.



Juan Arredondo / Getty Images Reportage

*Waste pickers who have been in informal recycling for years or even generations and understand their contribution to reducing greenhouse gases will not just fade away.*

## The Challenge Facing Today's Cities

It's certainly true that the economic make-up of cities has changed. Over half of the non-agricultural workforce in most developing countries – over three quarters in some – work in the informal economy. So while formalization may happen over time, it likely won't happen quickly enough in places where 50%, or even 80%+ of working people are currently making a living informally. What are cities – and workers – to do in the meantime?



*Consumers will continue to buy their vegetables at markets to support local commerce and get a better price.*

Juan Arredondo / Getty Images Reportage

The challenge is immense, and city governments cannot do it alone. For every street vendor evicted, another one (or two) eventually take their place. Consumers will continue to buy their vegetables at markets to support local commerce and get a better price. Waste pickers who have been in informal recycling for years or even generations and understand their contribution to reducing greenhouse gases will not just fade away. And home-based workers who must make a contribution to ensure their families can eat and their children can go to school are not going to stop producing goods from their houses.

There is no way to simply “get rid of” the urban informal economy, and cities that try find themselves deeply frustrated, with elected officials running for re-election in the face of angry protests, or city bureaucrats and police officers taken to court by an increasingly organized and capable movement of informal workers and their supporters.

But there is hope: it is possible to build inclusive cities! As the cases in this handbook demonstrate, urban authorities can allow street vendors, hawkers, market traders and the open-air markets, small kiosks or built markets where they vend, to co-exist alongside large retail malls. They can incorporate waste pickers into modern solid waste management systems. And they can support home-based production through basic infrastructure services and appropriate zoning policies.

There is an urgent need to provide basic services: access to water, sanitation and shelter to the urban poor, especially for those whose homes double as their workplaces. However, conceptual, institutional and resource barriers often prohibit this alternative vision for cities. City governments are in the best position to change these barriers and can look to organizations of urban informal workers for partners to collaborate in doing so.

What is required is to develop an inclusive approach to urban zoning, regulations and laws, as well as the plans and policies that integrates the livelihoods of the urban working poor, and to prioritize infrastructure delivery to the urban poor both where they live and where they work. Representatives of the working poor must have a voice in urban planning processes, and as they do so, they become constructive partners in building more inclusive cities.

## **Possibility-Thinking Through Promising Practice**

The cases shared here help show the way forward. They are only a few of the successes and highlights from the Inclusive Cities Project, where membership-based organizations of the urban working poor and their technical support partners worked together around a mutual vision of inclusive cities that value all people and their needs and contributions equally.

As the Inclusive Cities Project drew to a close, WIEGO commissioned a set of case studies as part of the final project evaluation. The purpose of these impact case studies was to identify where project partners experienced success, document the strategies used to achieve these positive outcomes, and to assess critical success factors and lessons learned so that successes of Inclusive Cities (IC) partners would be useful for learning and reflection by the IC partners as well as other organizations seeking to support the working poor in the urban informal economy.

To that end, case studies outlined the situation prior to the intervention, the nature of the intervention (conveyed in adequate detail so that others could potentially



Paula Bronstein/ Getty Images Reportage

**Bhavna Ben Ramesh** (at machine) and **Urmila Rathore** work on sewing hand-made purses at home. Their work is essential to their family's income, though women's home-based work often goes unrecognized. They are members of Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), a trade union for poor, self-employed women in the informal sector, and Mahila Housing Trust (MHT), a NGO that improves the housing conditions of poor, informally employed women.

adapt relevant strategies for other contexts), and the factors that made success possible in a particular context.

A selection of these cases are included here in summary form, with greater detail and further information available through the WIEGO website at [www.wiego.org/cities](http://www.wiego.org/cities). They are offered both as food for thought and inspiration for action by forward-thinking cities (and their partners in national government) who understand that the informal economy and its workers make significant contributions both to national GDP and to the vibrancy of city life.

To put these cases into context, it's helpful to understand some background about the Inclusive Cities Project.

## **Inclusive Cities Project: a Theory of Change**

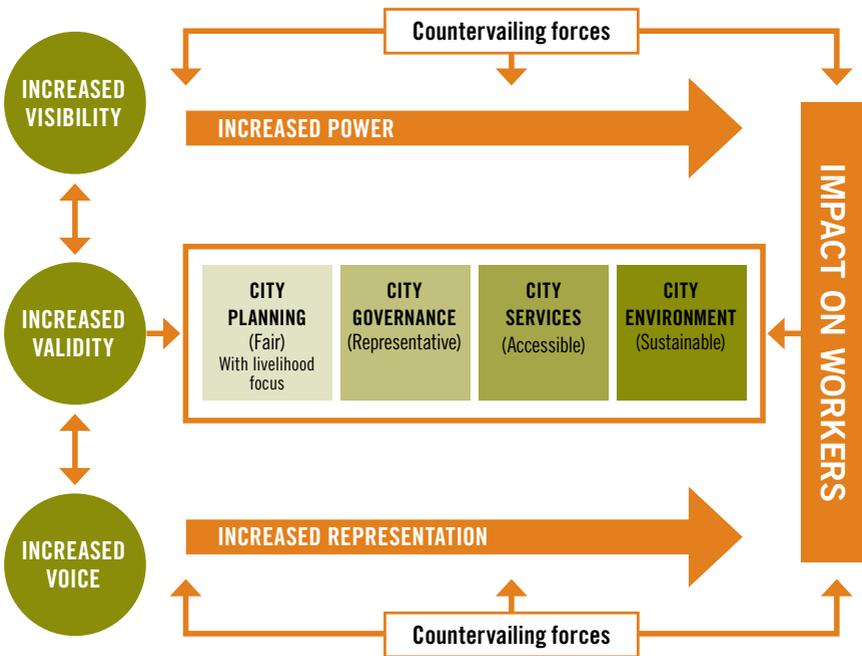
The Theory of Change (TOC) for the Inclusive Cities Project was developed jointly with partners during one of the annual learning meetings where worker leaders were present. It is a city-focused elaboration of the WIEGO Theory of Change, with workers having identified those elements of their engagement with the city that need to be in place in order to ensure secure livelihoods for urban informal workers.

The Theory of Change posited that if informal workers are counted as workers, primarily within statistics and other data relied upon by city officials and urban planners (Visibility), and are recognized as legitimate economic actors (Validity) by policy makers, and are able to participate in the processes and discussions that affect their lives/livelihoods (Voice) then informal workers will be able to achieve Increased Power and Increased Representation. With these necessary pre-conditions in place, informal workers and their organizations can have an impact on city planning, city governance, city services and the city environment. Ultimately, changes in these spheres should result in an impact on informal workers and their families.

However, the Theory of Change also recognized that none of this anticipated progress would happen in a vacuum – multiple countervailing forces are also present at the same time, potentially limiting or reversing the positive impact workers can make.

Examples of countervailing forces included real estate pressures (e.g. to build a mall where a market now stands), macro-economic trends (e.g. a global economic crisis), as well as corruption and/or collusion (e.g. a city councillor takes a bribe to vote against inclusion of waste pickers). Notwithstanding these countervailing forces, the project Theory of Change held that with sufficient support organizations of urban informal workers could make progress in improving the livelihoods and lives of the working poor.

**Figure 1. Inclusive Cities Theory of Change**



## Issues and Challenges Shared by Urban Informal Workers

As mentioned above, partners in the Inclusive Cities Project contributed a set of case studies to a final project evaluation process, of which 12 cases across 10 cities were then examined further in a content analysis process. This process was important in understanding what the common issues and experiences were for urban informal workers across different countries and regions, and to what extent the problems, solutions and success factors were shared.

The set of most often cited problems identified included inadequate housing and basic services, a non-existent or often punitive legal/regulatory framework used against urban informal workers, multiple cases of evictions and relocations, identified health issues, organizing challenges and overall low incomes for workers.

Interestingly, almost 50% of the problems identified are issues where either city or state authorities – or both – have the locus of control and therefore the ability to enact change. Not a single case identified issues where the individual worker, acting on their own accord, could have affected significant improvements, reinforcing the persistence of poverty for those at the bottom of the economic pyramid in today's cities.

The case study analysis supported the idea of organizing as a necessary pre-condition for workers to engage government on those issues which are outside the locus of control or ability of either the worker or the MBO themselves to change. (This reflects common sense, as cities must have organized groups with whom to collaborate.)

The importance of legal advocacy and technical support in engaging with government also emerged as critical interventions. Legal interventions in particular point to the potential sustainability of the project's impact over time through the achievements of new laws and policies supportive of the urban informal economy. When urban informal workers organize and are met with continued resistance at the city level, they are often able to reach out to national governments and/or through the court system in order to achieve the changes they need to improve their lives and livelihoods.

At the close of the case studies, groups of workers were asked to reflect on their continuing challenges. In the content analysis, it was clear that 41% of the total number of issues mentioned in this category were in fact political issues. These included: confusing and overlapping mandates among levels of authorities, the



Paula Bronstein / Getty Images Reportage

**Samnvay Tocharoen** works in a small factory producing bronze silverware. Bronze craft has been long practiced by members of Pradit Torakarn Community in Chatuchak district, Bangkok. Producing bronzeware involves a range of health risks and injuries. As part of Informal Worker Association facilitated by HomeNet Thailand, the Bronze craft group got to learn about how to improve their occupational health and safety and they also contributed to the national advocacy on the National Health Security Act. The successful advocacy led to the introduction of the Universal Healthcare Coverage Scheme in Thailand in 2001 which provides unprecedented health coverage to all informal workers, including home-based workers in Thailand.

vested interests of politicians and bureaucrats, city authorities blaming informal workers for congestion or unsanitary conditions, political unrest, changes in government counterparts which risk or rollback gains, historical prejudice, political ambivalence or apathy, bureaucratic hurdles, paralysis of government officials while waiting for elections, inconsistent implementation of national or state laws at local levels, appeasement of landowners by city officials, top-down planning and development models, discrimination and a complete disregard for livelihoods by government officials.

