



Women in Informal Employment:  
Globalizing and Organizing

MBO NEWSLETTER

February 2022

A Newsletter for Membership-Based Organizations  
of Informal Workers

Produced by: WIEGO Organization and Representation Programme

# Rising to the Challenge

## MBO stories of successes and difficulties

**This is the first WIEGO MBO newsletter of 2022** and the pandemic is still ravaging the lives of workers in the informal economy. The stories in this edition show how MBOs are rising to the challenge – finding ways to build communities, facing down inequality globally, using technical information to support their demands, and more!

**Readers are invited to submit stories of organizing. Email them to Sope Ogunrinde at [sope.ogunrinde@wiego.org](mailto:sope.ogunrinde@wiego.org)**

## Street Vendors Make a Day of It

**Every 14th of November, street vendors around the world commemorate their struggles, victories and demands.** 2021 was no exception as StreetNet International raised vendors' voices and visibility through the celebrations.

Take a look here at seven street vendor stories compiled by StreetNet's Youth Reporters on the Ground: <https://streetnet.org.za/campaign/international-day-of-street-vendors-november-14-2021/>.

There is Eunice Nankhwema in Blantyre, Malawi, who makes and sells flowers and runs a beauty salon; Aissata Sylla of Conakry in Guinea who sells shoes to support her parents and says she was able to sell 20 pairs a day before COVID hit, but now battles to sell more than five a day; and many more.

2022 will mark StreetNet International's 20th Anniversary!



***Eunice Nankhwema at her shop in Blantyre.***

## International Labour Conference Inequality Discussion

Delegates from international networks of informal workers went well prepared to the second part of the virtual [International Labour Conference](#) from 25 November to 11 December 2021. The [International Domestic Workers Federation](#), [HomeNet International](#), Self-Employed Women's Association of India, [StreetNet International](#) and WIEGO had prepared a [joint position paper](#) highlighting the causality between rising global inequality and informality and the impacts.

The 10 principles and demands in the position paper illustrate not only the problems of inequalities for workers in the informal economy but also suggest measures that would lead to reducing inequalities.

COVID-19 has exacerbated pre-existing inequalities with regard to income security, inclusion (or exclusion) under labour laws and regulations, social protection coverage and representation and bargaining power – to name just a few.

Through active participation in the workers' group of the committee dealing with Inequality and the World of Work, as well as through contacting governments during the negotiations, the delegates were able to achieve the inclusion of most of the concerns and demands in the adopted [conclusions](#) of the discussion.

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## Waste Pickers' Greenhouse Gas Emissions Calculator

In a virtual event during COP26 in November, WIEGO and the Global Alliance of Waste Pickers launched their greenhouse gas calculator and methodology, which enables the estimation of greenhouse gas emissions that waste picker groups prevent. The tool, which was developed for waste picker organizations and their supporters, allows for the measurement of greenhouse gas emissions avoided through the following waste treatment methods:

