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Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing

Housing and Urban Service Needs of Home-Based Workers: Findings from a Seven-Country Study

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A series of studies conducted by HomeNet South Asia (HNSA) in 2011 examined the issues facing home-based workers in seven countries within South Asia and Southeast Asia. This Policy Brief considers the linkages between the urban infrastructure and the livelihood issues that the studies underscored, but not the issues directly related to income such as marketing, skill building, etc.

While much has been written about the need of home-based workers for direct livelihood support interventions (and this cannot be emphasized enough), there is very little documentation on how the lack of adequate housing and infrastructure support negatively impacts home-based worker livelihoods. The recommendations made in this paper build on the HNSA's city studies but are expansive enough to be relevant to home-based workers more generally.

A Vast, Invisible Workforce

In most South Asian countries, home-based workers account for a majority share—60 to 90 per cent—of selected key export industries including the *agarbati* and *bidi* industries in India, the football industry in Pakistan, and the *coir* industry in Sri Lanka (Carr and Chen 2000: 6)[2]. In Indonesia, it is estimated that one out of every three households is engaged in home-based work (Mehrotra and Biggeri 2002: 2). In Thailand, estimates suggest that there may be up to two million home-based workers (Bonner and Spooner 2012: 61). In India, home-based work, which cuts across different branches of industry, is an important category, representing a significant share of urban employment; in 2009-10 it was 18 per cent of the total urban employment and 23 per cent of the urban informal employ-

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[2] *Agarbati* is an incense stick. *Bidi* is a local, hand-rolled cigarette. *Coir* is a versatile natural fibre made from coconut husks.

ment (Chen and Raveendran 2012: 14), with the data showing an increasing trend from 2005 onwards.

Home-based workers carry out remunerative work in their own homes or adjacent grounds or premises and are found in a wide range of industries from garments to micro-electronics. The general term "home-based workers" refers to two broad categories: self-employed workers and sub-contracted workers. The more specific term "homeworkers" refers to those workers who are sub-contracted to carry out paid work for firms/businesses or their intermediaries, typically on a piece-rate basis. This important distinction between self-employed home-based and sub-contracted homeworkers reflects differences that have policy implications.

Homeworkers occupy the bottom links of value chains, earning little and having to pay the overhead costs of production such as space, utilities and equipment. Irregular work orders, arbitrary rejection of goods and delayed payments are common. Self-employed home-based workers are generally in direct contact with the market and buy their own raw material. They face competition from larger and more powerful formal businesses and often do not have access to credit except at exorbitant rates of interests. Both categories lack bargaining power and social protection and remain largely invisible and voiceless.

Compounding all these employment challenges are urban infrastructure and housing issues. Many home-based workers toil seven days a week in homes-cum-workplaces located in the large slums that dot the cities in developing countries. These dwellings are small and crowded, with little natural light or fresh air. Infrastructure services are missing—no individual water connection or drainage, poor sanitation and often no proper garbage collection. Home-based work and workers are invisible in economic statistics and in city level data,

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and as a result, these workers are often denied basic urban services while cities decide what to do about informal settlements or impose single-use zoning regulations. Invisibility and lack of recognition (with no formal contracts and no identity cards) give rise to other insecurities such as a lack of access to credit or to government schemes that provide housing for the poor, etc. Shelter and infrastructure deficiencies often exert huge pressures on urban home-based workers.

When a woman works from her home, she needs adequate lighting, enough space and a safe, hygienic environment—conditions she currently rarely experiences. The cost of utilities cuts into her income, and the lack of or poor quality of these services has a direct bearing on her productivity. Frequent evictions and insecurity of tenure adds to her vulnerability.

Overcrowded housing means reorganizing space for different activities—and that can mean extra cleaning and washing. Lack of adequate sanitation and waste management, with infrequent or no garbage collection, adds to a woman's work burden. Poor health of her family means not only added expenditure on healthcare and medicines, but also more time spent in taking care of the ill.