MBOs also noted a lack of funding at the local level, a lack of trained professionals, and increased migration putting additional financial pressures on the city. Also related to this set of issues were the challenges categorized as “conflicting agendas”, such as there being no perceived incentive for cities to consider inclusive planning in the face of the push for “World Class Cities,” and circumstances (cited for example in Pakistan) where national policy is developed from a security perspective, not to support livelihoods or infrastructure development.

The emphasis on political problems in the set of continuing challenges raised by MBOs through the case studies points to the “countervailing forces” identified in the Theory of Change and here too, the locus of control is well beyond that of the individual worker or even a relatively-small MBO of informal workers. While legal interventions may have some impact here – in terms of courts holding city politicians and bureaucrats to some level of accountability – it also seems evident that an increase in the organization of urban informal workers, *combined with collaborative engagement on the part of city administrations*, is necessary to truly make it possible to achieve more Inclusive Cities.

As the world community seeks to address the challenges outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda, it’s clear from both the successes and the continuing challenges of the partners in the Inclusive Cities Project that collaborations between organizations of urban informal workers, as well as city and national governments, are the essential building blocks for building more inclusive cities.

The cases and urban worker profiles that follow offer inspiration and, on closer read, a road-path for those cities visionary enough to follow it. As a starting point, we offer Further Reading and Resources, as well as some guidelines on how to convene a policy dialogue. Cities interested in further pursuing collaboration with organizations of the urban informal workforce are encouraged to visit [www.wiego.org](http://www.wiego.org) or contact us directly at [wiego@wiego.org](mailto:wiego@wiego.org).

# Case Studies

## CASE NO. 1:

# Safer, Healthier Markets in Accra, Ghana

by Tony Dzidzinyo Dogbe and Suki Annan



Jonathan Torgovnik / Getty Images Reportage

*Historically, market traders and street vendors in Accra have faced unsafe and unhygienic working conditions, which arise out of institutional and governance challenges. The majority of vendors, many of them women, sell food and related items, cooked food, and cloths, or are artisans like hairdressers, carpenters, tailors, and seamstresses.*

These traders and vendors belong to the informal economy—as do 73 per cent of Ghana’s workers—and their earnings are often below the national minimum wage. They face high levels of economic and financial risk, job insecurity, harassment by local authorities, lack of access to credit, and lack of involvement in national and policymaking processes.

Because of this lack of institutionalized channels of communication, a lack of information delivered to informal workers, a system of patronage and deference to authorities, and a system in which misuse and embezzlement of revenue from the market is common, market traders and street vendors face many occupational health and safety hazards:

- Poor drainage and waste disposal and inadequate cleaning which lead to the breeding of disease vectors, food poisoning, and diarrhea;
- Frequent fire outbreaks in markets;
- Insecurity of the traders and their wares because of inadequate lighting in many market areas, the lack of safe and sufficient storage facilities, and the presence of criminals;
- Harassment from local government officials;
- Physical and psychological effects resulting from the unhealthy and unsafe work environments.



*Workers gained knowledge of how to engage with city authorities, who, in turn, are responding positively.*

Jonathan Torgovnik / Getty Images Reportage

## What Changed?

Two trader associations—the Makola Market Traders Union (MMTU) and the Ga East Traders Union (GETU)—recognized that as individuals, traders are weak when dealing with the local government or city authorities. Over the course of years, they mobilized other traders, often at their own expense.

Then, they conducted a study that revealed occupational health and safety (OHS) issues and the institutional challenges needed to be tackled from above and from below. But pressure from below can't be effective without adequate information—a principle that informed the traders' subsequent strategies.

The next steps were to disseminate information to traders' associations, to build workers' skills (through workshops and dialogue sessions), and to engage effectively and proactively with the local authorities.

Both unions, together with nine other informal workers' associations, also formed an umbrella organization. In the long term, this organization will be well positioned to support the traders in their struggle for recognition and for safe and healthy working conditions.



Jonathan Torgovnik / Getty Images Reportage

*Informal vendor **Monica Agyei** sells dried fish, shrimp, meat products, and spices at her stall in Makola Market. Monica is one of the more than 2,000 members of the Makola Market Traders Union, an affiliate of the Ghana Trade Union Congress (TUC). Its main intervention activities include development projects in the market and negotiations with local and national government for better conditions for its members.*

## Results

For the workers, the series of workshops and the dialogue sessions with the city authorities and service providers reinforced the importance of mobilization, networking, coalition-building, and direct representation in local government structures. The workers also gained knowledge of how to engage with the city authorities, who, in turn, are responding positively.

Workers also gained:

- Better awareness of OHS issues;
- Information on registering with the NHIS;
- Training on how to douse small fires before they get out of control;
- Training in basic bookkeeping, financial management, and how to access credit, which means vendors have improved savings;
- The confidence and ability to speak in public forums and to engage with city authorities, which has resulted in new infrastructure.

Overall, better OHS in the market benefited the city by:

- Minimizing the spread of communicable diseases;
- Ensuring citizens' continued access to basic services and necessities;
- Improved infrastructure and services;
- Continued revenue from markets, which contribute an average of 20 per cent to the AMA's internally generated funds.

## What Made It Work?

- A decentralized local government, which gives citizens the courage to come together without fear and allows them to engage with local authorities;
- Committed and selfless leaders;
- Research that helped explain real and pressing issues;
- Bottom up and top down approaches to tackling challenges;
- In addition to support from WIEGO, the involvement of progressive institutions like the Ghana TUC, the Institute for Local Government Studies (ILGS) and People's Dialogue on Human Settlements, who are already engaged with the informal workers and their needs;
- A facilitative organization that knows how to harness and motivate other institutions;
- Joining a trade union (Ghana TUC), which has international links;
- Learning lobbying and negotiation skills.

## CASE NO. 2:

# Improved Transport in Bangkok

by Chonticha Tangworamongkon



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*In Bangkok, many home-based workers have been relocated from the centre to the outskirts of the city as a result of major infrastructure projects. Before these relocations, which were conducted with little regard to the impacts on the affected people, residents were assured that basic utilities and public transport would be provided. Neither of these promises were realized: some areas remain underdeveloped and lack accessibility to basic utilities such as tap water. The area is also under-serviced in terms of public transport—a lack that deprives home-based workers of their livelihoods.*

Home-based workers (HBWs) need to commute to central Bangkok to buy materials, take orders, and deliver their finished works, not to mention access basic services such as hospitals, markets, banks, and the district office, none of which are available within walking distance.

The poor public bus service, then, poses two major problems. To travel by public bus is time-consuming: its service is not scheduled and is irregular, especially because it uses an indirect route. For home-based workers, the time spent travelling by public bus is equivalent to the loss of time for their livelihoods. Some of them spend the whole day on commuting alone. Second, in order to shorten time on commuting, workers need to spend much more money on private transportation, such as motorcycle taxi or taxi. Yet, home-based workers cannot afford this choice—their average income is well below 300 baht, which is the minimum daily wage of workers in the formal economy.

## What Changed?

HomeNet Thailand (HNT) has been working since 1992 to empower home-based workers through a variety of strategies, including organizing, networking, capacity building, researching, information dissemination, and advocacy for policies that enhance the social protection of informal workers.

As part of the Inclusive Cities Project, HNT worked to strengthen the capacity of home-based workers with the aim of ensuring urban planning that takes into account the interests of the working poor. In order to address the transport issues in a way that empowered workers, HNT facilitated a series of city dialogues with the HBWs, residents of the districts, and city officials to achieve the following:

- Unity in all the various districts under a common cause – to increase the residents' influence through their combined numbers and to demonstrate how cooperation between the districts could be achieved;
- Knowledge of the city's bureaucratic systems and how to navigate them;
- Introduction of officials to the HBWs and community members so they could be acquainted with their concerns;
- Commitment from authorities to address the issues presented.

## Results

- The dialogues empowered HBWs and other community members and enabled them to articulate their realities and problems;
- The dialogues raised HBWs' visibility to authorities;
- Information sharing and diverse perspectives enhanced understanding of the issues;
- HBWs learned about local administration and the roles of different authorities;
- By recognizing that poor bus service is an issue shared by a majority of different communities, the HBWs and community members have overcome their political divisions in order to address the issue;
- Allowing communities to have a say ensured development that genuinely responds to people's needs while addressing city problems;
- The Bangkok Mass Transit Authority (BMTA) said the dialogue was useful because of the rare opportunity to hear directly from the community;
- The BMTA has approved two more buses for route No. 143, significantly improving the regularity of the service;
- A petition for the construction of a pedestrian bridge has been forwarded to the Traffic and Transportation Department of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) for approval.

## What Made It Work?

- Participation of engaged, knowledgeable, and sympathetic representatives from concerned authorities. This made it possible for a fruitful dialogue where input—information, limitations, and suggestions—from officials can contribute to the most viable and appropriate solution;
- Committed leaders with essential organizing assets. These well-recognized leaders can serve as powerful hubs for effective networking;
- Engaging a wider group of affected people and mobilizing community support in the city dialogues. This united people within and beyond their communities despite internal conflicts;
- Using a bottom-up and democratic process ensured people's autonomy and participation;

- Keeping the key issues and message focused made it easier to create concrete solutions;
- Thorough research enabled HNT to learn and share with workers the complexity of government agencies' overlapping mandates and roles;
- Sufficient skill and dialogue preparation allowed community representatives to strategically present arguments.



Paula Bronstein / Getty Images Reportage

*Bangkok's informal workers account for 5.1 per cent of the total number of informal workers reported in Thailand, which is 24.8 million people.*

## CASE NO. 3:

# Waste Pickers as Public Service Providers in Bogotá, Colombia

By Olga Abizaid and Federico Parra



Juan Arredondo / Getty Images Reportage

*Colombia's waste pickers have been an extremely vulnerable group of people. Often they are migrants and displaced people driven from their homes by the country's armed conflict. They have low levels of education and few employment alternatives. On average, their daily income is less than US \$4 a day, and only 5 per cent of these workers can afford to make contributions to social security. As waste pickers, they face harassment, discrimination, abuse, and even violence.*

These low wages and abuses arise from a system that favours models of privatization and from a changed perception of waste from worthless to valuable material. This means that waste pickers have lost access to waste. They have also lost regulatory and policy battles to private interests that have the capital and political influence to define governance practices in their favour.