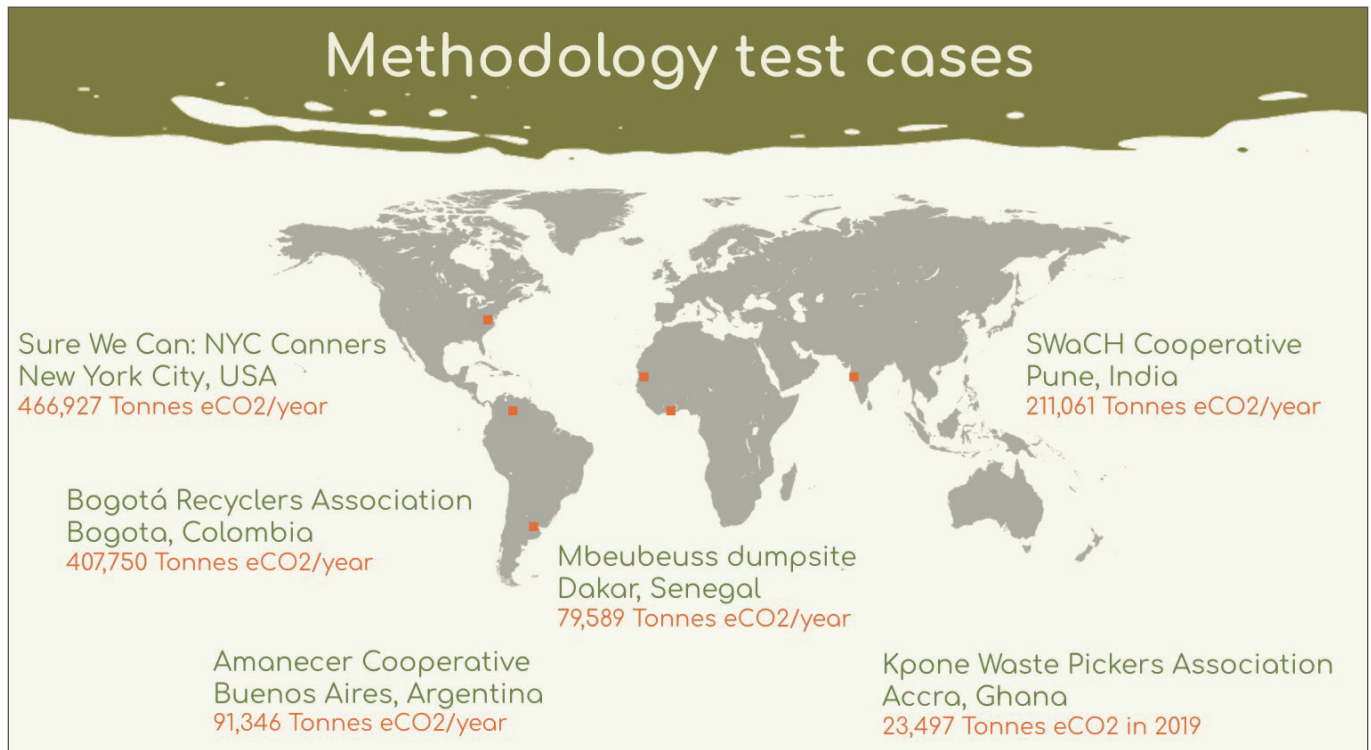
- diversion of waste from decay in landfills and dumps
- recycling
- manual sorting and transportation
- diversion of materials from open burning

**The calculator was tested by waste picker groups around the world before it was finalized.**

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Waste pickers from different countries told launch participants about their experiences with climate change and their contributions to its mitigation. The calculator tool was demonstrated in the second half of the event, which included a session by the tool's developer, Green Partners, who explained the challenges that waste picker groups face in accessing carbon credits. The calculator and explanatory methodology are being translated into Spanish, French and Portuguese. <https://www.wiego.org/ghg>

***A map of where the calculator was tested and how much CO2 emission each group prevents.***



## South African Street Vendor Leaders Focus on Collective Bargaining

**Forty street vendor leaders from across South Africa met in Johannesburg for a WIEGO training workshop on collective bargaining in November.** The street vendors were joined by two waste picker leaders, who attended to learn and share across the two sectors.

The aims were to familiarize participants with the [Public Space Trading Guidelines for Local Government](#); build their capacity to initiate and lead negotiations with local governments; and to develop local-level negotiation plans for 2022. Unhygienic public toilets, corruption, evictions and confiscations were among the problems identified for negotiations with municipalities. Participants collectively agreed that resolving these will require planning, teamwork, and cool heads when making negotiation demands on municipalities.

