

**TUC (GHANA)/WIEGO INFORMAL ECONOMY LEGAL PROJECT  
REPORT FROM CAMPAIGN BY STREET VENDORS & DOMESTIC WORKERS  
UNDERTAKEN ON 17 OCTOBER 2014 IN ACCRA**

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**1. Background**

The Ghana TUC/WIEGO Informal Sector Project seeks to identify and address laws impacting on the work of informal sector workers. It focuses on street vendors, kayayei and domestic workers. The first phase of the project began in 2011 with research and consultation with the workers. The research identified the legal provisions and practices which impact negatively on the activities of the workers. Phases two and three focused on policy advocacy to elicit stakeholders' responsiveness in addressing challenges faced by the workers. A stakeholder conference was held in 2012 to share findings of the research and engage policymakers and law enforcers on issues that emanated from the research. The project has also used evidence from consultation and research to engage relevant institutions such as the Accra Metropolitan Assembly and Magistrates in the Magistrate Court, Community Centre in Accra; to influence existing laws and structures in favour of the selected informal sector workers.

The fourth phase of the project aimed at building the capacity of the leadership of the workers' association (who are predominantly women). Training workshops have been organized to build the capacities of both street vendors and domestic workers. Workers were educated on their rights and responsibilities under Ghanaian laws such as the Labour Act and the Constitution. Each category of worker was introduced to peculiar laws or provisions in the law that affected them. For instance the AMA By-law 2010 concerns street vendors while some provisions in the Labour Act (Section 33, 34 & 44) borders on the rights of domestic workers. Domestic workers were also educated on the ILO Domestic Workers Convention 189 (2011) and were provided with abridged versions to make them available to their employers.

One important issue noted by research and consultation with workers was public perception about the two occupations. Generally, Ghanaians perceive both street vending and domestic work as survival strategies. Indeed some workers in this occupation admit that their engagements in the activities are only temporal to raise income to pursue other occupations. Some have alluded to poverty as the reason for engaging in the activities. On the other hand, the research noted the nature of such activities is changing with most workers accepting them as "work". To contribute to changing public perceptions, project principals held campaign activities in Accra, the capital of Ghana.

## 2. Campaign Strategy

A total of 100 street vendors and domestic workers converge at the TUC Hall dressed in T-Shirts with inscriptions as follows:

### a. Street vendors:

- Street vendors are also workers; do not criminalize it
- Street selling is not a crime; don't criminalize it
- Street vendors are neglected
- Street vendors pay taxes
- AMA should seek our views during policy making

### b. Domestic workers

- Domestic workers are also workers; Treat them fairly
- Pay us well
- Equal pay for domestic workers
- We want mutual respect
- Give us rest periods
- Don't abuse us
- Stop child domestic work

Dancing to music from a brass band, the campaigners interacted with other vendors, buyers and pedestrians, among others. They distributed the posters and flyers and gave verbal information. They attracted overwhelming attention with most people wanting to know the reason for the procession. Vendors, in particular street vendors, upon receiving information, were eager to join the campaign, and expressed similar sentiments as information carried in the materials was distributed. Some vendors who are not members of StreetNet or other informal sector associations involved in the project expressed the desire to join the group and called for another campaign involving them.

The campaigners and the leadership of the TUC were interviewed by the media who further publicized the issues. The Daily Graphic, the most patronized print media in Ghana, published in its Monday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2014 edition a story captioned *“TUC starts campaign workers”* (<http://graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/32405-tuc-starts-campaign-to-protect-workers.html>).

### **3. Conclusion and Way Forward**

The campaign climaxed activities undertaken under the fourth phase of the project. Campaigners were observed to be very confident, indicating increased capacity as a result of training given them. The formation of a domestic workers union and the Union of Informal Sector Workers (UNIWA) by the TUC are clear indications of sustainable strategies to promote and protect the rights of both categories of workers.

Appendix 1: PICTURES