## What Changed?

Since the 1990s, the Asociación de Recicladores de Bogotá (ARB) has been defending waste picking as a profession, encouraging the upward movement of waste pickers in the recycling value chain, and working towards the integration and remuneration of their activities into the public service. The ARB has 1,800 members, 58 per cent of whom are women.



Juan Arredondo / Getty Images Reportage

Waste picker **Elkin Padilla** works at the collection centre managed by the Asociación de Recicladores de Bogotá (ARB), an organization of waste pickers' associations and cooperatives that advocates for waste pickers' rights, compacting materials. By sorting, compacting, and preparing materials for reuse by the manufacturing industry, waste pickers play an important environmental and economic role in reducing the demand for new raw materials.

Under the Inclusive Cities Project, ARB opted to overcome the challenges waste pickers face through four strategic, simultaneous approaches: legal defense of waste pickers' fundamental rights, social mobilizing, forging alliances, and developing specific proactive policy proposals.

The use of legal defense has been ARB's most visible approach and has produced a series of Constitutional Court pronouncements upholding the waste pickers' rights to:

- Participate as independent service providers in the waste management system in the components of recycling and transportation;
- Benefit from affirmative actions to guarantee a level playing field vis-à-vis other tenders for procurement contracts and to be able to integrate more effectively into the waste management system;
- Have legislation on waste management that does not affect their right to work and to earn a livelihood;
- Be recognized as public service providers and be compensated for their work, which benefits the city.

In response to Order 275 of the Constitutional Court, ARB worked to form a Recycling Pact with other organizations. In March 2012, in alliance with the Pact, ARB presented a proposal for the inclusion of waste pickers into the waste management system. Though some differences remain, the city adopted many points for this proposal in its own waste management plan. For example, the city developed a programme to compensate animal-traction vehicles, and it started a process to provide waste pickers with ID cards.

ARB played an important role in the negotiation and set up of a payment scheme, including a tariff methodology and incentives for end users to promote the concept of recovering recyclable materials. ARB also negotiated that payment be made directly to individuals and that all waste pickers would be the beneficiaries of the payment scheme, not just ARB members.

## Results

Bogotá's payment scheme was launched in March 2013, and by January 2014, the scheme covered about 5,000 waste pickers, of whom 35 per cent were ARB members. To participate in the payment scheme, waste pickers had to comply with a number of requisites: they had to be included in the census of waste pickers, have an ID card, and have a bank account.



*Since the 1990s, the Asociación de Recicladores de Bogotá (ARB) has been defending waste picking as a profession.*

Juan Arredondo / Getty Images Reportage

Waste pickers within the payment scheme receive \$87,000 Colombian pesos (about US \$46) for each tonne of recuperated materials that is weighed at authorized weighing centres. Payments are bimonthly and are additional to the money received for the sale of recovered material.

## What Made It Work?

- ARB's strong organizational capacity and relationship with waste pickers;
- Clarity on goals and positions;
- Ethical leadership;
- Informed proposals and strategies based on research and analysis;
- Partnerships with national and international organizations and networks;
- The primacy of basic human rights within the political constitution of Colombia and the existence of channels for legal recourse to individuals whose rights are abused by the actions or omissions of authorities;
- A government willing to change the model to include waste pickers in the system;
- Informed use of legal mechanisms;
- Partnership with support organizations, which is key in effective negotiations;
- A high degree of cohesion within the organization as well as organizational strength;
- Continued resources to develop entrepreneurial skills and a business model;
- Recognition that change takes time.

## CASE NO. 4:

# Improved Livelihoods for Home-Based Embroidery Workers in Delhi, India

By Ruchi Sankrit



Sofia Trevino / WIEGO

*For the vast numbers of workers in Delhi—86 per cent of whom work in the informal economy—equity remains largely unattainable. This is particularly true for home-based workers, a large workforce within the informal economy. These workers, over half of whom are women, are predominately embroidery workers who earn their livelihood from Delhi's large garment and apparel industry. Many of these workers are migrants from other states in India and have specialized skills in embellishments, sequins, and beads.*

Delhi's home-based workers face many challenges. They are at the bottom of a global value chain, receiving work and payment from sub-contractors, and have the least bargaining power. They are vulnerable to exploitation, irregular work, and low wages. They live and work in dilapidated housing, with little or no sanitation and access to electricity—both of which affect productivity and health.

Workers also have no opportunity to advance or update their skills to keep pace with fashion, and they lack access to social security and credit to buy costly supplies.

## What Changed?

Since 2006, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) Bharat has been working to increase livelihood opportunities for home-based workers through the creation of a new production model, enterprise development, social security services, and advocacy.

This work itself is centered around three Embroidery Centres in slum areas. Situated very close to members' homes, these are used for linking members to the production process as well to support services like health training, microfinance, and skills training. Close to 800 home-based embroidery workers are linked to the centres on a regular basis, and they use the centres to collect and deposit work orders. A further 10,000 SEWA members use the centres for support services.



*Since 2006, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) Bharat has been working to increase livelihood opportunities for home-based workers.*

Through these centres, SEWA has helped reorganize the supply chain by bringing home-based workers into direct contact with international markets, eliminating middleman contractors, and setting piece rates, which doubles their members' incomes. SEWA also leads the production process and logistics between members, centres, and suppliers, and keeps a transparent payment system. SEWA also regularly leads workers through skill-building, which will ultimately increase their wages by enabling them to create and embroider a wider range of clothes and products.

SEWA Delhi registered a producer-led company called Ruuab, which home-based workers own through shares and sit on the board. The company connects members with exporters who provide better rates, and it deals with international firms interested in ethical and transparent lines of work.

Using an integrated approach of struggle plus development, SEWA also provides services to home-based workers from a number of approaches, including microfinance, health programmes, artisan's cards, information dissemination, and supplementary education classes for workers and their families. Finally, SEWA also engages in advocacy with NGOs, trade union organizations, and global companies through the Ethical Trading Initiative.

## Results

- Five Embroidery Centres and sub-centres established, providing work to 800 embroidery workers on a regular basis and to close to 3,000 workers at intervals;
- Helped embroidery workers increase their cumulative income by 50 per cent;
- Helped achieve a cash income increase of 32 per cent due to fair profit sharing between the centre and embroidery workers. This has increased workers' daily wage by 20 per cent from US \$1.5 (Rs. 100) to US \$1.8 (Rs. 120);
- Developed market linkages that have increased the number of working days by 12 per cent from 22 to 25;
- Through other SEWA programmes, provided benefits to workers of US \$71 (Rs. 4,722) per worker per annum;
- Helped workers access government benefits: US \$1.5 (Rs. 95) per worker per annum;
- A Producer Company of women members was established;
- Increased scale of operations by linkages to 20 brands and 36 suppliers.

## What Made It Work?

- Removal of middlemen from production chain;
- Support for workers throughout the production process, including skills training;
- Congruent social security services like healthcare, education, and microfinance;
- Transparent production and payment processes;
- Strong worker governance in leadership;
- Continuous expansion in domestic and international markets;
- Diversification of product range;
- Regional advocacy efforts, especially through multi-stakeholder platforms with workers, contractors, buyers, and sellers.



Carol Wills

*With Ruuab, workers come together at Embroidery Centres, which are very close to members' homes, and link members to the production process and support services like health training, micro-finance, skill training, and so on.*

## CASE NO. 5:

# Saving the “Mother Market”: Mobilizing Street Vendors in Durban

By Richard Dobson



*For many years, the Warwick Junction area has been a thriving market where street vendors and others involved in the informal economy have made their living. On April 29, 2009, the eThekweni (Durban, South Africa) Council granted a 50-year land lease to a party called the Warwick Mall (Pty) Ltd., developers who planned to construct a mall and mini-bus taxi rank on this site, supplanting the historic and vibrant Early Morning Market (EMM). This set in motion a two-year struggle to reverse this decision and protect the livelihoods of informal workers who work in and around this Market.*

A month earlier, the informal workers were first made aware of the Municipality's intentions when a public notice was published in a local newspaper on March 3, 2009. The notice invited objections to the proposed lease.

Two distinct groups of informal workers were to be affected by the proposal – stallholders inside the EMM and a further group utilizing the public spaces surrounding the Market. A significant concern was that the negative impact would not only be limited to the visible workers but would also include their often invisible network of assistants, co-workers and suppliers. At least 21,000 people—about 3,000 workers who support, on average, 7-12 dependents on the incomes they derive from the Market precinct – would be affected. Initial objections included the violation of various constitutional rights, the lack of public participation in the decision, the subversion of administrative justice, urban development critique, and general indignation. Although objections were duly submitted, none were acknowledged or upheld.

The first legal challenge was instituted by the Early Morning Market Traders Association (EMMTA) in response to the forced closure of the main Market gates on June 11, 2009. This was an attempt by the Municipality to force the stallholders to relocate to the proposed – but hopelessly inadequate – temporary site. The High Court granted interdictory relief to the stallholders as an interim order that would have allowed them to return to their stalls. However, the City officials maintained that only those with “valid permits” prior to June 11, about 35 per cent of the stallholders, could return. However, even these stallholders were then continually harassed by the officials. This Court order was effectively disobeyed by the City, which forced the EMMTA to obtain a further order ruling that the gates should be opened without restrictions. The City's subsequent response was to issue notices advising that all traders were to be evicted on July 31, 2009 and that the Market would be permanently closed.

This set in motion a litany of legal exchanges and protests, supported by a broad-based coalition under the banner of the World Class Cities for All Campaign, which included StreetNet and many others. Most prominent was the cause of the EMM stallholders. The Warwick Junction traders refer to EMM as the “mother market,” a maternal reminder that it has history and that it has gathered around it a significant number of viable informal income-generating activities. Asiye eTafuleni became increasingly aware that certain of these informal workers would be directly harmed by the proposed Mall. For example, the bovine head cooks were to be relocated to an obscure and under-serviced location. Others would suffer because their co-dependent networks would be shattered.

