

**PROMOTING THE INTERESTS OF WOMEN IN THE  
INFORMAL ECONOMY: AN ANALYSIS OF STREET  
TRADER ORGANISATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

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**The views expressed in this Research Report should not be attributed to the School of Development Studies.**

## **WIEGO in South Africa**

Women in Informal Employment: Globalising and Organising or WIEGO is an international collaboration of researchers and women in the informal economy - home based workers and street traders. South Africa is the site of a pilot for a WIEGO action research project in Africa.

A key output of the South Africa Project are a series of research reports as follows:

- The first WIEGO report synthesised research that had been conducted on the informal economy in South Africa since 1990, with special reference to what could be learned about the position of women street traders. We call this 'the synthesis report'.
- The second report considered the institutional environment within which women street traders operate by comparing five South African cities. The objective was to identify points of entry for street traders and their organisations to secure a more favourable policy environment and more appropriate interventions for women street traders. We call this 'the institutional report'.
- This third report - 'the organisational report' - concentrates on organising in the street trading sector. It is considered from the perspective of poorer women street traders.
- A fourth and final report will draw on work done for the institutional and organisational reports and will identify the potential spaces for mechanisms for representation of street traders' interests in urban policy and planning. It will be called 'the voice report'.

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## Acronyms

ACHIB	African Council of Hawkers and Informal Business
ANC	African National Congress
BCEA	Basic Conditions of Employment Act
CBD	Central Business District
CEDAW	United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DP	Democratic Party
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FIET	International Federation of Technical, Commercial Workers Union
FOSATU	Federation of South African Trade Unions
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
ICEM	International Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers Union
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
ITGLWF	International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers Federation
IUF	International Federation of Food and Plantation Workers Union
LRA	Labour Relations Act
NEDLAC	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NHC	National Hawkers Co-operative
NIBDA	National Independent Business Development Association
PIBA	Pretoria Informal Business Association
QHA	Queenstown Hawkers Association
SACHIB	South African Chamber of Informal Business
SANCO	South African National Civic Organisation
SEWA	Self Employed Women's Association
SEWU	Self Employed Women's Union
SMED	Small Medium Enterprise Distributors
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises
SWEAT	Sex Worker Education Advocacy Taskforce
UMSA	Unemployed Masses of South Africa
WIEGO	Women in Informal Employment: Globalising and Organising

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Women in Informal Employment: Globalising and Organising or WIEGO is an international action research project which seeks to promote the interests and security of women working in the informal economy. It does this by multi-level interventions all of which try to strengthen the voice and visibility of these economic actors.

The WIEGO programme in South Africa reflects the action research collaboration between an organisation of women workers in the informal economy, and a research institute. SEWU - the Self Employed Women's Union - works to promote the interests of poorer women workers, who are described as 'survivalists'. SEWU contracted researchers in the Centre for Social and Development Studies at the University of Natal to investigate the policy and institutional environment within which street traders work, the situation of street trader organisations in South Africa, and the potential of organisations to influence the institutions which structure the conditions under which they work. While SEWU organises both street traders and home based workers, in urban and in rural areas, the WIEGO research in South Africa has focused on street traders only, and in urban areas only.

SEWU, which started organising in 1993, drew much of its inspiration from SEWA – the Self Employed Women's Association – in India. SEWA was founded in 1972 in Ahmedabad, the largest city of India's western state of Gujarat. It grew out of the Textile Labour Association, India's oldest and largest union of textile workers. SEWA is influenced by the Gandhian approach to organising workers - that organisations of workers should address all aspects of the lives of workers, not just work place issues.

In 1999, SEWA has approximately 220 000 members, and organises three broad categories of self employed workers - small scale vendors, home based producers and workers selling services both rural and urban areas. What unites this diverse group is that they are all women, they are 'self employed', and they are poor. The organisation is both a trade union and a collection of co-operatives. The trade union arm struggles for job security, better working conditions, social security, services and changes of policy and law. The co-operatives organise women as producers, and also provide access to services such as child care, training, and legal aid. SEWA has established a Bank to provide credit and savings facilities.

SEWA and SEWU were participants at the meeting of the International Alliance of Street Traders held in Bellagio, Italy, in 1995. While the situation of traders in each country is different, and shaped by local conditions, the research in countries in the north and the south showed that traders faced similar basic problems regarding access to secure space, the need to be free from harassment, and the need for improved working conditions. This meeting drew up a set of recommendations for action by vendors, vendors' associations, city and national governments, and international bodies.

With regard to the traders themselves, there was a call to organise into unions, associations and co-operatives, the objective of which was to increase and strengthen visibility, voice, and bargaining power. The study presented here is the part of the WIEGO programme in South Africa which focuses on the need for organisations, an assessment of street trader organisations in South Africa, and

barriers to organising workers in the informal economy, all with a view to seeing how poorer women workers' interests fare. The assessment of street trader organisations includes, for example, their legal status, the status of women within the organisations, forms of self-governance, and links with markets, government at various levels, and other organisations.

After outlining the methodology of the study in Section 2, in Section 3 we give an overview of the policy and organisational environment in South Africa, including a summary of those parts of the previous two WIEGO reports (Lund, 1998; Skinner, 1999) which are needed as background for this work. Section 4 describes the potential functions of organisations. This provides the framework for the assessment of street trader organisations in South Africa.

Section 5 begins by setting out the major difficulties involved in conducting such an assessment. It then gives an overview of organisations with whom we made contact. We present case studies of eight organisations, each chosen to illuminate particular points about women and organisations in the informal economy. We then apply the framework developed in Section 4 to the organisations studied. Section 6 examines the barriers to organising which all organisations face. In the conclusion, Section 7, we draw out basic comparisons between organisations, and identify features of organisations which are likely to work in the interests of women workers.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

The information for this report was drawn largely from the following sources.

- Four Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held with women street traders – two in Durban, one in Mitchell's Plain (in Cape Town), and one in Queenstown.
- Contact was made with twenty-two street trader organisations (see Appendix 1). Organisations were chosen to represent the range from big and more formal, to small and less formal, and to represent different legal statuses and purposes. Where we heard of organisations which catered primarily for women, or had women in leadership positions, we actively pursued them. The contact ranged from formal interviews with leadership, to passing and more superficial contact with individual members, where we could not establish whether their views were representative of the organisation.
- Interviews were conducted with forty local authority officials and councillors, as well as some urban planners, in five cities (Durban, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, and East London) as well as one smaller town (Queenstown). Interviewees ranged from senior politicians and city managers involved with policy formulation and decision-making, to area managers who had street level responsibility for the implementation of policies on street trading. These interviews were held mainly to assess the institutional and policy environment (Skinner, 1999), but included discussions about organisations.
- Local Policy Dialogues were held with representatives of trader organisations, local authority officials, and councillors, in Cape Town, East London and in Johannesburg. A National Policy Dialogue was then held in Durban. Appendix 2 gives more details of these events, which were a rich source of information about organisations themselves, and the interaction between them and the authorities.
- Press clippings about street trading activities were studied. The collections are



held by the Durban Metropolitan Economic Development Department, Independent Newspapers in Johannesburg, Pretoria News, and the Daily Dispatch in East London.

These activities were undertaken between June 1998 and January 1999. Occasional additional phone interviews were conducted to fill gaps in information. Dates for these are highlighted in the text.

Being employed by an organisation to assess a sector in which it is a key player is a challenge. The project's point of entry is in line with the focus of SEWU's activism - a concern with the poorer end of the informal economy and with women. There is therefore an in-built bias in SEWU's favour. There is then a further potential bias towards SEWU in the gathering of primary data. For example, SEWU assisted in setting up the Focus Group Discussions and the participants were largely SEWU members. There was a dilemma in that it would have been very difficult to organise the Focus Group Discussions had we not worked through SEWU and yet this introduces a bias. Consequently we used these discussions to explore conditions of work for women traders, for example, and their perceptions of changing policies, rather than to analyse the organisations themselves.

This study did not attempt to investigate organisations dealing with activities defined as illegal, particularly with drugs, and with commercial sex workers. Women are especially vulnerable in connection with both these activities. We heard, in Focus Group Discussions and from local authority personnel, that drug syndicates are increasing in strength, and it is highly likely that they are penetrating some informal and formal sector organisations. Further there have been attempts in Durban to organise commercial sex workers. These however have not been very successful (Ted Leggett, personal communication).<sup>1</sup> In Cape Town, the organisation Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT) has received some publicity, but we did not pursue this.

The study is further limited by the decision to focus only on urban areas, and mostly in the Central Business Districts (CBDs) of large cities. A study of the conditions of organisations in rural areas, in black working class residential areas in the big cities (former 'townships'), and in small towns, would be a valuable focus for future research.

### **3 THE POLICY AND ORGANISATIONAL ENVIRONMENT**

Before approaching the analysis of the South African trader organisations, we present a brief overview of some issues which have implications for the mobilisation of women workers in the informal economy. These are the impacts of globalisation on labour and on organisations, the integration of gender concerns in South African government policies, in the South African labour policy and the labour movement, and in other non-governmental organisations in South Africa.

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<sup>1</sup> In India, a research organisation working in association with SEWA has had a protracted struggle to get commercial sex workers identified as a category of workers in the Indian national household survey. Finally, in 1999, they will be classified – in a new computer code which has two categories: 'prostitutes and beggars'.

### **3.1 Globalisation and changing labour and organisational patterns**

Globalisation brings changes in production systems and technology, and consequent shifts in the nature and structure of the labour market. Changes in production systems have led both to the retrenchment of many of those employed in the formal sector (and the consequent increase in numbers of people operating in the informal economy), as well as to the increasing casualisation of work. A dual labour market is emerging. The primary labour market consists of workers who are employed in the formal sector on permanent contracts. The secondary labour market is made up of temporary, part-time, casual, seasonal, home based and piece workers and those operating in the informal economy. The secondary labour market is disproportionately constituted by women.

Internationally the organised labour movement has focused on the primary labour market. The South African labour movement is similar in that it is modelled on the trade union movement in the developed world. To protect the rights of new categories of workers emerging through globalising forces, new and appropriate forms of organising need to be developed.

One positive outcome of globalisation is that new opportunities for global solidarity are presented by the very nature of changing communications technology, as well as by the softening and blurring of distinctions between north and south, and between developed and developing countries. There are notable international alliances concerned with, for example, environmental issues and reproductive health. In the informal sector, a goal of the International Alliance of Street Traders is to influence the international climate as well as to concentrate on local in-country conditions. For home based workers in the informal economy, an alliance, which included SEWA and SEWU, contributed to the ten year process which resulted in the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) adoption of a convention to protect home based workers in 1996.

### **3.2 The integration of gendered concerns in government structures and emerging policies**

There is a mixed climate in South Africa with regard to struggles for gender equality. The macro-economy policy, GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution), is of the neo-liberal type that has not favoured women's position in the productive or reproductive spheres. On the other hand, women have made gains on other policy and practical fronts. Some of these are described in the previous WIEGO report (Skinner, 1999: 4):

- South Africa has a high proportion – about one quarter - of women parliamentarians, ranking high in this respect internationally.
- It has been a signatory to a number of international conventions regarding women's rights, for example the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
- It has established a number of commissions to protect these rights, for example the Commission on Gender Equality.
- The Office on the Status of Women, in the President's office, co-ordinates structures within and outside government to entrench gender equity.
- Most government departments have made a commitment to integrate or mainstream gender concerns into their work.

- All new policies, as reflected in white and green papers, integrate, to a greater or lesser extent, gendered analyses into their policies, pointing to women's specific vulnerabilities. This is so for policies on land reform, water, health, and welfare, for example. All fall short - though in different degrees - when it comes to translating policies into legislation and implementation.
- The policy for the promotion of the informal sector – the SMME or Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise sector - is not well developed with respect to women's needs. Survivalists are identified in the emerging policy as a specific category of poorer economic actors, with an acknowledgement that most are women. However, there has been relatively little strategic thinking around the support strategies for this group as yet.

Thus there have been positive developments in government at national level. There are fewer women parliamentarians at provincial level, however, and even fewer at local government level, which is the point at which street traders most frequently interact with government. This is not to assume that women councillors are necessarily more sympathetic to women's issues than men councillors are; it nevertheless provides one example of the inconsistencies between national and local levels of government. It is the local authorities who must operationalise the national commitment to gender equality and the recognition of the informal sector as developmentally important.

Both the synthesis and the institutional reports (Lund, 1998; Skinner, 1999) described how in post-apartheid South Africa, local government has been tasked with three things which are pertinent to the interests of women street vendors:

- The promotion of local economic development as an integral function of local government
- The promotion of the informal sector as part of local economic development
- The participation of citizens in local governance.

These are positive developments in the move away from the apartheid past. There are of course stumbling blocks when it comes to translating this into reality. The institutional report identified important ones as being the lack of national guidelines; the lack of human and financial resources; the existing authoritarian mind set within bureaucracies, and the shortage of time to develop new and multi-level skills; and the restructuring process itself. The institutional report also suggested that the pattern in Johannesburg and in Cape Town to outsource management of street trading to the private sector (which is in line with the macro-economic policy stance towards a greater private sector role) is likely to marginalise poorer street traders, and especially women, even further (Skinner, 1999: 34-37).

