



Women in Informal Employment:
Globalizing and Organizing



START

ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2019-MARCH 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

03
Empowering Workers,
Securing Informal
Livelihoods

04
The Year in Review

07
WIEGO Welcomes New
Chair

08
WIEGO's Key
Programmes

09
How WIEGO Supports
Domestic Workers

11
How WIEGO Supports
Home-Based Workers

13
How WIEGO Supports
Street Vendors

15
How WIEGO Supports
Waste Pickers

17
WIEGO's Ongoing Cross-
Programme Work

19
COVID-19: Addressing
the Impact on Informal
Workers

20
Where WIEGO Worked in
2019-2020

21
The Year in Numbers

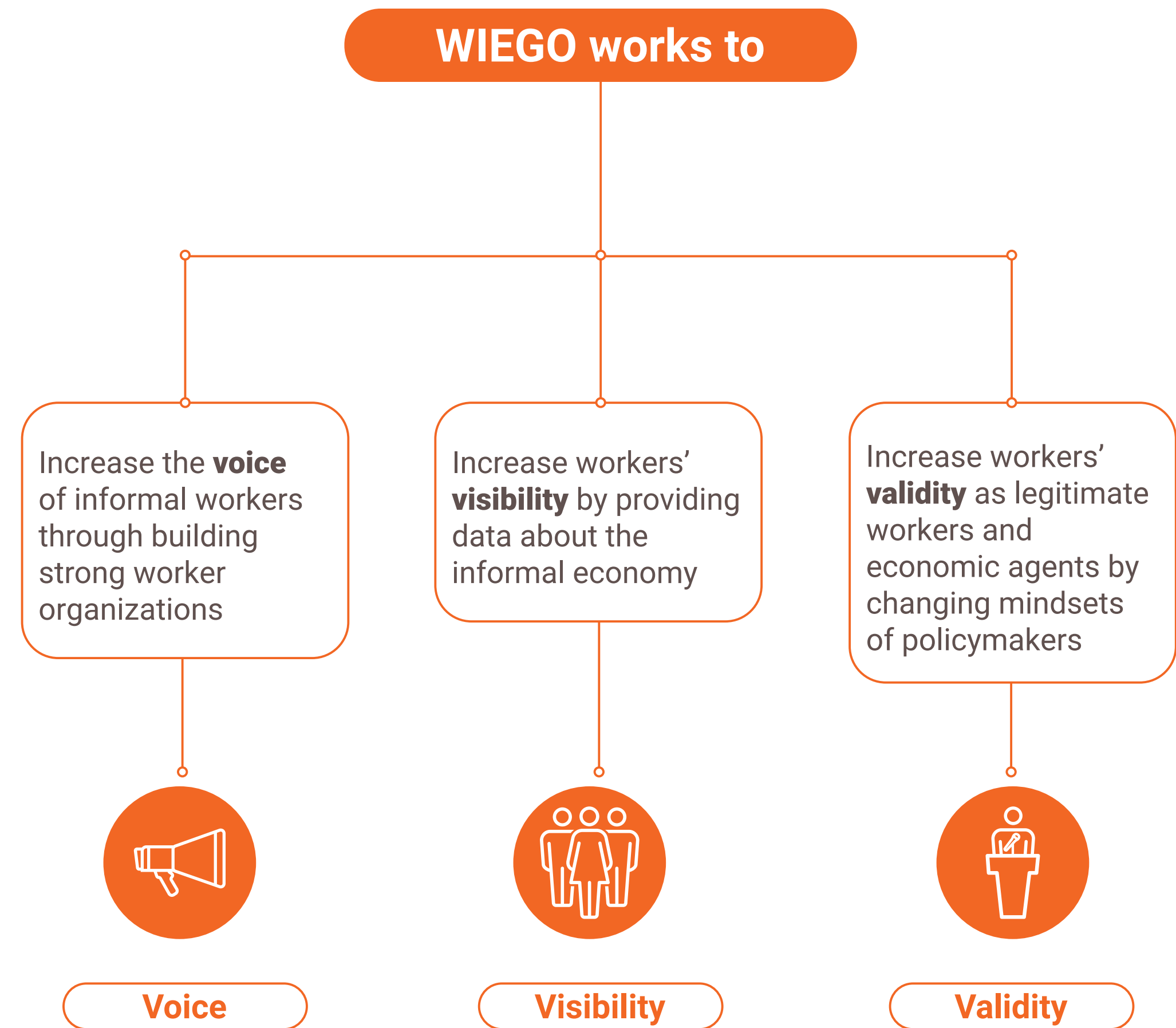
24
Publications & Resources



Empowering Workers, Securing Informal Livelihoods

WIEGO is a network of organizations of informal workers and the researchers, statisticians and development practitioners who support them. WIEGO's mission is to improve the working conditions of the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy.

We do this in two ways. First, we provide statistics, research and policy analysis on the informal economy. This information can be used for advocacy: **data in the hands of workers is power**. Second, we find and link up individuals and organizations of informal workers to build regional and global networks. We are building a social movement: **stronger together**.



The Year in Review

Mirai Chatterjee, Chair, *WIEGO Board of Directors*

Dear WIEGO Family and Friends,

This year—2019/2020—was a time of landmark gains for the global informal workers' movement, even in the face of challenging global trends and developments. These gains built on more than twenty years of experience and commitment to bringing meaningful change to the world of work that systematically excludes informal workers, especially women, and their democratic and membership-based organizations. Informal workers are now more visible in research and statistics, and have more voice and validity in policy forums. The global informal workers' movement grows in size and vibrancy, and with women's leadership.

Building on years of struggle and organizing, worker leaders representing domestic workers, home-based workers, street vendors and waste pickers advocated successfully for the adoption of ILO Convention 190 and Recommendation 206 on Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work. Armed with statistics on the size of the informal workforce and evidence of violence and harassment faced by informal workers, they made sure that the world's

2 billion informally employed workers would be covered by the new global norms being negotiated.

Their tireless efforts at the ILO reflect the WIEGO network approach of making systemic change at the global level through a combination of organizing, research and advocacy. The global networks are central to all our efforts. There was significant progress toward the formation of global networks of home-based workers and waste pickers this past year. Meanwhile, WIEGO's ongoing work with the International Domestic Workers' Federation and StreetNet International pushed the boundaries of social protection, urban policies and law to recognize, more effectively and appropriately, the day-to-day lived experiences of their members around the world.

The conclusion of our year of work and action saw the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and an immediate impact on livelihoods of informal workers. As always, WIEGO's initial response was informed directly by the needs of its membership. We remain steadfast in our commitment to serve informal women workers and their representative organizations, and to address the injustices and inequalities that first motivated WIEGO's founding more than twenty years ago.



Mirai Chatterjee

Mirai Chatterjee
Chair, WIEGO Board of Directors
November 2020



Sally Roever, International Coordinator

As 2020's first few months evolved into a global crisis of historic proportions, home workers in global supply chains reported cancelled orders well before COVID-19 cases were documented outside of China. Waste pickers soon saw changes in the price of recyclables and street vendors noted shifts in consumption patterns. Now more than ever, we are keenly aware of how interconnected we are.

The perceptions and insights from workers on global economic change in those early months of 2020 quickly fed into national, regional and global strategies to respond. The value of this connection between local, national and global is clear in so many of the milestones reached by the growing global movement of informal workers in the last year. As we look ahead to the challenges in front of us, we can take heart that a strong foundation is in place to build upon.

As in all of our work, the achievements of 2019-2020 were grounded in long-term collaborations and partnerships with informal workers' membership-based organizations at the centre. For example, over the past few years we have been learning from waste pickers in six Latin American countries about how human rights violations affect their ability to earn a living. These lessons recently fed into the work of the

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which called on Argentina, Mexico, Nicaragua and Uruguay to address waste pickers' human rights violations—a first.