As part of their strategy to render the EMM dysfunctional, City officials began harassing the bovine head cooks and then attempted to restrict the activities of the market barrow operators. This proved to be the catalyst that united the community of informal workers outside the EMM. The Legal Resources Centre (LRC, a non-profit resource) agreed to represent the barrow operators in an urgent application to the High Court in the matter that was known as Mbali and others vs. eThekweni Municipality and others. The resultant court order secured the right of the barrow operators to trade without permits.

This was a defining moment with memorable imagery – approximately 150 barrow operators in their working clothes, with many more waiting outside, crowded the courtyard gallery of the colonial era High Court awaiting the award!

The complete record of the legal struggle now shows that this application emboldened the entire community of informal workers and culminated in review applications, where the earlier applications by the EMMTA were joined with those of other informal workers – fruit and vegetable sellers, bovine head cooks, barrow operators, chicken sellers and a flower seller. Asiye eTafuleni worked with the LRC in obtaining all the supporting affidavits and also joined others in providing “expert opinion” in support of the application.

A daunting and comprehensive set of papers was submitted by the LRC, and to date, the City’s legal representatives have not responded. However, on April 7, 2011 the Executive Committee rescinded its 2009 resolution to lease the EMM site to Warwick Mall (Pty) Ltd. Then on August 2011, the City’s legal representatives advised the LRC of the Municipality’s intention to withdraw the review proceedings.

A key component of the legal struggle remains, namely pursuing the interim relief applications with the intention of obtaining a ruling to secure these as permanent orders. This will ultimately influence future case law, but in real terms, it will secure substantial rights for the informal workers in and around the Market. No doubt, the case will also influence future litigation elsewhere in South Africa.

This 2 year struggle represented a significant achievement for informal workers. During this period, the City officials and politicians employed all means to harass, threaten, confuse and alienate the community of informal workers and the Asiye eTafuleni staff. However, the formation of Asiye eTafuleni can now be seen as having been fortuitous. Its staff members had an exceedingly good prior knowledge of the Precinct and the “inner workings” of the Municipality together with

exemplary relations with the trading community. This was in stark contrast to what was being presented by the Municipality or the methods and means it had chosen to deploy in its attempt to influence the community. Asiye eTafuleni believes it was in a privileged position to provide a stabilizing and strategic course of action throughout the struggle. This was undoubtedly reinforced by its international and local networks and the professional expertise of the Legal Resources Centre.



Demetria Tsoutouras / WIEGO

*On April 7, 2011 the Executive Committee rescinded its 2009 resolution to lease the EMM site to Warwick Mall (Pty) Ltd.*

It is also extremely significant to note that there are now early indications that the Municipality has conceptualized a thorough and (potentially) inclusive consultation process to establish a new development framework for Warwick Junction. In addition, during the recent local council elections, a respected informal trader was elected to Council, effectively securing favourable political oversight over the Precinct in the immediate future.

Informal workers have secured a victory; they have become commonplace in the corridors of the High Court, and have secured short and long term rights whilst becoming empowered during, and as a result of, the struggle. All these attributes will, however, be tested because Warwick Mall (Pty) Ltd. has resurrected its intentions and is again pursuing its interests by returning to its initial plan to construct the Mall over the railway corridor!

## CASE NO. 6:

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# SWaCH PCMC Brings Waste Pickers into Mainstream

By Deia de Brito



Amit Thavaraj

*In 2008, after many decades of working independently, more than 1,000 waste pickers in Pune established a cooperative business of their own. They adopted the name SWaCH because it stood for “Solid Waste Collection and Handling,” which is what waste pickers do, and also because swach in Marathi, means “clean,” which is the result of their work.*

All profits from their business activities – door to door collection of waste, composting and bio-gas production – are shared by SWaCH's members. Their clients are the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) and the citizens of Pune. SWaCH collects the daily household waste generated by 280,000 families in Pune. As a result of its collaboration with the waste pickers of Pune, the PMC saves approximately Rs. 120,000,000 (over \$1.79 million US) every year.

Pimpri Chinchwad is a fast-growing township on the north-eastern borders of Pune. A region with scattered clusters of houses separated by factories is now home to 1.5 million people.



Leslie Vryenhoek

*SWaCH's best public relations activity turned out to be its members – the women who went door-to-door collecting waste.*

## What Changed?

Impressed by the work done by SWaCH in Pune (and after many months of negotiations), the Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) awarded SWaCH a five-year contract for managing the solid waste collection system in two of its four *prabhags* (municipal boroughs) in October 2010. The project was to begin immediately. SWaCH had never managed a mechanized waste-collection system. Its members had never operated heavy machinery, and there wasn't enough time to train everyone. Nevertheless, SWaCH decided to begin full-scale operations on schedule – any problems that emerged would be solved on the field.

Six months later, SWaCH had reached out to 200,000 families – around 90 per cent of all households in the two *prabhags*. One hundred and sixteen tipper trucks operated by three-member teams collected 200 tonnes of household waste every day.

Many PCMC councilors support SWaCH. To help engage more goodwill, PCMC and SWaCH personnel distributed pamphlets and flyers on the benefits of segregation to promote the new waste-collection services.

SWaCH's best public relations activity, however, turned out to be its members – the women who went door-to-door collecting waste. Six months after the waste-collection service was launched, many waste pickers reported that residents on their routes were very happy with the service:

*"I am offered tea every day by many residents on my route."*

*"We often get old clothes from residents. They are used but still wearable. Nobody expects waste pickers to wear torn rags these days."*

*"On every route, some residents offer us food."*

*"They [citizens] support us. They are happy... especially because the new mechanized service is modern."*

## Results

- Over 1,000 waste pickers have regular, safe employment;
- Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation has already saved nearly Rs. 20,000,000 as a result of sorting and segregation done by SWaCH. Over the contract period of five years, PCMC will save Rs. 4,000,000,000 (approx. \$59 million US);
- SWaCH segregates and sends 42 per cent of the wet-waste it collects for composting. This figure will rise with available composting infrastructure. Compost sells at Rs. 4,000 per tonne;
- SWaCH estimates that the business model will become sustainable by the end of the contract period – the municipal corporation will not have to spend a single penny for primary waste collection. (In all other municipalities, collection charges increase annually.)

## What Made It Work?

- Learning from one city experience (i.e. Pune) to benefit workers in another city nearby;
- A combination of organizing and technical support in solid waste management (SWM);
- When MBOs are perceived as companies, they are treated like companies (i.e. with the right to operate);
- Providing a better, cost-effective service wins support from both consumers and politicians.



KKPKP

*In the SWaCH PCMC model, waste-collection is done by independent teams consisting of two waste pickers and a driver. Each team collects waste on an assigned route from approximately 2000 houses every day. The waste pickers sort recyclable waste and transfer the rest at designated 'feeder points' to PCMC-run compactors for transport to the Moshi landfill.*

## CASE NO. 7:

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# Waste Pickers Find a Collective Voice in Ecuador

By Olga Abizaid and Felipe Toledo, with María Llanes and Yolanda Bueno



Olga Abizaid / WIEGO

*In common with most countries in the world, Ecuador is struggling to manage the waste generated in increasingly populated urban areas. For a long time, waste pickers in Ecuador – mostly poor women who are head of their households – have been collecting, sorting and re-channeling recyclable materials into the production of new goods, thereby benefiting society, private firms and environmental protection. It is estimated that these workers annually recuperate over 200,000 tonnes of reusable materials – representing US \$25 million in savings for Ecuador. With the appropriate support, such contributions could increase even more since recycling rates remain low in Ecuador. Despite this, waste pickers are in most cases invisible, discriminated against, marginalized and not sufficiently organized.*

As waste pickers realized in meetings sponsored by AVINA Foundation in 2008, a lack of organization was preventing them from engaging with public officials on the issues affecting their lives and from having access to public resources. At the end of that year, the First National Meeting of Waste Pickers was organized in Cuenca with support from AVINA and Fundación Alianza, a support organization. The meeting was attended by women and men representing 18 organizations from different cities and regions in the country and different sub-sectors within the sector (waste collectors in the streets, in landfills, etc.). Representatives from municipal governments, from technical assistance and (environmental) non-governmental organizations, as well as from waste pickers' organizations from the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Waste Pickers (Red Lacre) were also there.



Ana Carolina Ogando / WIEGO

*RENAREC has sought to build solid trust relationships both with government officials at all levels and with private companies to raise awareness among them on the relevance of the work waste pickers do.*

This was an exciting process for Ecuadorian waste pickers. For the first time, they were able to share experiences with each other and understand that they were part of a broader movement. They saw that if they were organized at the national level, they could also develop and push their own proposals forward and participate in solid waste management systems.

RENAREC was thus created to organize waste pickers, look for better working and living conditions, and for greater visibility and recognition of these workers as valuable economic actors that benefit society and environmental sustainability.

“We need to remember the history of the National Network... We were on our own before... when we found out that there were more compañeros, we realized we could be united. To be organized within the National Network has helped us,” says María Llanes, former (and first) President of the National Network of Waste Pickers of Ecuador, RENAREC (by its Spanish acronym).

After almost three years of continuous work, in July 2011, members of the RENAREC were able to celebrate an important organizational milestone: their legal recognition as a national federation of waste pickers’ organizations – a goal that they set their eyes on soon after the network was established in December 2008. With this new status, RENAREC has a stronger position as it further engages governments, both national and local, in the search for better working and living conditions for people in the sector.

Already a recognized stakeholder in discussions on issues relating to the popular economy and waste management, with legal recognition, RENAREC’s membership has access to public programmes and services, including uniforms, work equipment and capacity building on waste management. It also hopes that it will give waste pickers a stronger stance as they start discussions with the Association of Ecuadorian Municipalities as part of their continuous efforts to get support for the bill on recycling that they submitted to the National Assembly. Such a bill would recognize the value to society of this profession and grant waste pickers rights other workers have (e.g. social protection, occupational health and safety, etc.).

## **Increasing Visibility and Validity**

Aware of the relevance of having a strong organizational foundation to be heard by government agencies, RENAREC has prioritized activities to develop the organizational capacities of its members. Since its formation, it has managed projects for over US\$150,000 from various funders aimed at building capacity, obtaining the juridical personality of RENAREC and its members, developing leadership, management and administrative skills, and business development.