South African Informal Traders Alliance (SAITA) president Rosheda Muller commented:

***“I never thought before about all the strategies and tactics we need to apply in collective negotiations.”***



***Mpumalanga participants make their negotiating plans for 2022.***

Photo: Jane Barrett

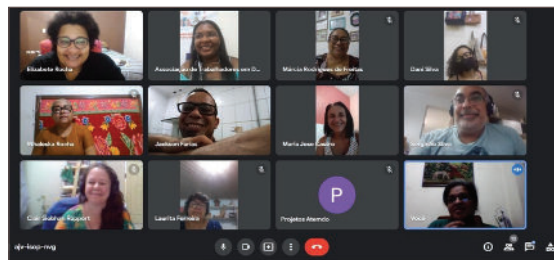
## ATEMDO Meets Home-Based Workers in Brazilian Cities

In Brazil, the Associação de Trabalhadores em Domicílio (ATEMDO) team organized face-to-face meetings with associations and self-employed home-based workers in Miravânia, Minas Gerais, and Osasco, Guarulhos and Artur Nogueira in São Paulo; and an online meeting with members of ArtSol Association of Aracati, Ceará, in November and December.

**The project “Ancestrality: redeeming knowledge to build the future”, supported by HomeNet International and WIEGO, was presented in all meetings.** The International Labour Organization Convention on Home Work (C177), instruments for formalization, principles of solidarity economy, and solidarity revolving funds were discussed with participants. A questionnaire with 79 questions about the living and working conditions of ATEMDO’s members was also applied.



**Getting together at the Municipal School José Belém de Souza in the Peri Peri district in Miravânia, Minas.**



**The ATEMDO meeting with the ArtSol Association of Aracati, Ceará, was virtual.**

## RENATTA-Perú sees its members face to face

Red Nacional de Trabajadores y Trabajadoras Autoempleados (RENATTA) is an organization of 1,260 market vendors, street vendors and home-based workers and is part of the campaign “Workers overcoming COVID-19” run by informal economy workers’ organizations in [Lima](#). As part of the campaign’s activities, RENATTA’s president Rita Maguiña, vice-president Alcira Varillas and secretary Gloria Solórzano, with the support of HomeNet International and WIEGO, visited members in Comas, Los Olivos, Independencia, San Martín de Porres, La Victoria and Cercado de Lima districts of Metropolitan Lima over the last three months of 2021.



*At Calle Mártir Olaya–San Martín de Porres market in Lima.*



These face-to-face visits with members made it possible to find out how they have been managing through during the pandemic. Furthermore, RENATTA's representatives carried out a consultation process and registered the organization as a union with Peru's Ministry of Labour. They are awaiting the administrative resolution confirming the registration.

**Visiting the market in Los Tumbos-Independencia, Lima.**



## Waste Picker Organizations Globally Adopt a Position Paper on Extended Producer Responsibility

**For the past three years, the Global Alliance of Waste Pickers and its member organizations, with support from WIEGO, have been collectively developing a position paper on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).** Governments across the world are introducing EPR regulations to force manufacturers to take responsibility for reducing as well as recycling the plastics and other waste that they create (especially packaging).

Waste picker organizations are demanding that EPR schemes recognize the socially and environmentally sustainable role of waste pickers in recycling. Instead of dispossessing waste pickers of their material and intellectual wealth, EPR schemes must be just and inclusive, and must enhance rather than undermine waste pickers' livelihoods.

The [published position paper](#) is preceded by a declaration and all waste picker organizations have been invited to endorse the position. It will be used by waste picker organizations to guide their negotiations with governments and producers locally, nationally and globally.

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## Global Alliance of Waste Pickers Position on EPR



### Other Demands



## Evicted Waste Pickers Have No Livelihoods in New Location

The [eviction and relocation](#) of the Mushroomville Waste Pickers in South Africa's Gauteng province took place on 6 December 2021. Before the eviction, WIEGO and its affiliates issued a [statement of solidarity with the waste pickers of Mushroomville](#) demanding that the City of Tshwane grant the waste pickers the right to continue working both in the city and in the vicinity of the new housing location.

*A wastepicker of Mushroomville with materials he has collected.*



After the eviction and relocation, the waste pickers have been left without a livelihood as they are not permitted to use their new living place for waste-picking activities. In addition, the location is far from sources of materials. The prohibition on using the home as a waste-sorting space is a challenge that many waste pickers across the world face. It requires a re-think of land-use regulation and town planning.

