



Women in Informal Employment:  
Globalizing and Organizing

MBO NEWSLETTER

December 2021

A Newsletter for Membership-Based Organizations  
of Informal Workers

Produced by: WIEGO Organization and Representation Programme

# Cause for Celebration

## Time for Reflections and Support

**Welcome to the third edition** of the new MBO Newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading the wide range of stories. Home-based workers around the world celebrated their special day with particular joy as it was the first since the launch of HomeNet International. We also report on support given by domestic worker unions to their members, Uruguay's sixth national assembly of waste pickers, and plenty more.

**Contributions from readers in membership-based organizations are most welcome. Email them to Sope Ogunrinde at [sope.ogunrinde@wiego.org](mailto:sope.ogunrinde@wiego.org)**

## Home-based Workers' Day Focuses on Social Protection

**More than 140 home-based workers from around the world** – together with supporters – celebrated Home-based Workers' Day on 20th October, 2021.

This was a very special occasion as it was the first Home-based Workers' Day celebrated together since the launch of HomeNet International (HNI) in February 2021.

Social protection was the focus of the global webinar. This is a major issue for home-based workers, especially during the pandemic. They are the group most severely affected by lock-downs, with little existing social protection and poor access to relief measures.



***Janhavi Dave, International Coordinator of HomeNet International, at the global webinar.***

During the webinar, home-based workers spoke about their social protection challenges, demands and successful interventions. They made suggestions on what they could do as HomeNet International in the coming year.



*In different countries, HNI affiliates – such as the Home-based Women Workers Federation of Pakistan – held demonstrations and other events to mark the day.*

## What is Social Protection?

Home-based workers explain social protection.



HomeNet South Asia Trust collected messages, inspiring stories and videos from home-based workers for Home-based Workers' Day.

## Popular Education Circles of Knowledge

**Home-based worker representatives** of the Asociación de Trabajadores en Domicilio-Brasil ATEMDO, Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores en Domicilio-Chile CONATRADO, Confederación de Trabajadores por Cuenta Propia-Nicaragua CTCP, Red Nacional de Trabajadores y Trabajadoras Autónomos-Peru RENATTA, and Sindicato de Trabajadoras Bordadoras a Domicilio-El Salvador SITRABORDO held three meetings (July 28, August 11 and 25, 2021) with popular educator Nélide Céspedes to learn about and reflect on the popular education approach, its importance for personal, social and organizational development and its methodological processes.

**The group reflected on types of leadership and became aware that the popular education methodology starts with and returns to the reality of the participants.** It promotes the collective construction of knowledge and power through dialogue, has participatory and democratic practices, and promotes values such as solidarity and respect.



## Domestic Worker Unions in Africa Support Members in COVID-19 Crisis

With domestic workers facing dismissals, indefinite unpaid leave or having their working hours cut, unions have adapted their membership policies and are trying different ways to help their members provide for their families and extended families through the pandemic.

The Conservation, Hotels, Domestic, Social Services and Consultancy Workers Union (CHODAWU) of Tanzania changed its constitution to allow for membership to continue for two years after members lose their jobs as opposed to the six months that was allowed before the pandemic.

During this time, the union supports members in trying to find new jobs, but jobs are scarce. Where members cannot find alternative employment, unions are trying different ways to help members put food on the table.

The Domestic Workers Union of Zambia (DWUZ) introduced sewing skills training for unemployed members to enable them to make face masks to generate an income. Most workers have turned to planting vegetables and the harvested crops are stored in food banks where all destitute members can get food.

Employed members are pooling their resources to support those without jobs as many cannot pay their rent and face eviction. The union has received support from its mother body, the IDWF.

DWUZ president Dorothy Kasaro was grateful for the IDWF solidarity fund that was used to help 50 domestic workers to pay their children's school fees.

While supporting members with alternative livelihoods in the short term, **unions keep unemployed members engaged in all union activities, including organizing and capacity building.**

Domestic worker unions have noted the need for social protection, especially mandatory medical cover for all members.

***Digna Nicholaus, 32, has worked for six years as a domestic worker in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.***



Photo: Fanuel Halelwa

## Historic Moment for South African Street Vendors

Forty street vendor leaders and government representatives in South Africa's most populous province, Gauteng, signed an historic joint declaration on October 14 after a two-day meeting between the parties.

