

December 2011 Issue



Abokobie Trading site, near
Madina Market
Accra, Ghana

Photo by WIEGO Staff

Food for Thought...

What should the role of
NGOs be, & how do we
ensure that our
support NGOs do not
dominate and take
decisions for us?



A plate of seasonal fruit
from the ICAG
Accra, Ghana

Photo by WIEGO Staff

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WIEGO MBO Newsletter



A Newsletter for Membership-Based Organizations of Informal Workers

WELCOME NEW INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS!!!

Following a decision to focus on inviting national or international MBOs to become Institutional Members of WIEGO, in October 2011 WIEGO invited national affiliates of StreetNet to become members. We are very pleased to welcome the following 15 MBOs, which have accepted our invitation:

ASSOTSI (Associação dos Operadores e Trabalhadores do Sector Informal), Mozambique

CIEAS (Coalition of Informal Economy Associations of Swaziland), Swaziland

CNTG (National Confederation of Trade Unions), Guinea

CNTS (National Confederation of Trade Unions), Senegal

FUTRAND (Federación Única de Trabajadores No Dependientes de Venezuela), Venezuela

KENASVIT (Kenya Association of Street Vendors and Informal Traders), Kenya

LAIE (Labour At Informal Economy; formerly Self Employed Union), Bangladesh

LDFC (Ligue pour le Droit de la Femme Congolaise), D.R. Congo

MUFIS (Malawi Union for the Informal Sector), Malawi

SINTRALOC (Sindicato de Trabajadores Vendedores de la Locomoción Colectiva), Chile

SIVARA (Sindicato de Vendedores Ambulantes de la Republica Argentina), Argentina

STREETNET GHANA ALLIANCE, Ghana

SUDEMS (Syndicat Unique et Démocratique du Mareyeurs du Sénégal), Senegal

SYVEBU, Burundi

SYMEVACOT Syndicat des Vendeurs de Matériaux de Construction du Togo, Togo

Spotlight: GHANA

Greetings friends & colleagues! It is with great pleasure that we take this opportunity to spotlight Ghana, a country with many MBOs of informal workers, in this issue of the WIEGO MBO Newsletter. In October, WIEGO held its annual Board & Team meetings in Accra, Ghana. During the trip, local MBOs hosted the WIEGO team & board, divided into small groups, on field visits to different markets. The StreetNet Ghana Alliance & their member MBOs, the Ga-East Traders Union, Circle Traders, & Makola Market Traders Union, hosted five groups from around the world on visits to Makola Market, Madina Street Traders Market, Kantamanto Market, Pedestrian Shopping Mall & Abokobie Traders Market. The GTUC & their affiliated organization, the Indigenous Caterers Association of Ghana (ICAG), hosted another group which visited indigenous caterers' *chop bars*. During the visits, the hosts & MBO members explained their individual work & working conditions to the WIEGO team & board. The groups learned about where & how different vendors acquired & sold their merchandise, & about the many difficulties they faced. The MBO hosts inspired their visitors when they described the history of the markets &

explained the efforts they are undertaking to improve their working conditions. In addition to the one small group's visit with the ICAG, the entire WIEGO team had the opportunity to eat dinner at the *chop bar* of the ICAG president, Mrs. Edith Addo.

Some of the MBO hosts also participated in a Policy Dialogue, hosted by the Ghana Trades Union Congress (GTUC), Institute for Local Government Studies (ILGS) & WIEGO, held the evening of the field visits. Panellists included officials from the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA), the Ministry of Local Government & Rural Development, & the Ministry of Employment & Social Welfare. Attendees included members of MBOs, trade unions & others with an interest in the informal economy in Ghana. Ideas & experiences were exchanged, & an impassioned dialogue took place. A few days after the Policy Dialogue, WIEGO learned that ILGS—which has been WIEGO's partner in the Occupational Health & Safety project in Ghana—was invited by the Ghanaian Government to contribute to local development planning with special input on the informal economy. This is a crucial component of the government's current decentralization process. ILGS Director Dr. Esther Ofei-Aboogye has asked WIEGO to collaborate on this work.



