

Teleconference Call 4 May 2007
Advisory Committee -WIEGO Statistics Programme

Participants: Joann Vanek (Chair), Grace Bediako, Debbie Budlender, Jacques Charmes, Martha Chen, James Heintz, Ralf Hussmanns, Jeemol Unni, Mary Beth Graves (WIEGO Staff), Uma Rani, who is not a member of the Advisory Committee but is involved with Programme work and now working with Jacques, also participated. Two members of the Committee were unable to participate, Marge Guerrero and Renana Jhabvala. Marge provided a written response to the agenda items which were read and discussed during the conference.

1. Vision for what we would like to see develop in statistics on informal employment/informal sector:

- Perhaps the key element in the vision: the development of statistics on informal employment and informal sector as a general component of mainstream or official labour force statistics available for a critical mass of countries
 - Increased data collection efforts using improved frameworks and criteria
 - Need for comparable data over time as well as panel data
- New, more definitive and clear methods, guidelines and classifications, including work to develop:
 - Categories of employment status, including a disaggregation of the employee category to reflect new types of employment arrangements and a study of unpaid family workers
 - Criteria for identifying informal employment: additional guidance is needed since employer contribution to social protection is a criteria for identifying informal employment outside the informal sector; it was cautioned that a universal framework would not be desirable as important differences are linked to national and institutional structures/contexts
 - Frameworks for analysis on gender, poverty and informal employment as well as labour market segmentation
 - A minimum set of indicators for what is essential to know about informal sector/informal employment. e.g. size, production, etc.
- Research on particular categories of workers, bringing together key resource material now available and potentially collecting additional data
 - Women entrepreneurs, to understand the situation of women entrepreneurs in contrast to men entrepreneurs – both characteristics and dynamics; caution was expressed that WIEGO's primary concern is the poor; however the importance of seeing the whole range and differences among the self-employed was also discussed
 - Street-vendors
 - Homeworkers and home-based workers

- Analysis of existing data: Objectives of such analysis include making better use of existing data and thereby providing justification for the collection of more data on informal employment/informal sector and testing new definitions to see if they are helpful in understanding the operation of labour markets
 - the importance and availability of data on contribution by the informal sector to GDP was also highlighted with data now available for nearly 50 countries
- Global data archive: incorporation of new and improved data into an archive which would be accessible to the users of data
- Advocacy and training: Priority was given to the important role WIEGO has in advocacy for the development of data on informal employment and informal sector; in other words WIEGO serves as a catalyst for the development of statistics in this area and the importance in strengthening the role was emphasized
 - A training seminar once the Manual on Surveys of informal employment and informal sector is completed was proposed as an important activity for mobilizing interest in the collection of these data by countries
- Global and regional estimates provided on a regular basis of informal employment

2. Future Directions for the WIEGO Statistics Programme:

- WIEGO's important role in advocacy for good data was given priority: the objectives of advocacy include influencing countries to collect these data, and ensuring that development organizations at the national and international levels work on employment and labour market issues and once they do that they base their work on all that has been done by the ICLS, the ILO, the Delhi Group and WIEGO The link between the use of data and advocating for more and better statistics was again highlighted:
 - The India –China project to promote the collection of data on informal employment/informal sector was considered an important effort; additional efforts to other countries were also considered important
 - Technical advice to countries: Ralf noted that ILO has had requests recently related to assistance in the analysis of labour survey data; James noted recent assistance by the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI), where he works, to the Central Bureau of Statistics- Kenya relating to analysis of the 2000 Household Budget Survey; however he noted that it would have been more helpful to have assisted them in the design stage; Grace requested similar technical support to the Ghana Statistics Office in work with the Ghana Living Standard Survey which James said he would be interested in doing;
 - The creation of a network of researchers/data analysts with the objective of building ties between researchers working on WIEGO related topics and to have a resource available when organizations request such work; Marty pointed out the network of researchers we have already worked with both in the Global Policy Network of the Economic Policy Institute and with the *Progress of the World's Women*.