Study Findings from Seven Countries

HomeNet South Asia (HNSA), a regional network of home-based worker organizations in South Asia, recently conducted a study to explore the key issues facing poor home-based workers in seven countries in South Asia and South East Asia: Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Thailand.

The studies were conducted in selected parts of several urban centres in each country. The objective of the studies was to find out more about the current situation of urban poor home-based workers and their main challenges and priorities, especially in relation to the cities where they live and work. Table 1 lists the cities where the studies were conducted and the main types of work done in each location.

Table 1 Type of Work Done by Home-Based Workers in Locations Studied

Country	Cities studied	Main type of work or items produced
Bangladesh	Dhaka, Jamalpur and Tangail	Garment production—hand-stitching; tailoring/sewing; embellishment; producing bamboo products; handloom/weaving; pottery-making; broom making; *bidi* (local cigarette) rolling; and *chumki/karchupi* setting (of sequins and jewellery; and embroidery work).
Cambodia	Phnom Penh and Siem Reap	Making toys; bags; baskets; boxes; containers; jewelry; key rings; musical instruments; making items out of recycled plastic bags; woodcarvings; smock (fish, flowers, birds and other items made of palm leaves); sewing of pants, neckties, scarves, mats, and gloves.
India	Kanpur	Rolling *bidi*; rolling *agarbati*; making leather products; hosiery production; food processing; kite making; flower making; coal picking; broom making; chain making; statue making; making *bindi*; making bulbs; pen packing; clip making; etc.
Nepal	Kathmandu Valley and Hetuada	Weaving; stitching/sewing; embroidery/patchwork; incense stick rolling; knitting; doing beadwork; making products from bamboo; candle making; metal work; and making traditional painting.
Pakistan	Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Islamabad, Lahore and Rawalpindi	Doing embroidery; stitching; sewing; needlework/embellishment (including attaching small stones on cloth); stitching footballs; winnowing grain, beans and pulses from chaff; making vermicelli; packing different types of goods.
Philippines	Quezon City and Caloocan City	Food processing; sewing of dresses and pants; rug making; producing metal products; fashion accessories; *capiz* shell making; garments; Christmas decor; rugs and potholders; peeling of onion skin; jackfruit seed and fruit pulp extraction/packaging.
Thailand	Bangkok, Chiang Rai and Khon Kaen	In **Bangkok**, making crafts from *carabao* horns; cooking crispy rolls; embroidering hijab (head scarf); doing organza embroidery; stitching garments; patched leather bags. In **Khon Kaen**, food processing such as making semi-dried fish; stuffed bun and steamed dumplings; pork sausages; sweet fried snacks; sweet crispy rice; making brooms from coconut palm ribs; weaving cotton and plastic baskets; making fishnets; artificial flowers; garbage recycling. In **Chiang Rai**, traditional weaving; sewing Buddhist Monks robes; doing bead embroidery and crocheting; food processing; production of mulberry paper and tea pillows.

Some occupations are sex-specific—for example, certain types of stitching are done more by women, and traditional painting and woodcarving are done more by men. Some occupations involve both women and men but with each specializing in different stages of production (e.g., in the production of and then embellishment of pashmina wool). However, in South Asia, the vast majority of home-based workers are women.

Research Methodology

The studies were conducted in 18 cities in seven countries within South Asia and South East Asia. Effort was made to use both qualitative and quantitative methods, and interviews were supplemented with focus group discussions in all countries barring two. Effort was also made to include own account home-based workers as well as sub-contracted homeworkers. All of the studies were conducted in 2011-2012 and have since been used by HNSA to guide city level policy dialogues on urban issues for home-based workers.

In the Philippines, the study was conducted in pilot sites in Quezon City and Caloocan City, which are the key cities in Metro Manila. The study looked at both the self-employed and sub-contracted home-based workers. The methodology included a survey of 107 home-based workers, followed by focus group discussions involving the survey participants in the two urban locations.

In Cambodia, poor urban home-based workers in the cities of Phnom Penh and Siem Reap were interviewed. The study included both sub-contracted homeworkers and self-employed or own account workers (38 per cent). Of the 109 home-based workers interviewed in both the sites, 83 per cent were women.