Having a formal legal entity has allowed RENAREC to establish dialogues with public officials and to make presentations about the work it does and the services it provides. Such dialogues have come to fruition: RENAREC recently succeeded in signing an agreement with the Municipality of Quito, through the Ministry of Environment, to participate in cleansing services.

Since the beginning, RENAREC has sought to build solid trust relationships both with government officials at all levels and with private companies to raise awareness among them on the relevance of the work waste pickers do. It expects that these efforts will build up over time and eventually lead to getting larger support from policymakers and local stakeholders, on one hand, for the passage of an enabling legal framework for their work, and, on the other, that member organizations will be able to effectively engage with other actors, namely buyers and private firms, within the recycling value chain.

As María Llanes puts it, “We have created this movement to get national recognition in benefit of our families in particular, and the society in general, and to empower our *compañeros*, by disseminating our activities. To achieve our mission we are building our capacities and we are managing resources for member associations. Our clients, the companies that buy our products and our local governments are our *compañeros* and partners. Our commitment is to work jointly with them.”

None of these achievements would have been possible without RENAREC’s understanding that it is part of a larger movement. Being part of the regional network of waste pickers, Red Lacre, has projected members of the RENAREC into other arenas, allowing them to exchange ideas, views and strategies with other waste pickers’ organizations in Latin America and the rest of the world and to participate in national and international events related to climate change.

## Looking Ahead

There are many more opportunities to seize. Looking ahead, RENAREC sees the need for further organizational strengthening and consolidation of RENAREC and its members. Particular emphasis is to be placed on capacity building in the areas of leadership and organization so that it can prepare to help its members to obtain legal personality too. It also requires more work in the area of communications to make the RENAREC more visible.

In addition to efforts related to the socialization of the bill on recycling, RENAREC hopes to strengthen linkages with end-buyers of recyclable materials in order to create longer-term business relationships that would enable waste pickers’ organizations to move up into the recycling value chain.

## CASE NO. 8:

# SEWA Bharat and Street Vendors in Delhi

By Ruchi Sankrit



Leslie Vryenhoek

*As a livelihood, street vending in Delhi is often a vicious trap of poverty, especially for women workers. It is often defined by low income, physical strain, harassment, exploitation, and continuous struggle for space and recognition.*

Women vendors earn less than men and their profits are meagre, depending on location, mobility, and type of goods. In order to obtain space to sell, they often have to bribe authorities or other vendors. They also lack access to capital to expand their business and are dependent on moneylenders who charge exorbitant fees.

Vendors often live a great distance from the markets where they sell, incurring high transportation costs. Licenses for vendors are precarious, and those who vend without licenses face fees, confiscation of their goods, violence, and arrest. They are also under constant threat of eviction, not only from markets, but also from their homes.



Julian Luckham

*Women vendors earn less than men and their profits are meagre, depending on location, mobility, and type of goods.*

Vendors face health issues including lack of access to water and sanitation and severe weather conditions. There is little social security, and vendors lack organization due to poverty, illiteracy, cultural barriers, and discrimination.

## What Changed?

The problems street vendors face stem from inadequate organization, government policies, the lack of legal protection, the internal dynamics among vendors, and the absence of social security.

SEWA adopted a strategy of advocacy, struggle, and development, so women vendors would develop and lead organizations of their own to bring forward the issues fellow members face.

At a national level, SEWA was integral in the development and passage of 2009's National Street Vendors Bill and the landmark 2014's The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act.

But SEWA also worked with vendors and cities on the ground, fighting to protect natural markets. It fought the eviction of the Qutub Road Market and the Book Bazaar—and won. In 2009, it worked extensively with an architectural firm and the city to re-create the Vellodrome Market beneath a new overpass. SEWA now has permission to run the market and deal with its attendant challenges, particularly with exploitative trade unions.



Paula Bronstein / Getty Images Reportage

*SEWA Bharat has demonstrated mechanisms through which the informal economy can be included in city planning and development.*

SEWA has also created an innovative new market—the Ladies Market—for 200 women vendors, who pay vendors fees to the city. Here, SEWA liaises with vendors, city officials, resident welfare associations, and other stakeholders to run and publicize the market.

Finally, SEWA offers a holistic approach to worker empowerment. Through a cooperative, SEWA provides loans to vendors and helps with savings and deposits. It has provided health camps and conducted non-formal education classes. SEWA also links members to government programmes such as old age and disability pensions.

## Results

As a result of these multi-pronged efforts:

- By 2014, 6,000 women street vendors were organized;
- Trade committees, market committees, and market associations were formed;
- Women street vendors in the Qutub Road Market saw a cumulative increase in income, including government benefits, of 133 per cent;
- In the Vellodrome Market, 1,200 vendor livelihoods were secured;
- Because of advocacy efforts, five lakh (500,000) vendors will not fall under the “illegal” vendor label, which prohibits unscrupulous middlemen from functioning in the markets.

## Suggestions for Future Efforts: What Made It Work?

- A commitment to organizing, to strengthening unions and leadership, and increasing bargaining power with authorities;
- Working with municipal authorities collaboratively, but not fearing pointing out deficiencies;
- Using legal measures to advocate for vendors’ rights;
- Taking an integrated approach that includes health, education, and other services like linking to government benefits;
- Advocating through media;
- Networking with other organizations.

## CASE NO. 9:

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# Improved Healthcare and Incomes for Home-Based Workers in Dhaka, Bangladesh

By Soma Dey



Marty Chen / WIEGO

*Despite the rapid growth of industrial, administrative and other employment in Dhaka's formal sector, almost half (49 per cent) of the working population is employed in the informal sector (Sundquist 2008). With the growth of the garment industry in the 1980s and 1990s, a huge number of poor migrant women have found formal employment in the garment factories of Dhaka. Still, many of them work as piece-rate garment embellishers outside factory hours in their own homes. They are often involved in tailoring, sewing, block/boutique/printing, garment embellishing, handicrafts/hand-stitching and broom making.*

In general, the living places of piece-rate workers are very congested and the environment is unhygienic. The majority (60.80 per cent) of the identified piece-rate HBWs surveyed as part of a baseline study were non-Bengali individuals residing in slum-like conditions in repatriation camps.

The income of piece-rate workers varies according to their working hours, as well as the type and quality of the work. They are usually hired by employers or contractors and are paid on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. Those who are paid on a daily basis earn between BDT 25 and 80 (approximately \$0.30 and \$1USD) each day. Those who are paid on a weekly basis earn BDT 200–3,000, and those paid monthly earn BDT 500–8,000.



*Among the identified piece-rate workers in the baseline study, 76.90 per cent had no access to proper healthcare services.*

Marty Chen / WIEGO

Because of their meagre income, many HBWs must reside in areas characterized by poor housing infrastructure, and without basic urban services such as efficient and clean water, sanitation, legal electricity connections and proper gas supplies. For example, in the Krishi Market Camp area of Dhaka North City Corporation, there are five common toilets for men and five for women. There is only one bathing space for all women and for men there are none. Each family cooks inside the living room using kerosene or fire wood stoves as there is no gas supplied to their homes. Though they have a supply of electricity, frequent load shedding is common. They have access to water, but it is not safe for drinking. Drains are open and often overflow as people throw in waste and other garbage, since there are no designated spaces for sanitary garbage disposal.

Due to the nature of their work and poor working/housing conditions, women HBWs suffer from various health problems including, but not limited to: urine infections, kidney problems, back and waist pain and eyesight problems. Besides this, they have various reproductive health problems. However, they are not covered by any healthcare scheme in the country, and being poor, they do not have the ability to access private healthcare services. Among the identified piece-rate workers in the baseline study, 76.90 per cent had no access to proper healthcare services.

In partnership with HomeNet South Asia (HNSA), the Centre for Services and Information on Disability (CSID) began organizing home-based women piece-rate workers through bi-monthly meetings for the group members. For the convenience of HBWs, most of the meetings were held near their residences. Group members discussed various issues including work-related problems, day-to-day responsibilities, health issues and conjugal relations. They were informed of existing labour laws, worker rights, civic amenities, democracy and the power of unity.

After the women were organized into groups of 25, CSID organized a stakeholder meeting for HBWs with local city authorities, government officials, social workers and health service providers. During that meeting, HBW group leaders raised the issues of primary healthcare, water and sanitation. The representative (Project Manager) from the Urban Primary Health Care Services Delivery Project (UPHCSO) was present in that meeting. (UPHCSO is being implemented by the NGO *Nari Maitree* in collaboration with the Dhaka North City Corporation, under the Ministry of Local Government and the Rural Development Cooperative.) The project manager was convinced and committed to providing primary healthcare services to poor HBWs. In total, 150 HBWs and their family members residing in the Mohammadpur and Adabor areas benefited from these services.

CSID also organized a meeting with the subcontractors and factory owners who played such vital roles in the lives of women HBWs, through which the factory owners and contractors were motivated to hire more women workers and pay them on a pre-scheduled basis.

The organizing activities are having additional effects as women gain confidence in their own voice. Rosy—a group leader for the HBWs residing in the Krishi Market Camp— noted that the experience of joining several group meetings gave her the confidence to negotiate successfully with her *mohazan* (middleman). Now, she receives BDT 20 per 100 pieces of work while previously she was paid BDT 15 for the same.