In this changing policy environment, there are windows of opportunity. However there is no guarantee that these will remain open. It is thus important to work towards institutionalising participation, and the integration of the role of street trading in urban economic planning, now.

### **3.3 Labour policy and the labour movement**

The labour movement has played a prominent role in shaping South African history throughout this century. Especially from the early 1970s, the mostly black Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) and the Congress of South

African Trade Unions (COSATU) affiliated unions played a critically important role in the political struggle. (See for example Friedman, 1987; Maree, 1987.)

Before the present government was in place, tripartite mechanisms involving government, business and labour worked towards the development of an entirely new framework governing labour and the work place. This has implications for workers in the informal economy. New labour legislation covers a broader spectrum of workers than in most other countries. For example, the Labour Relations Act (LRA), and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) cover anyone working for remuneration in an employment relationship, whether temporary, contract, part-time, piece-work etc. This is potentially inclusive for many informal economy workers who were previously excluded (previously wholly unrecognised, in fact). However, 'work' is still essentially defined in relation to 'employment', and the legislation deals with regulation of the employment relationship. Furthermore, the breadth of the new definition is offset by the fact that bargaining and dispute systems are designed for formal sector and larger operations. There are thus doubts about the enforceability of the dispute system for piece work, for example. It remains excluding and marginalising, at any level, for self-employed poorer women.

The primary focus of the South African labour movement has been on organising workers who are employed in the formal sector, and the leadership of the movement itself has been substantially dominated by men – some of whom have advocated strongly for improving the position of women. It has done little thus far in terms of taking up informal sector issues in any serious way.

Unions in other parts of Africa have responded to the challenges presented to the union movement by globalisation, changing forms of work, and the expansion of the informal economy. In West Africa, for example, the Ghanaian Trade Union Congress is committed to the unionisation of the informal sector and this is already being implemented by some of its affiliates, most notably the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) and the General Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU). GAWU started organising subsistence farmers when structural adjustment programmes reduced their membership from 130 000 to 30 000. Senegal's trade union congress has decided to organise workers in the informal sector and there are examples of informal sector unions in Benin, Togo and Cote d'Ivoire. (See Horn, 1997.)

In South Africa, the union movement registered its concern about unemployment through its proposals at the 1998 Jobs Summit. COSATU's proposals were that all workers should contribute one day's wages to a fund to be set up to fight unemployment and that working hours should be limited to forty hours a week, to create more work opportunities. It proposed that rather than conceding to calls for further wage flexibility, which it saw as redistribution from the already poor to the even poorer, it should continue campaigning for redistribution from the rich to the poor. After the Summit, COSATU spelled out its programme further, and the essence of its position is to 'formalise the informal sector'. It is positive on the one hand that COSATU now recognises the informal economy as an issue to be dealt with. However the notion of 'formalising the informal sector' addresses neither the reality that significant portions of the formal sector are informalising nor that the large survivalist end of the informal sector will never be formalised.

Two organisations of unemployed people have formed recently: the Unemployed

Masses of South Africa (UMSA), and Malamulela Social Movement for the Unemployed (Vlok, 1998: 40). Both claim high membership, and one suspects that both would find it difficult to produce up-to-date membership lists. UMSA was established in May 1994. Members pay a fee of R2.50 for life and it claims around 32 000 members. Malamulela holds that organised labour stands between the unemployed and jobs, and wants inclusion in consultative mechanisms. According to the General Secretary:

The unemployed should be the fourth voice besides the golden triangle of business, labour and government (Vlok, 1998: 41).

The Democratic Party (DP) attempted to forge an alliance with both these organisations as a tactic for the 1999 elections. It remains to be seen whether the DP, now being the formal opposition party, will give any further attention to this constituency.

### **3.4 Other organisational nodes**

Parallel to the union movement, the 1970s and 1980s saw the strengthening and deepening of mass struggle of populist organisations in South Africa. Since the 1994 transition to democracy, their voices have been muted. The National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) was set up as a national level four-chamber, multi-partite mechanism, a forum in which different interest groups could interact. Some dismiss NEDLAC out of hand, especially in terms of the ability of the fourth chamber - 'the community constituency' - to represent the interests of poorer people. Nevertheless, it is one potentially influential forum for representation of informal economy workers.

There are three interesting nodes where organisations are thinking about how to position themselves with respect to the new government and / or labour. First, the South African Homeless People's Federation is challenging the structure and regulation of the housing subsidies on the ground that they are enriching private capital at the expense of the poor. Second, the embryonic rural movement, organising around the development of a Rural Charter, expresses deep dissatisfaction at the lack of delivery on land reform and rural infrastructure. It is also critical of the high profile given to 'participation and consultation' which is seldom followed by implementation. It is one of the community constituencies in NEDLAC. Finally, the disability movement shares the WIEGO and SEWU stance of wanting to mainstream and integrate a constituency, rather than treat it as a special, non-normal case. It particularly wants to see an active labour market policy for people with disabilities, rather than being defined as a 'welfare' concern. It is the strongest of the five sectors in the community constituency in NEDLAC.

There are possibilities for new alliances between informal workers and these movements. All of them are concerned with the integration of formerly marginalised groups; all of them have a gender focus.

### **3.5 Gender and non governmental organisations**

Before the elections, the work of many non governmental organisations (NGOs) had an anti-apartheid focus. Much of it was urban-based and gender blind, and organisations were relatively isolated from international social movements.

Much has changed in the last few years. NGOs participated in the major international summits such as Beijing, Cairo and Copenhagen. A growing number of organisations have a gendered focus. For example organisations concerned about the exceptionally high levels of domestic violence and abuse against women have achieved a high profile.

South African NGOs have well developed linkages in the field of reproductive health rights and services. Some of the high salience is connected with the HIV/AIDS epidemic – the realisation that a crucial moment in tackling the spread of the disease comes when girls and women are able to take control over decisions to do with sexual behaviour.

Some members of the international donor community have inserted a strong gender element into their funding policies, making it an explicit criterion for support.

This Section has given a brief overview of the policy and organisational environment in which women workers in the informal economy seek to sustain themselves and their households. We now turn to the questions: Why organise? What is the need for, and role of, organisations of and for people in the survivalist sector?

#### **4 THE FUNCTIONS OF ORGANISATIONS FOR WORKERS IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY**

There has been an international swing towards recognising the importance of the informal economy. The tendency of many international organisations and NGOs is to conceive of all informal sector workers as prospective entrepreneurs who should be supported on a trajectory towards the formal sector. As a consequence of this analysis, it is common for them to say that what street traders need is 'skills training', or 'access to credit', or 'child care', and then they try to get street traders to set up organisations around these issues.

The WIEGO project takes as a central focus the structural issues of poverty and exclusion, and the marginal position of women in patriarchal societies. So we start with the need for organisations to establish and defend legal rights, and to represent members.

##### **4.1 Establishing and defending legal rights**

Street trader organisations are in a stronger position than individual traders to establish and to defend traders' legal rights. The most important of these, in most places, would be the right to secure access to permanent urban space, followed by rights to have property protected e.g. not to have goods indiscriminately confiscated.

There are also rights in the South African Constitution such as the right to be informed about bylaws and the right to a safe environment i.e. to be protected by the police. These rights may be contained within street trading bylaws, but they are not necessarily respected by all officials. An important role for organisations is to operationalise the Constitutional rights for their constituencies, by forcing local

authorities to include these rights in the policy and bylaws.

#### **4.2 Representing members**

An important organisational function is to represent members interests. This involves creating and sustaining mechanisms for continuous consultation, or for participating in already existing mechanisms. This serves to insist that traders voices are heard, and to monitor compliance with decisions about trading.

#### **4.3 Influencing policy and improving image: lobbying and advocacy**

If the interests of workers in the informal economy are to be integrated into urban and economic policies, one important task of organisations is to identify where policies are made and how agendas are influenced, so that representation is made in the appropriate places. These may be at the highest levels in national ministries (such as Trade and Industry, Labour, Health, Welfare, Transport). It may be in multi-partite and tripartite mechanisms involving labour, business and government (such as NEDLAC). It may be in platforms involved in the machinery for advancing gender equality.

Organisations need to lobby to ensure that the new government's commitment to previously disadvantaged groupings is operationalised. In the face of apartheid-created infrastructural disparities, there are many demands on local government resources. If traders are not organised, and thus not in a position to put pressure on local government, resources are unlikely to be allocated to them. Further South African cities are not designed for street trading activities. Street traders have to lobby for trading space to be factored into new city developments and for the redesign of existing areas where trading occurs. Examples of the latter would be the broadening of pavements, creating pedestrian walkways and the provision of shelters.

Street traders have had a poor public image in South Africa. Organisations can be a vehicle for enhancing the image, and raising the profile, of street traders. Organisations are able to learn skills in dealing with media – to fight negative images and misconceptions, and to construct more positive ones. The more formally the organisation is constituted, and able to show proven membership figures, the more likely it will be taken seriously as a spokesperson.

#### **4.4 Building leadership, through empowerment of members**

A trio of authors, who have been central to the development of WIEGO, seek to operationalise the idea of empowerment in social institutions:

... empowerment has to be understood in terms of concrete everyday experiences. If empowerment is the ability to exercise power, then everyday forms of women's empowerment are the ability of women to exercise power in the social institutions that govern their everyday lives (Carr, Chen and Jhabvala, 1996: 213).

They identify some of the social institutions in which women are disempowered as the household, local government, education authorities and religious groups.

One function of organisations is to be an institution in which people learn to be assertive. This is especially important for women workers in the informal economy who have less formal workplace experience. It is a terrain on which leadership can be developed from the bottom up. For better-off traders, organisations may be more important in terms of helping provide links into the formal economy. For survivalists, it may be more important to assist people to secure and defend the place that they have, and learn to negotiate for better conditions.

#### **4.5 Providing or getting access to services**

An important function of organisations is to secure tangible material benefits, through collective action. This is important not only intrinsically, in terms of material support for members; it is also important in securing members' commitment to the organisation.

First, organisations can work to secure material resources. Economic gains can be made for example through joint sourcing of goods, assistance with start-up costs, and securing storage space from formal traders and owners. Women traders are often especially disempowered in these relationships, partly because they are disproportionately located at the poorer end of the sector so have less purchasing power, but also because they can be subject to sexual harassment. If organised they are in a stronger position to respond. Also, through organisations, informal workers may develop a stronger voice on platforms where the interests of 'the economy' is otherwise represented only through formal sector organisations such as Chambers of Commerce and professional associations.

Second, organisations can negotiate for collective access to appropriate skills training. Collective access to skills training through an organisation can reduce the costs of training for individual traders. South Africa has developed a growth industry in training courses and consultants trying to teach people to 'grow your own business'. Street trader organisations could help ensure that training courses are appropriately designed. Very few survivalist traders, for example, are in a position to take a protracted period off work and yet many training courses require that traders do this.

Vendors' organisations should be able to advise on appropriate curricula, which may be more broad than traditional business skills. For example, street traders need to negotiate with formal sector traders, street trader associations and sometimes local government officials. Not having the confidence to be assertive in these relationships may act as an obstacle in terms of women street traders securing their right to trade. Concrete training in negotiation skills could go some way to addressing this source of disadvantage.

Third, organisations can negotiate access to forms of social protection such as child care, health care, social security. Informal workers have special needs around security against loss of income and assets. For poorer women, the boundaries between productive and reproductive or caring roles are fluid and porous. Many women street traders have their children with them on site. Organisations can potentially negotiate for state support, or be the vehicle through which collective childcare facilities can be secured.



#### 4.6 Creating strategic alliances with the trade union movement

Far-sighted trade unions are coming to recognise the potential importance of informal sector workers as allies in the workers' struggle. Street trader organisations, in turn, need to form strategic alliances with organised formal labour on particular issues.

SEWA in India early saw the importance of organising as a union of workers, and not as 'poor women', and adapted a strategy of parallel union and co-operative arms:

The trade union represents struggle, while the co-operative represents development. The trade union fights while the co-operatives build (Jhabvala, 1994: 127).

#### 4.7 Creating external linkages and alliances

Strong external cross-country linkages and alliances have been identified as a key factor in successful non governmental organisations. Traditionally, these linkages have been in a North-South direction, with northern organisations having greater power and resources than those in the south. Increasingly, the importance of South-South, as well as South-North, linkages, is appreciated. This parallels a recognition in the world of work that the conventional North-South distinction breaks down in the face of globalisation. A Korean woman immigrant working in the garment sector in Ottawa will be disadvantaged in similar ways to the woman worker in Hammarsdale in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Linkages between organisations - from local federations, to national federations, to regional networks – can help local organisations understand the relations between micro and macro economic policy; between South and North; and between employers (whether formal or informal) and workers (whether formal or informal).