The declaration records commitments made by the parties, including to prioritize the establishment of negotiating forums and to implement the progressive [Public Space Trading Guidelines](#) developed by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA).

Gauteng is home to five cities including Johannesburg, South Africa's biggest city. The meeting was convened by SALGA, with support from WIEGO, and the participation of the street vendor leaders was coordinated by the Johannesburg Informal Traders Platform (JITP).

Before agreement was reached, the worker leaders expressed their frustrations at constant police harassment, the lack of progress in setting up negotiating forums, the inadequacy of trading space design and size, and the lack of financial support to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. Some of the leaders were spitting fire!

**After years of battling to get heard by the authorities, the worker leaders were thrilled at the outcome and are looking forward to implementation.**



*Tshepang Fanya from Sedibeng municipality speaks her mind.*

Photo: Jane Barrett



## Kenyan Wages Council Revived

**Ruth Khakame, NEC member and youth coordinator of the Kenya Union of Domestic, Hotels, Educational Institutions, Hospitals and Allied Workers (KUDHEIHA), reports on the significance of having the Domestic Workers Wages Council reinstated after it was disbanded in the 1980s.**

The national wages council has been revived by the Minister of Labour. Its main function is to investigate remuneration and conditions of employment in the domestic worker sector.

While campaigning for the ratification of C189, the union reported on the status of domestic workers in Kenya and presented a position paper on this. One of the recommendations in the KUDHEIHA position paper was to call on government to revive the wages council to amplify domestic workers' voices. Being represented on the wage council board is an opportunity for the union to ensure that domestic workers' priorities are discussed over the next three years.

***“The main issue for us is the ratification of C189 and having better wages and conditions of employment in our sector.”***

## Bangladeshi Waste Pickers' Union Calls for Support to Tackle Climate Change

In this [video](#), **Rina Begum, president of the Bangladeshi Waste Pickers' Union** warns of the dangers posed by climate change and discusses the work that waste pickers do to mitigate these threats.



## Senegalese Alliance Calls Out Decent Work Deficits

**Fifteen unions of workers in the informal economy, together with Secretary General Mody Guiro and the Deputy SGs of the Confédération Nationale des Travailleurs du Sénégal (CNTS), joined together on International Decent Work Day on October 7 to call for better protections for workers in the informal economy.**

Annie Diouf, secretary in charge of the informal economy department of CNTS, stressed the importance of the informal economy in the development of Senegal and the [need for legal and social protections](#). She called for the government to include workers in health protection, social security and social housing programmes.

Adjé Séni Diop, president of the Women Waste Pickers of Mbeubeuss, [condemned the practices and methods of the UCG waste management company at the Mbeubeuss landfill in the capital, Dakar](#). UCG employees interfere and scatter the recyclables that landfill waste pickers have recovered, costing waste pickers hours of hard work, she said. Also, UCG garbage trucks have been involved in accidents in which two people were killed. Adjé Séni Diop called for better treatment of waste pickers and for access to protective equipment to guard against possible accidents from broken bottles, syringes thrown in the trash and other dangerous objects and materials.

## Union of Waste Pickers in Uruguay Holds Sixth National Assembly

There was a noticeable increase in the number of women waste pickers who attended the sixth national assembly of the Wastepickers Trade Union of Uruguay (UCRUS) on October 23. **The Union of Clasificadores de Residuos Urbanos Sólidos** is one of the few trade unions of waste pickers in the world and this was the first time it had been included in the national trade union confederation PIT CNT as a formal entity. The national assembly, supported by WIEGO and the Universidad de la Republica, took place in the head office of the Medicines and Related Industries Union in the capital, Montevideo.

*Worker leaders from Castillos, Paysandu and Salto who came to the capital to join their comrades from the union.*



**Elections were held and participants from waste picker cooperatives from seven regions formed under the Packaging Law shared their challenges and victories.**

The national assembly showed how extended producer responsibility (EPR) schemes emerging all over the world can determine new forms of organizing and influence negotiations with industry and municipalities. This emphasizes the importance of strong unity among worker representative groups.