Marty Chen / WIEGO

*In 2009-10 there were 2 million home-based workers in Bangladesh. This represents an increase of 41 per cent in the home-based workforce in Bangladesh since 2005-06.*

# Understanding Urban Informal Workers – Worker Profiles

# NOHRA PADILLA, Third Generation Recycler and Advocate for Organizing the Working Poor

By Melanie Samson

*NOHRA PADILLA is a third generation recycler. Nohra began working with her mother collecting recyclables from waste when she was seven years old. She worked from 4am until 10am and then went to school. Upon completion of secondary school Nohra could not afford university studies and so she too became a recycler.*



*NOHRA worked at the municipal dump for four years. When the municipality announced that it was closing the dump, Nohra and others formed a cooperative to fight for the right to keep recycling. Three other cooperatives were also formed at the dump. In total there were approximately 200 organized recyclers soliciting the city to keep recycling at the dump. Although the municipality did close the dump, it gave the cooperatives money to help finance their activities so that they could continue their collection work in the streets.*

*Nohra played an important role in bringing the original recycler cooperatives together to form the city-wide Asociación de Recicladores de Bogotá (ARB) in 1990. She is currently the Executive Director of the ARB. Three years ago Nohra also received a scholarship to finally attend university. She is completing a degree in administration which will help to strengthen the skills she has developed while working to organize recyclers.*

*The Asociación de Recicladores de Bogotá (ARB) is now 2,400 members strong and consists of 17 cooperatives. The ARB seeks to promote and strengthen the organization of recyclers; defend their common interests; improve their working conditions; and gain social and economic recognition for their work.*

*The ARB was the local host organization at the First International Conference of Waste Picker Organizations in February 2008, organized by waste picker organizations with the support of WIEGO and the Avina Foundation. Through the Inclusive Cities Project, waste picker groups from Asia, Africa and Latin America are sharing their success stories, such as this one from ARB. By organizing at the global level, waste pickers can learn from one another how to effectively organize so that their voices can be heard by local and national decision-makers and their working conditions and livelihoods can be improved.*



Juan Arredondo / Getty Images Reportage

*Nohra played an important role in bringing the original recycler cooperatives together to form ARB in 1990.*

# ELBA ROJAS, Street Vendor in Lima, Peru

By Leslie Vryenhoek and Olga Abizaid



*For 27 years, LUZMILA ELBA ROJAS Morales has sold chilis and other fresh produce in Lima's thriving wholesale market, La Parada, in the local district of La Victoria. She says selling fresh produce in the market provides more income than she could have earned in a local factory.*

*ELBA is the president of the Asociación 20 de junio, which comprises 150 perishable produce vendors. The Association assists their members by engaging with the authorities to obtain permits to sell. If they don't pay, they face the risk of being evicted. Her organization is part of the National Network of Women and Men Self-employed Workers (Red Nacional de Trabajadoras y Trabajadores Autoempleados, RENATTA).*

*Elba has always been good with numbers, but now she is very interested in learning marketing skills—which could be useful should she be able to get herself a formal store—and how to use a computer. As part of the network, she and the members of her association have access to advice for legal and administrative matters and also to capacity building for the production of diverse products and handicrafts.*

*Elba was part of a community of more than 7,000 vendors who made their living in La Parada, assisted by a well-organized workforce of market porters. But things changed almost overnight when the city decided to relocate the wholesale market to a less central area. Construction of a public transport hub was a key factor in the relocation. Complaints from neighbouring residents that the market was a gathering place for rats, criminals and other undesirable elements also fed the decision.*

*Unfortunately, chaos and violence erupted when officials arrived (with riot police) to move the vendors out and set up barricades in late 2012. Accounts vary widely on who was responsible for the violence.*

*What Elba remembers most clearly about those terrible days was standing shoulder to shoulder with her fellow vendors and singing Peru's national anthem while the police moved toward them. "I cried for a month," she recalls.*

*Peace has since been restored but barricades and a police presence remain, as do vendors like Elba. They continue to sell at La Parada, pending resolution relating to market space for them closer to the new wholesale location. But since the disruption, more than half the vendors have gone – and so have the customers.*

*Elba says her sales, and thus her income, have been dramatically reduced. The hours she must work, however, have increased. Because fresh produce is now offloaded at the new market area far from La Parada, she must leave home before 2 a.m. to get her day's fresh chilis. She has to be back at La Parada by 4 a.m. to greet her early customers.*

*Elba was initially excited about moving to the new market area – which the vendors refer to as “the promised land” – but controversy has opened up since the city made it clear that to get space there, vendors must first front a significant sum of money to cover a three year lease – funds that very few vendors have.*

*Now, Elba says she might rather retire. “My bones hurt,” she says. But she is keenly aware that as a zone leader in her vendor organization, she has a responsibility to help with morale, and she does not want to let others down. So Elba perseveres, rising early, working as she always has, and drinking every day an herbal medicine concoction formulated by a fellow vendor to help her aching bones.*

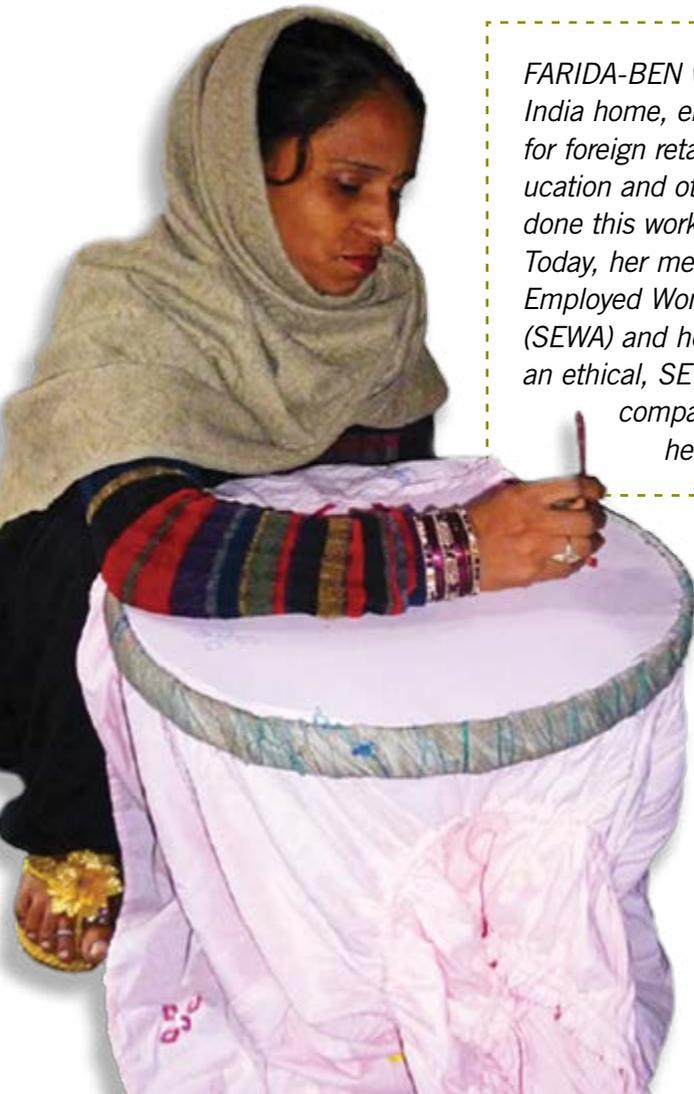


Carmen Roca / WIEGO

*Elba is the president of the Asociación 20 de junio.*

# FARIDA-BEN, Home-Based Garment Worker in Delhi

by Leslie Vryenhoek



*FARIDA-BEN works in her Delhi, India home, embroidering garments for foreign retailers. Denied an education and other options, she has done this work since she was a girl. Today, her membership in the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and her involvement with an ethical, SEWA-based producer company have expanded her world.*

*Embroidering dresses through the local SEWA centre (Ruuab) Farida-ben is paid by the piece, 20 rupees (about US \$0.373)<sup>1</sup> for each dress she completes. Farida-ben works quickly, her movements so practiced that she barely pauses to reload the ari with sequins. Embroidery has been her trade for a quarter-century. She works hard at it out of a keen desire to see her own children get the opportunities she was denied.*

*Farida-ben never had the option to attend school. Her parents educated only the boys. She recalls a strict upbringing that offered little choice but to do as she was told—and at age 12, she was told to take up work as a home-based embroiderer. Growing up under such limitations in Uttar Pradesh, northern India, she longed to see more of the world, and asked that the man chosen to be her husband live in Delhi. At 20 she was married to Akbar, whom she first met on her wedding day – 16 years later the two are still very happy together.*

*Akbar is a plumber and his income is unpredictable. In fact, this is the first time in a week he's been out to work. His earnings—usually no more than 6,000 rupees monthly—are only slightly higher than the 4-5,000 Farida-ben's embroidery now brings in.*

*Farida-ben's aspirations are not small, especially where her children are concerned, but her involvement with SEWA is helping put them within reach.*

*Farida-ben first connected with SEWA about nine years ago when the Secretary to the SEWA Delhi Trust, a neighbour, suggested she go to the nearby SEWA Centre and ask for some embroidery jobs. Until then, Farida-ben had worked, as most home-based workers do, for middlemen.*

*Middlemen (or contractors) typically occupy a space in the apparel chain between the producer and the retailer. Along with taking a substantial cut of the proceeds, these intermediaries obscure the working conditions at the bottom of the production chain. Retail brands can't always see whether the people who make their garments are exploited. SEWA, however, works differently because it is focused on improving the livelihoods and raising the status of home-based producers.*

<sup>1</sup> Indian rupee was the equivalent of \$0.01835 USD on December 14, 2013 (per [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com), mid-market rate).



Leslie Vryenhoek

*Farida-ben first connected with SEWA when a neighbour suggested she go to the nearby SEWA Centre and ask for some embroidery jobs.*

*Farida-ben won't abide middlemen anymore—SEWA, she says, offers more money per piece plus timely payments. Before, she might earn 100 or even 150 rupees per day but have to wait months to get paid. Now she earns a reliable (if variable) income—today's dresses will bring 200 rupees—and can access health benefits through SEWA. These include eye clinics to help counteract the strain caused by such constant, close work.*

*Since her oldest child, a daughter Yasmin, was born, Farida-ben has saved an impressive 140,000 rupees. Despite the family's limited means, she explains that she deposits at least 50 rupees, and whatever else she can, in an account at SEWA Delhi Co-operative every month. The savings are all earmarked for the children's education and for their weddings. Farida-ben is adamant that all of her children, sons and daughters, will be educated and have ample employment choices.*

# APPENDIX:

## How to Conduct a Policy Dialogue

By Francie Lund

### Introduction

**A policy dialogue involves people from different interest groups sitting together to focus on an issue in which they have a mutual, but not necessarily common, interest.** People in different positions – such as city officials and street vendors – have different perspectives, and a policy dialogue can help participants see the issues from each others' points of view. This can bridge understanding and bring about meaningful improvements to policies or programmes.