In Thailand, the study included a survey complemented by in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with home-based workers in the three cities of Bangkok, Chiang Rai and Khon Kaen. The study included own account workers (those who produce their goods using their own capital and tools and sell to the market), homeworkers (who are paid to produce goods or provide services to others), and a combination of the two.

In Nepal, the study looked at urban poor home-based workers in two cities: Kathmandu Metropolitan City and Bhaktapur Municipality in Kathmandu Valley (contiguous urban areas) and Hetauda City in Hetauda Municipality. A total of 123 household surveys and five focus group discussions (FGDs) were carried out with home-based workers, and several informal interviews were held with leaders of HBW groups in the cities surveyed.

In Pakistan, the study was carried out in five cities in the province of Punjab (Lahore, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi, and the Federal capital of Islamabad) and focuses mainly on the infrastructural and service-related problems of the cities as they affect home-based workers (HBWs) and women home-based workers in particular. The methodology involved conducting six focus group discussions with a total of 112 women home-based workers.

The study in Bangladesh was conducted in three cities: Jamalpur, Tangail municipal areas, and Dhaka city, each chosen because of the high concentrations of home-based workers in these urban areas. Sixty-three in-depth interviews and 11 focus group discussions were conducted. These were supplemented by additional interviews with city officials, NGO and development workers, city mayors, and journalists. In addition, 15 case studies of individual, family- and community-based conditions were collected to illustrate the circumstances and challenges facing urban poor home-based workers.

In India, the study included 100 interviews with home-based workers and seven focus group discussions in the city of Kanpur.

All of the studies found that poor housing and lack of urban services in poor urban settlements have negative impacts on both the livelihoods and the health of home-based workers and their families. The studies show how these problems play out in the specific urban communities to compromise the productivity of home-based workers. All the studies found that improving and securing the livelihood of home-based workers, who both work and live in low income settlements, requires provision of basic urban infrastructure and housing services, and health and social protection against injuries, disability and old age to supplement employment-related interventions (HNSA and HNSEA 2012).

The synthesis of findings related to urban infrastructure that emerged from HNSA's city studies is presented below.

Housing

Housing was a significant issue for the home-based workers in these studies. The high cost of housing forces the workers to live and work in crowded and small spaces that are in slums and illegal squatter settlements on public or private land. In addition, poor quality of housing, in terms of poor construction and poor location, further adds to the workers' insecurity and vulnerability.

High Cost, Crowded Spaces and Fear of Eviction

In India, Pakistan and Nepal, the high costs of housing in urban centres contributed to difficulties in carrying out home-based work. In Nepal, home-based workers

who are staying in rented houses usually have one-room accommodations because the rent in major cities like Kathmandu is quite high. It is not possible for the poor home-based worker to afford more than two rooms at the most—and these two rooms serve as both the family's living space and her workplace. In Kanpur, India, home-based workers have been reported to be living under huge space constraints for which they pay high rents (Gautum N.d: 18). The women home-based workers interviewed in Rawalpindi were packing henna in congested homes—usually a single room for an entire family—that required high rents and came with high utility bills. In Lahore, women faced high costs of rent and still did not have sufficient housing facilities, space or enough light. In Thailand, those living in rented houses have higher expenses as they have to pay extra charges for electricity and water imposed at flat rates by the house owners. In the Philippines, the majority of those involved in the study own their homes, but they do not own the land on which these homes were built. The workers whose homes are located on private land pay a monthly rent, which has gone up as much as tenfold in recent years. Some have applied to join the government-sponsored Community Mortgage Program (CMP), for which they have to share the high cost of surveying as well as pay a monthly amortization for 25 years.

All the studies in South Asian cities reported that the houses are very small and crowded, with no division between the workspace and the family's living area. Nearly half of the respondents in the cities of Jamalpur, Tangail and Dhaka (Bangladesh) report living in a single room with a husband, children and sometimes parents or other relatives. This can pose family-wide health concerns when the work involves chemicals or dust, putting children especially at risk as their homes may not be equipped for proper storage or ventilation. In Cambodia, South East Asia, 64 per cent of the

home-based workers interviewed reported problems with housing—especially with small spaces that are not enough for the family.