Last year also saw new milestones reached in the implementation of global norms that are crucial to the advancement of workers' rights and economic justice. In the Dominican Republic, for example, agreement in principle on a minimum wage for domestic workers marked a milestone for the implementation of the International Labour Organization's Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers, known as C189.

Of course, the content of global norms that protect workers' rights like C189 can be traced back to the efforts of global networks of workers' organizations, such as the International Domestic Workers' Federation and StreetNet International. Last year, regional home-based workers' networks took great strides toward forming their own global network, including a first-ever world-wide social media campaign on International Home-Based Workers' Day 2019.

Alongside changes in global and national norms, the efforts of the WIEGO network and its three constituencies are evident in gains made at the local level. For instance, new city-level statistics compiled by WIEGO for Ghana and Thailand were

used by workers to convince municipal governments to include informal workers' demands in their policy and practice. Ongoing work in Delhi resulted in the inclusion of informal livelihoods as an area of focus for the city's Master Plan.

These achievements are important building blocks for the future. If rising inequality and closing space for civil society were already presenting a challenging environment, the moment we are confronting now is all the more precarious and uncertain. To transform the systems driving inequality and injustice, now laid bare by the pandemic, informal workers must be seen and heard at all levels.

In Solidarity,



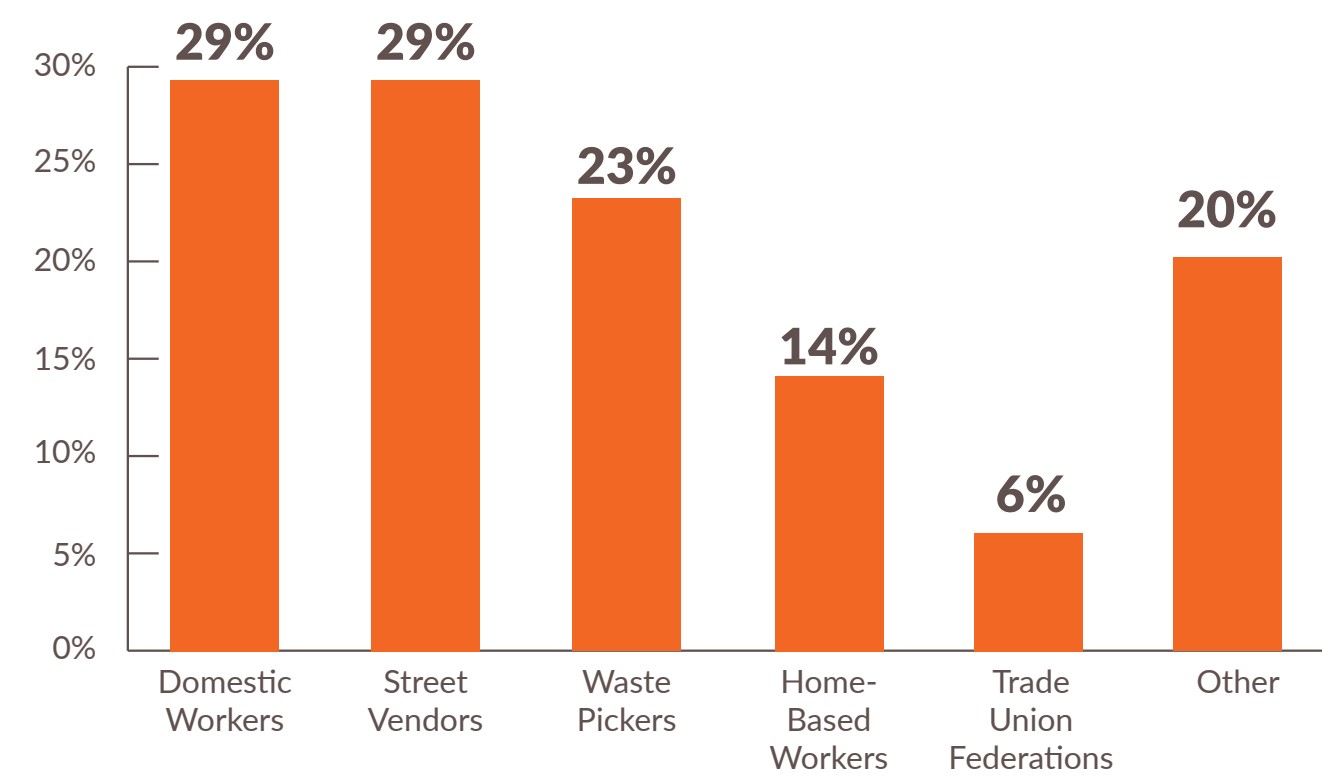
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sally Roever'.