We have described a framework for understanding the importance of organisations in promoting the interests of workers in the informal economy. We now turn to the organisations and associations themselves.

### 5 STREET TRADERS ORGANISATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The first WIEGO report (Lund, 1998) showed that there was little reliable documented information about organisations in the informal economy in South Africa in general, and among street traders in particular. The studies that had tried to assess organisational membership had found low membership levels. The larger surveys on street trading in Durban and Johannesburg found just over 14% and 15% respectively belonged to associations (Lund, 1998:33-34). Nevertheless, it is also clear that there are a large number of organisations in the street trading sector in South Africa - an organisation leader in Cape Town, for example, was able to supply a list of over 60 organisations in Cape Town City<sup>2</sup> alone.

The organisational environment in this sector changes constantly. A consultant who

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<sup>2</sup> One of the six local council's or substructures within the Cape Town Metropolitan Area.

had worked with the street trading sector observed:

'The organisational structure in this sector is so dynamic that you can only hope to have a picture painted of the organisational dynamics at one point in time, for the next time it is analysed it is likely to look quite different.'

Directories provided by local government officials and street trader organisation leaders were quickly outdated, and furthermore captured only the larger more established end of the sector.

That organisations came and went was consistently reinforced in interviews with those working in the street trading sector. The manager in charge of trading in the Johannesburg CBD, Li Pernigger, said:

'When we started negotiating the bylaws there were five organisations. This was then whittled away to two. Now there are ten new organisations.'

There appears to be a waxing and waning of organisations according to individuals' decisions. Two organisation leaders spoke of being in a position to create or revive an organisation if the need or occasion arose. In the East London Local Policy Dialogue, when asked if there was an organisation of clothing sellers, a trader responded:

'There is no such organisation at this point in time, but we could easily form one.'

The Western Cape Informal Business Forum is a provincial body which was launched in 1995. The organisation was established to represent informal sector interests in policy making forums and included representatives from 47 different organisations. The organisation is known to city and provincial officials. A representative attended the Cape Town local policy dialogue. When questioned about the organisation she said:

'The organisation does still exist but is not functioning. This is because of lack of subscription money. The organisation however is still in my name and can be resurrected if or when a crisis arises.'

This confirms Li Pernigger's conclusion:

'Many organisations in the informal sector are issue driven. Once the issue has been addressed, the organisation can no longer be found.'

If organisations were to be strictly defined as groups who are formally constituted and have paid up members, the definition would capture only a small proportion of organisations that exist. This study employs a flexible definition of the notion of an organisation.

Interviews were conducted with street trader organisation representatives in Durban, East London, Cape Town, Johannesburg, Pretoria and Queenstown (Appendix 1). These interviews were biased in favour of the more established organisations - those who could be contacted by telephone or fax. This was a result of having limited amounts of time in any one place and having to set up

interviews before arrival. However, a broader understanding of the nature of street trader organisations was gained through speaking to individual traders, and at the policy dialogues (see Appendix 2).

## 5.1 Factors shaping organisational structure in the street trading sector

The individual historical development of cities clearly leads to differences between them. There are a greater number of more formalised trader organisations in Cape Town than in any of the other cities. This is partly because a large proportion of traders are located in markets (as opposed to trading on sidewalks), and market areas are controlled by market associations. In contrast street trader organisations in Johannesburg appear to be more transient. A series of organisations have arisen in response to certain issues but with time are no longer active. When interviews were being conducted in East London, street trader organisations in the central business district were in flux, indicating a similar pattern to that in Johannesburg. In Durban the more formal end of the organisational environment is dominated by the SEWU. Organisational activities in Pretoria appear to be limited, probably because one dominant organisation has a close relationship with local government, as will be described in the case studies.

The urban vending component of the informal economy is highly segmented, and there are different class, racial and gender dynamics within sub-sectors, and according to the different ways in which cities in South Africa were affected by pre-apartheid settlement patterns, and then by apartheid policies. Class and racial cleavages, for example, seem to be particularly acute in Cape Town. Better-off traders tend to be coloured<sup>3</sup>, while poorer traders are black. Trader associations are dominated by coloured traders, and these trader associations are given a lot of control over trading areas (Skinner, 1998: 36). Black traders in Cape Town claimed that they were discriminated against on the basis of their colour by coloured colleagues; SEWU's Cape Town staff confirmed this.

Across all cities there are gender divisions with women being disproportionately represented at the poorer end of the sector and street trader employees more often being women than men. With a few notable exceptions, women are underrepresented in leadership positions of street trader organisations. Organisation leaders said that it was often difficult to get women to take up leadership positions. Further, we came across only one street trader organisation that was specifically concerned with women's issues.

A critical issue that was raised in every area that the research team visited was the division between foreign and South African street traders. The differences revolve around economic issues. South African traders say that the traders from other African countries are better traders than they are. Conflicts tend to arise about this, and about access to space.

Some street trader organisations have arisen specifically to respond to increased competition from foreign traders. All existing organisations have to take a stand on whether or not to include foreign street traders as members. One organisation in

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<sup>3</sup>The former South African government delineated four main racial groups: black, white, coloured and Indian. The use of this terminology does not signify acceptance of the terminology or the system of racial naming.

Johannesburg is said to have lost support entirely due to including foreign street traders. The leader of a breakaway group said:

'Including foreign members led to the death of the South African Chamber of Informal Business. We will not make the same mistake again.'

There are strong networks among foreign traders from the same country. There appears to be substantial economic co-operation. Foreign traders often sell similar types of goods - particularly clothing and leather accessories. South African traders consistently cited this as a reason for foreign traders doing better than their local counterparts.

The traders from other countries do not appear to be organised in formally constituted groups. For example, in all the newspaper clippings, only once is mention made of an organised group of foreign street traders: a group called the Concerned Somali Community East London or CSCEL was reported to distance themselves from an incident of violence between foreign traders (Daily Dispatch, 03/10/97). This is a difficult area to research. Since a proportion of foreign traders are illegal, there is a fear of discovery, and access by researchers to the foreigners is difficult. This is a research gap of real importance.

One of the ways in which South Africa is different from other African countries, and, indeed most developing countries, is that local government is obliged to consult with street traders. The Constitution states:

Municipalities must aim ... to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government (Republic of South Africa, 1996:Section 152).

This has been reinforced more recently in the White Paper on Local Government by the concept of 'developmental local government'. This is defined as:

Local government that is committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs and improve the quality of their lives (Republic of South Africa, 1998:ix).

In recent years there have been a number of consultative processes between local government and the street trading sector. Processes common to all cities and towns included in our study are the re-negotiation of street trading by-laws and the declaration of certain areas restricted or prohibited trade zones. In the case of the latter, for example, according to the Amendment to the Businesses Act (1993), plans had to be advertised and objections considered. Forums have also been set up in certain trading areas where resources have been allocated to street trading infrastructure. Different models have emerged. Some local authorities worked through existing organisations; others insisted organisations formed into an umbrella body; sometimes block committees were formed and in certain cases local authorities created their own organisations.

The changing relationship between the street trading sector and local government has impacted on the nature of street trader organisations in South Africa in the 1990s. Even if not directly creating or restructuring organisations, significant

power has been placed in the hands of street trader organisation leaders. This means that the way in which their organisations are constituted, and how they represent traders' interests, becomes particularly important.

## 5.2 Profile of Organisations

In this sub-section, we profile thirteen organisations with respect to a number of variables which differentiate organisations. Of the thirteen, eight are then selected as case studies for more in-depth description and analysis.

The Tables summarise the information on thirteen organisations. Column 1 shows their geographical location, dispersed through the cities in which we conducted the research.

### 5.2.1 Primary focus

Organisations were classified according to the primary focus of their work (Column 2), as well as the level at which they operated – whether in a local area only, or city-wide, or provincially, nationally or even internationally (Column 3).

- **Service providers:** The primary focus of six of the thirteen organisations was the provision of a service or services, for example bulk buying, storage, marketing of goods, training.
- **Issue-driven organisations:** Two organisations had arisen in response to one issue. Both the Greater Johannesburg Planning Committee and the Oxford Street Traders Association in East London were established to launch a campaign aimed at pressurising local government to reduce the number of foreigner street traders.
- **Managing market areas:** The sample included two organisations – Enclodek and the Green Point Fleamarket Association - which illustrate the trend in Cape Town where the management of trading areas is contracted out to trader organisations.
- **Marketing intermediary between formal and informal sectors:** It was clear from key informant interviews that a focus of a large proportion of trader organisations was to act as a marketing intermediary between the formal and informal sectors, and particularly with those formal sector businesses that supply the informal sector. This is an economic rather than a political relationship. Structures for ensuring representivity are therefore not an issue. Such organisations are run according to business principles; not much attention is paid to, for example, empowering membership. The National Informal Business Development Association is an example of this. These kinds of organisations are underrepresented in the sample; some organisations have been amalgamated into umbrella bodies like the Queenstown Hawkers Association and the Pretoria Informal Business Association.
- **Representing interests:** As is clear from column 3, representing traders interests is an important function of trader organisations. In this sample, only ACHIB and SEWU were explicitly active at a national level - for example in national policy debates (column 4). This is confirmed by a scan of newspaper coverage on issues affecting street traders. Aside from these two cases, street trader organisations activities tend to focus on one trading site or at a city level.

**Table 1 Organisational Profile (Information available as of 08/98-11/98)<sup>4</sup>**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Organisation	Geographical location of members	Primary focus	Level of action	Relationship with local government	Process of becoming and remaining a member	Number of members	In a position to produce a constitution	Extent of democratic practice
<b>African Council of Hawkers and Informal Business (ACHIB)</b>	Throughout South Africa	Service (variety of) and representation	Local, provincial and national	Negotiate with but independent of	Sign on	Over 100 000 (disputed)	No	Mass Meetings (but does differ from branch to branch)
<b>Enclodek – Cape Town Station Traders Association</b>	One trading area in Cape Town	Management	Specific trading area (however active in some national forums)	N/A (interact with the parastatal Intersite)	Being a permanent trader and buying a share of the company	Over 100	Yes	Annual election; important decisions are voted on
<b>Gompo Hawkers Association</b>	East London Central Business District (CBD)	Service (storage)	City but CBD focus	Negotiate with but independent of	Sign on	1 000	No	Mass Meetings
<b>Greater Johannesburg Planning Committee</b>	Johannesburg CBD	Responding to one issue	City	Demonstrate against	Attend a demonstration	Too informally constituted to assess	No	Intermittent mass meetings
<b>Green Point Fleamarket Traders Association</b>	One trading area in Cape Town	Management	Specific trading area	Lessor of government land	Being a permanent trader	Approximately 500	Yes	Annual election; important decisions are voted on
<b>Jabulani Trading Club</b>	KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng	Service (training and marketing)	Primarily city level	Negotiate with, but independent of, however closely linked to a political party	Sign on	6 000	Yes	Annual election; mass meetings

<sup>4</sup> Blank cells signify unreliable information or information that has been disputed.

**Table 1 Organisational Profile (Information available as of 08/98-11/98)**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Organisation	Geographical location of members	Primary focus	Level of action	Relationship with local government	Process of becoming and remaining a member	Number of members	In a position to produce a constitution	Extent of democratic practice
<b>Mitchell's Plain Progressive Traders Association</b>	One trading area in Cape Town	Representation	Specific trading area	Negotiate with but independent of	Sign on		No	Mass meetings
<b>National Informal Business Association (NIBA)</b>	Durban CBD	Service	City but CBD focus	Negotiate with but independent of	Sign on	2 000	No	Mass meetings
<b>National Informal Business Development Association (NIBDA)</b>	Johannesburg CBD	Service (bulk buying)	City but CBD focus	Negotiate with but independent of	Sign on	1 200	No	Members are clients so N/A
<b>Oxford Street Traders</b>	East London CBD	Responding to one issue	City	Demonstrate against	Attend a demonstration	Too informally constituted to assess	No	Intermittent mass meetings
<b>Pretoria Informal Business Association (PIBA)</b>	Pretoria-wide	Service (training) and representation	City	Created by and dependent on	Sign on	4 200	No	Mass Meetings
<b>Queenstown Hawkers Association (QHA)</b>	Queenstown-wide	Representation	Town	Created by but increasing less dependent on	Payment of subscription fees	Approximately 500	No	Mass Meetings
<b>Self Employed Women's Union (SEWU)</b>	KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern and Western Cape	Representation and service (variety of)	Local, provincial, national and International	Negotiate with but independent of	Payment of subscription fees only	2 100	Yes	Membership controlled