Makola Market
Accra, Ghana

Photo by WIEGO Staff



Ghana TUC
Accra, Ghana

Photo by WIEGO Staff

*Food for Thought...
How do we deal
with class, race and
gender divisions in
our organizations?*

*When organizing informal
women workers, 'Always
start where the women are.*

*We have to identify the
issues of concern, problems
they are facing, their
culture, traditions, and
their livelihoods. Take up
the issues and try and show
successes.'*

-MBO Workshop participant

MBO Spotlight: StreetNet Ghana Alliance

The StreetNet Ghana Alliance is a national affiliate of StreetNet International, & an affiliate of the Ghana Trades Union Congress. StreetNet Ghana's membership totals around 5000 workers, & is comprised of six local MBOs of street vendors: Makola Market Traders Union, Kantamanto Banana Traders Associations, Takoradi Market Trader Association, Pedestrian Shopping Mall (Hawkers & Vendors Circle), Ga East Traders Association – Madina, Tema Station (Hawkers & Vendors) & the new members of Koforidua Market Union. Associations within the Ga East Traders Association are the Madina Street Traders, who sell at Zongo Junction, & the Abokobie Traders, some of whom have relocated to

Madina after heavy rains in their original market area. Many times, the livelihoods of some of the vendors in these markets have been threatened. For example, Makola Market has recently suffered several devastating fires, especially threatening the cloth sellers. Even though the AMA (the local authority which owns the market) is legally obligated to provide fire extinguishers, the traders have so far been unable to acquire them. The market women have gathered enough money for eight extinguishers in the cloth section of the market, but they worry that they may not be able to replace them when they are no longer operational. Another example is the Kantamanto Traders, who sell at a market near a railway. This railway has been used as both a living & working space

for Accra's poor. The AMA recently decided that it was unsafe for people to live & work on the railway, & so began 'clearing' homes & businesses from the area. This sparked mass protests, involving, among others, the StreetNet Ghana Alliance. Due to this popular mobilization, the local authority backed down – for the time being. By joining together, the StreetNet Ghana Alliance has been able to advocate for the rights & protection of street & market vendors. For more information about StreetNet Ghana Alliance, see their profile on the StreetNet website, <http://www.streetnet.org.za/docs/affiliates/sp/Ghana-StreetNet-Alliance.pdf>, & please look forward to viewing their profile on the WIEGO website soon.

MBO Spotlight: Ghana TUC

The Ghana Trades Union Congress (TUC) is the main umbrella organization for workers in Ghana. The TUC was formed in 1945. Currently Ghana TUC has 18 affiliated national unions with membership of 500,000 spread across nearly all sectors of the Ghanaian economy, namely agriculture, mining, manufactur-

ing, trade, transport, finance, construction, utility, and community, social and personal services. Ghana TUC's mission is to unite all workers in Ghana both formal and informal economies into an independent and democratic organization for improved working and living conditions

through collective action, solidarity and social partnership based on the principles of fairness and social justice.

For more information about GTUC, go to <http://www.ghanatuc.org>.

Resources for Membership Based Organizations

StreetNet International has started a "StreetNet campaigns blog," which can be found here: <http://streetnet-campaigns.blogspot.com>. The blog features news and events about StreetNet's three on-going campaigns:

- The New Manifesto Campaign
- The World Class Cities for All Campaign (Brazil)
- Litigation Campaigns

To leave a comment on any of the articles, click on the word "comment." A box will open up for you to write a message.

The StreetNet campaigns blog also features information about other campaigns and activities undertaken.

The WIEGO website features news about MBOs of informal workers, including a new section on Organizations and Organizing (<http://wiego.org/informal-economy/organizing-organizations>). You can also read about other MBOs at <http://wiego.org/news-events>.

Send us your news to post@wiego.org and we will post it on WIEGO's news page to share with others.