



Women in Informal Employment  
Globalizing and Organizing

## WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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# A Gender Perspective on Recycling



## Research Action Project

### **PARTNERS:**

MNCR, WIEGO, INSEA, NEPEM/UFMG

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# Why Gender in Recycling?

- Women might not be allowed access to recyclables with the highest value.
- Women may not occupy positions of authority or may not be respected fully when holding those positions.



# Why Gender in Recycling?

- Asymmetrical power relations at the household level affect women's abilities to take part in public committees or to exercise leadership.
- Women are responsible for raising children and maintaining the household, limiting their time and energy for taking up leadership opportunities.
- When waste picking activity is formalized, women often do not enjoy the same opportunities as men for fair earnings.

# Why Gender in Recycling?

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- And most importantly, because women Latin American leaders asked WIEGO to help them address gender issues as this is an invisible issue at their national movements.

# What do we want...



1. To provide women with the tools to work towards equality in the workplace and their personal lives in order to strengthen their capacities and voices;
2. To increase women's leadership roles at their organizations;
3. To contribute to the economic, political and symbolic empowerment of women waste pickers.

# How

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- Involving women in all phases
- Engaging multiple partners and expertise
- Collegiate coordination
- Regional workshops
- Production of key resources – gender toolkits
- Ongoing communication

# Participatory Drafting Sessions





# Regional Workshops



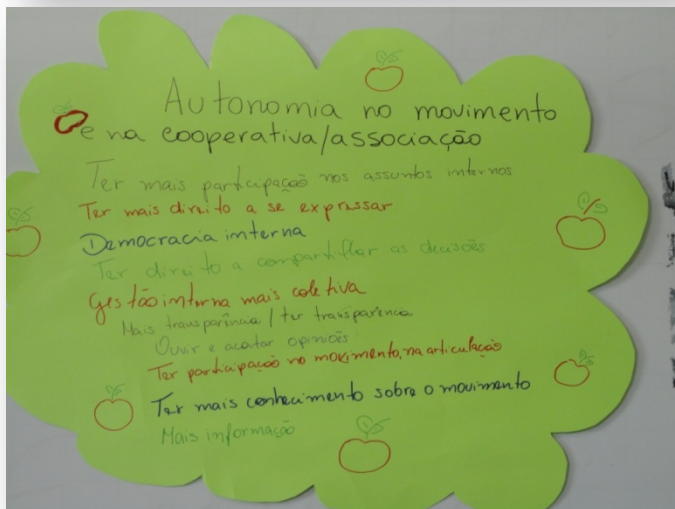
**The importance of collective action:**

*“Women need to be united if they want to fulfill their potential”*

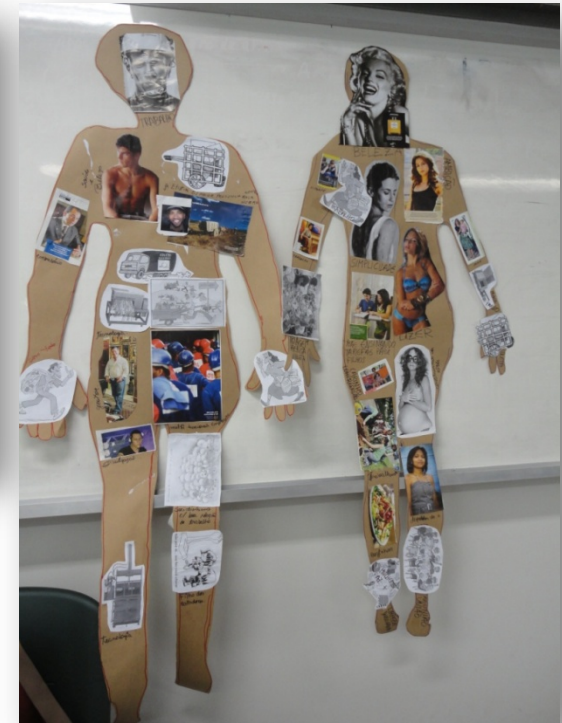
# Autonomy



...at home, in sexuality,  
at the workplace, and in  
the national movement



# Session: Gender Roles



# Working towards a gender plan in the movement

- Reflection on difficulties/obstacles faced; practical and strategic needs; changes within society, and in their national movement.



# An ongoing process...

## some workshop findings

- Reports were heard of discrimination and violence suffered by women...yet women are no longer victims (or “poor little creatures”) like in the past.... Women’s voices today are stronger....Good stories of women struggles were shared.
- Women expressed the desire for knowledge and to learn more. Skills required: how to read and write; computing skills; speech skills; political formation...
- The cooperative was recognized as a space of refuge that helps women waste pickers confront domestic violence. *Yet, women need to make their way upward in the power hierarchy of their national movement.*

# Learnings

- Importance of respecting women's pace when framing activities
- Going beyond the event culture towards a process culture – a challenge
- Women only spaces in the initial phase is important to provide women with a safe space to voice their concerns
- The importance of participatory methods/popular education materials

# Learnings (continued)

- Engaging key male leaders as supporters in tackling a sensitive issue like gender, which usually upsets power balance, is essential to ensure that working with gender also means working with both male and female and that it agrees with social movements' emancipatory agenda.
- Communication is important but at the right moment – it might backfire when done in a stage where traditional male leadership can boycott the process.
- A gender perspective is important for informal workers because it can map out the barriers to women's autonomy as well as to men's.

# THANK YOU



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