**Table 2 Organisational Profile (Information available as of 08/98-11/98)**

	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Organisation	Gender of primary spokesperson	% of women in leadership positions	Membership fee	Primary funding strategy	Organisation staffed by	Office Space	Contactable by tel. (/fax) at office	Most effective means of communication
<b>African Council of Hawkers and Informal Business (ACHIB)</b>	Man		Varies from branch to branch	Donations from formal business	Largely volunteers but a few employees	Office (when exists) frequently moves	Yes (intermittently)	Often uncontactable
<b>Enclodek – Cape Town Station Traders Association</b>	Woman	20%	R500 per share + R30 a day	Members payments for trading sites	Board members who are paid a small retainer	Permanent office space near trading site	Yes	Phone make an appointment, go to the office
<b>Gompo Hawkers Association</b>	Woman	100%	R20 a year (but few pay)	Do not have one	Volunteers	No office space	No	Find committee members at their trading sites
<b>Greater Johannesburg Planning Committee</b>	Man	Too informally constituted to assess	0	N/A	No staff	No office space	No	Find committee members at their trading sites
<b>Green Point Fleamarket Traders Association</b>	Woman	Exact % unknown but said to be predominantly men	R15 every Sunday	Members payments for trading sites	Volunteers	No office space	No	Find committee members at their trading sites
<b>Jabulani Trading Club</b>	Man	50%	R10 joining fee, R5 a year (few pay)	Do not have one	Volunteers	No office space	Yes	Phone chairperson



**Table 2 Organisational Profile (Information available as of 08/98-11/98)**

	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Organisation	Gender of primary spokesperson	% of women in leadership positions	Member-ship fee	Primary funding strategy	Organisation staffed by	Office Space	Contactable by tel. (/fax) at office	Most effective means of communication
<b>Mitchell's Plain Progressive Traders Association</b>	Woman	Exact % unknown but said to be predominantly women	0	Do not have one	Volunteers	No office space	No	Find committee members at their trading sites
<b>National Informal Business Association (NIBA)</b>	Man	Exact % unknown but said to be predominantly men		Do not have one	Volunteers	No office space	No	Find committee members at their trading sites
<b>National Informal Business Development Association (NIBDA)</b>	Man	20%	0	Profits from bulk buying	Volunteers	Office in central Johannesburg	Yes (intermittently)	Phone make an appointment, go to the office
<b>Oxford Street Traders</b>	Man	Too informally constituted to assess	0	N/A	No staff	No office space	No	Find committee members at their trading sites
<b>Pretoria Informal Business Association (PIBA)</b>	Man	25%	R5 / month (but few pay)	Donations from formal business	Volunteers	Office space borrowed from training institution	Yes	Phone make an appointment, go to the office
<b>Queenstown Hawkers Association (QHA)</b>	Man	25%	R5 / month	Subscription fees	Volunteers	No office space	No	Find committee members at their trading sites
<b>Self Employed Women's Union (SEWU)</b>	Woman	100%	R5 / month	Foreign funders	Employees	Four permanent offices (3 regional and 1 national)	Yes	Phone make an appointment, go to the office

### 5.2.2 Relationship with local government

Organisations differ with respect to their relationship with local government (Column 4). Some are oppositional (e.g. Greater Johannesburg Planning Committee and Oxford Street Traders); others are independent but work in co-operation with (e.g. Gompo Hawkers Association) while others were in fact created by local government (e.g. the Pretoria Informal Business Association). The Jabulani Training Club was the only organisation that was openly affiliated to one political party - the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). The IFP is well represented in local government in the areas the Jabulani Training Club operates.

### 5.2.3 The way in which organisations are constituted

Organisations differ with respect to the process of becoming a member (Column 5) and how membership is defined (Column 6). Having a constitution (Column 7) and having elections and annual general meetings (Column 8) are two indicators of the potential of organisational membership to hold their leaders accountable.

When membership is not defined by virtue of trading in one specific trading area, the process of becoming a member of an organisation is often to sign up once. This means that membership lists may reflect all the names of traders who had ever joined the organisation. Representatives quoted round figures for membership numbers (column 6). There is a possibility these are inflated as there is no way of assessing how many of these traders consider themselves members. The definition of what it entails to be a member is thus unclear.

When asked how they were organised, leaders generally pointed to the democratic structures - for example mass meetings to elect leadership (column 7). Meetings however were frequently called on an *ad hoc* basis. Organisational representatives often said they had a constitution, but few leaders were in a position to produce this kind of documentation (column 8).

The Cape Town organisations who leased state land – Enclodek and the Green Point Fleamarket Association - were more formally constituted, as was SEWU. They were able to produce constitutions, as well as minutes of their last annual general meetings.

### 5.2.4 The role of women in organisations

In assessing organisations, note was made of whether the primary spokesperson was male or female (column 9) and the question was asked about how many of the leadership positions were held by women (column 10). The primary spokesperson of eight of the thirteen organisations was a man. Of the five organisations that had at least one woman in a leadership position, Gompo Hawkers Association had 95% women membership, and SEWU organises only women.

A senior local government official in Johannesburg supplied the names and contact details of all the street trader organisations operating in Johannesburg and its surrounds that she had dealt with or was aware of. Eighteen organisations were listed, none of which had a female spokesperson. In Durban all the street traders organisations that we read about in newspaper clippings, or that traders told us about, except for SEWU, were headed by men. However there were differences between cities. As previously mentioned Cape Town stood out in that women

appeared to play a much more active role in organisations. Forty percent (twenty three of the fifty eight organisations) listed<sup>5</sup> were headed by women.

Organisation leaders tended to be vague when asked how many of the leadership positions were held by women. Except for Cape Town, women tended to be in secretarial positions. In the organisations where female committee members along with their male counterparts were interviewed, the women had to be specifically encouraged to participate.

Having women in leadership positions does not of course guarantee that women's particular concerns will be addressed. As will be explored later on in this section, there was only one street trader organisation - SEWU - which specifically focused on gender issues or whose approach was informed by a critique of patriarchy.

### **5.2.5 Organisational infrastructure**

Few organisations had consistent membership fees, or a concerted funding strategy (Columns 11 and 12). Street trader organisations were largely staffed by volunteers (Column 13). Few organisations had permanent office space (Column 14), and few could be contacted by telephone or fax (Column 15).

## **5.3 Street trader organisations: case studies**

Eight organisations have been selected for further analysis. These have been chosen to convey the great variety of objectives, of legal status, of aspirations of members, as well as different relationships to local authorities and the formal sector.

### **5.3.1 African Council of Hawkers and Informal Business (ACHIB): a national organisation**

The African Council of Hawkers and Informal Business – ACHIB - has been one of the most vocal street trader organisations in South Africa. Since its establishment in 1986, it has received considerable media attention. It was particularly active in the late 1980s and early 1990s, in the period when legislation affecting the informal sector was being reconsidered. ACHIB worked alongside the Law Review Project to produce a model set of street trading by-laws. When the by-laws were being renegotiated, the street trading sector in a number of cities used the model set as a reference point.

A key focus of ACHIB's activities has been securing deals with formal sector business people who supply the informal sector. For example, in late 1997 ACHIB entered into an agreement with Simpsons Marketing Agency, a firm that supplies fruit and vegetables to one of the main markets in inner-city Johannesburg. At the time the president of ACHIB was quoted as saying:

‘This will enable us to negotiate prices from a position of strength with bulk discounts and credit facilities for small hawkers’ (Business Day,

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<sup>5</sup> 65 organisations were listed; however the gender of the primary spokesperson was only clear in 58 cases.

1997/09/18).

ACHIB was involved with a similar scheme in Durban – the National Hawkers Co-operative (NHC). The NHC was launched in 1996 by a group of traders associated with ACHIB and with the KwaZulu-Natal Independent Business Association. The publicity at the time said that the NHC co-operative would operate from a central distribution centre, and would buy goods (ranging from fresh produce to groceries and cigarettes) in bulk. A subsidiary - the Small Medium Enterprise Distributors (SMED) - was responsible for procurement and distribution. SMED was run on a profit making and dividend-sharing basis, with shares sold to traders. The idea was that members would gain from profits made, and would also have access to loans ranging from R100 to R5000. To start the co-operative the founders enlisted the assistance of a major Durban fresh produce distributor, Mr Prevesh Maharaj, who was a minority shareholder in the co-operative. They also received assistance in the form of goods from several local businesses. The NHC was later reported to have had funding problems.

ACHIB claims to have more than 100 000 members countrywide, but we would question this large number. First, although ACHIB claims to have a membership of a few thousand traders in Durban, at the time of conducting interviews ACHIB was uncontactable in this city. Traders as well as other organisation leaders and local government officials said that ACHIB was no longer active in Durban's CBD. When questioned about this, the national president stated that local branches were autonomous and that the national office was not always aware of all the activities at branch level. ACHIB was equally uncontactable in Johannesburg CBD, and was also said to no longer be active. The local government official in charge of street trading in the Southern Metropolitan Local Council in Johannesburg, said:

'ACHIB is no different from other street trader organisations that have come and gone.'

On the other hand, in May 1999 ACHIB was able to organise an event which shows that it can summon support. The commuter corporation, Metrorail, announced that traders would be banned from operating on train platforms or in trains in the Witwatersrand region of Gauteng. ACHIB's national office organised a march on Metrorail offices, and within a month ACHIB's national leaders had started negotiating with Metrorail to find alternative trading sites (Business Day, 05/05/99; and 14/06/99).

This is indicative of how ACHIB operates. Leon Louw, a lawyer who has worked closely with ACHIB for many years, stated in a telephone interview:

'ACHIB can become so inactive that they appear to have vanished, then suddenly they will re-emerge again in another form. One month they will have one set of offices, the next they will be somewhere else and the next you will not be able to contact them at all. When I am asked to vouch for ACHIB I immediately ask, "Who is ACHIB these days?", and then I respond accordingly.'

He concluded:

'The only thing stable about ACHIB is its instability.'

Certain ACHIB branches, however, appear to be more active than others. These tend to be the branches where there is a formal relationship with local government. For example, in Rustenburg, Klerksdorp and Stilfontein, ACHIB issues permits on behalf of government and is responsible for cleaning and crime prevention. Lawrence Mvundla, the founder and current president, pointed to Empangeni and Ladysmith branches as being particularly well resourced and having a number of longer term projects. For example, in Empangeni, an ACHIB bank supplies micro credit to street traders. It has been operating for six years, and the local business service centre in Richards Bay assists in monitoring and funding the bank.

At a national level a constitution has been drawn up, but this was not available to non members; this is unusual, as one point of having a constitution is to demonstrate transparency in an organisation. Our experience in trying to contact ACHIB would indicate that ACHIB is often informally constituted at a local level. Lawrence Mvundla himself expressed concern about the lack of democratic practices at branch level.

ACHIB's primary funding strategy is raising money from formal business. At a national level companies such as Anglo American and Unilever are approached for money for specific projects like the annual conference or a training programme. At branch level ACHIB enlists local private sector support. Since ACHIB is informally constituted and does not have transparent financial management structures in place, corruption charges are not uncommon.

We studied the extensive newspaper coverage that ACHIB has received, and could not find one case where a woman representative had acted as a spokesperson. Leon Louw stated:

‘Women have never played a leading role in ACHIB at national or at branch level. Although in most cases their members are largely women, the key players are always men.’

When ACHIB was mentioned in Focus Group Discussions on three separate occasions, women participants said that the organisation was male dominated.

### **5.3.2 National Independent Business Development Association: an intermediary with the formal sector**

NIBDA was formed in 1995 in alliance with an existing organisation - the South African Chamber of Hawkers and Informal Business (SACHIB). The latter subsequently collapsed. NIBDA operates in Johannesburg, and its primary focus is bulk buying. It buys a variety of products from formal sector companies. It has an office in central Johannesburg where the goods are delivered for trade to informal workers. The organisation is now well known enough for formal sector business people to approach the leadership if they want their goods to be distributed by traders.

The sourcing of goods is done by the marketing arm of the organisation, and generates income. Profits then support the training and development arm of the organisation. NIBDA links membership to training institutions. However, the committee members interviewed felt that most of the training institutions were not very effective.

The organisation plays a number of other roles. For example, leaders resolve conflicts between traders, and traders are also given legal advice. Further NIBDA is in fairly regular contact with local government.

Three volunteers staff the office. The five person committee is elected at a mass meeting, and there are over 1200 members. Membership is free. The chair felt that the organisation could not charge membership fees until projects were up and running. The organisation consistently experiences financial difficulties; there are times when even covering the monthly rental of the office and paying the telephone bill is difficult. On occasion they have been given donations from local business people. At the time of the interview, they were in the process of writing proposals to secure funding to cover operation costs.

Although few women held leadership positions, women members were clearly active in the organisation. This was one of the few organisations able to send articulate female members to represent them in the National Policy Dialogue.

### **5.3.3 Gompo Hawkers Association: an informal service provider association with influence**

The Gompo Hawkers Association has been active in East London for a number of years. Its members are fruit and vegetable traders; in the areas where it is most active, however, it clearly has influence over those trading in other goods. It informally regulates trading in certain parts of East London. It was clear in the East London Policy Dialogue that new traders could not simply start trading but would have to approach the organisation's committee members about space. The chair of the organisation stated that new traders would be allowed to operate as long as the space they were using did not belong to another trader who was temporarily absent, for example due to sickness or having to source goods. With the recent demarcation and allocation of trading sites by the East London City Council, this kind of regulation will no longer occur. The Gompo Hawkers Association however is still influential.