- Methodological work to operationalize the existing framework for informal employment for application to developed countries was supported
- The importance of the data analysis/research objective of WIEGO was also given priority.
- Research on particular categories of informal workers was also highlighted.
 - the study of entrepreneurs
 - Jeemol Unni described efforts research she has undertaken for the Commission on the Unorganized Sector in India looking at both self-employed in non-agricultural sectors and home-based workers; this work is based on the 1999-2000 Labour Force Survey; however the 2004-5 survey does not have data for such analysis.
 - Uma Rani suggested that there is a great deal of data available in the archives of the Research Unit of the IRD that could be mined for studies of categories of workers. She will prepare a short note to be used as a basis for a proposal for further work

3. Listing of some of current activities related to WIEGO Statistics Programme undertaken by Advisory Committee members:

- Marty:
 - China-India Project with Sarah Cook of IDS Sussex
 - Exposure dialogue with economists and development officials in countries; one objective is to sensitize participants to need for a multi-segmented model of the labour force
 - Discussions with Azita Berar, head of the Employment Department and co-director of the In-Focus Programme on the Informal Economy and Joann during recent trip to Geneva. Azita proposed two activities: 1) a seminar for ILO during the October meeting of the Delhi Group at the ILO to inform ILO and others of the availability and quality of data on informal employment, informal sector and 2) to have WIEGO – in particular James working with Ralf –prepare a report to assess and analyze available data on informal employment/informal sector for the ILO Tripartite Symposium on Informal Employment which will take place 26-29 November 2007.
- Jeemol:
 - Report for Commission on Unorganized Sector on home-based workers and homeworkers
 - Regional conference organized by SEWA and UNIFEM/India on homeworkers and home-based workers
 - Meeting with the new Chief Statistician concerning the questions in the next labour survey that will provide for analysis of home-based workers and homeworkers
 - Work on the India-China dialogue
- Jacques:
 - Chapter on national accounts for the Manual on surveys of informal employment and informal sector

- A report on the statistics for Middle Eastern Countries for the ILO Office MENAR Region/Centre for Arab Women Training and Research (CAWTAR) Project on Gender and Rights in the Informal Economy of the Arab States
- A report for the Economic Research Forum on Micro- and small enterprises in the Middle East
- A report on informal employment in Iran
- James:
 - Research paper on the US on Precarious/informal employment analyzing existing data and groups not fully counted in the labour force such immigrant labour with Francois Carre
 - Collaborating with Naila Kabear on a meeting at IDS Sussex on macro-economic poliies and informal employment. In part this involves an assessment of whether growth is measured correctly
- Grace:
 - As a follow-up to the meeting on Gender Statistics at UNSD in December 2006, an expert group meeting will be held 6-10 August 2007 in India . One section of the meeting will be on economic participation and will include informal employment
 - A Gender Statistics Forum and Inter-agency Expert Group meeting will be held in Rome 26-30 November 2007. It will focus on sources of data on gender questions. WIEGO is invited to contribute to a panel on instruments for measuring informal employment and household work.
 - A web site/portal will be set up to provide information on sources of gender statistics; this will link to the WIEGO Statistics web site.
 - Participation at a meeting of the Human Capabilities Network at Oxford on employment indicators with Dr. Sastry
- Ralf:
 - Manual on surveys of informal employment and informal sector
 - Assist Carol Carson in preparation of chapter on informal sector for Revision of 1993 System of National Accounts
 - Technical cooperation to assist countries in the design and analysis of data on informal employment/informal sector
 - Update the data base to include informal employment outside the informal sector; this will be fit into the main ILO Statistics Database and put on internet; this will also include data collected through the Development Accounts Project
- Debbie:
 - working mainly on time use surveys
 - noted that Palestine needs assistance in better design of questions in the Labour Force Survey
- Marge
 - Technical backstopping for the Development Accounts Project – Interregional Cooperation on the Measurement of Informal Sector and

Informal Employment, including planning advocacy workshops, concretizing the unified data collection strategy and working with Mongolia, Sri Lanka and the Philippines –countries participating in the project

- Technical support to Kyrgyz to advise on Labour Force Survey (including questions on informal sector and informal employment) and its use to improve GDP estimates
- Joann:
 - Preparation of the Manual on Surveys of Informal Employment and informal sector
 - Preparation of the ECE/World Bank Manual, Developing Gender Statistics, including preparation of overview to economic activity section, and section on informal employment
 - Membership on steering committee for UN Development Accounts Project that is based at ESCAP.