***“Solidarity, Unity, Fight!”***  
***claims the***  
***painting at the***  
***back of the***  
***room during***  
***the national***  
***assembly.***



## Bagerezi Parade Their Work

**Bagerezi** (also known as reclaimers or waste pickers) took part for the first time in an annual parade, the Feast of Clowns, that has been running for the past 21 years in the South African city of Tshwane.

Their participation in the October 16 event – to raise awareness of their work in the city – was organized through the Tshwane Waste Picker Negotiation Forum. Thirty-five bagerezi representing street and landfill groups marched down the main streets of Tshwane, collecting recyclable material along the way to demonstrate their daily work to all the festival participants and onlookers. They had a scale set up at their stand where they weighed and recorded all the material collected on the day.

The bagerezi are looking forward to next year's parade – organized by the Tshwane Leadership Foundation and partners – and discussed how to improve their participation for greater effect.

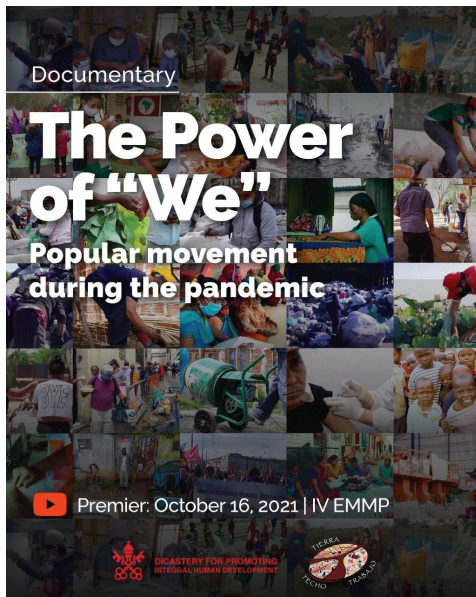
**WIEGO supports the organizing of bagerezi in Tshwane, and their participation in the Waste Picker Negotiation Forum.**



***Bagerezi took part in this year's Feast of Clowns parade in Tshwane.***

Photo: RubiconZA

## MBO Resources



### IV World Meeting of Popular Movements (IV EMMP), October 16, 2021

➔ Documentary:

#### The Power of “We”

Featuring Priya Chelladurai, a home-based worker and member of SAVE from Tiruppur, India; Alicia Priol, a home-based worker and representative of PATAMABA from the Philippines; and other representatives from GlobalRec, HomeNet International, MST-La Via Campesina, Pico Network, Slum Dweller International, and StreetNet International, among other partners in the network.

#### The Power of “We”

**ESP:** [youtu.be/Ess\\_xQ5N1cQ?t=665](https://youtu.be/Ess_xQ5N1cQ?t=665)

**ENG:** [youtu.be/9FiL7Eu7XhE?t=665](https://youtu.be/9FiL7Eu7XhE?t=665)

**PT:** [youtu.be/92-WsRhspQI?t=665](https://youtu.be/92-WsRhspQI?t=665)

**FR:** [youtu.be/oUXxbhpBFPo?t=665](https://youtu.be/oUXxbhpBFPo?t=665)

**IT:** [youtu.be/DR74kfTroHg?t=665](https://youtu.be/DR74kfTroHg?t=665)

#### Full Event :

**ESP:** [youtube.com/watch?v=Ess\\_xQ5N1cQ](https://youtube.com/watch?v=Ess_xQ5N1cQ)

**ENG:** <https://youtu.be/9FiL7Eu7XhE>

**PT:** [youtu.be/92-WsRhspQI](https://youtu.be/92-WsRhspQI)

**FR:** [youtu.be/oUXxbhpBFPo](https://youtu.be/oUXxbhpBFPo)

**IT:** [youtu.be/DR74kfTroHg](https://youtu.be/DR74kfTroHg)

➔ Podcast: **Walakolo Project** by Michael Ogumbe with Kibera Walakolo Self Help Group, a 42-member waste picker group in Kibera, Nairobi, Kenya. <https://anchor.fm/michael-ogumbe/episodes/WALAKOLO-PROJECT-e15luj4>