According to its chair, the organisation has 1 000 members. There is an annual R20 membership fee, but the chairperson said that many members have not paid this. This, coupled with the rounded membership figure, indicated a loose definition of membership. There is an executive committee, and committee members are elected at a 'mass meeting' (an interesting variation of the term annual general meeting, used by the more formal organisations). All executive committee members are women. The association organises fruit and vegetable sellers who are predominantly women. The chair said that there were an increasing number of men working in this area of street trading and that men would not be deliberately excluded from the organisation.

The organisation does not have enough resources to have an office. A part-time trader who also works at a local bank is responsible for keeping and updating the membership lists. It is very difficult to contact the organisation other than by going to committee members' stalls. Committee members do not speak any English, which means a Xhosa-speaking interpreter is required for interactions with many formal sector operators, and with many local authority personnel.

The chairperson, when asked what the organisation did for its members, said that it provided storage. The organisation negotiated with the Council to secure a number of old shipping containers that are located near trading sites in the central

business district. Members of the Gompo Hawkers Association are entitled to use these containers, for a small fee.

Despite its lack of formality, the Gompo Hawkers Association has played an active role in consultative processes with the local authority since 1995, for example, in the lengthy process in which street trading bylaws were workshopped. The chair of the organisation, however, did not feel negotiation with local government was one of the organisation's primary roles. She in fact did not even identify this as something the organisation did for its members. Yet the organisation was clearly seen by local government officials to be a critical point of entry into the street trading community. It was the first group to be mentioned when speaking about the sector. Officials were in fairly regular contact with the chairperson of the organisation. Decisions about the allocation of the newly demarcated sites were to be made by the Gompo Hawkers Association. Given the importance of site location, this gives the organisation, a relatively informal grouping, significant *de facto* power.

#### **5.3.4 Pretoria Informal Business Association: an organisation created by local authorities**

The Pretoria Informal Business Association or PIBA was officially launched in March 1996. The traffic officer in charge of street trading in Pretoria Central Substructure was instrumental in establishing PIBA. He explained how, in response to a crisis about the control of trading sites, the city had done the following:

'We arrested traders all over the city, this exploded them into action. There were a number of organisations active in the sector but we said that we were prepared to speak to one group and one group only. PIBA was then formed with representatives from some of the organisations on the committee. We worked closely with them. We still now have consistent contact with PIBA. We not only approach them with issues but they often tell us to go and remove a trader who, for example, will not listen to them.'

PIBA has a close relationship with a local authority which appears to treat traders harshly, relative to the other cities which we investigated. The official interviewed spoke of using 'army tactics' on groups of street traders. This relationship with council places the organisation in a powerful position but compromises its independence. Both officials and the executive members of PIBA said that at the time of the by-laws being implemented, new organisations formed. The official in charge of trading said that when one such organisation - the Concerned Hawkers Association - was formed, the department's response was to 'just bulldoze them'.

PIBA is a not-for-profit organisation. It has no funding except for a once off R40 000 grant received from a local bank. The membership fee is R5 a month, which the committee said few members actually paid. The PIBA executive said that they had 4 200 members located in fifteen branches across the city. PIBA representatives are all volunteers. They have no office space of their own but have been granted space by a local training centre - Protea College.

Protea provides training in business skills for street traders, and this is the key advantage PIBA members have over non PIBA members - the access to a free, full time, five week business training programme. No part time courses are offered, and poorer women traders are therefore unlikely to enrol. The training is funded jointly

by the National Department of Labour and the City Council. There was consensus among the executive committee members that one of the areas the organisation should focus on in the future was supplying goods to traders.

Leadership is elected at an Annual General Meeting. There are currently four committee members - three men and one woman. The chair said that despite most traders being women, women were very reluctant to take up leadership positions.

### **5.3.5 Queenstown Hawkers Association: an umbrella body**

The Queenstown Hawkers Association (QHA) was formed when the bylaws were to be re-negotiated. A senior council official explained how at the time there were loose groupings of traders selling similar products. When initiating the re-negotiation process, the local authority insisted that an umbrella body be formed. The executive committee contained so called 'sector representatives' and so was an amalgamation of the existing groups.

The QHA appears to combine formal characteristics and informal modes of operation. There are no regular meetings with members; meetings are called only when there are important decisions to be made. The committee chair said that the organisation did have a constitution. However when asked for a copy, he said it was not a public document and he would have to check with all the committee members as to whether he could give it to a non-member. The organisation originally planned to have an annual meeting at which organisation leaders would be elected. Elections however happen irregularly, for example when the organisation is in crisis. In late 1998 the chair was accused of embezzling funds. A committee was formed to investigate, and the accusation was confirmed. A mass meeting was then called to elect a new committee. The new chair could not recall when there had been an election before that held in 1998.

There is a joining fee of R11, and R5 a month membership subscription. This is collected together with permit charges. Because of this arrangement the organisation experienced fewer problems in collecting membership fees than other organisations. The organisation does not have a formal office.

Committee members of the QHA have regular contact with local government officials. Permit charges are paid into a joint local government-QHA bank account. Decisions around how these resources are to be spent are made in consultation with the organisation. The organisation has secured a number of gains for traders. At the time of conducting interviews, for example, they had negotiated with the Local authority for monthly permit charges to be reduced from R15 to R5. They have also secured donations for containers that can be used to store goods.

The chairperson said that exactly half of the committee members were women. There are however indications that men dominate the organisation. Both the chair and the deputy chair are men. Three representatives of the QHA attended the Local Policy Dialogue in East London, one of whom was female. (The invitation particularly requested women representatives.) At the end of the local dialogue there was an election for two delegates for the National Policy Dialogue. The group was encouraged to give preference to women, and elected among others the woman from the QHA. Within a week we were told that the QHA had democratically decided against sending the female representative, and would only attend if the male chair could be sent to replace her.



Initially the QHA would not include foreign traders, of whom there are many in Queenstown. The local authority, wanting the QHA to represent all traders, insisted that the organisation include foreign street traders. By late 1998, according to committee members and local government officials, foreigners could join the organisation; no foreign traders, however, held executive positions. Two brief interviews were conducted with foreign traders, both of whom felt that they had little representation within the organisation or within local government forums. An Ethiopian trader, who had been selling clothing in Queenstown for a number of months, approached the interviewing team specifically to speak about lack of representation. He said:

‘There is no one who listens to our concerns. We are voiceless.’

### **5.3.5 Cape Town Lower Deck Traders Association/ Enclodek: the company model**

The Cape Town Lower Deck Traders Association was formed in June 1995. The association represented a group of traders operating in the forecourt of the Cape Town central train station. The land is the property of Intersite, a parastatal in charge of all land surrounding train stations.

From 1986 the area had been leased out to individuals and rentals for trading sites were paid directly to the head lease holder. Because these sites were well located, relatively high rentals could be charged and once tables and metal frames for shelter had been purchased there were few capital outlays. The Cape Town Station Lower Deck Traders Association formed to object to the head lease system. They calculated that in the eighteen month period between July 1995 and December 1996, the lessor had received R3 966 000 in site rentals and R270 000 for rental of storage space (annex to letter to the State President, 05/03/97<sup>6</sup>). The traders argued that very little of this money was invested back into the trading area.

The association documented further complaints:

- Traders have no security of tenure – they are randomly moved.
- In terms of shelter, traders are provided with a metal frame but no canopy.
- Tables and changing rooms are in a poor condition.
- There is one security guard for the whole trading area making both customers and stall owners vulnerable to criminals.
- There are only two cleaning staff and few visible bins.
- The storage area is frequently left unstaffed.
- The manager is not available on the market to address these kinds of issues.
- There is no marketing or promotion of the area.

By 1997 the association had got parliamentarians involved in their campaign. Intersite suggested that they would be in a stronger position to win the lease tender if they formed a company. That year, Cape Town Lower Deck Traders Association launched Enclodek Ltd. Trading and Investment for Micro Empowerment. By September 1997, Intersite had granted Enclodek control of 50% of the market; the other 50% remained in the hands of the previous lessor.

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<sup>6</sup> It is an interesting indicator of the openness of the policy environment at that time that an organisation of traders thought it appropriate to write to President Mandela.

Permanent traders are entitled to buy a share in Enclodek. Shares cost R500 and traders can only have one share each. By October 1998 the value of the shares had quadrupled; it had a capital base of R250 000 and was looking for appropriate investment opportunities.

There are quarterly meetings and an annual general meeting where board members are elected. There are five board members; at the time of the field work, one of these was a woman, and she was chair. Documentation on the organisation shows that it places high value on transparency, and on traders participating in decision making processes. Their constitution for example states 'shareholders have the right to inspect the accounting records' and they have 'a right to vote on any issue relating to the market'.

One of the issues raised was that traders had no retirement benefits, insurance or medical aid. Provision of retirement benefits and a dividend that could be paid out in the 'bad months' were issues that the association was considering.

In speaking to traders it appears that all the concerns documented in 1997 have been addressed. Enclodek has invested money in new tables and overhead structures. There is a full time manager and more security guards and cleaners have been employed. There is little doubt that conditions have improved for members of the Cape Town Station Lower Deck Traders Association, who are now the shareholders of Enclodek.

What is clear, however, is that the members of Enclodek are a relatively elite group within the informal economy. The rate at which shares were valued excludes poorer traders. Further, membership is limited to permanent traders i.e. those who trade six days a week; this excludes the poorer traders who tend to work more erratically. Also, Enclodek documentation shows that casual traders are seen as a threat. Campaign material states:

Respect and consideration will be awarded to traders, especially with respect to new or casual traders being placed in competitive positions to veteran traders.

There is a clear class division in the trading community in Cape Town that is largely based on race. Poorer traders and trading assistants tend to be black. In October 1998 Enclodek had over 100 shareholders only three of whom were black. Stall owners often employ black women. The Enclodek chair stated that there was little opportunity for graduation from employee to stall owner. She said that the company was prepared to allocate a few spaces, from time to time, to disabled people or women's groups as part of its social responsibility. Facilitating the graduation of employees to become stall owner, however, was not one of Enclodek's objectives. Furthermore, employees, not being shareholders, obviously did not have voting rights.

During the period of field research Enclodek was the only organisation that had formed as a Closed Corporation responsible for managing a specific trading site. Nevertheless, it may come to be an influential model. Interest was expressed in the way Enclodek was structured both by other trader organisations (e.g. the Mitchell's Plain Progressive Traders Association and the smaller organisations operating at the Green Point Market) and by city officials and councillors. The councillor chairing the informal trade committee, for example, in response to a question about his vision for the informal sector, said:

'I would like to see traders associations form into companies like Enclodek; traders being shareholders of companies that are democratically organised.'

This is in line with the local government's increased emphasis on privatisation.

### **5.3.7 Green Point Fleamarket Traders Association: a not-for-profit market association**

Over 1 500 traders operate outside the Green Point Stadium in Cape Town city centre on Sundays and on public holidays. Sites cost R15 which is not prohibitive for poorer traders, and there is thus a greater range of traders than in other more exclusive markets in Cape Town. Four associations operate on the market, all of whom lease land from the City Council. The biggest association in terms of members is the Green Point Fleamarket Traders Association. It has the lease for the central and largest tract of land in the market area. The lease holder is responsible for all management functions - cleaning, security and day to day running of the market.

The association operates on a not-for-profit basis, and was one of the few trader organisations interviewed which could produce a constitution on request. This detailed, fifteen page document lays out procedures for financial control, management, decision making, disciplining and appeals. The constitution lays out detailed formal procedures. For example, if a trader has acted in an improper way or damaged the name of the association he or she can be called to a disciplinary hearing. The disciplinary sub-committee may suspend the person's right to trade. The trader however has a right to appeal against any decision made to another committee.

The Association is managed by a committee of nine members who are elected at the Annual General Meeting. Although a lot of the decision making power is vested in the committee, when important decisions are to be made membership meetings are called and issues voted on.

The constitution is written in gender neutral language, and at the time of interviewing, women played a dominant role in the association. The chairperson of the association was constitutionally in a powerful position, for example having the right to be sole spokesperson for the association. The present chairperson is a very vocal and articulate woman. As with Enclodek, only permanent traders are eligible for membership i.e. a trader who has been allocated a permanent site or one who has traded at the market for twenty consecutive Sundays and public holidays. Committee members were unable to give a gendered or racial breakdown of membership. They did however state that members were predominantly coloured, and claimed approximately 500 members.

Three other much smaller associations operate on the Green Point market site, with membership of 70, 120 and 180 respectively. There are conflicts between the four associations. Because this is a periodic market, traders who operate from here often operate on other markets during the week. For example the chair of Enclodek also chairs one of the smaller Green Point market associations, while the chair of the Green Point Fleamarket Association operates from a market that competes with Enclodek as it is situated on the roof of the Cape Town Station.

The Green Point Fleamarket Traders Association was the first association in the

area to be granted a lease. When the market grew, other groups applied for leases. The chair of the Green Point Fleamarket Traders Association argued that by splitting the lease among four associations the Council had 'created a monster'. It was clear from interacting with council officials and attending one of the consultative meetings around the future of the market that divisions among the associations made consultation between local government and traders extremely difficult. There was very high and very open hostility between traders.