Sally Roever, Ph.D.
International Coordinator, WIEGO
 November 2020

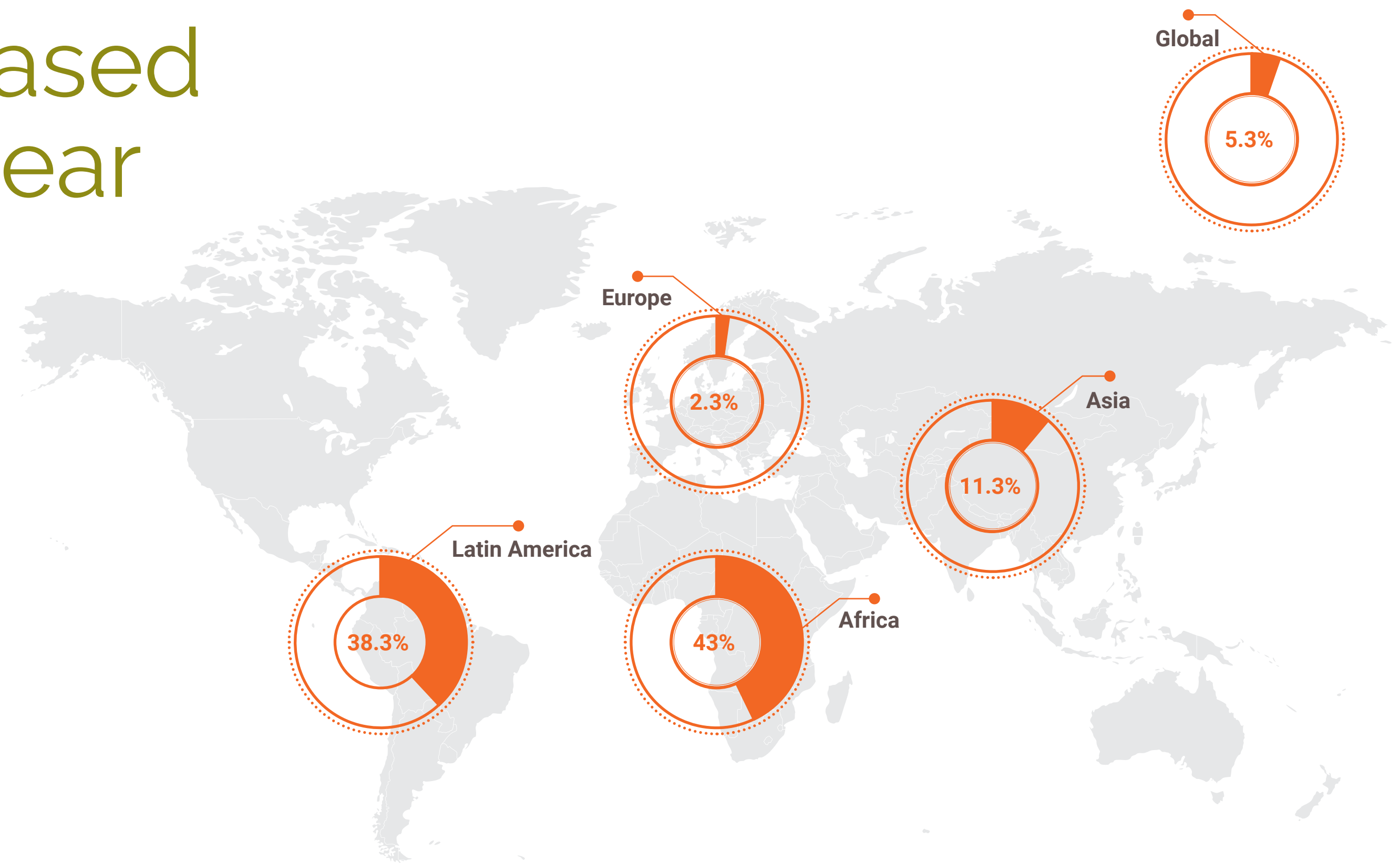


WIEGO engaged with 133 membership-based organizations this year

Engagement with membership-based informal worker organizations per sector*



*some organizations represent multiple sectors



WIEGO Welcomes New Chair

Outgoing WIEGO Chair and co-founder **Renana Jhabvala** was lauded for her long and dedicated leadership.

In her farewell speech, Renana spoke of WIEGO's original and ongoing purpose.

We want change at the global level, which affects us every day at the local level. While we need the help of researchers to articulate our message, this alone does not create systemic change. WIEGO's unique contribution is combining organizing with research and statistics to change policies.

— **Renana Jhabvala**

In March 2020, WIEGO's Board of Directors unanimously elected Mirai Chatterjee as the new board chair.

Mirai Chatterjee is the Director of the Social Security Team at the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), a trade union in India with a membership of 1.7 million women workers. She is responsible for SEWA's health care, child care and insurance programmes. She also chairs the SEWA Cooperative Federation of 106 primary cooperatives with 300,000 members in the state of Gujarat. Mirai joined SEWA in 1984 and was its General Secretary after its founder, Ela Bhatt.

Mirai brings a great deal of valuable expertise, insight and energy to the position, and we are very fortunate to have her as our Chair.

— **Sally Roever**



Renana Jhabvala, WIEGO co-founder and outgoing Chair of the WIEGO Board of Directors.
Credit: WIEGO



WIEGO's Key Programmes



The **Organization & Representation Programme** helps informal workers' organizations build their organizational and leadership capacity, connect to each other and align with allies as they fight to improve the working conditions of their members.



The **Statistics Programme** collaborates with official statisticians to improve statistical methods that will make visible the size and significance of the informal economy and the situation of all informal workers.

For example, the programme participates in the *ILO Working Group for the Revision of the Standards for Statistics on Informality*. In addition, the programme is collaborating with the ILO-ESCWA (UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia) in the development of informal employment statistics and statistics on social protection for use in policy in the Arab countries. The Statistics Programme

also promotes the use of the official international statistical definitions and methods for measuring the informal economy, as in Marty Chen's participation in the 2019 International Monetary Fund Forum on Measuring the Informal Economy.

At the request of membership-based organizations, the programme prepares statistical briefs on informal workers as a whole and by main sectors in major cities and nationally. These briefs provide policy makers, researchers and advocates with tabulations on the number and characteristics of workers in these sectors of focus for WIEGO's work: domestic workers, home-based workers, market traders, street vendors and waste pickers.



The **Law Programme** strives (a) for the recognition, inclusion and protection of the rights and work of informal workers in international instruments, national and local laws and regulations and (b) to build the capacity of informal workers and their organizations to use the law to fight for secure livelihoods and labour rights.



Informal workers need access to social protections that will protect and mitigate against risks to their incomes and help them cope after an event or shock. WIEGO's **Social Protection Programme** is committed to helping informal workers access these rights.



By working with informal worker leaders, policy makers and urban practitioners, the **Urban Policies Programme** strives to help the urban poor achieve better incomes, more secure places to live and work and the capacity to negotiate sustainable gains in urban policies and practices.



WIEGO's **Focal Cities** approach supports informal worker organizations to engage with government officials to secure more inclusive laws and regulations, improved urban services and a voice in urban planning and policy-making processes. WIEGO's five Focal Cities are Accra, Ghana; Dakar, Senegal; Delhi, India; Lima, Peru and Mexico City, Mexico.



How WIEGO Supports Domestic Workers

Meet Zainabu

A domestic worker from Kenya in Saudi Arabia.

It is my second time working in Saudi Arabia. The first time was chaotic. I didn't complete my contract because of the abuse I was facing—long working hours, sexual abuse in the house. I didn't have my passport and I didn't know where the embassy was. I didn't know anything, I was just green and they were not paying me. I worked for 12 months without pay. That is when I refused to work. When you refuse to work you face great repercussions, because they pay a lot of money to the agencies so when they find you, it's like they've bought you. — Zainabu

Worldwide, at least 67 million people are employed as domestic workers. Migrant domestic workers are even more vulnerable as their wages tend to be low and they enjoy fewer benefits and legal or social protections than other wage workers. Migrant domestic workers are extra vulnerable because they have little legal protection, especially if they are undocumented or have been trafficked.

The International Labour Organization's Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers (known as C189) is a significant tool in their rights advocacy, as it calls for specific protections for migrant workers and the regulation of private employment agencies. According to the convention, countries must ensure that all domestic workers can keep their travel and identity documents with them.



Credit: **WIEGO**



How WIEGO Programmes Support Domestic Workers



Organization and Representation Programme

We help informal workers' organizations build their organizational and leadership capacity, connect to each other and align with allies. In November 2019, the European Federation of Trade Unions in the Food, Agriculture, Tourism sectors and allied branches (EFFAT) adopted a resolution to include domestic workers in its statutes. The resolution included a demand for increased wages for domestic workers and resolved to strengthen EFFAT's work in the sector. This is a step towards growing domestic worker organizations in Europe.



Statistics Programme

The Statistical Briefs provide statistics on all WIEGO sectors, including domestic workers, which bring visibility to these workers at the national and international level. The first-ever tabulations for informal workers, including domestic workers, at the city-level were provided in briefs on [urban Ghana](#), [urban Thailand](#) and [urban South Africa](#). These are essential tools for planning.



Law Programme

The Law Programme supports affiliates of the International Domestic Workers' Federation (IDWF) to advocate for the ratification and implementation of the International Labour Organization's Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers (known as C189). The [C189 toolkit for the African region](#), which we developed together with IDWF affiliates in Africa, was highlighted in the ILO's guidebook on extending social protections to informal workers and facilitating transitions to formality.



Social Protection Programme

During 2019, the Social Protection Programme supported the International Domestic Workers' Federation (IDWF) and its affiliates in Bangladesh, Nepal and India to conduct a survey assessing social protection needs and gaps among domestic workers.



Focal Cities

Following a Supreme Court ruling that made social security protections for domestic workers obligatory in Mexico, WIEGO produced resources for workers to promote their registration in the national social security pilot. Media engagement in the city accelerated the dissemination.



How WIEGO Supports Home-Based Workers

Meet Savita

A home-based worker who has no choice but to work from home.

Formerly a construction worker, Savita took up home-based work after her family was relocated from the centre to the edge of the city. The time it took to travel such a long distance left her with few options but to quit. She was forced to take on low-paying home-based work.

Savita has four daughters.

I educated my own daughters, through very difficult times. But, now, I cannot always afford the 10 rupees each day that they need to take the bus to college. — Savita

Transport costs are a drain on the earnings of the poor and negatively affect women's work, skill building and education, all of which are constrained by limited mobility and access to the transport system of the city.