A policy dialogue can be a powerful advocacy platform for informal workers' organizations. It is a platform in which the relatively less powerful and more vulnerable groups are able to make their voices and needs heard and respected. Formal workers have employers, and a trade union for formal workers can engage in collective bargaining processes where there are defined 'rules of the game', with well-defined procedures for negotiating. The majority of informal workers are self-employed, and therefore have no employer.

There is no single, ideal model for a policy dialogue. It can be a one-off event, or can be run as a series of meetings. This Guide explains what a policy dialogue is, and also what it should not be! It gives guidelines about how to prepare for and implement a policy dialogue, drawing from WIEGO's extensive use of this process, especially in urban settings. It reflects on some of the easy-to-make mistakes, and how to avoid them. It includes some useful tips on focusing on objectives to get results.

### What Is a Policy Dialogue?

A policy dialogue involves people from different interest groups sitting together to focus on an issue in which they both have an interest, but on which they have different positions. People in different positions and circumstances will

have different perspectives on the same problem, and they may have access to different information and ideas about the issue. The dialogue is designed to bring to the surface what the differences are. It is clear about the fact there may be a lack of trust between the different parties. There may also simply be a lack of understanding of how different parties are differently affected by an issue. For example:

- Street vendors, city officials and urban planners may not agree on how public space should be used. The officials want the pavements to be kept clear; the vendors want more space to trade. A policy dialogue could focus on alternative additional spaces for trading.
- City officials and the general public may think that informal workers are the cause of ‘crime and grime’. They may not know that informal workers are equally worried about how ‘crime and grime’ affects their small businesses, and have formed an organization to promote better health and safety. A policy dialogue explores ways in which there could be mutual assistance between the officials and the workers.
- A woman worker who needs to take her children to health services may have to wait in very long queues, which for her means loss of income. A policy dialogue with the health department could explore ways of making the health facilities more accessible.
- Many urban planners are not yet aware of how many people use their homes as a place of work. A home-based worker who uses her home as her place of work, making garments for a clothing firm, may have different needs for infrastructure such as water, lighting and garbage removal than urban planners realize. A policy dialogue could be designed to assist planners to realize what the work-related needs of informal home-based workers are.

A policy dialogue can help people to see problems from each others’ perspectives. This can bridge understanding and bring about improvements to policies or a programme. Within groups and between groups, there are always power differences. City officials, for example, can generally be said to have more power than informal workers. Policy dialogues acknowledge these power differences, but seek to identify areas where it is in the best interest of all to make improvements and reforms. Even when policy dialogues stall or break down, they can help identify what the real underlying barriers are to resolving a problem.

## How Does a Policy Dialogue Work Best?

There is no single, ideal model for a policy dialogue. It is likely to work best when the gathering is closed (open only to those who are invited), the group is small (perhaps not more than 30 people), there is little emphasis on formal protocol, and the facilitator is well-prepared. It has to be well-structured so all parties have a chance to make their views known. It has to focus on a limited selection of issues that can be addressed in the time available.

A successful policy dialogue will conclude with a set of commitments to action by all parties.

### A Policy Dialogue is NOT...

- **It is not a mass meeting.** It is not possible to prepare large numbers of people for a dialogue, and difficult to keep focus during the meeting itself.
- **It is not an event controlled by only one interest group.** The purpose of a policy dialogue is to have a platform on which different interests can be dealt with. It is also a platform in which the relatively less powerful and more vulnerable groups are able to make their voices and needs heard and respected.
- **It should not be dominated by formalities and protocols.** There are many countries and cities in which formal hierarchies of power have to be respected. Sometimes, the officials invite senior power figures to a dialogue, either because it is expected, or it is one way of officials being able to control the policy dialogue.
- **It is not a seminar or lecture.** These learning events can have a lot of discussion and debate. However, seminars and lectures usually are platforms for more one-way communication than a policy dialogue is.

## What Do You Want to Achieve?

Clear, focused objectives are crucial. The clearer the objective, the more likely you will get the right people in the room, and be able to have a focused discussion, and come out with clear commitments to action.

Focused objectives will bring the different positions – the shared ones and the different ones - to the surface.

A common dynamic in a policy dialogue is that the more vulnerable or less powerful groups are able to identify a problem or a need. Those who they are meeting with may say, ‘There is no money for this in the budget’, and ‘There is no law covering this’. It can be helpful to have at least one objective that you know can be achieved without big additional resources, or without a change in a law.

## Who Should Participate?

- A small number of participants with focused purposes is best.
- The event should be open only to those invited.
- Think strategically about who should be present on the workers’ side, what interests they will present, and what role each person will play. Ideally, participants should be active, influential, thoughtful and vocal leaders.
- Restrict the number of interest groups involved. Allies are great, but inviting too many allies with slightly different agendas can threaten your specific objectives and focus. It may present a problem with managing diverse issues, which wastes valuable time.
- Invite those officials or programme representatives who have the ability to offer valuable information and/or the authority to make the commitments you want to achieve.
- Identify the exact departments/divisions in the local authority that deal with the issues to be addressed. Then identify the right people. In some situations it is advisable to involve a person who is actually responsible for doing the kind of work you need. They can bring ‘on the ground’ information that the more senior officials may not have. In some situations, however, you do not have much control over who is invited.

## Who Will Facilitate the Dialogue?

All interested parties – or at least the primary stakeholders - need to agree on who the external facilitator will be. The facilitator should be knowledgeable about and sympathetic to the issues. Just as important is that she or he should have experience in negotiation or arbitration processes. The facilitator needs to be very skilled at controlling the time allowed for the different parts of the program. If time is lost through speakers going on and on, or through the discussions getting stuck over a particular issue, time will run out – and you will lose the last session

in which commitments are made, by all parties, to concrete actions for change, and agreement to a follow-up process. The facilitator should be carefully briefed about this.

## **When and Where Should the Event Be Held?**

Consider the best timing for you and your partners. Choose a date that is far enough in the future to allow you to be fully prepared, and to get on people's schedules and in diaries.

Reserve a space that is a suitable size—large enough to be comfortable for everyone, small enough to allow for dialogue, and private enough that it is not interrupted.

The seating pattern really affects the dynamics of the event. Ideally, the room should be set up without a podium (to prevent an “up there/down here” environment). It is best if everyone can sit around a table—preferably not a long, narrow table that makes it hard for everyone to see and hear the other participants clearly. Or the chairs can simply be arranged in a circle.

## **The Invitation**

Extend a written invitation to participants that provides the focus and/or objectives – why it is being held, and who the interested parties are. (For example: “This is to discuss and find resolutions to our shared concerns about [name the specific problem.]”) The invitation should have complete information about the location, the date, and the start and end time, as well as including information about this opportunity. Having a written document about the agreed-on purpose of the policy dialogue will help with keeping the dialogue itself on track and in focus.

## **Setting up the Programme**

Decide on a reasonable length of time for the dialogue that will allow everyone to participate—without getting so long that people will become frustrated, restless or agitated. A dialogue with local government around a specific issue such as fire hazards, could fit into a three to four hour meeting; a dialogue that aims to discuss and plan for reform of policies such as health services may take much longer and require a series of dialogues. When dialogues are used as a continuing process or

platform for negotiations or policy reform, they can take part in a series that may run over months. (A good example of this is the national Water Dialogues in South Africa. In the new democracy they were a way of government finding out poorer people's views on water needs and delivery.)

The dialogues that WIEGO has engaged in have mostly been with municipalities, and health departments, over specific issues such as fire hazards in markets, or health insurance, and have lasted most of a morning or afternoon. Anything shorter than two or three hours is not likely to lead to lasting and realistic commitments to change.

Offer to draft the program yourselves. Sharing the draft with the intended partners is a good way of making sure that people are clear about the kind of event it is, and the objectives it hopes to achieve. If 'the other side' insists on drawing up the program, then insist on all partners' rights to view the draft and comment on it. The agenda should be given to people before the dialogue, and then also circulated at the meeting. It should have:

- The agreed-on, clear and focused objectives of the policy dialogue.
- A statement about the method and use of policy dialogues: They are used when people have differences about an issue. They are meant to bring to the table the different values, and approaches, and interests. They 'normalise' the idea of difference. They then explore alternative realistic solutions to the problem.
- The program should allow for clarity about what will be discussed, who will speak, and the time for each agenda item.
- The invitation and the agenda should be clear about what will NOT be discussed at this policy dialogue. This is a way to make sure that the focus issues are kept in focus, and not diverted by any of the interest groups.
- The invitation and/or program should say who the facilitator will be, and identify how the facilitator was selected.

MBOs can use the program information to canvas views from members about the issue to be discussed – though hopefully the dialogue has been set up as a response to issues raised already by members.

The program should allow the following:

- Each interest group should be given a time slot, near the beginning, in which to state their issues and concerns.

- After each party has had a chance to present, a period for questions and clarifications should be included. The idea is to generate real understanding of what the different interests and views are.
- A period for general discussion and debate should then be allowed. This is the heart of the dialogue, and a chief danger here is that speakers will go on for too long about their own particular issue.
- The program should finish with a clear time slot when commitments to solutions will be made, the time frame in which commitments will be fulfilled, and other follow-up actions that will be needed.

## Preparing for Policy Dialogues

Membership-based organizations (MBOs) will differ as to how much experience they have had in dealing with local governments, or with national health departments, or with the private sector. An important part of the preparation is to make sure that there is shared understanding of what the issues are that the MBOs want to address, that the objectives of the specific dialogue are well understood, and who the main spokespersons will be for each part of the programme.

It is a good idea to have, early in the dialogue programme, a space where reliable data can be presented. It can make more visible the actual situation of workers in the informal economy. It can show, for example, the economic contribution made by informal workers to the city; or how much the city or town earns in levies and licenses to operate by informal workers, or the cost to the city of poorly designed markets. This can be a way of dealing with biased stereotypes about the informal economy, and of showing how policy positions and/or delivery procedures are not convenient or healthy for informal workers. This is especially true if you have information about the costs paid by informal workers in keeping their own work environments healthy and safe (see Alfiers on this at [www.wiego.org](http://www.wiego.org)). It can create the common ground that you are seeking.