### 5.3.8 Self Employed Women's Union: an organisation focusing on women as workers

SEWU started organising in 1993 in Durban, and was modelled on SEWA in India. Its constituency is women working in the survivalist sector of the economy, and its main aim is to empower self-employed women to organise themselves and demand recognition and support for the work they do. At the time of this research SEWU operated in three provinces, KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and the Western Cape, with regional offices in Durban, Umtata and Cape Town respectively. The organisation had a total membership of just over 2100 women in August 1999. They are home-based 'own account' workers and street traders, in rural and urban areas. In 1999, the organisation took a decision to start organising domestic workers as well.

SEWU organises people as workers, and not as prospective entrepreneurs who, with a bit of support, will all move to the formal sector. The Constitution specifically addresses this position: to qualify for membership, a person must be earning a living from her work, and must not be employing more than three people (family member or not, paid or not).

SEWU is organised on the principles of direct democracy, and the focus is on the empowerment of membership. The organising unit is the branch. Two representatives from each branch are elected to the regional executive committee (REC) and four representatives from each REC are elected onto the national executive committee (NEC). The annual conference is the chief mechanism for members' involvement in policy decisions. Branches send one delegate for every twenty members in their branch. The national president, the vice president and the treasurer are elected at the conference.

This structure of direct democracy stands in contrast to the type of organisation in which a committee of control (board, trust, management) stands 'above' rank and file membership, as it were. As the General Secretary, Pat Horn said in an interview:

'SEWU's organising principle is that power lies with the workers.'

#### The organisational structure of SEWU

Branch Level	<b>Individual Members</b>
	Members elect <b>Trade Leaders</b>
	Trade Leaders collectively form <b>Trade Committees</b>

Regional Level

Trade Committee elects two members to represent them regionally. From this grouping a <b>Regional Executive Committee</b> is formed.
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National Level

<b>Annual conference.</b> Branches send 1 delegate per 20 members. The national office bearers are elected at the conference.
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The <b>National Executive Committee</b> comprises the national office bearers and four delegates from each region
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Membership fees are charged. There is a R10 joining fee and from then on a R5 monthly subscription. Dual membership with other street trader organisations is allowed.

SEWU has focused on negotiations with local government in the different regions, paying attention to the right of traders to trade in suitable public places, and the provision by local governments of infrastructure such as shelter, water, and toilets, for sites. The 1995 Annual report for example shows that during that year, SEWU negotiated with Durban Central Council for the improvement of facilities such as shelter, water supplies and toilets; the need for child care facilities, and the need for those selling traditional medicines or *muthi* to have a special market. As will be clear in the next section, SEWU has placed considerable emphasis on national level advocacy.

#### 5.4 Assessment of street trader organisations in South Africa

In this Section street trader organisations are assessed according to the framework developed in Section 4. Here we draw on trends identified in the profile of organisations, as well as in the case study material, and we also incorporate issues raised in discussions in the Local and National Policy Dialogues and Focus Group Discussions.

##### 5.4.1 Establishing and defending legal rights

In South Africa the policy process which decriminalised street trading culminated in the 1991 Businesses Act. This process was driven by national government, and preceded the emergence of street trading organisations that focused on defending legal rights, with one exception – ACHIB.

ACHIB had been established in 1986. It had organised a number of marches and rallies, raising the profile of street trading issues. In a research interview (August, 1999), Leon Louw, who was active in lobbying for deregulation at the time, identified ACHIB's contribution as follows:

'ACHIB was an important countervailing force to the formal sector groups who wanted street trading to be limited. The organisation gave the deregulation drive psychological and legal legitimacy.'

Street trader organisations played a role in the establishing of legal rights at a local

level. Since the Businesses Act was amended in 1993, street trading bylaws had to be re-negotiated. As noted earlier the national office of ACHIB, with assistance from the Law Review Project, had developed a model set of street trading bylaws. These were made available to any of its branches involved in renegotiating street trading by-laws. This is likely to have strengthened street traders' positions in negotiations. The consultation process varied from place to place. In Durban, for example, there was only one two-day workshop in 1992 where the bylaws were discussed before they were promulgated. This could not have been much more than an information sharing exercise, and Durban subsequently had difficulties in implementing the bylaws. In Johannesburg and East London the consultation process was much more comprehensive.

Few street trader organisations have leaders with a good knowledge of legislation. In interviews, and at two of the three Local Policy Dialogues, organisation leaders and officials called for legislation to be explained. At the National Policy Dialogue, the head of an umbrella body representing traders operating in Durban's CBD, a man who has been negotiating on behalf of traders for a number of years, had not heard of the Businesses Act.<sup>7</sup>

Having access to secure urban space is critical to the viability of street trading activities, so the declaration of trade zones is particularly important. Trader organisations will generally want to ensure that the areas declared prohibited trade zones are not too large; also, the areas in which city authorities want to prohibit trading in are usually particularly lucrative trading sites. Declaring an area a restricted trade zone, while securing certain traders access to space, also entails reducing the numbers of traders. City authorities frequently worked through associations in making decisions about who gets sites where, as well as who does not get sites at all.

There are two important issues to highlight in this respect. First is the independence of trader organisations. PIBA, for example, as an organisation created by local government, was complicit in the decision of the Pretoria local authority to declare a relatively large area a prohibited trade zone. A result of this was that the number of traders was significantly reduced.

Second, trader associations represent certain groups of traders better than others. The role of women in trader organisations is a case in point. If organisations are male dominated and yet leaders are given a lot of decision making power, women may be sidelined in decisions critical to their livelihood such as in the allocation of space.

Trader organisations are in a stronger position when it comes to defending rather than establishing traders rights. A scan of newspaper clippings demonstrates this. For example both ACHIB and KwaZulu-Natal Informal Business Association or KNIBA reacted to the harsh enforcement of street trading by-laws in Durban inner city, as did the Cape Town Hawkers Association when traders were removed from Adderley Street, which was a major trading site. ACHIB's more recent response to Metrorail's decision to disallow trading on trains and platforms is another example.

Local authorities in South Africa are probably more responsive to mass action by

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<sup>7</sup> Once all the policy dialogues had been held, the WIEGO project responded to requests from participants to provide information about legislation. We produced an accessible booklet, part of which covered legal issues. This was well received, with both government officials and trader organisations requesting further copies.

street trader organisations than may be the case in other developing country contexts because of the political project of including groups marginalised in the apartheid era. Pat Horn, the general secretary of SEWU, suggests that harsh action against street traders would be too reminiscent of forced removals.

Another situation in which traders rights need to be defended is in the redevelopment of areas. In Durban for example the local authorities wanted to move the traditional medicine or *muthi* traders operating in the CBD to a new location. SEWU engaged in negotiations about the move, and secured two important agreements with the authorities. The first was that the traders could continue to work where they were right up until the new market was ready for occupation, rather than having a break in trade. The second was that each trader would be sure of getting a space in the new area - the danger existed that the authority would use the move to reduce the number of traders.

In Matatiele, a small inland town, SEWU likewise intervened to protect the interests of existing traders, who were women. It had negotiated with the local authority for shelters for street traders, and:

Once these shelters were built, numbers of men (wage workers in local enterprises) applied for use of them, with the intention of employing people to work for them. However, SEWU was successful in persuading the Council that existing street traders should have preference, and preventing the women being pushed aside by men. (SEWU Annual report, 1996).

#### **5.4.2 Representing membership**

An area manager in Cape Town said that over the years of working in this sector he had been approached by a number of individuals claiming to represent street traders in a certain area. When speaking to traders he had quickly realised that they did not identify with their representatives. In some cases traders did not even know who the individual was.

If organisations leaders are in decision making positions it is important that they are legitimate. Our sample of organisations was biased in favour of the more formally constituted organisations and yet it is clear that even most of these are actually informally constituted. Few were in a position to produce a constitution and the definition of membership was unclear. Further, organisations form out of a heterogeneous street trading sector, with gender, racial and class divisions between traders. As is clear from the case study material, trader organisations represent the interests of one grouping more than another. The Enclodek case study demonstrates that even though women were in leadership positions, the organisation tended to support the interests of 'better-off' coloured people with little attention to the promotion of poorer people's interests.

Many client-based organisations have been called in to represent membership. Both NIBDA and Gompo Hawkers Association for example have played a key role in interactions between the street trading sector and local government. SEWU is one of the few organisations who present mandated positions. It has a far stricter definition of membership than any other street trader organisation we encountered. At its heart is an idea of membership which is both paid up and accountable.

Two incidents illustrate this. In Durban the *muthi* market branch chair was interviewed soon after traders had been moved to a new site. We asked how

many members she thought there were since the move. She reached into her clothing, pulled out a list of members, and itemised each person, pointing to the seven or eight who had lapsed as a result of the move.

The other example comes from a SEWU report:

We joined the negotiation forum set up by (Durban Southern) Council when the old Isipingo Town Board became part of the Southern sub-regional structure of the Durban Metropolitan Council. However, our Isipingo Branch has since collapsed, and we intend to terminate the negotiating relationship. The Council urged us not to withdraw altogether as they felt that our experience in matters affecting street traders and the informal sector was crucial to their effective planning. We agreed to attend those meetings where policy inputs could most effectively be made, but not in a collective bargaining capacity until such time as we have sufficient members in their area to warrant this. (SEWU Annual Report, 1995)

Here SEWU's strategy was to remain in a position of policy influence, while not claiming that it was representing non-existent members.

#### **5.4.3 Influencing policy and improving image: lobbying and advocacy**

The first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994 were preceded and followed by a period of intense policy activity, where there were opportunities for the previously excluded groupings to participate in policy formulation. Few street trader organisations had the capacity to do so. Table 1 showed that only three of the trader organisations profiled were active at a national level.

There have been two National Small Business Conferences concerned with SMME policy. At the second conference held in Durban November 1997, ACHIB, SEWU and Enclodek were the only trader organisations to give inputs.

In 1998, the national government body tasked with SMME development, Ntsika Enterprise Promotion Agency, initiated a small business regulatory review. Two of the Bylaws and Regulations Task Team members were affiliated to trader organisations - ACHIB and SEWU. ACHIB's Lawrence Mvundla also sat on the Advisory Board for the review.

ACHIB has specifically made interventions with respect to SMME policy while SEWU's interventions have been broader in terms of the issues they have covered. At national level the following are some of the submissions, spanning gender concerns, labour relations, and support programmes for the informal sector, made by SEWU in its first years of existence:

- Submission on the Reconstruction and Development Programme Draft Policy for Women's Empowerment
- In 1994, Submission on the draft of the Labour Relations Bill
- In 1995, Submission on the Department of Trade and Industry Discussion Paper on strategies for the development of an integrated policy and support programmes for SMMEs in South Africa
- In 1995, Submission to the Comprehensive Labour Market Commission
- In 1995, Submission to the Commission of Enquiry into the provision of Rural Financial Services.



The Department of Trade and Industry tabled the National Small Business Enabling Bill, and in its definitions of the informal sector, it left out survivalists. SEWU lobbied to have a specific sector defined. This was a fundamentally important action in increasing the visibility of poorer women in the informal economy. SEWU also insisted on specific policy actions for this part of the informal sector:

- Local languages should be used in all training materials coming out under the DTI. This takes into account that street traders and home based workers who are literate, are likely to be literate only in their mother tongues.
- Child care facilities should be provided at all training courses. This takes into account the fact that many women are excluded from training opportunities because of child care responsibilities.
- Skills development courses should not be offered on a full time basis. This takes into account that poorer traders cannot afford to leave their place of work for hours at a time.

During 1998 the SEWU General Secretary was actively involved in representing the interests of women at the Jobs Summit, and used this opportunity to promote the interests of women workers in the informal sector.

Street traders have a poor profile, and they are not well placed to change it. The conditions under which the majority work are difficult, for them and their customers alike: hot and crowded pavements, with food which can deteriorate. These are objectively difficult conditions. But also, the image of the city in South Africa is changing. The colonial template of 'the European city' dominated for years - by literally excluding access for black people. In the 1950s, a law dictated that black people had to step off the pavement to let white people pass; in Pretoria, black people were not allowed to enter central city parks. Now urban spaces are becoming Africanised. What some see as more vibrant, colourful, lively, messy, turbulent and good, others see as an affront to the image of order, and as a threat to hygiene and safe passage.

Organisations by their actions, such as marches on local authority offices in times of crisis, do raise the profile of the plight of traders. Few organisations however have the capacity to address media distortions on a consistent basis.

#### **5.4.4 Building leadership through empowerment of members**

Street trader organisations tend to be initiated by powerful individuals. Examples from our sample are Lawrence Mvundla, founder and president of ACHIB; Pat Horn, one of the founders and general secretary of SEWU; Augustine Mqaba, founder member of NIBDA; and Rashida Muller, who was key in the establishment of Enclodek.