Home-based workers may be working from their own homes, but many travel almost daily as part of their work to pick up materials at the market, negotiate with contractors, or engage with customers. Given these needs, the availability and cost of public transport directly impacts the time and money spent in commuting and transporting goods and, thus, the productivity and earnings of the workers.



Savita ben speaks on the difficulties faced in restarting her life after being evicted and relocated to a resettlement on the fringes of Delhi. Credit: Rashmi Chaudhary



How WIEGO Programmes Support Home-Based Workers



Organization and Representation Programme

WIEGO supports the creation of [HomeNet International](#) (HNI)—an international network of membership-based home-based workers' organizations in the making. Contributing to the strength of the global movement, it is significant that solidarity is growing between regional networks. WIEGO also supported the first world-wide campaign for International Home-Based Workers' Day.



Statistics Programme

Home-based workers are often invisible. WIEGO has long worked to change that. Previous Statistical Briefs on home-based workers in South Asia proved so useful to HomeNet South Asia (HNSA), a regional network of home-based worker organizations, that WIEGO and HNSA are now collaborating to update and expand briefs on Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan.



Law Programme



The Law Programme engages with influential international bodies to support the recognition, inclusion and protection of the rights and work of informal workers. For example, we participated in an ILO panel on home work at the Regulating Decent Work Conference and have contributed to its forthcoming publication on home work. Also, as part of WIEGO's work on the [garment sector](#), we produced [a resource for homemaker organizations](#) on the OECD Guidance on the Garment and Footwear Sector.

Social Protection Programme



This year, for the first time, academics, researcher organizations and home-based worker leaders from various Southeast Asian countries came together to discuss social protection for informal workers. The meeting was supported by WIEGO and organized by HomeNet South-East Asia, which has been working to develop a network of researchers in the region interested in working with organizations of informal workers on social protection.

Focal Cities



India's capital city is preparing the Master Plan of Delhi 2021-41. WIEGO wanted to address a history of exclusionary planning—where those living in self-built housing are ignored and home work is penalized, as the areas where they work are zoned residential. Alongside our allies, we launched the [I, too, am Delhi](#) (MBD) Campaign, which calls for the plan to adequately address the issues of livelihood and habitat for the urban poor. In 2019, livelihood—including within the informal sector—was adopted as an area of focus for the Master Plan and, due to the MBD's advocacy, the authors of the plan consulted directly with home-based workers on their needs.



How WIEGO Supports Street Vendors

Meet José

The oldest shoe shiner in Glorieta de Insurgentes Square in Mexico City.

José had never faced eviction in his 47 years of operating in Glorieta de Insurgentes Square in Mexico City. However, when the city government undertook a major, \$6.5 million overhaul of the space, aiming to “improve and modernize”, shoe shiners were seen as a relic of the past. While many held permits to work there, they were not allowed back after the renovations.

When the shoe shiners from Glorieta de Insurgentes were evicted, José, who is the designated representative for the area, called his union’s leader immediately. The group approached several institutions to defend the

evicted workers but received no response.

Together with WIEGO, the Shoe Shiners Union of Mexico City then filed a complaint at the city’s Human Rights Commission. The commission came back suggesting officials should resolve the case by allowing shoe shiners back into the square. However, officials always had excuses for why that would create chaos in their new, upgraded space.

A government representative eventually offered the solution to the deadlock—the shoe shiners would set up in spaces in the square that none of the authorities had claimed as theirs. Today, shoe shiners continue to work at Glorieta de Insurgentes Square.



José is his union’s local representative. Credit: WIEGO



How WIEGO Programmes Support Street Vendors



Organization and Representation Programme

WIEGO engages with the transition to formalize the informal economy by ensuring the inclusion of informal workers in legal and social protection measures. In South Africa, WIEGO provided input and support to meetings including street vendors, waste pickers and government officials that led to significant steps being made in the implementation of R204—the International Labour Organization’s guide for countries going through this process.



Statistics Programme

Our 2019 brief for [urban Thailand](#) showed that there were more than 300,000 street vendors and market traders in Bangkok. In March 2020, informal worker organizations used these statistics to advocate for the creation of a public policy for street vendors and market traders in Bangkok. A policy is expected to be developed and proposed to the Bangkok Governor by the end of 2020. [Read more](#)



Social Protection Programme

WIEGO works with informal worker organizations to develop their work on social protection. In 2019, we worked with the leadership of StreetNet International—a global alliance of street vendors—to develop a successful proposal to fund social protection capacity building work in Sub-Saharan Africa.



Law Programme

As part of our [Administrative Justice](#) work, WIEGO’s [Exposure Dialogue Programme](#) gives lawyers and city officials insight into street vendors’ and other workers’ everyday realities and encourages them to use this experience to rethink legal and policy frameworks. In Dakar, Senegal, a group of lawyers lived and worked alongside informal workers and changed their negative perceptions—instead valuing them as hard-working women and men who contribute to their communities and society. [Read more](#)



Urban Policies Programme

The Urban Policies team monitors urban trends and supports inclusionary policies and practices that contribute to more equitable cities and economies. A new [e-book](#) provides an in-depth look at the important role street vendors play in cities, the challenges they face and how street vendor organizations and city officials have worked together to create inclusive public spaces and innovative plans.



Focal Cities

The Focal Cities teams support street vendors to build advocacy agendas for decriminalization of their work in public space. In Delhi, this work has involved supporting street vendors to re-organize markets to ensure compliance with public health guidelines as the basis of negotiations with the municipality to re-open the markets.



How WIEGO Supports Waste Pickers

Meet Grace

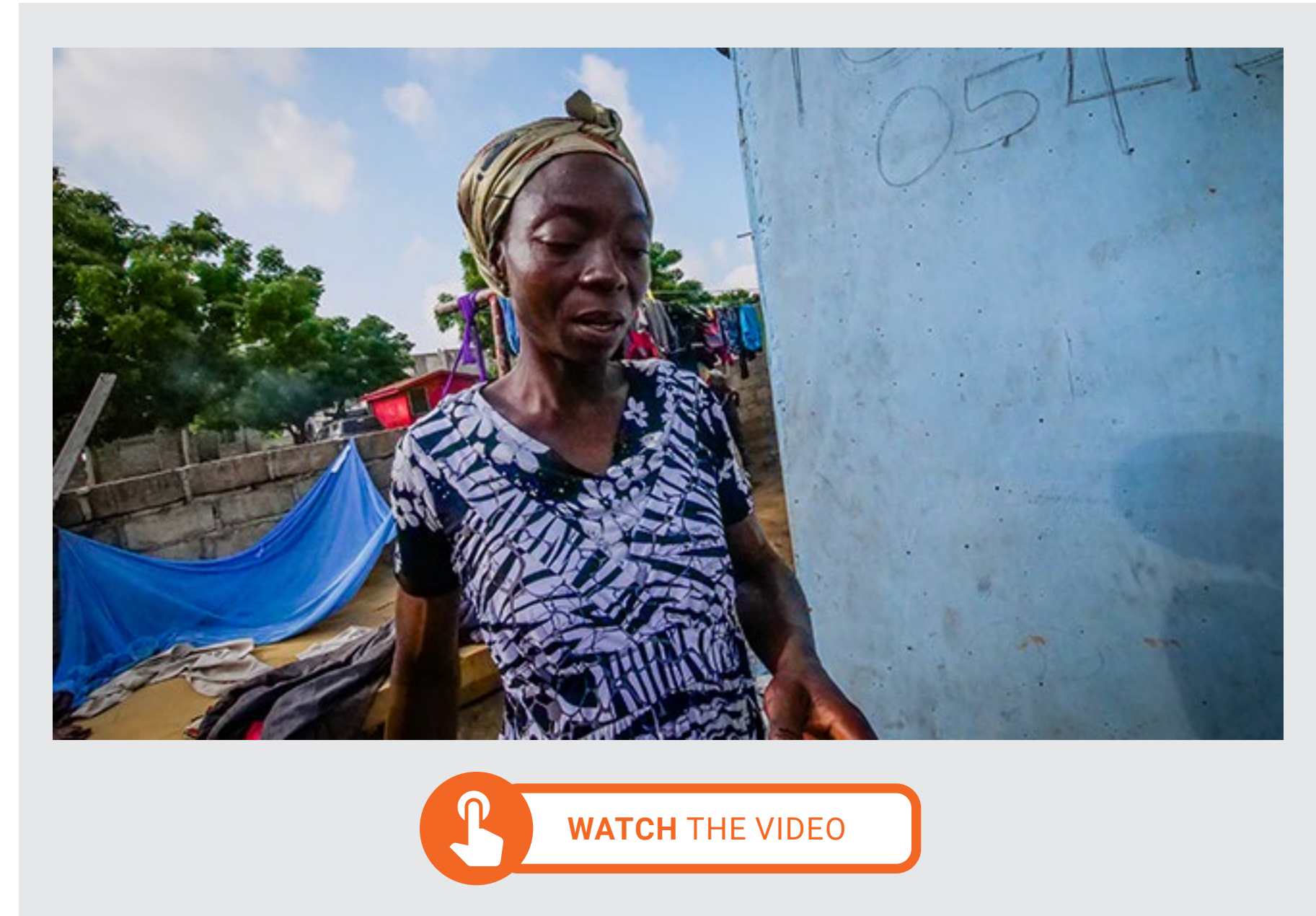
She collects recyclables on the Kpone landfill site in Accra, Ghana, which is slated to be closed.