Lack of storage space (for raw materials, equipment and finished goods) thus becomes another space issue. In Bangladesh, 35 per cent of all respondents reported having no storage facility, and of these, 59 per cent reported damage to their products and 36 per cent had difficulty preserving their finished goods. In Nepal,

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more than 70 per cent cite the lack of adequate work-space as a key problem, and 63 per cent report a lack of adequate storage space. In the Philippines, home-based workers complained of instances when raw materials and finished products were damaged due to improper storage or as a result of unforeseen calamities such as floods and typhoons.

When the price of housing—whether housing is owned or rented—is high, many home-based workers are forced to squat on public land due to absence of any government institutional housing provision that is affordable. Fear of eviction adds to home-based workers' insecurity. In Cambodia, home-based workers in Siem Reap are afraid that the government/land owning authority may move them to a new location far away from their source of livelihood.

In Phnom Penh, where they live on rented property, home-based workers are fearful of being evicted if they are unable to keep up with the payments, given the irregularity of their incomes and the delayed payment of their wages. In Thailand, home-based workers fear eviction because their houses are on rented private lands and the landowner may want to use the land for some other purpose, such as building an apartment block.

The Bangkok study has nuanced the tradeoffs that the home-based workers have to face in terms of housing. For the groups of home-based workers who stay in the inner city, housing conditions are "congested and stuffy," and they live under the constant threat of eviction; however, in the city, they have better access to work. On the other hand, home-based workers who are living in the suburbs and have built their houses on their own land have to face expensive and inconvenient transport and limited access to work.

The quality of the housing/workplace owned by home-based workers' families is generally poor both in terms of space and safety. Over three quarters of those surveyed in Bangladesh lived in tin-shed houses. In Cambodia, 64 per cent of the home-based workers interviewed reported hot or leaking roofs and weak structures. In India, many of the home-based workers are living in shanty houses under deplorable conditions. In Thailand, home-based workers fear eviction because their houses are on rented private lands and the landowner may want to use the land for some other purpose, such as building an apartment block.

In Kanpur, India, government relocation programmes also caused fears. The study found that home-based workers were resistant to vacating slums in favour of rehabilitated housing because of concerns about unavailability of work in the new locations, lack of tenure, and an inability to make payments for the housing—along with an overall lack of faith in the authorities' motives for relocations. As the study notes, "the schemes and efforts haven't always been successful because many a times schemes have been formulated without adequate consultation with the targeted beneficiaries." (Gautum N.d: 19).

Poor Quality Construction and Poor Location

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ditions. According to the Kanpur report, the "majority of the slum houses of home-based workers had thatched roofs, invariably leaking in rains, damped walls, white wash or paints falling off the wall and semi pucca floors with several rat holes" (Gautum N.d: 27). In Nepal, most of the workers' houses are unsafe in terms of earthquake and fire. Only some houses have access to sunlight, fresh air and safe working conditions.

Badly designed and poor quality urban settlements create a dual disability for home-based workers. In Pakistan, the poorly maintained roads create a backflow of dirty and contaminated water into homes, causing damage to goods and supplies and disrupting production. Some respondents complained that this is a chronic thief of income, spoiling goods and tools and stealing time. Some women in Lahore complained they had to spend all of their savings to buy new things or repair some costly ones due to the "flow-back". Other women complained that backflow is always a setback because they must spend time saving goods and cleaning up rather than working on their contracts. Similarly, in Rawalpindi, interviews with home-based workers suggested that they are subjected to periodic flooding from the main sewage drain that runs through the city. Flooding, which results from the authorities releasing floodwaters from Bangkok into suburban areas, also causes difficulties for those living in the suburbs and makes it harder for them to get work. In one October 2008 case, a one-metre high flood was reported to have lasted a month at a particular housing estate.