Traders at Local Policy Dialogues said that street trader organisations depended too much on individual leaders. In the Johannesburg meeting, the high turnover of leadership was identified as a major concern. One participant said that leaders of informal sector organisations are in a strong position to get jobs in the formal sector. Organisations are unstable as when these individuals leave, the organisation is unable to continue. A woman trader in the Cape Town meeting aptly captured this:

'The problem is that the leaders run away with the method, so leaving us in

the dark.'

Replicating leadership is one issue, empowering individual members is another. This is particularly important for women traders. In the Mitchell's Plain focus group interview women street traders called for the following:

'We need to be boosted up, to be taught how to speak in meetings - how to stand up for ourselves.'

If organisations are informally constituted there are fewer opportunities to learn these kinds of organisation skills, and if they are male dominated, women members are less likely to benefit than their male counterparts.

SEWU stands out with respect to building leadership both at national and branch level. The organisation is at present facing the departure of Pat Horn. Her leaving the organisation has been built into strategic plans for a number of years. There is a phased withdrawal in which attention has been paid to capacity building of leaders. SEWU's organisational structure with the focus on membership control aims to develop leadership skills at all levels. This was identified as one of SEWU's particular strengths in Focus Group Discussions.

#### 5.4.5 Providing services or getting access to services

A large percentage of street trader organisations concentrate on **buying goods in bulk**, thus securing discounts, a percentage of which is passed on to traders. This is a focus of both ACHIB's and NIBDA's activities. Sourcing goods through organisations will often enable traders to diversify into slightly more profitable areas. Traders are also in a stronger position to compete with formal sector retailers. This is a way in which organisational membership can provide key economic advantages and is an important function of organisations.

Storage is a central concern for traders. Not having storage facilities often leads traders to sleep at their trading sites - a situation in which women are particularly vulnerable. **Sourcing storage facilities** is a service provided by some organisations. The Gompo Hawkers Association - largest street trader organisation in East London - had secured exclusive access to a number of containers in which their members could store their goods. This was the primary advantage members had over non-members. Street traders organisations also secure private sector donations for example of fridges and containers. At the time of conducting interviews, for example, the Queenstown Hawkers Association was lobbying to secure fridges for those traders selling offal.

Compared to what appears to be the case in other countries, not much attention has been given by South African organisations to **helping traders secure access to credit**. As the case study showed (5.3.1), a number of ACHIB's bulk buying initiatives incorporate a credit component. In Empangeni, it runs a successful micro-credit banking service. In 1994 ACHIB secured agreement with a large formal sector bank - the NBS - to set up a Hawkers Bank in Warwick Avenue Triangle - one of the most densely traded areas in Durban's CBD. This initiative soon collapsed.

Some organisations focus on **providing access to skills training**, the Pretoria Informal Business Association being a case in point. Few street trader organisations themselves provide training. Organisations more often linked

traders up with existing training institutions. In most cases, where training was offered, the focus was on business skills. If there were courses targeting women specifically they were sewing courses. SEWU is unique in terms of the range of training it offers or it organises access to. SEWU both provides training itself and links its members up to training institutions. With respect to the former, there are frequent workshops covering issues such as how to negotiate, how to run an organisation and how local government works. With respect to the latter, members have attended courses in literacy, self defence, and training in traditionally male dominated fields of welding and electrical wiring.

For women street traders operating at the poorer end of the sector obstacles to developing their business are often issues that are considered 'domestic'. In a focus group discussion in Mitchell's Plain in the Cape, street traders said that counselling regarding abusive relationships and legal advice around securing child maintenance were priority problems that a street trader organisation should engage with. They also identified problems of securing pensions or disability grants for their dependants. In the Johannesburg Local Policy Dialogue women employees of street traders described how they were sexually harassed by their employers. Employers would withhold transport money until their employees had done sexual favours. Sexual harassment is common in other relationships such as with other street traders, and suppliers. SEWU was the only street trader organisation the research team came across that focused on **addressing women street traders specific concerns**.

A number of international organisations are pursuing issues of **securing social protection** for workers in the informal economy. The needs expressed by women workers are for child care, health care and social security. It is not clear to what extent it would be feasible and realistic to extend formal sector coverage to informal economy workers, and the unemployed. The WIEGO international project is pursuing the question: under what conditions, in which sectors, are what types of benefits, at what levels, realistic as a core minimum for informal economy workers, with possibility for incremental improvements?

In South Africa, there has been a substantial state assistance for elderly people and people with disabilities (Lund, 1998), and now the new government has introduced free health care for poor people. These services will make a difference to local demands for social protection.

In our sample of street trader organisations, only SEWU and Enclodek were considering issues of social protection. SEWU was involved in three areas: social security, child care, and funeral benefits. In the first area, SEWU made a submission to the Minister of Labour to extend social security benefits which are available to formal sector workers, such as for maternity, sickness, and loss of income, to workers in the informal economy.<sup>8</sup> Regarding child care, in different submissions SEWU has called for government to take responsibility for a national system of child care, to the advantage of all women and families. In the third area, one of SEWU's 1998 conference resolutions was that once membership fees are more secure through the debit orders described below, attention will be paid to introducing a funeral benefit scheme.

Enclodek is active on a much smaller scale. As mentioned in the case study

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<sup>8</sup> One outcome of the 1998 Jobs Summit was that, through NEDLAC, a social security task team was mandated to explore a comprehensive social security system, and it is instructed to include workers in the informal economy in its deliberations.

(5.3.6), Enclodek was considering the provision of retirement benefits and a dividend to be paid out in 'bad months' to share holders.

#### **5.4.6 Creating strategic alliances with the trade union movement**

In the sample SEWU was the only organisation that had contact with the formal sector unions. Further, SEWU was the only organisation to explicitly organise street traders as workers.

Forming itself as a union, SEWU identifies informal sector workers as part of the working class, and thus implicitly challenges the organised labour movement. It is aware of the difficulties posed to the labour movement by the idea of integrating informal sector workers, and the difficulties of organising in the informal sector, warning that it is not simply a matter of extending formal organising ideas. Obvious differences are the lack of a clear employer relationship, the complex class relationships, and the fact that the informal economy is dominated by women, who are oppressed as workers in specific ways (Horn, 1997).

Individuals within COSATU and NACTU have been sympathetic to SEWU, and to the idea of a strategic alliance. SEWU has forged strong linkages with the international labour movement, which we will now describe. It might be that these linkages will encourage unions within South Africa to take a more flexible and forward-looking position with regard to informal economy workers.

#### **5.4.7 Creating external linkages and alliances**

The only mention made of international linkages by organisations (apart from SEWU) was with respect to sourcing of goods. Both PIBA and Enclodek were looking to source imported goods directly from Asia, so cutting out local intermediaries.

SEWU was the only organisation which had a strategy of pursuing relationships with external agencies in order to strengthen the position of informal economy workers as workers. The relationship with SEWA has been close, with information exchange, and with exchange visits by SEWU members to India, and by SEWA members to South Africa.

Notable activities have been:

- SEWU is an active participant in the two international networks, Homenet and Streetnet.
- In Africa, SEWU and the Workers College held a workshop 1995 on organising workers in the informal sector. Participants came from Tanzania, Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Namibia.
- SEWU members in turn have visited sister organisations in Zimbabwe, Kenya, Ghana, and Germany.
- SEWU has applied for conditional affiliation to the International Federation of Food and Plantation Workers Union (IUF), the International Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers Union (ICEM), the International Federation of Technical, Commercial Workers Union (FIET), and the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers Federation (ITGLWF).
- This WIEGO project itself creates linkages with international trader organisations, and with international research networks.
- SEWU and the Workers College facilitated the Regional Exchange Workshop

for WIEGO in Durban in June 1999. Participants from market organisations as well as researchers and activists from Kenya, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire shared the findings from the South African pilot, explored ways of extending the research elsewhere, as well as of building regional networks for Streetnet.

By any objective assessment of organisations promoting the interests of South African street traders, SEWU, in most respects, stands out as 'better than' the others. It concentrates on the empowerment of poorer women. It is formally constituted and places emphasis on leadership being accountable. Further, it has had the capacity to contribute to local, national and international debates and has done so from the perspective of poorer women. If concerned with the structural issues of poverty and exclusion, and particularly the marginal position of women, SEWU fares better than any other street trader organisation we came across. This is not to down play the importance of those organisations that, for example, concentrate on material gains for their members like bulk buying and storage. These interventions however, tend to be short term and reformist rather than long term and radical.

## **6 BARRIERS TO ORGANISING IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY**

Just as the informal economy is not a homogeneous entity, so too the workers within it are not a single group. There are class and gender divisions, as well as cultural and racial. The WIEGO programme in South Africa focuses on poorer women working in the streets of urban areas. They too are not a unified grouping, and will sometimes co-operate with each other and sometime compete.

In some respects organising street traders is easier than organising formal sector workers. Street trader organisers who have had experience in the formal sector labour movement pointed out how those operating from the streets are easier to access than factory floor workers. There are 'gatekeepers' on the streets, but they are not as visible as those in the formal workplace. Also, a street vendor's time can in principle be more flexible than that of a formal sector worker.

The barriers to organising are formidable, however. In this Section we identify some barriers to forming and building organisations which are presented by the specific characteristics of the group in this study: they are women, they are poor, and they are working outside in public areas.

### **6.1 Economic barriers**

Most street traders are survivalists - their incomes are precarious. This constitutes a barrier to their organising and sustaining organisations. Time away from the streets, or on the streets talking to an organiser, means the potential loss of income.

In all the focus groups and in individual interviews with traders it was clear that time away from the streets was a major factor with regard to traders becoming involved in organisations. The economic value of time was an issue when first establishing an organisation, as well as in maintaining it. Organisers and local government officials consistently complained that street traders would only come to a meeting if there was a pressing issue or crisis. Organisers said that it was difficult to get

street traders to come to the kind of 'house - keeping' meetings so essential to building organisations. As we noted earlier, we think that the only reason we did not get even poorer attendance at focus groups was that SEWU organisers and branch leaders were able to say: "This is our - SEWU's - research."

Some traders employ assistants, and are able to arrange to be away from their sites. Relationships between street traders and their assistants are not always easy. In one Focus Group Discussion, both traders and assistants attended, and all spoke of the mistrust that can exist. Traders feared that assistants took advantage of them while they were absent, possibly selling the traders' wares as if their own, or promoting their own ahead of their employers'. Thus having an assistant is not a sufficient condition for securing attendance at meetings. Furthermore, the poorer traders do not have assistants. Their income is particularly precarious, and they are specially reluctant to leave the streets. They feel directly the opportunity cost of time away from the trading site.

South Africa's apartheid history led to specifically spatial patterning to urban (and rural) development, such that people who were not white were largely excluded from living close to city centres (exceptions were for those dwelling in men-only, or women-only, hostels in cities, built specifically so that workers would be close to the place of work). Although residential segregation legally has ended, the legacy whereby many of the poorest people live furthest from the city centres still endures. This adds a particular extra burden to time as an economic variable for the poorest women. It is one of the reasons why cheap accommodation close to the city was given such a high priority in the ranking of Durban traders' needs.

Women traders tend to be poorer, and are more likely to have children with them at work, with no child care facilities. In addition, women's domestic responsibilities mean that they are less able to take time off after work hours. In this respect the specific problem for organising women is similar to that experienced in the formal labour movement. A study done by COSATU sought to understand why women were so under-represented at shop steward and leadership level. The main reason given by women union members for not putting themselves forward for election was that the time they needed to spend on domestic responsibilities in the evenings and on evenings clashed with the responsibilities of shop stewards to organise at those times (Nyman, 1996).

The situation of street traders is different to those in the formal work place in important ways. All street traders – men and women – spend additional time coping with the risks and realities that go with being in the informal economy. This could be time seeing officials (or dodging them); paying fines; being relocated; erecting plastic sheets against the weather. These are important constraints in the way of their being able to improve their businesses – and getting involved in organisation.

## **6.2 Previous experience of organisations**

SEWU organisers and leadership said street traders are very suspicious of organisations, and that this was a major obstacle in recruiting. Street traders have often had bad experiences with organisations. There is a common experience of unscrupulous fly-by-night organisations who will 'make deals' under false pretences – whether a promise of cheap goods which never materialises, or a sale of a trading site over which the organisation in fact has no authority.

A SEWU member described her experiences to Debbie Budlender and Asha

Moodley, who did an external evaluation for SEWU:

Before [joining SEWU], I joined many organisations. They promised what they will do for me. I paid, and the car stops, and never moves. It was three organisations I joined. The first organisation was A. That got stuck. I joined B. B took my money again. It was for insurance, and when there is a funeral they say they will pay. They never did so. It was a mistake because we put money in the account for the president or association and did not get it back. Then I went back to A when it picked up again. Then two girls came to me [SEWU organisers]. They say they are coming to talk to self-employed women. First I say I am sick and tired of those who say they will do something. They say they are not promising to do something for us. They will listen what we want to do as self employed women. ... I said "They all say things like that". (Budlender and Moodley, 1995: 1)

SEWU leadership have said that this initial resistance to being recruited can be overcome, and that the larger problem for SEWU is maintaining membership.