I started waste picking on the Kpone landfill site in 2012. It's a very important job because, I can say proudly, this is the work I am doing to feed my children, my mother and my brothers.

On our dumpsite, there are a lot of challenges. If you wear safety boots, you are safe. If you are working and a nail is there, a broken bottle, it will not worry you, you can feel free and do your work. That is very important for me.

We, the workers, we organize ourselves. I share my problem and others, too, they share theirs. Then we sit down and we think about it. How can we go forward so that all of us can be one? Our goal is to move forward, to continue our waste picking work, and the government should help us. Closing the dumpsite would bring a lot of problems, financial difficulties. I love my work so I want to continue the work I am doing. — Grace

WIEGO has been working with waste pickers to plan for their integration into the solid waste management system if the landfill closes.



Credit: **Dean Saffron** <https://deansaffron.com>



How WIEGO Programmes Support Waste Pickers



Organization and Representation Programme

WIEGO's Reducing Waste in Coastal Cities Project supports waste picker organizations in preventing ocean waste pollution by improving the capacity of waste picker organizations to be formally integrated into solid waste management in their cities. In Argentina, the National Waste Picker Federation's *Amanecer de los Cartoneros* cooperative, with support from WIEGO and government, gave 2,000 waste pickers access to formal processing centres where residuals can be more responsibly managed. Every month, this prevents 8.5 tons of plastic from entering waterways. [Read more](#)



Statistics Programme

Among informal workers, there is particularly little data on waste pickers in country and international statistics, relative to other informal worker groups. WIEGO prepared the first-ever statistical brief on informal workers in [urban Ghana](#), which includes waste pickers as a specific group of informal workers. This affirms the importance of the continued collection of data, which makes tabulation of these workers possible.



Law Programme

WIEGO's [Protecting the Human Rights of Recyclers in Latin America](#) project aims to improve working conditions for waste pickers through a human rights perspective and to extend the right to work to include informal workers. Although we were denied a special hearing at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the commission cited WIEGO's report in their [Annual Report on Human Rights 2019](#) and requested four countries to address waste pickers' human rights violations—a first.



Social Protection Programme



Our [Informal Economy Podcast: Social Protection](#) is a source of accessible information that raises awareness about research and debates around social protection for informal workers. Episode #3 features the Occupational Health and Safety needs of waste pickers, exploring the Cuidar project—a participatory action-research project in Brazil conducted by WIEGO's Urban Policies team, with the support of the Social Protection team. The podcast was featured in the International Labour Organization's guidebook aimed at addressing the challenges of extending social protection to workers in the informal economy.

Urban Policies Programme



WIEGO works closely with waste picker organizations to support their integration into cities' waste management systems. In September 2019, the Municipal Cleaning Agency of [Belo Horizonte](#) transferred its door-to-door collection of recyclables to six cooperatives and each received a truck. Although Belo Horizonte has been a pioneer in including informal recyclers through social accords and comprehensive policies, *catadores* fought long and hard to gain this outcome.

Focal Cities



We support waste pickers to strengthen their organizations and membership, and to advocate with governments for improved working conditions and more secure livelihoods. Recently, in Accra and Dakar, this work has involved supporting waste pickers on dumpsites to explore and pilot alternative livelihood solutions as the basis for negotiations with the government for formal waste collection contracts.



WIEGO's Ongoing Cross-Programme Work

C190: Eliminating Violence and Harassment at Work

Informal workers experience myriad forms of harassment and violence in their daily work lives and often lack the power to protect themselves or to seek justice. Abuses include brutal evictions, confiscation of goods, arrests, extortion of bribes and other types of assault carried out by local authorities. Women informal workers are particularly vulnerable and face gender-based forms of physical, sexual and psychological violence.

This year, the Convention on Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work was adopted at the International Labour Convention. Waste picker, domestic worker, street vendor, home-based worker and WIEGO representatives ensured that the convention (known as C190) would protect some of the most vulnerable workers, including in private spaces

such as homes. They also successfully proposed the inclusion of language that names public authorities and refers to the state's overall responsibility to ensure proper implementation of C190. This includes protecting workers and following due process.

An ILO Convention is a vital catalyst for change—but it is just the beginning. Workers' organizations will now begin the hard work of organizing and advocating for the ratification and implementation of C190 in their own countries so that national laws, policies and practices protect all of the world's workers.

[Read more](#) about the Social Protection and Organization and Representation Programmes' work on C190.

C189: Decent Work for Domestic Workers

For domestic workers around the world, the International Labour Organization's Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers (known as C189) is a significant tool in their rights advocacy. WIEGO continues to support work on its ratification and implementation at the national level.

Convention 189 was ratified by the Mexican senate in December 2019 after almost a decade of campaigning by domestic workers and allied organizations, supported by WIEGO. In the Dominican Republic, the agreement in principle on a minimum wage for domestic workers marked a milestone in the implementation of C189.

[Read more](#) about the Law and Organization and Representation Programmes' work on C189.



Informal workers celebrate the new labour convention, C190, to help protect them from violence and harassment at the workplace. Credit: Sofia Trevino



Child Care

Just over [740 million women work in the informal economy](#) and the vast majority lack any support for child care. There is a crucial link between child care and women's ability to earn a livelihood. WIEGO's engagement with key development donors and policymakers at the UN, the World Bank and other international institutions increases the visibility of women informal workers' child care needs.

WIEGO and the International Labour Organization released [a new policy brief series](#) on child care for informal workers, revealing why child care for informal workers is critical in addressing gender equality. The Overseas Development Institute cited WIEGO's work on child care in [Women in the Gig Economy: Paid Work, Care and Flexibility in South Africa and Kenya](#).