## Practising for the Policy Dialogue

An important part of the preparation for the dialogue is MBOs becoming familiar with the facts of the issue to be discussed – and who in authority can do anything about it. For instance, the key to the success of the Health Policy Dialogue held in Accra, Ghana in July 2012 (see case study on page 72) was the pre-dialogue meetings, where MBOs made agreements on the main issue to be discussed at the dialogues, and learned about the local authority or health department policies that affected them.

## Opening the Meeting: the Role of the Facilitator

The facilitator should be clear about who is present and why: what the different interests in the issues are and what role each participant plays. Introductions should be made.

From the outset:

- Acknowledge objectives and common concerns.
- Acknowledge differing perspectives.
- Acknowledge unequal power relations.
- Make it clear that each interest group may be expected to give ground, and gain ground.

A policy dialogue is about acknowledging differences between parties. But getting into a confrontational approach does not easily lead to identifying better options for action.

Remind everyone that the purpose of the policy dialogue is to find some mutually beneficial solutions to common issues.

The facilitator's skills in mediation will come in useful here, and she or he should consistently be trying to get the different parties to explain their perspectives. If the dialogue is carried out in the spirit of mutual benefit, the outcome is more likely to be positive.

## Keeping the Record

A written record of the meeting should be kept, as evidence of the decisions that were made and decisions for action that were reached. Designate a record-keeper before the event. Good record-keeping requires skill. Don't rely on a tape-recording or digital recording as a substitute.

All parties should have the right to review the draft of the written record, and see whether they think it is a fair reflection of the dialogue.

## Getting the Commitments

Usually, but not always, a policy dialogue is seeking to get commitments from the more powerful participants to fulfill their responsibilities to the less powerful interest groups, such as informal workers.

Identify and articulate what you believe they might gain from finding a solution. For example:

- appreciation from peers and bosses for solving difficult issues
- a cleaner, more productive, better run city
- public gratitude for better public health and sanitation
- fewer enforcement headaches and costs
- actual poverty alleviation
- recognition as national or even international leaders in innovative municipal governance

If ‘the other side’ offers commitments that are not feasible—that you know cannot reasonably be achieved—negotiate them *down* to things that can be achieved. Otherwise nothing may be accomplished.

Work towards all parties making a commitment to take *concrete* actions:

- within a defined time, and
- with clear roles and responsibilities for different parties.

Ensure that all decisions about commitments made are written down in detail. Include the “what, where, when and who”.

## Following Up After the Event

- Send a thank you letter to each person or group who attended. In the letter of thanks, clearly identify the commitments that were made.
- Involve the public media, if possible, to tell the story of what was achieved. This will build public support, and will help ensure commitments are met.

## Six Lessons to Bring to the Table

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### 1. Find an issue that is easy to solve.

Have at least one demand that is good for the working poor—and does not hurt anyone else or cost a fortune. This will be hard to say no to.

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### 2. A change of policy or practice can affect different groups differently.

Evaluate the likely impact on ALL groups and be ready to discuss how different groups might be affected, positively or negatively. Explore solutions to the negative outcomes.

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### 3. Think about the cost-benefit calculation of any change in policy or practice that you might recommend.

Introducing new policies and practices can cost money. But it can also save money somewhere else. Think strategically about all the costs and benefits on all sides.

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### 4. Find an effective solution.

Policy-makers and officials don't want to be told that they have to improve working conditions for informal workers—they want to be told HOW they can change things. Wherever possible, offer detailed, concrete solutions.

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### 5. Put your message across clearly and concisely.

- Think very carefully about how to best put your message across so the ears on the other side of the room receive it. Rehearsing is advisable.
  - It could be useful to circulate a short summary that captures the most important issue and information.
  - Remember that they will have to pass the message on to their seniors, so they need to understand it.
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### 6. Direct them to resources that back up and expand on your claims.

Are there studies that back up your claims or offer additional information? Has what you are suggesting been successfully implemented somewhere else? It is useful to have evidence that something will have a positive outcome.

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Sources: Adapted from a presentation made by Imraan Valodia, Research Director for the (Inclusive Cities) Informal Economy Monitoring Study, at an Inclusive Cities Annual Learning Meeting in Chiang Rai, Thailand, held from 7-12 February 2013.

## Example of a Successful Policy Dialogue:

### In Ghana, poor women *kayayei* win commitments at Health Policy Dialogue

A Health Policy Dialogue held in Accra, Ghana in July 2012 helped more than 1,500 informal workers gain access to health care services through the Ghanaian National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). Most of those who benefitted were headload porters known as *kayayei*.

The Ghana Health Policy Dialogue was organized as a follow up to a Health Policy Dialogue organized by WIEGO and HomeNet Thailand in Bangkok in January 2012, where WIEGO presented a case study that showed the *kayayei* – who are usually very poor migrant women workers from northern Ghana – were not easily able to use health services in Accra. A large number were not registered with the NHIS because the premium was too expensive. Those few who could afford to join complained they were mistreated or ignored when they tried to use the health services. Also, information on health programmes such as free care for pregnant women was not reaching the *kayayei*. As a result, the *kayayei* were often paying for health services that they were legally entitled to receive for free.

About 100 *kayayei* attended the three-hour Health Policy Dialogue in Accra. They shared their experiences and asked direct questions of 12 key officials and advisers from the Ministry of Health and NHIS. According to Dorcas Ansa, who coordinates WIEGO's activities in Accra, the women workers' anger at being unable to access health services was strongly expressed. The *kayayei* amazed the officials with their confidence and their ability to pose critical questions.

Two important commitments emerged from the dialogue. First, NHIS officials asked for WIEGO's assistance in registering associations of *kayayei* with the scheme, and a significantly lower annual premium was negotiated. The NHIS then held a special registration for the *kayayei* in September, at which over 1,500 people registered. About 1,000 were *kayayei*; the others were community members who demanded to be allowed to register under the same conditions. The NHIS agreed, once the *kayayei* were done, to reg-

ister 500 additional people. A second registration was held four months later, when about 800 more *kayayei* registered.

The second commitment was from the Ministry of Health. It agreed to enter into discussions with the *kayayei* associations and WIEGO on the poor quality of care received by *kayayei*. One suggestion, put forward by Ministry officials, was that clinics and hospitals in areas where *kayayei* live and work would have doctors and nurses who were given a special mandate to look after these workers' needs.



Jonathan Torgovnik / Getty Images Reportage

*Daina Otoo sells fish in Agbogbloshie Market. With support from WIEGO, many kayayei in Agbogbloshie have experienced improved social protection. In 2012, WIEGO facilitated a Health Policy Dialogue in Accra with key government, civil society, and informal sector stakeholders, including the “kayayei” themselves. This allowed the “kayayei” to discuss and share experiences of Ghana’s National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) with key health policy-makers. As a result, 1,000 “kayayei” were able to register and gain better information on available health care services through the Ghanaian National Insurance Scheme.*

## Some Definitions of Policy Dialogue as a Process and Method

### Abrahamsson, 2014

*A transformative oriented method for improved understanding between parties whose relationship is asymmetric and characterized by important conceptual gaps and mistrust.*

Three key points:

- All parties understand the aims of the policy dialogue
- It makes differences in values and interests visible and understandable
- It illuminates policy alternatives

### Lund

*A policy dialogue is a way of tackling contested issues. It is an interactive event where people from different interest groups, with a common concern, who don't usually meet or have a usual platform for discussion and negotiation, come together for a decent length of time (sufficient to consider the complexity of issues), to engage in frank and critical discussions about contested issues.*

It needs:

- A clear purpose
- Sufficient time
- Skilled facilitation
- Language translation and assistance where needed

**Adler, Peter S. and Kristi Parker Celico. "Policy Dialogue." Beyond Intractability. Eds. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess. Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. Posted: December 2003 <<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/policy-dialogue>>.**

***Ripeness:** First, the issue is ripe for addressing. Often this means that the full diversity of participants have become sufficiently frustrated with the traditional adversary process that they are willing to try a different approach.*

***Poor Alternatives:** Second, none of the participants are likely to get a better outcome by proceeding on their own. For example, in one chemical weapons-related case, the military needed regulatory permits to destroy the weapons. These permits depended upon at least a minimal level of public support. The communities who live near the chemical weapons stockpile needed the Army to destroy the weapons. Although there was lots of controversy about what is the best way to destroy the weapons, all agreed in this post 9/11 world, that having stockpiled weapons stored nearby was a dangerous thing in and of itself.*

***Creative Leadership:** Third, creative leadership from diverse parties helps ensure the success of a dialogue. Leaders who truly want to solicit input and are able to respond very clearly why or why not they are taking the recommended approach are key to the process.*

## Further Reading and Resources

The following resources (and many more!) are available at [www.wiego.org/publications-resources](http://www.wiego.org/publications-resources).

Bonner, C. and Spooner, D. 2012. *The Only School We Have: Learning from Organizing Experiences Across the Informal Economy*. Cambridge, MA, USA: WIEGO.

Budlender, D. 2009. *How to Analyze Government Budgets from an Informal Economy Perspective*. WIEGO Technical Brief No. 2. Cambridge, MA, USA: WIEGO.

Budlender, D. 2014. *Informal Workers and Collective Bargaining: Five Case Studies*. WIEGO Organizing Brief No. 9. Cambridge, MA, USA: WIEGO.

Chen, M. 2012. *The Informal Economy: Definitions, Theories and Policies*. WIEGO Working Paper No. 1. Cambridge, MA, USA: WIEGO.

Roever, S. *How to Plan a Street Trader Census*. WIEGO Technical Brief No. 2. Cambridge, MA, USA: WIEGO.

For more information on the Inclusive Cities Project, including links to partners and more detailed case studies and research reports, please visit [www.wiego.org/cities](http://www.wiego.org/cities) and [www.inclusivecities.org](http://www.inclusivecities.org).