The Tshwane Waste Picker Negotiation Forum, with the support of WIEGO and other NGOs, will continue to engage with the Department of Environment and Agriculture at the City of Tshwane for a solution to the problem faced by the Mushroomville waste pickers as well as to ensure formalization and integration in the City's solid waste management system.

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## Three-Day Community Clean Up in Kibera, Kenya

With the motto United, We Stand, the newly-formed 42 Kibera Walakolo Waste Pickers Self-Help Group turned its monthly community clean-up into a three-day event, with other waste pickers from Kibera under the umbrella of CBO Kibera Solid Waste Management and in partnership with the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM).

The event started at Walakolo basements at 42 roundabouts, then proceeded to Karanja in Kibera and ended at Lindi. The clean-up ended with a roundtable discussion with the partners benchmarking recycling companies in the area for further collaboration.

The 42 Kibera Walakolo Waste Pickers Self-Help Group was formed in July 2021 following consultations among its members and after deliberations following a meeting attended by one of the members in Kisumu organized by WIEGO the previous year.




***Walakolo waste pickers at their first clean-up of 2022.***

Photo: Facebook

# MBO Resources



**Examples of Good Practice** and **Addressing Violence at Work** are among the 11 **Pocket Tools for Homeworkers Working in Garment Supply Chains** that are part of a series produced by the Home-based Workers Organizing for Economic Empowerment project.


July 2021

**SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY**

**Key Messages and Calls to Action from Workers in the Informal Economy**

Investments in social protection are integral to economic recovery. As national governments, global financial institutions, donors and supporters consider economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, they must consider how to support the recovery of the 2 billion people around the world working in the informal economy. WIEGO has prepared the following key messages and demands to support informal economy workers and their organizations in advocating for inclusive recovery policies related to social protection. The document includes seven high-level key messages and supporting calls to action aimed at actors at the international level and national level.

**Key Message 1**

**Invest in policies to connect workers to social protection and health and child care. These investments are integral to economic recovery.**

**International Calls to Action:**

- International financial institutions can support governments by ending practices that result in governments cutting vital public spending and reducing social insurance contributions by employers and businesses.
- They can also cancel the debt of low-income countries so they can invest in social protection and public services to support their economic recovery.
- Countries based on an evidence and research-eligible more progressed tax systems where high-income earners pay proportionally more income and corporate taxes than the working poor can guarantee greater income redistribution through tax-financed social assistance programmes.
- High-income countries and international financial institutions can fund the Global Fund for Social Protection – a model that helps the lowest-income countries pay for their citizens to have a minimum level of income security throughout their lives.

**National Calls to Action:**

- National governments must protect, not cut, spending on social protection and key public services that protect workers and their families from poverty, vulnerability and exclusion.
- Governments must guarantee social legitimacy in financing social protection, with employers and economic actors paying a larger share of their earnings in social insurance contributions and taxes than informal workers with much lower income (see Key Message 7).

## Social Protection for Economic Recovery: Key Messages and Calls to Action from Workers in the Informal Economy

**ENG:** [www.wiego.org/resources/social-protection-economic-recovery-key-messages-and-calls-action-workers-informal](http://www.wiego.org/resources/social-protection-economic-recovery-key-messages-and-calls-action-workers-informal)

**FR:** [www.wiego.org/fr/ressources/la-protection-sociale-pour-la-reprise-economique](http://www.wiego.org/fr/ressources/la-protection-sociale-pour-la-reprise-economique)

**ESP:** [www.wiego.org/es/recursos/proteccion-social-para-la-recuperacion-economica](http://www.wiego.org/es/recursos/proteccion-social-para-la-recuperacion-economica)

## We'd like to hear from you....

Please share your experiences of engaging on different online platforms while face-to-face engagements are restricted due to COVID 19!

For example, here's what a home-based workers' MBO in Kampala, Uganda had to say:

***“For Envirojewels, bringing members on board to use the online space is a good learning experience that makes them feel included in the new normal”.***