In the past year, WIEGO noticed a turning point within the global Early Childhood Development community in its recognition of informal workers'

child care needs as a key area for research and investment. This was reflected in the grant awarded by Echidna Giving for WIEGO's project around child care in markets project in Accra, Ghana; Durban, South Africa; and Nakuru, Kenya. Also for the first time, the International Domestic Workers' Federation (supported by WIEGO) was invited to develop a five-year funding proposal on the care economy in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda, together with Oxfam Canada.

In the lead up to the Delhi state elections in February 2020, three major parties committed in their political manifestos to increasing child care for informal women workers. This was an important result of advocacy work by WIEGO partner Forum for Creche and Childcare Services (FORCES, a national coalition of workers' rights, women's rights and children's rights organizations advocating for quality child care services in India) of which SEWA is a founding member. WIEGO supported this work financially and conceptually—seeing [child care as a workers' rights issue](#).



A child plays while his parents work in Bangkok, Thailand. Credit: WIEGO

[Read more](#) or listen to our [podcast](#) for more on the work of WIEGO's Social Protection and Organization and Representation Programmes and WIEGO's Focal Cities Initiative on child care.



COVID-19: Addressing the Impact on Informal Workers

WIEGO is focused on the devastating consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for informal workers, who lack labour, social and health protections. This multidimensional crisis is hitting informal workers particularly hard. Informal workers depend on their daily earnings to survive and face the risk of falling into extreme poverty as a result of government-ordered lockdowns and economic disruptions. Women informal workers face additional challenges because of their care and domestic responsibilities.

Here is what we did to support informal workers in March 2020, as the extent of the crisis and the impact on informal workers' lives quickly became clear.

Within weeks of the COVID-19 outbreak being declared a global pandemic, WIEGO disseminated user-friendly, scientifically verified and potentially life-saving [COVID-19 safety guidelines](#) for **waste pickers in 17 languages**—utilizing our longstanding relationships with local, national and global professional associations and waste picker networks.

Guidelines for street vendors and domestic workers would soon follow.

In addition, [WIEGO conducted a rapid assessment](#) to understand how COVID-19 and related public health measures were impacting informal workers in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The research finished in early April 2020 and WIEGO published a [preliminary report](#) and an [e-book](#) detailing what we learned. [Watch this video](#) to learn more.

In South Africa, WIEGO's interventions in the country's COVID-19 support package for informal workers contributed to two policy victories—the declaration of informal food vending as an essential service one week into lockdown and the design of a cash grant that included informal workers.

In Brazil, waste picker organizations immediately raised funds for relief efforts, including cash grants, food baskets, personal hygiene materials and protective equipment. In Uruguay, worker leaders responded rapidly to the crisis and achieved national and international recognition for their role in producing masks and other personal protection equipment for front-line workers. In Accra, Ghana, some waste pickers at Kpone landfill site made personal donations of personal protection equipment and other materials for use by other workers. The swift responses indicate a sense of solidarity and

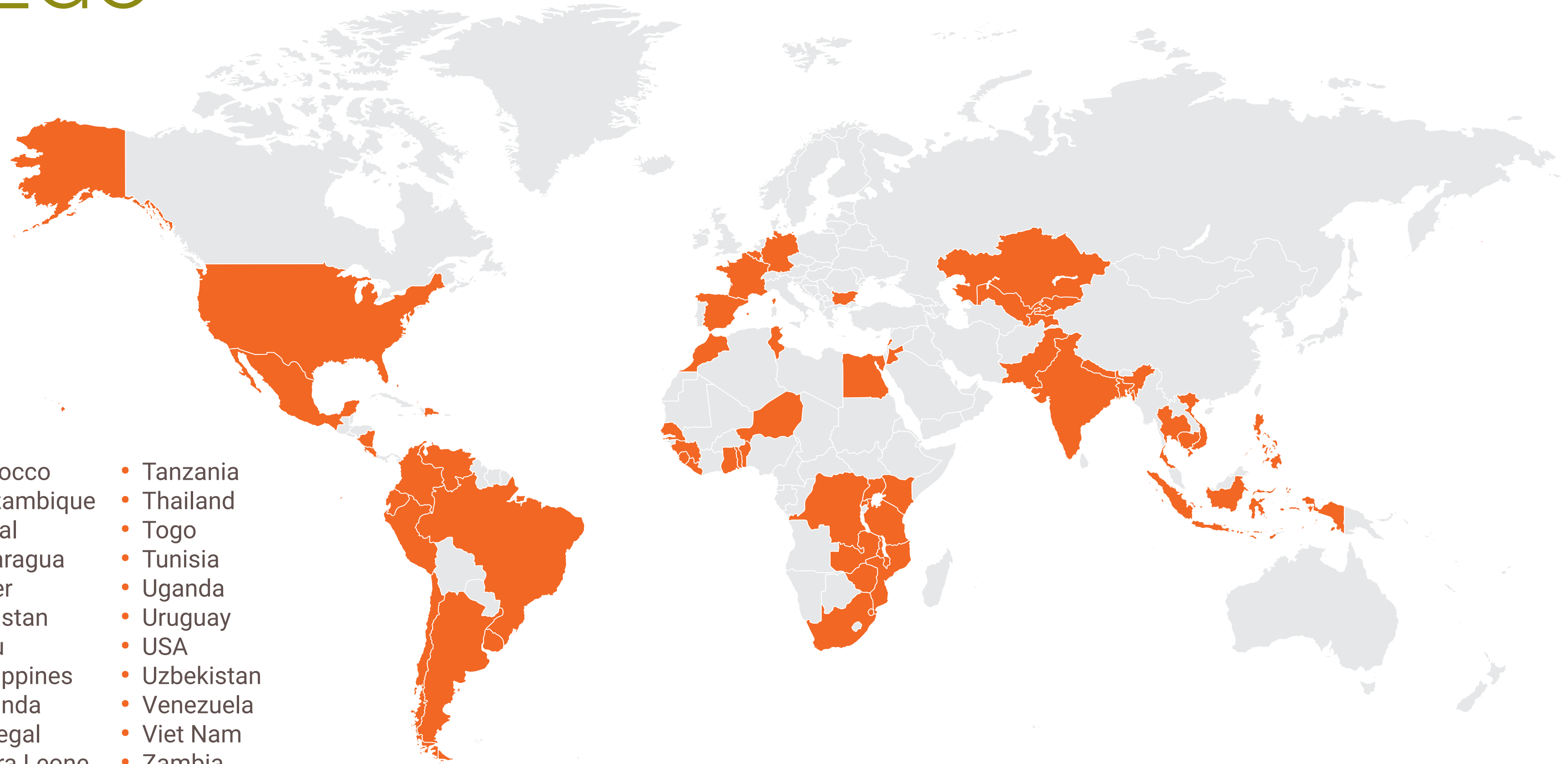
organizational strengthening. WIEGO provided support for the design, execution and dissemination of these campaigns.

In Ghana, national and international organizations consulted with WIEGO on waste pickers' needs in the context of COVID-19 and subsequently made material commitments in the form of food, water and occupational health services. A good relationship between local government officials and the Greater Accra Market Association (GAMA) in Ghana, facilitated in part by WIEGO prior to the pandemic, ensured cooperation with market traders at the start of the pandemic.

As the crisis continues, our teams are working remotely across the globe to maintain contact and provide as much support as possible to informal worker organizations in articulating and disseminating informal worker demands. We support informal worker organizations' [fundraising campaigns](#), we [reviewed the COVID-19 laws in 51 countries](#) and we are conducting research in 20 African countries on social protection laws during COVID-19. In late 2020, WIEGO will launch the results of [our COVID-19 Crisis and the Informal Economy Study](#) to help us unpack the multiple pathways through which the pandemic is affecting informal workers across cities and worker groups.