Lack of Adequate, Affordable Transportation

Poor location of houses often translates into lack of adequate and affordable transportation. Many of the home-based workers surveyed cited that this was a common concern: transportation services are expensive,

inconvenient or non-existent in low-income urban communities. When Bangkok became increasingly urbanized and the price of land began to rise, home-based workers were evacuated to the suburbs where the government provided them with low-priced land that they could pay for through long-term installments. However, because these sites are far from the city centre, the relocated workers have high transportation costs, long commutes and difficulty in getting access to work.

In Cambodia, 61 per cent of home-based workers surveyed used a bicycle or motorcycle, often old and in poor condition, to transport their products, but these workers barely had enough money to pay for the fuel much less to cover maintenance costs. In Nepal, the lack of safe public transportation emerged as a key concern of home-based workers, who complained of old and poorly-maintained public transport vehicles and said that service providers seldom followed traffic rules. In Bangladesh, because public transport was either too expensive, inconvenient, or not available where they lived, most of the home-based workers surveyed had to go on foot to meet contractors, suppliers, middlemen/women, and others on whom they depend for their work.

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Urban Municipal Services

The situation of home-based workers differs from that of many other poor urban informal workers in that their home is their workplace. This means that, in contrast to workers who live in but work outside the slum, home-based workers often live and work throughout the day and night in slum environments. For this reason, slum-related health and environmental problems pose particular concerns for home-based workers.

Poor Access to Water

In Bangladesh, only 32 per cent of home-based workers surveyed reported that they have access to a supply of water. In Nepal, the lack of adequate infrastructure was cited by 37.5 per cent of home-based workers interviewed as their major problem, with almost half reporting the water supply as the main issue. Time spent collecting water eats into productive time for home-based workers: almost 10 per cent spend more than two hours a day fetching water, and more than 30 per cent spend almost two hours fetching water daily. In Kanpur, India home-based workers face severe water problems throughout the year, and many have no water supply in the house, even though in some clusters pipelines do exist (Gautum N.d.). The study found that the majority of the home-based workers have to travel an average of one kilometre to fetch water three to four times a day, which could take a few hours. In Gujaranwala and Islamabad, Pakistan, many of the slums where the study

was carried out had no supply of water. In Siem Reap, Cambodia, water connections are not yet available to the home-based workers surveyed.

Unsanitary Conditions and Environmental Pollution

The urban service-related hazards faced include problems of sewage, open drains, and poor waste management. In Faislabad, Pakistan, there is no publicly-administered waste collection, so each household has to pay private collectors where they are available. Among home-based workers in Cambodia, 26 per cent report

the absence of water drainage and proper garbage collection activity as well as the presence of mice, insects and bad smelling canals and ponds. In Bangladesh, 63 per cent of those surveyed reported drains were not cleaned regularly, and 64 per cent said that waste was not removed from their localities.

The Pakistan study highlights how insufficient or contaminated water (expensive drinking water is beyond many home-based workers' means), combined with unsanitary conditions and environmental pollution, results in health problems in the slum areas/informal settlements where home-based workers spend both

day and night. These conditions, in turn, seriously compromise workers' ability to work and undermine their productivity. The study in Lahore points out that water supply lines and sewage mix together, causing a variety of waterborne diseases that affect almost every household in the area. Though a water filtration plant had been established in one location, the clean water is too far away for home-based workers to access, so the workers still have to drink contaminated water, which negatively affects their health and the health of their families. In Gujranwala, where there is little in the way of sanitation and where waterborne diseases are common, the water is also said to be contaminated because of waste from oil factories in the area. In Faisalabad, the women complain of low pressure and contaminated water (again, a mixture of drinking water and sewage), causing them to purchase privately supplied drinking water.

Expensive and Insufficient Electrical Supply

The supply of electricity, so necessary for home-based work, is either missing or insufficient due to frequent load-shedding (power cuts). Illegal connections and arbitrary pricing creates high overhead that eats into the earnings of home-based workers. An overwhelmingly large number of respondents in Bangladesh said they had access to electricity though this access is reported to be primarily through illegal connections administered by the vested interest groups who control the slums—a situation that arises when electrical companies won't supply power to slum dwellers who lack ownership papers. As a consequence, electricity bills can vary tremendously and be unnecessarily exorbitant. Home-based workers in Thailand and Cambodia complained of the high costs of electricity, and some home-based workers in Phnom Penh stated that they do not use the light or fan and continue to work in their dark, hot and windowless rooms so as not to increase their electric-

ity bills. In many locations in Cambodia and Pakistan, home-based workers did not have access to government-supplied electricity.