### **6.3 Lack of resources to sustain the organisation and serve members**

As is the case in the formal trade union and NGO movements, full time organisers are one key to vigorous organisational growth and maintenance. New members need to be recruited, and, just as important, existing members need to be serviced, if the organisation is to be sustainable. Where street traders are poor, there will be little ability to command sufficient internal resources for full time organisers. Yet members justifiably want to know what it is that they are getting in exchange for the membership fees.

In the funding of non-governmental organisations, donors are increasingly focusing on financial self-sustainability. Funders are no longer willing to continue supporting organisations if they do not demonstrate that they are moving towards financial independence. Yet full financial independence may be an unachievable goal, by definition, for organisations working with people who are exceptionally poor.

### **6.4 Corrupt practices**

It is perhaps in the very informal nature of the informal economy that it is a fertile field for corruption. Corruption is disempowering for those who are its victims. Where membership fees are collected there are often accusations of misappropriation of funds. A number of organisation leaders have been discredited in this way. There are more subtle forms of corruption, for example, allocating prime sites to organisation leaders, or the allocation of more sites to leaders than ordinary membership would have access to.

There are certain extreme examples of corruption. We heard traders talk about occasions when they had been sold trading space by an organisation who appeared to control the area. Membership cards were given as proof of purchase. Subsequently the trader discovered that the space was in fact owned by the local authority, and the organisation thus had no right to extract monies. Local authorities also said that traders often produced organisation membership cards as proof of their being allowed to trade in areas declared prohibited or restricted trading. Newer women traders were likely to be more susceptible to this kind of extortion than men.

SEWU has attempted to promote the idea of rights and responsibilities, that to be taken seriously as economic actors, discipline needs to be exerted both in the working environment and within the organisation itself. There has been swift internal discipline on matters of mismanagement, of corruption, and of intimidating behaviour. The organisation has undertaken dismissals and suspensions, and then used its newsletter to publicise what happened and what actions had been taken.

## **6.5 Political barriers**

The salience of political party organisations to organising in the informal sector will be different across different countries. South Africa is a new democracy with large majority support for the ANC, but it remains a deeply divided society - both inter-racially and intra-racially, and this will have implications for organising vendors.

The large surveys of street traders in South Africa reported low rates of belonging to organisations, as well as a fear among traders of talking about membership, and a reluctance to name any organisations. (See Lund, 1998.) It is likely that some of this is politically related. In Focus Group Discussions, we were given the strong message not to ask questions in this area, either about the existence of organisations, or about political party affiliations.

In the Western Cape there are racial and class divisions between black and coloured people which have roots in colonial and then apartheid history. In KwaZulu-Natal there is conflict within the black population between the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party. This manifests itself in a real fear among street traders of being aligned to one organisation that appears to be favouring one party or racial group over another.

A SEWU trader described how her husband noticed that her organisation's constitution had been printed by the COSATU printing unit aligned to the ANC, and he had assaulted her as a result. She repeatedly said: 'These problems are taken to the bedroom'.

In the Eastern Cape, there are factions within the ANC that shape activities such as organising street traders. Of the four provinces in which we did the research, this was the only one where councillor and street trader interviewees stressed the importance of working through political structures. For example in Queenstown we were told by an official that little could be achieved in the street trading sector unless the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) was co-operative.

## **6.6 Environmental barriers**

Working conditions for street traders are harsh. Traders and organisers are subject to difficult climatic conditions, whether the heat, humidity and thunderstorms of sub-tropical Durban, the cold, wet weather of the Cape winters, or the winds of East London.

Street traders by definition work in the open, where it is quite easy to meet as individuals or in small groups. But for concentrated discussion, a secure and quiet space close to the constituency is needed. In the Warwick Triangle area in Durban, a new local authority development initiative has included upgrading a hall in the heart of the trading community, and traders can have access to this for meetings.



This will be a valuable asset.

SEWU opted to have its regional office close to where there was dense trading. The crime rate in the area was so great that the decision was made to move to safer (and more expensive) accommodation. SEWU organisers expressed a great fear of being robbed as they moved around in the trading areas. During the course of the research, there were two robberies at SEWU offices, and one incident where armed men broke into a meeting (held in a hired hall), assaulted an organiser, and stole thousands of rands of SEWU money. SEWU arranged counselling for traumatised staff and members.

## **6.7 Psychological and cultural barriers to organising – and the rationale for organising as women**

South Africa is a multi-cultural society, and an important result of the transition to democracy has been that it has opened up the space for the celebration of cultural difference and diversity. But South African society across cultures is also strongly patriarchal, and the plea for a respect for 'culture' can be used – by both women and men – to legitimate the continuing domination of women by men. This happens in a country in which the exceptionally high unemployment rate (for men and for women) has led to the lack of clear and certain roles for many men. This is likely to be a contributing factor to the particularly high rates of domestic and criminal violence.

Should women organise together with men, or is there a case for organising separately, as women? There is a debate about what the most appropriate organisational form would be to deal with women's issues. Some would argue that having a gender desk within an inclusive organisation is sufficient. Formal sector unions in South Africa are an interesting example. Despite many unions having gender office bearers and, in some cases employing gender officers little headway has been made around gender issues.

In the street trading sector, it has been suggested that, with few exceptions organisations are likewise dominated by men. Organising as women is one way to ensure that women's gender-specific needs are heard. Women's organisations for example, are more likely ensure that local authorities take into consideration the fact that for poorer women, both productive and reproductive roles must be taken into account - to highlight that the stereotyped division between 'the economic' and 'the social or the welfare' is not helpful.

Further women's organisations are one way of ensuring that women develop leadership skills. In the Cape Town call from both coloured Muslim and African women was for the building of confidence so that women traders could be as assertive as men traders in meetings. Yet the African women also separately say that they feel dominated by the more articulate Muslim women, who have generations of trading experience in their families, and occupy a different class position.

## **7 CONCLUSION**

This report started by pointing out that, five years after the democratic elections in South Africa, there are windows of opportunity in the policy and institutional environment which could be useful in working to protect the interests of workers in

the informal economy, and especially women workers. The national economy policy expresses commitment to the development of the informal economy and survivalists. In the realm of governance, there is expressed commitment at national and local levels to consultation with affected parties when legislation is being reformulated. In terms of gender, South Africa has a high level of expressed commitment inside and outside of government to advancing the status of women.

For these commitments to be secured in a way which will make a material difference to street vendors, traders themselves need to have organisations through which to express their interests. If poorer traders are not organised, the opportunities may either silently disappear, or be colonised by better resourced, more articulate groupings, which will be more likely to have male leadership.

In conducting the research on organisations, we have been consistently asked two questions by both university colleagues and local government personnel:

- Are formal organisations appropriate to the informal sector? Is it not by definition impossible to create and sustain formal organisations in this sphere?
- Is a trade union an appropriate organisational form for workers in the informal economy?

We have explored the barriers faced by organisations in this sector, and shown how it is indeed possible to create and sustain formal organisations. It is what local authorities say they want - but do not always like. Indeed local authorities *should* need and want this level of formality and accountability, and organisations in turn need to hold local authorities to account, so that the latter do not renege on agreements made.

SEWU is an example of a trade union in the informal economy, organising people as workers, but mindful of the different strategies needed because of the different employment relationship, and the complex and heterogeneous composition of the informal sector. SEWU's membership is still relatively small. Our study of other organisations convinces us of the extreme importance of the precedent set by SEWU to date. It is one organisation that has organised amongst poorer survivalists, that is clearly accountable to its members, and that has a clean track record.

The comparative analysis has enabled us to get closer to identifying those features of an organisation that make it more likely to work in favour of the interests of poor women workers in the informal economy.

- An organisation should be democratically constituted, and accountable to members through constitutional structures. The interests of the most vulnerable member must have the same weight in law as those of the more powerful. It needs to be membership based: service organisations cannot sustain and effectively represent the interests of street traders - and local governments want the representation.
- This is linked to the need for membership control and accountability. There should be transparency about policy formulation, decision-making, and in the financial control and accounting.
- An organisation should have women in leadership positions and should focus on building the capacity of its women members. Women's organisations are in

a stronger position to do this.

- Women should engage in negotiations with other stakeholders, such as local government, the formal sector, and the trade unions. Women are more likely to hold out sustainedly for gender specific interests.
- The organisation should have a clear gender analysis and strategy – an analysis of what it is, structurally, that keeps women down, and strategies for addressing this in a structural way.
- The organisation should have a clear analysis of the effects of globalisation on changing patterns of work internationally, and form alliances with internal and external groups who are working to promote the interests of ‘the new poor’ world wide.

The fourth and final report – ‘the voice report’ - of the WIEGO project in the South African pilot will place this study of organisations alongside the earlier institutional one, and say: With this profile of traders and their needs, and in this institutional environment, and with these kinds of organisational strengths and weaknesses, what are the sites for and mechanisms of negotiation which are most likely to promote the interests of poorer women in the informal economy?

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## APPENDIX 1: ORGANISATIONS AND AGENCIES CONTACTED IN THE STUDY

During the course of the study, one or more representatives from the following organisations were interviewed personally, and/ or interviewed by phone, and/ or participated in Local Policy Dialogues (LPDs) and/ or National Policy Dialogues (NPDs).

<b>Region</b>	<b>Name of organisation or agency</b>	<b>Acronym (if in use)</b>	<b>Nature of contact</b>
<b>Johannesburg</b>			
	African Chamber of Informal Business	ACHIB	Telephone interview with President.
	Gauteng Self Employed Women's Association	GASEWA	Committee member participated in the LPD
	Micro Business Chamber		Chair participated in the LPD and NPD
	National Informal Business Development Association	NIBDA	Group interview with chair and 3 committee members; Chair and a number of members participated in the LPD; A member attended the NPD
	South African Chamber of Informal Business	SACHIB	Two members attended the LPD
<b>Durban</b>			
	Informal Trade Management Board	ITMB	Interview with the Chair; Chair and 2 members attended the NPD
	Jabulani Training Centre		Phone interview with Chair
	Self Employed Women's Union	SEWU	Interviews with General Secretary and regional organisers; Interviews with individual traders on work sites; Members attended FGDs; President and General Secretary attended NPD
	Traders Against Crime		Interview with Secretary
	National Informal Business Association	NIBA	Interview with Chair

Region	Name of organisation or agency	Acronym (if in use)	Nature of contact
<b>East London</b>			
	Gompo Hawkers Association		Interview with Chair; Chair attended LPD and NPD
	Oxford Street Traders Hawkers Association		Interview with Chair; Chair attended LPD
<b>Cape Town</b>			
	Athlone Informal Traders Association		Chair attended LPD
	Cape Town Hawkers Association		Interview with Chair
	Claremont Hawkers Association		Interview with a committee member
	Enclodek Trading and Investment for Micro Empowerment		Interview with the chair / managing director and her deputy; Chair attended LPD
	Green Market Square Traders Association	GMSTA	Representative attended LPD
	Green Point Hawkers Association		Interview with chair and a committee member
	Mitchell's Plain Progressive Traders Association		Interview with Chair; 3 representatives attended LPD; 1 representative attended NPD
	Mitchell's Plain Traders Association		Interview with chair
<b>Pretoria</b>			
	Pretoria Informal Business Association	PIBA	Group interview with executive committee; 2 representatives attended NPD
<b>Queenstown</b>			
	Queenstown Hawkers Association	QHA	Group interview with Chair and 2 committee members; Chair and 2 committee members attended LPD; Chair attended NPD

Interviews were set up with the following organisations but did not take place:

Federated Association of Informal Traders, Johannesburg  
 Greater Johannesburg Planning Committee, Johannesburg

## APPENDIX 2: THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL POLICY DIALOGUES

The Local and National Policy Dialogues were an important source for gathering data. They were occasions where street traders and local government officials could discuss common problems. They were organised by the research team and the Workers College, and specifically not organised as SEWU events.

There were supposed to be five local dialogues; three took place. The idea was that at the local dialogues, people would be identified to attend the national event. This was an imperfect process because of the difficulty of getting 'representation' in this fairly unorganised sector.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Dialogue</b>	<b>Number of officials present</b>	<b>Number of traders present</b>	<b>Number of trader organisations represented</b>	<b>Duration</b>
20 Oct 98	Cape Town Local Policy Dialogue	3	11	7	Two and a half hours
27 Oct 98	East London Local Policy Dialogue	3	12	3	Two and a half hours
29 Oct 98	Johannesburg Local Policy Dialogue	6	18	7	Three hours
18 Nov 98	National Policy Dialogue	4 from 4 provinces	13, from all study areas	9	Six hours

The programmes were organised around research findings that had been gathered by the time of the dialogues. The findings were presented, and fairly open discussions were then held about pressing issues arising.

Officials and traders alike wanted some very basic information about changing policies, bylaws, etc., so a twenty page pamphlet was developed, following the dialogues, and distributed to all who had participated.