Where WIEGO Worked in 2019-2020



- Argentina
- Bangladesh
- Belgium
- Benin
- Bermuda
- Brazil
- Bulgaria
- Cambodia
- Chile
- Colombia
- Dominican Republic
- DR Congo
- Ecuador
- Egypt
- France
- Germany
- Ghana
- Guinea
- India
- Indonesia
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Kenya
- Kyrgyzstan
- Lebanon
- Liberia
- Malawi
- Mexico
- Morocco
- Mozambique
- Nepal
- Nicaragua
- Niger
- Pakistan
- Peru
- Philippines
- Rwanda
- Senegal
- South Africa
- Spain
- Swaziland
- Tajikistan
- Tanzania
- Thailand
- Togo
- Tunisia
- Uganda
- Uruguay
- USA
- Uzbekistan
- Venezuela
- Viet Nam
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

Read about [our Institutional Members](#), including Global and Regional networks of informal workers.



The Year in Numbers

Financial Report: Year Ended 31 March 2020

Summary

WIEGO's total incoming resources for the year were US \$5.4 million for the financial year ending 31 March 2020. This compares to US \$8.9m in the previous year, which included some multi-year grants.

Total expenditures for the year were US \$7 million, compared to US \$6.9 million in the previous year.

The figures for 2019-20 are extracted from the statutory accounts approved by the Directors on 5th August 2020. The full statutory financial accounts, on which the auditors (Crowe U.K. LLP) gave an unqualified opinion, have been delivered to the Registrar of Companies in the United Kingdom.

The auditors have confirmed to the Directors that the 2019-20 figures extracted from the statutory financial accounts are consistent with the statutory financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2020.

These extracts may not contain sufficient information to allow a full understanding of the financial affairs of the company. For further information, the full statutory accounts should be consulted together with the Auditors' Report and the Directors' Report, available from the Company Secretary at WIEGO's registered office in Manchester, UK.

BALANCE SHEET	2019-20	2018-19
	USD \$000	USD \$000
CURRENT ASSETS		
Accounts Receivable	267	223
Cash at Bank	2,358	4,001
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	2,625	4,224
CREDITORS		
Accounts Payable	-636	-664
NET ASSETS	1,989	3,560
FUNDS		
Restricted Funds	705	498
Unrestricted Funds	1,284	3,062
	1,989	3,560

Source: Extract from the statutory accounts



Financial Governance

The Finance Committee of the WIEGO Board reviews the budgets and reports of all WIEGO funds and accounts. Budgetary and financial controls are reviewed continuously to reduce the risks of under or overspending and to mitigate the effect of a drop in income in any one financial year. This risk is further mitigated by the building of designated reserves, which currently stand at a level of US \$210K. The Finance Committee reports to the WIEGO Board for final decisions on budgets and risk management.

Source of funds

We are very proud of the number of funders who generously support WIEGO in our efforts to empower informal workers and secure informal livelihoods around the globe.

Our thanks to the organizations, foundations and governments for their generous financial support for WIEGO programmes and projects in the 2019-20 financial year.

SOURCE OF FUNDS	2019-20	2018-19
	USD \$000	USD \$000
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)	2,875	3,365
The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation	995	4,517
Open Society Foundations	697	502
Ford Foundation	-	200
DFID Work Opportunities for Women	184	-
Echidna Giving	150	-
Comic Relief	137	-
FMO: Entrepreneurial Development Bank	42	50
Cities Alliance	30	84
Other Sources	306	181
TOTAL FUNDING	5,416	8,899

Source: Extract from the statutory accounts



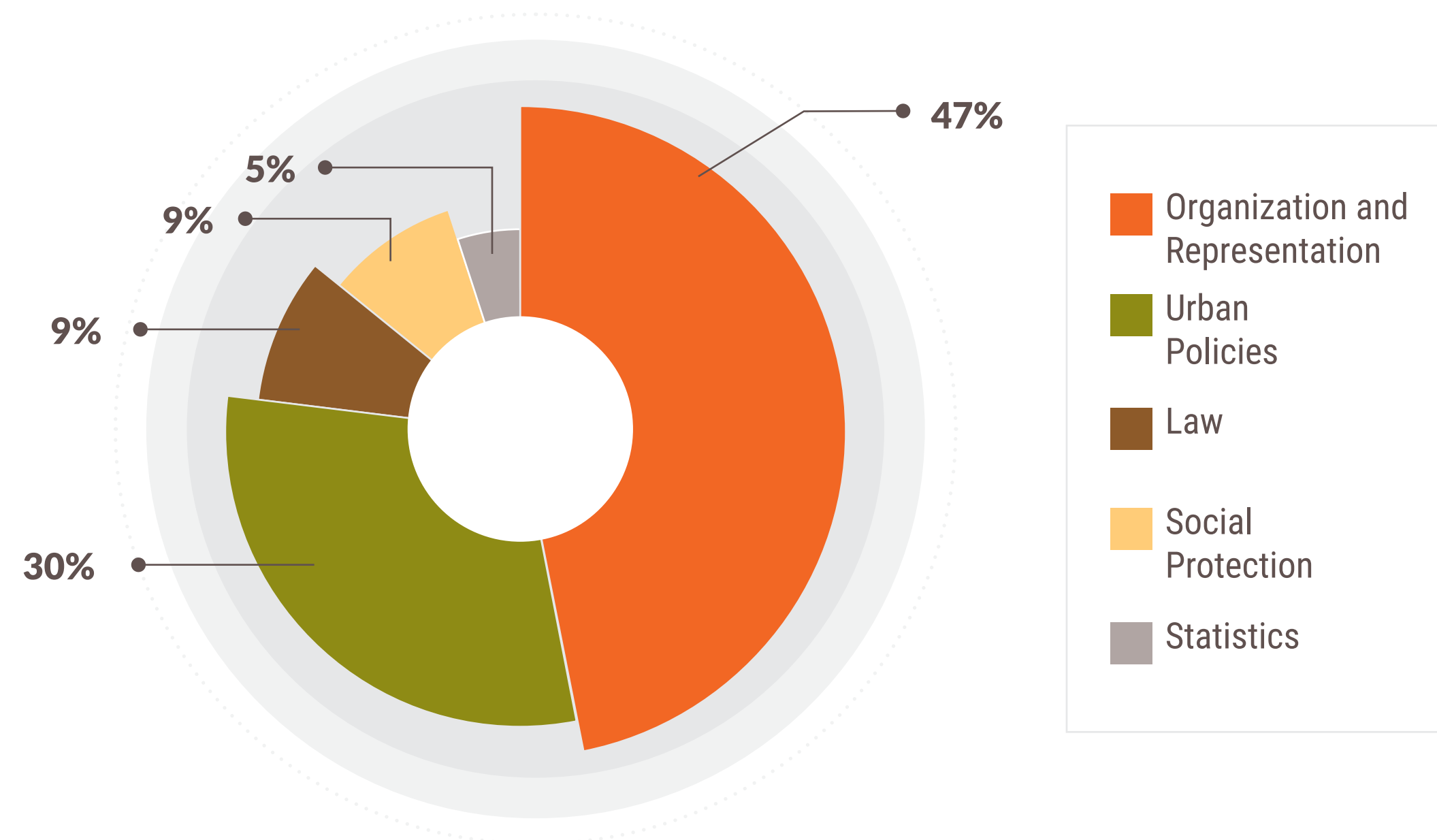
Use of Funds

The charts below summarize expenditure on the core categories of the organization and a breakdown of the core programmes.