All locations studied in Pakistan highlighted the interruption of electricity due to load-shedding. This means workers must light their work areas with candles—which the home-based workers report skyrockets when load-shedding grips the country. Furthermore, long hours working at night—often because domestic chores and fetching water take so much of the daylight hours—has led these women's eyesight to weaken.

In Nepal, similar issues with load-shedding led to an inability among home-based workers to fulfil orders—in some cases, the orders were cancelled. All the home-based workers in Nepal reported that load-shedding has been hampering their work on an average of 3.75 hours per day. Almost half—49 per cent—of the home-based workers use alternative energy (candles, kerosene lights and power back-up/emergency lighting) to illuminate their work. Unfortunately, light created by alternative sources is not as effective as that provided by electricity. As a home-based worker from Kathmandu stated, "in most of the cases [with load shedding] we are unable to fulfil the order and in some cases the orders are cancelled" (Shrestha 2011: 80). The Kanpur study in India also highlighted long and frequent power cuts, with most of the slums experiencing power cuts of 10 –12 hours every day, even in winter.

Occupational Health and Safety

For home-based workers, poor living conditions mean poor health and safety conditions at work. It is a challenge to track home-as-workplace health issues or injuries since incidents in the home are rarely categorized as workplace incidents. In addition, unlike many

other poor urban informal workers, home-based workers do not leave the slum for work so their exposure to slum-related health and environmental threats is unrelenting. Many home-based workers are overworked and must maintain unhealthy postures.

In Bangladesh, nearly all respondents reported respiratory and other chronic or acute health problems. In Thailand, many home-based workers groups report the problems of eye-strain, sore eyes, and blurred vision—especially among older workers. Their workplaces have poor lighting conditions and, particularly in the inner city areas, are often congested, hot, and stuffy. Exposure to dust and other irritants, such as the pungent smell of kerosene, result in allergies and respiratory diseases. Those engaged in food processing suffer from skin rashes caused by splashes of hot oil while cooking. In Kanpur, India, those working with leather have to deal with extremely pungent smell and work in a severely polluted atmosphere. In Nepal, a home-based worker who was forced to work in candlelight due to frequent power cuts reported, "the candle light is dimmer and after completing work there is pain our eyes and also there is deposition of tar or carbon on the inner walls of nostrils" (Shrestha 2011: 80).

In Gujranwala, Pakistan, the need to burn wood and coal due to the lack or high cost of natural gas is said to have resulted in indoor and outdoor pollution, and in some cases, of suffocation. In Islamabad, too, the supply of natural gas is equally difficult to come by. As a consequence, it is said that almost the entire population of 800 households are forced to rely on wood and coal, causing pollution problems and posing serious threats to the health of women and children, especially to infants who are already at risk in such localities due to waterborne diseases and malnutrition.

Urban Policies and Planning

Half or more of the world's population now lives in cities—including a large or major share of the world's home-based workers. Most cities do not know very much about home-based workers; fewer still do much about them. But when cities turn a blind eye to the need of slum dwellers for basic infrastructure services or periodically clear slums, these practices are like a double-edged sword to home-based workers—undermining or destroying not only their homes but also their workplace.

In all Asian countries where the studies were carried out, the focus of legislation and public policies has been primarily on formal workers, formal enterprises, and formal economic activities to the relative neglect and disadvantage of informal workers, informal enterprises, and informal economic activities. For instance, labour regulations and protections are premised on the notion of a recognized employer-employee relationship; but home-based workers are either self-employed or sub-contracted workers without an easily identifiable employer who can be held responsible for their wellbeing.