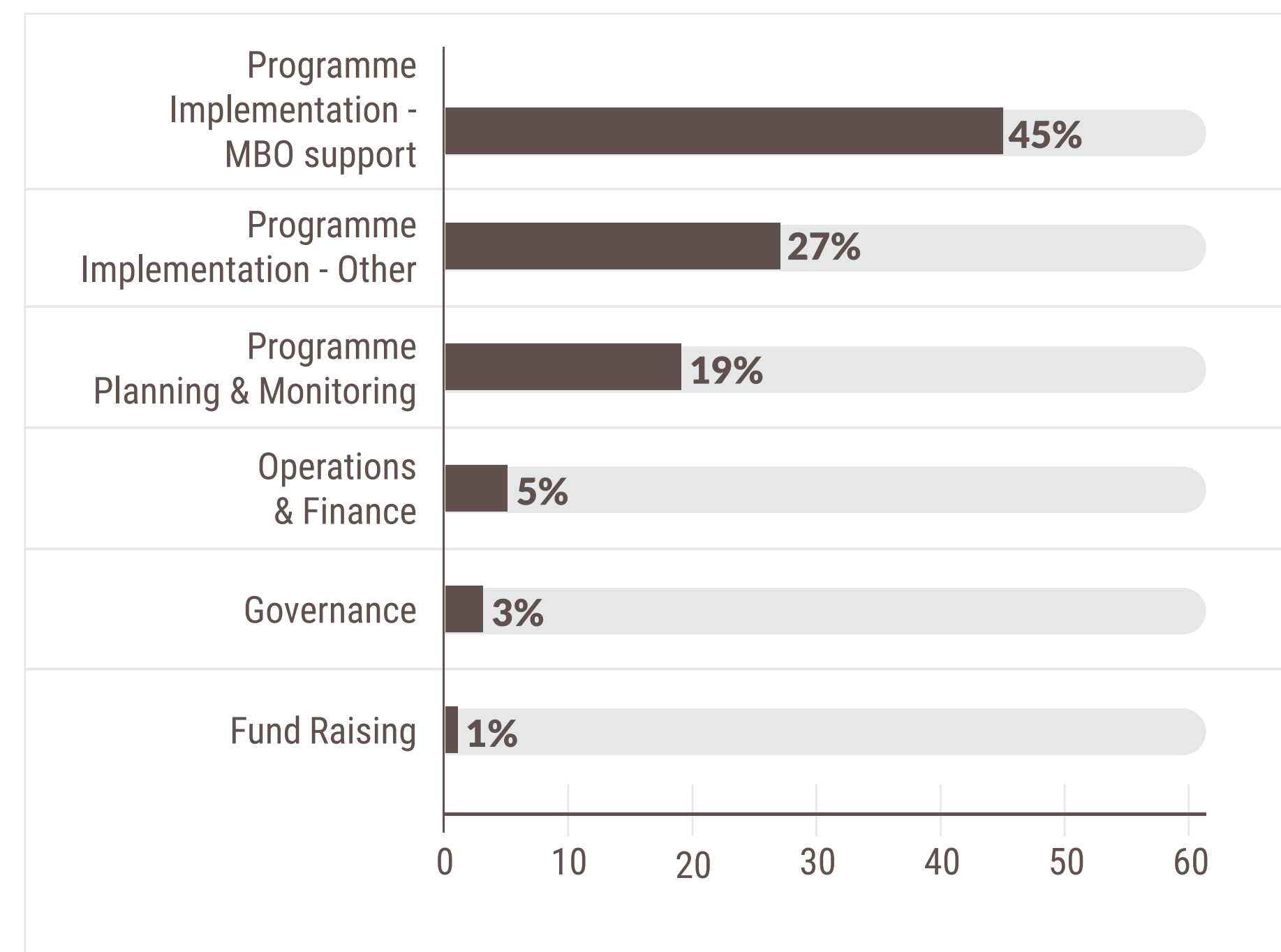
WIEGO's strategy is designed to ensure the maximum possible resources are channelled directly into programmes to meet the objective of delivering quality improvements in MBO support, research, policy advocacy and capacity building.

Spend for the Urban Policies Programme includes the work in WIEGO Focal Cities.

Total Spend by Programme



Total Spend by Category 2019 - 2020



The Programme Implementation - Other category includes all research, statistics and communications costs.



Publications & Resources

WIEGO Publication Series

Working Papers feature research that makes either an empirical or a theoretical contribution to existing knowledge about the informal economy. All WIEGO Working Papers are peer reviewed by the WIEGO Research Team and/or external experts.

von Broembsen, Marlese. 2019. **The European Union's Commodification of Bulgarian Home workers: Regulating Informal Labour in Global Production Networks.** [WIEGO Working Paper No. 40](#)

Briefs aim to provide user-friendly documentation for those involved in advocacy, policy and research on the informal economy.

Policy:

Alfers, Laura and Chidchanok Samantrakul. 2019. **Integrating Occupational Health into Public Health Provision: The Case of HomeNet Thailand.** [WIEGO Policy Brief No. 18](#)

Statistical:

Rogan, Michael. 2019. **Informal Workers in Urban South Africa: A Statistical Snapshot.** [WIEGO Statistical Brief No. 19](#)

Poonsab, Wissanee, Joann Vanek and Françoise Carré. 2019. **Informal Workers in Urban Thailand: A Statistical Snapshot** [WIEGO Statistical Brief No. 20](#)

Budget:

Budlender, Debbie. 2019. **Budgeting and the Informal Economy in Lilongwe, Malawi.** [WIEGO Budget Brief No. 8](#)

Workers' Lives use descriptive profiles of individual workers to explore informal employment.

Devenish, Annie and Laura Alfers. 2019. **Bridges to Better Lives: SEWA's Community Health Workers.** [WIEGO Workers' Lives No. 7](#)

Resource Documents include WIEGO-generated literature reviews, annotated bibliographies and papers reflecting the findings of new empirical work. They provide detail to support advocacy, policy or research on specific issues.

Okoye, Victoria. 2020. **Street Vendor Exclusion in "Modern" Market Planning: A Case Study from Kumasi, Ghana.** [WIEGO Resource Document No. 15](#)

Books and Special Issues

Midgley, J, Rebecca Surender and Laura Alfers (eds). 2019. [The Handbook of Social Policy & Development](#). Elgar: London.



Joint Publications - ILO and WIEGO

Moussié, Rachel. 2020. **Quality childcare services for workers in the informal economy.** [Policy Brief No. 1.](#)

Moussié, Rachel. 2020. **Labour and human rights frameworks promoting childcare for all workers.** [Policy Brief No. 2.](#)

Moussié, Rachel. 2020. **Extending childcare services to workers in the informal economy: Policy lessons from country experiences.** [Policy Brief No. 3.](#)

Tools for Membership-Based Organizations

[Worker Group Advocacy Materials](#) for Home-Based Workers; Domestic Workers; Street Vendors; Waste Pickers

[Teaching Resources](#)

About WIEGO's Work

[Annual Reports](#)

[WIEGO in the World Newsletters](#)

[WIEGO Membership-Based Organizations' Newsletters](#)

[Law & the Informal Economy Newsletters](#)

E-book

[Street Vendors and Public Space: Essential Insights on Key Trends and Solutions](#)

This e-book offers an in-depth look at the important role street vendors play in cities, the challenges they face, and the solutions that can make cities more vibrant, secure and affordable for all.

Peer Reviewed Publications

Every year, WIEGO researchers write and contribute to multiple academic journal articles.

WIEGO Publication Catalogue

This catalogue is a full guide to our latest publications.

Other Resources

[Blogs](#)

[Videos](#)

[Social Protection Podcast](#)

[Webinars](#)

Our social media channels





**Women in Informal Employment:
Globalizing and Organizing**