In urban areas, regulations and practices reinforce this bias towards the formal economy and wage employment. Urban planning, as commonly taught and practiced, has some focus on informal settlements but limited understanding of informal workers' needs and little (if any) focus on informal livelihoods. This lack of attention to livelihood is compounded by the influence that powerful stakeholders in the formal economy—corporations and real estate developers—have on the allocation of urban public resources, notably land and on urban design and planning. The net result is that most current urban renewal schemes undermine the livelihoods of the working poor in the informal economy, the most overlooked of whom are home-based workers.

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Home-based workers are not visible in the city policy dialogues or in city statistics. They have also lacked voice in policymaking, rule-setting, and collective bargaining institutions and processes. As well, relatively few civil society individuals or institutions in South Asia (or elsewhere) focus on urban livelihoods or the urban informal workforce.

However, through increasing organization, workers have begun highlighting the acute need for better housing and infrastructure when the home is the workplace. These voices are growing louder, regionally and globally, due to the growing number of women migrating to cities and finding a lack of adequate formal work opportunities or taking up home-based work to augment family incomes because male partners have irregular, low or even no earnings.

Another factor in the growth of home-based work is global competition, which increases pressure on firms to cut costs through flexible work contracts or sub-contracting production. The challenges to forming local organizations or associations of home-based workers are arguably greater in urban than in rural areas because of increased isolation and lack of community ties. However, the need for organizing in the urban context is equally great. To gain the right kinds of official support, home-based workers need to participate in the formulation of policies and the implementation and monitoring of programmes that affect their lives and work.

Way Forward

All seven country studies contain a wide range of recommendations with the goal of improving the livelihoods and living conditions of urban poor home-based workers. Home-based work helps create vibrant and sustainable urban neighbourhoods by providing economic opportunities for urban residents. The home as a workplace—as a vital economic unit—must be recognized by urban decision-makers, urban planners and municipal authorities. What follows here is the set of common core recommendations, which are expandable to other regions of the globe:

- Better data needs to be available about home-based workers. National and city-level statistics should include measurement of the number of home-based workers and information about their contributions.

- Home-based workers need a more efficient and equitable approach to regulating land use that provides for their inclusion within the formal policy framework. They need in situ upgrading of homes/workplaces and upgrading of informal settlements.

- Home-based workers need to be targeted in government sponsored low-cost housing schemes and

policies. At the policy level, in several of the countries, policies related to housing for the poor do exist, but home-based workers need to be included in the formulation of these policies. Urban planners and policymakers must adopt an underlying philosophy that recognizes and factors in home-based production as widespread and critical livelihood support for the urban poor.

- Accessible, reliable and affordable basic infrastructure services—electricity, water, sanitation and fuel—are critical to augment livelihood support for home-based workers, particularly women. Home-based workers also need affordable and accessible transport services.

- Mixed-use zoning regulations will facilitate home-based workers and their work. Restrictive zoning regulations subject home-based workers to socio-economic exclusion and exploitation by adding an element of "illegality" to the home-based work and workers, making them susceptible to harassment by city administration. In urban areas, appropriate zoning regulations are needed that allow home-based production activities in residential areas. Equally, an urban planning approach needs to recognize home as workplace for a significant portion of the population.

- The home-based workers themselves need to be included in productive dialogues with city officials, urban planners, academics, media, and other concerned agencies and institutions. More importantly, the

way cities are planned and built needs to shift towards a concept of inclusive cities—cities that have space and support livelihoods for the most marginalized and invisible, the urban home-based worker.

To achieve this will require building organizations of home-based workers at the local, national and regional levels. Home-based workers as a distinct category of urban poor and home as a workplace should be twin policy platforms adopted by home-based workers' organizations and taken up at all levels. Simultaneously, home-based workers' organizations and alliances must be accepted as representational bodies that can engage in collective bargaining, advocacy campaigning and engagement with policymakers. It is incumbent upon urban officials and other decision-makers to include these representatives in discussions around issues of housing and infrastructure as livelihood support for the home-based worker.

Accessible, reliable and affordable basic infrastructure services are critical to augment livelihood support for home-based workers, particularly women.

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